CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION 481
MW 1:40-3:00
Literacy Strategies for the Middle and Secondary School Content Areas
The University of Montana
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The limits of our language are the limits of our world.

–Ludwig Wittgenstein

REQUIRED TEXTS

Additionally, you will need a textbook from your own content area that is currently in use in the schools; you will use this throughout the course to develop materials and complete assignments.

Recommended: (and available electronically through the UM library.)

Goals for the Course:
By the end of this semester you will:

1) Understand the expanded definition of the nature of literacy and its social and cultural impact on a diverse and multicultural society.

2) Understand how students learn most effectively and apply this understanding to classroom methods and activities.

3) Create a variety of meaningful classroom activities, materials, & resources for future use, which guide and assist learning, foster critical thinking, and incorporate literacy skills.

4) Be familiar with a variety of ways to assess student abilities and plan for instruction accordingly.
5) Understand the principles of and be able to demonstrate pedagogical uses of academic service learning.

6) Understand the 7 Essential Understandings of the Montana Indian Education for All Act.

7) Be able to bring learners and texts together such that it results in active student involvement and collaboration with both the classroom and larger community.

8) Understand the difference and achieve a balance between subject content and learning processes.

9) Develop and reinforce the practice of critical reflection in your professional life.

10) Challenge and reinforce your own beliefs and feelings about teaching and participating in a democracy.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS, ATTENDANCE, AND EVALUATION**

**Attendance**
This is a workshop format course where the most meaningful learning will come from your interactions with your peers and professor. Missing more than two sessions will affect your grade. **Late work will not be accepted without prior arrangement.**

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<th>Grading Scale in Percentages:</th>
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<tr>
<td>100-99%= A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>91-90%=B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>85-82%=C+</td>
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<td>75-74%=D+</td>
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**Evaluation**
Please keep a record of your own performance. It is a good idea to keep a copy of work and materials handed in to me. The table below shows the assignments, the number of points each is worth, and the dates that they are due.
### Assignments and Projects

#### Writing Prompts and Tasks Collection (RAFTS)
Throughout the semester we will be exploring the ways to create and prompt writing tasks for your students in order to elicit a variety of responses across a spectrum of formats and purposes. Toward that end you will be creating many tasks of all sizes and scopes for possible use with future students. We will have two sessions throughout the semester dedicated to peer review workshops, wherein you will share your prompts with a group of peers and receive feedback and suggestions. For each session you will bring 3-5 new prompts for peer review. By the end of the semester you will choose the best 5 of these to include in this final collection. For each prompt ahs three parts: context, task articulation, and assessment component. The idea here will be to find ways to use writing as an effective tool for teaching and assessment.

#### Textbook Project Activities and Responses
Find a textbook for your intended subject area. Choose one area of focus (a unit, a chapter, etc.) from your textbook. You will create a packet of several types of activities (see below) that support your students’ understanding of the chapter/unit from your chosen textbooks. In this way, you will leave this class with at least one chapter/concept prepared for use in your future teaching. You will prepare a packet of activities that will supplement your students’ reading/writing/listening/speaking/study habits, and understanding of the content concepts. These projects should include:

- **Introduction:** Your job is to construct an introduction to the project that addresses what will be difficult about the book for students, easy for them, new, and unfamiliar. Using one of the methods we’ll explore in class, estimate the readability level of the material and discuss what steps you’d need to take to synchronize this with your intended grade level. In short, Introduce the book (title, publisher, date, intended audience, etc), identify and assess the strengths, weaknesses, and unique features of the textbook, and talk about how you’ll make us of these to make the book accessible to your students. This Introduction should also describe the intended audience and context for the activities.
Textbook Survey: this is a 1-2 page guided tour or scavenger hunt for your students which introduces them to the textbook’s various features (study guides, appendix, table of content, index, answers to even problems, color mixing chart, ask an expert, fingering guide, chord diagrams, etc...) the intent is to ensure the students are aware of how to operate this particular textbook, as well as demonstrating your familiarity with all the minute components and features of your chosen book.

Vocabulary Activities: These will be 1-2 pages of worksheet-type activities which will reinforce understanding of the most crucial vocabulary concepts connected to your chapter/unit. These will NOT be ‘List and Define’ type activities, but will emphasize cognitive engagement and be based on the most essential terminology for the particular section/chapter/unit of the book.

Guided Reading/reading comprehension activities: These are intended to be a series of activities for students to complete before, during, and after reading to reinforce comprehension of the salient points. These should guide the students reading (and rereading,), reinforce crucial concepts, and provide a structure/framework for classroom discussions or on which to base future reading and independent work.

Text Set: this is a collection of THINGS (articles, photos, songs, artwork, objects, etc.) connected to the central ideas of the chapter/unit. Their purpose is to build a tangible connection to the material, provide a hands-on experience, and/or offer another ‘take’ on the material in the textbook. Their purpose is to support the textbook and provide alternate routes to understanding and/or deeper looks at important ideas perhaps not effectively explained in the textbook—Five Artifacts minimum, each thoroughly described (including how you will use them).

