

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Literacy Program

EDRD 619.001 – Disciplinary Literacy CRN: 41356
EDRD 619.6L1 – Disciplinary Literacy CRN: 43536
EDRD 619.6H1 – Disciplinary Literacy CRN: 43725
3 Credits, Summer 2024
Asynchronous, Online
May 13-July 9, 2024

Faculty

Name: Tom Opfer, Ph.D.
Office Hours: By Appointment
Office Location: Program Office Thompson Hall 1500, Fairfax Campus
Office Phone: Program Office 703-993-7611
Email Address: topfer2@gmu.edu

Required Prerequisite: SEED 566, SEED 567, SEED 569, SEED 572, or SEED 573 (with a grade of B or better)

Required Corequisite: SEED 667, SEED 669, SEED 672, SEED 673, or SEED 676

University Catalog Course Description

Examines language and literacy processes of adolescent learners. Builds understanding of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and visually representing in content areas. Evaluates disciplinary instructional strategies to support students' development of academic language and comprehension, including adaptations for diverse learners' needs. Fosters an awareness of the role of multiple texts and independent reading in adolescent learners' literacy practices.

Course Overview

Not Applicable

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 @gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on Monday, May 13.

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 see:
https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers

To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/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 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: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - Windows Media Player: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

Expectations

- Course Week:
Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, **some weekly modules start Monday and finish on Wednesday and others start Thursday and finish 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 **4 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 **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. 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.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

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

1. Compare theories of adolescent literacy.
2. Examine the role of literacy in learning across disciplines.
3. Evaluate evidence-based strategies that adolescent learners can use to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate disciplinary-specific texts.
4. Critique scholarly literature.
5. Design learning strategies and plans in specific content areas to scaffold adolescent learners' literacy development, including their word analysis, vocabulary, comprehension and writing skills.
6. Explain the specific challenges adolescent learners with varying levels of literacy and linguistic proficiency face in each discipline.

Professional Standards

Not Applicable

Required Texts

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2020). *Improving adolescent literacy: Content area strategies at work* (5th ed.). Pearson.

All other articles are provided in Blackboard.

Course Performance Evaluation

Candidates are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA, hard copy).

- **Assignments and/or Examinations**

Assignment Overview

Assignment	Total Value	Due Date
Course Learning Modules	40%	Weekly on Wednesday & Sunday evenings
Annotated Bibliography	20%	June 9
Disciplinary Literacy Inquiry Project	20%	June 30
Disciplinary Literacy Lesson Plan	20%	July 9

A. Course Learning Modules (40%): Each week, students are expected to complete a series of lessons and activities to show evidence of understanding course objectives. Assignments and point values are detailed in each module. Students can expect modules to take **6-9 hours per week** including time to read and view content.

Students' work should reflect learning from readings, videos, and any other online content posted within the **Course Learning Modules**. Thorough preparation and reflection is expected.

Participatory activities will vary including, but not limited to engaging in online discussions, sharing, and providing feedback on peers' work, reflecting through journals and blogs, and/or creating multi-media responses and projects. A variety of online tools and platforms will be used to facilitate activities.

Rubrics provided on Blackboard. Students **must complete all lessons and activities** in the Course Learning Modules to be prepared for the final projects.

Late work not accepted without prior approval.

B. Annotated Bibliography (20%): Students will read six (6) articles related to teaching in a particular discipline and create an analytical annotated bibliography. Articles must be from peer-reviewed journals. Annotations must follow APA format.

C. Disciplinary Literacy Inquiry Project (20%). Students will investigate the role of literacy in learning in the disciplines. Using knowledge gained from the annotated bibliography and coursework, students will review at least 3-5 more resources (i.e. websites, books, podcasts, blogs) and develop a 15-minute multimedia presentation that demonstrates an ability to synthesize theory, research, and practice to explain the role of literacy in learning in the disciplines.

D. Disciplinary Lesson Plan (20%): Students will design, justify, and reflect on a detailed, standards-aligned lesson plan with specific content learning and literacy/language development goals. Students will draw on learning from the course to work across several modules to build and share the lesson plan.

