



## **Professional Development Institute**

### **Flex Course Syllabus**

# **Comprehension Strategies for Middle and Upper Grades (4-12)**

**PDI Course Number: 74T02**

**UCSD Course Number: EDUC41476**

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 concerned about students who read the assigned text or chapter yet have little or no comprehension of the content upon completion? Effective comprehension skills are critical for students in the upper grades, as they are exposed to more difficult content reading. This online course begins by providing teachers with an overview of why essential learning targets should be used in tandem with state standards. The course then provides teachers with excellent strategies designed to boost both comprehension and retention. Teachers will learn successful comprehension-building strategies such as DRTA, SQ3R, and close reading. Teachers will also learn tools and techniques to help students learn how to infer, draw conclusions, and summarize. Teachers will receive resources that can be used to teach students about the different text structures and patterns of organization, and how they can use that information to improve their comprehension. Guided comprehension strategies will also be explored. Teachers will also learn how to conduct quick assessments so that they can identify struggling readers more quickly, which gives them the opportunity to offer the necessary support(s) to help those students find success. Teachers will also be presented with ways in which students can perform their own self-assessment, so that they learn how to discover when their comprehension is off track. Finally, teachers will learn how to help build students' vocabulary to better improve comprehension

skills. By the end of this course, teachers will have gained many strategies so that they are better prepared to support their students as they continue to build with their comprehension schemas.

## **Educational Outcomes**

1. Teachers will understand the history behind the Common Core State Standards and why there is now a need to shift to essential standards instead.
2. Teachers will understand what essential standards are, and they will explore the role that professional learning communities (PLCs) play in their creation.
3. Teachers will learn how to create effective essential learning targets using “I Can” statements and by following Bloom’s taxonomy.
4. Teachers will learn how essential learning targets connect to curriculum standards.
5. Teachers will learn what reading comprehension involves, and they will learn strategies for attending to comprehension before, during, and after reading.
6. Teachers will learn about the various levels of comprehension and the different types of comprehension questions that exist.
7. Teachers will learn how to use DRTA.
8. Teachers will learn how to ask questions at various levels of comprehension.
9. Teachers will learn how to develop and teach a guided reading lesson.
10. Teachers will learn how to use the SQ3R strategy.
11. Teachers will understand the importance of teaching close reading techniques.
12. Teachers will learn a variety of strategies to improve students’ comprehension.
13. Teachers will learn how to help students monitor their own comprehension.
14. Teachers will learn different text structures.
15. Teachers will learn strategies for improving students’ comprehension of nonfiction text.
16. Teachers will learn a variety of note-taking and outlining options.
17. Teachers will learn how to identify and support struggling readers.
18. Teachers will learn strategies to teach inference and summarization as important comprehension 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: Develop a Comprehension Strategy Lesson (20% of final grade)
- Culminating Practicum (20% of final grade)

## Topical Outline

### Unit One

- Essential Learning Targets
- Focus on Comprehension: Putting Research into Action
- Levels of Comprehension
- **Assignment #1**  
*Write an autobiography including information about yourself, your grade level and what you specifically hope to learn about helping students improve their comprehension in grades 4-12. Your autobiography should be a minimum of three paragraphs.*
- **Test #1**

### Unit Two

- Focus Strategy: DRTA
- Focus Strategy: SQ3R
- Focus Strategy: Close Reading
- **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 Teach Inferring
- Questioning Levels and Techniques
- How to Summarize Text

- **Assignment #3**

*Online Discussion Board Participation/Engagement: Please post a tip, strategy, or idea that specifically relates to helping students improve their comprehension in grades 4-12. 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**

- Text Structure and Patterns of Organization
- Focus on Nonfiction Text
- Note Taking and Outlining Skills
- **Test #4**

## **Unit Five**

- Comprehension Assessment
- Working with Struggling Readers
- Guided Comprehension
- **Test #5**

## **Unit Six**

- Effects of Vocabulary on Comprehension
- Teaching Content Vocabulary
- Self-Assessment of Comprehension
- **Assignment #4**

*You have been introduced to a variety of comprehension strategies throughout the course. In addition to language arts teachers, all content area teachers should be prepared to teach comprehension strategies. Design a lesson specific to your content area that incorporates a comprehension strategy into the plan. The lesson should clearly address the content/standards being taught as well as the specific comprehension strategy being introduced that is designed to help students comprehend and retain the content. The lesson should be detailed enough for another teacher to use it.*

- **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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