

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**Course**

EDCI 555: Literacy Teaching and Learning in Diverse Elementary Classrooms  
Fall 2010  
Section 616 – 3 credits

**Meeting Time**

Every other Wednesday 5:00-10:00  
Arlington campus – ARL 330 (move to 335 at the break)

**Instructor Information**

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Office hours by appointment

**Course Description**

This course provides a research-based introduction to literacy teaching and learning for children in grades K-6. The emphasis of the course is language development, components of learning to read, reading instruction, types of text, and writing instruction.

**Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organizations**

This course addresses priorities in the GSE master plan including literacy, technology, and diversity. It is designed as an integral component of the new Elementary Program for teachers of grades PK-6, and meets new state and national guidelines and standards including Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC); International Society for Technology in Education, (ISTE); and International Reading Association (IRA) Standards for Literacy Professionals and Paraprofessionals. This course will build closely upon themes taught in the first two elementary program courses and will integrate ideas from other elementary methods courses.

## **Student Outcomes**

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of reading as a cognitive, sociocultural, psychological, and linguistic process.
2. Students will reflect on their own literacy learning histories and connect these to current theories of reading instruction.
3. Students will observe and assess the reading development and needs of elementary learners.
4. Students will plan literacy lessons that demonstrate an understanding of connections between phonemic awareness, word recognition, fluency and comprehension strategies and proficient reading.
5. Students will plan literacy lessons that promote creative and critical thinking.
6. Students will plan lessons that facilitate reading fluency, reading comprehension and vocabulary development across content areas.
7. Students will plan lessons using strategies in literal, interpretive, critical, and evaluative comprehension.
8. Students will survey technological tools, print materials, and other resources for teaching reading.
9. Students will describe the literacy needs of diverse learners, including English Language Learners and students with other special needs, and they will adapt lesson plans to meet these needs.
10. Students will explore and explain the role of families, communities, and schools in children's literacy learning.
11. Students will understand the importance of promoting independent reading and reading reflectively by selecting quality literature, including fiction and non-fiction, at appropriate reading levels.
12. Students will demonstrate the ability to assess individual and group reading needs in a classroom situation and organize classroom instruction to facilitate the literacy development of all learners.

## **Nature of Course Delivery**

This course includes multiple instructional strategies. Individual session formats will vary and may include lecture, small group/ large group discussion, hands-on, interactive work, student presentations, and cooperative learning. Practical applications of theory will be explored via public school classroom-based assignments.

## **IRA Standards**

1. Foundational Knowledge
2. Instructional Strategies and Curriculum Materials
3. Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation
4. Creating a Literate Environment
5. Professional Development

## INTASC Core Standards

1. The teacher understand the **central concepts**, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.
2. The teacher understands **how children learn and develop**, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.
3. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to **diverse learners**.
4. The teacher understands and uses a **variety of instructional strategies** to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
5. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group **motivation** and behavior to create a learning environment encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
6. The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media **communication** techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
7. The teacher **plans** instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
8. The teacher understand and uses formal and informal **assessment** strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.
9. The teacher is a **reflective practitioner** who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professional in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.

## Mason Mission Statement

George Mason University will be an institution of international academic reputation providing a superior education enabling students to develop critical, analytical, and imaginative thinking and to make well founded ethical decisions. It will respond to the call for interdisciplinary research and teaching not simply by adding programs but by rethinking the traditional structure of the academy.

The University will prepare students to address the complex issues facing them in society and to discover meaning in their own lives. It will encourage diversity in its student body and will meet the needs of students by providing them with undergraduate, graduate, and professional courses of study that are interdisciplinary and innovative. The University will energetically seek ways to interact with and serve the needs of the student body.

The University will nurture and support a faculty that is diverse, innovative and excellent in teaching, active in pure and applied research, and responsive to the needs of students and the community. The faculty will embody the University's interactive approach to change both in the academy and in the world. The University will be a resource of the

Commonwealth of Virginia serving private and public sectors and will be an intellectual and cultural nexus between Northern Virginia, the nation, and the world. (Adopted January 1991)

### College of Education and Human Development Statement of Expectations

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See [www.gse.gmu.edu](http://www.gse.gmu.edu) for a listing of these dispositions.

- Students must follow the guidelines of the **University Honor Code**:

*To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: **Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.***

- 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.
- Mason strives to comply fully with the **Americans with Disabilities Act**. Students requesting accommodations based on disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services, [www.gmu.edu/student/drc](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc), located at SUB 1 Room 222, phone (703) 993-4306.

