



Course Syllabus

Course: LRD 920A *Finding the Balance in Early Literacy*

Instructor: Carol Gossett

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Number of Units: 3 graduate-level, professional development semester units/credits

Course Description

Character and good citizenship are integrated into a series of units of instruction for K-12 classrooms. A close look at guiding documents, articles from experts in the field, and Best Practices leads into a comprehensive unit of study to teach students and teachers about the important components of character and civic education, including; community service, parent involvement, career awareness, conflict resolution, and positive prevention. At the time of enrollment, students will select course materials suited for their grade level among the following grade spans: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, or 9-12. Critical thinking skills, connections to current events, and application to the student's real world are made throughout assignments.

NOTE: You will need access to the use of the following applications: PowerPoint or Keynote and Microsoft Word. This is a fully online course hosted by the Fresno Pacific University Moodle website.

Course Materials

- ✓ *Course Text: Classrooms That Work, They Can All Read & Write* by Pat Cunningham and Richard L. Allington is the course textbook which contains suggested classroom activities and techniques for classroom application. Student is to purchase this text separately. Additional information on ordering information is included on the course Moodle website.
- ✓ *Various resources on course Moodle site* written by Carol Gossett published by Honey Pot Press.

Course Requirements

- Listed below is a summary of types of assignments contained within the course Modules on the course website, that are required to be completed in order to earn either a letter grade or a grade of credit for the course. Embedded within these assignments, students are asked to make specific connections to National and State Reading and Language Arts standards for their grade level which are addressed in the course. Application of Best Practices and Thinking Skills is required throughout the course assignments. As described in the course Rubric, quality of assignments will be determined and based on the *Fresno Pacific University's Desired Student Learning Outcomes (for additional information see University Information below)* A variety of formats are required for the submission of the assignments on the course website and are described in detail in each Module.

- Personal contacts with FPU instructor
- Participation in focused class discussions via a Forum link on website
- Written Reflective Assignments
- Classroom Application Assignments
- Classroom Project Based Assignments
- Multi-media project based assignment

National, State, District Standards and Guiding Documents

Assignments contained in this course are closely aligned to National and State Content Standards in Mathematics, for grades Kindergarten and First grade.

The following standards listed by the National Council of Teachers of English are addressed throughout this course.

Standards for the English Language Arts

“The vision guiding these standards is that all students must have the opportunities and resources to develop the language skills they need to pursue life's goals and to participate fully as informed, productive members of society. These standards assume that literacy growth begins before children enter school as they experience and experiment with literacy activities—reading and writing, and associating spoken words with their graphic representations. Recognizing this fact, these standards encourage the development of curriculum and instruction that make productive use of the emerging literacy abilities that children bring to school. Furthermore, the standards provide ample room for the innovation and creativity essential to teaching and learning. They are not prescriptions for particular curriculum or instruction. Although we present these standards as a list, we want to emphasize that they are not distinct and separable; they are, in fact, interrelated and should be considered as a whole.” 1996 IRA and NCTE

- 1.** Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
- 2.** Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
- 3.** Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
- 4.** Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

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Students are asked to identify specific Language Arts Standards from their state/district and at the grade level they are teaching that are addressed in this course. If students cannot locate a copy of these standards in their district, all state standards can be found on the Internet. The following are a few of the multiple sites where these standards can be accessed.

Didax Educational Standards <http://www.didaxinc.com/standards.html> Includes standards in the following areas: Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Visual and Performing Arts, Technology, Science, Social Studies, Health, and more.

Educational World: National Education Standards <http://www.education-world.com/standards/national> includes links to both national and state standards in different areas of the curriculum.

Also applied are the National Professional Teaching Standards found at: <http://www.nbpts.org>. The following five areas are addressed throughout the course materials. Students are asked to apply these standards in their teaching practices.

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experiences.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.

