

**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**

Spring 2011  
Section 001 – 3 credits  
Tuesday 4:30 – 7:10 PM  
East 122

**Instructor Information**

Jackie Malloy, PhD.  
Robinson A322  
703-993-5628  
[jmalloy2@gmu.edu](mailto:jmalloy2@gmu.edu)

**Office Hours**

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

### *Student Expectations*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- 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/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- 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.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

### *Campus Resources*

- 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/>].
- 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/>].

## Required Texts

Bear, D. R., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S., & Johnston, F. R. (2007). *Words their way: Word study for phonics, vocabulary, and spelling instruction* (4<sup>th</sup> 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)

## 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 explored, 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 (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. **Please reflect on 5 reading or writing lessons that you've observed in your PDS classroom using the following questions as a guide:**

- (a) What was the objective (learning target) of the lesson? (e.g., content knowledge/vocabulary, word study, fluency, comprehension, strategy development); Can you identify the standard that it addressed?
- (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 backgrounds?
- (g) What do you like about this lesson?
- (h) What would you do differently?
- (i) Class/Text Connection (how does what you saw connect with what you've read in your texts or been exposed to in our class?).

Please remember to include **your name and the grade level** on the reflection.

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 05/10/11.**

### 3. Children's literature logs (15%)

Ongoing (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 literature and texts that are interesting to children. 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.** 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),
- (e) a *short* paragraph that summarizes the book, and
- (f) teaching implications, such as pre-reading/ during reading/ post-reading activities. Think about whether the book could be used as a read aloud or resource in a content area, such as science, social studies or math. What reading strategies would be good to model with this particular text? 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 can find these online and copy/paste them into your document.

You will be graded on the accuracy of the information, your analysis of the books "teaching" potential, the appropriateness of the classroom implications you suggest, and the variety of reading you do. Be sure to read across grade levels and genres!

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 05/10/11.** 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 3/22/11 Hard copy**

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 PDS classroom. You will need to arrange this with the classroom teacher with sufficient time to do the analysis of student work. You will need to 'borrow' about 15 –

20 minutes of class time in the field to give the assessment. Please talk to me if there are any issues with getting this done.

Once you have obtained 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 3/29/11 (draft via email); 4/12/11 (conduct in class); 4/19/11 (revised plan with reflection via email)**

Children are never too old for read-alouds. When we read out loud to our students, we expose them to new topics and genres, novel vocabulary, text and print structures, and can 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 excellent 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 PDS school. **You will be explicit in describing 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 **3/29/11**. I will provide feedback on your plan before you give your lesson.

**On 4/12/11**, you will give your read-aloud to your group during class time 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 delivery, 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. These final versions are due on **4/19/11**.

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



## 6. Informal Reading Inventory (15%)

**DUE 5/3/11  
(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. You will need to spend several small bits of time with this student to gather sufficient information in order to understand his or her instructional level and learning needs.

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 May 3rd.**

We will practice these in class before the due date.

## 7. Final – Vision Statement (15%)      **DUE Notes to share - (hard copy) 2/8/11; First draft - 2/15/11 (email); Final Draft - 5/10/11 (email)**

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 on **2/8/11**. An electronic first draft of your vision statement is due on **2/15/11** to [jmalloy2@gmu.edu](mailto:jmalloy2@gmu.edu). This first version will describe your vision for teaching. Think about: Why do you want to teach? What are you passionate about? What do you want your students to remember about you and your teaching? The first vision statement should not exceed two 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. Use what you've learned about classroom structure, management, and teaching to describe how you will enact your vision in your classroom – **not just WHAT your vision is but HOW you will get it done.**

**A final version of your vision statement with classroom implications will be due to the instructor on May 10<sup>th</sup> via email.** 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 is important to you). 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**  
**EDCI 555 001**  
**Spring 2011 - Malloy**

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**Class 1 – 1/25/11**

- Introductions
- Syllabus
- Theories and Processes of Reading
- Balanced Literacy Instruction
- Overview of the Course
- Review of GMU lesson and objective writing

Readings for next week: Zarrillo Chs. 1 & 3

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**Class 2 – 2/1/11**

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

Readings for next week: Zarrillo Chs. 4 & 5  
Write up notes for vision to share next week.

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**Class 3 – 2/8/11**

- **BRING NOTES FOR 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

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**Class 4 – 2/15/11**

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

Readings for next week: WTW Ch. 4 - 8

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**Class 5 – 2/22/11**

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

Readings for next week: Zarrillo Ch. 9

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**Class 6 – 3/1/11**

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

Readings for next week: Zarrillo Ch. 6

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**Class 7 – 3/8/11**

- Fluency
  - Wide Reading
  - Choral Reading and Reader's Theatre
  - Repeated Readings
- Understanding the decoding/fluency/comprehension connection
- Introducing comprehension strategies

Readings for next class: Zarrillo Chs. 8, 10 & 11

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## **NO CLASS ON 3/15/11 – HAPPY SPRING BREAK!!!!**

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### **Class 8 – 3/22/11**

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

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

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### **Class 9 – 3/29/11**

- **STRATEGIC READ-ALOUD LESSON PLAN (ROUGH) DUE**
- Assessments part I
  - Informal vs. Formal
  - Concepts of print
  - Retellings
  - Explicit and implicit questioning (APK)
  - Formative and Summative
  - When to get help

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

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### **Class 10 – 4/5/11**

- Assessments II
  - Running records
  - IRI's

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

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### **Class 11 – 4/12/11**

- **CONDUCT STRATEGIC READ-ALOUDS IN CLASS**
- Differentiated Instruction
  - Flexible groups
  - Literature Circles
  - Book club
  - ELL's and Diverse Learners

Readings for next week: Zarrillo Ch. 12

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### **Class 12 – 4/19/11**

- **STRATEGIC READ-ALOUD REVISED PLAN AND REFLECTION**
  - Planning for learning needs using whole/small/independent teaching
  - Guided Reading
    - Grouping for instruction
  - Independent Reading
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### **Class 13 – 4/26/11**

- Motivation and affect
    - Interest
    - Choice, collaboration, authenticity
    - Projects
    - Themed Units
    - Teacher as model
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### **Class 15 – 5/3/11**

- **INFORMAL READING INVENTORIES DUE – hard copy in class**
  - Creating literate classroom environments
  - Culture/Family/Community
    - Discussion
    - Reciprocal teaching
  - Online Literacy
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**5/10/11 NO CLASS – Professor at International Reading Conference**

**FINAL VISIONS AND ALL FIELD REFLECTIONS AND LIT LOGS  
DUE VIA EMAIL TODAY!**

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**5/17/11 FINAL**

- **BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS YOUR VISION**
  - **Creating Lit Log CDs**
  - **Looking forward to 556**
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**\* The instructor reserves the right to adjust syllabus throughout the semester.**