

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### **ELA 912: Developing Adolescent Readers and Writers**

**Instructor: Luetta Reimer**

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Number of Units: 3 Semester Units

Grade Level: 5-12

### **Course Description:**

In any classroom, reading and writing can become wonderful tools for young people to use as they grow in their understanding of themselves and the world. Some classrooms may be facing substance abuse, relationship conflicts, teenage mothers and fathers, depression, or other issues that make learning difficult. Other classrooms may be full of energetic, enthusiastic learners who seem to produce beyond the teacher's expectations.

This course is designed to give teachers of grades 5 - 12 practical techniques to help young people become willing and effective readers and writers. Teachers will learn creative ways of making literature come alive for students so that they recognize the value of reading and writing. Course requirements include reading the accompanying text, completing a series of reading and writing activities with students, and reading and responding to an adolescent novel.

This course is designed to meet the objectives identified in the Common Core State Standards in Language Arts as well as the five core propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Students will be asked to make connections between their work and these standards or the standards of their own states.

### **Course Dates:**

This course is self-paced; students may enroll at any time and take up to a year to complete assignments. No course should be completed in less than three weeks (one week per credit).

## **Course Materials:**

**Text (Included):** *Seeking Diversity: Language Arts with Adolescents*, by Linda Rief. Heineman, Portsmouth, NH, 1992.

Materials include a packet with instructions for completing this course, information about Fresno Pacific University, the Center for Professional Development, and the instructor, plus specifics on course policies and procedures.

## **Course Requirements:**

To successfully complete this course, participants must submit

1. a one page reflection on the literary context of his/her classroom.
2. a one page analysis of the use of positive-negative graphs.
3. a lesson plan for teaching a multi-genre literary unit, plus an evaluation of that lesson.
4. a one page writing log.
5. a one to two page response to the reading-writing survey.

See the "Schedule of Topics and Assignments" for more details on these assignments.

All work should be typed and sent to the instructor at one time when the course is completed. Please make a copy; work will not be returned. Students have one full year to finish the course but should not send completed work in fewer than three weeks from registration.

**Send completed work by email attachments to: [Lmreimer@fresno.edu](mailto:Lmreimer@fresno.edu)**

**OR**

**Mail all the above items to:**

Luetta Reimer  
1549 S. Lind Avenue  
Fresno, California 93727

**IN EITHER CASE, request online grading: <http://ce.fresno.edu/cpd>**

## **National Standards:**

This course is designed to reinforce and support the English Language Arts Standards of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS). The Anchor Standards for Reading (Grades 6-12) are listed here:

### **Key Ideas and Details**

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

### **Craft and Structure**

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

### **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

### **Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity**

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

# **National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: Five Core Propositions**

In addition to the content standards referenced above, this course supports the following core propositions that characterize National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs).

## **Proposition 1: Teachers are Committed to Students and Their Learning**

- NBCTs are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They believe all students can learn.
- They treat students equitably. They recognize the individual differences that distinguish their students from one another and they take account for these differences in their practice.
- NBCTs understand how students develop and learn.
- They respect the cultural and family differences students bring to their classroom.
- They are concerned with their students' self-concept, their motivation and the effects of learning on peer relationships.

## **Proposition 2: Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students.**

- NBCTs have mastery over the subject(s) they teach. They have a deep understanding of the history structure and real-world applications of the subject.
- They have skill and experience in teaching it, and they are very familiar with the skills gaps and preconceptions students may bring to the subject.
- They are able to use diverse instructional strategies to teach for understanding.

## **Proposition 3: Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning.**

- NBCTs deliver effective instruction. They move fluently through a range of instructional techniques, keeping students motivated, engaged and focused.
- They know how to engage students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to meet instructional goals.
- NBCTs know how to assess the progress of individual students as well as the class as a whole.
- They use multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding, and they can clearly explain student performance to parents.

#### **Proposition 4: Teachers Think Systematically about Their Practice and Learn from Experience.**

- NBCTs model what it means to be an educated person—they read, they question, they create and they are willing to try new things.
- They are familiar with learning theories and instructional strategies and stay abreast of current issues in American education.
- They critically examine their practice on a regular basis to deepen knowledge, expand their repertoire of skills, and incorporate new findings into their practice.

