



## **RDLA267 Course Syllabus**

### **Title**

RDLA 267: Teaching Phonics and Spelling for Beginning and Transitional Readers, Second Edition

### **Target Audience**

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

### **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 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 that provide foundational skills. Learners will study current, research-based 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 student in Grades K-3.

### **Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

### **Requirements**

Technical Requirements:

- Word processor
- Internet service provider
- E-mail

Learners are expected to:

- Complete all assignments
- Maintain an online journal
- Participate and actively engage in discussions with fellow learners while contributing to the social construction of knowledge
- Be self-directed and self-motivated
- Ask for assistance when they need it

### **Schedule**

This course is scheduled to take approximately 45 hours to complete. The number of hours identified reflects time spent online but does not reflect the total time spent completing offline coursework and assignments. All learners are different, and the time it will take you to complete all coursework will depend on your learning style and work habits.

### **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.

### **Course Authors/Editors**

- Susan Garni Masullo, Ph.D.  
Teachers College, Columbia University  
Senior Lecturer in Applied Educational Psychology, Director of Literacy Practica

## Reading Specialist M.A Program

- Bessie P. Dernikos, Ph.D Florida Atlantic University  
Assistant Professor of Reading & Language Arts

### 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.
- Understand and demonstrate their knowledge of 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 two instructional activities for students in the Letter Name-Alphabetic Spelling Stage.
- Describe two instructional activities for students in the Within Word Pattern Spelling Stage.
- Apply the Feature Analysis 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 who do not learn readily with traditional forms of instruction.
- Create a case study of a student in Grades K-3.

### Outline of Content and Assignments

The six course sessions include readings, interactive activities, journal reflections, a video, and discussion questions. Learners should work through the sessions in order. Each session provides opportunities to plan and prepare for work on the final project, which will be completed in Session 6 and submitted to the course facilitator.

This course is aligned with the NCTE/IRA Standards for the English Language Arts, and the Common Core State Standards. Key concepts are presented through readings, interactive activities, journal reflections, a video, and discussion forums with the purpose of improving content knowledge, teaching pedagogy, and enhancing student achievement. Assignments will draw upon the learner's knowledge of classroom practice and may include interaction with students. Assignment accommodations are provided for those course participants who currently do not work in K-3 classrooms.

### The sessions are as follows:

- Session 1: Reading, Writing, and Spelling
- Session 2: Stages of Spelling Development (Part I)
- Session 3: Stages of Spelling Development (Part II)
- 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 Student in Grades K-3

## 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 K-3 in your online journal.
- Compare/contrast traditional and contemporary perspectives on spelling through online discussion.
- In your online journal, use course readings to explain changes in your instructional practice for teaching spelling.

### Read:

- “Reading and Writing Accomplishments of Young Children”
- “How Readers and Writers Use Phonics”
- “Orthographic Mapping in the Acquisition of Sight Word Reading, Spelling Memory, and Vocabulary Learning”
- “Questions Teachers Ask about Spelling”
- “A Weekly Procedure for Teaching Spelling”
- “What Is Our Responsibility in Helping Children Learn to Spell?”
- “A Speller’s Bill of Rights”
- Effective Reading Instruction for Struggling Readers: The Role of Direct/Explicit Teaching

### Complete Activities and Assignments

- Read “Language Experience Approach,” a video transcript, which illustrates how the teacher guides and prompts first graders to use what they know about sounds and letters to spell words as they create a Language Experience Story.

### Write in Online Journal

- After reading all the articles, what changes might you consider making in your teaching practice? Provide reasons from the readings and your practice to support your response.

### Participate in Online Discussion Forum

- 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? What does it mean to use a systematic spelling program?

## Session 2: Stages of Spelling Development (Part I)

### Objectives:

- Explain and discuss the effectiveness of using the Bear and Templeton model for word study with 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, questions, and/or concerns of 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.

### Read:

- “Explorations in Developmental Spelling: Foundations for Learning and Teaching Phonics, Spelling, and Vocabulary”
- Figure 1.14 “Developmental Stages, Characteristics, and Word Study Instruction” from Words Their Way
- “Word Study Instruction in the K-2 Classroom”
- “Teaching Rimes with Shared Reading”
- “Strategy Instruction during Word Study and Interactive Writing Activities”

- "Figure 1 in 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.

### **Write in Online Journal**

- Answer the following question:
  - In grades K-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.

### **Participate in Online Discussion Forum**

- Respond to the following question:
  - Think of a child you know. Would the description of the stages in the developmental sequence discussed by Bear & Templeton (1996) and illustrated in the Words Their Way table help you characterize and describe that child's spelling? What are your impressions of the reading and writing and word study focus suggestions provided in the table? How might these suggestions help you plan for instruction?

## **Session 3: Stages of Spelling Development—Part II**

### **Objectives:**

- Discuss and justify your position on Wilde's philosophy for teaching spelling.
- Analyze and compare Wilde and Taberski's perspectives on spelling instruction and determine which approach provides a greater degree of direct and explicit instruction.
- Create and describe two instructional activities for a student within the Letter Name –Alphabetic Stage in your online journal.
- Create and describe two instructional activities for a student within the Within Word Stage in your online journal.

