

Title

Teaching Phonics and Spelling for Beginning and Transitional Readers (Grades 1-3)

Target Audience

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

Prerequisites

We recommend that learners become familiar with the related content in the PBS TeacherLine course “RDLA 150: An Introduction to Underlying Principles and Research for Effective Literacy Instruction (Grades K–8).”

Course Description

This course is designed to give educators research-based instructional activities and pedagogical approaches to teach phonics and spelling to beginning and transitional readers. These activities help students learn letters, letter-sound correspondences, letter-sound patterns, and high-frequency words, which in turn help them develop oral reading fluency. The topics and methods include principles which provide the foundation for *No Child Left Behind* policies. Learners will study traditional vs. contemporary perspectives on spelling instruction. They will practice assessing a student’s spelling stage and then setting appropriate goals for that student. As a final task, learners will create a case study of a second-grade speller.

Instructor/Facilitator

See instructor/facilitator sheet

Credits

To be determined by college or university

Goals

At the end of this course, learners will have an understanding of:

- Research-based elements of phonics and spelling that should be explicitly taught to beginning and transitional readers.
- Strategies for using developmentally appropriate reading and spelling activities.
- Pedagogical approaches that improve student achievement.
- Assessment and data of student development that guide instructional decisions.

Learner Outcomes (performance based)

Learners completing this course will be able to:

- Explain changes in their instructional practices for teaching phonics and spelling.
- Compare and contrast traditional and contemporary perspectives on spelling instruction.
- Describe instructional practices in an integrated language arts program that support phonics and

- spelling development at early stages of spelling development.
- Analyze three spelling samples and describe an activity to develop the spelling skills of each student represented by the samples.
- Describe three instructional activities for students in later spelling stages (within-word and syllable juncture).
- Apply the Within-Word Feature Analysis and Instruction diagnostic spelling tool to identify a student's spelling stage and set instructional goals for that student.
- Describe specific methods that support the reading, writing, and spelling development of students who are English-language learners and students with diverse learning styles.
- Create a case study of a second-grade speller (final project).

Outline of Content and Assignments

Each of the six course sessions includes readings, videos, interactive activities, journal reflections, and discussion questions. Learners should work through the sessions in order. The end of each session contains a self-assessment. Each session provides opportunities to plan and prepare for work on your final project, which you will complete in Session 6 and submit to your facilitator. In lieu of the final project, learners may choose to complete three alternative projects, found at the end of Sessions 2, 4, and 6.

This course is aligned with the ISTE standards, NCTE/IRA Standards for the English Language Arts, and NCTE standards. Key concepts are presented through readings, videos, interactives, journal reflections, and discussion forums with the purpose of improving content knowledge, teaching pedagogy, and enhancing student achievement. Assignments will draw upon your knowledge of classroom practice and may include interaction with students.

The sessions are as follows:

- Session 1: Reading, Writing, and Spelling
- Session 2: Stages of Spelling Development—Early Spelling Stages
- Session 3: Stages of Spelling development—Later Spelling Stages
- Session 4: Assessing Phonics and Spelling
- Session 5: Effective Phonics and Spelling Instruction for Diverse Learners
- Session 6: Final Project: A Case Study of A Second-Grade Speller

Session 1: Reading, Writing, and Spelling

Objectives:

- Define your professional goals and expectations for this course in your online journal.
- Explain your prior knowledge about the most effective methods for teaching phonics and spelling in grades 1–3 in your online journal.
- Reflect on statements about teaching phonics in your online journal.
- Compare/contrast traditional and contemporary perspectives on spelling through online discussion.
- In your online journal, use course readings and the video to explain changes in your instructional practice for teaching spelling.

Read

- “How Readers and Writers Use Phonics”
- “Questions Teachers Ask about Spelling”
- “A Weekly Procedure for Teaching Spelling”
- Understanding and Recognizing: Writing Disabilities
- Spelling and Students with Learning Disabilities
- Five Guidelines for Learning to Spell and Six Ways to Practice Spelling

- “What Is Our Responsibility in Helping Children Learn to Spell?”
- “A Speller’s Bill of Rights”

Complete activities and assignments

- View the video, “Shared Writing,” which illustrates how the teacher guides and prompts first-graders to use what they know about letters and sounds to spell words as they create a Language Experience Story.
- Complete Session 1 Self-Assessment.

Write in online journal

- After viewing the “Shared Writing” video, respond to the following statements:
 - “Teaching phonics is not synonymous with teaching reading.”
 - “Phonics does not stand alone. Readers use what they learn about phonics during writing, and writers are helped to spell by what they have learned about phonics through reading.”
- Reflect on your current spelling instruction and/or your knowledge of spelling instruction. Use the following question as a guide:
 - After reading the Wilde articles and watching the video, what changes would you make to your own teaching practices?