Candidates will complete the following:

1. Lesson design: Students will design a lesson plan that engages students in reading a content area text. The lesson may focus on adolescent learners in middle level (grades 6-8) or secondary (grades 9- 12). A lesson template will be provided, or candidates may use a lesson plan template from their current teaching context, ensuring that all elements from the lesson template are addressed. A folder in Blackboard will be provided with lesson planning materials.
2. Lesson rationale: Students will submit a 1-2 page written or 3–5-minute audio-recorded lesson rationale reflecting on and explaining the lesson design. Students will (1) explain why/how the content and language/literacy learning goals support one another in a rigorous (grade-level appropriate) lesson that is anchored in VA SOLS, (2) explain choices/thinking around lesson content, learning activities, and scaffolds/supports, and (3) explain the way that embedded formative assessment(s) will support adolescent learners **and** the candidate in assessing learners' progress toward the content and language goals.

*Further details and rubrics provided on Blackboard for all assignments.

- **Grading**

- A = 95%-100%
- A- = 90%-94%
- B+ = 87%-89%
- B = 83%-86%
- B- = 80%-82%
- C = 70 %-79%
- F = below 70%

- **Other Requirements**

All assignments and online tasks are due by 11:59 p.m. on the date listed in the class schedule. Unless arrangements have been made beforehand with your instructor, 10% of the total points will be deducted from assignments for *each* day they are submitted late.

Assignments should follow APA (7th ed.) formatting (including 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with one-inch margins). Writing quality (including mechanics, organization, and content) is figured into the overall score for each assignment, so proofread carefully and use formal, academic writing. Be sure to use APA format (7th ed.) when providing citations for relevant research. (See Blackboard for resources.) When submitting electronic files, please name the files using your first and last name and assignment title (ex: JOHNDOEResearchCritique1.docx).

Note: Students in the Secondary Education program must earn a B or higher in all coursework.

Professional Dispositions See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>

Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
Module 0 May 13	Welcome & course overview	Read the syllabus.	Complete all activities in module.
Module 1 May 13-15	Adolescent literacy Disciplinary Literacy	Ch. 1, <i>Improving Adolescent Literacy</i> Buehl, D. (2017). Mentoring students in disciplinary literacy. In Doug Buehl, <i>Developing readers in the academic disciplines</i> (pp. 1-22). Stenhouse.	Complete all activities in module.
Module 2 May 16-19	Comprehension Multiliteracies	Cartwright, & Duke, N. K. (2019). The DRIVE Model of Reading: Making the Complexity of Reading Accessible. <i>The Reading Teacher</i> , 73(1), 7–15. https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1818 Harrison, C. & Alvermann, D. E. (2017). The “M” Word: Dare We Use It? <i>Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy</i> , 61(1), 99–102. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.665	Complete all activities in module.
Module 3 May 20-22	Text Complexity	Buehl, D. (2017). Teaching comprehension of complex disciplinary texts. In <i>Developing readers in the academic disciplines</i> (pp. 29-73). Stenhouse. Fang, Z. (2008). Going beyond the Fab Five: Helping students cope with the unique linguistic challenges of expository reading in intermediate grades. <i>Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy</i> , (51)6 476-487. https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.51.6.4	Complete all activities in module.
Module 4 May 23-29 (be sure to take some time for yourself during the Memorial Day holiday weekend!)	Background knowledge	Ch. 2, <i>Improving Adolescent Literacy</i> Jones, L., Smith, S. L., & Durham, C. (2022). Teachers as digital composers: Designing digital jumpstarts to scaffold for emerging bilingual learners. <i>Computers and Education</i> , 189, 104592– https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2022.104592 Rance-Roney, J. (2010). Jump-starting language and schema for English-language learners: Teacher-composed digital jumpstarts for academic reading. <i>Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy</i> , 3(5), 386–395 https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.53.5.4	Complete all activities in module.