### Required Texts

Bear, D. R., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S., & Johnston, F. R. (2007). *Words their way: Word study for phonics, vocabulary, and spelling instruction* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Ellery, V. (2009). *Creating Strategic Readers: Techniques for Developing Competency in Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Olness, Rebecca (2005). *Using Literature to Enhance Writing Instruction: A Guide for K-5 Teachers*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement. (2008). *Put reading first: The research building blocks for teaching children to read* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BUY THIS BOOK – I WILL GIVE YOU A COPY**

## Recommended Texts

- Allington, R. L. (2005). *What really matters for struggling readers: Designing research-based programs* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Allyn & Bacon
- Duffy, G. G. (2003). *Explaining reading: A resource for teaching concepts, skills, and strategies*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Fountas, I. C. & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good first teaching for all children*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Miller, D. (2002). *Reading with meaning: Teaching comprehension in the primary grades*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Pressley, M. (2006). *Reading instruction that works: The case for balanced teaching* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). New York: Guilford.
- Routman, R. (2004). *Writing essentials: Raising expectations and results while simplifying teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Zarrillo, J. (2007). *Are you prepared to teach reading? A practical tool for self-assessment*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

## Assignments

### 1. Participation

Ongoing (15%)

This class is conducted in a manner that is intended to encourage the development of a community of learners. There is important content to be learned, and there are opportunities to learn from each other as we practice new skills in pairs and small groups. Your participation in class discussions and group work enhances the learning of all. Classroom participation grades will be determined by your participation and engagement in small group and whole class discussions, and by work produced and shared during in-class activities.

### 2. Vision Statement

Due 9/22/10 and 12/15/10 (20%)

Exemplary teachers are passionate about teaching, and they know *why* they are passionate. That is, they can articulate a vision for what they are trying to do in their instruction and what influence they want to have on their students.

You will submit two versions of your vision during the course. The first will be due to the instructor on September 22nd. This first version will describe your vision for teaching. Allow the following questions to guide you: Why did you choose to teach? What are you passionate about teaching your students to learn or to do? What do you want to instill in your students? The first vision statement should not exceed three pages.

You will revise your vision throughout the course based on new learning, continued reading of professional sources, consultation with colleagues, and additional personal experiences and reflection. However, the revised vision will also address the tasks, activities, and experiences you will implement in your classroom that will help you achieve your vision. A final version will be due to the instructor on December 15. This final vision statement should not exceed five pages.

The instructor will evaluate both versions of the vision statement in terms of how well you justify your position (i.e., how well you bring readings and knowledge to bear in building a thoughtful and defensible rationales for what you say you stand for). Your vision itself will not be evaluated as it is personal to you, and what you say you stand for is your business. Instead, the evaluation will focus on how clearly you present and justify your position. In the second draft, you will be evaluated on justifying the means (tasks, activities, experiences) that will help you to enact your vision in the classroom.

### **3. Instruction and Reflection (40% - 10% each)**

#### **a. Spelling inventory**

**Due 10/06/10**

Spelling inventories are extremely informative assessments that are easy to implement. They provide the teacher important information about students' language and literacy development. For this assignment, you will conduct a spelling inventory in your classroom. With the students' spelling inventories, you will complete a **Feature Guide** for each student, a **Spelling-by-Stage Classroom Organization Chart**, and a **Classroom Composite**. Using this information, you will organize students into word study groups, explaining the primary need of each group and the instruction you would use to meet this need. You will turn in the feature guides, the classroom organization chart, the classroom composite, and the groups with explanations of your grouping and instructional decisions. **I WILL EXPLAIN AND MODEL ALL OF THESE IN CLASS.**

#### **b. Strategic read-aloud**

**Due 10/20/10**

Reading aloud is a staple of every elementary classroom and should occur daily. Conducting a strategic read aloud is an effective way to show students how good readers think while they read. Therefore, strategic read-alouds are at the heart of comprehension instruction. You will conduct a strategic read aloud in your class, explicitly explaining to students a comprehension strategy and then modeling the strategy by thinking aloud as you read the book. After conducting the read aloud you will turn in the lesson plan and a reflection. The reflection should discuss what went well with the lesson and things to improve upon. **I WILL EXPLAIN AND MODEL A STRATEGIC READ ALOUD IN CLASS.**

**c. Guided reading****Due 11/3/10**

Guided reading is an instructional method in which teachers support students' literacy development through differentiated instruction. Guided reading lessons follow a before-during-after format. Before reading, the teacher previews important vocabulary and sets a purpose for reading (often explicitly teaching a skill or strategy). During reading, the teacher listens to and observes each child's reading, providing assistance and documenting what s/he learns. After reading, students discuss the reading based upon the purpose set at the beginning and extend the reading through a brief activity. You will implement guided reading in your classroom and turn in the lesson plan and a reflection on the implementation of guided reading. **I WILL EXPLAIN AND MODEL GUIDED READING IN CLASS.**