Learning Objectives / Outcomes

Students will:

- become familiar with state and national guiding documents in the area of reading for their grade level.
- understand the rationale of the guiding documents.
- become familiar with current research in the area of reading.
- see connections between the guiding documents, research, and curriculum planning in the area of reading.
- apply developmentally appropriate teaching strategies in their classroom via the *Classroom Practice - Language Arts Unit*.
- establish a directory of resources to assist them in further curriculum planning for the future.
- network between other online students enrolled in this course.
- develop their own philosophy for teaching reading after careful consideration of various resources; guiding documents, research, opinions of experts in the field, and their own experiences in the classroom

Summary of Assignments

The following course assignments are explained in detail in the Course Modules included on course Moodle site and include:

- Personal instructor/student contacts where students will respond to directed questions based on previous readings and assignments. Instructor will respond back to the students based on their answers.
- Class discussions where students will reflect on previous readings and assignments.
- Written reflective forums and assignment postings where the instructor will interact with students based on their writing.
- The Pedagogy of Teaching Reading and Language Arts will be explored through the review of readings assigned by the instructor and will be further reviewed through a reading selected by the student. After comparing the documents, common threads, pros and cons of offering various reading strategies and techniques in the schools will be discussed via student postings and responses on the course website. Students will reflect on their own philosophy of teaching reading.
- National standards will be thoroughly reviewed and specific standards will be identified that directly address each student's classroom curriculum.
- After reviewing the content standards in reading and language arts the students will reflect on their own application of these standards in developmentally appropriate practices within their classrooms.

- Project based assignments ask students to prepare a multi-media presentation; PowerPoint, to use as a teaching tool which they will share with fellow teachers in order to offer information learned through this course.
- **STUDENTS ARE ADVISED TO SIMPLY FOLLOW THE COURSE MODULES IN ORDER OF THE SEQUENCE PRESENTED. ALL COURSE ASSIGNMENTS ARE TO BE POSTED TO THE COURSE SITE.**

Evidence of Learning

- Course instructor will observe evidence of understanding of course objectives as demonstrated through students' reflective writing assignments, class discussions with instructor and other students via the Class Forums and Course Check-Ups on the course website.
- Course instructor will observe evidence of understanding of course objectives as demonstrated through students' written analysis of the application of best practices and critical thinking skills questions via the lesson experiences planned and implemented.
- Course instructor will observe evidence of student making connections to national and state content and professional teaching standards through various assignments including reflective writing, class discussions, and project based classroom activities.
- Course instructor will find evidence of student's development of a personal philosophy of teaching early literacy through various submitted assignments.
- Course instructor will view evidence that student understands how to apply developmentally appropriate teaching strategies in their classroom through lesson plans submitted by student and discussions with other students.

Grading Policies and Rubrics

Students successfully completing the course assignments following guidelines set forth in both the Schedule of Assignments and further described within the course rubric will earn a grade of **Credit** or where a letter grade is requested in writing, a letter grade of **B or A, (depending on the quality of work)**.

Coursework falling short of a quality equaling a B will not receive credit.

Coursework is to be presented online via attachments or posted to the course website. Keep a file copy of your coursework in the event something gets lost.

Grade Point Scale

1674--1860 = A

1488- 1673 = B

Below 1488 = no credit See Grading scales within each assignment for point values.

Students falling short of B quality work will be contacted by the instructor and will be given the opportunity to improve their submitted assignments (provided the student has returned their coursework in time to accomplish this prior to the course final due date).

Students have an entire year to complete their work, however, the assignments should not take more than 45 hours per unit to complete. This is a 3 semester credit course which requires a combined minimum of 135 hours of research, writing, project, and class discussion time.

Instructor/Student Contact

Another requirement from many districts across the nation is instructor/student contact. Several contacts between the instructor and student are required as part of the course assignments. These contacts are designed to offer an opportunity for the student and instructor to discuss aspects of the course content by providing prompts for students to respond to. Contact is to be posted on the course Moodle website. See Module Course Assignments for details on these contacts.

References and Additional Resources

- Literacy Guide. <http://www.bnkst.edu/literacyguide/early.html> Early Literacy. Telecollaborative Project. <http://www.earlyliterature.ecsd.net/> Hall, N., and Marsh, J. (2003) *Handbook of Early Childhood Literacy*. Sage Publications Ltd.
- Dickinson, D. and Nueman, S. (2005) *Handbook of Early Literacy Research*. The Guilford Press
- Fullan, M., Hill, P. and Crévola, C. (2006). *Breakthrough*. Corwin Press
- Algozzine, R., Marr, M., McClanahan, T., and Barnes, E. (2008). *Strategies and Lessons for Improving Basic Early Literacy Skills*. Corwin Press.

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 Catalogue.”

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*
- *Cultural and global perspectives to understand complex systems*
- *Computational/methodological skills to understand and expand disciplines, including an understanding of technological systems”*