



HIGH SCHOOL LITERACY: COMPREHENSION THROUGH ACTIVE, STRATEGIC READING

Course Description

High School Literacy: Comprehension Through Active, Strategic Reading is an interactive, online, and in-person professional development course designed for all high school teachers. The six online sessions focus on the latest research findings on active, strategic reading; techniques and strategies for implementing active, strategic reading across the curriculum; and six important elements of adolescent literacy—Motivation, Contexts, Communication, Collaboration, Connections, and Assessment.

Goals of this course include getting students to read and think critically about fiction, nonfiction, and informational text through marking a text; write purposefully about all types of texts through the use of a dialectical journal; interpret and analyze texts through small-group and whole-class discussion of open-ended prompts; and make text and real-life connections through participation in Socratic Seminars.

- Session 1, the Course Introduction, includes a Course Keynote by lead author Dr. Marilyn Whirry, who discusses the importance of adolescent literacy and the role of active, strategic reading in developing that literacy. Also provided is a description of how this course supports teachers of all content areas in helping their students to construct meaning from all kinds of text. A Self-Assessment follows the Keynote.
- Session 2 defines active, strategic reading, presents the research base behind it, explains the contexts for it, and highlights the techniques that foster a learning environment in which adolescent literacy can best develop.
- Session 3 focuses how to get students reading and thinking critically about fiction, nonfiction, and informational texts by using markings to comment upon and question text. Included is how to assess students' markings.
- Session 4 focuses on writing purposefully about all types of texts through the use of a dialectical journal. The session presents techniques for using journal writing to help students interact with text by identifying, questioning, and analyzing key ideas, and identifying unfamiliar vocabulary. It also describes how to assess students' use of dialectical journals.
- Session 5 explains how using open-ended prompts to talk collaboratively about texts can help students deepen their comprehension. Included are techniques for raising questions about the text, a discussion of the roles of primary and secondary sources, as well as supplementary texts in classroom discussions. The session provides guidance in assessing group discussions.
- Session 6 focuses on how to motivate students to deepen meaning by exposing them to multiple points of view, to sharpen their critical thinking skills through a free exchange of ideas, and to make connections within a text, between texts, and to the larger world. The format of the Socratic Seminar, which is used to draw out and practice these skills, is successfully modeled in this session. This session also explains how to assess the Socratic Seminar.

Course Objectives

On completing the course, participants will be able to:

- **establish** classroom objectives for improving adolescent literacy in the content areas of English/language arts, social studies, science, and math by utilizing active, strategic reading techniques that are supported by current academic research.

- **teach** students to read and think critically about fiction, nonfiction, and informational texts through marking texts as a method of questioning and constructing meaning.
- **teach** students to write purposefully about all types of texts by making effective use of a dialectical journal.
- **guide** students to deepen their comprehension of text by using small-group and whole-class discussion to interpret, analyze, and synthesize ideas found in texts.
- **lead** students to construct deeper meanings and to make connections within a text, between texts, and to the larger world through their participation in Socratic Seminars.
- **apply** active, strategic reading strategies to different types of texts and text structures encountered in the content areas, as well as in information conveyed by electronic and digital media.

Course Outline

1. Course Introduction and Keynote

1.1 Getting Meaning From Texts Across the Content Areas

Self-Assessment

2. How Active, Strategic Reading Improves Adolescent Literacy

- 2.1 Engagement Between Reader and Text
- 2.2 Explicitly Guiding Active Readers
- 2.3 Enhancing Reading Comprehension Through Discussion
- 2.4 Using Collaborative Learning to Deepen Comprehension
- 2.5 The Reading-Writing Connection
- 2.6 Assessing Student Progress

3. Reading and Thinking Critically About Texts

- 3.1 Marking a Text: Targeted Comments and Questions
- 3.2 Methods for Marking a Text
- 3.3 Marking Fiction to Understand Story Meaning and Conventions
- 3.4 Marking Nonfiction to Gain Information and Insight
- 3.5 Using Marking as a Basis for Discussion
- 3.6 Assessing Students' Marking of Texts

4. Writing Purposefully About All Types of Texts

- 4.1 The Role of the Journal in Reading Comprehension
- 4.2 Using Strategic Responses to Construct Meaning From Text
- 4.3 Connecting to Text Through Response, Analysis, and Criticism
- 4.4 Extending the Discourse to Deepen Comprehension
- 4.5 Sharpening Listening and Speaking Skills Through Discussions
- 4.6 Assessing Dialectical Journals and Discussions

5. Talking Collaboratively to Further Understanding

- 5.1 The Role of Collaborative Discussion in Active Reading
- 5.2 Using Primary Sources for Collaborative Discussions
- 5.3 Using Secondary Sources for Collaborative Discussions
- 5.4 Creating Prompts for Focused Discussions
- 5.5 Managing Collaborative Discussions
- 5.6 Assessing Collaborative Discussions

6. Connecting Literacy to the Curriculum and to Students' Lives

- 6.1 Using the Socratic Seminar to Maximize Text Comprehension
- 6.2 Enabling Students to Listen and Respond

- 6.3 A Formula for Seminar Success
- 6.4 Teacher's Role as Facilitator
- 6.5 Assessing the Socratic Seminar
- 6.6 From Active Reading to Responsive Writing