EDMS 463  
Teaching Reading and Language Arts to Younger Students  
3 units

Sonoma State University  
School of Education  
Literacy Studies and Elementary Education Department

Course Description
Philosophy, goals and pedagogy in reading and language arts in grades K-3. Candidates examine early literacy development and teaching/learning processes in order to extend their knowledge and competencies to teach reading, writing, and other sign systems to students of diverse backgrounds. Candidates learn to assess and build upon the oral and written language strengths children bring to school, with attention to print awareness, control of language (semantics, syntax, grapho-phonemics, pragmatics), functions of oral and written language, literature and text interpretation, language conventions, writing strategies, writing applications, and non-written communication.

Course Philosophy / Connections with School Vision
Literacy is viewed as a dynamic and multidimensional human process that enables individuals to express, communicate, and reflect on their experiences, hopes, and dreams. Reading and writing involve constructive strategies of composition and comprehension, situated in particular contexts and carried out for personal and social purposes. Language and literacy vary according to regional, historical, social, cultural, political, and economic influences; these and other factors must be interrogated and taken into account in instructional decisions. All children learn language, learn about language, and learn through language by using language in natural contexts. Difficulties in students’ reading and writing can be addressed by teachers who understand the linguistic, cognitive, sociocultural, and developmental dimensions of literacy development. Teachers can expand learners’ repertoires of meaning construction and expression through the use of and transmediation between/among multiple sign systems, including language. The arts – music, dance, drama/movement and the visual arts – provide the potential for creating deeper and diverse meanings.

DISPOSITIONS identified by the School of Education that are strongly addressed in EDMS 463:  
Preparing teachers who
  • Promote social and emotional growth and an ethic of caring, nurturing, and learning in their classrooms, schools, and communities;
  • Are culturally responsive and responsible, knowledgeable and appreciative of the diversity among learners;
  • Value the arts in learning;
  • Are committed to anti-bias principles, social justice, and democratic practices.
PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS identified by the School of Education that are strongly addressed in EDMS 463:
Preparation goals:

- Design and implement pedagogy and curriculum that are informed by theory, research, professional standards, and reflective practice;
- Design, implement, and evaluate instructional practice and educational assessments responsive to the full range of individual differences – social, linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity/physical and learning disabilities;
- Use various means – knowledge of research, formative and summative assessments, reflection and evaluation – to improve teacher practice and student learning;
- Use technology to enhance teaching and support active, authentic learning.

Course Goals:
Candidates learn and apply strategies for English language learners and speakers of English, that are aligned with the state-adopted academic content standards for students in English/language arts and the Reading and Language Arts Framework. Candidates complete field assignments that provide opportunities for first-hand knowledge of classroom literacy practices and application of course concepts. This course builds on and extends candidate knowledge and experience developed in their subject matter preparation programs related to reading and language arts content. Another focus of this course is on the arts, including drama/movement, music, visual art, and dance as ways of knowing. Candidates learn to employ multiple sign systems (language and the arts) across the curriculum as ways of helping young learners know and explore concepts as well as express their ideas.

- Examine research, methods, and materials for teaching reading and writing in first and second languages and the theories that underlie them
- Understand the nature of early literacy and appropriate instructional strategies
- Learn about the roles of home and community literacy practices in literacy development
- Understand the nature of the arts as ways of knowing and expressing
- Learn and apply strategies that promote fluent reading and writing, including phonemic awareness; direct, systematic, explicit phonics; and decoding skills, including spelling patterns, sound/print codes (orthography), and extensive practice in reading and writing as they apply to younger readers
- Investigate and develop strategies for using a wide range of literature for young children
- Develop awareness of diversity in student abilities, cultural backgrounds, and language and use these understandings to develop classroom practices.
- Learn and apply ongoing assessment strategies to guide teaching and early intervention techniques in a classroom setting
- Investigate, develop, and compile teaching strategies and assessment approaches for application in classroom contexts, including technology-based activities
- Do teacher research – observe and analyze literacy events in the field
- Investigate current issues involved in teaching reading and the language arts
At the end of the course, candidates will be able to:
• Teach reading and writing to beginning and primary-aged readers
• Assess elementary students’ phonemic awareness, phonics knowledge, vocabulary knowledge, and comprehension strategies
• Create instructional and intervention strategies based on assessment findings for developing phonemic awareness, phonics skills, vocabulary knowledge and comprehension with primary-age students
• Evaluate the success of reading and writing intervention and instructional strategies with primary-age students
• Use technology to implement reading and language arts instruction
• Integrate the arts with reading and language arts curriculum for meaning making

