

PBS TeacherLine Course Syllabus

Title

Teaching Narrative and Expository Text Comprehension (Grades 1-3)

Target Audience

This course is intended for pre-service and in-service teachers of grades 1-3.

Prerequisites

To successfully participate and complete the assignments in this course, the learner must:

- Have access to a reading classroom or a few students in grades 1-3 to try out the strategies and the lesson plans.
- Be familiar with taking an online course or have completed the “Practice Learning Online with TeacherLine” course.
- Have some experience in first-, second-, or third-grade classrooms.
- Have an interest in language, literacy, and comprehension instruction.

Course Description

This course is designed to give educators both theoretical and practical information about text comprehension in grades 1-3, and an array of practical strategies for supporting students' comprehension of both narrative and expository texts. Learners will study the factors that affect a student's comprehension, the impact of genre on comprehension, and strategies for assessing students' comprehension. They will develop a lesson plan for direct instruction of a comprehension skill and a lesson plan that uses a collaborative approach to teaching a comprehension skill. As a final task, learners will evaluate the effectiveness of their school or district's reading comprehension curriculum.

Instructor/Facilitator

See instructor/facilitator sheet

Credits

To be determined by college or university

Goals

The overall goal for this course is for learners to develop an understanding of important research about text comprehension in grades 1-3 and to learn an array of practical strategies for supporting students' comprehension.

At the end of this course, the learner will understand and be able to apply the following in his or her own classroom:

- The factors that affect a student's comprehension.
- Active comprehension strategies used by good readers, combined with a range of practice and effective techniques for teaching them.
- Collaborative learning techniques that support students' comprehension.
- Strategies to support the comprehension of diverse student populations.
- A variety of ways to assess students' comprehension.

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Learner Outcomes (performance based)

Learners completing this course will be able to:

- Align their state's standards to the NCTE/IRA standards, and list any instructional strategies they have used to meet each of the standards.
- Develop a lesson plan for direct instruction of a comprehension skill.
- Design a graphic organizer that will be used in conjunction with an expository text that students will read or be used in a read-aloud.
- Develop a lesson plan that uses a collaborative approach for teaching a comprehension skill or strategy.
- Create a think-aloud for a diverse student, administer it, and analyze the experience.

Outline of Content and Assignments

After previewing the documents in the Course Information area, learners will proceed to the Course Content area to complete the following six sessions, working through each session in order. Throughout the sessions, learners will articulate their ideas in various forms: they are encouraged to reflect on their ideas and experiences in their online journal; the weekly discussions in the discussion forum are designed to allow learners to glean information from other learners' experiences. As a final project, learners will evaluate their school or district's current reading curricula as it relates to reading comprehension. They will develop an evaluation rubric, participate in an online peer review to refine their evaluation rubrics, write a 2-3 page evaluation of their curricula, and write a memo to the principal with recommendations for improving the school or district's curricula.

This course is designed to address the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and International Reading Association (IRA) Standards for the English Language Arts, which were developed to serve as a guide for teachers in developing curriculum and instruction that foster students' literacy development. The course specifically addresses Standards 1, 2, and 3. In Session 1 of this course, learners will read the applicable NCTE/IRA standards and a portion of the New Standards written by the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). Learners will also familiarize themselves with how their own states' standards address text comprehension.

Additionally, this course addresses several of the ISTE NETS*T for teachers including:

- Use technology to enhance the curriculum.
- Use technology to assess student learning.
- Use technology resources to engage in ongoing professional development and lifelong learning.
- Continually evaluate and reflect on professional practice to make informed decisions regarding the use of technology in support of student learning.
- Use technology to communicate and collaborate with peers, parents, and the larger community in order to nurture student learning.

Session 1: Key Theoretical Concepts in Text Comprehension

Learners will:

- Define professional goals and expectations for this course in the online journal.
- Explain prior knowledge and experiences about teaching text comprehension in the online journal.
- Identify in the online journal at least three factors that affect students' comprehension by reading the article, *Reading for Comprehension*.
- Explain the factors that affect students' comprehension through online discussion.
- Compare his or her state's standards for reading comprehension with the NCTE/IRA standards by completing a graphic organizer.

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- Evaluate own instructional practices with respect to NCTE/IRA standards and state's standards by completing a graphic organizer.

