

Course Syllabus

Idaho State University - Albion Institute

Addressing Literacy Gaps in Adolescent Literacy (PD+)

EDUC 5598P - 0512

Description

As reading and writing demands increase across grade levels and content areas, gaps in foundational literacy skills can limit adolescents' ability to access complex texts, develop academic vocabulary, comprehend disciplinary content, and communicate effectively in writing. This course examines how K-12 educators and school leaders can identify and address literacy gaps through systematic, cumulative, and explicit instruction. Participants explore evidence-based approaches to adolescent literacy, including foundational reading and writing skills, vocabulary, comprehension, syntax, grammar, assessment, differentiation, scaffolding, and instructional supports for students with varied literacy needs.

Throughout the course, participants apply their learning through assessments, activities, discussions, and assignments focused on authentic educational contexts. Participants use screening and diagnostic information to identify areas of need, evaluate instructional practices and materials, and design targeted supports for their own classrooms, schools, or professional settings. Course assignments result in practical resources such as instructional plans, assessment tools, differentiated lessons, scaffolds, intervention strategies, accommodations, and other classroom-ready materials. Participants receive guidance and feedback as they refine these resources and develop an evidence-based approach to supporting adolescent readers and writers.

Enrollment, Delivery, and Completion Information

- **EDUC 5598P**  [Links to an external site.](#) : **Addressing Literacy Gaps in Adolescents: Teaching Foundational Literacy Skills in Every Lesson**
- **Credits:** 1 semester credit hour (letter grade A-F)
- **Enrollment Type:** Open enrollment with self-registration
- **Completion Timeframe:** 90 days from the date of enrollment
- **Delivery Format:** Fully online
- **Purpose:** K-12 professional development recertification requirements

Recertification and Professional Advancement Statement

Successful completion of this course results in a letter grade and semester credit hour from Idaho State University. As a graduate 5000-level course aligned to [Idaho State University's Graduate Catalog EDUC 5598P](#)  [Links to an external site.](#), the course includes engagement with a faculty member and a K-12 practitioner and is designed to support professional learning and implementation in educational settings. Learners enroll as non-matriculated students, and earned grades and semester credits are recorded on an ISU non-academic transcript endorsed by the university Registrar. Applicability of this course toward K-12 teacher license renewal, recertification, salary lane advancement, or other professional advancement is determined by the relevant state board of education, licensing authority, school district, human resources office, collective bargaining agreement, or other approving entity.

Student Expectations

To earn semester credit and a letter grade in this course, students must complete the course in full and engage at the level of rigor expected in a university course. The course includes academically engaged learning through readings, lectures, videos, discussions, applied activities, assignments, and assessments. Successful completion requires consistent participation and satisfactory performance on graded coursework.

Students must:

- Spend the time necessary to complete all assigned learning materials, activities, assignments, and assessments in support of the course learning outcomes
- Demonstrate thoughtful and substantive engagement by applying course knowledge through high-quality, timely work that produces practical strategies, tools, resources, or artifacts ready for use in educational settings
- Engage with instructor feedback, where applicable
- Successfully complete all graded requirements necessary to earn semester credit and a final letter grade

Required Materials and Technology

Students must have regular access to a reliable laptop or desktop computer capable of loading and running standard software.

The computer must support word processing, presentation tools, file downloads and uploads, data review, and multimedia tasks such as viewing videos, recording audio or video, and participating in web conferencing.

The learning management system supports mobile devices, but mobile access should be considered supplemental only. Mobile devices may limit a student's

ability to complete assignments successfully, particularly those involving file handling, multimedia creation, lesson plan development, or other course activities.

An up-to-date browser on any computer or device is required, along with a reliable internet connection.

