

Teaching Beginning Readers*

GRADES PRE-K–3

GRADUATE CREDIT: 3 SEMESTER HOURS

Young children’s success in school and in life relies on the establishment of a strong foundation of literacy skills and experiences. Educators in this course take a developmental approach to reading and literacy instruction in preschool through third grade. Using the “five pillars” of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) as an organizational framework, they explore the characteristics of emergent, beginning, and transitional readers. Educators also plan and implement developmentally appropriate assessments, materials, and strategies for instruction, including effective use of current technologies.

This course is designed for pre-K–3 classroom teachers, lead teachers, curriculum coordinators, special education teachers, and reading specialists.

**Some assignments in this course may be more easily completed through student interaction.*

COURSE TOPICS

- Foundations of early literacy learning
- Understanding the literacy learner
- Selecting texts
- Textual groupings
- Essential components of literacy learning
- Perspectives on literacy learning
- Interactive perspective: oral language development, word study, strategic processing
- The critical perspective: critical evaluation and thinking critically
- The response perspective: personal response and connecting reading and writing
- Response to intervention
- The literacy environment

COURSE OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, educators will:

- Plan and implement activities that help them gain insights about cognitive and non-cognitive (affective) aspects of literacy development.
- Summarize the results and consequences of the literacy assessments they apply.
- Apply knowledge of learners and a variety of texts to select appropriate and engaging texts in a textual grouping for a unit of study and a particular group of students.
- Develop literacy activities for each of the five pillars.
- Analyze their current literacy instruction through the filter of the three perspectives in the Framework for Literacy Instruction: interactive, critical, response.
- Evaluate the use of metacognitive and higher-level thinking skills in a literacy lesson.
- Identify instructional strategies to scaffold different levels of support for emerging and beginning readers.
- Explain the role of the phonics assessment in literacy development.
- Assess students’ progress in developmental word knowledge and develop activities to support and extend students’ word knowledge.
- Determine appropriate instructional strategies for improving reading fluency.
- Identify instructional practices that promote the use of making inferences.
- Develop or describe a guided reading lesson that uses appropriately leveled text and provides before, during, and after reading activities.
- Adapt or implement a rubric for students to use when evaluating online texts.
- Analyze current practices using reader response activities.
- Identify and explain elements of response to intervention (RTI) methodology.
- Evaluate current practices of eliciting parental involvement and suggest ways to improve them.

TEACHING BEGINNING READERS

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

This course provides numerous opportunities to apply research-based concepts and theory to practical teaching situations. Assessment is conducted in the following ways:

- **Activities** are short assessments that help educators explore concepts and make connections between the content and their teaching practice.
- **Study Team Discussions (print & DVD) or Discussion Summaries (online)** allow educators to share ideas about the course content with other teachers, then ask them to analyze and summarize the discussion, and then describe how their understanding of the topic has been enhanced or expanded.
- **Applications** assist educators in applying the theories, concepts, and strategies to their teaching.
- **Quizzes** provide educators with instant feedback (online only) on their understanding of the course material. There are quiz questions following each section of the course.
- The **Final Reflection** requires educators to synthesize the content and reflect on their key learnings throughout the course.

COURSE MATERIALS AND FORMAT

Course texts, websites, and journal articles help facilitate learning and transfer theory into practice. Video programs feature interviews with nationally recognized education experts. Classroom scenes provide a view into the classrooms of master teachers who demonstrate the strategies taught in the course. This course is offered in two distance-learning formats: print & DVD and online. Educators select one format when they enroll.

PRINT & DVD FORMAT

Educators in the print & DVD version of the course receive printed materials to facilitate their learning. This version of the course requires educators to form a study team. The educator must have at least one study partner or peer coach, preferably another educator, to complete activities, engage in discussion, and seek feedback. It is not necessary that the study partner be enrolled in the course. Educators enrolled in the print & DVD version should have Internet access in order to connect with the many websites that are offered as learning resources. Assignments are submitted via email. The print & DVD course includes:

- The print study guide:
 - *Teaching Beginning Readers*
- The DVD:
 - Laureate Education, Inc. (Executive Producer). (2009). *Teaching beginning readers grades pre-K–3*. Baltimore: Executive Producer.
- The course textbook(s):
 - Griffith, P. L.; Beach, S.; Ruan, J.; and Dunn, L. (2008). *Literacy for young children: a guide for early childhood educators*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- The other required readings

ONLINE FORMAT

Educators in the online version of the course access the course content via an online classroom. Educators are required to participate in virtual discussions with fellow educators via a discussion board. The course textbook is shipped to educators, but the video programs and other resources are available within the online classroom. Assignments are submitted through the online classroom. The online course includes:

- Access to the online classroom for:
 - Teaching Beginning Readers
- Access to the video programs in the online classroom as well as a backup DVD:
 - Laureate Education, Inc. (Executive Producer). (2009). *Teaching beginning readers grades pre-K–3*. Baltimore: Executive Producer.
- The course textbook(s):
 - Griffith, P. L.; Beach, S.; Ruan, J.; and Dunn, L. (2008). *Literacy for young children: a guide for early childhood educators*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Access to the other required readings

