

**George Mason University
Graduate School of Education**

EDRD 619-002 (3 credits)
Literacy in the Content Areas
Fall 2010, Section 001
Thursdays, 7:20 – 10:00 p.m.
September 2 – December 9, 2010
Robinson Hall B228

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Hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Credit hours: 3

Description: Offers understanding of language and literacy process as it applies to teaching in secondary schools. Emphasizes reading and writing in content areas, and instructional strategies to support students' literacy development. Focuses on ways reading, writing, speaking, and listening are developed and used in learning discipline-specific curriculum, including adaptations for culturally diverse and exceptional learners.

Prerequisites

Methods I (EDCI 567, 569, 572, or 573) and Methods II (EDCI 667, 669, 672, or 673).

Corequisite

EDCI 790 Internship.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

1. Students will demonstrate understanding of how content area learning can be enhanced through reading, writing, and language-based strategies.
2. Students will plan and demonstrate a lesson that integrates literacy with instruction in their own teaching specialty or content area.
3. Students will survey adolescent literature, media, and other print, visual, or technological resources that can be used to connect reading, writing and other

language arts to their teaching specialty or content area. From these resources a book talk will be presented.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

The following course requirements will be explained in detail during class meetings:

Assignment	Point Value
Class Participation	25
Group Chapter Strategy Demonstration	25
Article Reflection	30
Motivational Strategy Share	25
Student Interview	20
Content Area Alternative Texts Collection	35
TOTAL	160

Final grades are calculated as a percent of total points earned:

A	= 90% - 100%	160 – 144 pts.
B	= 89% - 80%	143 -- 129
C	= 79% - 70%	128 -- 112
D	= 69% - 60%	111 -- 95
F	= 59% or lower	94 --

CLASS PARTICIPATION POLICY

To maximize the benefit of this interactive content literacy course, students are expected to attend and participate actively in every class session. Attendance for book talk and strategy share sessions is especially critical. Attendance is all that is required to earn the full 25 points for class participation. For each session you are absent, 5 points will be deducted from your class participation grade. Attendance will be taken beginning on the second class session. The only exclusions are class cancellations by the university or the professor.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK/READINGS

Brozo, W.G., & Simpson, M.L. (2007). *Content literacy for today's adolescents: Honoring diversity and building competence*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

The National Reading Panel Summary Report:

<http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Publications/publications.htm>

Alliance for Excellence in Education's Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas: Getting to the Core of Middle and High School Improvement:

http://www.all4ed.org/publication_material/adlit

GENERAL INFORMATION

Email Access

Students must have access to email and the Internet, either at home, work, or on the GMU campus. GMU provides students with free email accounts that 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 email.

GSE Statements of Expectations

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. Professional dispositions are expected of all members of the GSE community. Please go to <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

ASSIGNMENTS

ARTICLE REFLECTION

Write a 2-4 page reflection on three peer-reviewed articles. Reflections should begin with a very brief description of each articles, followed by how the articles are similar, how they differ, and your reflection on each article how it can be used in your teaching practice, and your overall impressions of the articles and their content. Plan to discuss in class.

CHAPTER STRATEGY DEMONSTRATION

Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you the opportunity to bring to life a strategy from the textbook in a group led strategy demonstration.

Completion Procedures

1. Form a team of 5-6 students to collaborate on the assignment.
2. Your group will be assigned a chapter of the textbook.
3. From your assigned chapter identify a strategy that can be discussed and demonstrated for the class. Your demonstration should include the following:
 - A brief description of the strategy
 - A brief description of the professional literature supporting the strategy
 - A brief explanation about why your group selected the particular strategy
 - An explanation about how the strategy can be used in at least two different content areas (e.g., science and history)
 - Examples of strategy applications
 - Questions, issues, or challenges for other students in the class to consider when thinking about using the strategy in their classrooms
 - Time to discuss the issues, answer questions, think through challenges related to ways of applying the strategy in the other students' classrooms
4. PowerPoint slides, overheads, and handouts should accompany the Chapter Strategy Demonstration
5. Chapter Strategy Demonstration Team should plan 15-20 minutes for the activity.

Evaluation Strategy Demonstration Team will be given a grade based on (a) effective planning and coordinating of the presentation and discussion of the strategy; (b) how succinctly and understandably key information about the strategy was presented; and (c) the extent to which the demonstration used engaging techniques for helping students understand how to apply the strategy in their particular teaching contexts.

