

Literacy Strategies: Social Studies

It's generally thought that literacy skills are taught during the early years of education, with the expectation that every child will know how to read by the 4th grade. However, more and more middle and high school content area teachers seem to be complaining that their students just aren't getting it: The students either don't bother reading their assignments or they don't seem to comprehend what they have read. As a result, often content area teachers become frustrated and blame lack of reading skills.

Although this link may seem obvious—a lack of reading skills equals poor comprehension—more often than not, the culprit is difficulty understanding the ideas presented in the required reading assignment.

Many content area teachers balk at the idea of having to teach "reading" to their students, especially when their class curriculum is already so full. Still, teachers can easily implement several simple strategies into any lesson plan to help students comprehend subject matter. These strategies not only help students connect with the ideas in the text, but also give them a purpose for reading. The skills they learn through these strategies will be invaluable in school as well as later in life.

This course will help you understand why it's important for every teacher to become involved in teaching students how to read, write, and comprehend the subject matter being presented to them, and it provides a few teaching strategies in the social studies area. You will also explore the common misperception that a lack of reading skills is the root of failure in content area courses and learn several strategies relevant to social studies.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, you should be able to

- Discuss the rationale for building literacy skills and what reforms in early reading are required to ensure that all students become proficient readers.
- Explore the common misperception that a lack of reading skills is the root of failure in content area courses.
- Learn several strategies relevant to social studies.

Course Syllabus

Module 1	Foundations for Success <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Module Welcome• Action Plan for Reading in the Lower Grades• What Content Area Teachers Can Do• Application: Self-Assessment• Post-Module Reflection
Module 2	Prereading, During-Reading, and Postreading Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Module Welcome• Prereading Strategies• During-Reading Strategies• Postreading Strategies• Video 1: Prereading• Video 2: During-Reading Strategies• Post-Module Reflection
Module 3	Literacy Strategies: Social Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Module Welcome• Anticipation Guide: Example One• SQ3R: Example Two• Video 1: Prereading Strategies• Video 2: SQ3R Journal• Post-Module Reflection

Module 4

Helping Students: Whose Job Is It?

- Module Welcome
- All Teachers Can Teach Reading
- Video: Reading to Learn
- Improving My Students' Reading
- Helping Struggling Readers
- Post-Module Reflection

References

- Allen, R. (2000, Summer). Before it's too late: Giving reading a last chance. Curriculum Update, 1–3, 6–8.
- Anderson, J. (2001, November). Success in reading: A seven-trait approach. Classroom Leadership, 5(3). 10/10/08, from www.ascd.org.
- D’Arcangelo, M. (Producer/Writer). (2002). Reading in the content areas [Videotape]. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Dermody, J. (2003, April). Developing the caring classroom. Classroom Leadership, 6(7), 1–2.
- International Reading Association. (2003). Standards for reading professionals: Revised 2003. Newark, DE: Author.
- Learning First Alliance (1998). Learning First Alliance Action Plan for Reading. Retrieved 10/10/08.
- McCabe, P. P., & Margolis, H. (2001, September/October). Enhancing the self-efficacy of struggling readers. Clearing House, (75)1, 45–50.
- Children of the Code and Learning Stewards, Inc. (2008). Children of the code: A social education project [Television series]. New York and Washington, DC: Public Broadcasting Service. Interviews available online at <http://www.childrenofthecode.org>
- Taylor, R., & Doyle-Collins, V. (2003). Literacy Leadership for Grades 5–12. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.