



**College of Education and Human Development**  
**Teaching Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and**  
**Exceptional Learners**

**EDCI 582 SYLLABUS**

*FOUNDATIONS IN LANGUAGE AND LITERACY*

3 CREDITS, SPRING 2023

ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE

CRN: 17480

**Instructor:** April Mattix Foster

**Office Hours:** Office Hours will be offered by appointment. Please contact your Instructor using the contact methods below to set up an appointment date/time. Office Hours will be accessed virtually through the Office Hours Link on Blackboard (i.e., Blackboard Collaborate). Virtual office hours are held to provide opportunities for you to ask one-on-one questions of your Instructor as needed. Office hours can be used to discuss anything related to the course, including assignments and projects. Please review the [Blackboard Collaborate](#) support documentation for further information.

**Contact:** Office: Thompson 1501, Fairfax Campus

Phone: 703-993-4007

Email: [amattix@gmu.edu](mailto:amattix@gmu.edu)]

## COURSE INFORMATION

### PREREQUISITES/COREQUISITES

N/A

### UNIVERSITY CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

Focuses on the relationship of language to reading and the connection between language structure and learning to read in English. Examines theories of language acquisition and the complexity of language development and the reading process for ESL/EFL/EAL students. Explores key factors that influence and enhance English language learning and development. Introduces literacy instruction and literacy assessment for ESL/EFL/EAL learners and explores sociocultural perspectives on literacy.

### COURSE DELIVERY METHOD

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using an asynchronous format via Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password.

**Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.**

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## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers and supported operation systems on different devices see:
  - [Browser Support](#)
  - [Tested Devices and Operating Systems](#)
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students may need a headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
  - [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)
  - [Windows Media Player](#)
  - [Apple Quick Time Player](#)

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## EXPECTATIONS

- **Course Week:** Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will start on Monday, and finish on Sunday.
- **Log-in Frequency:** Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week.
- **Participation:** Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- **Technical Competence:** Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- **Technical Issues:** Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- **Workload:** Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet specific deadlines and due dates listed in the **Course Schedule**. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- **Instructor Support:** Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
- **Netiquette:** The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words. Remember that you are not competing with

classmates but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

- **Accommodations:** Online learners who require effective accommodations to ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

## COURSE LEARNER OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to enable the students to do the following:

1. Develop an understanding of literacy, how ESL/EFL/EAL students develop as readers and writers, and how to support that development.
2. Develop a deep understanding of the theoretical orientations that have and continue to be influential in teaching reading and writing to culturally and linguistically diverse learners.
3. Develop an awareness of the cultural factors that influence ESL/EFL/EAL students' development of literacy skills.
4. Develop an understanding of ways to assess ESL/EFL/EAL students' literacy and to provide instruction related to what they need to learn.
5. Determine ways in which to engage culturally and linguistically diverse students in literacy activities.
6. Develop an awareness of literacy assessments and resources for developing ESL/EFL/EAL student literacy skills.

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Initial TESOL Pre-K-12 Teacher Preparation Programs Standards; TESOL Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults Framework

Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards:

*Initial TESOL Pre-K-12 Teacher Preparation Programs Standards:*

- **Standard 1: Knowledge about Language:** Candidates demonstrate knowledge of English language structures, English language use, second language acquisition and development, and language processes to help English Language Learners (ELLs) acquire academic language and literacies specific to various content areas.
  - 1a. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of English language structures in different discourse contexts to promote acquisition of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills across content areas. Candidates serve as languages for ELLs.
- **Standard 2: ELLs in the Sociocultural Context:** Candidates demonstrate and apply knowledge of the impact of dynamic academic, personal, familial, cultural, social, and sociopolitical contexts on the education and language acquisition of ELLs as supported by research and theories. Candidates investigate the academic and personal characteristics of each ELL, as well as family circumstances and literacy practices, to develop individualized, effective instructional and assessment practices for their ELLs. Candidates recognize how educator identity, role, culture, and biases impact the interpretation of ELLs' strengths and needs.
  - 2a. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of how dynamic academic, personal, familial, cultural, and social contexts, including sociopolitical factors, impact the education of ELLs.
  - 2b. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of research and theories of cultural and linguistic diversity and equity that promote academic and social language learning for ELLs.

