

Teaching & Learning Reading & Writing - Elementary
ED 520.002 (Thursday)
Fall 2005
Graduate School of Education
University of Pennsylvania

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Office hours: Friday, 1-3 p.m. or by appointment

Class time & location: Thursday, 1:00-4:00, GSE 120

To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin. (hooks, 1994)

Course Materials

Texts:

Constance Weaver, *Reading Process and Practice*, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002.
Lucy M. Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Writing*, 2nd Edition, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994.

Young Adult Literature

You will choose a young adult novel during the first class to read as a small group.

Purchase the texts from House of Our Own Bookstore at 3920 Spruce Street.
A bulk pack containing selected articles and book chapters will be delivered to class on the first day.

Course Description

In this course we explore the interconnections of language, literacy and culture to build a knowledge base and understanding of how children learn to read and write. Our focus will be on how to teach and develop literacy curriculum in the elementary grades. A major emphasis of the course and our work together will be on how close listening and observation of children in their classroom contexts combined with a critical reading of research and theory can inform teaching practices. In addition, we investigate ways to build classroom communities through literacy practices, including multimedia. Throughout the course we explore ways to teach in innovative child-centered ways that are also congruent with district guidelines and standards. In order to facilitate our inquiry and build a body of knowledge about literacy teaching and learning, we will use classroom descriptions from teachers and university-based researchers, your observations as student teachers from your field placements in local schools, research theory about literacy teaching and learning, class discussions, multimedia websites, videos, and individual and group reflections. A central tenet of this course is that the best teachers of reading and writing are themselves active and engaged readers and writers. As a result, you will engage in reading and writing in and outside of the class. In addition, an examination of our own reading and writing processes will inform our thinking about how to teach children. An important goal is to combine an inquiry approach to teaching and learning with an inquiry approach to thinking about how we teach.

The amount of time we will spend together will only allow us to begin to understand how children learn to read and write, and how we can use our knowledge of learning to teach reading and writing. Our hope is that, through this course you will develop ways of observing, thinking,

and analyzing that will prepare you to continue learning as you teach. Because good teaching decisions depend on the context, the central aim of the course is not to provide you with easy answers or techniques to use in all circumstances. Rather, it is to help you develop necessary tools for thinking and working as a teacher leader who can articulate the reasons for teaching decisions and make informal choices about how and what to teach. These tools include ways to examine content, assess your students' understanding on an ongoing basis, analyze your teaching, and consider ways to help all your students develop as literate individuals in the broadest sense.

The first section of the course will focus on learners and learning; the second part on pedagogy. Throughout we will discuss the classroom rituals and routines that form the backbone of literacy teaching. We begin by examining how students learn to read and write and develop as literate individuals at school and at home. Next we investigate a variety of approaches to teaching reading and writing based on a deep understanding of how children learn and an understanding of how to use and build on the interests, passions, and knowledge, including the cultural knowledge they bring to the classroom. We focus on the balanced literacy framework, an approach used throughout the School District of Philadelphia and districts across the country. Videotapes of elementary classroom teachers, mostly from Philadelphia, comprise critical texts and sites of inquiry for the course.

Assignments:

Using the field placement as an opportunity to learn

Some of the class assignments require you to carry out specific activities in your field classroom. Nevertheless, even when you are not working directly on an assignment for class, we encourage you to integrate what you are learning in our course into your classroom work. This may take a variety of forms including: interactions with individual students, working with small groups, reading aloud to a group, leading a writing workshop, or teaching a literacy lesson that you have planned ahead of time with your classroom mentor. The purpose is for you to learn as much as you can about your students as literacy learners before you take on responsibilities for teaching and curricular planning. We want to emphasize that informed and powerful teaching grows out of close listening and careful observation of children.