### **Read:**

- "Building a Knowledge Base in Spelling"
- "Word Study Groups: Analyzing Words for Their Phonetic, Structural, and Morphemic Features"
- The Lesson Plan for "Phonological Patterns: Finding Patterns in Books"
- "Summary of Sequence of Word Study for Letter Name-Alphabetic Stage"
- "Integrated Word Study: Spelling, Grammar, and Meaning in the Language Arts Classroom"

### **Complete Activities and Assignments**

- Read "Phonological Patterns: Finding Patterns in Books," a video transcript, in which first-grade students look in books for examples of a phonological pattern they have just studied.
- Complete the Within Word Pattern Sort assignment to experience how word sorting allows students to apply their word knowledge and to develop a deeper understanding of phonological patterns.
- Complete the Spelling Instruction Activity Assignment and Peer Review.

### **Write in Online Journal**

- Describe four instructional activities (two for the Letter Name-Alphabetic Stage and two for the Within Word Pattern Stage) 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.

### **Session 4: Assessing Phonics and Spelling**

#### **Objectives:**

- Discuss the importance of informed observation in assessing students' reading and spelling.
- Use assessment results to analyze features of student spelling based on a developmental framework.
- Use assessment results to plan for instruction in phonics and spelling.

#### **Read:**

- "Getting Started: The Assessment of Orthographic Knowledge"
- "Technology and Teaching Children to Read"
- "The Issues: The Internet and the Early Childhood Classroom"
- "iPad Apps for Literacy Instruction (Optional)"
- "A Framework for Using iPads for Building Early Literacy Skills" (Optional)
- Figure to 2.5 "Examples of Students' Spelling in September"
- Complete Activities And Assignments
- Complete the Sample Practice Activity in "Getting Started: The Assessment of Orthographic Knowledge"
- Complete the Spelling Feature Analysis and Instruction Plan assignment.
- Explore Technology and Teaching Students to Read and interactive games from PBS

#### **Participate in Online Discussions Forums**

- How do you address the issue of finding time to assess students and plan for individual needs? Is it worth the additional time and effort?
- Now that you have completed the reading on assessment and have had some practice using assessment results to begin to plan for instruction, what are your impressions of using informed observation and developmental spelling feature analysis as a means of planning differentiated instruction in your classroom? What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages?

### **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 an optimal learning environment for English Language Learners and those with diverse learning styles.

**Read:**

- “Critical Elements of Classroom and Small Group Instruction Promote Success for All Students”
- “Balanced Literacy”
- “Beginning to Decode”
- “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”
- “Opening doors to texts: Planning effective language instruction for emergent bilinguals”

**Complete Activities and Assignments**

- View the video: Vowel Teams: Examples and Best Practices
- Create a lesson plan for an English Language Learner or a student who struggles to learn word level skills readily

**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 Forum**

- Compare and contrast the viewpoints presented in “Balanced Literacy” and “Critical Elements of Classroom and Small Group Instruction Promote Success for All Students.” Think about how their recommendations would inform your teaching of the second language learners and students who do not learn readily by traditional methods of instruction. As you complete the rest of the readings and assignments for this session, return to the discussion forum one or two more times and continue the discussion of direct instruction for students, particularly those who do not learn word level skills readily. Using information from the readings, consider ways to link phonics and spelling instruction to meaningful opportunities for oral and written language at the students’ developmental level. Finally, after reading the last of the assigned readings for this session, post your ideas about whether you think any of the techniques they suggest would be applicable to the struggling readers and/or English language learners in your classroom, and the reasons for your response.

**Session 6: Final Project: A Case Study of a Speller****Objectives:**

- Design appropriate instructional plan and activities to meet the needs of your student or the student in the case study. (Final Project)
- Align your instructional goals and objective with the appropriate CCSS
- Assess your learning in this course by comparing your prior knowledge and acquired knowledge.
- 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)
- “Sort, Search, and Discover: Spelling in the Child-Centered Classroom” (not required)

**Complete Activities and Assignments**

- Final Project: A Case Study of a Student  
The culminating course project is to develop one week of lesson plans for teaching phonics and spelling to a student in Grades K to 3. During this process, learners will:
  1. compile and/or analyze a student profile
  2. develop one week of lesson for the student

3. submit your plan for peer review, then
4. submit a final draft to the facilitator to grade.

Learners have the option to focus this case study on a student from their classroom or use a hypothetical second-grader provided in the “Example Student Profile.” The example student profile includes a description prepared by a teacher that discusses the student’s background, attitudes, and progress in developing literacy; the student’s latest Words Their Way Primary Spelling Inventory and Feature Analysis scores; and two samples of the student’s writing.

The assessment criteria for the final project are provided in the final project assessment rubric and apply to all course participants regardless of the student profile they use.

#### **Write in Online Journal**

- Reflect on the following questions:
  - What insights and 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?