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Supporting Secondary Teachers in Literacy Instruction:
A Course for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches

Course Description

Supporting Secondary Teachers in Literacy Instruction: A Course for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches is an interactive, online professional development course designed for middle and high school literacy coaches. The six course sessions focus on the literacy coach's role in helping content-area teachers improve classroom literacy instruction for striving readers and for all students. Coaches can apply to receive 2 semester hours of graduate credit for their coursework through one of Scholastic RED's university partners.

Supporting Secondary Teachers in Literacy Instruction is one of three courses in Scholastic RED's school-wide professional development program for raising adolescent reading achievement: Foundations of Adolescent Literacy: A Professional Development Program for the Whole School. The program includes a course for all secondary teachers and a course for secondary principals.

- **Session 1** provides literacy coaches the background on adolescent literacy they need to be effective literacy leaders. This session examines the literacy demands on today's adolescents and the rising literacy requirements of all workplaces, profiles striving readers and explains how to support them throughout their instructional day, defines the elements of a literacy-focused middle or high school and describes the role of the literacy leadership team.
- **Session 2** guides literacy coaches in using literacy assessments, student data and teachers' input to plan literacy improvement goals and implement a coaching model based on assessed needs. This session gives in-depth direction for implementing a whole-school reading assessment and the powerful uses of the resulting student data to improve instruction and raise achievement, with a focus on meeting the needs of striving readers through intensive intervention.
- **Session 3** provides a complete guide to leading effective teacher study groups. Coaches learn how to use a proven, four-part study group format and how to promote purposeful, structured dialogue about students and instruction. The session also provides techniques for preparing English language arts and content-area teachers to implement reading strategies in their classrooms.
- **Session 4** gives coaches all of the research, video modeling and resources they need to effectively model literacy strategies for secondary teachers. Coaches learn how to prepare for demonstration lessons with pre-modeling teacher conferences, how to conduct effective instructional modeling and how to help teachers reflect on modeled lessons and plan for their own use of the strategies.
- **Session 5** focuses on a critical step in supporting teachers in literacy instruction – conducting classroom observations. Coaches learn effective practices for before, during and after an observation. The session also guides coaches in how to analyze student work and observation data to structure feedback and plan next steps with teachers.

- **Session 6** explains how literacy coaches and the school literacy leadership team collaborate with the entire school community to raise reading levels and achievement, with a particular focus on implementing a school-wide, data-driven improvement model.

All online sessions include resources for working with teachers to integrate literacy instruction into every curriculum area.

Course Faculty

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Course Objectives

On completing this course, you will be able to:

- Understand the needs of striving readers and your role in working with your colleagues to meet these needs.
- Use literacy assessments, student data and teacher input to plan a school-wide literacy improvement program.
- Develop teachers' understanding of effective literacy strategies and build school capacity to improve student achievement in literacy and in content-area classes.
- Plan and run successful teacher study groups that prepare English language arts and content-area teachers to implement reading strategies in their classrooms.
- Coach content-area teachers effectively, using practices for planning, modeling, observing and analyzing literacy instruction.
- Help teachers integrate frequent, varied and engaging opportunities for all students to participate in literacy activities.
- Monitor instruction by conducting focused observations, providing constructive feedback, and analyzing student work.
- Work collaboratively with school leaders and content-area teachers to improve literacy outcomes.

Course Outline

1. **Understanding Today's Adolescent Readers**
   1.1 Preparing Striving Adolescent Readers for Success
   1.2 Today's Striving Adolescent Readers
   1.3 Defining the Elements of a Literacy-Focused School
   1.4 Developing a Literacy Leadership Team
   1.5 Using School-Wide Assessment Data
   1.6 Supporting Striving Readers Throughout the Instructional Day   Self-Assessment

2. **Assessing School-Wide Literacy Needs**
   2.1 Evaluating and Prioritizing Literacy Needs
   2.2 Assessing Every Student in Reading
   2.3 Assessing Striving Readers
   2.4 Supporting Teachers to Use Data to Improve Instruction
   2.5 Guiding Teachers to Choose Appropriate Materials

3. **Leading Teacher Study Groups**
    3.1 Elements of Effective Professional Development
    3.2 Using Study Groups to Advance Literacy Strategy Instruction
    3.3 Professional Development That Improves Instruction