Professionalism, preparation and class participation

You are expected to complete the reading and class assignments prior to each class. Each class will draw on readings, collaborative and independent work in class, observation from the field, and personal reflections. Your engagement and participation in our class activities and discussions are important not only for your own learning but also the learning of others. You are expected to treat our class as part of your professional experience; that is you are expected to take responsibility for your learning and act in a professional and collegial manner. This includes attending class and being on time, being prepared with reading and short assignments, turning in assignments on time, and being a collaborative participant in the work of the class.

Grade weight: 5%

Video analysis assignments

You will have the opportunity to select one or several teachers' multimedia website(s) to investigate from the Carnegie Foundation's Quest project. Specifically, we will use these websites to learn about classroom rituals and routines. These websites contain several kinds of materials including video footage of classroom practice, interviews, and several different written documents. You will use these sites for a few of your assignments. Over the semester you will write two short analytical papers based on your inquiry into your chosen multimedia website(s). (2-3 pages)

Video analysis #1 Using literacy rituals and routines to come to know students: Identifying and selecting video clips

First select a website of an elementary classroom from the Carnegie Foundation website: <http://quest.carnegiefoundation.org/~dpointer/gallery/index.htm>. (Note: These sites area still under construction.) Choose from among the following sites: Amelia Coleman, Mattie Davis, and Gill Maimon. All three of these teachers teach in Philadelphia. Explore the video clips on the site to identify a single moment where the teacher uses a classroom ritual or routine to get to know a student (a group of students or the class as a whole) in order to teach literacy and build community. An example might be a particular ritual enacted in a morning meeting. Describe that moment. In addition, reflect on the following questions: Why did you choose this moment and what does it illustrate for you? What do you think the teacher’s purposes for this routine might be? How do you think that this routine might connect with the social and academic curriculum of the classroom? Are there similar ways that you and your classroom mentor come to know students, teach literacy and build community? How might you adapt these ideas to your current context and the practices of your classroom mentor? What are some ways that you might use these ideas in your teaching next year? Given the structure and requirements of the mandated curriculum, how will you get to know students in your classroom? How will you adapt the existing curriculum to the students you teach? Don’t worry about answering all of these questions. They are meant to prompt your thinking about the video clips and guide your reflection and analysis of the video clips and multimedia sites.

Due September 15.

Grade weight: 10%

Video Analysis #2: Responding to literature through classroom rituals and routines: Identifying a routine and ritual for teaching academic content

This assignment has two parts. Write a brief personal response to the young adult novel you read to prepare for participation in a literature circle. For instance you might make connections to other books you have read or your life experiences. In addition you might choose to discuss the author’s craft.

Next look through either the initial website you chose to analyze or one of the new ones that I will introduce to you in class. Find one ritual or routine that the teacher uses to engage students with literature or reading that might be useful to use with the book you read. Describe that ritual or routine. Reflect on the following questions: How might you use this activity for teaching the young adult novel you read? What makes this routine particularly suited to conversations about this book? Are there similar ways that you and your classroom mentor use for students to respond to literature in small groups? How might you adapt these ideas to your current context? What are some ways that you might use these ideas in your teaching next year?

Due November 17.

Grade weight: 10%

Children’s book and reading/writing journal.

As teachers of reading and writing, it is important for you to understand how children learn to read and write, and also to think of yourself as a reader and writer. From the first day of class, you are asked to keep a journal of ideas for writing a children’s book. Once you have settled on a topic of your book, you will be asked to read widely—children’s books, adolescent novels, adult novels and magazines—in order to explore this topic. For instance, if you decide to write a mystery for your children’s book, then you might find mysteries written for children as well as those written for young adults and adult readers. Use your journal to keep track of your reading and your ideas. You will be asked to read from your journal periodically throughout the class in a journal group and to the class as a whole. It won’t be graded.

This project is designed to give you an opportunity to make a children's book—an activity you might want to do with your students. It will give you the chance to have a real reason to write and to work on your writing, to experience some ways to teach and learn to write, and to investigate and learn first hand how children's books are constructed. It will also illustrate some ways that reading and writing are interconnected. You might choose to develop the ideas for your book directly from your experience in the classroom and the curricular unit you plan for your full-time student teaching. Alternatively, the book might be connected to a significant experience in your life or a personal interest. There are many possibilities that you can explore for this project. The final copy of the book is due on **December 15**. We will meet as a class that evening at Kathy Schultz's house to read and share these books and to celebrate the end of the semester.

