George Mason University
Graduate School of Education

EDRD 831 Foundations of Literacy: Adolescence through Adulthood
Fall 2005

PROFESSOR: Dr. Bill Brozo
Office: Robinson A 451
Phone: 703-993-3894
Email: wbrozo@gmu.edu
Fax: 703-993-2013
Mailing Address: MSN 4B3, Graduate School of Education, George Mason University
Fairfax, VA 22030

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisites: EDUC 800 and EDRS 810
The doctoral seminar explores theory, research, and practice related to adolescent and adult literacy. Topics include influences on adolescents' and adults' literacy practice and development, current and historical understanding of literacy, connections between literacy and learning in the content areas, and needs of diverse learners. Students study both a common core of research literature and topics of individual interest.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

This course will be taught from an inquiry-oriented perspective. Students will have the opportunity to develop and explore their own questions about adolescent and/or adult literacy that are meaningful to them, given their work to this point in the doctoral program. Each individual will propose and conduct a project based on her/his own interests and learning needs. The choice for individual projects should be based on what has already been accomplished in previous graduate coursework as well as goals that have been set in the doctoral portfolio. Projects will be negotiated individually with the professor.

      A. Students will set personal goals for their own continuing development as scholars and researchers

      B. Students will develop questions related to aspects of interest in adolescent and/or adult literacy and will develop a scholarly project or paper to address those questions.

    C. Students will read and analyze research studies and research reviews related to adolescent and adult literacy

REQUIRED TEXTS

A list of readings to be found on electronic databases will be supplied in class.

* Students will also need access to the American Psychological Association Manual, 5th Edition

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

I. Portfolio
Students will create a course portfolio to document their learning related to the student outcomes listed above. The complete portfolio will be due on 11/21. Some assignments within the portfolio will have separate due dates.

All Portfolios will include:
    A. Goal statement regarding what you wish to gain from the course (2-3 pages) Due 9/12.
    B. Reflections on all course readings (See format and expectations in syllabus). Ongoing due dates.
    C. Reflection on what you learned as a result of the readings, activities, and projects. Include the areas you want to explore further both in terms of the the content of the course and your skills as a scholar/researcher. (2-3 pages)

II. Article Discussion Leadership
Each student will be responsible for interpreting and engaging her/his peers in discussion around one of the required articles. (See assignment details in syllabus)

III. Term Project
Each individual will write a proposal for research project or conduct a mini-project focusing on some aspect of adolescent or adult literacy. All students will present a brief oral summary of what they learned and accomplished through the project on the final class session. (See format and expectations in syllabus).

IV. Class Participation
Students are expected to attend all classes and participate actively. If an emergency prevents attendance, please discuss the situation with the professor.

* All assignments will be graded on a *Pass* or *In Progress* basis. A *Pass* grade converts to an "A".   An *In Progress* grade means the student's work has not yet achieved a *Pass* grade and s/he will be expected to continue improving the assignment until a *Pass* grade is achieved. If necessary, the student will be offered the option of taking an *Incomplete* for the course in order to finish work at a *Pass* level.

TENTATIVE AGENDA

Session 1, Aug 29	Course Introduction & Requirements
Session 2, Sep 5	NO CLASS – Labor Day Holiday

Session 3, Sep 12	The Landscape of Adolescent Literacy
	    Moje, Young, Readence & Moore, 2000
	    Alvermann, 2001; Gee 2001

Session 4, Sep 19	Youth Culture and Adolescent Identites
	     Moje, 2002; Gee 2000
	     ADL

Session 5, Sep 26	Pop Culture and Youth Literacies
	    Dimitriadis, 2001; Finders, 1998/99
	    Morrell, 2002
	     ADL

Session 6, Oct 3	Multiliteracies in the Everyday Lives of Youth
	     Hinchman, Alvermann, Boyd, Brozo & Vacca,
	    Alvermann, 2003;
	     ADL

Session 7, Oct 10	Youth's Multiliteracies
	     Kinzer, 2003
	     ADL

Session 8, Oct 17	NO CLASS -- work on projects
Session 9, Oct 24	NO CLASS – work on projects