Participate in online discussion

- What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of developmental models of spelling instruction versus traditional methods that use spelling books and weekly tests?

Session 2: Stages of Spelling Development—Early Spelling Stages

Objectives

- Explain and discuss the effectiveness of using the Bear and Templeton model for word study with older students.
- Evaluate whether it is important to focus on students’ spelling or the content of their writing in your online journal.
- Reflect on your experiences of using classroom discussions about print with your students. Or,
- Reflect on your questions and concerns about using classroom discussions about print with your students.
- Analyze three spelling samples and describe an activity to develop the spelling skills of each student represented by the spelling samples.
- Develop a position paper on spelling instruction for your school. (Alternative Project 1)

Read

- “Explorations in Developmental Spelling: Foundations for Learning and Teaching Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary”
- “Words Their Way” (Charts)
- “Where’s the Phonics? Making the Case (Again) for Integrated Code Instruction”
- “Kindergarteners Talk about Print: Phonemic Awareness in Meaningful Contexts”
- “Interactive Writing in a Primary Classroom”

Complete activities and assignments

- Explore the Analyze Student Writing interactive to analyze the developmental features of a student’s writing and to select appropriate instructional activities.
- Complete the Examination of Student Spelling Samples assignment to identify the spelling stage that each represents.
- Complete Session 2 Self-Assessment.

- If you choose to do the alternative projects rather than the final project, complete Alternative Project 1: Spelling Position Paper.

Write in online journal

- Answer the following question:
 - In grades 1-3, is it more important to focus on word accuracy or content? Use examples from your own professional experiences and reading to support your response.
- Respond to the following:
 - If you have used classroom discussions about print, similar to those presented in the Richgels and the Button articles, with your primary-grade students during shared reading, shared writing, or interactive writing, write about your experiences and your observations related to these types of activities which promote students' literacy development.
 - If you have not had an opportunity to use these activities in a classroom, write questions and concerns about implementation such as scaffolding instruction, selection of appropriate materials, and assessing student learning.

Participate in online discussion

- Respond to the following questions about Bear and Templeton's proposal for a model for word study:
 - Do you think the model will work equally well for older students who are increasing their vocabulary?
 - How might the model be modified to meet the ability levels and curricular goals of the upper elementary grades?

Session 3: Stages of Spelling Development—Later Spelling Stages (Within Word and Syllable Juncture)

Objectives:

- Discuss and justify your position on Wilde's philosophy for teaching spelling.
- Analyze and compare Wilde's and Taberski's perspectives on spelling instruction and determine which approach would meet your students' needs.
- Describe three instructional activities for a student in the Within-Word Pattern Stage.
- Conduct a peer review of two other learners' spelling instruction activities in an online discussion.

Read

- "Building a Knowledge Base in Spelling"
- "Word Study Groups: Analyzing Words for Their Phonetic, Structural, and Morphemic Features"
- "Integrated Word Study: Spelling, Grammar, and Meaning in the Language Arts Classroom"

Complete activities and assignments

- View the video, "Phonological Patterns: Finding Patterns in Books," in which second-grade students look in books for examples of a phonological pattern they have just studied.
- Complete the interactive, Within Word Pattern Stage, to view how word sorting allows students to apply their word knowledge and to develop a deep understanding of phonological patterns.
- Complete the Spelling Instruction Activity.
- Complete Session 3 Self-Assessment.

Write in online journal

- Consider the amount of time devoted to spelling instruction and its role in the literacy

curriculum by reflecting on the following question:

- Whose approach—Wilde’s or Taberski’s—will best address the needs of your students or prospective students?
- Write about the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches.
- Describe three instructional activities you would use in your present/future classroom for students in the Within-Word Pattern stage. You may wish to use the following questions to guide your reflection:
 - What spelling knowledge and strategies will students learn in each activity?
 - How will you modify the activities to meet the needs of students who are diverse learners?
 - How will each activity meet your literacy goals for reading and writing?

Participate in online discussion

- Do you agree or disagree with Wilde that teaching spelling is not about teaching skills, but instead is aimed at building a knowledge base in spelling? State the rationale for your position and discuss its implications for your literacy curriculum.
- Conduct a peer review of at least two other learners’ spelling instruction activity.

Session 4: Assessing Phonics and Spelling

Objectives:

- Discuss the impact of responsive teaching on student achievement using course readings.
- Apply the Within-Word Feature Analysis and Instruction diagnostic spelling tool provided in this session to identify a student’s spelling stage and set instructional goals for that student.
- Design a reading and writing activity for a first-, second- or third-grade class that provides assessment data about students’ skills in using a common phonetic feature (Alternative Project 2).

