

SECONDARY ELA NEWSLETTER

March 2025

Hello, ELA Colleagues!

March is Women's History Month and April is National Poetry Month -- two of my favorite areas of study! And as we move into springtime, there are many opportunities shared in this newsletter to dive into both topics with your students.

Naomi Watkins
USBE Secondary ELA Specialist
naomi.watkins@schools.utah.gov

I'M CURRENTLY ENJOYING:

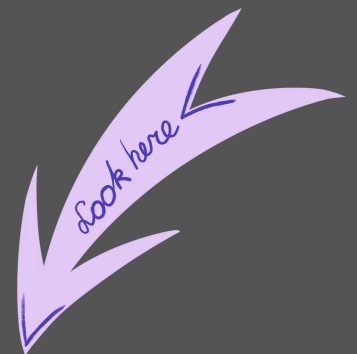
- *Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype* by Clarissa Pinkola Estés
- *Severance* on Apple TV



P-12 ELA STANDARDS RESOURCES

[Link to resource folder](#) which includes:

- [Secondary ELA Webinars from 2023-24](#) - **you can still view them!**
- **NEW!!!** [2024-25 Secondary ELA Webinars recordings & resources](#)
- [Best Practices in Secondary ELA](#) - **UPDATED**
- [FAQs](#)
- [Reading Strand Standards Breakdown](#)
- [Speech Progression Chart](#)
- [Slides](#) from summer 2023 professional learning
- Resources shared by other districts (e.g., vertical alignment)
- [ACT Crosswalk](#)
- [Grades 6 - 12 Core Guides](#)
- [Formative Assessment Process Toolkit](#)
- [Bringing Grammar and Language to Life Through Evidence-Based Practices](#) (USBE guidance document written by Dr. Deborah Dean)
- **NEW!!!** [Disciplinary Literacy in Utah Schools](#) - USBE Guidance
- **NEW!!!** [USBE Dyslexia Handbook](#) - updated and revised



**Please note: LEAs have the duty to select instructional materials that best correlate to the core standards for Utah public schools and graduation requirements. (UCA 53G-4-402(1(a))). Posting of these resources by USBE staff curriculum content specialists does not imply the resources have received official endorsement of the State Board. Educators are responsible to ensure use of these materials complies with LEA policies and directives.



SECONDARY ELA WEBINAR



Morphology Matters: Unlocking Meaning



MARCH 13, 2025

04.00 PM – 05.00 PM MDT

Wondering how teaching morphology can help your students understand complex texts? Heard the term and want to know how to easily incorporate word study routines into your classroom? Come join our discussion! We'll dive into some of the latest research around morphology and learn how to embed simple practices into everyday instruction.



KATIE WILBURN
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
[LEARN MORE](#)

REGISTER NOW



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2024–25 SECONDARY ELA PROFESSIONAL LEARNING WEBINAR SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Presenter
Thurs, Oct. 10	Writer's Craft	Dr. Deborah Dean
Wed, Nov. 13	Effective Writing Assignments	Dr. Amber Jensen & ELA educator
Mon, Dec. 16	AI in Secondary ELA	Matt Winters
Wed, Jan. 15	Explicit Writing Instruction	Dr. Naomi Watkins
Mon, Feb. 10	Effective Writing Assessments	Dr. Amber Jensen & Megan Wight
Thurs, March 13	Morphology	Katie Wilburn, Univ. of Virginia
Thurs, April 24	Poetry	Jason Stephenson, Red Dirt Poetry
Tues, May 6	Reflection Writing	Dr. Amber Jensen & ELA educator

If you are interested in receiving 0.5 USBE credits for your participation in the 2024–25 Secondary ELA Professional Learning Webinars, you will need to enroll in the Canvas course to complete the following tasks:

- Attend or view 7 webinars
- Complete reflections for the 7 webinars you attend or view
- Provide evidence of implementation of at least one instructional practice with students or working with educators

There will be a total of 8 webinars. You select the 7 webinars that are most of interest or applicable to you. More information about what these tasks entail and how to submit this work will be provided within the Canvas course. You will have until December 31, 2025 to complete all of the required work to receive credit.