4. **Modeling Strategies in the Classroom**
    4.1 Implementing Literacy Strategy Instruction
    4.2 Planning a Modeled Lesson
    4.3 Modeling Literacy Strategies
    4.4 Reflecting on a Modeled Lesson

5. **Conducting Focused Classroom Observations**
    5.1 Protocols for Classroom Observations
    5.2 Classroom Observations in Action
    5.3 Analyzing Student Work
    5.4 Participating in Literacy Walks

6. **Collaborating With Your Literacy Team to Raise Reading Achievement**
    6.1 Leading School-Wide Literacy Improvement
    6.2 Assessing School-Wide Literacy Improvement
    6.3 Ongoing Professional Development
    6.4 Ensuring Effective Teaching
    6.5 Meeting the Needs of All Students

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COURSE RESEARCH BASE   **COURSE IMPLEMENTATION**

Session 1: Understanding Today's Adolescent Readers	
"Simply put, *basic* level literacy is insufficient in today's world where both reading and writing tasks required of adolescents are continuing to increase in complexity and difficulty" (Alvermann, 2001).	▪ The online, interactive course underscores the increasing literacy demands that adolescents face today, both in the classroom and in the world. Throughout the course, literacy coaches are presented with strategies they can use to help teachers handle increasingly difficult reading and writing tasks in the content areas.
"When students can't keep up in the classroom, they often misbehave, disrupting everyone's learning. Intervening to improve reading and writing may be a much better solution than disciplinary actions" (Taylor, Hasselbring, & Williams, 2001).	▪ A RedTVs highlights the Failure Cycle, equipping educators to recognize the symptoms of adolescent reading difficulties. Sessions throughout the course support literacy coaches in helping teachers break the cycle of failure and establish a pattern of success by getting at a root cause of the Failure Cycle—inadequate reading skills.

"The goal in improving adolescent literacy should not simply be to graduate more students from slightly improved schools, but rather to envision what improvements will be necessary to prepare tomorrow's youth for the challenges they will face twenty and thirty years from now" (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004).	▪ Sessions throughout the course provide RedTV videos and resources of effective instructional practices that can be used school-wide to help students master the core literacy skills they need to learn in school and keep learning once they transition to colleges, communities, and workplaces. • Course text and resources highlight the 15 key instructional elements of effective adolescent literacy programs recommended by *Reading Next.* A RedTV explains the four nonnegotiable elements of effective adolescent literacy instruction endorsed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Governors Association.
"Professional development is one of the greatest tools available to improve student achievement. . . . The principal and the [Literacy Leadership Team] need to ensure the school does not use a haphazard approach to improving instruction, but rather an approach based on assessment data" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2005).	▪ Throughout the course, literacy coaches learn effective strategies for working with content-area teachers to instill a shared culture of literacy, based on assessed student needs, school-wide.
"The goal of a school's assessment efforts should be to provide a clear picture of student strengths and weaknesses, teacher professional development needs, and the school's capacity to support a school literacy program" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2005).	▪ The course advocates a balanced assessment program, including formal assessments, diagnostic assessments and classroom assessments. Resources support literacy coaches in developing a balanced assessment program.
"In the medical profession, treatment needs to be tailored to an individual patient's needs; at times, more than one intervention is needed to effectively treat a patient. Similarly, educators need to test mixes of intervention elements to find the ones that work best for students with different needs" (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004).	▪ The course highlights the elements of effective literacy intervention, including longer class periods, small class sizes, direct instruction, differentiated instruction, common reading strategies and ongoing assessment.

