Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
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Literacy Development in the Elementary and Middle School  
Spring 2016, Hardenberg Hall B4  
Tuesdays, 9:50am-12:50pm

Instructor: Amy Lewis  
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Office Hours: by appointment

Email: amy.lewis@gse.rutgers.edu  
Location: 205C, GSE 10 Seminary Place

Prerequisites or other limitations: 
Admission to the Teacher Education Program

Mode of Instruction: 
- Lecture  
- Seminar  
X Hybrid  
- Online  
- Other

Permission required:  
X No  
- Yes

Directions about where to get permission numbers:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION & LEARNING GOALS

The New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers (2014) can be found at http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap9.pdf. In this course, we will be covering the following standards:

**Standard Three:** Learning Environments. The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation. 

- Essential Knowledge: 1, 2, 3, 5
- Critical Dispositions: 1, 2, 3, 4
**Standard Four:** Content Knowledge. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches, particularly as they relate to the Common Core Standards and the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

- **Performance:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 8
- **Essential Knowledge:** 1, 2, 3, 6
- **Critical Dispositions:** 1, 2, 4, 5

**Standard Seven:** Planning for Instruction. The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, crossdisciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

- **Performance:** 1, 2, 3
- **Essential Knowledge:** 1, 2
- **Critical Dispositions:** 2, 4

**Standard Eight:** Instructional Strategies. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

- **Performance:** 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
- **Essential Knowledge:** 3, 4, 5, 6
- **Critical Dispositions:** 2, 3

**Standard Ten:** Leadership and Collaboration. The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

- **Performance:** 6, 7, 8, 9
- **Essential Knowledge:** 3, 4
- **Critical Dispositions:** 3, 5

In regard to the **Council for Accreditation of Education Professionals (2013)**, we will be covering **Standards #4 Content Knowledge** which falls under **Content and Pedagogical Knowledge**. This includes **1.1 Content Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions**. For additional information, please visit [file:///Users/ecboling/Downloads/CAEP%20Standards.pdf](file:///Users/ecboling/Downloads/CAEP%20Standards.pdf). Projects such as the lesson plan, professional development group workshop, and mini-documentary project can be submitted as artifacts in your teacher education portfolio to reflect the professional standards that you are meeting.

**Course catalog description**
Focus on literacy skills for grades 3 through 8. Emphasis on higher order comprehension skills, vocabulary development, content area reading, writing, and struggling readers. Upper elementary and adolescent literature is explored.

**Other description of course purposes, context, methods, etc.**
This course serves as an introduction to the teaching of literacy in the upper elementary and middle school. The major focus of the course will be literacy instruction in grades 3 through 8 with some discussion of literacy learning at other levels. Throughout the semester, we will examine the ways in which the term “literacy” is constantly evolving in today’s society. In addition, we will explore the relationship between various areas of literacy, as well as the role of literacy across the curriculum. The course is designed to assist future teachers in developing the fundamental knowledge, skills/strategies and dispositions needed to carry out a literacy program where all students’ expertise in reading, writing and oral language is nurtured.

During each class session, we will explore research-based practices for building literacy in diverse learners. Classes will involve a variety of collaborative activities, such as discussing readings, examining curriculum/assessment materials, analyzing/developing lesson plans, participating in reading/writing workshops and other cooperative learning activities related to content and pedagogy. The instructor will also model lessons specially geared to grades 3 to 8 with an emphasis on higher order comprehension skills, vocabulary development, content area reading, expository writing and struggling readers. There will be an emphasis on exposure to upper elementary and adolescent literature.

Learning Goals & Objectives
At the end of the course, students should be able to…

- Articulate a philosophy of literacy instruction that emphasizes the interactive and integrative nature of language and builds upon these connections when creating learning opportunities.
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills that are needed for creating and implementing a literacy curriculum using small and large group work, collaborative learning, conferencing, and individual work based on professional standards.
- Identify, plan, and design literacy instruction based on students’ needs, developmental progress, learning styles, and prior knowledge.
- Identify and understand the characteristics, uses, advantages, and limitations of different types of assessments for evaluating how students learn, what they know and are able to do, and what kinds of experiences will support students’ growth and development.
- Critically reflect on his/her teaching and learning.
- Identify and use available resources and materials for instructional planning.
- Articulate how educational research can be used as a means for continuous learning and development.