Multiple Subject Program Connections (carried out in field placement)

CRITICAL MULTICULTURAL STANCE
• Find and use information about an individual student’s cultural and personal background in Young Reader/Writer Study (assessments and instruction)
• Develop strategy lessons/experiences to assist diverse young readers/writers
• Identify and analyze own personal perspectives on classroom diversity issues

TECHNOLOGY INFUSION
• Locate and use web resources for use in literacy lessons
• Videotape own teaching of literacy/arts lessons and/or assessment administration
• Use computer resources in literacy/arts lessons/activities (e.g., word processing, arts tools, Powerpoint)

SPECIAL EDUCATION
• Assess reading and writing strengths and needs of a variety of young students
• Learn the referral process for special services
• Create/enact open curricular opportunities for young students with diverse strengths and needs

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING
• Observe and interact with English language learners one-on-one, in small groups and in large groups
• Create/enact open curricular opportunities for young students with diverse strengths and needs
• Observe specialized programs for assisting English language learners (e.g., English language development programs, English as a Second Language programs)

Field Requirements and Assignments
• Young Reader/Writer Study
• Reading Process Project/Exploration
• Writing Process Project/Exploration
• Technology Application
• Arts Project/Exploration
• Interviews of teachers in fieldwork regarding classroom literacy program, English language learners, and students identified for special education services
• Assessments of diverse students’ oral language, reading and writing strengths and needs
• Lesson plans for young readers and writers
• Lesson plans focusing on the arts with young students
• Collect classroom resources, student work samples, and course work in a resource notebook

RICA
Recent California legislation requires all credential candidates to pass a test called Reading Instruction Competency Assessment (RICA) to qualify for a teaching credential. RICA components addressed in this course include phonological awareness, concepts about print and letter recognition, systematic, explicit phonics and other word identification strategies, spelling instruction, vocabulary development, reading comprehension, student independent reading and its relationship to improved reading, relationships among reading, writing, and oral language, diagnosis of reading development, use of assessment and evaluation data, and structure of the English language.

You are advised to collect course materials and other documents and resources that provide information you will need to pass the examination. You may choose to keep a separate RICA binder, although it can and probably will contain duplicates of selected materials from you EDMS 463/464 Resource Notebook.

Disabilities Statement
If you have a disability that requires accommodation in this class, you must notify the instructor before the end of the second week of class regarding the nature of the accommodation you need. You must register with the campus Disability Resource Center that is located in Bldg. AFC#1, 664-2677. The Center will then provide you with written documentation of your verified disability and the recommended accommodation that you must then present to the instructor.

Required Texts
• CA Department of Education, Reading and Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve http://www.cde.ca.gov/cdep/press/laframework.pdf
• CA Department of Education, English—Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve http://www.cde.ca.gov/board/pdf/reading.pdf
• Cox, Teaching Language Arts: A Student & Response-Centered Classroom, Allyn & Bacon
• Dombey & Moustafa, *W(h)ole to Part Phonics*, Heinemann
• Braunger & Lewis, Hand out in Class: Readings from *Building a Knowledge Base in Reading*, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory’s Curriculum and Instruction Services, National Council of Teachers of Reading, International Reading Association

**Required Articles**

- Moats, *Teaching Decoding*
- Weaver, *Phonics in Whole Language Classrooms*
- Shefelbine, *Learning and Using Phonics in Beginning Reading*
- Routman and Butler, *Why Talk About Phonics?*

**Professional Book Club Texts** (Select one title later in the semester):

- Blecher & Jaffee, *Weaving in Arts*, Heinemann
- Ray, *Writing Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (and They’re All Hard Parts)*, NCTE, 2001

**Ways of Knowing Book Clubs** (Select one title later in the semester):

- Gee, *Visual Arts as a Way of Knowing*, Stenhouse, 1999
- Heller, *Drama as a Way of Knowing*, Stenhouse, 1996
- Short, *Literature as a Way of Knowing*, Stenhouse, 1997
- Zakkai, *Dance as a Way of Knowing*, Stenhouse, 1997

**Grading**

This course is not offered for credit/no credit.

- **A** represents full participation in course activities and going the “extra mile” in the ‘B’ category.
- **B** indicates competence in demonstrating understanding of significant concepts, drawing implications for practice, contributing to others’ learning, producing excellent products, and effectively communicating in oral and written settings.
- **C** denotes minimal competency achieved on course tasks. Lower grades indicate incompletion and/or inadequacy of course work.
- **I** (Incomplete) is granted only after a conference and a written agreement about work remaining.

