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C&I 435.01: Organizing Classroom Reading and Writing Programs

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Organizing Classroom Reading and Writing Programs

C & I 435

Tuesdays 4:10-7:00 pm, room 313

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Office hours: MW 10:00-11:00, T 3:00-4:00, and by arrangement.

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Course Purpose:

The purpose of this course is to develop and explore a working understanding of the processes of writing and reading and use this knowledge to integrate these facets of communication throughout the curriculum, to connect current findings of contemporary research in literacy to effective educational practice, and to plan, implement, and assess a quality literacy program for grades k-8.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate, through their performance, a thorough understanding of the following key concepts:

1. The expanded definition of the nature of literacy and its social and cultural impact on a diverse and multicultural society.
2. How students learn most effectively and the application of learning theory to classroom practice.
3. The development of meaningful classroom activities, materials, and resources for future use that guide and assist learning, foster critical thinking, and incorporate literacy skills.
4. Authentic assessment that guides teaching.
5. Using literature in the content areas.

Instructional Methods:

1. Small group activities
2. Whole class participation and discussion
3. Inquiry teaching, deductive and inductive learning
4. Cooperative learning

5. Critical thinking
6. Written response to literature

Rationale for the Course:

- 1) Literacy is an essential survival skill.
 - 2) Reading and writing are the foundation of literacy.
 - 3) The teacher creates an environment that inspires literacy development.
 - 4) A reading specialist is expected to have expertise in the development of the assessment of school-wide literacy programs.
 - 4) Teachers should be active participants in the literacy community.
3. The MONTANA SCHOOL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES MANUAL, Board of Public Education states:

" . . . The education program in Communication Arts encompasses the study of languages and literature, the development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, effective media use, and the nurturing of creative, logical, and critical thinking."

Required Reading:

Wiggins, G. and McTighe, J. Understanding by Design
Marcrorie, K. Searching Writing
Pinkney and Pinkney. Duke Ellington

Additional texts on teaching writing and reading in the k-8 classrooms, as needed.

Evaluation Criteria:

Attendance is required. More than two absences or repeated tardiness will result in a reduction in your final grade. All assignments must be typed and stapled. Late papers are not accepted. Clear communication is a requirement of our profession; therefore, approximately 1/3 of each grade may be based on the mechanics of writing. Assignments will not be reread: Complete them with care. Papers, quizzes, tests, reading assignments, and class activities are designed to meet the dictates of our accrediting agencies (the State of Montana and NCATE), and the guidelines of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instruction and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.

All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>.

Tentative Weekly Schedule:

22 January
Logistics and Introduction

29 January
The Writing Process
What we do when we write.
Making writing prompts.
Have read 1st 4 chapters of Macrorie

5 February (T.B.A)

12 February
Writing Prompt session 1
Bring 3-5 writing prompts

Have read 1st 2 chapters of Wiggins and Mctighe

19 February
Ellington session
Have read Pinkney

26 February
Ellington Day

4 March
Book club 1

11 March
book club 2

18 March
book club 3

25 March Spring Vacation

1 April
Writing Prompt session 2

8 April
Writing prompts due

15 April
I search day 1

22 April
I-Search day 2
Final draft of I-search due.

29 April
Conclusions...
Journals due

6 May Final Examinations

Required Tasks:

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Journal | 15% |
| Writing Prompts Collection | 20% |
| Ellington Activities | 10% |
| I-Search Project | 25% |
| Book Club | 20% |

Quizzes/tests/etc.

10%

Grading Scale:

| | | | | | | | |
|--------|----|--------------|----|-------|----|-------|----|
| 100-99 | A+ | 91-90 | B+ | 83-82 | C+ | 75-74 | D+ |
| 98-94 | A | 89-86 | B | 81-78 | C | 73-70 | D |
| 93-92 | A- | 85-84 | B- | 77-76 | C- | 69-68 | D- |
| | | 67 and below | F | | | | |

I-Search Project

An I-search paper is an alternative to traditional re-search papers in that it dispenses with the illusion of objectivity and its attendant distancing language, and allows the writer to tell her or his story of finding and applying knowledge about a particular subject, to recount the adventure of finding out. Ken Macrorie explored and wrote extensively about I-Searches.

