



**Strategic Literacy:  
Topics in Reading K-5  
Site-Based Participant Syllabus**

**Course Description**

This course is designed to provide an overview of and foundation for current literacy research components and practice with an emphasis on the K-5 classroom. Participants of this course will examine current literacy research and explore reading components as they apply to the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom. Foundational work will include the spectrum of reading development, fluency, word study, and vocabulary as well as comprehension strategy investigation. Participants will evaluate their classroom culture of literacy, reflect on their current practice, and formulate a literacy plan for implementation.

**Course Prerequisites**

This course is recommended for K-5 teachers, paraprofessionals, tutors, or resource specialists looking to gain foundational knowledge of the components of reading at this level.

**Text Books/Supplemental Reading**

Will be provided on the first day of class.

**Global Goals of the Course**

To deepen and/or apply the content and skills of the teacher's existing professional knowledge base by meeting the following global goals of this course:

1. To examine instructional and pedagogical belief systems in relation to literacy (NBPTS 1,2,4; IRA 1,6; InTASC 1,2)
2. To develop an understanding of the continuum of reading development (NBPTS 1,2,4; IRA 1,2,5; InTASC 1,2)
3. To explore current literacy research and become critical research consumers (NBPTS 2,4,5; IRA 1,6; InTASC 9)
4. To analyze the major components of literacy (NBPTS 2,3,4; IRA 1,2,5; InTASC 4,5)
5. To investigate the factors contributing to a literate environment (NBPTS 1,3; IRA 5; InTASC 2,3)
6. To synthesize literacy research and classroom applications (NBPTS 2,3,4; IRA 1,2,5,6; InTASC 4,5,8)

## Instructional Objectives

By the conclusion of the course, each participant should be able to do the following:

1. Develop a framework of literacy instruction
  - 1.1 Reflect on one's personal learning experiences
  - 1.2 Explore individual belief systems
  - 1.3 Examine current approaches to reading instruction
2. Examine exemplary literacy research
  - 2.1 Review multiple sources of current research
  - 2.2 Identify appropriate sources for classroom application
3. Create a practical collection of instructional strategies
  - 3.1 Investigate current classroom instructional strategies
  - 3.2 Select exemplary strategies for implementation
  - 3.3 Design a strategy portfolio
4. Construct a reading incentive plan
  - 4.1 Consider factors of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation
  - 4.2 Appraise feasibility
  - 4.3 Develop an authentic incentive program
5. Audit, critique, and review a literacy environment
  - 5.1 Survey existing literacy environment
  - 5.2 Analyze survey data
  - 5.3 Apply current literacy research concerning classroom culture
  - 5.4 Suggest constructive modifications

## Teaching Methodology and Delivery Model

Content and instructor focus are on improvement of course participant expertise through the development of knowledge and skills related to transition planning and associated concepts.

1. Methodologies include instructor presentations, specific skill practice, discussions, audio-visual presentations, self-evaluation, project development, course readings, research/inquiry exercises, and the synthesis of new knowledge and skills with previously acquired skills/expertise in relation to transition knowledge and content.
2. The course is taught with instructor-participant and participant-participant feedback. Course content, activities, and assignments are organized into segments totaling 45 seat hours. Final projects are due within the two-week period immediately following class meetings.
3. Research-based content, presentations, and assignments are supported by textbooks and additional readings/handouts designed specifically for education professionals, educator resources in print and on the Internet, notes from instructor presentations, class activity work pages, and references.

4. Daily activities include a variety of research-based instructional approaches appropriate for adult learners. Class participants actively construct their own learning and make it personally relevant by acquiring and applying course knowledge/skills during hands-on practice and problem-solving activities, personal reflection, in-class presentations, whole-class discussions and activities, assigned readings, research/inquiry, projects, and collaborative work in various group formats. All are designed to make it possible for teachers and other transition-related personnel across the entire spectrum to learn the same basic content and skills with an emphasis on application to their own specific content area or grade level.

### **Learning Assessment**

Formative assessment of learning objectives for this course is conducted informally throughout the week via discussion, critiques, peer- and self-evaluations, journal entries, verbal and written instructor feedback, small-group sharing, and activities requiring the participants to make sense of new knowledge and/or skills within their realm of teaching. Additionally, three formative assessments are embedded within the course. Summative assessment for the course occurs in the form of a final project which requires each participant to synthesize class content and apply it within the teacher's specific teaching environment.

