

Reading Success for English Language Learners

COURSE RESEARCH BASE

COURSE IMPLEMENTATION

Session 1	
<p>We need to make one thing very clear. This should not be business as usual. Teaching English language learners to read and write is not just a slower version of what works for first language learners. There are important differences (August, 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video brings experts in the literacy development of English language learners to the teachers throughout every course session relating research to effective instruction and providing guidance on how to modify existing practices to enhance English reading skills for ELLs.
<p>Federal law requires that all English learners be provided with an educational program that provides them with access to the core curriculum and opportunities for English language development (Peregoy, S.F., & Boyle, O.F. 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The online course includes the course text, additional downloadable resources, and multimedia components created to fit a variety of instructional models for English language learners.
<p>As the population of language-minority students grows and higher levels of literacy are expected for all students, more must be done to help English learners achieve educational parity with native English speakers (Grant, R.A. & Wong, S. D. 2003).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for adapting instruction and assessing ELL reading readiness are outlined, as well as specific ways to modify classroom practices to accelerate ELL reading progress.
<p>The literacy needs of English language learners are best met in the most inclusive types of classrooms— inclusive in terms of students, languages, and literacies (Jiménez, R.T. & Barrera, R. 2000).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RedTV videos show ways to foster sensitive classroom environments and course text aids in preparing volunteers and classroom aides to respond to the needs of ELLs .
<p>It is clear that teachers should take advantage of the first-language background that bilingual children bring to the classroom to help them learn to read and write in English (Morrow, 2001; Pérez and Torres-Guzmán, 2002; Tokuhama-Espinosa, 2001).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RedTV outlines techniques for incorporating English language learners' native languages into the classroom through engaging classroom libraries, decorations and routines.

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Phonemic Awareness and Phonics	
<p>Explicit, systematic teaching of phonemic awareness and phonics significantly improves students' reading, according to the National Reading Panel (NRP) Report (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of systematic phonics instruction are reviewed and activities for reinforcing instruction, such as blending activities, are highlighted.
<p>A sound that is not present in one's native language will likely be difficult to hear and, in turn, produce (Goldstein, 2000; Kress, 1993).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experts in the field identify specific challenges that teachers must recognize when working with students for whom English is not the native language.
<p>"Children should be encouraged to play with words every day to get a keen sense of the sounds that words are made of." (New Standards, 2002)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice modeling of in-class phonics instruction is visible through RedTV. A practitioner models and reflects on effective exercises to develop students' ability to read and recognize words, including learning sounds, letters and letter-sound correspondences. • Various vocabulary activities and "games" are described in RedTV later in the course
<p>The primary purposes of classroom-based assessment activities include monitoring student learning, redirecting instruction, and providing feedback to the learning (Valdez-Pierce, 2003).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal assessments for identifying words and word patterns outlined in RedTV include written directions for easily modifying recommended activities to more- or less-advanced levels. • Mini lesson plans for classroom assessment activities can be downloaded as resources and correspond to important elements of phonemic awareness and phonics covered by discussed in the course.
<p>Classroom volunteers can be a tremendous help to teachers. Research tells us that when these volunteers are trained to support students' literacy learning, their effectiveness increases (Darrell Morris, 1994).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonemic manipulation activities that teachers or classroom volunteers can conduct with students are modeled in RedTV and further described in course text.