Session 10, Oct 31	Youth's Voices in Educational Reform
	     Brozo, in press
	     Cook-Sather, 2002
	     ADL

Session 11, Nov 7	Supporting Academic Literacy
	  Behrman, 2003
	   ADL

Session 12, Nov 14	Supporting Academic Literacy
	  Greenleaf, et. al., 2001
	   ADL

Session 13, Nov 21	Stuggling & Reluctant Adolescent Readers
	  O'Brien, 2001; Guthrie & Davis, 2003
	   ADL

Session 14, Nov 28	Diverse Learners
	  Hawkins, 2004
	   ADL

Session 15, Dec 5	TBA
Session 16, Dec 12	Presentations of Final Projects

GENERAL INFORMATION

Email Access
Students must have access to email and the internet, either at home, work or GMU campus. GMU provides students with free email accounts which must be accessed for information sent from the university or the Graduate School of Education. Go to http://mason.gmu.edu/ for information on accessing.

Honor Code
To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of George Mason University and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the members of George Mason University, have set forth the following code of honor. Any individual who is caught in the act of cheating, attempting to cheat, plagiarizing, or stealing will be brought forth before a council of their peers. In the event that the individual is found guilty, he or she will be punished accordingly. For further information, please refer to the University Catalog or Website at www.gmu.edu. Code in the University catalog can be found online at http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html.

George Mason University Policy on Disabilities
This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the series, programs, or activities of all State and local Governments. Under ADA a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as: learning, working, walking, speaking, hearing, breathing, and/or taking care of oneself. If a student has a disability and needs course adaptations or accommodations because of that disability, it must be established with the faculty, in writing, at the beginning of the semester so arrangements can be made. Please call the Disability Resource Center for required documentation (703-993-2474). The Disability Resource Center website is at http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/.

REQUIRED READINGS

Alvermann, D. (2001). *Effective literacy instruction for adolescents* (Executive summary

and paper commissioned by the National Reading Conference). Retrieved

August 4, 2005 from http://nrconline.org/documents/2001/alverwhite2.pdf

Alvermann, D. (2003). *Seeing themselves as capable and engaged readers: Adolescents*

and re/mediated instruction. Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates.

(http://www.ncrel.org/litweb/reader/readers.pdf)

Behrman, E. (2003). Reconciling content literacy with adolescent literacy: Expanding

literacy opportunities in a community-focused biology class. *Reading Research*

and Instruction, *43*, 1-30. (ProQuest Database)

Brozo, W.G. (in press). Tales out of school: Accounting for adolescents in a literacy

reform community. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. (Available as email

attachment)

Cook-Sather, A. (2002). Authorizing students' perspectives: Toward trust, dialogue, and

change in education. *Educational Researcher*, *31*, 3-14.

(http://scholar.google.com)

Dimitriadis, G. (2001). "In the clique": Popular culture, constructions of place, and the everyday lives of urban youth. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *32*, 29-51. (ProQuest Database)

Finders, M.J. (1998/1999). Raging hormones: Stories of adolescence and the implications for teacher preparation. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *42*, 252-265. (ProQuest Database)

Gee, J.P. (2001). Reading as situated language: A sociocognitive perspective. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *44*, 714-725. (ProQuest Database)

Gee, J. P. (2000). Teenagers in new times: A new literacy studies perspective. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *43*, 412-420. (ProQuest Database)

Greenleaf, C., Schoenbach, R., Cziko, C., & Mueller, F. (2001). Apprenticing adolescent readers to academic literacy. *Harvard Educational Review*, *71*, 79-127. (ProQuest Database)

Guthrie, J., & Davis, M. (2003). Motivating struggling readers in middle school through an engagement model of classroom practice. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, *19*, 59-85. (http://www.education.umd.edu/EDHD/faculty2/Guthrie/reading.pdf)

Hawkins, M.R. (2004). Researching English language and literacy development in schools. *Educational Researcher*, *33*, 14-25. (http://scholar.google.com)

Hinchman, K., Alvermann, D., Boyd, F., Brozo, W., & Vacca, R. (2003-04). Supporting older students' in- and out-of-school literacies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *47*, 304-310. (ProQuest Database)

Kinzer, C. (2003 June). The importance of recognizing and expanding boundaries of literacy. *Reading Online*, *6*. Available: http://www.readingonline.org/electronic/

elec_index.asp?HREF=/electronic/kinzer/index/.html

Moje, E.B. (2002). Re-framing adolescent literacy research for new times: Studying

youth as a resource. *Reading Research and Instruction*, *41*, 211-228.