### **Compliance with National Board of Professional Teaching Standards**

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards represents the highest level of professional achievement in the continuum of teacher professional development. There are five core principles (standards) which cover five aspects of professional educational practice: (1) commitment to students and their learning, (2) knowledge of subject matter and instructional strategies, (3) management and monitoring of student learning, (4) systematic reflection about the teaching profession to learn and grow from experience, and (5) collaborative participation in the educational learning community.

### **Compliance with International Reading Association Standards**

International Reading Association Standards are used in planning preparation programs for education support personnel, classroom reading teachers, reading specialists/literacy coaches, reading teacher educators, and administrators. There are six standards for this population: (1) foundational knowledge, (2) curriculum and instruction, (3) assessment and evaluation, (4) diversity, (5) literate environment, (6) professional learning and leadership.

### **Compliance with Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards**

The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium's work is guided by one basic premise: An effective teacher must be able to integrate content knowledge with the specific strengths and needs of students to assure that all students learn and

perform at high levels. All teachers should meet the following standards: (1) learner development, (2) learning differences, (3) learning environments, (4) content knowledge, (5) application of content, (6) assessment, (7) planning for instruction, (8) instructional strategies, (9) professional learning and ethical practices, and (10) leadership and collaboration.

### **Topics Agenda**

#### **Topic One: Introduction, Belief Systems, Instructional Approaches, and Reading Development**

Review of the syllabus and course expectations as well as community-building exercises for optimal colleague collaboration will be completed. Examination of one's own literacy biography and sharing of background knowledge of reading and literacy experiences will take place. Critical belief systems that emerge in literacy instruction will be explored. Participants will reflect on their own belief systems as they relate to the instruction of reading including current instructional approaches (whole language, basal reading, reading workshop, technology based, language experience, integrated language arts, literature based and comprehensive instruction).

Investigation of the spectrum of reading development from emergent literacy and reading readiness, listening and oral language development, phonemic awareness and phonics will occur. Project #1 requires participants to review multiple sources of current research and synthesize information that applies directly to their classroom.

#### **Topic Two: Reading Research and Fluency**

Participants will review current and seminal studies in the history of reading research with an emphasis on fluency research. Discovery of the components of fluency such as rate, expression, accuracy, and phrasing will be emphasized and implemented through fluency instructional strategies. Participants will be introduced to the International Reading Association and exemplary journals. Key components of research articles will be reviewed.

#### **Topic Three: Word Study and Vocabulary**

Discovery of the components of word study with an emphasis on K-5 topics such as types of vocabulary (receptive and expressive), phonemic awareness, phonics, and morphology will occur. Word study instructional strategies appropriate for the k-5 grade band and current word study research will be explored. Discovery of the components of vocabulary, levels of vocabulary knowledge, contextual cues, vocabulary instructional strategies, and current vocabulary research will be explored. Project #2 requires participants to gather effective instructional strategies for each of the reading components covered so far in days 1-3.

#### **Topic Four: Engaged Reading, Motivation, and Classroom Culture of Reading**

Investigation of intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation by implementing literature circles, thematic units, choice reading, author studies, and shared reading experiences at the K-5 grade band will be explored. Developing a philosophy of

reading as a social experience for all will be emphasized. Survey of individual classroom library materials and evaluation of print environment as well as literacy-appropriate culture will be considered. Participants will reflect on personal reading dispositions within the classroom. Project #3 allows participants to create a reading incentive plan for their classroom.

**Topic Five: Comprehension, Non Fiction Comprehension, and Wrap Up**

Discovery of the components of comprehension; before, during, and after reading strategies; and the importance of listening comprehension will be emphasized.

Current comprehension research will be examined and vetted for effective instructional strategies. The afternoon will be devoted to specific non-fiction text comprehension strategies to assist students and teachers in the reading of content level texts at the 3 - 5 grade levels primarily. The final project allows participants to audit their own literacy environment and practice and devise constructive modifications based in research and best practice.