Course Organization
This course is organized into three “phases.” Phase I covers the research and theory that frame instruction in the middle grades. This phase “sets the stage” for discussing literacy instruction in grades 3-8. You will learn about research, theory, and educational standards (both state and national) that guide teaching at this level. Phase II makes up the majority of the course and takes a close look at effective instruction in various literacy domains, including comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, and word study. Phase II also introduces differentiation and critical literacy. Finally, Phase III gives special attention to the materials and instructional programs that can be used for literacy instruction. This final section of the course covers how to best use the materials
available to teachers at this level with emphasis given to supporting literacy learning across disciplines.

**Required Texts**

- One children’s or young adult nonfiction or historical fiction text published since 2005.
- One professional book from a list provided in class for your professional development group (PDG)
- A variety of required readings in the form of PDF files, websites, online texts, etc. will be available through the Rutgers library system, provided online, and/or available through our class website.

**Grading Policy & Turning in Assignments**

Assignments are due as indicated on the course schedule. The syllabus, course schedule, and due dates can be found on our class website. You are responsible for knowing what the due dates are. Unless arrangements are made in advance of the due date, late assignments will not be accepted.

**Communications & Announcements**

I will update our Google Classroom each week to post information for your assignments. You are responsible for any information that is presented in these announcements, so please make sure to check the site between classes so that you are aware of any additions and/or changes.

I will use e-mail to contact you individually. If you do not usually use your Rutgers e-mail account, be sure that you have set it to forward to the account you do check.

**Participation Policy**

This class is discussion-oriented; therefore, your active participation in this course is vital to the course and to your learning. All students must come prepared to discuss this week’s assigned readings. Keep notes on the reading. These notes will be important for helping make meaning, participating in online discussions, giving feedback to your peers, sharing how you connect readings to classroom experiences, and so on. You are expected to participate in a variety of ways throughout the semester, and your various assignments and projects will incorporate participation as part of their grade. Additional information on requirements for class participation is provided below.
Evaluation of Course Work
The following will be considered and used when evaluating your work:

• Only work that meets professional standards will be accepted. As teachers, we are expected to clearly communicate information to parents, administrators, and colleagues. For this course, you are expected to hand in proofread work.

• You will be evaluated on clarity, conciseness, and organization of writing. Responsiveness to the task or question will also be evaluated (e.g., are you fulfilling the requirements of the assignment).

• An ‘A’ assignment is exceptional work; not work that merely meets the requirements outlined in the syllabus.

• Responses will be judged by completeness and depth. You must present the necessary amount of detail to support your points. Write or present as though your audience is not an expert on your topic and in a way that demonstrates depth of analysis of the topic.

• Your work must demonstrate independent judgment. This includes going beyond the information presented by others. Be critical, seeing both strengths and weaknesses, and support opinions with your own reasons.

• Be sure to pay attention to professional style. Papers should be typed or word-processed and follow APA format.

Grading Scale

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90% and above</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80 – 86.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 76.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60 – 69.9%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 60%</td>
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Academic Integrity Policy
Any violation of academic honesty is a serious offense and is therefore subject to an appropriate penalty. Refer to http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml for a full explanation of policies.

Confidentiality
When discussing classroom situations during course sessions, do so carefully. Mask the name of a student on any written or visual work shared in class or used in an assignment. When discussing teaching practices you have observed in the field, be mindful of maintaining a tone of professional courtesy. Under no circumstances (whether in class or in casual conversation with friends) should you relate stories from classrooms or schools that may be embarrassing to teachers or students or that include sensitive information about a child or family.
EVALUATION OVERVIEW, ASSIGNMENTS & TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Your overall course evaluation and final grade will be based on the following:

1. Attendance & Participation (in-class and online)  
   20%
2. Nonfiction / Historical Book Talk  
   15%
3. Professional Development Group (PDG) Workshop  
   25%
4. Lesson Plan  
   15%
5. Literacy Investigation Project  
   25%

WEEKLY ATTENDANCE, PREPARATION, & PARTICIPATION

Your participation and attendance are necessary for you and your classmates to get the most out of this course. You are expected to **attend every class** session having completed all required readings. I do understand, however, that extenuating circumstances might result in an absence. If you miss class, use the university absence reporting website [https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/](https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/) to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me, but I recommend also following up forwarding the same information directly to me. You are allowed one missed class without it having a negative impact on your grade. You will still be expected, however, to turn in any assignments that are due on that day. Missing additional class time will result in lost points. For example, you will not earn full credit if you arrive late/leave early regularly, miss more than one class, or if you do not actively participate both online and face-to-face.

