

# Successful Learning Conference: Masterclass

## Inclusive Reading Instruction: Integrating high-leverage practices, quality environment and emotional supports

Wednesday 1 July 2026, 9.00am-3.00pm | **Online by ZOOM**



***This full-day masterclass focuses on integrating explicit, high-leverage reading instruction with consideration of contextual and emotional factors that influence learning, with a particular emphasis on reading anxiety. Drawing on current research and classroom-based examples, the session is designed to support teachers in strengthening core literacy instruction while also recognising and addressing barriers that may interfere with students' reading progress.***

Evidence-based reading instruction is foundational to improving literacy outcomes for students across grade levels. A strong evidence base has identified high-leverage instructional practices that support reading achievement. However, with many students continuing to struggle to read proficiently, attention to the instructional environment and students' emotional experiences is warranted. For many students, particularly those with persistent reading difficulties, factors such as the classroom environment and reading-related anxiety may impact their learning.

The masterclass begins by examining what it means for classrooms to be safe and conducive to learning. Participants will explore how instructional design, routines, and teacher responses can either support or undermine students' willingness to engage with challenging academic tasks, particularly reading. This discussion situates wellbeing as a condition for learning rather than a separate instructional goal or add-on.

The session provides in-depth instruction on three high-leverage reading practices that can be implemented across settings: word-level reading and phonics instruction, vocabulary instruction, and explicit instruction. Building on this instructional foundation, this class then addresses reading anxiety. Participants will learn how reading anxiety may manifest in classroom settings, how it can be identified and assessed within instructional contexts, and why students with reading difficulties may experience elevated levels of reading anxiety compared to peers. The session will share practical, school-appropriate approaches for supporting students who experience reading anxiety.

Finally, the masterclass addresses how academic and emotional supports can be embedded within classrooms. Throughout the day, teachers will engage with case studies, explicit reading instruction materials, and engage in group discussions to support transfer to classroom and school contexts.

By integrating explicit reading instruction with attention to the learning environment and emotional factors, specifically reading anxiety, this masterclass offers a research-informed, practical approach to supporting reading development for diverse learners in inclusive classrooms.

*By the end of this masterclass, teachers will learn:*

- How to establish a safe classroom environment and why this foundation is essential for student learning.
- Three high-leverage reading instructional practices that can be used across different settings and grades, including word-level reading and phonics, vocabulary instruction, and explicit comprehension instruction.
- How to recognise, assess, and manage reading anxiety within classroom instruction.
- How academic and emotional supports can be embedded across classrooms and within broader school frameworks.

## Presented by:

**Sarah Fishstrom**, Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education - College of Education, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, US

Sarah Fishstrom is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Special Education, College of Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She has over 15 years of experience across K–12 and university contexts, with a focus on improving reading outcomes for students with learning difficulties.

Dr Fishstrom's research explores the intersection of anxiety and learning difficulties, with particular attention to reading difficulties and reading anxiety. A former National Board-Certified teacher in New York City Public Schools, she brings a decade of classroom experience to her academic work and is committed to advancing evidence-based reading instruction while also supporting teacher and student wellbeing.

In addition to her research, Dr Fishstrom supports pre-service and in-service teachers in building knowledge and confidence in instructional practices. Her work emphasises integrating academic instruction with social–emotional considerations, particularly anxiety, as well as culturally responsive reading practices for diverse classrooms. She recently developed well-being modules for the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa College of Education and currently collaborates with the Hawai'i Department of Education on a train-the-trainer initiative to support adolescent students with reading difficulties.

Through her teaching, research, and professional collaborations, including international partnerships, Dr Fishstrom is committed to advancing inclusive, evidence-informed educational practices that support students in reaching their academic potential.



## Registration & Fees

\$330pp GST Incl. (1 day masterclass)  
Includes full-day online masterclass attendance & electronic resources bundle.

Please register online from the following link:  
[Masterclass Registration](#).

To view all Successful Learning Conference registration options please visit the Successful Learning Conference website at [SLC 2026](#).

## For enquiries please contact:

Rachel Payne | Office of Professional Learning  
Sydney School of Education and Social Work  
T +61 2 9351 8520  
E [rachel.payne@sydney.edu.au](mailto:rachel.payne@sydney.edu.au)