

Strategies for Teaching Striving Readers: A Course for All Secondary Teachers

COURSE RESEARCH BASE

COURSE IMPLEMENTATION

Session 1: Understanding today's Adolescent Readers	
<p>“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).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The online, interactive course includes strategies for improving students’ background knowledge, vocabulary and fluency, so that they are able to read and write increasingly complex texts in a variety of important genres and content areas. The course also includes effective strategies for helping striving readers move from basic literacy to higher proficiency.
<p>“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).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RedTVs outline the Failure Cycle and show effective strategies for motivating and engaging students through active participation routines. Sessions throughout the course support teachers in breaking the cycle of failure and establishing a pattern of success by getting at a root cause of the Failure Cycle-inadequate reading skills.
<p>“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).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>“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).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course advocates the use of formal and informal assessments to identify striving readers and place them in accelerated intervention courses-and to monitor all students’ progress in literacy on a regular basis. • The course provides effective professional development to teachers, including RedTVs that show models of effective instruction and models of literacy coaches working with classroom teachers to improve literacy instruction.
<p>“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).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RedTVs and course text show how principals, literacy coaches and teachers use assessment data to plan professional development and literacy instruction school-wide.

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Session 1: Understanding today's Adolescent Readers (cont'd)

"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 presents a variety of effective instruction strategies that teachers can use to work with striving, proficient and advanced readers to engage and motivate them to read and to differentiate instruction based on students' needs.

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Session 2: A Research-Based Literacy Improvement Model	
<p>“Adopting a school-wide approach to literacy in which every teacher is committed, involved, and championing coordinated literacy improvement efforts is the way we can make our secondary schools count for all students” (Lenz, Ehren, & Deshler, 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of systematic, school-wide literacy instruction, such as classroom participation routines and explicit instruction of academic vocabulary, are highlighted.
<p>“Three-quarters of struggling readers in third grade continue to read poorly in high school” (Peterson, Caverly, Nicholson, O’Neal, & Cusenbary, 2001; RAND Reading Study Group, 2002).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This course explains the most common obstacles to reading success, including lack of engagement with texts and inadequate word-attack skills, background knowledge, vocabulary and fluency, and provides best- practice modeling of effective instructional strategies to improve reading results.
<p>“The most powerful thing a teacher can do to ensure real access to powerful learning experiences may be deceptively simple: Stop the age-old practice of hand raising as the primary way to structure discussion” (Feldman & Denti, 2004).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RedTVs, lesson plans and resources provide teachers with models of classroom participation routines they can use to hold all students accountable and actively engaged in interacting with texts and practicing academic discourse.
<p>“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).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course provides tips and resources for incorporating supplemental texts in a diverse range of reading levels and topics into classroom work, including a Web site resource that teachers can use to analyze text difficulty.
<p>“Allocate 65 percent of your instructional time to ‘front-loading’ your instruction, spending that time on stimulating students’ interest, acquainting them with essential vocabulary, building background knowledge, and explicitly teaching strategies for actively engaging with text” (Kinsella, 2004).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course provides guidelines and interactive practice on strategies for teaching challenging text by pre-teaching before reading to tap into and build background knowledge and academic vocabulary.

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Session 3: Building Background Knowledge for Comprehension	
<p>“There is a good deal of evidence that learning is enhanced when teachers pay attention to the knowledge and beliefs that learners bring to a learning task, use this knowledge as a starting point for new instruction, and monitor student’ changing conceptions as instruction proceeds” (National Research Council, 2000).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RedTVs, resources and session content provide practical ways for teachers to assess students’ background knowledge, use anchor videos to help students build schema and mental models, and check students’ understanding of text as they read.
<p>“If students are expected to learn abstract concepts in isolation without calling upon information they already know, they will not be likely to learn the new concepts. However, if teachers tie new knowledge to be learned to information students already know, learning new concepts becomes much easier” (Deshler, 2001).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course presents strategies that teachers can use to help students connect new knowledge to existing knowledge, such as focused class discussions and graphic organizers.
<p>“Readers need a critical mass of background information and effective reading strategies for every content area. The math, science, or social studies instructor is in the best position to analyze the linguistic, conceptual, and rhetorical demands of assigned literacy tasks and to provide this vital schema-building” (Kinsella, 1994).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course guides teachers in using strategies that help students make good use of background knowledge before they read, including Anticipation Guides and Idea Waves. • RedTVs and resources show how content-area teachers can customize these strategies for reading texts in their classrooms.
<p>“Research has shown that effective readers and listeners construct mental models that contain information about the situations and scenes that a story describes” (Hasselbring & Goin, 2004).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course uses RedTVs and provides resources to show how teachers can help students use visual anchors effectively to help them construct mental models when they read.
<p>“The more students understand the format of textbooks and informational books, the better equipped they are to construct meaning and new understandings” (Robb, 2003).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course highlights the benefits of pre-reading texts and presents the steps for pre-reading texts to familiarize students with the topic, organization, key vocabulary and main points.
<p>“Reading comprehension depends on the reader filling in blanks and silently supplying enough of the unstated premises to make coherent sense of what is being read” (Hirsch, 2003).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RedTVs show teachers how to model during-reading strategies that help students think aloud as they read, preview and predict what the text will present, and look for evidence in the text to confirm their thinking.

