

**George Mason University  
College of Education and Human Development  
Graduate School of Education  
Secondary Education Program**

EDRD 419.001: Literacy in the Content Areas  
3 Credits, Fall 2013  
7:20-10:00 Thursdays Thompson Hall 2020

**PROFESSOR (S):**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

A. Prerequisites/Corequisites:

Prerequisites: EDCI 473 and EDCI 483.  
Corequisites: EDCI 490

B. University Catalog Course Description

Assists students in understanding the language and literacy process as it applies to teaching in middle and high schools. Focuses on instructional strategies to support literacy development, including adaptations for culturally diverse and exceptional learners.

C. Expanded Course Description

Not Applicable

**LEARNER OUTCOMES:**

This course is designed to enable students to:

1. Explain theories of adolescent literacy and the role of literacy in learning in content areas.
2. Explain and describe evidence-based strategies that middle/high school students can use to successfully comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate content-related texts.
3. Draft instructional plans that support adolescents' literacy development in specific content areas.
4. Identify and evaluate technology to enhance literacy learning and integrate technology as well as a variety of media during instruction.
5. Identify and explain the instructional challenges of their specific content in light of populations of students with varying levels of literacy and linguistic proficiency.

6. Assess instructional materials and consider adaptations or alternatives as needed to provide effective instruction for a diverse student population.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Fisher, D., Brozo, W.G., Frey, N., Ivey, G. (2010). *50 Instructional routines to develop content literacy*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education Inc.

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2012). *Improving adolescent literacy: Content area strategies at work*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Boston, MA: Pearson Education Inc.

Tovani, C. (2000). *I read it but I don't get it: Comprehension strategies for adolescent readers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers

### Additional Resources:

Websites:

<http://www.adlit.org>

<http://www.readwritethink.org>

Professional Organizations:

International Reading Association (IRA) (organization for educators/and researchers)

[www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)

National Reading Conference (NRC) (an international literacy research organization)

[www.nrconline.org](http://www.nrconline.org)

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE): [www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)

National Science Teachers Association (NSTA): [www.nsta.org](http://www.nsta.org)

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM): [www.nctm.org](http://www.nctm.org)

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS): [www.socialstudies.org](http://www.socialstudies.org)

### **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS:**

1. Assignment descriptions

**Attendance and Participation (10 %):** Attendance is critical and class time will provide opportunities to ask questions, hear others ideas, and deepen your understanding of the material.

Absences and tardies will impact a student's grade. For each class missed, 10 points will be deducted from your class attendance/participation grade. Two tardies/early departures are equal to one absence. Missing 3 or more classes will result in failure of the course unless special circumstances have been approved by the instructor and /or university.

*Class Participation Rubric*

<b>Excellent (9-10)</b>	<b>Competent (7-8)</b>	<b>Minimal (5-6)</b>
Student regularly attends class, asks thoughtful, critical questions and makes sophisticated observations that indicate reflection and analysis appropriate to the topic. Participates actively in small group activities and class discussions.	Student regularly attends class, occasionally asks questions and makes mostly relevant observations that indicate reflection and analysis appropriate to the topic. Participates in small group activities and class discussions.	Student attendance is irregular. Student asks questions or makes comments that indicate some familiarity with the topic. Does not actively participate in small groups and class discussions.

In class or online activities will build upon readings. Occasionally student products will be generated and used to document participation. There will be no opportunity to make up points awarded for student products generated during class time

**Learning Log: (20%)** Student will maintain a *learning log (either electronic or hand written)* to record reflections, connections, and questions about course readings and topics. Instructor will assign weekly strategies/topics (see course schedule for detailed listing). These logs will be actively used during class and small group discussions. In addition, student will be responsible for 2 online interactive learning log experiences.

Final Learning Log Entry Directions:

A. As you read your log . . .

- Highlight 4 areas where you make strong connections to your own teaching.
- Insert 2 check-marks by ideas that are especially salient- places where you feel your knowledge has been nudged.
- Insert 2 question marks by concepts that are still confusing to you OR area that you want to explore in greater depth.
- Insert 2 smiley-faces by ideas that are really powerful to you- ideas you want to try right away.