Module 5 May 30- June 2	Vocabulary Learning Language Structures	Ch. 3, <i>Improving Adolescent Literacy</i> Flanigan, K., & Greenwood, S. (2007). Effective content vocabulary instruction in the middle: Matching students, purposes, words, and strategies. <i>Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy</i> , 51(3), 226–238. https://doi.org/10.1598/JAAL.51.3.3 Schneider, E. & Ming, K. (2019). Masters of morphology: Explicit multisensory structured metacognitive language strategies to foster adolescent learners’ content vocabulary. <i>The Clearing House</i> , 92(3), 101–111. https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2019.1608144	Complete all activities in module.
Module 6 June 3-5	Planning for comprehension instruction Explicit teaching Think Aloud	Chapter 4, <i>Improving Adolescent Literacy</i> Rainey, E. C., Maher, B. L., Coupland, D. Franchi, R., & Moji, E. B. (2018). But what does it look like? Illustrations of disciplinary literacy teaching in two content areas. <i>Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy</i> , 61(4), 371-379. Spires, H. A., Kerkhoff, S. N., & Graham, A. C. K. (2016). Disciplinary literacy and inquiry: Teaching for deeper content learning. <i>Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy</i> , 60(2), 151–161. https://doi-org.mutex.gmu.edu/10.1002/jaal.577	Complete all activities in module.
Module 7 June 6-9		Choose articles for annotated bibliography.	Annotated Bibliography due
Module 8 June 10-12	Using strategies to support comprehension	Ch. 5, 7, & 8 <i>Improving Adolescent Literacy</i> Brown, S. A., & Pyle, N. (2021). Self-Questioning strategy routine to enhance reading comprehension among secondary students. <i>Teaching Exceptional Children</i> , 53(6), 441–449. https://doi.org/10.1177/0040059920976677 Gabriel, Wenz, C., & Dostal, H. (2016). Disciplinary text-dependent questions: Questioning for learning in the disciplines. <i>The Clearing House</i> , 89(6), 202–207. https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2016.1209154	Complete all activities in module.
Module 9 June 13-16	Writing	Ch. 9, <i>Improving Adolescent Literacy</i>	Complete all activities in module.

		Fang, Z., & Park, J. (2020). Adolescents' use of academic language in informational writing. <i>Reading & Writing</i> , 33(1), 97–119. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-019-09937-8	
Module 10 June 17-23	Guided discussions	Ch. 6, <i>Improving Adolescent Literacy</i> Chiaravalloti, L. (2010). “Wouldn’t she notice he had mud on his shirt?”: Scaffolding meaningful discussions. <i>Voices from the Middle</i> , 18(2), 16–25. Windschitl, M. (2019). Disciplinary Literacy Versus Doing School. <i>Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy</i> , 63(1), 7–13. https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.964	Complete all activities in module.
Module 11 June 24- June 30	Disciplinary Literacy Inquiry Project	Complete your Disciplinary Literacy Inquiry Project.	Disciplinary Literacy Inquiry Project due
Module 12 July 1-3	Lesson Planning	Ch. 10, <i>Improving Adolescent Literacy</i> Jung, L. A. (2021). Lesson planning with UNIVERSAL DESIGN for Learning: Intentionally using UDL principles upfront means making fewer adaptations later-- and reaching more students. <i>Educational Leadership</i> , 78(9), 38–43. Prather, C. (2021). The code for student engagement: What Malcolm X, The Wire, and my students’ lives taught me about creating lessons that matter. <i>Educational Leadership</i> , 79(4), 52–57. Wiggins, G., & Wilbur, D. (2015). How to make your questions ESSENTIAL? <i>Educational Leadership</i> , 73(1), 10–15.	Complete all activities in module.
Module 13 July 5-9	Disciplinary Literacy Lesson plan	Complete your Disciplinary Literacy Lesson plan. Complete course evaluations.	Disciplinary Literacy Lesson plan due

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Core Values 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: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/> (New Window)).
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/> (New Window)).
- c. 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.
- d. 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 (see <https://ds.gmu.edu> (New Window)).
- e. Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized 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 <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.

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

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, 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 or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus> (New Window)
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <http://cehd.gmu.edu/>.