

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development Graduate School of Education
Program: Elementary Education - Licensure

Literacy Teaching and Learning in Diverse Elementary Classrooms, Part I

Course

Fall 2009
Section 001 – 3 credits
Wednesday 7:20 – 10:00 PM
West 1008

Instructor Information

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Office Hours

Wednesday 5:00-7:00 and by appointment

Course Description

This course is one of a pair of courses that provide a research-based introduction to literacy teaching and learning for children in grades K-6. The emphasis in this first course is on the reading processes, literacy development and instruction, integration of reading across the curriculum, connections between culture, families and literacy, and meeting the needs of all learners. Field experience is required. *Prerequisites: Admission to the program, EDCI 542, EDCI 543.*

Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

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

Student Outcomes

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

Nature of Course Delivery

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

IRA Standards

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

INTASC Core Standards

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

Mason Mission Statement

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

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

The University will nurture and support a faculty that is diverse, innovative and excellent in teaching, active in pure and applied research, and responsive to the needs of students and the community. The faculty will embody the University's interactive approach to change both in the academy and in the world. The University will be a resource of the Commonwealth of Virginia serving private and public sectors and will be an intellectual and cultural nexus between Northern Virginia, the nation, and the world. (Adopted January 1991).

College of Education and Human Development Statement of Expectations

1. Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See www.gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.
2. Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code:

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

3. Students must agree to abide by the university policy for **Responsible Use of Computing**. See hyyp://mail.gm.edu and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.
4. Mason strives to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting accommodations based on disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services, www.gmu.edu/student/drc, located at SUB 1 Room 222, phone (703) 993-4306.

Required Texts

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

Fountas, I. C. & Pinnell, G. S. (1996). *Guided reading: Good First Teaching for All Children*. NH: Heinemann. (F&P).

Zarrillo, J. (2007). *Are you prepared to teach reading? A practical tool for self-assessment*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. (ZAR)

Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement. (2003). *Put reading first: The research building blocks for teaching children to read* (2nd ed.). Jessup, MD: National Institute for Literacy. (NIFL) **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BUY THIS BOOK – I WILL GIVE YOU A COPY.**

Grading Scale

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

C+ = 70 – 76
C = 75 – 70
D = 69 – 65
F = Below 65

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation (10%)

Ongoing

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

2. Field Reflections (15%)

Ongoing & 12/2
(email)

The time you spend observing in classrooms will help you to understand *in practice* what we cover in class and what you read in your texts. Each time you visit your field classroom (10 times in this semester), please note the following (as applicable) as you observe the reading and/or language arts lesson: (a) What was the focus (learning target) of the lesson? (e.g., knowledge/vocabulary, word study, fluency, comprehension, strategy development, or metacognition); (b) What materials were used? (c) What did the teacher do? (d) What did the students do (actions)? (e) How did students respond (attitudes/engagement)? (f) How did the teacher adjust the lesson or activity to differentiate instruction for students with varying levels of ability or language background? (g) What do you like about this lesson? (h) What would you do differently? (i) Text Connection (how does what you saw connect with what you've read?).

Send your reflections to me via email (jmalloy2@gmu.edu) as you complete them. I will read them and respond to you within the week. These reflections allow me to give you individualized feedback on what you're seeing in the classroom and may also influence what we address in classroom discussions.

All reflections must be received via email by 12/2/09.

3. Children's literature logs (10%)

Ongoing & 12/2
email

As you're going to be teaching reading, you'll need to become familiar with children's literature. You will learn to develop an eye for high quality texts (those that appeal to 'book people') and those that are interesting to children (appeal to 'child people'). To begin building this knowledge, you are expected to read a number of children's books on different topics, at various levels, and from different genres (fiction, informational, picture books, chapter books, series, multicultural books, poetry, etc.) as part of this course.

To document the children's books you read, you will complete **10** literature logs using a template that will be provided for you. On the log, you will be asked to list (a) the title, (b) the author, (c) the genre, (d) the approximate level (typical grade level or other leveling system can be found online), and (e) a *short* paragraph that summarizes the book, and (f) teaching implications, such as pre-reading/ during reading/ post-reading activities. Give thought to how the text can be used to address various learning targets we've talked about in class. Feel free to supplement your log with images of the book cover if you like. You will be graded on the accuracy of the information, your analysis of the books "teaching" potential, and the amount and variety of reading you do.

