

Differentiation in the English Language Arts

15:252:513 (01)

3 Credits

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Office hours: Thursdays 3:30 – 4:30 pm and by appointment	Prerequisites or other limitations: None
Mode of Instruction: ___ Lecture ___ Seminar ___ Hybrid ___ Online _X_ Other	Permission required: _X_ No ___ Yes Directions about where to get permission numbers: Contact instructor

Learning Goals

Reading allows us the opportunity to engage with texts, but it also allows us the opportunity to know ourselves, our realities, and society. The idea that reading is first a social activity frames this course. Following this line of thinking, this course will help you develop your stance as a literacy educator by sharing methods, ideas, and research on effective methods to differentiate reading instruction. This course will help you understand who each of your students are as readers, how to move them forward in every lesson, and how to use structures and systems in class that will facilitate their engagement with texts. This course primarily focuses on differentiation in the teaching of reading, as other courses will aid your development in the teaching of writing.

This course is also framed by the belief that to become an effective teacher of reading, educators must continually develop their own literacy practice. Thus, during the course, you will read texts and participate in your own reading activities to grow awareness of how you connect to texts and other readers, how you use strategies to extract meaning from texts, and how you analyze texts. This work will undoubtedly help you gain insight into the art of teaching literature.

The course's essential questions are as follows:

- How can teachers support young people of varying interest & ability levels to read powerfully?
- How do we reconcile our beliefs about teaching literature with the Common Core?
- What might be some likely ways that teachers can address the challenges that students may face in learning about reading well?

Course Catalog Description

This course will focus on understanding and implementing differentiated instruction in the English language arts in order to meet the needs of students who differ in terms of their previous school histories, linguistic backgrounds, cultural histories, and so on.

Class Materials

Required Texts

- Beers, K. (2003). *When kids can't read, what teachers can do: A guide for teachers, 6-12*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (some copies should be available at the bookstore).
- Two texts from the selected titles at the end of the syllabus
- One adult book from the selected titles at the end of the syllabus
- A variety of required readings in the form of PDF files, websites, online texts, etc. will be available through the Rutgers library system and/or on Sakai.
- Common Core English Reading Literature and Reading Informational Text Standards

Recommended Texts (Chapters Included in the Syllabus)

Burke, J. *The English Teacher's Companion*.

Christensen, L. *Teaching for Joy and Justice*.

Compton-Lilly, C. *Breaking the Silence: Recognizing the Social and Cultural Resources Students Bring to the Classroom*.

Gallagher, K. *Deeper Reading: Comprehending Challenging Texts, 4-12*.

Gallagher, K. *Readicide: How Schools are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It*.

Keene, E. O. & Zimmerman, S. *Mosaic of Thought: The Power of Comprehension Strategy Instruction*.

Tatum, A. *Teaching Reading to Black Adolescent Males*.

Wilhelm, J. D. *Engaging Readers and Writers in Inquiry*.

Wilhelm, J. D. *Improving Comprehension with Think-Aloud Strategies*.

Grading and Activities

Your course assignments are an opportunity for you to communicate your thinking about what you have learned, ultimately in the service of you becoming the best teacher of English you can be. You are welcome to revise your assignments; at times I will request that you revise them if I am not convinced that the task shows your best work. If you choose to revise an assignment, let's be sure to have a conversation beforehand.

Upload your assignments on time by the due date on the course's Sakai site. **Be sure to put your full name in the document file (ex.: Barchi_Robert_reading notebook)**. Please let me know in advance if you expect to turn in an assignment late. I will lower your grade if you turn your assignments in late. Please use 12-point font, 1-inch margins, and APA or MLA formatting for your papers.

Activity	Total Percentage
Weekly Attendance, Preparation & Active Participation	20%
Online Discussion	20%
Lesson Plan	15%
Book Clubs + Reader's Notebook	20%
Trying out Instructional Strategies	25%

Grading Scale

A = 90-100

B+ = 87-89

B = 80-86

C+ = 77-79

Grading Summary

A = Outstanding work

B = Good work

C = Satisfactory work

F = Failing work (also stopped attending without withdrawing)

C = 70-76

F = 69 and below

Description of Activities

Weekly Attendance, Preparation & Active Participation (20%)

Be present—physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally—during class. Be on time. Let me know via email if you will miss a class session in advance, and please be in touch with a colleague to learn about and make up what you missed. Excessive absence—two or more sessions—will negatively affect your grade in this course.

I respect your observance of major religious holidays. Please notify me at the beginning of the semester about your wishes to observe holidays on days when class sessions are scheduled. I am happy to work with you on fulfilling any assignments on days you miss for religious observance.