REGISTER NOW



SUPPORTING WRITING INSTRUCTION

Join us for a half-day professional learning session designed for secondary administrators, instructional leaders, and coaches. Learn how to champion and support evidence-based writing practices in your school or district.



Utah State
Board of
Education



central utah
writing project



Secondary (grades 6-12)
School & District Administrators,
Instructional Leaders & Coaches



May 12, 2025
8:00 am - 12:30 pm



BYU Campus, Provo

[REGISTER](#)

bit.ly/UTWriteAdmin

Questions? naomi.watkins@schools.utah.gov

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March is Read Across America month and it's a fantastic opportunity to ignite a love of reading in our students! To help spark some fresh ideas and amplify our efforts, here are a few resources:

[Read Across America website:](#)

[Event Ideas](#)

[Kwame Alexander – A Jazz-Infused Reading with resources](#)



Teaching Foundational Skills to Adolescent Readers

Presented by [Douglas Fisher](#), [Nancy Frey](#), [Kierstan Barbee](#), [Sarah Ortega](#) and [Aida Allen-Rotell](#)

Date: Monday, April 14, 2025 - 3:30PM PT

Duration: 60 minutes

[REGISTER NOW](#)

It's never too late to build the skills necessary to find joy in reading and learning. Armed with equity, empathy, evidence-based research and practical application, literacy experts Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey along with Kierstan Barbee, Sarah Ortega, and Aida Rotell will address this critical need head on, and provide classroom practices teachers can use with the whole class or with small groups to integrate reading support seamlessly with grade-level content learning.

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Let's focus on research in Utah's Online School Library!! Please, join us on **Tuesday, March 18th at 4:00 pm** (MST). Let's share and exchange ideas for how we can use UOSL to help our students research in the classroom.

For example, how might we use Gale in Context: Elementary to help students conduct animal research on their choice of animal? Or how can we use DocsTeach to analyze primary documents Westward Expansion, the Civil War, The Great Depression, World War II, and more. There are countless possibilities in UOSL we want to share and hear from you!

Meet-up details:

- 📅 Date: **Tuesday, March 18th**
- 🕒 Time: 4:00 - 4:30 pm MST
- 📍 Location: **[Zoom Registration Meeting Link](#)**

What to expect:

1. 🙋 Welcome
2. 🗣️ Share and Exchange
3. 📅 May 2025: Our next meeting will be May 2025

How to get involved:

- 🔔 Subscribe: Join our [mailing list](#) for updates, event invitations, and relevant news.
- 📅 Attend Meet-Ups: Participate in regular meet-ups for networking, idea-sharing, and professional growth. We value your insights! Feel free to share your ideas, suggestions, and expertise with the community.

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BETTER DAYS
utahwomenshistory.org

utahwomenshistory.org has a variety of tools for educators about Utah's suffrage story and trailblazing women throughout Utah history. Check out the lesson plans, primary source sets, bios, activities, or book recommendations, for great ways to bring Utah women's perspectives and experiences into your classroom.

Dear Poet 2025

Engage directly with award-winning poets as part of National Poetry Month.

Every National Poetry Month Academy of American Poets present Dear Poet, a multimedia education project that invites young people in grades five through twelve to write letters in response to poems written and read by award-winning poets.

The submission period for Dear Poet 2025 is now open until April 24, 2025.

Every letter will be read by a team of volunteers, and all students can expect a general response from the poet to whom they wrote, as well as a certificate honoring their work. Five letters to each of our nine participating poets will be selected at the end of National Poetry Month, and the poets will write a personalized response to the selected student letters. The letters will be published in a shareable, PDF booklet during the summer.