In-class activities that I use to inform my planning count toward your participation grade. Activities related to readings will take the form of written reflections, discussion leader, article discussion group work, participation in online discussions, etc. At times materials prepared outside of class will also contribute to this portion of your grade.

NONFICTION / HISTORICAL BOOK TALK  
(Due: Week 6)

You will read an award-winning text appropriate for use in grades 3 through 8 and present a multimedia book talk. The book should be a nonfiction or historical text and new to you. Select a text that has been published within the past 9-10 years. Examples of awards given to such books include the Newbery Medal, Pura Belpré Award, and Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal.

Book talks will be presented and shared on our Google Classroom. Programs such as Animoto, Prezi, PowerPoint, iMovie, and Screencast-O-Matic can be used to create your presentation. Your multimedia presentations should be approximately 5-10 minutes in length. Additional details and requirements will be provided in class.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GROUP WORKSHOP
(Due: Weeks 9 & 11)

You will participate in a professional development group (PDG) and final workshop during the second half of the semester. This will include selecting a professional text to study (from titles introduced in class). Groups will be formed based on interest, and you will have the opportunity to engage in dialogue and activities centered on the pedagogical and theoretical presentations of literacy instruction offered in the multiple texts. Upon completion of the experience, you will be asked to conduct a mini-workshop (no longer than 30 minutes) for your classmates. Recommended texts for your PDG groups will be posted on our class website and introduced in class.

LESSON PLAN
(Due: Week 10)

This assignment requires you to develop a lesson that teaches some aspect of literacy, such as fluency, vocabulary, or comprehension. Be sure to cite course readings to provide a rationale for the target of instruction and the method that you will use. A lesson plan format will be provided in class along with further instructions. This assignment also provides you with the opportunity to review the lessons of some of your classmates and to offer them feedback.

MINI-DOCUMENTARY/LITERACY INVESTIGATION PROJECT
(Due: Week 15)

This assignment will require you to create a digital documentary / digital story that explores literacy through either a content area topic of particular relevance to your teaching (e.g. science or social studies topic) or a “hot” topic related to literacy teaching (e.g. teaching English Language Learners, standardized assessments, digital literacies). More information about this project will be provided in class. In addition to completing the multimedia project, you will write a reflection about the experience.
## Tentative Course Schedule by Week

### Phase I: The Research and Theory that Frame Instruction in Grades 4 through 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introduction – Literacy in Our Lives: What does it mean to be literate? How is “literacy” defined? How might literacy take on different forms in different contexts?</td>
<td>(In class) Introductions Syllabus &amp; Course Requirements - PDG books - Autobiographical Literacy Narrative - Book talk - Discussion Leader sign-ups</td>
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<td>Tompkins Ch. 1</td>
<td>1. Visit our course Sakai site and join our Google Classroom. 2. Post a professional profile picture of yourself in your Google Profile. 3. Compose your Autobiographical Literacy Narrative and submit it as a Google doc on the Google Classroom assignment.</td>
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<td>Literacy in the Middle Grades: How do literacy demands change as students move through the grades? How do effective teachers organize and plan instruction for learners in grades 3 through 8 and beyond? What does effective literacy instruction look like?</td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 2</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Examining Reading and Writing Processes: What is the reading process? What is the writing process? What are the basic principles for planning and</td>
<td>Snow, C., &amp; Moje, E. (2010). Why is everyone talking about adolescent literacy? Phi Delta Kappan, 91(6), 66-69.</td>
<td>Sign up with the book title for your Book Talk (on our Sakai Forums)</td>
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<td>Share possible topics for Mini-Documentary/Literacy Investigation and go over</td>
<td>Sign up for PDG book/groups (on Google doc in</td>
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| Week 4 | **Assessment and Evaluation:** How can teachers assess reading and writing? How can teachers use assessment to inform literacy instruction? How can teachers ethically prepare students for high-stakes tests? | Tompkins Ch. 3  
Read PDG and Book Talk book & discuss expectations for these assignments | Topic, Purpose (Topic Statement) and Research Question for Mini-Documentary Literacy Investigation (submit as a Google Classroom assignment) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week 5 | **Differentiating Instruction:** How do culture and prior experiences relate to literacy practices? How can teachers plan and implement literacy programs based on the needs of diverse populations of students? | Tompkins Ch. 4  
"What is Differentiated Instruction?" by Carol Ann Tomlinson  
http://www.readingrockets.org/article/what-differentiated-instruction  
Finding Common Ground from the "Engaging with Literature" series by Annenberg. (To access the video, scroll down the page to video #8 and click on the VOD icon on the right.)  
http://www.learner.org/resources/series182.html?pop=yes&pid=1987#  
Read PDG and Book Talk book | PDG Meeting #1-Learning Blog on Sakai (in the Blog tool) & bring book to class |