- 2c. Candidates devise and implement methods to understand each ELL’s academic characteristics, including background knowledge, educational history, and current performance data, to develop effective, individualized instructional and assessment practices for their ELLs.
- 2d. Candidates devise and implement methods to learn about personal characteristics of the individual ELL (e.g., interests, motivations, strengths, needs) and their family (e.g., language use, literacy practices, circumstances) to develop effective instructional practices.
- **Standard 3: Planning and Implementing Instruction:** Candidates plan supportive environments for ELLs, design and implement standards-based instruction using evidence-based, ELL-centered, interactive approaches. Candidates make instructional decisions by reflecting on individual ELL outcomes and adjusting instruction. Candidates demonstrate understanding of the role of collaboration with colleagues and communication with families to support their ELLs’ acquisition of English language and literacies in the content areas. Candidates use and adapt relevant resources, including appropriate technology, to effectively plan, develop, implement, and communicate about instruction for ELLs.
  - 3a. Candidates plan for culturally and linguistically relevant, supportive environments that promote ELLs’ learning. Candidates design scaffolded instruction of language and literacies to support standards and curricular objectives for ELLs in the content areas.
  - 3b. Candidates instruct ELLs using evidence-based, student-centered, developmentally appropriate interactive approaches.
- **Standard 4: Assessment and Evaluation:** Candidates apply assessment principles to analyze and interpret multiple and varied assessments for ELLs, including classroom-based, standardized, and language proficiency assessments. Candidates understand how to analyze and interpret data to make informed decisions that promote English language and content learning. Candidates understand the importance of communicating results to other educators, ELLs, and ELLs’ families.
  - 4b. Candidates demonstrate understanding of classroom-based formative, summative, and diagnostic assessments scaffolded for both English language and content assessment. Candidates determine language and content learning goals based on assessment data.
- **Standard 5: Professionalism and Leadership:** Candidates demonstrate professionalism and leadership by collaborating with other educators, knowing policies and legislation and the rights of ELLs, advocating for ELLs and their families, engaging in self-assessment and reflection, pursuing continuous professional development, and honing their teaching practice through supervised teaching.
  - 5c. Candidates practice self-assessment and reflection, make adjustments for self-improvement, and plan for continuous professional development in the field of English language learning and teaching.

*TESOL Standards for ESL/EFL Teachers of Adults Framework:*

- **Domain: Planning**
  - Standard 1: Teachers plan instruction to promote learning and meet learner goals and modify plans to assure learner engagement and achievement.
- **Domain: Instructing**
  - Standard 2: Teachers create supportive environments that engage all learners in purposeful learning and promote respectful classroom interactions.
- **Domain: Assessing**
  - Standard 3: Teachers recognize the importance of and are able to gather and interpret information about learning and performance to promote the continuous intellectual and linguistic development of each learner. Teachers use knowledge of student performance to make decisions about planning and instruction “on the spot” and for the future. Teachers involve learners in determining what will be assessed and provide constructive feedback to learners, based on assessments of their learning.
- **Domain: Identity and Context**

- Standard 4: Teachers understand the importance of who learners are and how their communities, heritages and goals shape learning and expectations of learning. Teachers recognize the importance of how context contributes to identity formation and therefore influences learning. Teachers use this knowledge of identity and settings in planning, instructing, and assessing.