Send draft versions of these in as you complete them – I will provide feedback that you can use to revise them. **All 10 final versions of the lit logs should be received by me by 12/2/09.** At the end of the course, we will compile a CD that contains the lit logs for the entire class that can be used as a resource for you to pull from as you plan read-alouds in your classroom.

4. Spelling Inventory – (15%)

DUE 10/21

Spelling inventories are extremely informative assessments that are easy to implement. They provide the teacher with important information about students' word recognition and language development. For this assignment, you will conduct a spelling inventory in your field observation classroom. With the students' spelling inventories, you will complete a **Feature Guide** for each student, a **Spelling-by-Stage Classroom Organization Chart**, and a **Classroom Composite**. Using this information, you will write an instructional summary of how you would place students in word study groups, explaining the primary need of each group and the instruction you would use to meet this need. You will turn in the feature guides, the classroom organization chart, the classroom composite, and the instructional summary with explanations of your groupings and instructional decisions. **I will model all of these in class before this assignment is due.**

5. Strategic Read-Alouds (15%)

DUE 10/28 (plan/email); 11/11(conduct/in class); 11/18 (revised plan with reflection/email)

Children are never too old for read-alouds. When we read out loud to our students, we have the opportunity to expose them to new topics and genres, as well as novel vocabulary, text and print structures, and to model appropriate strategies for reading as we think aloud. Conducting a strategic read aloud is an effective way for showing students how good readers think while they read. Therefore, strategic read-alouds are the heart of comprehension instruction.

You will plan and then conduct a strategic read aloud in our class based on the grade level you are observing in your field observations. You will be explicit in explaining to your “students” (colleagues) an appropriate comprehension strategy for the text you’ve chosen and provide a reason why the strategy is important. You will then model the strategy by thinking aloud as you read the book. You will have group time to work on your lesson plans and will turn them in via email by the “plan due” date via email. I will provide feedback on your plan before you give your lesson.

On 11/11, you will give your read-aloud to your group and your colleagues will provide feedback. You will then write a reflection about your lesson, describing what went well and what you need do to improve your deliver, and giving reasons for any changes you made in your original plan. Please turn in a final version of your lesson plan incorporating any feedback I gave on your first draft as well as changes recommended from your in-class lesson.

I will have modeled a strategic read aloud in class and we will discuss how to plan for them.

6. Informal Reading Inventory (15%)

**DUE 12/09
(hard copy)**

An informal reading inventory is an assessment that provides a snapshot of a student’s reading level, miscues, fluency, and comprehension skill. It’s also a great way to begin observing student behaviors and listening with a “teacher’s ear”. You will have opportunities to practice these in class before completing this assessment in your field placement. Your cooperating teacher will guide you in selecting an appropriate student for this assessment.

The inventory forms (QRI-4) will be provided for you as fits the grade level of your placement. You will meet with your student to give the inventory, perhaps recording them while they read, so that you can time them, make a running record, and assess their comprehension. You will then write a summary of each student’s literacy strengths and weaknesses in decoding, fluency, and comprehension and the implications for teaching this student based on those observations. Please print and attach the summary to the student’s scoring sheets and bring to class on the due date. We will practice these in class before the due date.

7. Final – Vision Statement (20%)

DUE Rough draft to share - 9/16 (hard copy); First draft - 9/23 (email);

Final Draft - 12/16 (email and hard copy to bring)

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

You will submit two versions of your vision during the course. The first will be shared with colleagues in draft form in class and will be due to the instructor via email on Friday, Sept 23rd. This first version will describe your vision for teaching. Think about: Why do you want to teach? What are you passionate about? The first vision statement should not exceed three pages.

You will begin to independently revise your vision based on new learning, continued reading of professional sources, consultation with colleagues, and additional personal reflection. However, the revised vision will also address the tasks, activities, and experiences you will implement in your classroom that will help you achieve your vision.

As you revise your vision, you will share it with colleagues periodically during the course. A final version will be due to the instructor on December 16th. This final vision statement should not exceed five pages.

The instructor will evaluate both versions of the vision statement in terms of how well you justify your position (i.e., how well you bring readings and knowledge to bear in building a thoughtful and defensible rationale for what you say you stand for). Your vision itself will not be evaluated (it is personal to you, and what you say you stand for is your business). Instead, the evaluation will focus on why you hold that vision and how you justify your position. In the final draft, be sure to address *why* certain tasks, activities, and/or experiences are likely to lead your students to the vision you have for them.

