

**MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

**DEPARTMENT of CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, and SPECIAL EDUCATION  
COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Course Prefix and Number:** RDG 8713

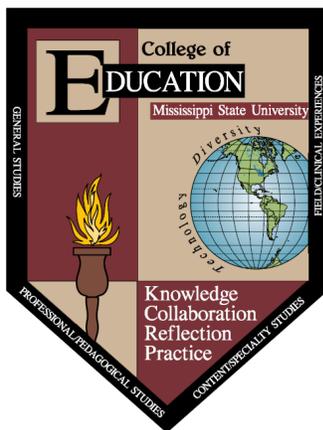
**Course Title:** Teaching Struggling Readers and Writers

**Credit Hours:** Three (3) semester hours

**Type of Course:** Lecture/Lab

**Catalogue Description:** Practicum experience teaching struggling elementary school literacy learners; identifying literacy learning strengths and difficulties; teaching to improve achievement.

**College of Education Conceptual Framework:**



The faculty in the College of Education at Mississippi State University are committed to assuring the success of students and graduates by providing superior learning opportunities that are continually improved as society, schools, and technology change. The organizing theme for the conceptual framework for the College of Education at Mississippi State University is educational professionals - dedicated to continual improvement of all students' educational experiences. The beliefs that guide program development are as follows:

1. **KNOWLEDGE** - Educational professionals must have a deep understanding of the organizing concepts, processes, and attitudes that comprise their chosen disciplinary knowledge base, the pedagogical knowledge base, and the pedagogical content knowledge base. They must also know how to complement these

knowledge bases with the appropriate use of technology.

2. **COLLABORATION** - Educational professionals must continually seek opportunities to work together, learn from one another, forge partnerships, and assume positions of responsibility.

3. **REFLECTION** - Educational professionals must be willing to assess their own strengths and weaknesses through reflection. They must also possess the skills, behaviors, and attitudes necessary to learn, change, and grow as life-long learners.

4. **PRACTICE** - Educational professionals must have a rich repertoire of research-based strategies for instruction, assessment, and the use of technologies. They must be able to focus that array of skills on promoting authentic learning by all students or clients, while exhibiting an appreciation and commitment to the value and role of diversity.

## Course Objectives:

1. Identify, select, use, and interpret a variety of literacy assessment tools and strategies. [CFPO 1, 2, 6, 7]
2. Use results of assessments to design and adapt instruction to meet the needs of individual, diverse learners. [CFPO 5, 6, 7]
3. Develop and conduct assessments that involve multiple indicators of learning progress [SRP 10.1; CFPO 1, 6, 7]
4. Reflect on one's practice to improve instruction and other services to students [SRP 16.2; CFPO 1, 4, 6]
5. Understand how contextual factors in the school, community, and society can influence student learning and reading (e.g. grouping, school programs, assessment, poverty, etc.) [SRP 2.9; CFPO 3, 10]
6. Understand the nature and multiple causes of reading and writing difficulties. [SRP 4.1; CFPO 8, 12]
7. Communicate with allied professionals and paraprofessionals in assessing student achievement and planning instruction, and observe, monitor, and support paraprofessionals to support children's literacy learning. [SRP 11.2, 15.2; CFPO 9, 10]
8. Involve parents in cooperative efforts and programs to support students' reading and writing development. [SRP 11.3; CFPO 2, 10]
9. Adapt instruction to meet the needs of different learners to accomplish different purposes. [SRP 12.2; CFPO 3, 4]
10. Possess multiple strategies for supporting struggling readers and writers. [SRP 4.1; CFPO 1, 2, 9]
11. Understand, respect, and value cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity. [SRP 3.2; CFPO 3, 4]
12. Use multiple indicators to determine effectiveness of the literacy curriculum [SRP 12.5; CFPO 5, 6]

## Topics to be Covered:

- Understanding, Developing, Adapting, and Interpreting Literacy Assessments to Assess Struggling Literacy Learners (9 hrs.)
- Interpreting Standardized Tests to Improve Teaching and Learning (3 hrs.)
- Observing and Reflecting (9 hrs.)
- Understanding Struggling Readers and Writers (12 hrs.)
- Researching and Adapting Teaching to Meet the Needs of Struggling Literacy Learners (12 hrs.)

## Required Texts:

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., & Kucan, L. K. (2002). *Bringing words to live: Robust vocabulary instruction*. New York: Guilford.

Beers, K. (2003) *When kids can't read: What teachers can do*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

McKenna, M. C., & Stahl, K.A.D. (2009). *Assessment for reading instruction (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)* New York: Guilford.

### **Methods of Instruction:**

- **Lecture Component:** Reading and discussion of theory and practical texts.
- **Practicum (Laboratory) Component:** One-on-one tutoring of a struggling learner/reader/writer in a school or summer-program setting. Teachers will develop and justify lesson plans; conduct tutoring/teaching sessions; and write observations, reflections, and narratives to document and understand the teaching and learning in the Practicum.