Read

- "Reading for Comprehension," from the book *Rethinking Reading Comprehension*
- "Key Areas of Instruction: Text Comprehension" from *Between the Lions*, PBS Kids
- NCTE/IRA Standards 1, 2, and 3
- Grades 1-3 standards related to text comprehension from the learner's own state
- "Standard 1: Habits, Discussing Books (grades K-1)," from National Center on Education and the Economy's *New Standards, Speaking and Listening Committee*
- "Standard 1: Habits, Discussing Books (grades 2-3)," from National Center on Education and the Economy's *New Standards, Speaking and Listening Committee*
- "Standard 2: Getting the Meaning, Comprehension (grade 1)," from National Center on Education and the Economy's *New Standards, Primary Literacy Committee*
- "Standard 2: Getting the Meaning, Self-Monitoring and Self-Correcting Strategies, Comprehension (grade 2)," from National Center on Education and the Economy's *New Standards, Primary Literacy Committee*
- "Standard 2: Getting the Meaning, Self-Monitoring and Self-Correcting Strategies, Comprehension (grade 3)," from National Center on Education and the Economy's *New Standards, Primary Literacy Committee*

Write in the online journal

- Reflect on expectations for the course.
- Reflect on prior experiences teaching text comprehension to students and any techniques that were used.

Participate in an online discussion

- Introduce themselves to other learners.
- Respond to the question: "What happens when someone actually comprehends a written paragraph or page?"

Complete activities and assignments

- Complete Analyzing the Standards graphic organizer
- View videos for Standard 1.

Session 2: Teaching Active Comprehension Strategies

Learners will:

- Implement an interactive designed to activate prior knowledge with a student and evaluate the effectiveness of the interactive in a written reflection on the experience.
- Analyze and debate Barton and Sawyer's approach for direct instruction of comprehension strategies through online discussion.
- Critically evaluate a video clip of direct instruction of a reading comprehension strategy by providing specific examples of effective instruction in the online journal.
- Synthesize own learning about direct instruction and strategic reading by designing a lesson plan.

Read

- "Effective Practices for Developing Reading Comprehension," from the book, *What the Research Has to Say about Reading Instruction*
- "Bat Word Splash" (sample)
- "Our Students Are Ready for This: Comprehension Instruction in the Elementary School," from, *The Reading Teacher*

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- *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding* (see Chapter 6, “Making Connections: A Bridge from the New to the Known,” in particular. Not required)
- *Mosaic of Thought* (see Chapter 4, “Homes in the Mind: Connecting the Known to the New,” in particular. Not required)

Write in online journal

- Reflect on the experience of using the Word Splash interactive with a student or students.
- Reflect on the “Guided Reading” videos.

Participate in an online discussion

- Participate in a debate about whether you agree or disagree with this statement: “From our perspective, some students’ comprehension difficulties could be alleviated if more elementary teachers made comprehension instruction a central part of their literacy curriculum.”
- Provide feedback to at least two other learners about their Lesson Plans for Direct Instruction.

Complete activities and assignments

- Explore the Word Splash interactive
- View “Guided Reading” videos 1 and 2
- Develop a Lesson Plan for Direct Instruction

Session 3: Teaching Students to Comprehend Expository Text

Learners will:

- Analyze and compare text layout, language use, and comprehension challenges in narrative and expository text by completing a graphic organizer.
- Synthesize own learning about graphic organizers by designing one, trying it out with students, and discussing graphic organizers with fellow learners.
- Evaluate the utility of using expository text with students in grades 1-3 through online discussion and journal writing.

Read

- “Nonfiction Trade Book Use in Primary Grades,” from *The Reading Teacher*
- “Our Students Are Ready for This: Comprehension Instruction in the Elementary School,” from *The Reading Teacher*
- “Developing Strategic Use of Combined-Text Trade Books,” from *The Reading Teacher*
- *Reading & Writing Information Text in the Primary Grades: Research-Based Practices* (not required)
- *Informational Text in K-3 Classrooms* (not required)
- *Teaching Reading in the Content Areas* (not required)
- *Graphic Organizers (Grades K-8)* (not required)
- “The Four-Square Strategy,” from *The Reading Teacher* (not required)
- “Guidelines for Implementing a Graphic Organizer,” from *The Reading Teacher* (not required)

Write in online journal

- Reflect on multi-genre texts, the potential comprehension challenges they present, and strategies for using them effectively in classroom instruction.

Participate in an online discussion

- Respond to provided scenario by answering the following: “What arguments can you use to convince your colleagues of the utility of expository text with students in grades 1-3?”
- Provide feedback for at least two other learners’ graphic organizers.

Complete activities and assignments

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- Complete the Text Analysis Graphic Organizer assignment
- Complete the Design a Graphic Organizer assignment

Session 4: Collaborative Approaches to Comprehension Instruction

Learners will:

- Analyze the potential obstacles to using collaborative approaches through online discussion.
- Compare three collaborative approaches (Reciprocal Teaching, QtA, and Collaborative Reasoning) by listing commonalities among the approaches in the online journal.
- Analyze a video clip of students participating in a book club by describing student discussion in the online journal.
- Synthesize learning about collaborative approaches to comprehension instruction by designing one lesson plan.