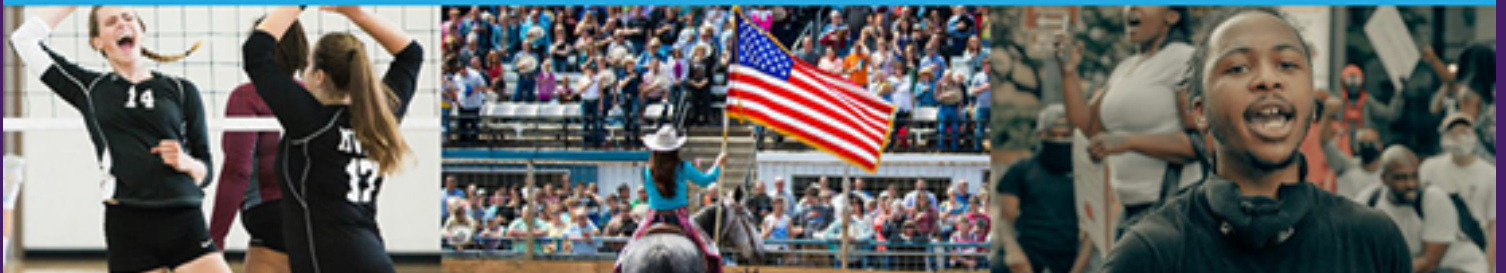
LEARN MORE >

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Our Towns, Our Stories



With thanks to the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the National Writing Project (NWP) makes public [Our Towns, Our Stories](#), a COPPA-compliant publication website for teachers who want to provide their students an opportunity to try their hand at journalistic writing about the place they call home. [Teachers can register](#) their classrooms or other groups of students who can then share stories that matter to them and their communities using journalistic tools like investigation, documenting, publishing, and circulating content and media. The website also contains learning modules to help teachers (or independently working students) learn such forms as the profile essay, the op-ed, the open letter, and more.

American Library Association announces 2025 Youth Media Award winners



Check out the most recent winners of the Newbery, Belpré, Printz awards...and more!

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The Secondary Literacy Crisis: Why Reading Scores Are Falling—and How to Fix It

Tuesday, April 1, 2025 @ 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Too many older students slip through the cracks, missing out on critical literacy interventions that could change their academic trajectory. Join leading experts as they tackle the biggest challenges in secondary literacy education and share actionable solutions that work. This edLeader Panel will explore key systemic challenges, including:

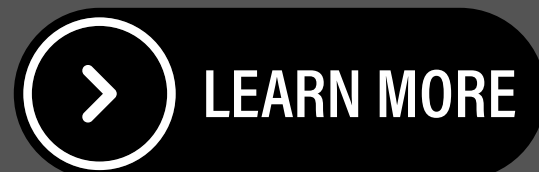
- The Missing Middle – Why older students often don't receive the structured literacy interventions they still need—and how to fix it
 - Core Curriculum vs. Supplemental Support – Striking the right balance between teaching content and developing essential literacy skills
 - The Lost Group – How absenteeism, EL learners, and special education students are disproportionately impacted—and what we can do to support them
- Gaps in Secondary Educator Training – Bridging the knowledge gap so middle and high school teachers can effectively support struggling readers
- Building Comprehension – The power of vocabulary, background knowledge, assessments, and interventions to close literacy gaps while reducing stigma
- Staying the Course in a Shifting Landscape – How to navigate changing education trends while keeping literacy at the forefront

This isn't just another discussion—it's a call to action. Walk away with research-backed strategies to integrate literacy support into secondary classrooms, strengthen professional development, and ensure all students have the tools they need to succeed.

Presented by Dr. Anthony Smith, Deputy Superintendent, Denver Public Schools (CO); Dr. Zandra Jo Galván, Superintendent, Salinas Union High School District (CA), Immediate Past-President, California Association of Latino Superintendents and Administrators; and Dr. Glenda Sheffield, Superintendent, Hampton County School District (SC)

Moderated by Dr. Donna Wright, Regional Partner, Really Great Reading

Sponsored by **Really Great Reading**



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2025 BELFER NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
Free, Virtual Conference for Educators in June

Registration is open for the [2025 Belfer National Conference for Holocaust Education](#), taking place June 23-25. At this free, virtual professional learning conference, educators will explore the latest practices in accurate, meaningful teaching about the Holocaust with Museum historians and educators. Find new sessions that demonstrate how to integrate Holocaust history into both ELA and social studies instruction.





