



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

EDCI 587 SYLLABUS

CONTENT LITERACY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
3 CREDITS, FALL 2023 (10/19/23 – 12/14/23)
ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE

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Virtual, by appointment through Zoom or Blackboard

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COURSE INFORMATION

PREREQUISITES/COREQUISITES

N/A

UNIVERSITY CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

Focuses on research-based instructional strategies for integrating development of ESL/EFL/EAL learners' academic language and literacy skills with learning of content concepts across grade levels and disciplinary areas. Emphasizes sociocultural practices that leverage ESL/EFL/EAL learners' social, cultural, linguistic, and knowledge capitals to strengthen academic achievement in content classrooms and discipline-specific fields.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course provides a specific focus on content area literacy for English learners (ELs) at all levels and across contexts. Candidates in this course will examine literacy research and instruction related to teaching specific subject matter including social studies, science, mathematics, and the arts to ELs. Participants critically analyze and demonstrate teaching approaches for English literacy and biliteracy in content areas. An important goal for this course is promoting collaboration between content area teachers, as well as literacy and language personnel, to support the academic success of ELs. The cultural context of learning is also considered. Among the topics addressed are: sociocultural and sociopolitical dimensions of

teaching academic content; principles for content area instruction; identity and self-concept formation; learning and collaboration across the curriculum; differentiated instruction for ELs; strategies for reading and writing for academic purposes; formative assessment in the content areas; analyzing resources and materials; dimensions of learning social studies, science, and math content; students with interrupted schooling; critical literacy; and advocacy in support of academic equity for language learners.

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.

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](#)

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 insure 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. Identify language and literacy skills critical for EL success in the content areas.
2. Plan and execute literacy activities across a range of content areas for ELs.

3. Apply first and second language acquisition theory and praxis to developing literacy, especially reading /writing, for ELs in the content areas.
4. Utilize current theory and praxis in literacy and bi-literacy to analyze resources and materials for teaching secondary and post-secondary ELs in the content areas.
5. Analyze research from newer perspectives concerning implications for teachers of older children, youth, and adults from culturally diverse and second language backgrounds.
6. Use content-language integrative approaches to teach pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading and writing strategies.
7. Model for students reading and writing strategies appropriate to various learning tasks in content area subject matter.
8. Develop performance-based assessment activities in determining the content instruction for ELs.

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 language models for ELLs.
 - 1d. Candidates apply knowledge of English academic language functions, learning domains, content-specific language and discourse structures, and vocabulary to promote ELLs' academic achievement across content areas.
- **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.
- **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.
 - 3c. Candidates adjust instructional decisions after critical reflection on individual ELLs' learning outcomes in both language and content.
 - 3e. Candidates use and adapt relevant materials and resources, including digital resources, to plan lessons for ELLs, support communication with other educators, school personnel, and ELLs and to foster student learning of language and literacies in the content areas.
- **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 determines 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.

- 5a. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of effective collaboration strategies in order to plan ways to serve as a resource for ELL instruction, support educators and school staff, and advocate for ELLs.
- 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 how context contributes to identity formation and therefore influences learning. Teachers use this knowledge of identity and settings in planning, instructing, and assessing.
- **Domain: Content**
 - Standard 7: Teachers understand that language learning is most likely to occur when learners are trying to use the language for genuine communicative purposes. Teachers understand that the content of the language course is the language that learners need in order to listen, to talk about, to read and write about a subject matter or content area. Teachers design their lessons to help learners acquire the language they need to successfully communicate in the subject or content areas they want/need to learn about.
- **Domain: Commitment and Professionalism**
 - Standard 8: Teachers continue to grow in their understanding of the relationship of second language teaching and learning to the community of English language teaching professionals, the broader teaching community, and communities at

large, and use these understandings to inform and change themselves and these communities

COURSE MATERIALS

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Gibbons, P. (2015). *Scaffolding language scaffolding learning: Teaching English language learners in the mainstream classroom* (2nd ed). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann

Zwiers, J. (2014). *Building academic language: Meeting Common Core Standards across disciplines*. (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

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

Gottlieb, M., & Ernst-Slavit, G. (2014). *Academic language in diverse classrooms: Definitions and contexts*. Corwin Press.