[General Technology Hardware for Online/Hybrid Courses - ISU Help Desk](#)  [Links to an external site.](#)

No textbook purchase is required for this course.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analyze adolescent literacy development and identify instructional needs related to foundational reading, vocabulary, comprehension, language, and writing.
2. Apply systematic, cumulative, explicit, and evidence-based literacy practices to support students with varied strengths, needs, and levels of readiness.
3. Evaluate and adapt texts, instructional materials, assessments, scaffolds, and literacy supports to improve student access, engagement, and progress.
4. Design practical, context-specific literacy instruction, intervention strategies, assessment tools, and professional resources that address identified student needs and can be implemented in educational settings.

Course Deliverables & Takeaways

Learner Developed

- An audience-specific literacy action recommendation that proposes a practical step for improving adolescent literacy support through intervention, instruction, assessment, professional learning, or resource allocation.
- A revised literacy lesson that strengthens an existing lesson with explicit, systematic literacy practices to better support students' reading, writing, vocabulary, comprehension, or language needs.
- A vocabulary teaching strategy resource that organizes vocabulary approaches by timing, grade level, and instructional purpose to help teachers select strategies that strengthen word knowledge and reading comprehension.
- A rigor and differentiation analysis that evaluates classroom supports for access, rigor, and appropriateness and identifies how each support should be maintained, revised, faded, or replaced based on student evidence.
- A classroom support analysis that evaluates whether instructional strategies appropriately support access to challenging work, need revision, or unintentionally reduce academic expectations.

- A differentiated text-based lesson that identifies barriers to learning and adds targeted scaffolds, meaningful extensions, and formative checks so students can work toward the same rigorous learning goal with the support or challenge they need.
- A grammar and syntax lesson revision that improves an existing activity by connecting grammar instruction to authentic reading, writing, meaning, and purposeful language use.
- Student-facing grammar and syntax materials that give students opportunities to practice, manipulate, and apply sentence-level skills within meaningful reading or writing tasks.
- A set of student supports and extension materials that help learners access complex text or deepen their analysis based on readiness and need.
- A formative assessment and adjustment plan that helps the teacher decide when to continue, change, remove, or add instructional supports.
- A mentor text mini-lesson that uses an authentic writing example, teacher modeling, guided practice, and student application to teach a specific writing skill or craft move.
- Student-facing mentor text materials that include noticing questions, practice activities, and a formative check to help students analyze and apply the targeted writing move in their own writing.
- A student revision and editing toolkit that includes four classroom-ready resources for revision, focused editing, peer feedback, and writer reflection.
- Teacher implementation notes that explain how the toolkit will be introduced, differentiated, used during the writing process, and gradually faded as students become more independent.
- A completed student example that demonstrates how one of the toolkit resources can be used to revise or edit an actual piece of writing.
- A student-facing literacy support that addresses a specific learning barrier and helps students more successfully access, process, or communicate their learning during a literacy lesson.
- A transformed literacy lesson that adds purposeful multisensory or multimodal strategies and technology or assistive tools to address specific student barriers while maintaining the original literacy goal and rigor.
- A student literacy profile analysis that uses multiple sources of data to identify strengths, needs, missing information, and an appropriate instructional priority.
- A progress-monitoring plan that identifies what student skill will be tracked, how progress will be measured, and how the results will guide future instructional decisions.
- A literacy support plan that uses student data to identify a priority need and outline a focused instructional response, including the skill to target, instructional approach, setting, frequency, and duration.
- A progress-monitoring and decision-making plan that identifies how student growth will be measured and what evidence will guide decisions to continue, adjust, intensify, or seek additional support.