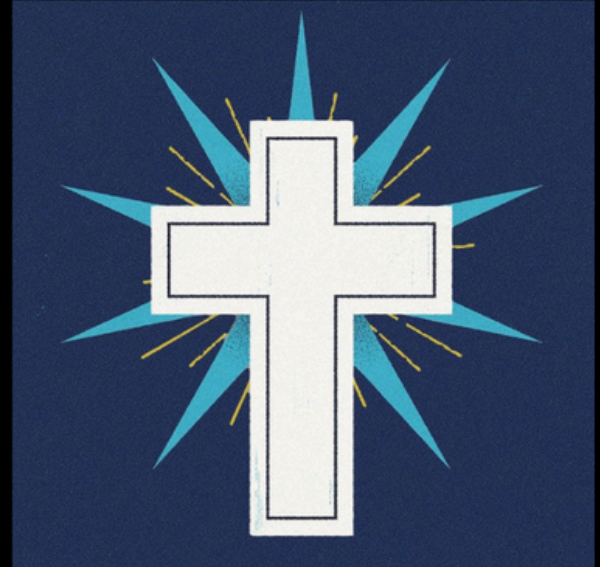
The Grand Theatre

School Outreach

Jesus Christ Superstar

February 22 - March 22, 2025
Musical | Thursday – Saturday

This rock opera tells the story of the last seven days of Jesus' life, detailing friendship, loyalty, and ultimate betrayal.



Dreamgirls

May 21 - June 14, 2025
Musical | Thursday – Saturday

Three talented young Black women go from seedy shows to stardom, where they face love, betrayal, and the dangers of ambition.



.....

The Grand Theatre is eager to bring theatre to each new generation, so we offer free tickets to 7-12th grade students, in addition to up to 3 half-price tickets to each student per show. Don't miss the (free!) opportunity to see local theatre by local artists! Contact Ellie Otis at eotis2@slcc.edu to set up a free showing for students!



March 21-22, 2025 | Brigham Young University

Annual Conference on Tutoring and Teaching Writing

**invites K-12 and college
peer tutors and writing center directors,
writing teachers and administrators,
and NWP teacher consultants**
to collaborate and learn
about writing and
tutoring



see the conference website for more
information and registration links

SSWCA.ORG/CONFERENCE



Conference Snapshot

Friday, March 21

8:30 am - 3:30 pm

SSWCA Strand: Peer Tutoring and Writing Center Programs

In-person and virtual sessions on peer tutoring and writing centers given by

- middle-school peer tutors
- high-school peer tutors
- secondary writing center directors
- university partners
- district and school leaders

University writing center tutor and director panel for K-12 attendees

Keynote address by Dr. Tom Deans, University of Connecticut professor

In-person registration includes

Breakfast and lunch

Utah's famous "dirty soda" and a soft pretzel snack bar



Saturday, March 22

8:30 am - 3:30 pm

NWP Strand: Teaching Writers and Becoming Writers

In-person sessions and workshops on teaching and becoming writers given by NWP teacher consultants

In-person and virtual sessions on writing center implementation given by K-12 and college tutors and directors

Workshops on writing in college and for college admission for K-12 students

Keynote address by Dr. Anne Whitney, Penn State University professor

In-person registration includes

Breakfast and lunch

Embodied writing experiences (yoga, hiking, bookmaking, walk and write)



SSWCA.ORG/CONFERENCE

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AMERICA'S *Field Trip*

AMERICA 250 CELEBRATION

In 2026, the United States will mark our Semiquincentennial: the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Today's young people are the leaders, innovators, and thinkers who will shape the next 250 years — and it's important their voices are heard as we commemorate this historic milestone.

America's Field Trip is a contest that invites students across the country in grades 3–12 to be part of America's 250th anniversary by sharing their perspectives on what America means to them — with the opportunity to earn an unforgettable field trip experience at some of the nation's most iconic historic and cultural landmarks. Students are asked to submit writing or original artwork in response to the contest's prompt: "What does America mean to you?"

Submissions will be accepted until Wednesday, April 16, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. ET.



LEARN MORE

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TEACHING SHAKESPEARE WITH UTAH SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

Have you ever felt completely lost trying to understand Shakespeare? Maybe you've sat through a performance feeling bewildered, or stumbled over the language while reading one of his plays. You're not alone! Many people find Shakespeare's works challenging, but the problem isn't Shakespeare himself – it's how he's often taught. The Utah Shakespeare Festival believes everyone can enjoy and appreciate the Bard, and their "Teaching Shakespeare" course can help you unlock the magic for yourself and your students. This immersive, four-day course, offered in beautiful Cedar City, Utah, provides practical and engaging strategies to make Shakespeare accessible and exciting.

