

**George Mason University
Graduate School of Education**

EDRD 619/EDRD 419 (3 credits)

Literacy in the Content Areas

Spring 2010, Section 001

Tuesdays 7:20 – 10:00 p.m.

January 19, 2010 through May 12, 2010

Innovation Hall, 207

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Hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisites: Methods I and II. This course is designed to be taken concurrently with EDCI 790 Student Teaching Internship. Only students enrolled in Student Teaching Internship are allowed to register for EDRD 619.

EDRD 619 offers understanding of language and literacy processes as they apply to teaching in secondary schools. The course emphasizes reading and writing in content areas, and instructional strategies to support students' literacy development. The focus is on ways reading, writing, speaking, and listening are developed and used in learning discipline-specific curriculum, including adaptations for culturally diverse and exceptional learners.

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/Teacher 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 3-4 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: Content Teacher Interview Procedures

1. Identify a content teacher to interview. The teacher may be from your own middle or secondary class or school, or someone from your neighborhood, a relation, etc.
2. Conduct an interview of a content teacher using the following questions or add your own:

Sample Interview Questions

- Do your students like to read? (Describe)
- What do you think your students like most/least about reading?
- How would you describe your students outside reading?
- What kinds of outside readings do your students identify with? (books, magazines, favorite authors, etc.)
- What kinds of outside readings do you provide/encourage in your classroom outside of the assigned curriculum?
- How would you characterize yourself as a reader? Do you do much outside reading in your content area? (self-description and attitude towards discipline)
- What skills and strategies do you use when you introduce outside reading? (particularly relevant for school-based reading)
- How do you use the school library, public library or local bookstores to identify outside reading materials? (Describe)
- How could you make school reading more enjoyable for your students?
- What opportunities and experiences have you provided for striving readers or for English Language Learners?
- How do you think your students ability to speak English influences their reading?
- (Other relevant questions at your discretion)

Draft the following and post on Blackboard by March 23, 2010.

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

1. 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.
2. Collect the following reading pieces related to your topic that will likely be of high interest to your students. 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
3. Identify a motivational strategy that could be used to engage students in learning the disciplinary topic identified. Be prepared to share this strategy with the class. This motivational strategy is identified in more detail in the following section entitled, Motivational Strategy Content Literacy Share.
4. Write a short paper (8 or more double-spaced pages) with the following components/subheadings:
 - A. ***Interview Subject and Context*** (1/2 page) Provide the first name or a pseudonym of the teacher. Explain why the teacher 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 teacher's responses to the interview questions.
 - C. ***Citations, Annotations & Rationales*** (4 or 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 students 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 and to your book talk.
 - 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 and present the motivational strategy to the class in a 15-20 minute presentation.

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 and editing.

Part 3: Motivational Content Literacy Strategy Share

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you the opportunity to design a content literacy strategy that would be motivating for adolescents, conduct the strategy in your classroom, and provide a mini-lesson of the strategy in our class. The assignment requires you to (a) design and implement a motivational literacy strategy lesson; (b) write a brief reflection of the experience, along with the steps for conducting the strategy; and (c) take the class through a short demonstration of the strategy activity.

Completion Procedures

1. From the disciplinary topic identified in your content area alternative text collection, find a motivational strategy in the textbook that you can use in your classroom. The strategy can come from any chapter in the book, whether covered in class or not, or from another research based strategy appropriate for teaching content literacy.
2. Craft and implement in your classroom the motivation to learn strategy for the topic.
3. Prepare a 10 – 12 minute strategy share for our class. Be sure your classmates are actually “doing” the strategy and 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.
4. Write a 1-2 page description of the strategy and how it was taught in your classroom including a reflection on the results. Use first-person narrative. Use the following subheadings and description:
 - **Instructional Context**
Briefly describe the strategy and where it was taken from the textbook. Describe where, when, and with whom the strategy was used.
 - **Steps in Conducting the Strategy**
Describe the sequence of steps from start to finish you followed to conduct the strategy in your classroom.
 - **Reflections on Effectiveness**
Indicate how effective you believe the strategy was in motivating your students to become more engaged readers and learners. Use examples.
 - **Attachments**
Provide actual lesson material and sample student work.

5. At the end of your strategy share in our class, be prepared to take questions from your peers
6. Hand in a complete set of materials including the description of the strategy and all supporting documents (e.g., visual examples, sample anonymous student work, any other materials used in the share)

Evaluation

The Strategy Share 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 and reflect on the teaching of the motivational readiness strategy; and (c) overall clarity and editing.

TENTATIVE AGENDA

Session 1, January 19	Course Introduction Assignment Explanations Model “My Bag”
Session 2, January 26	Adolescent Literacy and Youth Culture <i>Read: Chapter 1 and National Reading Panel Summary Report</i> Class “My Bags”
Session 3, February 2	Principled-Based Practices of Adolescent Literacy Comprehension Processes <i>Read Chapters 2 and Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas: Getting to the Core of Middle and High School Improvement</i> Chapter Strategy Demonstration (Chapter 6)
Session 4, February 9	Comprehension Processes <i>Read Chapter 3</i> Chapter Strategy Demonstration (Chapter 3)
Session 5, February 16	Motivation for Literacy and Learning <i>Read Chapter 5</i> Chapter Strategy Demonstration (Chapter 5)
Session 6, February 23	Learning Strategies <i>Read Chapter 9</i> Chapter Strategy Demonstration (Chapter 9)

Session 7, March 2	Assessment <i>Read Chapter 4</i> <i>Article Summaries Due</i> Chapter Strategy Demonstration (Chapter 7)
Session 8, March 9	Spring Break – No Class
Session 9, March 16	Expanding Word Knowledge <i>Read Chapter 6</i> <i>On-Line Class</i>
Session 10, March 23	<u>Draft Teacher Interviews Due</u> <i>On-Line Class Discussion of Interviews</i> Work Collection/Motivational Strategy
Session 11, March 30	Writing as a Tool for Active Learning <i>Read Chapter 7</i> <i>On-Line Class</i> Work on Collection/Motivational Strategy
Session 12, April 6	Supporting Striving Readers <i>Read Chapter 11</i> <i>On-Line Class</i> Work on Collection/Motivational Strategy
Session 13, April 13	Finalize Collection/Motivational Strategy
Session, 14, April 20	Collection and Motivational Strategy Shares Presentations
Session 15, April 27	Collection and Motivational Strategy Shares Presentations
Session 16, May 4	Collection and Motivational Strategy Shares Presentations

NOTE: Sessions 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 will be conducted on-line. All other classes will be held in Innovation Hall, Room 207.