Read

- “Collaborative Approaches to Comprehension Instruction, Part 1,” from the book, *Rethinking Reading Comprehension*
- “Collaborative Approaches to Comprehension Instruction, Part 2,” from the book, *Rethinking Reading Comprehension*
- “Book Club: Methodology,” reprinted from Planet Book Club (Web site)
- “Teacher’s Guide to International Collaboration on the Internet,” reprinted from the U.S. Department of Education Web site
- *Knee to Knee, Eye to Eye: Circling in on Comprehension* (not required)
- “Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom” (not required)
- “Using Book Club to Engage Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners in Reading, Writing, and Talking about Books, from *The Reading Teacher* (not required)
- *Comprehension Right from the Start: How to Organize and Manage Book Clubs for Young Readers* (not required)
- “Book Club: A Literature-Based Curriculum” (not required)
- Monster Exchange (not required)
- RTEACHER (not required)
- *Talking about Books: Literature Discussion Groups in K-8 Classrooms* (not required)
- “Theory to Practice: Literature Circles” (not required)

Write in online journal

- Reflect on the three techniques presented in the chapter, “Collaborative Approaches to Comprehension Instruction.”
- Reflect on the “Book Club” video.

Participate in an online discussion

- Respond to the question: “What difficulties have you encountered, or could you imagine encountering, in using collaborative techniques with students in grades 1-3, and how have you overcome them or imagined overcoming them?”

Complete activities and assignments

- View the “Book Club” video
- Complete the Collaborative Approach Lesson Plan assignment

Session 5: Supporting Students with Diverse Learning Needs

Learners will:

- Identify and discuss the challenges he or she might experience when assessing and building comprehension in a diverse student group.

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- Explain how he or she can use the strategies in “The Reading Comprehension Development and Instruction of English-Language Learners” to facilitate comprehension in the online journal.
- Explain and reflect about the effectiveness of the Language Experience Approach (LEA) to facilitate comprehension with culturally diverse students.
- Analyze one student's strengths and weaknesses in reading comprehension by completing a Think aloud procedure.

Read

- “The Reading Comprehension Development and Instruction of English-Language Learners,” from the book, *Rethinking Reading Comprehension*
- “Cross-Cultural Schemata and Reading Comprehension,” from the book, *Literacy Instruction for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*
- “Using the Experience-Text Relationship Method with Minority Children,” from the book, *Literacy Instruction for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*
- “Using Think-Alouds to Assess Comprehension,” from *The Reading Teacher*
- “Using Think-Alouds to Enhance Children's Comprehension Monitoring Abilities,” from *The Reading Teacher* (not required)
- “Using the Think-Aloud for Reading Instruction,” *The Reading Teacher* (not required)
- “Think-Aloud Protocols: Teaching Reading Processes to Young Bilingual Students,” from the Center for Applied Linguistics Web site (not required)
- *Improving Comprehension Through Think-Aloud Strategies: Modeling what Good Readers Do* (not required)

Write in online journal

- Reflect on using the strategies outlined in “The Reading Comprehension Development and Instruction of English-Language Learners” to facilitate comprehension with diverse students in the classroom.
- Reflect on the excerpts, “Cross-Cultural Schemata and Reading Comprehension” and “Using the Experience-Text Relationship Method with Minority Children.”

Participate in an online discussion

- Respond to: “How can you use the strategies outlined in ‘The Reading Comprehension Development and Instruction of English-Language Learners’ to facilitate the comprehension of diverse students in your classroom?”

Complete activity and assignment

- Explore the “It’s All About Word Play” lesson plan from Maya and Miguel, PBS Kids.
- Think-Aloud assignment

Session 6: Concluding Thoughts and Ideas

Learners will:

- Assess their learning in this course by comparing their prior knowledge and acquired knowledge in a journal activity.
- Analyze the learning experience in this course by reflecting about their professional goals and expectations in the online journal.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of their school or district's reading comprehension curriculum.

Final Project

The final project includes four elements:

1. Evaluation rubric
2. Peer review of at least two other learners’ plans
3. Written evaluation of school’s or district’s curriculum
4. Memo to principal



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Schedule

This course is scheduled to take approximately 45 hours to complete readings, activities, video, assignments, reflections and a final project.

Requirements

Learners are expected to:

- Complete all assignments.
- Maintain an online journal.
- Participate and actively engage in discussions with fellow learners while contributing to the social construction of knowledge.
- Be self-directed and self-motivated.
- Ask for assistance when they need it.

Materials (hardware, software, plug-ins)

Technical Requirements

- Word processor
- Internet service provider
- E-mail

Evaluation

This course is evaluated on a letter grade basis, and may be available for graduate credit. See graduate credit details pertaining to specific graduate credit institutions.

Assessment Criteria

Learners in the course are required to:

- Participate in discussions during each session.
- Submit assignments at the end of each session.
- Reflect on learning in the online journal.
- Submit a final project.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

To be inserted by university institution only