B. In your final entry, summarize your course learning with the following framework: 1 paragraph per entry (total 6).

- 3 New Understandings you have about disciplinary literacy.
- 2 New Ideas/Strategies you have to integrate into your teaching
- 1 Question you want to explore more deeply as you begin your teaching career.

### **School and Student Study: (20%) DUE DATE 9/26**

Student will compile a 5-7 -page paper that summarizes understanding of the school culture as it pertains to adolescent literacy. Student will describe how literacy is addressed in the school wide vision and in the particular content area in the school where student teaching is being completed. Student should address the literacy practices observed in the classroom and the challenges administrators, teachers, and students face. Information for this project will be obtained from personal interviews conducted on the school site. Student is responsible for interviewing ONE content teacher and TWO students from diverse backgrounds.

Student will also collect school data (SOL scores, demographics, school vision plans, & other pertinent data) and summarize these findings in the introduction of the paper. See VDOE website <http://www.doe.virginia.gov> and school and county sites to find further information.

### **Young Adult Novel Assignment: (15%): DUE DATE 11/7**

Student will choose a young adult novel related to his/her content area (Must be approved by instructor). After reading the novel, student will write a 2- page paper with the following sections:

***Overall Introduction-*** In a brief paragraph, explain the age/grade range for the young adult novel and why you chose it for this project. Also, include the interest level and specific reading level of the book.

***Citation & Summary*** – Provide a full bibliographic citation using APA format. Provide a brief summary of the entire text. This must be in your own words.

***Discussion:*** Discuss the merits of the book: Identify key passages, themes, author’s writing style, or other areas of the text you feel are worth highlighting in relationship to the book’s usefulness in the classroom. In addition, propose some approaches and/or strategies you would use or recommend to teachers for engaging adolescents in literacy learning in your discipline. Be sure to consider and include ideas for meeting the needs of diverse learners. Use your texts and other appropriate scholarly sources to support your teaching strategies. This can be a bulleted list.

You will also informally share your book and ideas with a small group in class.

### **Strategy Lesson Portfolio: (35 %) DUE DATE 12/12**

The purpose of this project is to generate a personal resource of strategies that is particularly useful to increasing student understanding in a specific content area. Students will develop a portfolio of 6-8 mini -strategy lessons to implement in a classroom that serves adolescents.

During the internship, students must implement *AT LEAST 2* of the strategies in the content classroom. Students will collect several adolescent student samples and bring to class to share with class study group.

All strategies must come from a course text unless otherwise approved by the instructor. All mini strategy lessons must include a literary element (i.e. newspaper article, textbook, book chapter, online resource, etc.). Students must be engaged in reading and/or writing using a designated strategy to assist them in gaining content.

At least one strategy from each of the following course topics must be included: Vocabulary, Anticipatory Activities, Questioning, Comprehension, Writing, and Graphic Organizers.

After completion of the portfolio, you will write a 2-page reflection about your experience developing the mini-strategy lessons and implementing them in the classroom. Your reflection should address what worked/didn't, changes you would make to the lesson, why you would keep it the same or use it again, what you learned about using strategies to support active reading, and/or other relevant thinking about integrating literacy strategies into your instructional routines.

Strategy portfolios will be presented and shared with classmates.

\*The instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus and assignments  
as deemed necessary\*

## 2. Assignment and examination weighting

Class participation	10 percent
Learning Log	20 percent
School Student Study	20 percent
Young Adult Novel	15 percent
Strategy Portfolio	35 percent
Total:	100 percent

## 3. Grading Policies

### *Grading Scale*

A= 94%-100%  
A- = 90%-93%  
B+= 87%-89%

B= 80%-86%

C= 75%-79%

#### 4. Other expectations

#### ***Readings and participation***

The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities pertaining to disciplinary literacy, it is critical for you to keep up with readings and to participate in class. It is your responsibility to come to class with insights, questions, comments, and concerns from the readings. Class participation is a required component of your grade. In general, we will engage in three types of activities:

1. Mini-lectures, activities, and discussions related to disciplinary literacy
2. Discussion of the week's readings
3. Pair and small group meetings in which you will provide feedback and support for each other's strategy lessons.