What can you expect?

- Earn college credit: This course offers three university credits, enhancing your professional development.
- Interactive learning: Engage in hands-on activities and exercises that demystify Shakespeare's language and bring his works to life.
- Behind-the-scenes access: Go beyond the stage with tours and interactions with Festival company members, gaining unique insights into the world of Shakespearean theater.
- Ready-to-use resources: Receive lesson plans, handouts, and assessments designed for immediate classroom application.
- Experience the magic: Your course fee includes tickets to four Utah Shakespeare Festival plays, allowing you to experience Shakespeare's genius firsthand.

If you're looking to deepen your understanding of Shakespeare and discover innovative ways to share his brilliance with your students, this course is for you. Summer in Cedar City is truly enchanting, offering a perfect escape to learn, grow, and be inspired.

Interested in other professional development opportunities at the Utah Shakespeare Festival? Visit the [USF Education webpage](#), email educationprograms@bard.org for general information, or contact "Teaching Shakespeare" instructor Shawnda Moss directly at bsmossfam@gmail.com with specific questions.

LEARN MORE



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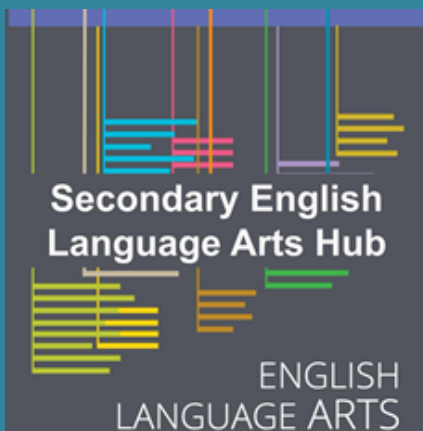
UTAH FILM FESTIVAL WORKSHOPS

Calling all content creators and future filmmakers! Tumbleweeds workshops give kids the tools to tell great stories and up their filmmaking game! Our workshops will feature filmmaking and camera use, editing, green screen, stop motion animation, and MORE! These hands-on workshops will have your kids making awesome content they can share with their friends, family and beyond.

[LEARN MORE](#)



UEN SECONDARY ELA MEDIA HUB



UEN has curated a hub for secondary ELA resources. Phase 1 is now live, and we will be continuing to evaluate and add resources. If you have quality online resources that you frequently use, feel free to send them my way so we can get them on the hub.



[LEARN MORE](#)



BOOK LOVE

F O U N D A T I O N

The Book Love Foundation seeks teachers who demonstrate a passion for promoting a hunger for books. These teachers recognize the diversity of every class of readers, and they challenge each student to build an independent reading life of increasing depth and joy. Teachers who apply for a Book Love Foundation grant must demonstrate that they are already committed to the support of readers through current classroom practices such as maintaining access to a range of books, conferring regularly and purposefully to understand and support students' changing needs, and sharing their own contagious passion for reading inside and outside of their classroom. Read about the requirements for a grant, and then apply for either a classroom library or book clubs.

TeachingBooks is...

a dynamic, PreK–12 a dynamic collection of resources that strives to deepen understanding, engagement and joy of the books they are reading.. With hundreds of thousands of engaging video, audio, and online resources, TeachingBooks brings to life the books that are enjoyed in your community.

Access Directions

1. Go to www.TeachingBooks.net/Utah
2. Sign in with your school email address
3. Start exploring and enjoy!

To explore without logging in, visit <https://onlinelibrary.uen.org/>



For assistance, please email accounts@TeachingBooks.net or call 216-573-6886 (press 2).



Image courtesy of Bryan Collier

Exploration Suggestions



Search for resources about a book, author/illustrator, or subject, using the search box on the top of the screen.



Explore the resources, including Meet-the-Author interviews, Read-along Book Recordings, Leveled Lesson Plans, Video Book Trailers, Literature-based Vocabulary Lists, and more.