Grade weight: 15%

Integrated Assignments

Term II: Child Study

For the literacy portion of this assignment, you will write a literacy portrait of the child who you are studying. You will conduct a literacy interview (about one half hour in length) to assess the child's reading and writing along with his/her interests in reading and writing and the literacy activities he or she engages in at home or out of school. See the detailed assignment sheet for the specifics of this assignment.

Due October 17.

Grade weight: 30%

Term III: Analysis of Teaching

For this assignment you will design and teach a literacy lesson to a small group of students. You will begin by deciding on a classroom routine to use to teach this lesson. This means that you might actually teach this lesson over a few days. You can choose to write up a single day of this lesson. Choose one of the rituals or routines we have talked about in class in relation to the Carnegie multimedia websites. The focus of the assignment will be to think carefully about how to design and teach a lesson. In addition, a critical component of the assignment is to document and analyze your teaching. This will include keeping careful reflective notes on your planning process and on the teaching experience itself. Either a mentor or a peer will provide additional observations and feedback. In addition you will collect and analyze students' work to document student learning. (Details for this assignment will be given to you in class and in the Field Seminar.) The lesson design is due by **November 4**. Please send it by email to:

katschu@gmail.com. I will try to send you feedback within a few days that you send it to me. The final project is due **December 2**. **Grade weight: Lesson design 5%, Final project 25%**

Specific criteria for grading will be given with the assignment. In each case, you will be evaluated on the quality of the connections you make between knowledge about practice and the issues raised in readings and class discussions, as well as the clarity of your written presentation of your work and ideas. **All assignments are due by the beginning of class on the day indicated and must be typed and proof read.**

Late Policy: I will accept late work only if you have discussed it with me ahead of time.

Rewrite Policy: If you receive a B or below on any assignment, you may redo it for a higher grade. (You may not rewrite an assignment for which you received a grade higher than a B.) Rewritten assignments are due no more than one week after you receive the graded assignment.

Summary of Assignments

Assignment	Percentage	Date due
Professionalism	5	
Video Analysis 1 (Classroom rituals & routines)	10	September 15
Video Analysis 2 (Responding to literature)	10	November 17
Children's Book & Reading/writing journal	15	December 15
Child Study (Integrated Assignment, Term 2)	30	October 17
Analysis of Teaching (Int. Assignment, Term 3)	30	
• Lesson design	5	Nov. 3
• Final project	25	Dec 2

Membership in NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English): NCTE is an organization dedicated to improving the teaching of English and the language arts at all levels of education. Its members consist of elementary, middle, and secondary teachers, as well as literacy educators at the university level. NCTE membership provides you with ideas about teaching and access to current classroom research. We highly recommend that anyone teaching in an elementary classroom become a member.

To learn more about joining NCTE, go to their website: <http://ncte.org>. In addition, you can register to receive their weekly newsletter which is filled with research, teaching ideas, grant resources and other valuable information. Go to: <http://www.ncte.org/inbox/> for more information about this service.

Course Topics and Readings:

(note: all reading and assignments are due the day of class *before* class begins. (bp)=articles in course bulkpack; (txt)=course texts

Term II: Learners and Learning

Week 1, September 8

Building community through reading and writing

How can we use our own literacy community to understand how to build a community through reading and writing in our elementary classrooms?

Reading: (note: These readings were distributed to you prior to the first class meeting to be read by that class.)

Excerpts from:

Frederick Douglass, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*

Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*.

Toni Cade Bambara, *Geraldine Moore the poet*

Lois Lowry, *Anastasia Krupnik*

Week 2, September 15

Contextualizing reading and writing in the cultures of children

What are the rituals and routines we can use to bring students' lives into the classroom and to build classroom communities through knowing children?