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Fluency and English language learners	
Some readers may recognize words automatically in isolation, but may not read the same words fluently in connected text. Automatic word recognition is a necessary, but not sufficient, reading skill (Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2001).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The basics of effective fluency instruction and why they are essential for all students to master are reviewed, and opportunities to test existing knowledge of fluency instruction are provided via RedTV simulations
Students new to the English language may be able to assimilate the phonological aspects of the code, but without fluent English language knowledge it may be difficult to acquire reading fluency (Haager & Windmueller, 2001).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experts emphasize the significant role fluency plays in developing reading comprehension, particularly for ELLs, and its intrinsic relationship to related issues for English language learners.
Rereading texts and reading several different or bilingual versions of a story gives English language learners opportunities to master vocabulary and text features (Schirmer, Casbon & Twiss, 1996).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Downloadable extra resources offer advice on choosing books for classroom libraries and instruction, as well as checklists for monitoring students' progress as they develop accuracy and expression in their reading.
Comprehensive assessment of fluency must include measures of oral reading accuracy, rate of oral reading and quality of oral reading. These dimensions should be assessed within the context of reading comprehension (Pikulski & Chard, 2005).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources associated with Oral Reading Records are provided in a hands-on practice session (Your Turn). Lesson plans outlining strategies that promote fluency, such as pre-teaching words and using punctuation cues, are also provided in Your Turn.
The National Reading Panel referred to fluency as the "neglected" aspect of reading—but it is receiving increasing attention from researchers and practitioners as one of the five critical components of reading (Pikulski & Chard, 2005).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluency-building activities for the classroom that are outlined in RedTV can be incorporated into daily instruction, especially with ideas on how to maximize the help provided by classroom volunteers.

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Vocabulary and English language learners	
<p>Readers cannot understand texts without knowing what most of the words mean. Reading more advanced texts, children must learn the meaning of new words that are not part of their vocabulary (Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2001).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies for finding meaning in new words are modeled, described and supported, both in RedTV video and via downloadable resources.
<p>A student's level of vocabulary knowledge has been shown to be an important predictor of reading ability (fluency) and reading comprehension for English language learners (Grabe, 1991; McLaughlin, 1987).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course text identifies the difficulties that ELLs face when tackling new words and their meanings while explicit strategies for teaching word meaning are modeled in RedTV. Downloadable word lists are available for both teachers and students, as are ready-to-use activities and prompts for developing students' word knowledge.
<p>Thematic instruction makes sense for all students for many reasons, but English language learners certainly benefit from dwelling on a topic long enough to build and extend conceptual and linguistic knowledge (Romo, 1999; Schirmer, Casbon & Twiss, 1996).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible lesson plans and informal classroom assessments provided in Your Turn allow for targeted instruction and work with a variety of texts throughout the year even after completion of the course.
<p>A key principle of early literacy assessments is to identify students early on who are at risk for not becoming successful readers in a timely manner (Johnston & Rogers, 2001; Snow et al., 1998).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The variety of ways you can assess students' word knowledge in the classroom is covered by course text. In-class assessments that build word knowledge through using specific parts of speech are available in Your Turn, as are strategies for determining word meaning
<p>Using terms with which students are already acquainted to give meaning to new words enables students to associate the new vocabulary with their daily experiences, generalizing it across contexts (Beck et al, 2002).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various vocabulary activities and "games" are described in RedTV that can be conducted by classroom volunteers.

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Reading Comprehension and English language learners	
<p>Comprehension occurs in the transaction between the reader and the text (Kucer, 2001; Rosenblatt, 1978). The reader brings many things to reading, the text has certain features, and yet meaning emerges only from the engagement of that reader with that text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies such as activating prior knowledge by using context are modeled in RedTV videos and described in more detail in resources and lesson plans in Your Turn.
<p>Students need to do more than read words; they need to understand the words they are reading (New Standards, 2002).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Techniques for aiding comprehension while reading aloud to students, such as using gestures and paraphrasing, are modeled in RedTV best practice videos. Resources to help students understand story elements and obtain meaning from rich text are available in Your Turn.
<p>Focusing on reading comprehension as a gateway to oral language development rather than on proficient language as a prerequisite to reading helps increase the understanding of the text and, simultaneously, oral proficiency (Anderson & Roit, 1996).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher-student interaction with text is visible in RedTV best practice video, with accompanying teacher reflection to review and reinforce the important elements of in-class instruction.
<p>The value of an in-depth classroom assessment comes from teachers having a deep understanding of reading processes and instruction, thinking diagnostically, and using the information on an ongoing basis to inform instruction (Black & William, 1998; Place, 2002; Shepard, 2000).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom assessments that teachers can use regularly with students across a variety of texts are provided.
<p>Studies show that all children, given the opportunity and support, can participate in conversations about texts to construct meaning, make connections between the text and their own experiences, and evaluate the text and their understanding of it (Au, Carroll, & Scheu, 1997; Eeds & Wells, 1989; Goatley, Brock, & Raphael, 1995; Paley, 1997).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rubrics to assess students' retelling of stories are provided in Your Turn, along with a lesson plan for helping students comprehend rich text.