Please let me know if you need any particular academic support during the semester in person, during office hours, via email or phone.

You are welcome to bring your laptop to class. Use it in ways that enable you to be fully present.

Online Group Discussions (20%)

Part of the work of further developing your stance as a literacy educator is engage in thoughtful dialogue with others about the assigned texts. You will have an opportunity to do so both online and also in class. By Monday at 11pm, you will post a 250-300 word response that synthesizes your ideas about the professional readings for the week to three or four of your colleagues. By Wednesday at 5pm, read the responses your colleagues provided and offer a response. The discussions will take place using the discussion forum tool on our course website on Sakai.

A successful reflection will not be summary, but will include some analysis and synthesis of the texts. Consider thinking through some of the following questions as you prepare your reflection:

- Perspective & Evidence:
 - What are the authors asserting?
 - What reasons/ evidence do the authors provide to convince us of their assertions?
What's the most compelling set of reasons/ evidence?
- Connections:
 - What ideas, statements, or examples continue to repeat across the texts? Which ideas counter one another? Which ideas expand on one another?
 - How do the ideas presented today relate to other ideas you've read or thought about so far this semester? How do they relate to your placement?
- Significance:
 - Does any of this matter for the teaching of English? Why/Why not?
 - How do these readings illuminate the issue/topic for the week?

As you respond to your group members, you may want to consider the following:

- What are some of the most interesting issues and ideas that arose?
- Any challenges, misconceptions, controversies?

- What are 1-2 questions that resonate with the online discussion that students can grapple with when you see each other in person?

Lesson Plan (15%)

Toward the end of the semester you will submit one lesson plan that reflects your stance as an English teacher committed to engage all students and that incorporates what you have learned in this class. This lesson plan will fulfill the requirements of the GSE teacher portfolio. You will receive more information about this lesson plan during the semester.

Book Clubs + Reader's Notebook, ongoing (20%)

You will participate in three book clubs. The purpose of the book clubs is for you to think about your own reading and also to practice instructional strategies that you learn with your text. **You will complete 1-2 entries from your reading notebook each week according to the dates on the syllabus. Bring your entries to class each week.** You will submit your parts of your reader's notebook during the semester and at the end of semester, along with a brief reflection on your participation.

Your reader's notebook is an opportunity to explore, in writing, your analysis and interpretations about the books that you're reading in book clubs. It's also an opportunity to reflect on yourself as a reader. You can maintain a hard copy notebook or an electronic version. Be prepared to share your ideas each week with your groups, and know that we'll have a reading notebook gallery walk periodically throughout the semester. You should keep two small sections in your notebook-- one that logs the pages and days you read and one that reflects on your reading habits and your thoughts about the book:

Reading Log:

I will show some examples of reading logs that you can keep and insert into your notebook. Feel free to make one on your own, so long as it includes the title of the book, pages you read, and how long it took you.

Reading Reactions:

You will also write about your actual reactions to the text. Here are some tips to guide your first few entries:

- Think about a main or secondary character. **Trace** their
 - Actions + words
 - Beliefs, desires, motivations
 - Problems
 - Interactions with others
 - Interactions with the setting
- Overall impression? Evidence?
- Evolving impression?

Reading Habits

In your reading notebook you can also write about your experience as a reader of the book. What did you notice about yourself while you read? What surprised you? What would you say to this

author? What was challenging, and how did you get through it? What was easy? Did you observe yourself using any specific strategies to help you understand difficult concepts, ideas, or language?

Your writing should be about a page or so, but you can also consider an equivalent that includes writing and visual response—maps, charts, symbols, or other.

You will be evaluated on:

- Thoughtful, rigorous responses
- Risk taking in your reflection and trying new strategies
- Creativity

Trying out Instructional Strategies (mini lesson + text analysis, discussion questions, text set) (25%)
During the semester, you will read about and see me model various instructional strategies that can help all students engage in a range of texts. You will apply that learning to the texts that you read for your book clubs in class. Part of your grade for each of these strategies includes trying it out in class and reflecting on it. You will receive more information about each assignment during the semester.

(Note: You are required to submit an early teaching philosophy as part of the GSE portfolio requirements of this course in December. It is not part of this course's grade, but you will not receive a final grade for this course until you submit it. I will provide more details on crafting your teaching philosophy during the semester.)

Tentative Schedule:

September 4th: What's your reading past and present?