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Session 4: Teaching Word Attack Skills in the Content Areas	
<p>“An emphasis on multisyllabic word reading is critical because of the number of novel words introduced in intermediate and secondary textbooks and the potential for failing to learn from material if the words cannot be read” (Archer et al., 2003).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course highlights ways that teachers can help students understand multisyllabic words, including previewing the text for key content vocabulary and breaking down words into meaningful words parts of prefixes, root words and suffixes.
<p>“Instant recognition and accurate pronunciation of affixes is key to decoding long words” (Archer et al., 2003).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RedTVs and resources aid students and teachers with steps for reading unknown words and lists of common Latin and Greek roots, common prefixes and suffixes.
<p>“By developing expertise in identifying words, students can improve their success in content-area classes and be better prepared for postsecondary education and the workplace” (Bremer, Clapper, & Deshler, 2002).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course presents word-attack strategies and lesson plans that are useful for identifying and understanding multisyllabic words.
<p>“Time spent in meaningful, contextually relevant word study facilitates students’ understanding of the subject discipline” (Hennings, 2000).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course includes a variety of strategies and resources teachers can use to instill word consciousness and curiosity in students, such as Word Webs, Word Hunts, Word Builds, Word Towers and Word Sorts.
<p>“By analyzing and sorting words, searching for related words, and discovering ways words work, upper level students learn clusters of words that share a common element or origin” (Hennings, 2000).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RedTVs show how teachers in science, social studies, math and English language arts create engaging opportunities for students to practice recognizing, learning and using new words.

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COURSE RESEARCH BASE

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Session 5: Building Academic Vocabulary	
<p>“Numerous studies have documented the strong and reciprocal relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension” (Feldman & Kinsella, 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course documents the critical importance of academic vocabulary to content-area learning in middle and high school, summarizing how students acquire vocabulary and why some students need extra support.
<p>“Numerous studies have documented the positive impact of direct, explicit vocabulary instruction on both immediate word learning and longer-term reading comprehension (Baker et al., 1995; Beck et al., 2002; Biemiller, 2004; Marzano, 2004)” (Feldman & Kinsella, 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course describes the elements of effective vocabulary instruction. RedTVs demonstrate a direct instruction routine useful for pre-teaching academic vocabulary.
<p>“Because of the sketchy and rather arbitrary nature of key terms selected by publishers, it is incumbent upon teachers to have a viable framework for choosing words that require planned explicit teaching” (Feldman & Kinsella, 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course presents the research base, a RedTV demonstration and interactive practice to build teachers capacity in choosing specific academic vocabulary words to teach.
<p>Teaching students carefully selected words using a consistent sequence will help them build background knowledge essential for comprehension (Feldman & Kinsella, 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course highlights a five-step routine, modeled in a science class on a RedTV, for teaching high-utility vocabulary words. Expert reflection on the modeled lesson and a lesson plan provide additional insight for teachers.
<p>“Vocabulary knowledge seems to grow gradually, moving from the first meaningful exposure to a word to a full and flexible knowledge” (Stahl, 2003).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course provides strategies for encouraging students to use new words repeatedly in classroom work, discussion and writing, which enable them to deepen their vocabulary knowledge. An English language arts teacher models these strategies on a RedTV.
<p>“Researchers such as Baker et al., (1995) and Marzano (2004) have documented the importance of incorporating regular informal vocabulary assessment into the instructional process, especially with academically diverse learners” (Feldman & Kinsella, 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An interactive RedTV and course text guide teachers in incorporating meaningful informal assessments of vocabulary learning into regular classroom instruction.

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Session 6: Improving Fluency to Understand Diverse Texts

<p>“Attention to fluency for those students who are not fluent readers offers promise of significant improvements in reading comprehension and overall academic performance across the content areas” (Rasinski et al., 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course summarizes the detrimental impact of poor reading fluency on adolescent readers and presents engaging strategies for incorporating fluency instruction into content-area classrooms.
<p>“Adding fluency instruction to the middle school is not only important for struggling readers, it is also helpful for all students as they encounter varied text structures” (Rasinski et al., 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A RedTV “fluency challenge” underscores the demands of complex, content-area texts and provides a simple fluency assessment that teachers can use to assess fluency.
<p>“Because comprehension requires higher order processes that cannot become automatic, word identification must become the automatic process” (Hudson et al., 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course text and a RedTV explain the complex mental processes involved in reading fluently. The course also presents simple strategies for providing students with the practice and repetition they need to build fluency.
<p>“By reading orally to students, we model for students what fluent, meaningful reading is like” (Rasinski, 2003).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A RedTV shows a teacher modeling effective fluency instruction by reading aloud with students using an oral cloze routine. Expert reflection on this modeled instruction extends teachers’ learning.
<p>“Many struggling readers may not gain reading fluency incidentally or automatically. In contrast to skilled readers, they often need direct instruction in how to read fluently and sufficient opportunities for intense, fluency-focused practice (Allinder et al., 2001)” (Hudson et al., 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course presents strategies for engaging all students in fluency activities, such as echo and choral reading, partner reading, repeated reading and readers’ theater. In a RedTV, a literacy coach provides direct fluency instruction before students demonstrate readers’ theater, a fluency-building activity.
<p>“As struggling readers continue to read very slowly, they are exposed to less text . . . As a result, these students read less over time and fail to gain fluency while their peers read more and more over time and become increasingly fluent” (Archer et al., 2003).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text and a RedTV focus on matching students to appropriate leveled texts that they can and want to read to build fluency. Resources offer additional support to help teachers choose books by reading level, topic or other criteria.

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COURSE RESEARCH BASE

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Session 7: Collaborating With Your Literacy Team to Raise Reading Achievement	
<p>“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).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text and RedTVs spell out the roles of principals, literacy coaches and teachers in a school-wide literacy initiative.
<p>“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).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course text and RedTVs explain how literacy-focused schools should use assessment data to drive instruction, professional development and school-wide plans.
<p>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).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>“A successful literacy program takes the combined effort of skilled content-area teachers and reading specialists/coaches” (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>“Some students require or would benefit from intense, individualized instruction” (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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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