



Professional Development Institute

Flex Course Syllabus

Guiding Emergent and Early Struggling Writers to Success (K-2)

PDI Course Number: 31T02

UCSD Course Number: EDUC41578

If you would like information about receiving post-baccalaureate (graduate) credit for completing this course, [please click here](#).

Course Timeline

Participants have one year to complete the course. Participants must spend a minimum of three weeks in this course.

Course Description

Are you interested in learning how to help your struggling writers become more successful with their writing? Children often begin school excited to learn how to write, but for those who struggle, the spark is quickly diminished. This online course is designed for teachers in grades K-2 who want to help their struggling students with key writing skills. The course begins with a brief discussion of why students may struggle with writing as well as an exploration of writing standards. Then, teachers will learn the difference between, and characteristics of, the emergent writer and the early writer. Teachers will also learn how to differentiate between struggling writers and those who are learning disabled so appropriate remediations can be selected. Information on the writing process is shared together with suggestions for incorporating specific writing strategies such as the six traits and writing across the curriculum. Teachers will also learn how to motivate their struggling writers so they become more interested and focused on the process. The strong connection between reading and writing will be explored. Additional strategies such as writer's workshop, technology that promotes writing, and using quality literature as an inspiration for writing are shared. Finally, writing

assessment is fully explored. By the end of this course, teachers will more fully understand how to best help their struggling writers.

Educational Outcomes

1. Teachers will understand the basics of the Common Core Writing Standards.
2. Teachers will become familiar with the developmental stages of writing.
3. Teachers will learn specific strategies for creating a collaborative working environment within their classroom.
4. Teachers will learn specific strategies for motivating students to write.
5. Teachers will learn specific strategies to make writing meaningful for their struggling writers.
6. Teachers will learn how to differentiate their instruction to best suit the needs of their struggling writers.
7. Teachers will learn the warning signs of a writing disability.
8. Teachers will learn all the steps of the writing process.
9. Teachers will learn specific strategies for every stage of the writing process.
10. Teachers will learn the basic mechanics of the writer's workshop.
11. Teachers will have a basic understanding of the six traits of writing in addition to learning strategies to help their struggling writers.
12. Teachers will have an appreciation for, and will learn the importance of, the reading-writing connection.
13. Teachers will learn how to use literature as an example and inspiration for writing.
14. Teachers will learn about informational text features.
15. Teachers will learn specific strategies for introducing nonfiction writing into their classrooms.
16. Teachers will have an appreciation for, and will learn the importance of, writing in all content areas.
17. Teachers will learn specific strategies for helping their struggling writers in content area classes.
18. Teachers will learn various release models in order to give back the responsibility of writing to their students.
19. Teachers will learn three types of assessments and the differences among them.
20. Teachers will discover ways to assess their students' writing.
21. Teachers will discover ways to incorporate technology into their writing programs in order to help and inspire their struggling students.

Instructional Media

- Online Discussions
- Online Engagement
- Online Collaboration
- Instructor Feedback
- Instructor Interaction
- Online Resources and Websites

- Supplemental Instructional Materials
- Printable Classroom Resources

Evaluation

- Test #1 (5% of final grade)
- Test #2 (5% of final grade)
- Test #3 (5% of final grade)
- Test #4 (5% of final grade)
- Test #5 (5% of final grade)
- Autobiography and Goals for the Course (10% of final grade)
- Article Reflection (15% of final grade)
- Course Collaboration/Share Ideas with the Class (10% of final grade)
- Writing Lesson Activities (20% of final grade)
- Culminating Practicum (20% of final grade)

Topical Outline

Unit One

- Why Johnny Can't Write: A Brief History of Writing
- Writing Standards - What? There Were Standards?
- Introduction to the Common Core Standards for Writing
- **Assignment #1**
Write an autobiography including information about yourself, your grade level and what you specifically hope to learn about helping your struggling writers. Your autobiography should be a minimum of three paragraphs.
- **Test #1**

Unit Two

- The Emergent Writer
- The Early Writer
- Developing Fluency
- **Assignment #2**
As an educator, it is important to be aware of the research, studies, and professional work done in the field. In the course, you will find an article and video that are relevant to the specific course content. Read the article and then write an essay with your thoughts.
- **Test #2**

Unit Three

- Building a Community of Learners

- Differentiation is Key
- Struggling or learning disabled?
- **Assignment #3**

Online Discussion Board Participation/Engagement: Please post a tip, strategy, or idea that specifically relates to helping struggling writers and will make a difference to other teachers in their own classrooms. Your assignment should be a minimum of three paragraphs and detailed enough for another teacher to easily follow. This is a great opportunity to share and collaborate with other teachers at your grade level around the country. Take time to review and respond to other postings that are relevant to your classroom population in order to gain effective ideas to use immediately in your classroom.

- **Test #3**

Unit Four

- Understanding the Writing Process
- Writer's Workshop
- The Six (plus one) Traits of Writing
- **Test #4**

Unit Five

- The Reading-Writing Connection
- Using Literature to Teach Writing
- Introducing Nonfiction Text
- **Test #5**

Unit Six

- Writing Across the Curriculum
- The Gradual Release of Responsibility
- Assessing Student Writing
- **Assignment #4**

Create a writing activity for ten different books (at least one must be a multicultural literature book) that you can use in your classroom. Each activity should be explained in a minimum of five sentences. Keep in mind that this assignment is a cumulative project and therefore, you are expected to demonstrate the knowledge you gained from the course and your ability to apply what you have learned in a practical setting.

- **Assignment #5**
The culminating practicum is a three-step process. (1) In the first assignment, you were asked what goals you had and what you hoped to learn from the course. Think back to your original goals for this course. Write a minimum two-paragraph reflection specifically describing how what you learned can be used to help you reach those goal(s). (2) Next, write a minimum three-paragraph plan

that specifically describes the ways in which you intend to implement a particular strategy you learned in this course into your own teaching situation. (3) Last, write a minimum two-paragraph reflection describing a student you have or have had in the past. Then, discuss how the strategies you learned in this course will specifically benefit that student as you put your plan into action.

Bibliography

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