### **Suggested Student Activities:**

- **Active Reading and Participation (50 pts.):** Actively read all articles and chapters ahead of class (see directions for how to do this) and willingly and actively participate in group work, whole class discussions, etc. (Course Objectives: 1, 4, 9, 10)
- **Tutoring Portfolio (150 pts.):** Students will complete a tutoring portfolio for an individual struggling literacy learner. Your portfolio will include information from various assessment given by you, interpretation from test score information you find in the student's folder (look for prior reading scores), lesson plans used with the student, selected student work, and final reflection. A complete overview and rubric for scoring will be provided for the portfolio, which is a cumulative project you will work on throughout the class. (All Course Objectives)
- **Tutoring Lesson Plan Format (100 pts.):** Students will write, teach, and reflect on a series of lessons, including technology infusion (comprehension, vocabulary, writing, fluency, spelling/phonics). (Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14)
- **Video/Audio Reflection (50 pts.):** Videotape or audio tape yourself listening to your child read aloud for about 10 minutes and then tape the conversation between you and the child, as the child responds to the text. Describe and reflect on the recording.
  - What decisions did you make that support the child's ability to become a fluent and thoughtful reader?
  - What decisions did you make that might hinder the child or that are less effective? Why?
  - Analyze your speech, body language, what you say and don't say, etc.
  - Use concrete specific descriptions of what you said and did, what the child said and did, to support your reflections.(Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12)
- **Common Core State Standards Paper (50 pts.):** Choose one area of the ELA CCSS and research best practice related to the teaching of those standards, sharing resources and strategies for instruction. Summarize each resource and write a paragraph or two synthesizing what this means for you own classroom practice. (Course Objectives: 9, 11, 13, 14)
- **Final Exam (100 pts.)**

**Honor Code:**

Mississippi State University has an approved Honor Code that applies to all students. The code is as follows:

*“As a Mississippi State University student I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.”*

Upon accepting admission to Mississippi State University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor Code. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the MSU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor Code. For additional information visit: <http://students.msstate.edu/honorcode>

**Technology:**

Graduate students will use technology to plan appropriate lessons for students in the field component of the course.

**Diversity:**

Diversity among classrooms, teachers, and students will be discussed in this course. Students will examine materials for appropriateness to use with diverse learners.

**Disability:**

In accordance with section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, Mississippi State University reasonably accommodates students who demonstrate, through appropriate documentation, a qualified disability. The Department of Student Support Services (SSS) is the designated unit on campus that assists students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability. For additional information contact SSS at 662-325-3335

**Field Component:**

This course will incorporate a field component in a school or summer-program setting, including one-on-one tutoring of a struggling learner/reader/writer. Students will develop and justify lesson plans; conduct tutoring sessions; and write observations, reflections, and narratives to document and understand the teaching and learning in the Practicum.

**Evaluation of Student Progress:**

Grades will be determined based primarily on the criteria established in the individual rubrics and criteria for each assignment. In general, a B represents very strong, thorough, complete work of the sort that’s likely to get you hired by a school principal. An A represents the quality

of work I'd expect from teachers I'd want for my very own children. A C represents solid work of an "average" teacher. Below a C is not a passing grade.

Grading Scale:

- 500-463, (93-100%) = A
- 462-420 (84-92%) = B
- 419-380 (76-83%) = C
- 379-345 (69-75%) = D
- 344 and below (68% and below) = F

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS/ACTIVITIES

Active Reading and Participation	50 pts.
Tutoring Portfolio	150 pts.
Tutoring Lesson Plans	100 pts.
Video/Audio Reflection of Lesson	50 pts.
Common Core State Standards Paper	50 pts.
Final Exam	100 pts.

**Total Points** **500 pts**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Instruction will be based on course discussion, group work, group projects, in class writing and reflection, and many other participatory activities. If you are absent you will not be able to learn the course content. Because of the collaborative and interactive nature of the course, if you are absent you hurt your peers' opportunity to learn. You are expected to attend class regularly. If you are absent you are required to consult with another student to find out of the details of readings and assignments due for the next class. You must always come to class prepared and ready to turn in your assignments. Absences do not excuse you from being prepared the next time class meets. The schedule is a good guide but it may change. Bring the homework and turn it in on time. Late papers will not be accepted.

CLASS ETIQUETTE

Cell phones are to be turned off or placed on silent and put away during class, as per Mississippi State University policy. If there is an emergency situation which would require the need for your cell phone to be on vibrate, you are to first discuss this with your instructor. Text messaging or accessing the Internet via cell phone, PDA or personal computer **is not allowed during class**. If access to the Internet is necessary during class, it will be directed specifically by the instructor.

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