September 12th: Why does the field of English instruction call some kids “different”? (Book 1)

Read:

- Beers Chapters 1 and 2
- Compton-Lilly's Introduction, Sociocultural Considerations for Students and Classrooms: The Case of Alicia Rodriguez, on Sakai.
- Burke's Chapter 2, Who We Teach: Understanding and Teaching the Next Generation, on Sakai.

Due:

- Reading notebook entry 1

September 19th: How do teachers support students comprehend texts that seem challenging? (Book 1)

Read:

- Beers Chapters 3 and 4
- Wilhelm Chapter 2, What All Good Readers Do: Introducing General Reading Process Think-Alouds

Due:

- Reading notebook entry 2

September 26th: How do teachers support students to infer? (Book 1)

Read:

- Beers Chapter 5
- Gallagher Chapter 5, Deepening Comprehension Through Second-Draft Reading, on Sakai

Due:

- Reading notebook entry 3
- *Bring to class:* A hard copy of one of your favorite reading notebook entries, ready to share with the class
- *Bring to class:* Mini lesson rough draft
- *Monday September 30th:* Mini lesson & text analysis final draft

October 3rd: How might you frame a text to engage all students? (Book 1)

Read:

- Beers Chapter 6
- Burke's Chapter 3, How to Teach So Students Will Learn, Use Remember—and Enjoy, on Sakai
- Wilhelm's Chapter 3, Asking the Guiding Question: Reframing the Existing Curriculum into Inquiry Units, on Sakai
- *Bring to class (there's a free app for smartphones):* The Common Core State Anchor Standards for Reading: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R>; Grade 7 Reading Literature Standards <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/7>; and Grades 9-10 Reading Literature Standards <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/9-10>

Due:

- Reading Notebook Entry 4
- Reading notebook entries 1-4 with log and reflection in person or on Sakai

October 10th: Part 1 -- How might you engage students as they read? (Book 2)

Read:

- Beers Chapter 6
- Gallagher's Chapter 3: Avoiding the Tsunami & Chapter 4, Finding the "Sweet Spot" of Instruction, on Sakai

Due:

- Reading notebook entry 5

October 17th: Part 2--How do you engage students meaningfully as they read? (Book 2)

Read:

- Beers Chapter 13
- Wilhelm's Chapter 2, Rediscovering the Passion of Teaching and the Power of Understanding, on Sakai

Due:

- Reading notebook entry 6

October 24th: Part 3-- How do you engage students meaningfully as they read? (Book 2)

Read:

- Wilhelm’s Chapter 4, Engaging Exchanges: Secret Prompts, Walk Arounds, and other Techniques for Discussion Before, During, and After Learning, on Sakai
- Serravallo’s Chapter from *Small Group Reading Instruction*, on Sakai

Due:

- Reading notebook entry 7
- Whole-class discussion questions
- Three ideas for an alternate text to read related to your current novel. Be ready to discuss them with your book club group
- *Monday October 28*: Final draft of discussion questions

October 31st: How do you engage students meaningfully after they read? (Book 2)

Read:

- Beers Chapter 8

Due:

- Reading notebook entry 8
- *Bring to class*: A recent favorite notebook entry to share with the class
- *Bring to class*: Draft of lesson plan

November 7th: Part 1--How do you engage students in non-required texts? (Alternate text)

Read:

- Gallagher’s chapter 2, on Sakai
- Francois’s “Reading Is About Relating: Urban Youths Give Voice To The Possibilities For School Literacy,” on Sakai

Due:

- Final lesson plan
- Reading notebook entry 9

November 14th: Part 2—How do you engage students in non-required texts? (Alternate text)

Read:

- Tatum’s Chapter 5, Structuring Curriculum Orientations that Empower Students, on Sakai
- Christensen’s Chapter 4, Beyond Anthologies: Why Teacher Choice and Judgment Matter, on Sakai

Due:

- Reading notebook entry 10

November 22nd: Part 3—How do you engage students in non-required texts?

Read:

- Gallagher’s Chapter 9, Reading the World, on Sakai
- Keene & Zimmerman’s excerpt from Chapter 3, Using Schema to Understand and Remember, on Sakai

Due:

- Notebook entries and reflection

December 5th: How do you engage students to engage in language?

Read:

- Beers Chapter 9 (Skim chapters 10-12)

Due:

- Text set
- Monday, 12/9: Early Teaching Philosophy

Book Club Titles:

Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck

The Outsiders, S. E. Hinton

The Giver, Lois Lowry

To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee

Raisin in the Sun, Lorraine Hansberry

Night, Elie Wiesel

Animal Farm, George Orwell

Their Eyes Were Watching God, Zora Neale Hurston

Brave New World, Aldous Huxley

Fahrenheit 451, Ray Bradbury