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Session 2: Assessing School-Wide Literacy Needs	
"The goal of a school's assessment efforts should be to provide a clear picture of student strengths and weaknesses, teacher professional development needs, and the school's capacity to support a school literacy program" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2005).	▪ In a RedTV, course faculty stress the importance of assessing both students *and* teachers to determine school-wide literacy needs and plan professional development that will support literacy improvement. ▪ Throughout the course, literacy coaches learn how to examine data effectively and engage the faculty in asking probing questions to reveal insights that data can provide.
"Every teacher should know and understand what the data reveal about the literacy abilities of each student within his or her classroom" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2005).	▪ The data provided by standardized, norm-referenced tests, individual diagnostic assessments and ongoing assessments are explained in the course. RedTVs provide examples of a technology-based, school-wide assessment and action steps for analyzing data.
"To select the best approach for improving student literacy, teachers and school leaders need data on their struggling readers, the reasons these students are struggling, and what approaches can be effective to address their problems" (National Governors Association, 2005).	▪ The course highlights a full range of data that can be used to inform instruction, such as student demographics; absenteeism, discipline, and dropout records; course-taking patterns; library use; observations; planning documents; and informal surveys and focus groups of teachers and students to gauge their habits and attitudes about literacy.
"Teachers need opportunities to learn and ask questions about data collection and reporting systems. Teachers need to use student data to differentiate instruction, to target struggling students, to heighten the level of student engagement, and to arrange cooperative grouping" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2006).	▪ An interactive RedTV gives literacy coaches practice in using data to differentiate instruction and provides feedback from a master literacy coach. ▪ The course offers best practices for incorporating data analysis and reflection into the school day and the school schedule.

"High-interest, low-difficulty texts play a significant role in an adolescent literacy program and are critical for fostering the reading skills of struggling readers and the engagement of all students" (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004).	▪ The course provides strategies that literacy coaches can use to help teachers diversify texts in classrooms and match students to appropriate texts.

Session 3: Leading Teacher Study Groups	
"The responsibilities of the coach are daunting: to convince a group of teachers both to engage in an adult learning process and then to adopt a teaching approach that likely challenges much of what they believe and have done, some quite effectively." —University of Massachusetts—Boston researcher Lisa Gonsalves, quoted in Richardson, 2004).	▪ RedTVs, course text and resources provide research-based, practical strategies for effective professional development, including teacher study groups, modeling, practice and reflection.
"Highly effective secondary teachers, no matter the content they teach, effectively employ before-reading, during-reading, and after-reading activities" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2005).	• Course text and RedTVs present effective literacy strategies and best practices for pre-, during- and post-reading that are useful in every content area.
"Coaches don't use locker-room pep talks to motivate their teams, but they do strive to improve morale and achievement—and raise test scores—by showing teachers how and why certain strategies will make a difference for their students" (Russo, 2004).	▪ RedTVs model how teachers can plan to try new strategies in a collaborative study group of a professional article led by a literacy coach and focused on their own students' needs. After trying a new strategy in their classrooms, teachers gain added insight and support by reflecting with the literacy coach and other teachers on their classroom experiences. They also can use study groups to plan for further literacy strategy instruction. • Web resources support literacy coaches in leading effective teacher study groups.

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Session 4: Modeling Strategies in the Classroom	
"Decades of research about school change reveal that weak implementation is the Achilles heel of all school reform. Literacy coaches are a strategy invented by educators rather than politicians to address exactly this issue" (Symonds, 2003).	▪ The course highlights the literacy coach's role in evaluating literacy needs, planning effective ways to develop school-wide literacy capacity, modeling and observing classroom instruction, and guiding teachers to reflect on their teaching and analyze student work. ▪ Resources include *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* from the International Reading Association and content-area groups, which give specific guidance for strong implementation of literacy strategies school-wide—across the content areas and throughout the school day.
"To be effective, scores of researchers say, professional development must be ongoing, deeply embedded in teachers' classroom work with children, specific to grade levels or academic content, and focused on research-based approaches. It also must help to open classroom doors and create more collaboration and sense of communities among teachers in a school" (Russo, 2004).	▪ RedTVs highlight literacy coaches working with teachers before, during and after they model literacy strategies in teachers' classrooms. This professional development is highly relevant and focused on teachers' classroom work and the issues they are dealing with in the moment. The literacy coach and teacher collaborate effectively to address specific classroom goals.
"Coaching has the potential to be powerful in ways that isolated workshops have not. Coaching for reflective teaching takes place in the classrooms of real teachers with real kids and occurs on an ongoing basis" (Buly, Coskie, Robinson & Egawa, eds., 2004).	▪ The Your Turn section provides an observation tool that literacy coaches can provide to teachers to record their observations during modeled lessons. This tool supports careful observations and reflection about teaching pedagogy.
"Support of core content teachers requires professional development that occurs over time and provides teachers with opportunities to learn literacy instructional strategies; modeling of strategies by literacy and peer coaches; time to practice the strategy with feedback; opportunity to learn content-specific strategies; and time to plan and discuss strategies for classroom instruction" (Putnam & Borko, 2000).	▪ The course supports a coaching model that embeds regular opportunities for teachers to learn, observe, practice and reflect on new instructional strategies that work in every content area.