**Course Artifacts and Activities**

This course is designed to engage you in experiences that you can refine and reinvent for your own students. You are invited to critique the effectiveness of materials, instructional strategies and assessments for students of diverse ages, experiences, and languages—and most especially (and immediately) for you! You will construct a Resource Notebook to document your learning in EDMS 463 and to organize your
growing collection of literacy education materials using the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and the English-Language Arts Content Standards.

You will do many things in this course, including talking, reading and writing for many purposes and audiences. Get ready for: participation in book clubs, investigations of teaching strategies, work in one-on-one and small group instruction in a field placement, analysis of a reader’s oral reading behaviors including their use of phonics, grammar and fluency (miscues), use of electronic and print media, lesson planning based on students’ need that is consistent with CA’s English-Language Arts Content Standards, responses to peers’ coursework, reflective writing, your own personal inquiry project, ongoing written exchanges with elementary aged children, and review of state-adopted reading and language arts materials.

In this class you will do a lot, and you can learn a great deal. The depth of learning is dependent on the amount of your effort. The key to this course is to work steadily on each component. You can not save up the work to the end of the semester and be successful. The course is structured around five components: further directions will be given in class.

A. Class Participation and Collaboration
Be punctual and regular in attendance. Read all material prior to class and be prepared to share your responses and assignments in class. Participation and demonstrations are vital to this course. You are expected to contribute frequently and constructively to our learning community. Although it sometimes feels risky to share new understandings, confusions, and questions, our class will support everyone’s learning through collaboration, communication, and professional attitude. Write clearly, type all final work, and follow conventional formatting. Observe due dates and take responsibility for all missed material.

B. Documenting Your Reflection
These reflections can take the form of written responses to your reading, making connections with (1) what you see and do in the field, (2) your course texts and concepts, (3) your own personal literacy experiences, (4) in class experiences and activities, and (5) what you are learning or have learned in other courses. These reflections are intended to show how you have related the course ideas to your own experiences and to provide an accountability measure of your work. They should capture your growing understandings, surprises, questions and confusions in conversational/informal writing, drawing and other media. The focus is on what you believe to be the key course ideas and your interpretations of these ideas. Different formats for your responses will be suggested which you may then adapt for your own students. Be sure and try them out!

C. Projects and Explorations
Your instructor will provide you with specific assignments from each of the following areas at the beginning of the semester. Examples of potential assignments are listed in each category:

1. The Reading Process
   • Picture book study
   • Author study
• Illustrator study
• Collect/analyze reading samples from young readers

2. **Process Writing**
• Collect/analyze writing samples from young writers
• Spelling Inquiry
• In-class writing process experiences
• Writing across the curriculum
• Writing and the arts project

3. **Technology Application**
• Search Internet for Book Club Extensions
• Reading/Writing Software Review
• Upload Lesson Plans to Website
• Response to Classroom Streaming Video
• Videotape teaching

D. **Midterm Construction**
Organize and show what you’ve learned so far in this combined “take home” work and in-class writing. The take-home segment will be handed out in class several weeks before it is due.

E. **Culminating Projects**
• **Resource Notebook**
  This collection of course artifacts and teaching tools must be constructed over the course of the entire semester. It will be submitted at the end of the course. Prepare a “toolbox” to support your literacy instruction. In it you will annotate and organize instructional materials, teaching strategies including three lesson plans that demonstrate your understandings of language arts instruction, assessment approaches, resource lists, and other ideas for literacy and language arts learning and teaching. You may include copies of professional articles, lesson ideas, student handouts, web addresses from your internet searches, reviews and lists of children’s literature titles for primary grades, notes from your readings, course handouts, personal writing—any items that will help you to be a better teacher! The organization for the Resource Notebook is your choice; you need to decide what will make it helpful and easy for you to use as a classroom teacher. We will discuss potential organizing structures in class. Please use a large 3-ring binder with dividers.

• **Fieldwork Project**
  You will work in an ethnically and linguistically diverse classroom as a part of your required 45 hours. Plan for approximately 4 hours a week during reading and language arts instruction. Remember to give a copy of the Letter of Introduction to your mentor teacher and the principal. In consultation with your mentor teacher, choose individuals and small groups of students to observe and work with in reading and writing. Please record your observations, activities and experiences in your Fieldwork Log. At the end of the semester, please submit the Fieldwork Log and the Fieldwork Project.