Reiss, J. (2012). *120 content strategies for English language learners* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Allyn & Bacon.

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 <i>TESOL Standards 5c; TESOL Adult Standards 8</i> | 35% |
| Disciplinary Literacy Project | 27% |

| | |
|--|------|
| <i>TESOL Standards 1a,d, 2a, 3a,e, 5a; TESOL Adult Standards 1,2,7,8</i> | |
| Content Literacy Lesson Project <i>TESOL Standards 2b, 3a,c,e, 4b, 5a,c; TESOL Adult Standards 1,2,3,4,7,8</i> | 38% |
| Total | 100% |

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

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.

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.

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 (MODULE 1-8)

Class participation is evidenced by thoughtful, thorough completion of **all activities** in the Weekly Modules. 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.

DISCIPLINARY LITERACY PROJECT

This major assignment will afford teacher candidates with the opportunity to delve into the research-based best practices **in a specific disciplinary area** that is promising for building English learners' content understanding and academic language and literacy practices in tandem. Depending on their teaching context/interest, candidates may choose to focus on young adolescents in grades 4-6, middle level (grades 7-8), secondary (grades 9-12), or post-secondary adult learners. If you choose the lower elementary level (K-3 grades), please focus on moving beyond teaching content-area literacy in the primary grade with a research-based rationale.

Candidates **may also choose** to collaborate with a peer in the course with similar teaching context/interest to co-create the multimedia presentation (paper will be written independently). Peers who are collaborating on the multimedia presentation must inform the instructor early on in the course.

Multimedia Presentation: Candidates will portray key concepts from their research in an interesting, engaging multimedia presentation designed for an audience of teacher peers. Presentation software must be compatible with Blackboard. Candidates will narrate their presentations and include active audience engagement. The presentation will be uploaded via a Discussion Board link located in the Major Assignments folder. Candidates will be expected to view and share brief feedback around peers' presentations.

Research Paper: Candidates will use resources from the textbook and journal articles in weekly modules as a starting point for researching the academic language and literacy features and the demands of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in a specific disciplinary area. Candidates will research and explain the instructional approaches and strategies that can apprentice learners to construct and communicate knowledge successfully within a disciplinary area. Expect to include **at least three to five different research articles and/or book chapters** (outside of the course reading) that are relevant to disciplinary development in general as well as your chosen disciplinary subject and grade level. That is, the paper will focus on describing and explaining the kind of instructional practices in a specific disciplinary area that can bolster your learners' engagement with print-based and/or digital texts, leading to deeper content understanding and contributing to the development of college and career ready academic language and literacy practices.

Further details and the assignment rubric are provided on Blackboard.

CONTENT LITERACY LESSON PROJECT (PBA)

As the Performance Based Assignment for EDCI 587, Content Literacy Lesson Project will provide candidates with the opportunity to design, implement, and reflect on a detailed, standards-aligned lesson plan with specific content learning and literacy/language development goals. Candidates will design a lesson plan with a focus on grades K-3, grades 4-6, middle level (grades 7-8), secondary (grades 9-12), or post-secondary adult learners. The candidate may use a lesson plan template from their current teaching context, but must ensure that the lesson plan *design and description* highlight design features specified in the assignment description in the Major Assignments folder. (Note: Candidates will draw on learning from the course to work across several modules to build and share the lesson plan with feedback from peers and the instructor).

Further details and the assignment rubric are provided on Blackboard.

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](#).

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

POLICIES

- 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.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to VIAhelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>.
- Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to [Blackboard Instructional Technology Support for Students](#).
- For information on student support resources on campus, see [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.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our [website](#).

NOTE: *Any text generated by an artificial intelligence (AI) text-generation tool (such as ChatGPT) is not accepted in this class as “the student’s own work,” and so will be considered similarly to text published on paper or online or text composed or significantly edited/altered by another person. The use of such text without proper attribution is a violation of academic integrity.*