## COURSE MATERIALS

### REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Herrera, S. G., Perez, D. R., & Escamilla, K. (2015). *Teaching Reading to English Language Learners: Differentiated Literacies* (2nd edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson  
ISBN: 978-0132855198

### RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

American Psychological Association (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

## COURSE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., via Blackboard).

### ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAMINATIONS

Assignments	Grade %
Informed Participation	20%
Reading Responses	30%
Creating a Culture of Literacy	20%
Student Literacy Study Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)	30%
Total	100%

## GRADING

At George Mason University course work is measured in terms of quantity and quality. A credit normally represents one hour per week of lecture or recitation or not fewer than two hours per week of laboratory work throughout a semester. The number of credits is a measure of quantity. The grade is a measure of quality. The university-wide system for grading graduate courses is as follows:

Grade	Course Grades	Grade Points	Interpretation
A+	=100	4.00	Represents mastery of the subject through effort beyond basic requirements.
A	94-99	4.00	Represents mastery of the subject through effort beyond basic requirements.
A-	90-93	3.67	Represents mastery of the subject through effort beyond basic requirements.

B+	85-89	3.33	Reflects an understanding of and the ability to apply theories and principles at a basic level.
B	80-84	3.00	Reflects an understanding of and the ability to apply theories and principles at a basic level.
C	70-79	2.00	Denotes an unacceptable level of understanding and application of the basic elements of the course.
F	<70	0.00	Denotes an unacceptable level of understanding and application of the basic elements of the course.

For more details, see the [University Catalog](#).

## DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS

Specific details about each of the graded assignments can be found on the course site. Your completed assignments should be submitted via Blackboard.

### INFORMED PARTICIPATION

Class participation is evidenced by thoughtful, thorough completion of **all activities** in the Weekly Modules and the Warm-up Activities that require a submission. Your discussion and other work should reflect learning from readings, videos, and any other online content within the Weekly Modules. While your current knowledge is important to your understandings, **demonstrating the way that deep engagement with the course content expands your knowledge, disposition, and skills as a reflective practitioner is expected and necessary for earning full participation points**. That is, candidates' work within each Weekly Module must reflect thorough preparation, which will be evidenced by critically analyzing, asking questions, making observations, and sharing reflections as well as by offering specific examples for incorporating learning from the course into their teaching practice in diverse, inclusive classrooms.

Further details and the assignment rubric are provided on Blackboard.

### READING RESPONSES

Writing about what you have read is a useful way to synthesize your learning. In the reading responses, you will respond to the assigned academic readings to discuss the ways in which these readings interest, provoke or stimulate your ideas about literacy development and instruction. While these writings do not need to be formal, they should be professional in tone, grammatically accurate, and make use of the readings to motivate the discussion. The response is an opportunity to demonstrate your careful reading of the assigned texts; it is a space to work through and challenge ideas, and it provides an opportunity to make the readings relevant to your own teaching and life experiences.

While the response should provide evidence that you did the reading it should not simply be a summary of the reading. You should start with a brief summary of one reading (3-4 sentences). You will need to complete six (6) reading responses throughout this course, and you may pick and choose which reading you wish to respond to. Responses should be one page, single-spaced, and in a legible 12-point font and should focus on one of the weekly reading assignments.

Further details and the assignment rubric are available on Blackboard.

### CREATING A CULTURE OF LITERACY

One of the most important things to think about as literacy instructors is how to create a literacy rich and friendly environment in which reading is encouraged. For this assignment, each student will craft a 4–6-page paper (double-spaced and in a legible 12-point font) about how to create a culture of literacy for a class that you plan to or currently teach. For this paper be sure to define your student profile and context of your class and then describe the following:

1. In what ways will you work to develop a culture of reading in your classroom for your CLD learners? What classroom practices can you establish to promote literacy development and increase your CLD students' motivation to read?
2. How can you extend this culture of literacy to promote literacy development and increase your students' motivation to read outside of the classroom?
3. If you have (or will have) your own classroom, how can you create a literacy-rich space that encourages reading? Define the space physically, describe the resources that would be available in the space, and explain how you envision the space being used.

Further details and the assignment rubric are provided on Blackboard.