#### ***Class attendance***

Class attendance is both important and required. If, due to an emergency, you will not be in class, you must contact the instructor via phone or email. You are expected to email assignments regardless of class attendance on the day that the assignment is due. Students are responsible for obtaining information given during class discussions despite attendance. Attendance will influence your grade.

#### ***Assignments***

All assignments should be turned in on the due date in the schedule below via paper copy OR email attachment (by 7:20 pm, whether or not you are in class that evening). Save all electronic files with your last name and assignment titles (ex: SMITH\_ProfDevProposal.docx). All assignments must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font, and double-spaced with one—inch margins. Writing quality (including mechanics, organization, and content) is figured into the overall points for each writing assignment, so please proofread carefully. Late papers and projects will not be accepted without penalty, excepting extraordinary circumstances.

#### ***General***

Please see me with questions and concerns about assignments, expectations, or class activities. I am happy to clarify and lend assistance on projects and assignments, but please come to me within a reasonable time frame. I will be available for the 15 minutes following class, by appointment, and by-email. I look forward to collaborating with each of you as you work towards your goals.

Our course website ([mymasonportal.gmu.edu](http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu)) will include information and resources important to your successful completion of the course. These will include the course syllabus, an announcement page, notes and class presentations, assignment descriptions and rubrics, and a bibliography of course readings and web resources. We will also hold discussions via Blackboard.

### *Electronic Requirements*

Students **must have access to email** and the Internet, either at home, work or 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 mail.

After introductory training, students will also be expected to access Blackboard prior to every class session to download agendas and other pertinent course documents. **Blackboard can be accessed by going to <http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>**

### **TASKSTREAM REQUIREMENTS:**

NONE FOR THIS COURSE

### **GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- d. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See

<http://ods.gmu.edu/>].

- f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

**PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS:**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

**CORE VALUES COMMITMENT:**

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>]

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**PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE:**

This schedule may be changed at the discretion of the professor or as needs of the students or the program dictate.

Date	Topic/Learning Experience	Readings/Assignments
8/29	Course introduction: What does it mean to be literate in your discipline? Group Assignments	Biancarosa, 2012
9/5	Literacy matters: History and issues in adolescent literacy	*Review Professional Organization Standards  Review: <i>Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy</i> - A Carnegie Report {Jigsaw/complete graphic organizer on BB}  Learning Log Readings:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tovani Ch. 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>• Greenleaf &amp; Hinchman, 2009</li> </ul> <p><u>LEARNING LOG ENTRY 1:</u> Write down one brief passage (2-3 sentences) from each reading and explain its significance to your teaching.</p>
9/12	<p>Knowing your students: Culturally responsive teaching &amp; the language of schooling</p> <p>Develop interview questions.</p>	<p>*Bring in demographic data and testing information from the school where you are completing your internship. Bring in school improvement/literacy plan.</p> <p>Review: <i>Double the Work: Challenges and Solutions to Acquiring Language and Academic Literacy for Adolescent English Language Learners</i>- A Carnegie Report {Jigsaw/complete graphic organizer on BB}</p> <p>Learning Log Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tovani Ch. 3 &amp; 4</li> <li>• Vacca, Vacca, &amp; Mraz, 2014 Chapter 3 (e-reserves)</li> </ul> <p><u>LEARNING LOG ENTRY 2:</u> Respond to this quote: “It is crucially important to be aware that students from diverse cultural backgrounds may bring different ways of knowing, different styles of questioning, and different patterns of interaction to school.” <u>Connect to the readings.</u></p>
9/19	<p>Planning for Instruction: Reading purposes and BDA frameworks</p>	<p>*Locate and bring a textbook and an alternative reading source</p> <p>Learning Log Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fisher &amp; Frey Ch. 1</li> <li>• Tovani 5 &amp; 6</li> <li>• Fang, 2008</li> </ul> <p><u>LEARNING LOG ENTRY 3:</u> Describe your own reading processes: what fix-up strategies do you use? How do you approach different types of reading? What strategies are helpful to you as you read? Make personal connections to the readings. Describe how those connections help you to make better sense of the material being read.</p>
9/26	<p>Interest and motivation: using anticipatory activities</p> <p>Assessment: knowing what your student’s have learned.</p>	<p>Learning Log Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fisher &amp; Frey Ch. 2 &amp; 9</li> <li>• Content Article: Find specific article under content folder on BB</li> </ul> <p><u>LEARNING LOG ENTRY 4:</u> Text to world connections: Connect at least 3 ideas from the readings to what you are observing in the classroom.</p> <p><b>School and Student Study DUE</b></p>