Read

- “Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation of Students’ Spelling”
- “Word Journeys: Assessment-Guided Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary Instruction”
- “Technology and the Building Blocks for Teaching Students to Read: Phonics”
- “The Issues: The Internet and the Early Childhood Classroom”

Complete activities and assignments

- Explore the Spelling Features/Instruction interactive, in which Ganske’s Within-Word Feature Inventory is used to analyze the within-word phonetic features a student understands.
- Complete the Feature Inventory Analysis assignment.
- Explore interactive games from PBS.
- Complete Session 4 Self-Assessment.
- If you choose to do the alternative projects rather than the final project, complete Alternative Project 2: Common Phonetic Feature Classroom Assessment.

Participate in online discussion

- Discuss the issue of responsive teaching by answering the following questions:
 - How do you address the issue of finding time to assess students and plan for individual needs?
 - Is it worth the additional time?

Session 5: Effective Phonics and Spelling Instruction for Diverse Students

Objectives:

- Discuss the methods that enable teachers to best use “teachable moments” to teach spelling and phonics.
- Describe specific methods that may support the reading, writing, and spelling development of students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with diverse learning styles in your classroom in your online journal.
- Describe some of the challenges you may experience in providing a safe learning environment for English Language Learners.
- Conduct a peer review of two other learners’ lesson plans for an English Language Learner in an online discussion.

Read

- “Balanced Literacy Instruction: Addressing Issues of Equity”
- “Analyzing Words and Making Discoveries About the Alphabetic System: Activities for Beginning Readers”
- “Focus on Research: Using What We Know about Language and Literacy Development for ESL Students in the Mainstream Classroom”
- “A Chinese Boy’s Joyful Initiation into American Literacy” (not required)

Complete activities and assignments

- View the video, “Guided Reading: Applying Phonics and Spelling Knowledge,” in which a first-grade teacher takes advantage of a teachable moment during guided reading.
- Create a lesson plan for an English Language Learner.
- Complete Session 5 Self-Assessment.

Write in online journal

- Describe specific methods that you might use in your present or future classroom to support students with diverse backgrounds and learning styles who lag behind in developing and applying their phonological and orthographic knowledge. Incorporate methods for students whose developing foundational knowledge supports both reading and spelling.

Participate in online discussion

- Engage in a discussion about the role of direct instruction as opposed to “teachable moments” by responding to the following:
 - What methods enable teachers to best use “teachable moments?”
 - Share some specific examples of “teachable moments” when delivering spelling and phonics instruction that you have used or have observed.
- Expand the previous discussion about direct instruction by including methods for supporting the learning of English-language learners and students with diverse learning styles.
- Conduct a peer review of at least two other learner’s lesson plans.

Session 6: Final Project: A Case Study of a Second-Grade Speller

Objectives:

- Assess a writing sample from a student case study using Cunningham’s assessment tool to describe the student’s instructional needs.
- Design appropriate instructional plans and activities to meet the needs of the student in the case study.
- Evaluate your state standards and provide an overall rating for how well state standards address topics related to word study and make suggestions for improving them (Alternative Project 3).
- Assess your learning in this course by comparing your prior knowledge and acquired knowledge in a journal activity.
- Analyze the learning experience in this course by reflecting on your professional goals and expectations.

Read

- “Journal Entries as a Window on Spelling Knowledge” (not required)
- “Emily: A Case Study” (not required)
- Primary Voices K-6: Teaching Writers to Spell” (not required)

Complete activities and assignments

- Final Project: A Case Study of a Second-Grade Speller

You will develop a case study for a second-grader based on the student profile provided, which includes a description prepared by the teacher that discusses the student’s background, attitudes, and progress in developing literacy; the student’s latest Ganske Feature Inventory scores; and three samples of the student’s writing. You will create a two-week lesson plan based on your analysis of this student.

The assessment criteria for the final project are provided in the final project assessment rubric.

- Alternative Project 3: Evaluation of State Standards
If you choose to do the alternative projects rather than the final project, complete Alternative Project 3: Evaluation of State Standards.

Write in online journal

- Reflect on the following questions:
 - What have you learned and what skills have you acquired from the course?
 - Identify the essential ideas and strategies you gained from this course and how you plan to incorporate them into your current or future classroom.
- Reflect on the following questions:
 - How does this learning experience compare with your goals and expectations?
 - Were there any professional goals you were unable to achieve? Why?
 - How do you plan to address these areas of professional development in the future?

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 at least once each week in discussion boards
- Ask for assistance when they need it

Materials (hardware, software, plug-ins)

Technical Requirements

- Word processor
- Internet service provider
- E-mail

Academic Dishonesty Policy

To be inserted by university institution only

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.

Last Update: April 30, 2007