**d. Interactive Writing Lesson****Due 11/17/10**

Shared writing and interactive writing are activities that allow you to "share the pen" with students and compose writing together. A real benefit of these activities is that they allow the teacher to provide a clear model and to get a sense of how students are thinking through a writing project. You will plan and execute an interactive writing lesson in your classroom and then reflect on the process. You will turn in your lesson plan with a written reflection that outlines what you learned from this experience. **I WILL EXPLAIN AND MODEL AN INTERACTIVE WRITING LESSON IN CLASS.**

**Evaluation for all Instruction and Reflection Assignments:**

You will be graded on your lesson plan as well as your detailed reflection of the lesson. Your lesson plan must adhere to the Elementary Program lesson plan format and be consistent with instructional methods taught in the course. Lessons should be relevant to the grade level and provide an authentic literacy task while specifying objectives related to state and national standards. Reflections and plans will be evaluated for ability to apply knowledge gained in readings and in class; thoroughness; coherence of writing; and mechanics (including APA).

**4. Reading, Writing, Spelling Assessment (PBA)****Due 12/01/10 (25%)**

This assignment requires you to apply your knowledge of literacy development and literacy content through an in depth assessment of one child's literacy and the instructional program you would implement for that child based on the assessment. This analysis is the performance-based assessment for the literacy course.

In your classroom, select a target child. Between now and the end of October you will assess the child's reading, writing, and spelling ability. You will learn in class which assessments to give.

*Reading:* create opportunities to listen to the child read. Keep a log of when you read together. Gather data on the child's reading ability, including level, fluency, self correction, strategy use, and comprehension. You may use anecdotal records, running records, interviews, discussions, reading inventories or any other form of assessment you see fit. You will present a snapshot of the child's reading ability at one point in time. Supporting documents should be attached as appendices and cited in the text. Include a research-based instructional plan.

*Writing:* collect at least three writing samples. Be sure they are dated. The samples should include different types of writing. Avoid having all three be from the same source (e.g., 3 journal entries or 3 prompted stories). Based on these samples you will assess the child's writing ability. This will include the developmental level as well as specific examples of their strengths in form, function, and process. Supporting documents should be attached as appendices and cited in the text. Include a research-based instructional plan.

*Spelling:* based on the writing samples collected, information from a spelling inventory, and other observational data, identify the student's developmental spelling level as well as the word study strategies they use. Supporting documents should be attached as appendices and cited in the text. Include a research-based instructional plan.

## **Evaluation**

Diversity of assessments used, accuracy of developmental levels assigned and appropriateness of instructional suggestions based on content from class discussions and texts will determine grade. Scoring rubric will be provided.

## **Grading Scale**

A = 100-94  
A- = 93-90  
B+ = 89-86  
B = 85-80

C+ = 79-76  
C = 75-70  
D = 69-65  
F = below 65

## Course Outline

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Due Today</b>	<b>Read for Next Class</b> (you'll have two weeks...)
<b>Sept 8</b>	<b>Course Overview</b> <b>Reading and Writing processes</b> <b>Language Development</b> <b>Word Recognition</b>	<b>Read Ellery Chapters 2, 3, 5</b>	<b>Words Their Way Chapters 1 - 5</b>
<b>Sept 22</b>	<b>Spelling</b> <b>Word Study</b> <b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>Vision Statement Rough Draft</b>	<b>Words Their Way Chapters 6 – 8</b> <b>Ellery Chapters 4 &amp; 6</b>
<b>Oct 6</b>	<b>Fluency assessment and teaching</b> <b>Comprehension assessment and teaching</b> <b>Model read aloud</b>	<b>Spelling Inventory</b>	<b>Ellery Chapter 1</b> <b>Olness Chapters 1 - 3</b>
<b>Oct 20</b>	<b>Models of Instruction</b> <b>Planning and Grouping for differentiation</b> <b>Reader's Workshop</b> <b>Model of Guided Reading</b>	<b>Strategic Read Aloud</b>	<b>Olness Chapters 4 - 8</b>

<b>Nov 3</b>	<b>Process Approach to Writing</b> <b>Guided Writing</b> <b>Writer’s Workshops</b> <b>Reading Writing Connections</b> <b>Model of Interactive Writing</b>	<b>Guided Reading Lesson and Reflection</b>	<b>Olness Chapters 9 &amp; 10</b> <b>Brophy Article (in BB)</b>
<b>Nov 17</b>	<b>Motivation</b> <b>Relevancy and Authenticity</b> <b>Thematic Units</b> <b>Culminating Products and Portfolios</b> <b>Standardized testing</b>	<b>Interactive Writing Lesson and Reflection</b>	
<b>Dec 1</b>	<b>No Class – Professor at Conference</b>	<b>Reading, Writing, Spelling PBA</b>	
<b>Dec 15</b>	<b>Teachers and Reflective Decision Makers</b>	<b>Vision Statement Final Presentation</b>	

The Syllabus and Course Schedule may need to be adjusted during the semester based on the instructor’s judgment, weather cancellations, etc.

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