10/3	What's in a word?: Vocabulary learning in the content areas	<p>Learning Log Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fisher &amp; Frey Ch. 3</li> <li>• Hennings, 2000 * strategy on BB to apply to this reading</li> <li>• Content Article: Find specific article under content folder on BB</li> </ul> <p><u>LEARNING LOG ENTRY 5:</u> Text-to-Text Connections: Connect at least 3 ideas between the readings. Discuss how these ideas inform your own understanding of teaching vocabulary in your content.</p>
10/10	Vocabulary strategies	ONLINE DISCUSSION BLOG (see Blackboard for specific instructions)
10/17	Guiding Comprehension	<p>Learning Log Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fisher &amp; Frey Ch. 4</li> <li>• Vacca, Vacca, &amp; Mraz, 2014 Chapter 7 (e-reserves)</li> <li>• Content Article: Find specific article under content folder on BB</li> </ul> <p><u>LEARNING LOG ENTRY 6:</u> Discuss your role in guiding students' reading. Identify at least 2 specific strategies/techniques you can integrate into your teaching.</p>
10/24	The role of questioning and inferencing in student learning	<p>Learning Log Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fisher &amp; Frey Ch. 5</li> <li>• Tovani 7,8, &amp; 9</li> <li>• Content Article: Find specific article under content folder on BB</li> </ul> <p><u>LEARNING LOG ENTRY 7:</u> Describe the role of questioning in developing students' reading comprehension. What are high quality questions? How can you ensure students are asking and being asked high quality question?</p>
10/31	Using tradebooks to enhance content learning.	ONLINE DISCUSSION BLOG (see Blackboard for specific instructions)
11/7	Writing Across the Curriculum	<p>Learning Log Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fisher &amp; Frey Ch. 8</li> <li>• Content Article: Content Article: Find specific article under content folder on BB</li> </ul> <p><u>LEARNING LOG 8:</u> Connect the readings to the kinds of writing you are seeing ongoing in your internship experience. What are the challenges to integrating writing into daily instructional routines? Discuss how writing can be integrated both formally and informally in your classroom.</p>

		<b>Young Adult Novel Assignment DUE</b> In class sharing of young adult novel.
11/14	Effective ways to use graphic organizers	Learning Log Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fisher &amp; Frey Ch. 6</li> </ul> <p><u>LEARNING LOG 9:</u> Review the list of considerations for creating and interpreting graphic organizers on p. 108. Discuss your understanding and opinion of applying these ideas to your teaching practice. *Visit from Travis Holder about certification.</p>
11/21	Note-taking Discussion strategies for engaging students	Learning Log Reading: {Be prepared to discuss in class} <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fisher &amp; Frey Ch. 7</li> </ul> <p><u>LEARNING LOG 10:</u> See assignment details for directions for FINAL entry. <b>Learning Log DUE</b></p>
12/5	NO CLASS	Instructor at LRA Conference. Complete work on strategy portfolios.
12/12	Strategy Portfolio Showcase	<b>STRATEGY PORTFOLIOS DUE</b>

**ASSESSMENT RUBRICS:**

**Learning Log Rubric:**

<b>Criteria</b>	Low Performance (0-4 points)	Developing (5 points)	Accomplished (6 points)	Exemplary (7 points)
<b>Completeness</b> : all questions for a particular entry are addressed	Some required entries submitted.	Most required entries submitted.	All required entries submitted.	All required entries submitted.
<b>Quality:</b> Level of insight and reflection (evidence of thoughtful responses);	Minimal evidence of thoughtful responses; highly inconsistent	Provides adequate reflection and insight into own teaching practice; may be inconsistent between entries	Provides solid reflection and offers critical insight into own teaching practice.	Provides very thorough reflection and offers critical, constructive insight into own teaching practice.

