

READ 417: Reading Instruction in the Intermediate & Upper Grades

[READ 415: Reading and Writing in the Content Areas will have a related set of additional assignments to be accompany this syllabus by Sept. 16]

Northeastern Illinois University – El Centro Campus Fall 2009
Wednesdays, 4:15 – 8:30 PM

Class Meets: Wednesdays at El Centro
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Course Description

This course is intended to provide graduate students an opportunity to analyze and synthesize the basic concepts of reading comprehension in the intermediate and upper grades, develop an understanding of reading instruction in these grades, and acquire teaching strategies to foster reading comprehension in intermediate and upper grades.

Course Objectives

The learner will:

1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the contexts and processes of reading comprehension in the intermediate and upper grades. *IRA (International Reading Association) Standards 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4*
2. Explore current research about secondary reading. *IRA Standards 1.2, 2.2, 2.3*
3. Demonstrate instructional strategies developed to promote text-based learning. *IRA Standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3.*
4. Complete literacy activities with an intermediate or upper grade student. *IRA Standards 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4*
5. Participate in a group exploration of young adult literature. *IRA Standards 2.3, 4.1, 4.2*

[additional objectives to be added for READ 415]

Required Texts

Beers, K. (2003). *When kids can't read: What teachers can do*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Strong, W. (2006). *Write for insight: Empowering content area learning, grades 6-12*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Resource Texts

Zwiers, J. (2004). *Building reading comprehension habits in grades 6-12: A toolkit of classroom activities*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Articles and excerpted sections from selected texts will be made available online or in handouts.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance and participation

Your consistent attendance and active participation are essential for this course.

Large and small group discussions, cooperative learning activities, reflective writing, and student presentations predominate most class sessions and address many of the course objectives. Absences or lack of participation will detract from your learning and will therefore be reflected in your final grade. **Please notify me in advance if you know you must miss a class.**

2. Timely completion of assignments

Reading assignments should be completed prior to class to ensure active engagement in discussion. Written assignments should be typed, using 12-point font, double spacing, and 1-inch margins. Use APA format when appropriate. Late assignments may not receive full credit.

Assignments

(Assignments are subject to revision by instructor as needed after conferring with class in a timely manner. If participants have suggestions for variations to make assignments more applicable to their actual classes, they should ask permission for variations.)

A. Classroom Presentation of Secondary Reading Strategies

Working in dyads or triads, the students will research, plan, and demonstrate to the class three strategies (Before/During/After) appropriate for use with secondary learners. Focusing on the areas listed below, discuss your plans with the instructor prior to extensive investment of time. The presentation will involve explicit instruction, modeling, and active class participation. Additionally, the presentation will address possible adaptations necessary to meet the needs of diverse learners and will identify correlating standards that are met through its use. Students will prepare a resource references list in APA (American Psychological Association) style.

- Present a lesson (modified to compress for demo purposes) including one Before, one During and one After Reading strategy (10 to 20 minutes each, or up to 45 minutes if shown in combination.)
- Several model formats will be shared in class, and each student must specify and get permission for the one will be used.
- For extra credit, try the strategies in your own classroom, and write a brief, 1--2 paragraph reflections on how each one went. If your READ 417 presentation is scheduled before you can try them in your own class, report later on how they went.

- If you try them a second time with another lesson, please share that with us, too, and get your students to do exit slips on how they responded to the strategies.

Areas for strategies:

Vocabulary, pre-reading comprehension, during reading comprehension, post-reading comprehension, writing to learn, reading fluency/reading rate, study skills, uses of trade books, uses of technology, reading instruction for ELL students, motivating adolescent readers, or another topic of your choice (which must be approved by instructor.)

B. Teen Reader Interview

Interview an intermediate or upper grade struggling reader or nonreader (Grades 6-12). Discover her/his attitudes about reading as well as her/his perceptions about the problems s/he is experiencing with reading, especially with textbook reading. Briefly trace the development of the problems and determine what the struggling reader thinks are the causes and the solutions for the reading problems. Write about the student in a 3-4-page paper essay, complete with your reflections about how this experience influences your perception of struggling teen readers. Reflect on possible ways the student might be helped, both in reality and in a more “ideal” situation (i.e., with more money, time, resources, etc.) Include a paragraph comparing your own experiences as a reader at that age to that of your interviewee.

Alternative: Create or use an existing survey form to survey a class of students about the same issues listed above for one student. Reflect on ways to help the class as a whole.

C. Lesson Planning for Secondary Student(s)

Following one of the lesson plan formats we will examine together, create one integrated lesson plan for struggling teen readers. You will begin with a brief, 1-2 paragraph description of the students, their instructional reading levels, particular instructional needs, and interests.

D. Reflective Essays (revised)

You will be asked to write three 1- to 2-page reflections on issues presented in the texts or discussed in class. Two reflections will be required of the whole class : (1) autobiography as a learner and (2) reflection on motivation or other topic from the readings/discussion. When it is your turn to write a 3rd reflection, you will choose no less than three ideas from the reading or from the previous class discussion on which to reflect and write. Reflections should be typed, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and will be turned in by the class session following the assigned reading or class discussion. Occasional brief, free writes will be requested during class, and these will not be graded, only checked as completed or not. The autobiography paper will not be held to the specific format described here, but should be thoughtfully written.

E. Write an I-Search Paper on a research interest related to teaching reading and/or writing. Discuss your ideas with the instructor and get approval before proceeding.

- There will be more instructions on this project, with written guidelines in a handout.

F. There will be additional assignments for the “Teaching Writing” side of this double course. These will be provided by mid-September.

G. There will be a variety of small assignments, that will be graded as Competed or Not Completed.

- Conduct a readability assessment on two trade books, following guidelines to be provided.
- Present a book talk to the class on one of the trade books. A variety of formats for book talks are acceptable, staying under 5 minutes of presentation time. You may take artistic license with your book talk to be as creative as you wish, with the goal of interesting your audience in reading the book themselves.

Grades:

Your final course grade will reflect the following:

Strategy lesson with BDR	20%
Reflections (3)	10%
Teen interview OR class survey	10%
I-Search Paper	20%
Completion of smaller assignments	10%
Writing Portfolio [for READ 415]	30%

A 90-100% B 80-89% C 70-79% D 60-69% F Below 60%