**Phase 2: Powerful Teaching**

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<thead>
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<th>Class Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Promoting Comprehension—Reader Factors: What theories inform reading comprehension instruction? How do good readers and writers comprehend texts?</td>
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<td>Tompkins Ch. 7</td>
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<td>Documentary websites, readings, and videos (provided on our class website)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Online response to readings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Book Talks (posted on Sakai forum)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Online Book Talk Critiques (review the work of three peers on Sakai forums)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 7</th>
<th>Promoting Comprehension—Text Factors: What are the unique text factors of fiction, nonfiction and poetry? Why is knowledge of text structure important?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 8</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finish PDG Text</td>
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<td>PDG Meeting #2 – Learning Blog on Sakai (in the Blog tool) &amp; bring book to class</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>Eliminating Obstacles to Fluency: What is fluency and why is it important? How can teachers help students to become fluent readers and writers? Expanding Academic Vocabulary: What are the stages of word knowledge? What are some</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tompkins Ch. 5 &amp; 6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kucan, L. (2012). What is important to know about vocabulary? <em>The Reading Teacher, 65</em>(6), 360-366.</td>
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<td>PDG #3 – Learning Blog on Sakai (in the Blog tool) &amp; bring book to class</td>
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<td>Documentary Planning: Mini-Doc/Literacy Investigation form (submitted on Google Classroom) with format, audience, topic, purpose, and potential resources.</td>
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| Week 9 | Teaching Writing: How can teachers create an environment to support good writing? How do teachers approach spelling instruction in the middle grades? | Tompkins Chap. 9
"Does the Fight for a Cursive Comeback Miss the Point?" NPR "All Things Considered" broadcast [http://www.npr.org/blogs/ed/2014/03/25/294212825/kids-these-days-can-type-but-cant-write-cursive-is-that-bad](http://www.npr.org/blogs/ed/2014/03/25/294212825/kids-these-days-can-type-but-cant-write-cursive-is-that-bad)


Draft of Lesson Plan (submitted on Google Classroom) |


"Why Core Standards Must Embrace Media Literacy" by Richard Beach and Frank Baker, *EdWeek 2011* | Online response to readings in Sakai forums
Final Draft Lesson Plan (posted on Sakai forum)
Online Lesson Plan Critique (review the work of three peers on Sakai forums) |
## Phase 3: Effective Instructional Programs

<table>
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<th>Class Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
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| **Week 11**   | **Teaching with Trade Books:** How do teachers choose and organize reading materials? What teaching procedures support comprehension of both online and offline texts? | Tompkins Ch. 10  
PDG Presentations |
| **Week 12**   | **Teaching with Textbooks:** How do teachers use required textbooks to meet the needs of students? | Tompkins Ch. 11 |  |
| **Week 13**   | **Literacy Across Disciplines:** What instructional techniques support reading and writing across the curriculum? How do students use reading and writing as tools for learning? | Tompkins Ch. 12  
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Mini-Documentary-Literacy Investigation Project Due (posted on Sakai forum)</td>
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