



## **Professional Development Institute**

### **Flex Course Syllabus**

# **Connecting Content with Literacy: Dynamic Strategies for Comprehension (6-12)**

**PDI Course Number: 121T02**

**UCSD Course Number: EDUC40398**

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**

As a teacher in grades 6-12, do you find that while you understand the true meaning of literacy to be a complex issue, you still struggle to incorporate these best practices into your content-area class? By the time students get to middle and high school, the assumption is that these skills have been mastered in previous grades, making the push for literacy education in a math, science, history, and even the reading/ELA classroom not as strong. Unfortunately, if these skills are not practiced daily throughout middle and high school, many students are sadly likely to be left behind. This online course provides teachers in grades 6-12 with a plethora of research-based strategies to tackle substantive literacy issues within their content-area classrooms. Teachers will learn how to incorporate vocabulary strategies within their content-area classrooms, and they will learn how to motivate students to read with cross-curricular reading strategies. Teachers will learn how to foster fluency within the content areas so that students' speaking and listening skills are actively employed. Teachers will explore a variety of writing strategies that can be used during everyday content-focused lessons. Teachers will be introduced to the backwards planning process so that they understand how beginning with and always keeping the end result in mind helps ensure that literacy concepts are not left out of their content-area lessons. An overview of assessment will be shared, and teachers will learn a variety of strategies for assessing their

students' literacy skills, both formally and informally. By the end of this course, teachers will feel more confident and successful in their quest to implement research-based literacy strategies into their own teaching practices within the content areas.

## **Educational Outcomes**

1. Teachers will understand the definition of literacy.
2. Teachers will learn about the five building blocks of literacy, known as the “Big Five” (phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension).
3. Teachers will learn about the factors that influence students' literacy development, including such things as learning disabilities, speech and/or language impairments, dyslexia, ADHD, and Autism Spectrum Disorder.
4. Teachers will learn specific strategies to help their students build their reading comprehension skills across the content areas of reading/ELA, history/social studies, science, and math/technical subjects.
5. Teachers will understand what dyslexia is and will learn a variety of classroom strategies and accommodations to help those students who are affected.
6. Teachers will learn a variety of cross-curricular strategies to motivate students to read.
7. Teachers will learn strategies to help their students acquire both academic and content-area vocabulary.
8. Teachers will learn a variety of strategies for teaching vocabulary acquisition within reading/ELA.
9. Teachers will learn a variety of strategies for teaching vocabulary acquisition within math and science.
10. Teachers will learn a variety of strategies for teaching vocabulary acquisition within history and social studies.
11. Teachers will have a thorough understanding of the Common Core Writing Standards.
12. Teachers will learn how to incorporate a variety of writing strategies into the various content areas.
13. Teachers will learn how to incorporate essay writing into the content areas.
14. Teachers will be introduced to the assessment process, including formal and informal assessments.
15. Teachers will learn about the backwards design process known as Understanding by Design, and how it helps guide curriculum, assessment, and instruction.
16. Teachers will learn a variety of assessments to help them informally assess their students within the content areas.
17. Teachers will learn a variety of assessments to help them formally assess their students within the content areas.

## **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/Video Reflection (15% of final grade)
- Course Collaboration/Share Ideas with the Class (10% of final grade)
- Cumulative Assignment/Project: Use Backwards Planning to Design Lessons (20% of final grade)
- Culminating Practicum (20% of final grade)

## Topical Outline

### Unit One

- What is Literacy?
- The Big Five
- Factors that Influence Literacy Development
- **Assignment #1**  
*Write an autobiography including information about yourself, your grade level and what you specifically hope to learn about incorporating a variety of literacy strategies into the content areas so that they become part of your daily teaching practices. Your autobiography should be a minimum of three paragraphs.*
- **Test #1**

### Unit Two

- Academic and Content Area Vocabulary Acquisition
- Vocabulary Strategies for Reading/ELA
- Vocabulary Strategies for Math and Science
- Vocabulary Strategies for History and Social Studies
- **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

- Strategies to Build Reading Comprehension Skills
- Dealing with Dyslexia
- Motivating Students to Read with Cross-Curricular Strategies
- **Assignment #3**  
*Online Discussion Board Participation/Engagement: Please post a tip, strategy, or idea that specifically relates to incorporating a variety of literacy strategies into the content areas within the 6-12 classroom. The tip, strategy, or idea that you share needs to 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 follow easily. 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

- Fostering Fluency within the Content Areas
- Promoting Speaking and Listening Skills with Special Needs Students
- Active Speaking and Listening Strategies for the 6-12 Classroom
- **Test #4**

### Unit Five

- Unpacking the Common Core Writing Standards
- Writing Strategies for the Everyday Lesson
- Essay Writing in the Content Areas
- **Test #5**

### Unit Six

- An Overview of Assessment
- Strategies for Informal Assessments
- Strategies for Formal Assessments
- **Assignment #4**  
*Using the Backwards-Planning Template that was introduced in Unit Six, plan a unit that is specific and relevant to a content area typically seen in grades 6-12. Next, review and reflect on the backwards planning process that you just went through. Write a paragraph of no less than eight detailed sentences reflecting on how this process worked (or didn't work) for you. Then, write two detailed lesson plans to accomplish what you added in Stage Three of the backward planning template. The lesson plans should be detailed*

enough that another teacher could use the lessons. Please refer to Assignment 4 for specific details.

- **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

The Professional Development Institute wishes to thank the NGA Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Offices for their generous public license of the Common Core State Standards.

The Professional Development Institute wishes to thank the Lead States, Partners, and Achieve for all their hard work that went into creating the Next Generation Science Standards. The Next Generation Science Standards is a registered trademark of Achieve. Neither Achieve nor the lead states and partners that developed the Next Generation Science Standards were involved in the production of this product, and do not endorse it.

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