Course Provided

- An adolescent literacy research collection that helps educators understand literacy gaps, identify evidence-based approaches, and support older students who continue to struggle with reading.
- A structured literacy reference guide that explains systematic, cumulative, and explicit instruction and provides practical guidance for applying evidence-based literacy practices with adolescent learners.
- An adolescent literacy implementation guide that provides research-based recommendations for supporting reading development and intervention in middle and secondary settings.
- A vocabulary instruction strategy collection that provides research-based approaches for selecting words, building word knowledge, and supporting vocabulary development across grade levels and student populations.
- A revision, editing, and peer-feedback practice library that provides strategies and frameworks teachers can use to help students revise, edit, give feedback, and become more independent writers.
- A multisensory and multimodal literacy strategy bank that helps educators select approaches for combining text, discussion, visuals, audio, movement, and other modes to increase access to reading and writing.
- A literacy technology and assistive technology tool guide that introduces options for text access, differentiation, translation, annotation, multimodal learning, and student response so educators can select technology based on specific literacy needs.
- A student literacy profile case study that gives educators a realistic set of assessment and classroom data for practicing how to identify literacy strengths, needs, patterns, and appropriate instructional next steps.
- An assessment, progress-monitoring, and MTSS decision-making framework that helps educators interpret multiple sources of literacy data, monitor student response to instruction, and make decisions about continuing, adjusting, or intensifying support.

Units

Time Allocation	Unit Content
5.5 hrs	Unit 1: Understanding Literacy Gaps and the Need for Targeted Instruction
6.5 hrs	Unit 2: Structured, Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction for Adolescent Learners
6 hrs	Unit 3: The Building Blocks of Language: Vocabulary for Every Student
5.5 hrs	Unit 4: Balancing Text Complexity with Comprehension and Critical Thinking
4 hrs	Unit 5: The Role of Grammar and Syntax in Content Learning
6 hrs	Unit 6: Structured Writing: Steps for All Learners

6 hrs	Unit 7: Boosting Literacy with Multisensory and Digital Supports
5.5 hrs	Unit 8: Progress Monitoring in Literacy: Informing Instructional Changes

Assignments and Grading

As a credit-bearing course, grading emphasizes knowledge acquisition, meaningful engagement, and the development of practical tools and artifacts that can be implemented in real educational settings.

Formative Work (Reflections, Quizzes, and Interactive Activities) - 30%

Formative work includes written reflections, quizzes, and interactive activities designed to support your ongoing understanding of course concepts. These tasks provide opportunities to engage with key ideas, check for understanding, and begin applying learning in low-stakes ways. Activities may include short written responses, graphic organizers, instructional planning exercises, and interactive units. Collectively, these experiences are intended to help you connect course content to your professional context and prepare for more in-depth application in assignments.

Assignments (Instructional Artifacts and Applied Projects) - 70%

Assignments require the development of professional-quality, implementation-ready instructional artifacts that demonstrate your ability to apply course content in K-12 educational settings. These may include lesson plans, instructional materials, analysis tasks, and strategy-based resources designed for immediate use in practice. Assignments are intentionally more comprehensive and require deeper synthesis of

Projects are assessed for clarity, accuracy, depth of understanding, alignment with course concepts, professional quality, and readiness for implementation in an educational setting. Final submissions should demonstrate the level of rigor expected of university coursework and be suitable for review in professional or accreditation contexts

Projects are assessed on clarity, accuracy, connection to course concepts, and appropriateness for course level.

Grading Scale: [ISU grading policy](#)  [Links to an external site.](#)

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = below 60%

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to follow [institutional policies on academic honesty](#)  [Links to an external site.](#). Plagiarism, cheating, or misrepresentation of work undermines learning and will result in appropriate consequences as defined by university policy. If you are unsure whether something is acceptable, ask before submitting work.

Accessibility and Disability Services

The university is committed to providing an accessible learning environment. If you have a documented disability and need accommodations, contact the [Disability Services office](#)  [Links to an external site.](#) as early as possible to ensure that reasonable accommodations can be arranged. Students without documentation who believe they may have a disability or learning difference are encouraged to consult Disability Services about evaluation options and campus resources.

Classroom Climate and Respect

This course addresses topics related to disability, learning differences, and personal experiences. Students are expected to maintain a respectful, supportive environment, keep classmates' stories confidential, and listen with openness and empathy. Disagreement is normal, but it should be expressed respectfully.