Browse the books, authors, lists, series, awards, and collections. Highlights include...

- Grade Level, Genre, and Cultural Area exploration.
- Diverse Books Collection
- Meet-the-Author and Illustrator Original Resource Collection



Share tools provide immediate access to the book and author resources of your choice. No sign-in required.

Distribute via...

- QR Code Printables
- Any Digital Platform



Technological Highlights



Any Device

including phones, tablets, and computers, deliver literacy connections to everyone in your community.



Home Screen Button

for Apple and Android devices includes scanning a barcode to immediately have resources for the book in your hand!



Integration

into Clever, Canvas, Classlink, Google Classroom, and more.



Sharing tools

so that teachers, students, administrators, and families can seamlessly learn about and access materials via email, text, QR code flyers, and more.

Utah TeachingBooks Webinars

Visit <https://www.uen.org/uosl/webinar-archive.shtml> to access current webinars and trainings.

Activities & Lessons



Book Readings



Book Trailers



Games



TeachingBooks®
Where books come to life

Author Interviews



Want to learn more?

TeachingBooks.net/QuickStart



Questions?

800-596-0710

accounts@TeachingBooks.net

TeachingBooks.net/Help

READY TO ADVANCE YOUR CAREER

Master's of Education (M.Ed) in Literacy Education AND Secondary Literacy Interventionist Endorsement

Literacy Education at the University of Utah develops literacy professionals and leaders in a variety of educational settings

Contact Us:
Program Director, Dr. Claire Son
literacy@utah.edu

Program Overview

Our program provides research-based professional education, dedicated to develop exemplary practitioners and leaders in the field of literacy. We are committed to support research-informed teaching practices to ensure literacy learning for all students.

Students can take individual endorsement courses, which can count toward a master's degree in literacy education (33 credits).



Secondary Literacy Interventionist Endorsement

We offer USBE approved courses to fulfill all ten competency areas for Secondary Literacy Interventionist Endorsement.

- (Area 1) EDPS 6711-030 Foundations of Literacy
- (Area 2) EDPS 6631-030 Assessment and Intervention
- (Area 3) EDPS 6126-030 Content Area Literacy Instruction
- (Areas 4,5,6) EDPS 6713-030 Literacy Acquisition
- (Area 7) EDPS 6840-030 Vocabulary
- (Area 8) EDPS 6714-030 Comprehension
- (Area 9) EDPS 6130-030 Writing
- (Area 10) EDPS 6124-030 Children & Adolescent Literature in the School

A Different Kind of Program

Our courses are fully online with summer and evening classes to accommodate a working schedule of professionals, including:

- PreK-12 educators
- Literacy specialists
- Reading coaches
- School media/library specialists
- Special education teachers
- School administrators

Our core courses are offered at a significantly reduced rate for educators. Merit-based scholarships are available for master's students.

With rolling admission, you can start your study during any semester.





Earn your Secondary Literacy Interventionist endorsement

The School of Teacher Education and Leadership is now offering 5 courses that will count towards a Secondary Literacy Interventionist endorsement through the Utah State Board of Education. Join us and finish your endorsement in just 3 semesters! This sequence of endorsement courses can be started during any semester and will be offered yearly. For more information on literacy courses at USU, contact Dr. Marla Robertson: marla.robertson@usu.edu.

All courses will be offered either online or through synchronous broadcast over Zoom. Students are not required to attend through a USU campus.

Courses (3 credits each):

- TEAL 5380 Effective Writing Instruction
- TEAL 5320 Foundations of Literacy*
- TEAL 6350 Literacy Assessment and Intervention
- TEAL 6340 Adolescent Literacy Development and Engagement
- TEAL 6310 Multi-Component Literacy Instruction and Interventions

**If you have completed LETRS training, you can be exempt from taking TEAL 5320.*

These courses can also count towards a Master of Education in Curriculum & Instruction at USU. To learn more about graduate programs visit cehs.usu.edu/teal/graduate/master-of-ed or contact Dr. Max Longhurst: max.longhurst@usu.edu.

To view the Secondary Literacy Interventionist endorsement application scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/SIL-endorsementapplication



Emma Eccles Jones
College of Education & Human Services
UtahStateUniversity

