

Feedback from Learners

Updated 11 June 2018

I found this course more in depth, more interesting and more practical than any other literacy course I have done (and paid far more for). I sincerely appreciate the information, resources and expertise you have shared with us.

Thank you so much for sharing the things that you've learned over the years. This has been one of those experiences wherein a lot of things, lying just below the surface of my awareness, were suddenly pulled up and introduced to me formally. It's been a mind-broadener ... There are loads of reasons why I loved the course you've made. It's straight-forward, the information is well presented, the assessments are really useful, the references are interesting, the resources you've pulled together are in most cases immediately applicable in the classroom and the list goes on. A heart-felt thanks for all of this ... every second of this course was valuable. I have downloaded the entire course so I can return to it and refresh my mind of things that I might not have fully appreciated or assimilated.

Two years ago I took upon the task of helping children with learning differences in my school. Armed basically with good will and very little solid knowledge (acquired reading articles here and there) I started working with my colleagues to raise awareness of the challenges faced by students with learning differences.

When I registered for your course I was, at first, only interested in learning the content. But as soon as I started watching the lectures I realised that I was going to want a certificate to show my institution, to prove I had taken the course.

Thanks to you, now I can develop strategies to detect, (informally) diagnose and help students with reading and/or writing difficulties. I have started to apply some of your strategies and I am very happy and encouraged by the results. Moreover, I can feel how students appreciate our efforts to help them in new and more effective ways.

I would like to thank you for your work. Your well-structured programme, the clarity of your explanations and the variety and quantity of resources at our disposal. Joaquin R./ Switzerland

Thanks for the lectures and the information. Learning about the background of dyslexia has been really important and also recognising the importance of phonological awareness and a structured phonics programme, overlearning and also the different ways of helping these students. I have a very dyslexic little boy (6 years old) in my class and I now understand more about what he is feeling and seeing in class. As a result I am changing the things I do with my whole class and this will support him in particular and also help others to understand more about the English language. This way he will also not feel that he is being singled out. Thank you again for helping me develop my understanding of this subject. Regards, Vicky Guilfoyle

Dear Dr Thomson and Dr Goetry,

I thoroughly enjoyed this course. It has given me so many tools to help the troubled readers that I work with. I have always been intrigued by "the process of learning to read" and your course has given me a great insight into it. Although I have some specific training in "teaching reading," the precision of the tools and techniques you have provided, along with the new insights that brain-imaging enables, will greatly expand my understanding of my students' challenges. For example, the distinction between the garden-variety poor reader and the dyslexic reader is particularly interesting and useful. I really value the extra material that was also supplied in the course -- Milne's book, the extra videos, the references to other scholarly work and the links to all sorts of online information. I will be going back to all this material again and again to improve my teaching practice.

Thank you very much, and good luck in your own studies,

Constance Boldt, from Ontario, Canada.

My Name is Temitope Oladele from Lagos, Nigeria. I took this course to acquire knowledge that can enable me help children in Nigeria struggling with reading and writing. I am commencing a literacy program that would take me to 30 public schools in Lagos during the next academic term. The course would enable me quickly identify children with reading difficulties and i would be able to help them with the knowledge I have acquired.

I want to say a big thank you to the instructors for the professional manner the course has been put together and delivered..

My name is Sarika, and I'm about to complete my two-year degree in special education (Learning Disabilities) in May 2018 from Amity University, Lucknow, which is in India. Since Special Education for Learning Disabilities and even Inclusive Education is still in a very nascent stage in our country (compared to the US, UK or Europe), we have a dearth of trained professionals working in this field; so I was also roped in by an inclusive school (unable to find a full-time special educator) to work with them part-time with the SEN students in the school. Needless to say, this course was a Godsend for me.

I am the only student in my degree programme. For some reason, regular B.Ed (Bachelor of Education) degrees are more sought after than (B.Ed. Special Education) degrees and we haven't had any new enrollments since I have joined the course. This, despite the education act (RTE 2009), the government policies, and the education boards all having repeatedly instructed schools to go in for an inclusive set up.

I'm not even sure if my university is going to continue this course a year down the line. I also don't have professors who have worked with children with learning disabilities, so most of what I

have learned over the past year and a half has been self-taught. I was finding it very challenging to work with my students. I just wasn't sure if I was giving them all the help they needed and whether I was doing it right.

