

Literacy Beyond the Basics:  
Word Learning Essentials: Breaking the Code

Longwood University  
Professional Studies Non-Credit Class

**Instructor:** Maria R. Hamilton  
hamilton.mariar@gmail.com  
434.607.1475

**Class Description:** Teaching reading is rocket science, at least according to Louis Moats, researcher, educator, and author. Effective literacy instruction requires that you know and understand numerous concepts students need to master in order to break the written code of English and become proficient readers. This class will examine four essential components necessary for effective word-level literacy instruction, phonology, phonemic awareness, sound-symbol association, and syllabication and explore how you can easily incorporate them into your daily practice. Word Learning Essentials will enhance your reading instruction by providing you with critical knowledge of skills necessary for your students to become successful readers.

**Class Overview:** Word Learning Essentials examines phonology, phonemic awareness, sound-symbol association; phonics and orthographic mapping, and syllabication, what they are, what instruction looks like, and the skills necessary to master the concepts. You will finish this course with a deeper understanding of how effective word-level literacy instruction helps structure engagement with words as students become readers and writers. In addition, this class will provide opportunities for you to explore effective teaching methods, understand how to differentiate instruction based on need, and learn how to assess and monitor student progress.

Word Learning Essentials is a self-paced class. It does not require participants to complete the work simultaneously or participate in activities or discussions at the same time. However, reviewing what your fellow participants post and initiating discussions with them will significantly enhance your learning and overall experience.

**Text:**

No text is required for this class. Readings will be posted online.

**Supplemental texts for further reading:**

No texts are required for this class. The following are suggestions for acquiring a deeper understanding of the topics covered.

Mesmer, H. A. E. (2019). *Letter lessons and first words*. Heinemann.

Moats, L. C. & Brady, S. (2020). *Speech to print: Language essentials for teachers* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

### **Goals & Objectives:**

1. Define four critical components in evidence-based, word-level literacy instruction.
2. Identify the areas of the brain associated with word-level knowledge and word recognition.
3. Explore quality instruction across the word-level literacy components.
4. Examine assessments that help inform instruction.
5. Evaluate current teaching practices and identify areas for improvement and/or change.
6. Expand upon current lessons based on evidence-based practices that enhance literacy instruction.

<b>SCHEDULE</b>		
<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
<b>Module 1 Week 1</b>	<b>Introduction Phonology &amp; Phonemic Awareness</b>	Readings & Activities Self-Reflection Activities & Resources Collection
<b>Module 2 Week 2</b>	<b>Sound-Symbol Associations Phonics &amp; Orthographic Mapping</b>	Readings & Activities Expand an Activity Activities & Resources Collection
<b>Module 3 Week 3</b>	<b>Syllabication &amp; Spelling</b>	Readings & Activities Activities & Resources Collection
<b>Module 4 Week 4</b>	<b>Instruction &amp; Assessment</b>	Readings & Activities Needs Assessment Activities & Resources Collection

**Class Assignments:** Instructions are provided for all assignments within the online class modules. The following are general descriptions of the expectations.

**Participate in Class Activities:** Each module will have at least one activity that you will be asked to complete, post your results, and reflect upon. These activities are assigned so you will have hands-on experience with potential lesson ideas you can use with your own students.

**Activities & Resources Collection:** Contribute at least two activities to the database that align with the focus of this class.

**Knowledge Survey & Self-Reflection:** Complete a survey of your current reading knowledge. Write a summary of your strengths while reflecting on areas for growth.

**Expand an Activity:** Choose an activity appropriate for typical readers in your class. Expand upon that activity by providing differentiation for students that are behind and beyond.

**Needs Assessment:** Take a deeper dive into the needs of a student. Which assessment will provide the most useful information to inform instruction for that student? How will you use that information to formulate a plan for instruction?

**Class Grading:**

Participation	50
Activity & Resources Collection	25
Survey & Self Reflection	25
Expand an Activity	40
Assessment	45
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Total Possible Points	200

**Grading Scale**

Non-credit classes are Pass/Fail. A minimum of 80% (160 points) is required to pass.

**CLASS POLICIES****Student Responsibility:**

It is your responsibility to inform yourself of, and to observe, all regulations and procedures required by the university. In no case will a regulation be waived or an exception granted because students plead ignorance of the regulation or assert that they were not informed of the regulation by an advisor or other authority.

**Communication Policy:**

The instructor will respond to student messages within 24-48 hours (except holidays), generally through email. For all assignments, feedback will be delivered within one week of the due date.

**Attendance & Participation Policy:**

Attendance for online courses is determined by how many times and for how long you access the Canvas course (this information is available for each student to the instructor), your participation in the assignments, and your timeliness in submitting requested work or response. Online courses can get away from you if not carefully scheduled. Take the time to review your online commitments, schedule regular and consistent time to be online, and stick to the schedule. You are expected to participate in all Canvas activities. Failure to participate in Canvas activities may impair academic performance and result in a lower grade. You must assume full responsibility for an online presence.

**Technical Assistance:**

Please contact our office for assistance with Canvas: Shelly Madden, Professional Studies Coordinator, [maddenrr@longwood.edu](mailto:maddenrr@longwood.edu) Office Phone: (434) 395-2719 or Cell Phone: (434) 808-2496.

**Class Evaluation:**

At the conclusion of the course, each student will have the opportunity to evaluate the class and instructor through Canvas. Your feedback is important to us. Please take the time to complete the online evaluation.

## References

- Dehaene, S. (2009). *Reading in the brain*. Penguin Group Inc.
- Florida Center for Reading Research. (n.d.). *Florida center for reading research*.  
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- International Dyslexia Association. (2018, April). *Scarborough's reading rope: A groundbreaking infographic*. [Infographic]. Dyslexiaida.org.  
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- Kilpartick, D. A. (2015). *Essentials of assessing, preventing, and overcoming reading difficulties*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Kilpatrick, D. A. (2018). *Equipped for reading success: A comprehensive, step-by-step program for developing phoneme awareness and fluent word recognition*. Casey & Kirsch Publishers.
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- Reading Rockets. (n.d.). *Phonics and decoding*.  
<https://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/reading-basics/phonics>
- Reading Rockets. (n.d.). *Phonological and phonemic awareness*.  
<https://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/reading-basics/phonemic>
- Scanlon, D. M., Anderson, K. L., & Sweeney, J. M. (2017). *Early intervention for reading difficulties: The interactive strategies approach*. Guilford Press.
- Sedita, J. (2020, May 5) *The role of orthographic mapping in learning to read*. Keys to Literacy.  
<https://keystoliteracy.com/blog/the-role-of-orthographic-mapping-in-learning-to-read/>
- Spear-Swerling, L. (2018). Structured literacy and typical literacy practices: Understanding

differences to create instructional opportunities. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, XX(X),  
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University of Florida Literacy Institute. (n.d.). *UF literacy institute*.

<https://education.ufl.edu/ufl/>.