(ProQuest Database)

Moje, E.B., Young, J.P., Readence, J.E., & Moore, D.W. (2000). Reinventing adolescent

literacy for new times: Perennial and millennial issues. *Journal of Adolescent &*

Adult Literacy, *43*, 400-410. (ProQuest Database)

Morrell, E. (2002). Toward a critical pedagogy of popular culture: Literacy development

among urban youth. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *46*, 72-77.

(ProQuest Database)

O'Brien, D.G. (2001). "At-risk" adolescents: Redefining competence through the

multiliteracies of intermediality, visual arts, and representation. *Reading*

Online, *4*(11). Available: http://www.readingonline.org/newliteracies/lit_

Index.asp?HREF=/newliteracies/obrien/index.html

SUGGESTED READINGS

Alvermann, D. (2002). *Adolescents and literacies in a digital world*. New York:

Peter Lang.

Ancess, J. (2003). *Beating the odds: High schools as communities of practice*. New York:

Teachers College Press.

Bean, T. (2000). Reading in the content areas: Social constructivist dimensions. In M.L.

Kamil, P.D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (Vol. 3,

pp. 631-644). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Braunger, J., Donahue, D., Evans, K., & Galguera, T. (2005). *Rethinking preparation for content area teaching: The reading apprenticeship approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Goodman, S. (2003). *Teaching youth media: A critical guide to literacy, video production, and social change*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Hull G., & Schultz, K. (2002). *School's out! Bridging out-of-school literacies with class-room practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Jackson, A.W., & Davis, G.A. (2000). *Turning points 2000: Educating adolescents in the 21st century*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Jetton, T. L., & Dole, J. A. (Eds.). (2004). *Adolescent literacy research and practice*. New York: Guilford.

Knobel, M. (1998). *Everyday literacies: Students, discourse, and social practice.* New York: Peter Lang.

Lesko, N. (2001). *Act your age! A cultural construction of adolescence*. New York: Routledge Falmer.

Males, M. A. (1996). *The scapegoat generation*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

McDonald, K. (1999). *Struggles for subjectivity: Identity, action and youth experiences*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sturtevant, E., Boyd, F., Brozo, W.G., Hinchman, K., Alvermann, D., & Moore, D. (2006). *Principled practices for adolescent literacy: A framework for instruction and policy*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

FORMAT FOR WRITING A REFLECTION ON COURSE READINGS

For each course reading, use the following format and subheadings to type a one page reflection:

- **Article Title & Author**
    in APA format

- **Author's Most Significant Points**
    1 paragraph summary of the author's points you found to be most significant

- **Text to Self Connections**
    1-2 paragraphs about how the article contributes to your own professionalism

- **Questions and Criticisms**
    1 paragraph of doubts, challenges, and lingering questions

ARTICLE DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP

Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you the opportunity to read, analyze, and interpret the research articles and readings in the course pack for your peers.

Completion Procedures

1. Identify one article over which to lead discussion. The article should be taken from the course readings. There will be no overlap.

2. Read, analyze, and format its presentation around the following aspects of the article:

   - purpose
   - main points
   - type of research and methodology, if relevant
   - conclusions
   - implications for research and practice
   - personal responses and reactions

3. Discussants should also devise ways of engaging the class in critical conversation and reflection on the article. Demonstrations, simulations, role-plays, and debates are recommended.

4. PowerPoint slides, overheads, and/or handouts should accompany the article presentations and discussions.

6. Article discussion leaders should plan 30 minutes for their article discussions.

Evaluation

Article discussants will be given a grade based on (a) how well they planned and coordinated the presentation and discussion of the article; (b) how succinctly and understandably key information from the article was presented; and (c) the extent to which the discussants used engaging techniques for bringing all students into critical conversation about the article.