**CONTENT TEACHER INTERVIEW, ALTERNATIVE TEXTS COLLECTION
AND MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY**

FINAL PROJECT

Part 1: Adolescent Interview Procedures

1. Identify an adolescent or pre-adolescent to interview. Preferably, this would be a youth-of-color and/or an English language learner. The youth may be a student from your own middle or secondary class or school, or someone from your neighborhood, a relation, etc. (Be sure to gain parental permission, if necessary.)
2. Conduct an interview of the youth using the following guidelines and protocol:
 - * Psychological/Motivational
Outside-of-school interests; reading and writing interests; skills and strategies; literate identity
 - * Sociological
Preferred instructional context; funds of knowledge; culture
 - * Linguistic
Language development issues

Required Interview Questions

- What kind of reading do you do outside of school? (name books, magazines, favorite authors, etc.)
- What kinds of things do you do outside of school? What do you like to do the most? (specific activities as glimpses into out-of-school literacies and/or print experiences)
- How would you characterize yourself as a reader? (self-description of ability and attitude and literate identity)
- What skills and strategies do you use when you read? (particularly relevant for school-based reading)
- What kinds of opportunities have you had or do you have at home for reading? (gets at home and cultural values of reading and literacy)
- Do your parents like to read? (Describe)
- Do you go to the library and bookstores? (Describe)
- What do you like the most and/or least about reading in school? (instructional/social context of school)
- How could school reading be made more enjoyable to you? (instructional/social context of school)
- What opportunities and experiences have you had and do you have for learning English? (relevant to English language learners)
- How do you think your ability with English influences your ability to read English? (gets at identity and metalinguistic awareness)

- (Other relevant questions at your discretion)

Draft the following and post on Blackboard by October 28.

- Interview Subject and Context** (1/2 page) Provide the first name or a pseudonym of the student. Explain why the student was chosen for your interview. Include the date and time of the interview and where it took place.
- Interview Findings** (2 - 3 pages) Summarize the student's responses to the interview questions.
- Reflection** (1/2 page) Reflect on your findings.

Part 2: Content Alternative Test Collection

This assignment is designed to: (a) help you discover the importance of multiple perspectives on subject area topics; (b) incorporate livelier texts into content area teaching; and (3) identifying a motivational strategy to teach content area subject.

Completion Procedures

- Identify a disciplinary topic (e.g., manifest destiny – history; biomes – science, etc.) you are likely to teach in your classroom in the coming weeks/months.
- Collect the following reading pieces related to your topic that will likely be of high interest to the student you interviewed. Listed are the minimums and categories may overlap. If you find other pieces you would like to include you are welcome to do so; however, your collection must have:
 - * At least one reading from the perspective of a person of non-white-European Background
 - * At least one reading from the perspective of an English language learner or Nonstandard English speaker
 - * At least one reading from the perspective of a woman
 - * Two magazine articles (from popular magazines for adults or teens)
 - * Two newspaper articles
 - * Two Web sites
 - * One nonfiction book
 - * One young adult novel
 - * One comic book or graphic novel
- Identify a motivational strategy that could be used to engage your student in learning the disciplinary topic identified. Be prepared to share this strategy with the class.
- Write a short paper (8 or more double-spaced pages) with the following components/subheadings:
 - Interview Subject and Context*** (1/2 page) Provide the first name or a pseudonym of the student. Explain why the student was chosen for your interview. Include the date and time of the interview and where it took place.

- B. **Summarize Interview Findings** (2 pages) Summarize the student's responses to the interview questions.
- C. **Citations, Annotations & Rationales** (4or more pages) – provide a full bibliographic citation for each source using APA format; briefly describe each source and its connection to the disciplinary topic and why you think it will appeal to adolescents. *Sources should not be older than ten years.*
- D. **Strategies for Teaching with the Sources** (1 page)– propose some approaches and strategies you would use for engaging the student with these alternative texts as opposed to simply assigning them. Be sure your strategy suggestions are applied specifically to the source content. Also this should also be tied to your motivational strategy.
- E. **Motivational Strategy for Teaching the Disciplinary Topic Identified** (1 page)– write a brief description of the motivational strategy identified and how it will be used to teach the disciplinary topic identified. In addition include a justify of the strategies use based on current research and how it will be used to engage adolescent.
- F. **Reflection** (1/2 to 1 page). Reflect upon the interview, the collection and the strategies.
- G. **Reference**. Reference research that support strategies used in D and E.