Reading:

Willis, A.I. (195). Reading the world of school literacy: Contextualizing the experience of a young African American male, *Harvard Educational Review*, 65 (1), 30-49. (bp)

Schultz, K. (2003). *Listening: A framework for teaching across differences*. New York: Teachers College Press. (Chapter 2) (text from seminar)

Newman, L. (1988). A Letter to Harvey Milk, *Lilith*, 21, 25-28. (bp)

Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Writing*, ch. 5 (pp. 53-57) (txt)

Freire, P. (1987). The importance of the act of reading, In P. Freire & D. Macedo, *Literacy: Reading the word and the world*. Bergin and Garvey. (bp)

Assignment:

Video analysis 1: Using literacy rituals and routines to come to know students

Explore one of the Philadelphia elementary classroom sites on the Carnegie Foundation website/Quest project. Investigate the video clips to identify a single moment where the teacher uses a classroom ritual or routine to get to know a student (a group of students or the class as a whole) in order to teach literacy and build community. Describe that moment. In addition, reflect on the questions described in the longer description. Use these questions to write your analysis. You do not have to answer each one. Use this assignment to begin to explore the Quest websites

Week 3, September 22

Learning to read

How did we each learn to read?

What are the processes involved in learning to read?

How can we use our knowledge of how children learn to read to shape our teaching of reading?

Reading:

Weaver, *Reading process and practice*, chapters 1 & 2, (txt)

Keene, E.O., & Zimmermann, S. (1997). *Mosaic of thought: Teaching comprehension in a reader's workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, chapt. 3-5, pp. 29-96 (bp)

Griffin, M. L. (2001). Social contexts of beginning reading, *Language Arts*, 78(4), 371-8.(bp)

Lewis, C. (1993) Give people a chance: Acknowledging social differences in reading. *Language Arts*, 70, 454-461. (bp)

Goodman, D. (2005). Why Marco can read: Becoming literate in a classroom community, *Language Arts*, 82(6), 431-440. (bp)

Week 4, September 29

Learning to write

How do children learn to write in and out of school? How can we use this knowledge to shape our writing instruction and the opportunities we offer students in our classrooms? How can we use the close study of one child's writing development to understand more broadly how children learn to write?

Reading:

Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Writing*, section 1, chapters 1-4, (txt)

Zecker, L. B. (1999). Different texts, different emergent writing forms, *Language Arts*, 76(6), 483-9. (bp)

Whitmore, K. F. Martens, P, Goodman, Y., & Owocki, G. (2005). Remembering critical literacy research: A transactional perspective, *Language Arts*, 82(5), 296-307. (bp)

Week 5, October 6

Learning to read and write multimedia texts

How do children read multimedia and multimodal texts and how can we incorporate this knowledge into our literacy classrooms?

Reading:

Pahl, K., & Rowsell, J. (2005). *Literacy and education: Understanding New Literacy Studies in the classroom*, (chapter 2, Multimodal literacies: New ways of reading and writing). London: Paul Chapman Publishing. (bp)

Wilhelm, G. (2004). *Reading is seeing: Learning to visualize scenes, characters, ideas, and text worlds to improve comprehension and reflective reading*. (Chapter 3, pp. 44-71). New York: Teaching Resources. (bp)

Choose one of these articles to read. You will be given a cd (to share) to accompany the text.