TERM PROJECT

Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you the opportunity to conduct a scholarly exploration of an area of interest in adolescent or adult literacy. A report will be written as a result of your exploration that will take the form of either a research proposal or a report of a mini-research project.

Completion Procedures for the Research Proposal

1. Identify an issue/aspect of adolescent or adult literacy to research

    This should be something that concerns/interests you at the present time. It may be related to something that has evolved out of your teaching experience, or it may be something that has piqued your interest from the course readings.

2. Seek Knowledge

    There are many sources for acquiring information about your research concern. First and foremost, review the related literature. Consult journals, books, year-books, etc.

3. Plan and Implement Research

    Based on your research concern, plan specific steps to carry out with groups of students or individuals. To refine your plan, it's helpful to pose questions that the research might answer or form hypotheses to be confirmed or disconfirmed.

    Your research might involve trying out strategies, administering criterion tasks, meeting with students, teachers, administrators for interviews, gathering verbal reports, administering interest and attitude scales, and/or observing students within genuine learning contexts.

4. Reflect on Research Results

    In this phase you should gather all the data related to your research concern and make interpretations relative to your research questions/hypotheses. All inter-pretations and assertions should be supportable by the data.

    Another important aspect of the reflection phase of research is to consider the implications of the findings. You should focus your attention on how the research results might affect your teaching, your interactions with students, or future research you may conduct.

KEEPING A RESEARCH LOG AND WRITING THE REPORT

The research log might be viewed as a journal kept during the research process. From the very beginning of the process it should contain running prose of your thoughts, machinations, feelings, doubts, concerns, attempts, and reflections on the process. Like a journal, the log should have dated entries. The research log should be handed in with your report.

The research report should contain and be written according to the following sections:

- **Introduction and Literature Review**

  This section should include a clear description of your research concern, research question(s), and a brief discussion of the professional literature related to your concern.

- **Description of Methods**

  In this section describe how you implemented your research. Include a description of subjects (i.e., students, teachers, administrators), the context of the research, the strategies and materials (put in an appendix sample material), the number and total time of each research session, and a complete description of the methodologies.

- **Results and Findings**

  In this section, indicate what you discovered or found as a result of your research. Focus on results that are related to your research concern and answer your research questions or shed light on your research hypotheses.

- **Discussion/Reflection**

  In this section reflect on the findings of your research and discuss what they mean to you as a teacher and scholar.

Length

Your research logs will vary in length, so it is impossible to fix an exact page limit. If you are using the log appropriately—as a sounding board and a reflection on the research process—it should have many regular entries.

Your research reports should be no more than 15 double-spaced pages in length, excluding references and appendices.

Completion Procedures for the Research Proposal

1. Formulate a research question that is simply stated and clear. This question should be related to adolescent or adult literacy and that concerns or interests you at the present time. Be sure to discuss why an answer to your particular research question is worth seeking; in other words, what would it mean in terms of the advancement of our knowledge of literacy and literacy practices.

2. Review the literature likely to address this question. The information gleaned from your sources should support the need for further research on the question, whether calls for replication of or new directions of inquiry based on previous work.

3. Formulate your research design by including the following information:

  - description of subject(s)
  - description of all materials and how they would be utilized
  - description of any instruments you would use, such as checklists, surveys, naturalistic assessments, written protocols, etc. and how they would be used
  - thorough discussion of the procedures you would use to collect data and what would be required of your subject(s)
  - how you would evaluate and interpret data

Be sure to thoroughly describe exactly what the subject(s) would do over the course of the study. For instance, if you design a quasi-experiment you will need to specify how the activities of the "treatment" group differ from the "control" group. Be very clear here.

4. Discuss the implications of your potential findings. Speculate on what it would mean if your data pointed in one direction versus another. Focus your discussion on implications relative to the advancement of knowledge about literacy and literacy practices.

5. Include a complete list of references in correct APA format.

6. Append all appropriate materials.

The research proposal should contain and be written according to the following sections:

  - **Research Question and Rationale**
  - **Review of Literature**
  - **Research Design**
  - **Potential Implications**

Length

Your research proposal should be no more than 20 double-spaced pages in length, excluding references and appendices.