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Writing and English language learners	
Reading instruction is most effective when combined with writing instruction (NRP report, 2000).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing instruction to enhance and extend the text that students read in the classroom is modeled in RedTV video.
Reading and writing development are essentially similar for English learners and native English speakers. Two important differences, though, are a student's English language proficiency and ability to read and write in the primary language (Hudelson, 1987).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities for building word meaning are outlined in RedTV and direct vocabulary instruction is targeted for ELLs by associating first language words with pictures and English words and meanings.
Research shows that English learners can benefit from English literacy instruction well before they have developed full control of the language orally. In other words, oral and written English can develop more or less simultaneously (Hudelson, 1984, 1986; Goodman, Goodman, & Flores, 1979; Urzua, 1987).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lesson plan in Your Turn outlines how to use the literature read in class as well as what students are reading independently to provide models of effective writing for students to use in their own writing.
A developmental spelling assessment (e.g., Bear et al., 2000) that includes words that are likely to cause confusion or a dictation assessment (e.g., Clay, 2002) provides valuable informal data for teachers to use in planning phonics lessons that build on students' understandings of letter-sound correspondences (Helman, 2004).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional classroom assessments in Your Turn focus on enhancing student writing by developing techniques such as editing, revising and incorporating details.
Interactive writing (McCarrier et al., 2000), in which children share the pen with their teacher, allows children to share in the writing of a text that grows from their own experiences (Drucker, 2003).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubrics for writing and revising, as well as techniques for enhancing writing instruction for ELLs, are downloadable resources in Your Turn. • Resources to get students to think about their own writing and to assess their own preferences and reactions to others' writing when reading are available in Your Turn.

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Content-Area Learning and English language learners	
<p>All students, including English language learners, can benefit from assistance in dealing with expository texts and complex literature, both in reading and writing (Singer & Donlan, 1989).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines for examining students' expository writing are provided in Your Turn. Strategies for making rich texts more accessible to students, such as pre-teaching words and identifying text features, are modeled in RedTV best practice videos and interactive animated segments.
<p>As the teacher, you can facilitate student success with reading by stating explicitly what you expect students to gain from a text and what you want them to do with what they have read (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson plans and classrooms assessments outline strategies for determining word meaning and contain specific instructions for setting student's expectations and employing effective follow-up techniques to reinforce instruction.
<p>Using trade books in science, social studies, and mathematics has a positive impact on children's learning—specifically, on their content area learning, literacy learning, motivation, or some combination of these (e.g., Bristor, 1994; Guthrie, Van Meter, McCann, Wigfield, Bennett, Poundstone, et al., 1996; Guzzetti, Kowalinski, & McGowan, 1992; Levstik, 1986; Morrow, Pressley, Smith, & Smith, 1997; Smith, Monson, and Dobson, 1992).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Features particular to content-area texts are displayed and described in RedTV. Graphic organizers available in Your Turn help students understand elements of text across content areas and help them activate prior knowledge with relation to a variety of content areas.
<p>All students, and especially non-native English speakers, should be assessed in a great variety of ways: through work in groups and with partners; through participation in projects; through drawings, experiments, and oral talk; and through reading and writing (Huerta-Macias, 1995).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A variety of classroom assessments focus on techniques that will provide students with tools to take on all kinds of text, including summarizing academic texts, using text features/characteristics to aid comprehension, and using graphic organizers to compare and contrast content-area information. Resources to get students to think about their own writing and to assess their own preferences and reactions to others' writing when reading are available in Your Turn in a previous course session on writing.
<p>English language learners have to gain more language proficiency each year than their native-speaking peers in order to catch up (Drucker, 2003).</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 English language learners.

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