**Final Projects**

Assignments/ assessments should reflect that each participant is accountable for a high degree of learning; thus, an appropriate combination of group and individual assignments/assessments that can accurately determine an individual's achievement level is required.

In keeping with best instructional and assessment practices, this course requires participants to demonstrate synthesis and application of course knowledge in an applied final project linked to the instructional objectives of this course. Assessment of the project should not be limited to the quantity of work submitted but should carefully consider the quality and intellectual value of the work.

Final projects are due within two weeks of the end of class. Projects submitted during the third week "grace period" will have their grade reduced one full letter grade. No papers will be accepted past the grace period, and participants will, consequently, forfeit credit for the course. Papers are expected to be properly formatted and submitted to the instructor either in person or via mail or an email attachment.

Participants taking professional development unit (not-for-credit) courses must attend all scheduled class sessions and complete all formative assignments. However, they will be exempt from completing the final summative project unless otherwise noted. Proof of seat hours will be presented to the participants after completing course reflection via the student portal and all hours are met.

**Grading**

Throughout the course, participants will engage in both formal and informal formative and summative assessments. Points are assigned based on a four-point

criterion rubric specifically delineated for each assessment that can be further defined as follows:

**Distinguished:** The assessment is highly imaginative; demonstrates critical thought; is unique; shows substantial application to one's own teaching or professional position; *goes above and beyond requirements*; is creative; demonstrates both breadth and depth of knowledge of transition-related subject matter; shows individual's personality; is professional in presentation and appearance; and demonstrates considerable effort. The assessment is exceptionally completed and demonstrates clear understanding of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Distinguished" on the course rubric.

**Proficient:** The assessment is well-organized and complete; is effectively and clearly presented; demonstrates clear understandings; applies what has been learned to the author's own classroom situation; clearly shows connections; is detailed; and is thoughtful and supported with ideas. A thoroughly completed assessment demonstrates that the participant shows awareness of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Proficient" on the course rubric.

**Basic:** This is the lowest passing grade. The assessment meets minimum requirements; includes general information but lacks descriptive detail; shows limited application to teaching/learning; and lacks originality. This denotes work that does not meet **all** aspects of standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Basic" on the course rubric.

**Unsatisfactory:** The assessment is missing evidence or information; is sloppy and poorly organized; demonstrates only surface understandings; shows no evidence of application to the author's own teaching situation; is poorly written; and does not meet minimum standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Unsatisfactory" on the course rubric.

The assessments for this course are weighted as follows:

Participation and Reflection	30%
Formative Assessments	30%
Summative Assessments	40%

Letter grades are based on 100 points possible and assigned based on the university grading scale.

### Academic Honesty and Integrity

All participants are expected to maintain academic honesty and integrity by doing their own work to the best of their ability. Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, etc.) will result in the participant receiving a zero for that assignment or paper.

### Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and The Americans with Disabilities Act, participants who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the first session. Reasonable academic accommodations, aids, and adjustments may be made as needed to provide for equitable participation.

### Attendance

Participants are required to attend all classes as well as participate in class discussions, small group activities, and projects. Absence from any part of the class will require that you withdraw from the class. You will need to contact The Connecting Link at (888) 550-5465 in the event this occurs.

### Emergency Statement

In the event of an emergency declared by the college or by The Connecting Link, we reserve the right to alter course plans and the attendance policy. In the event of an emergency, TCL will contact the instructor/participants with alternative educational plans for the course.

### Late Work and Make-Up Policy

Participants are expected to keep pace with in-class assignments and evening at-home assignments. If a situation arises in which an assignment cannot be completed, the participant is expected to make arrangements with the instructor for the timely submission of such work. All work is due not later than two weeks after the class ends. Failure to complete all work in this time frame will result in an **incomplete** or a grade of **F** for the work, depending on the reason for the delay.

### University Compliance

Course content and instruction are bound by policies associated with the university granting academic credit for the course. Such policies include, but are not limited to: academic integrity and honor codes, institutional objectives and grade grievance procedures. These policies are located within the official academic catalogs which can be accessed through the university's official website.

For Valparaiso University Graduate School Student Learning Objectives please visit: [www.valpo.edu/gradschool](http://www.valpo.edu/gradschool)