This course was SO VERY HELPFUL! I really wish it were longer, or there was a follow-up course which had more practice-based lessons and assessments. Designing an IEP or planning a lesson for a child, for instance. I really really would have appreciated some feedback on that.

However, I can't thank you enough for organizing the course and the resources so very well. It is evident that both of you have worked passionately and diligently with students facing learning difficulties. Your lectures answered nearly all the questions that arose in my mind, and going through the resources did the rest. I could wax poetic about the course for very long, but I'll just cut this short, and thank you both once again; and urge you to please come up with the followup course!

A really wonderful experience. I am coming from the country, Pakistan, where dyslexia is a very new field, we still have to tell them about what learning difficulties are.

I am working with an institute by the name of IDEAS which stands for Institute of Dyslexia Education and Attitudinal Studies. it is working under Bazeecha Trust which mainly deals with the education and rehabilitation of underprivileged strata of society where education and learning difficulties are a big issue but lack of awareness makes it much worse.

Great balance of theory and suggestions for improving practice. Every teacher should undertake this course - what a huge difference it would make to the identification and understanding of pupils with Dyslexia (dyslexic traits) ...

12 Nov 2017

I have really enjoyed this course and have found it extremely useful in terms of my professional development. I have learnt such a lot in only 6 weeks and now feel much more confident and better equipped skill wise to support pupils with reading and writing difficulties.

10 Nov 2017

It was a wonderful experience to learn this course in a well systematic way.I am thankful to all who have taken efforts to make this course efficient enough to the learner.Last but not least to the peer groups , without them the active forum would have not been effective .

I would once again like to thanks the course providers and team for their well planned and structured content.Thanks !!!!!!!!!!!

10 November

Thank you both so much!!! I learned profoundly all the information you both have shared with all of us!!! I am very enthusiastic to apply all you have taught me during this course. Your knowledge and passion are qualities that I have taken with me during this course!

I am from Dominican Republic, have a Bachelors degree in Early Childhood Education and during my studies, I had a keen interest for Dyslexia and Neuroscience, as well as second language acquisition. I currently work with five yearolds, Pre-primary years, so all that I have seen in this course has connected with all that I've acquired in my three-year experience as an Educator in Pre-Primary years!

I loved the modality in which you both gave this course!!! So precise, detailed and complete! I had no idea, until now, that for professional learning we don't always need to be physically in a University or course; online learning is equally effective!

Thank you and it was an honor to learn from both of you!

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I'm a speech and language therapist working in hospital based in Sri Lanka. I am very much interested in the field of learning difficulties. That's why I selected this course. Now I will be able to proper assessments and plan intervention for the children who come to me. So thank you very much Dr. Jenny and Dr. Vincent. like to learn and do research in this field. Thank you again.

Navindra Rajapaksha

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I would like to say that we have been utilizing a multisensory teaching methods to aid young learners to pick up basic reading skills at a tender age.

I have also worked with an ESL learner who is 13 years old now and I have implemented the Oxford Reading Tree program and I encouraged her to use playdough to create words in order to build up vocabulary and be able to connect the phonemes with the graphemes. It was an intensive hourly session per day that allowed her to eventually read words and sentences in a methodical manner.

Asad Yusuf, Pakistan

I am Ritah Kisakye your former student from Uganda working at the International School of Uganda (ISU). I would like to thank you for all the information you provided me with. It made my work very easy and had fun with my student since I knew exactly what challenges he faced. I took this course because I was struggling assisting my student who was both autistic and dyslexic. I had a lot of information about autism so I knew what to expect but had less informed about dyslexia and that is why I offered the course to help him complete his assignments. Knowing about the difficulties he had in reading and writing, the strategies you provided me with

made it easy for me to assist him. What I loved about the course are basically the recordings you made, clear explanations and example that were provided. When I forgot something, I would replay them to get the information I needed at anytime which was far better than reading. Even when I was home doing something else, I would listen to the recordings made. Thank you for being knowledgeable and coming up with easier ways of communicating on your information to a number of people in the world. I stay Ritah Kisaye.

I worked as educational psychologist in reputed international schools in India. I had worked with children of different age groups and reading writing difficulty has always been a common concern amongst subject teachers and parents. Though I had fair knowledge in helping them out, but lacked in few essential elements that could help for the intervention.