Vasudevan, L, Schultz, K., & Bateman, J. (under review). .Beyond the printed page: Multimodal storytelling in an urban classroom. Submitted to *Language Arts*. (bp)

OR

Hull, G. A., & James, M. (in press). Geographies of hope: A study of urban landscapes, digital media, and children's review of place. (bp)

Term III: Pedagogy

Week 6, October 14 (note: this is a Friday class, rescheduled because of Yom Kippur)

Frameworks for teaching reading

*What are your assumptions about learning to read and teaching reading? How do the various theories of how to teach reading support or challenge these assumptions?
How can we negotiate our beliefs about reading and writing with mandated practices?*

Reading:

Duke, N. & Pearson, P.D. (2002). Effective practices for developing reading comprehension. In A. Farstrup & J. Samuels (Eds.), *What research has to say about reading instruction* (3rd ed.) (pp. 205-242). Newark,DE: International Reading Association. (bp)

Ladson-Billings, G. (1992). Reading between the lines and beyond the pages: A culturally relevant approach to literacy teaching, *Theory into Practice*, 31, 312-320. (bp)

Daniels, H. & Bizar, M. "Perspectives on Teaching Reading", excerpt from *Teaching the Best Practice Way: Methods that Matter K-12*, p.37-43 (bp)

Weaver, *Reading process and practice*, chapters 11 (txt) (skim)

We will distribute NCTE Standards and selections of the Philadelphia Core Curriculum for this class. You will select one grade level and study the curriculum for the second 6 weeks of school for that grade.

Assignment:

Child study due Monday, October 17.

Week 7, October 20

Teaching emergent readers and writers

What is balanced literacy? How does it fit or build on your own beliefs about how to teach literacy? How can you adapt it to your current or future classroom context?

Reading:

Weaver, *Reading process and practice*, chapter 12, skim 14, (txt)

Schwartz, R. (2005). Decisions, decisions: Responding to primary students during guided reading. *Reading Teacher* 58(5), 436-443. (bp)

Meyer, R. J. (2002). Captives of the script: Killing us softly with phonics, *Language Arts*, 79(6), 452-461. (bp)

Explore the Carnegie websites, especially Jennifer Myers & Melissa Pedraza

Week 8, October 28

Reading and writing in the primary grades

Using rituals and routines: Centers & reading conferences

What rituals and routines support the teaching of reading and writing?

How do we create reading and writing classrooms where children feel like authors?

Where do ideas (for stories) come from?

Reading:

Calkins, L.M. (2001). *The art of teaching reading*. New York: Longman. Chapt. 16. (bp)

Luce-Kapler, R. (1999). White chickens, wild swings and winter nights, *Language Arts*, 76(4), 298-303. (bp)

Heard, G. (1989). *For the good of the earth and the sun: Teaching poetry*. (chapters 2 & 3). NH: Heinemann. (bp)

Continue to look at the Carnegie/Quest materials to learn how teachers set up classrooms to support reading and writing.

Week 9, November 3

Writing workshops

How can a writing workshop be incorporated into our classrooms? How can we use these processes to write children's books and to teach writing? How can we nurture the craft of writing through children's literature?

Reading:

Calkins, *The art of teaching writing*, Sections II & III (txt)

Ray, K. (2004). Why Cauley writes well: A close look at what a difference good teaching can make. *Language Arts*, 82(2), 100-109. (p. 139, reading list)

Wright, K. (2000). Weekly spelling meetings: Improving spelling instruction through classroom-based inquiry. *Language Arts*, 77(3), 218-223. (bp)

Assignment:

Turn in lesson design for Analysis of Teaching Literacy project on November 4 to katschu@gmail.com. You can turn it in earlier than this if you would like feedback sooner.

Week 10, November 10

Creating communities of readers and writers through routines and through talk

How do teachers build communities of readers and writers through literature?

What are some ways to create contexts for students to engage in difficult discussions about literature?

Reading:

Ackerman, M. (1996). Can I speak Gussak?: Using literature with a Special Education class. In M. Barbieri & C. Tateishi (Eds.). *Meeting the challenges: Stories from today's classrooms*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (bp)

Lewis, C. (1999). The quality of the question: Probing culture in literature-discussion groups. In C. Edelsky (Ed.). *Making justice our project: Teachers working toward critical whole language*, (pp. 163-190). Urbana, IL: NCTE. (bp)

Silvers, P. (1999). Rethinking literature discussions. In J.W. Lindfors & J.S. Townsend (eds.), *Teaching Language Arts: Learning through dialogue*. (pp. 51-69). Urbana, IL: NCTE. (bp)

Hanssen, E. (1998). They gotta do it themselves: Students raising questions for literature discussion, *The New Advocate*, 11(4), 357-359. (bp)

Daniels, H. (2002). *Literature circles: Voice and choice in book clubs and reading groups* (2nd edition), chapter 9 (pp. 146-158), Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers. (bp)

Look through the multimedia websites for a classroom ritual or routine for your Analysis of Teaching project.