<b>Connections:</b> extent to which relevant course content (from texts and class discussions) is integrated in the entries.	Provides minimal reflection; highly inconsistent	Provides adequate critical reflection; may be inconsistent between entries or over reliance on summarizing.	Provides critical reflection that includes links to class discussions, reading and theoretical perspectives, roots of practices, views, and values	Provides a strong critical reflection that includes links to class discussions, reading and theoretical perspectives, roots of practices, views, and values; may provide additional evidence beyond the course.
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**Young Adult Novel Rubric:**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Low Performance (0-3 points)</b>	<b>Developing (3-4 points)</b>	<b>Accomplished (4.5 points)</b>	<b>Exemplary 5 points</b>
<b>Completeness:</b> all components of assignment included	Some required components submitted	Most components submitted.	All components submitted.	All components submitted.
<b>Quality:</b> Evidence of engagement with the text and relevant rationales.	Minimal evidence of thoughtful responses; highly inconsistent	Provides adequate summary and offers some insight into the relevancy of the text.	Provides solid summary and offers insight into the relevancy of the text.	Provides very thorough summary and offers critical, insight into the relevancy of the text.
<b>Connections:</b> extent to which relevant course content (from texts and class discussions) is integrated into discussion.	Draws weak, if any, connection to teaching practice; ideas may be loosely described and/or not research-based.	Draws some connections to teaching practice; ideas are evident;	Draws solid connections to teaching practice; ideas are mostly relevant and well-developed.	Draws very strong connections to teaching practice; ideas are relevant, very clearly articulated and thoroughly developed.

**School Student Study Rubric:**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Low Performing (0-3 points)</b>	<b>Developing ( 4 points)</b>	<b>Accomplished (4.5 points)</b>	<b>Exemplary (5 points)</b>
<b>Introduction:</b> Includes a narrative describing school,	Introduction included some of the required information, was unclear or	Introduction included most of the required information, was somewhat clear;	Introduction included all required information, was mostly clear and organized.	Introduction included all required information; written in a

department, literacy visions, and important findings from the state testing data.	disorganized.	some flaws in organization.		clear, succinct manner. Well organized
<b>Interview Reporting:</b> Answers to interview questions are presented in narrative format; compares, contrasts, and synthesizes interview information.	Does not convey information that is <u>compared</u> , <u>contrasted</u> , and <u>synthesized</u> from those interviewed. Ideas are vaguely stated and not well supported.	Conveys information that is <u>compared</u> , <u>contrasted</u> , and/or <u>synthesized</u> from those interviewed. Ideas are stated and somewhat supported.	Conveys information that is <u>compared</u> , <u>contrasted</u> , and <u>synthesized</u> from those interviewed. Ideas are stated and mostly supported.	Clearly and consistently conveys information that is <u>compared</u> , <u>contrasted</u> , and <u>synthesized</u> from those interviewed. Ideas are clearly stated and very strongly supported.
<b>Discussion:</b> References course concepts; connects experiences to own teaching practice.	Ideas from the interviews are loosely summarized. Connections unclear and not rational; lacks insight. Weak connections to your own teaching practice.	Ideas from the interviews are summarized to an extent. Ideas are somewhat insightful, rational, and logical. Some connections to your own teaching practice.	Ideas from the interviews are summarized. Ideas are insightful, rational and logical. Connections to your own teaching practice evident.	Ideas from the interviews are clearly summarized in a logical, coherent manner. Ideas are insightful and strongly connected to your own teaching practice.
<b>Readability</b>	Contains numerous errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, or sentence structure that interfere with comprehension. Page limits may not be adhered to.	Several errors in spelling, grammar, language usage; minimal variety of sentence structures; limited vocabulary. May	Minor errors (1-3) in spelling, grammar, language usage; some variety of sentence structures; appropriate vocabulary. Within page limits.	Error free: accurate spelling, grammar, language usage; variety of sentence structures; rich vocabulary.

		be outside of page limits.		Within page limits.
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**Strategy Portfolio Rubric: See Blackboard**