I would take this opportunity to thank both the instructors for presenting core and essential content on reading writing difficulties. Practical approaches in the classroom were very helpful to understand the theory. It is very clear from the lectures that Jenny and Vincent has enormous knowledge and techniques in helping children with reading writing difficulties. The course is designed wonderfully and It helped me in many ways, especially in terms of technological aids and assignments. The course content has enhanced my knowledge in phonological awareness too.

... I must congratulate whole team for designing it in a very precise, step by step and technically very sound manner.

I would definitely recommend this course to people in educational field.

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Been teaching for 13 years and have never really understood, nor knew how to properly address students who need reading intervention.

The great thing about this course is that it seems to be strongly leaning towards looking at the data from scientific research which is to be highly commended. I am very happy that the topic of bilingualism is brought up in the course.

I am learning Support Teacher here in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I withdraw low ability students from their general education classroom in order to teach them in small groups and one-on-one. These students often struggle with reading and writing, and I find this course useful when working with them. It helps me understand the nature of their difficulties. It also provides me with useful strategies to implement within my lessons. I have incorporated what I have learned into my teaching practice, and I have already begun noticing a difference in my teaching style and my students' outcomes.

Just wanted to thank you for this opportunity. I live and teach on a small island, St. Lucia, in the Caribbean and having access to a course like this would not be possible. Thanking you for allowing me to see and understand the dyslexic child's

mind and even any non-dyslexic child and the wide variations that our brains have for learning.

It would be haughty of me to assume that I helped bring them completely out of their learning difficulties but I can say that, while working in a remote village in Nepal the course really helped me provide actual informal assessments and the risk factor would be haughty of me to assume that I helped bring them completely out of their learning difficulties but I can say that, while working in a remote village in Nepal the course really helped me provide actual informal assessments and the risk factor observations to the staff and administration of the school. This goes a long way where learning difficulties are shunned, ignored or classified incorrectly. It being the case that many students don't get access to specialists, giving the teachers direction from a metacognitive perspective really helps boost the children's confidence to continue trying to work through their difficulties.

Have learnt more from this course than surfing the net for many years.

I had a meeting with [my child's] school staff to discuss the results of her formal evaluation. At the meeting, a tester explained specific test items and her results. Thankfully, I understood all of what she said clearly and the intent of each test item because I took this course with two assessments. She is confirmed as dyslexic and immediately joined an intervention the next day. One of the staff told me that she is so impressed how I recognized her symptoms very early and even her kindergarten and 1st grade teachers did not notice.

Thank you for creating this course and sharing your knowledge with all of us. I hope that I will be able to put all that I've learned into helping others learn a new language in professional and personalised manner.

Thank you for the well-structured lectures and interesting learning experiences. This was a very manageable course, which provided tools that I could immediately put into practice at school and at home.

Thank you for designing such an informative and interesting course. I work as a receptive skill specialist at an elementary school and this course has helped me to a tremendous extent. I have a few challenged students, and with the understanding provided by this course, it has been easier for me to initiate programs to help them develop further.

I wanted to sincerely thank you for this terrific course which helped me better understand Dyslexia. You have been most exhaustive in your presentations and I feel I come out of this experience with definitely more awareness on this area. I have already made some accommodations in class as all children benefit from multi-sensory approaches.

A girl in my class seems to present some of the traits discussed in this course; you gave me many ideas and resources for supporting her, thank you for your patience and for your passion in teaching us.

I am currently working in Nigeria teaching French and this course has taught me so much and made me re-structure my teaching styles and methods for those students who are struggling.

I have already had some interesting insights from this course which I can relate to individual pupils!

I thought I knew a lot about phonics but I never thought about the process all this information takes.

I am doing a research on dyslexia and this course is an eye opener. I have already started using my knowledge to help students with reading problems in my own little way.

Thank you so much for a hugely insightful course. I learnt a great deal and now have a far more in-depth understanding of dyslexia and the difficulties associated with it.

I am really enjoying this course. Even though I feel I came with a certain amount of expertise, I have learned so much. It is very well presented and is very interesting. Thank you!

This was the best course ever, I will keep referring to it throughout my career.

I thoroughly enjoyed undertaking this course. The material was delivered clearly, thoughtfully and in a way that was easily understood. I will take what I have learnt through this course and apply it now in assisting children as a specialist dyslexia teacher/tutor.

... wonderful, inspiring and invaluable lectures.

This is the best course I've ever done on Coursera. It's not just watching some videos, but actually studying the topic and getting challenged.