#### **Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities.**

- NBCTs collaborate with others to improve student learning.
- They are leaders and actively know how to seek and build partnerships with community groups and businesses.
- They work with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development.
- They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of resources in order to meet state and local education objectives.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

Participants will be able to

- 1) define and build a literary context in the classroom. (CCSS 2, 3, 7, & 9; NBPTS Props 1, 2, 3, & 4)
- 2) nurture the creativity and “voices” of their students. (CCSS 3, 7, & 9; NBPTS Props 1, 2, 3, & 4)
- 3) utilize a variety of literary forms in lesson planning. (CCSS 5-10; NBPTS Props 1 & 2)
- 4) gain skills in evaluating and assessing the work of students. (NBPTS Props 2, 3, & 4)
- 5) integrate many subjects into the language arts classroom. (NBPTS Props 1-4)
- 6) gain confidence and skill in the teaching of writing and reading. (NBPTS Props 1-5)
- 7) connect lessons to state or national standards. (NBPTS Prop 5)

# Schedule of Topics and Assignments

## Developing Adolescent Readers and Writers

1. Read the entire text *Seeking Diversity: Language Arts with Adolescents*. The Foreword and Introduction of the text provide helpful insights and background that will make the purpose and intention of the text clear. As you read, you may want to use post-it notes to mark the pages that hold ideas that relate to a novel or theme you teach, or to simply mark a new lesson you would like to try. Notice that each chapter contains an extensive bibliography of related works. These novels, poems, short stories, children's books, songs, etc. can be an extremely useful resource as you teach. You may skim the Appendices that contain sample portfolios and the forms Rief refers to in the text.
2. Linda Rief uses Chapter 2 to describe her own classroom and the importance of fostering a context where students can be immersed in a literary environment. Unfortunately, not all teachers have their own classrooms or the flexibility to bring in bookshelves and pillows. Yet, even in dire circumstances, there are simple ways of showing students that reading and writing are valued in the classroom.

In one page, reflect on the following topics.

- a. Describe your classroom and how you provide a literary context.
  - b. List two or three insights or useful ideas you gained from reading this section.
  - c. What would you like to try in your classroom?
3. In Chapter 3 of the text, Rief uses positive-negative graphs to help students understand how their experiences have shaped who they are. The graphs are also used as a springboard for personal experience writing.

Take your students through the process of creating graphs. You may develop the time lines into a larger project, incorporating more of Rief's steps, or you may shorten the project to work with your schedule. Feel free to adapt! For example, time lines could be designed around a character's life or one could ask students to make a time line of a particular chapter or of a novel. This provides an ideal tool for assessing student comprehension. Students could design graphs mapping their development as readers and writers, citing significant positive and negative events, or they could divide their lives into chapters, giving each chapter a title that reflects its significance.

Use your discretion, but encourage creativity and the use of visual arts in your classroom! An excellent way to grab the attention of your students is to share your time line with them. Time lines can make wonderful wall decorations, too!

In one page, describe how you used positive-negative graphs or time lines. How did students respond to the activity?

4. Following Rief's guidelines in Chapter 4, develop a unit that uses several literary genres. Use the "Generations" theme or choose another that coincides with the interests of your students. Develop writing activities that provide opportunities for students to respond to the literature.

The unit should span at least four class periods (or the equivalent of 200 minutes). For each day, identify the lesson objectives, the lesson process, and how learning may be assessed. Be sure to include the titles and authors of all literature used in the unit.

You may follow the accepted lesson plan format for your district or a format that is functional for your teaching situation. While it should be specific and detailed, it need not be more than one or two pages. Each plan should include (but is not limited to) the following elements:

- a. Grade level
- b. Date presented
- c. Learning objectives
- d. Literature and other input used
- e. Methods for evaluating or assessing student progress and growth
- f. State or national standards addressed

Evaluate the success of this unit. Write one page (total) responding to these questions.

- a. Describe several representative student responses to the literature unit:
- b. How were writing and reading experiences enriched through the unit?
- c. If you were to teach this unit again, which aspects would you retain and which might you change?
- d. How will the reading and writing skills highlighted in your lesson continue to be reinforced?

5. Choose one of the novels from Rief's "Best-liked Books" list (256) or choose a novel that is popular among your students that you have never read. As you read the book, complete and submit three log entries following Rief's guidelines on pages 276-277. In the same document, discuss how the writing log process helped you and why you think the book is popular with young readers. Write a total of approximately 200-250 words.
6. In the foreword, it is said that Rief's "own literacy is the key to theirs. She writes with them and for them, reads with them and to them, and speaks her mind always about what she thinks and knows. Because they see her as a reader and writer, students pay attention" (Rief, p. xi).

