

Academy for Teachers of Struggling Readers

(30 contact hour non-credit training for K-12 teachers)

University of Virginia
Curry School of Education
Reading@Curry

Date: TBD Time: TBD

Location: TBD

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Academy available online at

<https://collab.itc.virginia.edu/portal/site/d461b2d1-8bc4-42f1-b8c6-86292089103f>

“Without knowing the force of words, it is impossible to know more.” □ – Confucius

Do you love teaching and want to improve your students’ reading and writing skills? Literacy is the cornerstone of lifelong learning, and you are invited to participate in a professional learning experience designed to help educators who work with struggling readers. During the four-day academy, we will explore how literacy develops and examine potential causes and solutions for reading difficulties. We’ll consider problems, e.g., why do some children read and write with ease, while others labor to take meaning from the page?

It is widely reported that students who fall behind in the primary grades have a dismal academic future without intensive home and school interventions. Struggling readers need passionate teachers who care and advocate for them. Caring for our students includes understanding how literacy develops and applying evidence-based instruction to maximize learning. The academy will help you become a better teacher for all of your students but especially for your struggling learners. Throughout our academy, you will see models of assessments and instruction plus have opportunities with peers to plan interventions that solve common problems of struggling readers. We’ll wrestle with thorny questions: How do I differentiate for diverse learners? Why do some children struggle to read and write while others fly through with ease?

If you ever lay awake at night wondering how to reach a student, spend hours searching for that perfect text, or feel called to teaching those who are relegated to the margins, then you are in the right place. You will leave the academy re-energized with a toolkit of research-based and practical ideas to teach literacy skills to your struggling readers in the classroom of today as well as in your classrooms of

tomorrow.

What will you take away from the academy?

You will learn how to...

- Link theories of literacy development and instruction to best practices for the classroom
- Learn about the continuum of literacy development and compare it with the students in your own classroom.
- Explore and value the dynamic cultural and social issues that influence literacy instruction for struggling readers.
- Cultivate an awareness and interest in the learning and success of struggling readers and writers.
- Evaluate and refine your current and future literacy instruction.

What does a typical day look like?

Each day focuses on a different stage of literacy development and the issues related to struggling readers (see the sample [schedule](#)). Participants in face-to-face academies explore answers to daily questions by participating in interactive small-groups, discussions, analysis of case studies, and watch video examples from real classrooms. Instructors bring in examples of research-based resources, children's literature and instructional activities to illustrate best practices in the classroom. As an ongoing activity, you will design an intervention plan for working with struggling readers in the future. As part of your learning, you will take a reading lesson from your own classroom and refine it with peers.

What will participants do during an academy?

In addition to our guided learning activities and discussions, you will...

- Use a pre-academy anticipation guide to gauge your experiences, interests, and knowledge of literacy development and instruction before and after learning during the academy.
- Write daily reflections as a way to focus your thinking, capture your questions, and evaluate what you learn, what you care about, and how you are learning it.
- Design an intervention plan and evaluate one of your own reading lessons for a struggling learner in your classroom. Your intervention plan will be developed during the academy with the support of peers and your instructor. It will reflect what you are learning about literacy development and instruction.

Schedule & Topics

Times and topics are tentative and may shift to address participants' learning needs & interests

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	Pre-Academy	Day 1 <i>Who are the readers and writers in your classroom?</i>	Day 2 <i>How do we learn how to read and write?</i>	Day 3 <i>When is someone fluent? What does it mean to understand a text?</i>	Day 4 <i>What is changing about how you think about struggling readers & writers?</i>
8:30-10:00		Opening Session Models of Reading Development	Emergent Readers & Writers	Transitional Readers & Writers	Reading & Content Area Instruction
10:00-10:15		BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
10:15-12:00		Diverse Learners: Cultural & Social Issues Reading Disabilities	Focus: Phonological Awareness OR Using Read-alouds for Instruction*	Focus: Fluency Text Selection	Small Group Instruction OR Word Study for Transitional & Beyond*
		LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
1:00-3:00		Role of Assessment Writing Instruction	Beginning Readers & Writers Focus: Phonics & Word Identification	Intermediate & Advanced Readers & Writers Focus: Comprehension & Writing <i>Lesson Plan: How would you adjust it?</i>	Focus: Vocabulary Instruction Accommodation vs. Intervention Individual work & reflection <i>Intervention Plan: What solutions have you learned for struggling readers?</i>
2:00-2:10		BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
3:00-4:00		Individual work & daily reflection <i>Intervention Plan: Describe your context. Choose a lesson to bring.</i>	Individual work & daily reflection <i>Intervention Plan: List problems & supports. Lesson: What worked?</i>	Individual work & daily reflection <i>Intervention Plan: Begin drafting solutions.</i>	Sharing Our Learning Together <i>Final Intervention Plans and Revised Lessons</i>
Homework		Online Anticipation Guide	Reading TBD	Reading TBD	Reading TBD

Who will help me during the academy?

Teaching can be an isolating profession, and our academy encourages collaboration with peers during our learning journey. You are assigned to a learning team throughout the academy training. You will have many opportunities to connect with peers, to receive feedback and encouragement, to experience alternative perspectives on teaching, and to affirm your own teaching practice.