A test You will create/write a 2 page test, making use of multiple choice, true and false, matching, and short answer formats for the questions (in any combination as befits your particular area’s needs). These will be intended to serve as a summative evaluation for the material covered in your chapter/unit.

Fear not, we will explore multiple examples of each of these five activity categories in class. You will bring drafts of your own activities to class to share with your peers and gather feedback on workshop day. You will turn in your whole complete, revised, collection in late April.

Book Club Activity and Products

This term we will be reading the text, The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, by Sherman Alexie. You will be assigned to a Book Club group. To prepare for our book club sessions, each person will have read the book and done any pre-book club session homework assignments their group may have decided upon.

Each member has 4 tasks (PRODUCTS) to complete:

1) Choose, adapt (or as a group) create an appropriate ROLE RESPONSE SHEET from the models to be handed out in class. Complete this ROLE RESPONSE along with a 2 or 3 discussion questions as a way of preparing for a conversation about the book. Bring the questions and completed role to session I.

2) Write a short (2-3 page) paper discussing connections between the book and his/her own life, and/or connections to other ‘texts’: books, songs, paintings, poems, movies,. Bring drafts of these papers to book club phase one. These connections papers, along with your Role Responses, and open questions will serve as the foundation for your group’s discussion of the novel. (These will all be turned in at the end of session I).
3) Create an activity/mini-lesson that connects the text to your content area. These activities should be focused enough so that they can be concluded in 20-30 minutes, built for a High School audience (with appropriate adaptations to account for your group's actual competencies.) **YOU WILL TEACH YOUR LESSON TO YOUR GROUP AS IF THE MEMBERS WERE STUDENTS IN YOUR [insert relevant content area here] CLASS. YOU ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT A LESSON YOU COULD TEACH DURING YOUR TIME.** (Can you imagine why I used **bold** on those sentences?). After completing your teaching, your peers will provide you with brief written feedback about the quality and delivery of your lesson. These will assist you in the writing of:

4) A brief critique of your lesson: what worked? What didn’t? How will you improve the lesson for next time? This is due the week after teaching your lesson.

Book Club will happen in two phases. Phase I will be a small group conversation about the book, using your role responses, questions, and your connections papers as catalysts for discussion.

Phase II will be the running of the activities for your peers and a discussion of what worked and what could be improved about the teaching activity.

The Book Club sessions may be enhanced by including food that is related to the book in some way, provided by the students to be served to their group only. I will visit each of the groups as an observer.

**You will turn in:**
- Your connections papers and discussion questions. (after book club phase I)
- your (revised) lesson plans, lesson critique, and overall reaction to book club (one week after you complete phase II).

**Academic Service Learning Experience**

The service learning experience for this course consists of two hours per week for thirty hours total of academic service in the area of literacy, using your content area expertise. You may distribute these hours as best fits your schedule and project. Check options list or see me for phone numbers and further information. My five favorites for this work are: The Montana Natural History Center, The Flagship Program*, CINE and IWFF, Watershed Education Network, (WEN), and the residential nursing homes.

In addition to these options, you are free to come up with a written proposal of your own. You may have a particular teacher with whom you are very interested in working or you may want to tutor a neighborhood child and get credit for it. Let me know your ideas. Students have responded to this experience most positively and have felt that it was one of the most valuable experiences that they have had in their various programs. Think through and consider the readings and speaker presentations before you make your final decision and then choose something that will truly enrich your life and professional growth. Don’t delay too much as you want to get your hours completed. You can not pass this class without fulfilling this assignment. As you go through this process, think of how you might use service learning with your own students. Written individual proposals are due no later than __2/27____. The papers will document and reflect on this community involvement experience.
In this 3-5 page paper you will:

- describe what you did for your service learning (and where)
- explain what you learned from the experience
- explore how it connects to your future content area classrooms

Additionally, you’ll be verbally and visually presenting this to our class at the end of the semester. You’ll bring in some object/artifact to represent some aspect of your experience and use it to describe your experience (covering the three main areas from your papers).

The Notebook task evolves out of the premise that writing on a regular basis, for a variety of purposes is a singularly effective way to enhance the quality and effectiveness of writing. Writing is a valuable tool for teachers, in terms of discovering and developing ideas, as well as reflecting on observations and actions from your classroom. Being able to quickly and efficiently describe what happened with a lesson (and/or interaction with a student or peer), what worked, what didn’t and what you’ll do next remains the surest route to improving the quality of your teaching experience. Further, creating opportunities and circumstances for your students to engage in regular, reflective writing will deepen their understanding and thinking about the information and ideas inherent in your various subject areas, as well as bolster the foundation of a crucial skill set for pursuing a happy, rewarding and engaging path through life.

All easy enough to say (write) but clearly there are numerous impediments and such to be navigated here: time, motivation, purpose, accountability to name a few.

My own efforts towards resolution here have to do with the notion of momentum: creating a habit/regular practice routine makes it more likely that such practice will be sustained and thus make the intended incremental benefits more accessible.

