Addressing Literacy Gaps in Adolescents: Teaching Foundational Literacy Skills in Every Lesson
Course Syllabus

Course Description

As reading materials become more complex, the gaps in students' foundational literacy skills become evident. Ensuring that every adolescent acquires foundational literacy skills, despite their grade and age, is a challenging but an essential task. This course covers explicit instruction techniques to address varying abilities, ensuring lessons are accessible to all and that students make sufficient progress in their reading and writing skills.

What do we do when students lack the basic skills required for more complex comprehension, syntax, vocabulary, grammar, and writing lessons? This course teaches you exactly how to address this in every lesson through the implementation of systematic, cumulative, and explicit instruction in reading and writing to ensure success for each student. Through a hands-on online course, meaningful peer discussions, and provided strategies, participants will gain ready-to-use strategies, lesson plans, modification ideas, and accommodations.

Additionally, educators will learn to use quick diagnostic screeners to assess individual students' needs, allowing for tailored instruction that addresses specific literacy gaps. By the end of this course, educators will be equipped with the skills and resources needed to bridge literacy gaps, promote academic success, and foster confidence in their students.

This course enhances classroom teaching effectiveness and supports improved student outcomes by introducing new knowledge in addressing adolescent literacy gaps through explicit, systematic instruction and diagnostic assessment strategies that support diverse learners in reading and writing.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Identify which students are more likely to have literacy gaps and explain the importance of addressing and bridging these gaps.
2. Gather and create baseline data measures, feel prepared to administer these pre-assessments, and feel confident interpreting the results to inform and tailor instruction to address the specific reading and writing needs in your class(es).
3. Explain the importance of vocabulary and the explicit instruction of word meanings so that students can apply new vocabulary in both their spoken and written language.

4. Implement strategies to improve text understanding for all students while ensuring higher-level thinking skills for students who require modified reading materials (complexity and/or length).
5. Design structured writing lessons that guide students through the stages of the writing process (planning, drafting, editing) that are appropriately differentiated to ensure all students can successfully transfer their thoughts and ideas to paper.
6. Plan and integrate syntax, grammar, and spelling instruction in both reading and writing lessons.
7. Integrate multisensory approaches and leverage technology tools to support literacy development.
8. Assess and monitor student progress in literacy and adjust instruction accordingly.

Modules

- Module 1: Recognizing At-Risk Students and the Importance for Targeted Instruction, Quiz 1
- Module 2: Creating and Using Baseline Data to Create Literacy Lessons, Quiz 2
- Module 3: The Building Blocks of Language: Vocabulary for Every Student, Quiz 3
- Module 4: Balancing Text Complexity with Comprehension and Critical Thinking, Quiz 4
- Module 5: Structured Writing: Steps for All Learners, Quiz 5
- Module 6: Teaching Grammar, Syntax and Spelling Across the Curriculum, Quiz 6
- Module 7: Boosting Literacy with Multisensory and Digital Supports, Quiz 7
- Module 8: Progress Monitoring in Literacy: Informing Instructional Changes, Quiz 8

Grading:

Each quiz must be passed at an 80% or higher (three attempts allowed).

Format

This is a self-paced, asynchronous (no required live meetings) course. Throughout the PD course, you will find it helpful to take notes along the way to assist with the quizzes. Within each module, you will find reflection assessments that are not graded but will help in your journey through the course. There is an interactive forum in the course to help you connect with peers and instructors, share ideas, and collaborate on best practices throughout your learning journey.