Week 11, November 17

Literature Circles

What are the structures, rituals and routines that promote literature discussions?

Reading:

During the first few weeks of class you will form a literature group and choose a young adult novel to read and discuss as a group. Read that book for this class. Also bring in a picture book that extends one theme in your young adult novel.

Assignment:

Video analysis 2: Responding to literature through classroom rituals and routines
Write a personal response to the young adult novel you read to prepare for participation in a literature circle. In addition, look through one of the multimedia websites. Find one ritual or routine that would be useful for teaching your book. Describe that routine and reflect on how you might adapt that activity to this book and to your elementary classroom. (See longer explanation.)

Week 12, December 1

Building community through reading and writing: Aligning standards and assessment

How can we integrate assessment, planning and instruction? How can we align our teaching with state and local standards while maintaining our own standards and beliefs about teaching and learning?

Reading:

Materials from the School District of Philadelphia and from the State (Pennsylvania) (to be distributed in class)

Wiggins, G. (1998). *Educative Assessment: Designing assessments to inform and improve student performance*. SF: Jossey-Bass. (bp)

Ball, A.F. (1998) Evaluating the writing of culturally and linguistically diverse students: The case of the African American Vernacular English speaker. In C.R. Cooper & L. Odell (Eds.). *Evaluating Writing* (pp. 225-248). Urbana, IL: NCTE. (bp)

Johnston, P. (1997). *Knowing literacy: Constructive literacy assessment* chapters 3 & 24, York, Me.: Stenhouse Publishers. (bp)

Assignment:

Turn in Analysis of Teaching Literacy project on December 2 by 5 p.m.

Week 13, December 8

Reading and writing a range of genres/Critical literacy

What are the various genres for teaching reading and writing? How can we use our knowledge of children, including their communities and interests, to teach reading and writing non-fiction? How can we bring a critical and social justice stance into our classroom?

Reading:

Bomer, R., & Bomer, K. (2001) *For a better world: Writing for social action*. (Chapter 8, pp. 122-154). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (bp)

Colman, P. (1999), Nonfiction is literature, too. *The New Advocate*, 12(3),215-223. (bp)

Campano, G. The second class: Providing space in the margins. *Language Arts*, 82(3), 186-194. (bp)

Lewis, M., Flint, A., Van Sluys, K. (2002). Taking on critical literacy: The journey of newcomers and novices. *Language Arts*, 79(5), 382-392. (bp)

Calkins, *The art of teaching writing*, Section IV (txt) (optional, but suggested)

Look at Vanessa Brown's website (<http://www.goingpublicwithteaching.org/vbrown/>) to explore how she uses non-fiction texts and social justice to come to know and teach her students.

Week 14, December 15

Teaching as craft/ Forging professional connections

How will you use what you have learned about teaching literacy to shape your classroom next year? Where will you begin? How will you develop a network of support for your first years of teaching?

Reading:

Foss, A. (1999). Leaving my thumbprint: The journey of a first-year teacher. In J.W. Lindfors & J.S. Townsend (eds.), *Teaching Language Arts: Learning through dialogue*. (pp. 295-302). Urbana, IL: NCTE. (bp)

Burton, F.R.(1999). An open letter from a principal to new teachers. In J.W. Lindfors & J.S. Townsend (eds.), *Teaching Language Arts: Learning through dialogue*. (pp. 303-309). Urbana, IL: NCTE. (bp)

Assignment:

Children's book due in the evening at the book reading & end of the year party.