In order to understand yourself better as a reader and writer, read and think about the questions on pages 270-271 in the Reading-Writing Survey, Appendix I.

In one to two pages, respond to these prompts.

- a. In what ways is your literacy visible to students in your classroom?
- b. Choose all or some of the survey questions to ask your students. You could use the questions as a way to discuss the value of reading and writing or as an opportunity for your students to conduct self-evaluations. What do you observe in their responses? What have you learned about your students as readers and writers?
- c. In what ways do you believe you could help your students reach their potential?

**\*NOTE: If you are completing this course during summer break or when you are not teaching, you should prepare the lessons in Assignments 3 and 4 but omit their evaluation as well as student responses to the survey in Assignment 6. To compensate, respond in one typewritten page to this issue:**

Linda Rief is a strong supporter of using portfolios in the classroom as a means of assessment and of gauging a student's progress throughout a year. (See Appendix A in the text.) How do you respond to her ideas? What are your experiences with portfolios? What are the advantages and disadvantages of using portfolios? What would be necessary to effectively incorporate portfolios into your classroom?

## **Evidence of Learning:**

- Instructor observed evidence of understanding of course objectives as demonstrated through student's reflective writing assignments. (Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- Student demonstrated his/her understanding of effective design of lesson plans. (Outcomes 3, 4, 5)
- Student included the use of critical thinking skills and made connections to state content and/or professional teaching standards. (Outcome 2, 7)
- Student demonstrated an understanding of course objectives by identifying how course content and terminology may be used in his/her teaching. (Outcomes 1, 2, 5, 6)

## **Grading Policies and Rubric:**

Grades will be determined using the following percentages:

Reflection on the literary context of your classroom: 15%

Analysis of the use of positive-negative graph activity: 15%

Lesson plan and evaluation: 40%.

Writing log experience: 15%

Response to the reading-writing survey: 15%

Total scores determine the final grade:

90 - 100% = A

80 - 89% = B

79% or below = no credit

All coursework must reflect a minimum "B" quality to receive credit. The discernment between an A and a B is at the discretion of the instructor, based on the quality of work submitted (see assignment rubric). Participants may request either a letter grade (A or B) or credit (CR). Coursework falling short of a "B" or Credit grade will be returned with further instructions. Every person with a score of 80% or above will receive three semester units of credit.

## Scoring Rubric

Type of Assignment	90 – 100 points Exceptional	80 – 89 points Adequate	70 – 79 points Not Acceptable
Written responses	Student's written responses show an exceptional investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student is original and thorough. The student effectively organizes key insights and demonstrates evidence of interaction with the texts.	Student's written responses show an adequate investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student is complete, but lacks thoroughness and originality. The student sufficiently organizes insights and demonstrates evidence of interaction with the readings.	Student's written responses show little investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student does not show adequate thought or effort.
Lesson design	Lesson plans show an exceptional investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. Student consistently makes connections to local instructional goals/standards and implements research-based strategies and approaches.	Lesson plans show an adequate investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. Student makes some connections to local instructional goals/standards and research-based strategies and approaches.	Lesson plans submitted by the student do not show adequate thought or effort, and may not address specific goals.
Lesson evaluations	Student includes the use of critical thinking and reflection in the evaluation of lessons implemented.	Student includes the use of reflection in the evaluation of lessons implemented, but may lack sufficient detailed analysis.	Student does not demonstrate critical thinking or reflection in the evaluation of lessons implemented.
Presentation	Student effectively organizes key insights into a thoughtful and well-written presentation.	Student includes several key insights in an adequately written response.	Student response lacks key insights and is carelessly written.

## **Instructor/Student Contact**

Students are warmly invited to contact the instructor at any time with concerns, questions, or comments related to course work. They are specifically asked to do so after completing Assignment #2. When coursework has been finished, the instructor will comment on the student's work and make suggestions, if needed.

## **Policy on Plagiarism**

All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled according to the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalog.

## **University Information**

Graduate level course work reflects Fresno Pacific University's Desired Student Learning Outcomes as it applies to professional development to demonstrate the following:

- Oral and written communication in individual and group settings
- Content knowledge, and application of such knowledge in the student's area of interest to affect change
- Reflection for personal and professional growth
- Critical thinking
- Computational/methodological skills to understand and expand disciplines, including an understanding of technological systems