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS FOR ONLINE COURSE FORMAT:

- Operating system for PC: Windows® XP, Windows Vista®, or Windows® 7
- Operating system for Mac®: OS X or higher
- Processor: 1 GHz, 32/64 bit or higher
- Memory: Minimum 512 MB of RAM; 1 GB recommended
- Browser: Microsoft Internet Explorer® 6.0 or higher; Firefox® 3.6 (also for Mac®: Apple® Safari® 4 or higher)
- Internet connection: Broadband (DSL, cable modem, or similar) required
- Software: Microsoft Word®, Adobe® Flash® Player 7 or higher (free), Adobe® Acrobat® Reader® version 8 or higher (free)
- Monitor resolution: 1280 x 800 pixels or higher

Note: If you are using a Macintosh®, please be sure to download Mozilla® Firefox® 3.6. It's free, and the download should take only a few minutes at www.mozilla.org.

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- Adobe, Flash, and Acrobat Reader are registered trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated in the United States and/or other countries.

EDUCATION EXPERTS

Peter Afflerbach, Ph.D.

Dr. Peter Afflerbach is a professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Maryland, College Park. A former classroom English and reading teacher, Dr. Afflerbach serves on the National Assessment of Educational Progress Standing Reading Committee and as chair of the Literacy Assessment Committee for the International Reading Association. He is an associate editor of the journal *Metacognition and Learning* and a member of the editorial advisory board of *Reading Research Quarterly*. His research focuses on the areas of reading assessment, reading comprehension, and verbal reporting methodology. His publications have appeared in numerous theoretical and practical journals. He is the author of *Understanding and Using Reading Assessment, K–12*.

Janice F. Almasi, Ph.D.

Dr. Janice Almasi is a former elementary school teacher and reading specialist and is currently the Carol Lee Robertson Endowed Professor of Literacy Education at the University of Kentucky. Her research has examined the contexts in which children learn from text, particularly in terms of strategic processes and peer discussion environments. Her books include *Teaching Literacy in Third Grade* and *Teaching Strategic Reading Processes*. Her research has been published in journals such as *Reading Research Quarterly*, *The Journal of Literacy Research*, *Elementary School Journal*, and *Educational Psychologist*.

Sue Bredekamp, Ph.D.

Dr. Sue Bredekamp is the director of research for the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition in Washington, D.C. Her work is in the area of early childhood education and early childhood programs. Dr. Bredekamp has served as a consultant to many programs and initiatives, and much of her work has focused on the promotion of professional development for early childhood educators.

Linda Gambrell, Ph.D.

Dr. Linda Gambrell is a professor in the Eugene T. Moore School of Education at Clemson University. She has recently served as president of the International Reading Association (2007–2008), and has received numerous accolades, including election to the Reading Hall of Fame in 2004. Dr. Gambrell's research interests are in the areas of reading comprehension strategy instruction, literacy motivation, and the role of discussion in teaching and learning. She has written books on reading instruction, including *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction*, and has published more than 100 book chapters and articles in scholarly journals.



ABOUT CANTER

Canter, a subsidiary of Laureate Education, Inc., is committed to serving the educational community with high-quality, graduate-level courses that blend research-based theory with practical strategies. Canter began with one groundbreaking guide on managing behavior in the classroom and, more than 35 years later, has helped more than 300,000 educators address the most critical issues in education while advancing their careers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about Canter graduate-level courses, visit www.Canter.net or call 1-800-669-9011.

ABOUT OUR PARTNERSHIP

Canter offers its courses in partnership with Walden University, allowing you to benefit from Canter’s quality curriculum in a self-paced format, while earning graduate credit from a leading accredited university.* The course curriculum is developed and designed by Canter in collaboration with national education experts, while graduate credit is granted through Walden University, which assesses student work. Credit may be applicable for certification renewal and/or salary advancement.[†] Course credit may be transferable with prior approval from the university providing your advanced degree or planned program.

Walden University

The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership at Walden University is a **National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)**–accredited college dedicated to enhancing educator effectiveness. As a recognized standard of excellence in professional education for the preparation of teachers, administrators, and other pre-K–12 school professionals, NCATE accreditation ensures the college has met rigorous national standards set by the profession and members of the public.

The college, named for the former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, was identified by *U.S. News & World Report* as having the largest online graduate program in education by enrollment (May 2010). Walden students were awarded the fourth most TEACH Grants to students nationwide in 2010–2011, according to the U.S. Department of Education. The choice of more than 53,000 students and alumni, including more than 80 state teachers of the year, the college is also a proud partner of the National Education Association (NEA) Academy and a year-round sponsor of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Walden University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and a member of the North Central Association, www.ncahlc.org. Canter and Walden University are both subsidiaries of Laureate Education, Inc.

*Prospective Washington state students are advised to contact the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at 1-360-725-6275 or prof.educ@k12.wa.us to determine whether Walden’s programs in the field of education are approved for teacher certification or endorsements in Washington state. Additionally, teachers are advised to contact their individual school district as to whether this program may qualify for salary advancement.

[†]It is each student’s responsibility to check with his or her state/district and evaluate and understand any requirements related to the use of individual courses for any purpose.