Professional Development Institute

Flex Course Syllabus

Reading Fluency: The Bridge between Phonics and Comprehension (K-5)

PDI Course Number: 137T02

UCSD Course Number: EDUC42337

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

Have you ever listened to a student struggle to read out loud, often sound-by-sound? Perhaps you listened as another student read something beautifully, only to realize afterwards that he/she had absolutely no understanding of what was just read? All readers must be able to decode the words on the page, but to read fluently, they must also learn how to simultaneously comprehend those words as they are read. This online course provides K-5 teachers with a variety of strategies to help students build their fluency, as a way to "bridge" phonics and comprehension. The course begins by talking about the role that fluency plays in literacy and how it fits into the "Big Five" of foundational literacy skills. As they progress through the course, teachers are exposed to a variety of strategies to improve students' fluency. The role of assessment as it relates to fluency is also explored in detail. Teachers will take a deep dive into the effects that phonics has on fluency as well as how fluency affects comprehension. Accuracy, automaticity, and prosody are explored in detail, and teachers will learn how various types of instruction (small group, whole group, and centers) can be used to increase students' fluency skills. By the end of this course, teachers will feel more confident and successful in their quest to embed best fluency practices into their own teaching as they work to highlight fluency as a way to bridge the distance between phonics and comprehension.

Educational Outcomes

1. Teachers will learn about the important role that fluency plays in literacy.
2. Teachers will understand what it means to be a fluent reader and how fluency progresses.
3. Teachers will learn how fluency fits within the "Big Five" building blocks of literacy.
4. Teachers will learn how fluency drives the other components (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension) of literacy.
5. Teachers will learn about the various types of assessment (diagnostic, formative, summative, benchmark).
6. Teachers will learn how screening, diagnosing, and progress monitoring factor into fluency assessment, and they will learn how to determine whether their current fluency assessment practices are adequate.
7. Teachers will take a deep dive into various fluency assessment options (oral reading fluency, DIBELS, aimswebPlus, GORT-%), including the benefits and drawbacks of each.
8. Teachers will learn how the mastery of phonics skills affects students' ability to read fluently.
9. Teachers will understand the differences between sight words and high frequency words.
10. Teachers will learn how to use a research-based scope and sequence for introducing phonics concepts to students.
11. Teachers will understand how comprehension relates to fluency.
12. Teachers will take a deep dive into the three levels of comprehension (literal, inferential, and applied), and they will understand how all three levels must be addressed when planning instruction.
13. Teachers will understand what a "word caller" is, and why being one may be dangerous to true comprehension.
14. Teachers will explore Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, including why it is so important to reading and comprehension.
15. Teachers will learn what accuracy is, and how it relates to fluency.
16. Teachers will learn what automaticity is, and how it relates to fluency.
17. Teachers will learn what prosody is, and how it relates to fluency.
18. Teachers will understand the essential elements of successful literacy centers and they will explore how they can be used to increase students' fluency skills.
19. Teachers will understand the benefits of small group instruction.
20. Teachers will explore several small group activities that can be used to increase students' fluency skills.
21. Teachers will understand the benefits of whole group instruction.
22. Teachers will understand the essential elements of effective whole group instruction and they will explore how they can be used to increase students' fluency skills.

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: Make Some Grouping Decisions (20% of final grade)
- Culminating Practicum (20% of final grade)

Topical Outline

Unit One

- The Role of Fluency in Literacy
- Fitting Fluency Within the "Big Five"
- Why Fluency is Considered "Neglected"
- **Assignment #1**
  Write an autobiography including information about yourself, your grade level and what you specifically hope to learn about fluency and how it can be used to bridge phonics and comprehension in the K-5 classroom. Your autobiography should be a minimum of three paragraphs.
- **Test #1**

Unit Two
- The Importance of Fluency Assessments
- Using Assessments to Drive Fluency Instruction
- Assessment Choices for 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

- The Effect of Phonics on Fluency
- Sight Words and Fluency
- Lesson Ideas and Strategies to Combine Phonics and Fluency
- **Assignment #3**
  Online Discussion Board Participation/Engagement: Please post a tip, strategy, or idea that specifically relates to how fluency can be used to bridge phonics and comprehension in the K-5 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

- The Effect of Fluency on Comprehension
- The Danger of "Word Callers"
- Lesson Ideas and Strategies to Combine Comprehension and Fluency
- **Test #4**

Unit Five

- Addressing Accuracy
- Addressing Automaticity
- Addressing Prosody
- **Test #5**

Unit Six

- Using Centers to Increase Fluency Skills
- Using Small Group Instruction to Increase Fluency Skills
- Using Whole Group Instruction to Increase Fluency Skills
- **Assignment #4**
  Based on the data presented in the fictional data report in Assignment 4, write a paragraph detailing your observations. Next, write an additional two paragraphs detailing the kinds of grouping decisions (small group, whole group, centers) you can make to address the given fluency deficits. Then, once your grouping decisions have been made, either write a lesson plan or design a fluency center to address one of the fluency deficits, as evidenced in the fictional data report. All three paragraphs should be written in no less than six detailed sentences, and they should reference the fictional data to support your decisions. The lesson plan or the fluency center also needs to be detailed

and specific. To obtain full credit, be sure to follow all the parameters set forth in Assignment 4.

- **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.

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