### STUDENT LITERACY STUDY (PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT)

The Performance-Based Assessment for this course is the *Student Literacy Study*. The purpose of the study is to begin to learn about literacy learners in a holistic sense; it provides the student with an opportunity to learn about one student, the community in which he/she lives, and how the student views him/herself as a literacy learner. Students will conduct interviews, perform reading inventories, and engage the learner in developmentally appropriate literacy activities. It is important to note that these activities are introductory in nature. Each student will be required to select a child or adolescent with which to work for this project. It is recommended to work with a small group of students, even if the data is being collected for one student for this study.

It is important to begin planning for your Student Literacy Study as soon as possible. Expect to spend about 15 hours of fieldwork per course. Candidates will be responsible for locating appropriate settings for field experiences.

All data collected should have a purpose in mind. For example, asking yourself, “what do I hope to learn from my observations?” or “how will I use the information I have learned?” help to establish purpose. Data can be collected through a variety of means: lesson plans, narratives, time/event sampling, anecdotal records, review of academic records, teacher or parent interviews, student interviews, checklists, observations, or student work products. It is not necessary to use all of these means to collect data during your study however it is very important to use a *variety of means, over time, to collect your evidence*.

*If you are not currently a teacher and are completing this in a K-12 school, be sure to get permission from teachers or parents for activities in which you are an active participant and collecting data.* Most schools will allow you to collect general information about a student as a normal part of your field experience. In some schools, you will need specific permission both from a supervisor, your teacher and/or parents. Be sure to obtain any needed permissions before you begin. If you are a practicing professional follow the guidelines in your school policies.

*All reports must use pseudonyms (fictitious names) to protect the confidentiality of the student and setting.* Your final report will be given directly to your instructor; no copies should be distributed or disseminated. Remember you are learning how to observe and make sense of those observations – you need to be cautious in your interpretations and discuss your findings with your instructor for clarification.

Each case study will include the following:

1. Description on the focal student (age, language skills, school or educational context).
2. Description of the sociocultural context (home, school, and community)

3. Description of the student's attitude and response to reading.
4. Description of the student's reading profile.
5. Recommendations for the student's literacy development.
6. Reflection of what you have learned by doing a child study describing your experience.

**Support your analysis and conclusions with specific examples from your observations, field notes, lessons, student products, parent/teacher/student interviews, etc. Do not send all of your evidence, just those samples that support the statements in your analysis. Do not rely on a single source of data (e.g., observational) to support your analysis - you must demonstrate the use of multiple methods to collect your evidence.**

The paper should be written in narrative form, single-sided, double-spaced, and between 12 to 15 pages in length. Use APA formatting. Attach samples of your ethnographic records, anecdotal observations, interviews, work samples, etc. as appendices.

Further details and the assignment rubric are provided on Blackboard.

## OTHER REQUIREMENTS

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### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to participate in all learning activities within each weekly module. Not participating in all learning activities within each weekly module will be reflected with a zero for the week and as an absence. Students with one or more absences will not receive credit for the course.

Class participation is vitally important in a course such as this. Each class session we will have readings to discuss, ideas to unpack, and learning activities to do. You are expected to participate in the class discussions and learning activities in a substantive way, as this not only enriches the class, but also helps ensure that you will get the most out of the course.

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### FIELD EXPERIENCE

Field experience in settings that serve language learners are important opportunities for connecting learning to real-world experience. All Performance-Based Assessments (PBAs) in this program will require some field experience to apply new knowledge to an educational context. Expect to spend about 15 hours of fieldwork per course. Candidates will be responsible for locating appropriate settings for field experiences.

## GMU POLICIES

### CORE VALUE COMMITMENT

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: [Core Values](#).

## GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

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### POLICIES

- Students are expected to be familiar with the [policies and procedures](#) of the University and the College of Education and Human Development.
- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the [Mason Honor Code](#).



- Students must follow the university policy for [Responsible Use of Computing](#).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from [Disability Services](#) is received by the instructor.

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#### CAMPUS RESOURCES

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

#### **Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:**

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/>**