Session 5: Conducting Focused Classroom Observations	
"Overall, the coaching role is highly collaborative. Successful coaches must be viewed by teachers as advisors/mentors who understand their goals, frustrations, and visions—not as supervisors who evaluate their performance" (Sturtevant, 2003).	▪ The coaching model presented in the course builds in pre-teaching conferences, classroom observations and post-teaching conferences, which provide opportunities for literacy coaches and teachers to collaborate in supportive, non-threatening ways**.**
"Coaching is new to the culture of many schools, and staff members often feel suspicious about claims that the coach is there to help. In such situations, when a coach behaves like a supervisor, even subtly, those suspicions flare and the entire coaching endeavor is compromised" (Toll, 2004).	▪ The course text and RedTVs provide effective strategies, best-practice examples and specific language and behaviors for supporting teachers in tying literacy activities into subject-matter learning.
"Coaching breaks through the isolation that traditionally characterizes teaching and gives teachers the structured support they need to change their practice" (Symonds, 2003).	▪ In RedTVs, coaches demonstrate how they support teachers in planning to use new strategies and in reflecting on their teaching experiences, student performance and student work afterwards. The Your Turn section includes tools that literacy coaches and teachers can use together to analyze student work.
"A Literacy Walk provides insight related to the successful implementation of literacy strategies into the day-to-day instructional program" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2005).	▪ The course explains the elements of a literacy walk, including planning, observing and reflection, and provides guidance on how literacy coaches and the literacy leadership team can use this observation tool to monitor progress in literacy instruction. The Your Turn section includes a full set of tools for conducting effective literacy walks.

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Session 6: Collaborating With Your Literacy Team to Raise Reading Achievement	
"The idea for comprehensive change may not begin in the principal's office, but it most assuredly can end there either through incomplete planning, failure to involve others, neglect, or failure to create conditions that allow a new order of things to emerge" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2004).	▪ The course text and RedTVs spell out the roles of principals, literacy coaches and teachers in a school-wide literacy initiative.
"The goal of the school's assessment efforts should be to provide a clear picture of student strengths and weaknesses, teacher professional development needs, and the school's capacity to support a school literacy program" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2005).	▪ The course text and RedTVs explain how literacy-focused schools should use assessment data to drive instruction, professional development and school-wide plans.
There is a growing consensus that professional development must lie at the center of education reform and instructional improvement (Elmore & Burney, 1997; Haslam & Seremet, 2001).	▪ The course identifies the U.S. Department of Education's 10 principles of effective teacher professional development. A RedTV underscores the effectiveness of coaching in transforming teacher practice.
"A successful literacy program takes the combined effort of skilled content-area teachers and reading specialists/coaches" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2005).	▪ The course explains how school leaders, literacy coaches, reading specialists and teachers can collaborate to meet the needs of adolescent readers, in every classroom, across the school day.
"Some students require or would benefit from intense, individualized instruction" (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004).	▪ Throughout the course, downloadable resources, interactive activities, and best practice modeling in videos all work to provide tips, strategies and purposeful classroom advice for supplementing regular classroom instruction with the tools and techniques needed to support striving adolescent readers.

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*Supporting Secondary Teachers in Literacy Instruction:
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Scholastic RED Professional Development Course Participation Hours

Description	Estimated Time	Participation Hours
Self-paced instruction includes the relevant reading research base. Participation in interactive simulations for practice of research-based strategies. Video modeling by coaches.	1 hour per session plus additional time to revisit concepts and key activities for ongoing practice.	10
Collaborative discussions with colleagues and advice/feedback to classroom teachers.	20 minutes per session	3
Relevant articles to read study and connect to learning and classroom application for literacy coaching.	20 minutes per session	3
Print and review online resources (lesson plans, management tools, graphic organizers, etc.) – for planning and application in classroom coaching.	20 minutes per session	3
Preparation for application of learned skills and strategies utilizing tested lesson plans and student resources in demonstration lessons.	60 minutes per strategy; 1 strategy per week	10
Setting goals and incorporating into Professional Improvement Plan.	1 hour	1
Total Hours		**30**