Thus, this assignment: Develop the habit of writing regularly (at least 3-5 days per week). To help you along the way, I offer several approaches and one blunt extrinsic motivator:

**FREEWriting**: (sometimes called AUTOMATIC WRITING). This is an approach used by poets and other ‘creative’ writers, as well as artists from all disciplines to solidify contact with the creative flow of ideas. Try it now. Sit with your pen or other writing implement of choice (typewriter? Laptop...?), set a timer (or choose a piece of music without words... in either case 10 minutes worth is a good starting place), hit “go,” and begin writing down the stream of words as fast as you can, without stopping (and certainly without judging or contemplating what has been written.) When the time is up, stop. That’s it. If, however, you are interested in the ideas you have grabbed onto, feel free to pursue them by writing for a longer time. Feel free to reread what you have written and make note of anything worth thinking about again.

**Observation**: Here you make a camera of your mind, letting all your senses perceive a situation. Choose some interaction you notice between people during the course of your day. In a classroom, at the UC, in line somewhere, any interaction you are able to overlook for a sustained period of time. Afterwards, do your best to describe in detail what happened and what was said. Afterwards, write down what you think and or feel about the incident. Draw some conclusion or make some judgment (but be sure to do this after the documenting phase). This is fair practice for documenting your observations in the classroom (which should have clear and apparent future value to you both in terms of dealing with disciplinary incidents, and more frequently, as an aid towards documenting student achievement and progress.) Feel free to connect this with your service learning and/or practicum observations.
**Service Learning Planning and Reflecting Tool:** Write down your plans and expectations before each of your service learning sessions. Afterwards, write down what happened, what worked, what didn’t. Think of it as building a daily before and after teaching reflection: ten or fifteen simple minutes a day to make your teaching life better.

**Be Your Own Teacher:** Choose something in your own life that you want to learn more about or get better at. Keep a chronicle of how you reach towards that goal, setting down your intentions, recording what you actually did, and then reflecting on the degree to which you are making progress.

Combine any, some or all of the above with any other approaches you can imagine which seems a useful way to make use of daily writing: e.g. Imagine your phone wakes you at 6am. You've been called in to substitute teach (insert subject here) with no sub plans (horrors!). Write down your best idea for something cool and engaging to do with the class...). Or, record the minutiae of your life; complain; keep a diary, a journal, a daily summary of what you thought best about the day; a dream log... anything you think might keep you moving forward towards making writing part of your daily practice. As an exercise in parallel thought, try to imagine ways you might authentically and productively have your students engage with informal writing as part of your ongoing plan for your future teaching.

Finally, that aforementioned bit of extrinsic motivation here: the task is graded on quantity and quality of reflection about the task (not quality of entries...). It’s worth 10% of your final grade, so obviously I value the possible benefits. Your establishment of the habit of writing will be quantitatively measured against my own ongoing efforts:

\[
\frac{\text{Your number of entries}(x)}{\text{divided by my own}(y)} \times 10 = \text{your entries grade.}
\]

If the task seems irrelevant, spend a few minutes and construct a relevance to your teaching, your learning and/or your future classroom teaching. Consider this a forced opportunity to brainstorm ideas to use on rainy days in your classroom... I will not read your entries for content or quality; I will verify quantity in a brief conference with each of you along with a brief survey to be filled out at the end of the semester.

**Participation:**
You will notice several days designated as ‘workshops’ with ‘drafts’ due. To be counted as ‘prepared’ and earn your participation points for those particular days you’ll need to: a) attend class, with b) a typed (and edited) version of the day’s task in hand (as a courtesy to your peer readers). The idea here is to maximize the opportunity to share ideas and insight with your peers, while exploring the workshop technique as a mechanism for strengthening and refining written work.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1: 23 January
Introduction to the course and logistics.
-Service learning overview

Week 2: 30 January
What is reading?
Facets of Understanding

Week 3: 6 February
Making Task Prompts (RAFTS)

Week 4: 13 February
Bring a textbook from your intended subject area Wednesday
-Readability
-Textbook surveys
-Vocabulary activities

Week 5: 20 February
(no class Monday)
-Book club overview and logistics.
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, by Sherman Alexie.

Writing prompts session 1
S-L Proposals Due

Week 6: 27 February
Book club, Phase I (Mon.)
Connections papers and role sheets due (to turn in at the end of class)

Bring Lesson plans for phase II (Wed)

Week 7: 5 March
Book club phase II

Week 8: 12 March
Remaining Book Club Products Due
-Reading Guides and
-Reading comprehension activities

Week 9: 19 March
-Text sets
Test taking/Test making
Literacy, Evaluation and Assessment

Week 10: 26 March
Notebooks revisited
(Bring notebook/ journals Mon.)

Week 11: 2 April
Spring break!

Week 12: 9 April
Textbook Project drafts workshop
(bring drafts of all components)

Week 13: 16 April
Writing Prompts Session 2 (Mon.)
Textbook Project final drafts due

Week 14: 23 April
-Service learning presentations and papers due (for group 1 & 2)

-Writing Prompts final collections Due (wed)

Week 15: 30 April: Conclusions
-Service learning Group 3 (Mon.)
-Bring notebooks and surveys on Wed.

Week 16: 7 May
FINALS WEEK (tba)