Each academy instructor is a trained reading specialist who has extensive experiences working in the classroom and with guiding adult learners. Your instructor will elicit and provide constructive feedback, answer questions, and lead you in activities that promote your learning. S/he will be both your guide and your best resource if you are puzzled.

How will I know what I'm learning?

The academy is a non-credit professional learning experience, so there are no assigned grades, quizzes or exams. Together, we will use our daily activities, anticipation guides, daily reflections, intervention plans and refined lessons to assess and reflect on our individual and collective learning. You will receive constructive and general feedback on your intervention plan and lesson from your peers and the instructor. As we apply academy principles to your own students, we'll celebrate what you are doing well, refine current practices, explore new perspectives, and encourage one another to try out new techniques or strategies with students.

Pre-Academy Anticipation Guide: To examine your knowledge and interests and to guide the timing and selection of academy topics, you will complete an online anticipation guide. This 10-15 minute guide is designed to gauge your teaching experiences, interests, and knowledge of literacy development and instruction and should be submitted at least three days before the first session. You will receive a link to the anticipation guide via email. Please don't copy and share the link as it is tied to your unique email address. Don't worry; it's not a graded exercise! The statements will help you assess your own understanding of the academy topics. You will refer back to the anticipation guide consistently throughout the academy so you can reflect on what you know, what you learned, and how your perspective is (or is not!) shifting.

Daily reflection: You will write a brief online or written reflection (@1-2 paragraphs) at the end of each session. Later, you will have a chance to share your thoughts and learning with your peers. The daily reflections will allow you monitor your own learning and provide kindling for your group's conversations.

A reflection may address one or more of these questions:

- Which topics were clear to you?
- How will you apply today's learning in your own classroom?
- What excited you today?
- What confused you?
- What still needs clarification?

Intervention Plan & Lesson: Throughout the academy, you will design an intervention plan and refine an existing reading lesson used with a struggling student in your classroom. Your reading intervention plan will describe the classroom context and stage/s of the struggling readers you typically see in your

classroom. You will list three to five problems that you face with your lowest readers. Describe each problem in detail and outline concrete steps towards potential solutions. Ideally your intervention plan will identify key personnel in your building who can support your problem-solving efforts and list any resources you need to get started.

During each session, as you collaborate with others, you will reflect on the optimal conditions for student learning; consider potential roadblocks, support personnel and resources; and recommend solutions to help your students succeed. Please use the sample intervention plans provided as a guide to jumpstart your thinking, but your plan does not have to look exactly like these! Your plan should reflect the realities and diversity of students where you teach!

To integrate academy principles with our intervention plans, you will also bring in a sample lesson of your choice that you have already used with a struggling reader in your classroom. This does not have to be an exemplary lesson—in fact, we encourage you to bring a lesson that flopped—we often learn more from our mistakes than our successes!

The instructor will model and help you practice designated components of your intervention plan before you are asked to work on it. As you craft your plan and lesson, you can use the academy readings, lesson activities, and peer consultations to support your progress.

Your final plan and lesson should have at least 2 references from our readings, academy materials, or the research literature as support for the proposed solutions. It should consider the full range of student diversity in your classroom, i.e., special education, Title I, SES, gifted, ELL, speech language, various disabilities, etc. There will be opportunities to share your draft plan and discuss what you are learning during each afternoon of the academy. At the end of Day 4, you will share your intervention plan and refined lesson with the group.

What types of materials/books will I receive?

At the beginning of the academy, all participants receive a set of learning materials that includes the following:

- A participant notebook of academy materials (notebook & links to additional resources are available online!)
- Reading@Curry tote bag with the supplies you will need to complete each day's activities (e.g., highlighters, removable highlighter tape, classroom timers, Wikki sticks, etc.)
- Required books (2): Some participants find it helpful to do their readings in advance. We will send your books in advance if possible!
 - Fisher, D., Brozo, W.G., Frey, N., & Ivey, G. (2014). *50 instructional routines to develop content literacy*. (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson.

plus ONE of the following:

- (K-2 teachers): Tyner, B. (2009). *Small-group reading instruction: A differentiated teaching model for beginning and struggling readers*. (2nd ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

- (Gr 3 & beyond): Tyner, B. & Green, S.E. (2012). *Small-group reading instruction: A differentiated teaching model for intermediate readers, grades 3-8*. (2nd ed.). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

What will I receive after finishing the academy?

If you attend one or more days and complete the anticipation guide, daily reflections, and intervention/lesson plan, then you will receive a certificate of attendance for up to 30 contact hours that may be used towards your recertification for state licensure. Digital and print certificates are sent directly to your district for distribution to you.

I loved my academy. Where can I find more resources?

Visit the academy's [collab site](#) and explore the Resources tab using the login your instructor provided. Your instructor will also bring resources on-site that you can borrow to expand your learning. We encourage you to make a plan to continue your professional learning about struggling readers after the academy ends. Your district/school will automatically provide coaching &/or follow-up support for our training in order to encourage you as you implement what you have learned during the academy.