5. Share 2-3 pieces of your collection.

Evaluation This assignment will be evaluated based on (a) the appropriateness of the alternative texts to the disciplinary topic; (b) the succinctness of the annotations; (c) the relevance of the teaching suggestions; and (d) overall clarity, APA, and editing.

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGY

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you the opportunity to design a reading and learning strategy that would be motivating for the youth you interviewed. It is also meant to give you experience providing lesson demonstrations for your colleagues. The assignment requires you to (a) take the class through a short demonstration of the strategy activity, and (b) hand in a written narrative with supporting material.

Completion Procedures

1. Find 2 other classmates to work as a team on the motivational strategy.
2. Identify a content area topic from a typical middle/high school classroom (e.g., science – photosynthesis; history – the Holocaust; etc.) that the youth you interviewed is likely to encounter.
3. Reflecting with your group on the student you interviewed and craft a readiness to learn strategy for the topic that you think would be motivating to her/him. Motivation strategies allow a tremendous variety of creative options because

- they're activities that do not necessarily assume a great deal of prior knowledge for the topic.
4. Prepare a 10 – 12 minute strategy activity for the class. Be sure your classmates are actually “doing” the strategy. You are not simply describing it. Allow the class to simulate the experience of engaging in the strategy. Make necessary handouts and/or other appropriate material.
 5. Write a brief (2 pages, double spaced) description of the strategy and how it would be taught in a content classroom that included the youth you interviewed. Use first-person narrative. Begin by describing where and with whom the strategy would be used and why it would be motivating to the youth. Next, describe sequentially how the strategy would be taught from start to finish.
 6. At the end of your strategy demonstration, be prepared to take questions from your peers
 7. Hand in a complete set of materials including the two page description of the strategy and all supporting documents (e.g., visual examples, “sample” student work, any other materials used in the share)

Evaluation

The Strategy Activity will be evaluated based on how well you followed the above directions. Critical in the evaluation will be (a) how engaging and interesting you made your strategy demonstration; (b) how clearly you describe the teaching of the motivational readiness strategy; (c) the soundness of your rationale for using the strategy with the youth you interviewed; (d) overall clarity and editing.

TENTATIVE AGENDA

- Session 1, September 2** **Course Introduction**
Assignment Explanations
Model “My Bag”
Chapter 1: Principled-Based Practices of Adolescent Literacy
Assignment Demonstration
Presentation Sign-up
- Session 2, September 9** **Content Area Strategies for At-Risk Youth**
Guest: Chad Ploskina and Kristin Bird
- Session 3, September 16** **Principled-Based Practices of Adolescent Literacy**
Comprehension Processes
Read Chapters 2 and Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas: Getting to the Core of Middle and High School Improvement
Chapter Strategy Demonstration (Chapter 11)
- Session 4, September 23** **Comprehension Processes**
Read Chapter 3
Chapter Strategy Demonstration (Chapter 3)
- Session 5, September 30** **Motivation for Literacy and Learning / Learning Strategies**
Read Chapter 5 and 9
Chapter Strategy Demonstration (Chapter 5)
- Session 6, October 7** *Library/Research/Writing*
- Session 7, October 14** **Assessment**
Read Chapter 4
Chapter Strategy Demonstration (Chapter 4)
- Session 8, October 21** **Expanding Word Knowledge**
Read Chapter 6
Chapter Strategy Demonstration (Chapter 6)
- Session 9, October 28** **Blackboard Posting: Student Interviews Due**
- Session 10, November 4** **Blackboard Posting: Article Summaries Due**
- Session 11, November 11** **Writing as a Tool for Active Learning**
Read Chapter 7
Chapter Strategy Demonstration (Chapter 7)

- Session 12, November 18** **Reflect on 2-3 pieces from your collection**
- Session, 13, December 2** **Collection and Motivational Strategy Presentations**
- Session 14, December 9** **Collection and Motivational Strategy Presentations**
Final Projects Due
Evaluations

NOTE: Sessions 6, 9, 10, 12 will be conducted on-blackboard. All other classes will be held in Robinson Hall, Room B228.