

# NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

## Course Syllabus

### I. WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The Rx for Discovery Writing training is a didactic and practicum workshop. The professional learning provides pre-school through third-grade educators with foundational understandings from brain research on how handwriting develops from a biological and cognitive development perspective and the instructional implications. Specific topics include the neurobiological basis for handwriting, handwriting and written expression development, and multi-modal development of writing skills. Educators will explore how handwriting impacts the brain and examine the link between handwriting, reading, and spelling. Mediated learning is the overarching instructional approach used to facilitate the norms, learning tasks, and discourse in the educational context. The training focuses on broadening educators' conceptions of multi-modal instructional practices that support handwriting and writing success for all learners. Key handwriting and written expression instruction include graphomotor skills, orthographic-motor integration, orthographic processing, cognition, language, and writing traits.

- A. **Evidenced-based:** Based on a meta-analysis research from the Institute of Education Sciences (*Teaching Elementary Students to Be Effective Writers: Practice Guide Summary*; What Works Clearing House Practice Guide, 2018)
- B. **Philosophy:** Multi-modal, structured approach based on “The Big Picture of Writing” and the “Simple View of Writing” (Berninger, 2002) within a mediated learning instructional framework (Feuerstein, 1996)
- C. **Instruction:** Didactic and practicum learning experiences with hands-on, role-playing activities and lesson plan development
- D. **Assessment:** Participants will practice implementing a writing lesson plan with a small group and receive feedback on their demonstrations. Proficiency with designing and implementing multi-modal lesson plans that include the 6+1 writing traits will be assessed as well as the use of mediated learning instructional framework. .

### II. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- A. **General:** Successful completion of this workshop will enable educators to use evidenced-based strategies to develop Pre-K – 3rd grade students handwriting and written expression skills.
- B. **Specific:** Upon completion of this workshop, participants will be able to:
  - 1. Understand the neurological basis of writing development and what educators should know about teaching handwriting
  - 2. Articulate why handwriting is important and how it is related to reading, spelling, written composition, and thinking
  - 3. Articulate the Big Picture of Writing and the Simple View of Writing

4. Understand the 6+1 writing traits and how to develop students' writing traits
5. Use a multi-model approach to design and implement handwriting and written expression lesson plans
6. Implement Mediated Learning as the instructional methodology in handwriting and written expression instruction

### **III. REQUIRED RESOURCES**

- A. Rx for Discovery Writing – Fundamentals *training manual* (provided by NILD)
- B. Research and Journal Articles below

### **IV. WORKSHOP REQUIREMENTS**

#### **A. *Pre-Workshop Preparation (approximately 90 minutes)***

1. Watch 3 asynchronous PowerPoint lectures.
2. Read four articles
3. Review 2 online resources and watch two videos

#### **B. *Workshop Activities***

1. Engage in lectures and practicum activities.
2. Acquire an understanding of how writing develops from a biological and cognitive developmental perspective.
3. Observe instructor demonstrations of writing activities and strategies
4. Demonstrate strategies taught with peers in a group setting
5. Create a plan to implement writing activities learned in the workshop

#### **C. *Workshop Workload***

1. Asynchronous learning – time required is approximately 8 hours
2. Synchronous learning – time required is 8 hours