Course Outline

Class 1 – 9/2/09

- Introductions
- Syllabus
- Theories and Processes of Reading
- Balanced Literacy Instruction
- Overview of the Course

Readings for next week: Zarrillo Chs. 1 & 3

Class 2 – 9/9/09

- Language development
 - Alphabetic principle
 - Concepts of print
 - Shared Reading
 - Literate Environment
 - Morning meeting/message

Readings for next week: Zarrillo Chs. 4 & 5; NIFL pp. i. – 17

Class 3 – 9/16/09

- **BRING DRAFT OF VISIONING PAPER TO SHARE WITH GROUP**
- Word recognition
 - Phonological awareness
 - Phonemic awareness
 - Phonics
 - Sight words
 - Decoding
 - Word Walls

Readings for next week: WTW Chs. 1 - 3 ; Zarrillo Ch. 7

Class 4 – 9/23/09

- **1st DRAFT OF VISIONING PAPER DUE**
- Spelling
 - Relationship to reading
 - Spelling Inventory
 - Stages of Spelling Development

Readings for next week: WTW Ch. 4 - 8

Class 5 – 9/30/09

- Word Study
 - Organizing the classroom
 - Concept sorts, writing sorts, speed sorts
 - Games

Readings for next week: Zarrillo Ch. 9; NIFL pp. 29-39

Class 6 – 10/7/09

- Vocabulary
 - Tiers
 - Wide Reading
 - Word consciousness
 - Individual words
 - Graphic organizers
 - Structural analysis
 - Word banks

Readings for next week: Zarrillo Ch. 6; NIFL pp. 19 – 27

Class 7 – 10/14/09

- Fluency
 - Wide Reading
 - Choral Reading and Reader's Theatre
 - Repeated Readings

Readings for next week: Zarrillo Chs. 8, 10 & 11; NIFL pp. 41-48

Class 8 – 10/21/09

- **SPELLING INVENTORY DUE**
- Comprehension
 - Narrative vs. Expository
 - High quality literature
 - Aesthetic read-alouds
 - Before-during-after
 - Narrative comprehension instruction
 - Strategic read-alouds
 - Discussion
 - Reciprocal teaching
 - Expository comprehension (KWL, Text structure, Vocabulary)

Readings for next week: Zarrillo Chs. 2 & 16; read ahead in F&P – see class 10

Class 9 – 10/28/09

- **STRATEGIC READ-ALOUD LESSON PLAN DUE**
- Assessments part I
 - Informal vs. Formal
 - Concepts of print
 - Retellings
 - Explicit and implicit questioning (APK)

Readings for next week: F & P Chs. 6 & 7, read ahead in F & P – see class 10

Class 10 – 11/04/09

- Assessments II
 - Running records
 - IRI's

Readings for next week: Zarrillo, Ch. 15; F & P Chs. 1-5, 8, 11

Class 11 – 11/11/09

- **CONDUCT STRATEGIC READ-ALOUDS IN CLASS**
- Differentiated Instruction
 - Heterogenous grouping
 - Flexible groups
 - Literature Circles
 - Book club
 - ELL's and Diverse Learners
- Guided Reading
 - Grouping for instruction

Readings for next week: Zarrillo Ch. 12

Class 12 – 11/18/09

- **STRATEGIC READ-ALoud REVISED PLAN AND REFLECTION**
 - Motivation and affect
 - Interest
 - Choice, collaboration, authenticity
 - Projects
 - Themed Units
 - Teacher as model
 - Managing a balanced literacy framework
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Class 13 – 11/25/09

NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Class 14 – 12/2/09

- **FIELD REFLECTIONS DUE VIA EMAIL**
 - **FINAL CHILDREN'S LIT LOGS DUE VIA EMAIL**
 - **NO CLASS (I'll be at National Reading Conference)**
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Class 15 – 12/9/09

- **INFORMAL READING INVENTORIES DUE – hard copy in class**
- Catch up day for course content

FINAL – 12/16/09

- **2ND VISIONING PAPER DUE (BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS YOURS)**
- **CREATING CD'S**
- **Looking forward to 556**

*** The instructor reserves the right to adjust syllabus throughout the semester.**