

## ***T&L 900—Improving Reading Comprehension Skills in Content Area Classes***

### **Course Syllabus**

#### **Introduction**

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The reading comprehension skills you will learn in this course are tools that good readers use, consciously or subconsciously, to help them make meaning from what they read. These strategies will not address decoding skills or the most basic of reading skills. However, you can use them to enhance what is already occurring in your classroom. We have found that learning these strategies empowers readers at all levels of competency to become more proficient at making meaning, to comprehend text more fluently, and to become more engaged in their reading. These skills will help them to learn your content area. You will learn to teach these strategies explicitly, using the gradual release of responsibility model.

#### **Learning Objectives**

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After completing this course, you should be able to accomplish the following objectives:

- Identify the proficient reader strategies.
- Examine the value of explicitly teaching comprehension strategies within your content area.
- Analyze the use of schema within your own reading practices.
- Design a series of lessons within your content area to teach one of the proficient reader strategies, using the gradual release of responsibility model.

#### **Required Textbook and Materials**

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Tovani, C. (2000). *I read it, but I don't get it: Comprehension strategies for adolescent readers*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse. ISBN-10: 157110089X or ISBN-13: 9781571100894.

You will need access to a video camera to produce a 10–15 minute video of yourself modeling the connection strategy.

#### **Suggested Supplemental Sources**

If you want to know more, read the following books:

Keene, E. O., & Zimmermann, S. (1997). *Mosaic of thought: Teaching comprehension in a reader's workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. ISBN-10: 0435072374 or ISBN-13: 9780435072377. (This book got us interested in teaching with these strategies. Some folks on our staff didn't care much for it, but we found it inspiring!)

Miller, D. S. (2002). *Reading with meaning: Teaching comprehension in the primary grades*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse. ISBN-10: 1571103074 or ISBN-13: 9781571103079. (Laurie stayed awake nights reading this one, even though it is about a primary classroom. Debbie Miller is definitely a master teacher!)

## Assignments

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You need to complete six lessons with assignments to complete the requirements for this course.

Lesson 1	<b>Getting to Know You</b> A short biography and background information on your personal reading history, style, and preferences, as well as your philosophy about teaching reading in your subject area.
Lesson 2	<b>Here's What You Need To Know</b> Introduction to the strategies and the gradual release of responsibility model. Read the Harvey chapter and respond.
Lesson 3	<b>Dryland Training</b> Read Tovani text and respond using the Access Tools provided.
Lesson 4	<b>Get Your Feet Wet!</b> Create a video of you modeling the connection strategy. View one of ours. You will also write a two-page paper.
Lesson 5	<b>Dive In!</b> Design a unit for your own class on a proficient reader strategy of your choice, using the gradual release of responsibility model.
Lesson 6	<b>Look How Far You've Come!</b> Summarize your understanding of the material, the feasibility of incorporating this into your curriculum, and how your feelings about "teaching reading" have or have not changed.

## Grading

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You will be evaluated using established and presented criteria for each assignment. To earn a Pass in the course, you must complete every assignment at a passing level. If needed, we will give you feedback and guidance and you can resubmit assignments until they are of passing quality.

## Scholastic Dishonesty

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Students enrolled in this course are expected to be aware of the seriousness of scholastic dishonesty. Unacceptable behavior such as submitting someone else's work as your own, cheating on exams, or plagiarizing can result in failure of the course or other sanctions. For a more detailed description of these policies, please refer to the UND Code of Student Life, Section 3-3 at <http://sos.und.edu/csl/>.