Excellent! Incredibly rich lectures, knowledgeable staff/instructors and great resources provided. I learned a great deal from participants as well in the discussion forum from students all over the world.

A very very helpful course that gives practical solutions in a classroom and school-wide setting.

... this course has supplied me with an incredible amount of information that I can actually use with my students next week!

The instructors are wonderful, and the content is something I will read over and over in the future. Thank you, Coursera, for providing this to us.

I particularly liked the initial weeks of learning how the visual and auditory centers in the brain work. This has helped me better help my students.

Excellent explanations, simple and accuracy. Both teachers are very qualified.

I found this course to be extremely informative, filled with the latest research findings and recommendations to assist those working with dyslexic learners ... I highly recommend this course- don't miss it!

Excellent course for beginners and specialists alike. I highly recommend the course for anyone interested in specialist work or supporting students.

This is an excellent course for teachers who want to better understand and support children with reading difficulties. The content of the course encompasses all of the main aspects of concern and the references to the research provides a springboard to further study in this area.

This is the best course I've ever done on Coursera. It's not just watching some videos, but actually studying the topic and getting challenged. I'm taking so much away for my work.

Estoy haciendo un trabajo sobre la construcción del concepto de dificultades de aprendizaje y he conseguido información actualizada en este curso. Gracias.

It is hard for us as teachers, and it is harder if we don't know how to help them and if we don't have any experience. Nowadays, where I live public education now includes them in the regular classes, when they used to separate them from the other, and that makes me happy, because they don't feel rejected anymore but the problem now is that the government or the teachers don't make an effort to prepare themselves or prepare them which is really sad. I appreciate that you are preparing in order to help her and also for the future.

This course is going to help me be a better teacher and it's also making me reflect back on how I learned to read and write.

Just after finishing the first session, I must confess that I have to raise my hands up! I know nothing about dyslexia and I am really eager to be an excellent student of this course. And here is some feedback from a survey in which we asked teachers, following their completion of the course, to describe an individual they felt had made progress.

[one of pupils] was always shy when we asked him to write, even short notes. He knew he was dyslexic, but he didn't know how to approach it. During the course I shared ideas and we began to work. He still confuses letters but now is more confident and he knows everything he writes must be double-revised, but he is writing more and is having fun with that.

One young man has been struggling for many years. He started school with cognitive death* (or back then we thought it learned helplessness), he did not enjoy writing, reading or learning maths concepts and the gap with his peers just got greater every year. The lectures about the psychological aspects and the strategies helped me to adjust my approach and support his learning in a way that has given him more ownership of the learning, and he wants to learn.

*This is the dramatic term used by a psychologist and reprised in one of the lectures.

One student has made gains of two years in two months of tutoring. He is 14 years old. He tested at a 1st grade level for spelling before tutoring started. I retested him after two months – he is spelling at 3rd grade level. I have not retested him for reading as of yet, but he is making great strides there as well.

Boy, aged 14: I asked him to assist me as a subject in the course questionnaires. He was quiet in class and somewhat isolated. He was also the reason for taking the course and finding out more about dyslexia. During 5 and after the course he has been more willing to talk and to ask questions; he is also more involved in reading. He will initiate conversations and give me news about himself in class.

I've learned more how to support children more effectively so even though they find things difficult they are better understood and tackle reading with a better attitude which is half the battle.

By using the knowledge from the course I am able to better approach the student and their learning and fine tune some techniques to better assist them with a positive outcome. This has led to success and a better sense of achievement for them.

One particular boy has gone from being a virtual non-reader with a negative attitude to looking forward to the next book I bring as he can now access the text, having been taught for only eight weeks to date using a multisensory approach.

The learner has issues – both skills/abilities and attitude – with mathematics. By making the lesson focused 'every day' [transactions] – time, purchases etc [but never using the "M" word] – I eventually saw him almost double his mathematics grades. As an early grades teacher, the foundations of reading begin in my level. I have noticed how children with difficulties have started to gain more confidence in performing activities. That, in itself, has shown that they improved their learning habits and skills.

One of my adult learners wanted (and needed) a job so as to come off the many years of welfare. We discussed a pathway towards a goal, and the first step was [acquiring] a driver's licence. Reading and understanding the Test Questions became a series of lessons. Fear to face the questions was agreed 6 challenges; together we 'faced the fears' by using strategies in this MOOC. The fear is now greatly reduced.