During the course of the semester we will be exploring the world of literacy education with an emphasis on establishing organizing principles and best practices for the k-12 classrooms. Each of you is charged with learning as much about teaching writers and readers as possible, from a variety of sources and perspectives, gathering questions and activities from which to begin forming your own classroom programs in the near future.

Towards this end you will be searching for materials that interest you and speak relevance to your own experiences and intentions. You will chronicle (narrate) your search, collect and evaluate resources, and summarize your findings and conclusions. Some basic rules here are: be truthful and useful. That is, follow your interests and don't stop until you have made the work productive and personally relevant. Interview people as well as texts. While it is true that not all opinions are as worthwhile and valuable as others, all have something to contribute, if only as an ignorant starting point for greater illumination.

I think of the paper in four parts (as adapted from Macrorie):

1) What I knew (and didn't know) about the topic when I started out.

2) Why I'm writing the paper (Here's where a real need should show up: the writer demonstrates that the search may make a real difference in her life. Find something more than "because it is an assignment." This will involve focusing and refining your

particular slice of the overbroad topic of teaching writer and readers.).

3) The search (the story of the hunt).

4) What I learned and how I can use it (or didn't learn. A search that fails or falls short can be as useful and exciting as one that has succeeded.)

Each project must include a least **One** interview as part of the search. Record your interviews and type up a transcription as part of the Resources Appendix.

The purpose of bibliographies and footnotes is to help readers assess the reliability of a search and the sources. It helps keep clear when the writer is speaking and when the sources are being quoted. Also they assist a reader who may get interested in the topic and wants to explore further; the sources tell him where to go so he doesn't have to re-do all the hunting the I-searcher did to find a good authority. Document your sources as a list of texts and articles, a list of interviews, and a list of all other sources of information.

Book Club: Students will survey a sampling of 'how to teach reading and writing/writers and readers' books. Each student/pair will choose one book, buy it, read it several times. Describe/summarize (1-2 pages), Evaluate it in terms of usefulness and richness of ideas (tell what it's good for and how you might make use of it), and articulate one tangible activity/lesson derived/inspired from/by the book.

On your Book Club day you'll give a presentation to the class about your text and run the activity for us.

We'll workshop your lesson plan and provide feedback. You'll revise and turn in the lesson with summary evaluation (what worked well about the lesson, what you'd improve for next time...) and bring copies for all (thus we each end up with a collection of revised activities, and the beginning of a library/bibliography).

You turn in:

- A summary and evaluation of the text. (as above).
- A lesson overview and plan (with revisions based on feedback).

Writing Tasks Collection

Throughout the semester we will be exploring the RAFTS elements (Role, Audience, Topic, Format, Strong verb/purpose) as a guide for creating writing prompts/tasks for your students to elicit a variety of responses across a spectrum of formats and purposes. Toward that end you will be creating many tasks of all sizes and shapes for possible use. By the end of the semester you will choose 10 of these to include in this collection. Each of these must be peer reviewed and revised. (We will have two sessions throughout the semester for revision and commentary.) You will include an introductory document talking about each task's intended context, its potential role in the classroom, and what it is you are expecting the activity to show you about your students learning. You will refine a consistent format for articulating your tasks with an eye towards having the task plan accessible to others.

One of these MUST be an I-search prompt as if it were going to be given to your students as an individualized assignment. Specify intended grade level and provide an appropriate depth of explanation and instruction to guide the student through all the necessary stages of the task (with time line, instructional prompts, handouts etc).

ELLINGTON ACTIVITIES

Using the book Duke Ellington we will discuss/describe connections across the curriculum (i.e. using the book as a springboard for a lesson in math, spelling, creative writing, social studies, science, art, P.E. etc...) You will choose a concept from one of the subject areas and work with a partner (or alone) to develop a short lesson which connects that subject area to the book. We'll run all our activities for the whole group. This serves as a tactile example of using some theme/concept as a center of gravity as well as an exercise in collaborative planning.

Journals

Writing regularly and for a wide variety of purposes is the single most effective route to improving fluency and quality of writing. The most effective teachers of writers are writers themselves. Teachers who write are better teachers of writers than their peers who do not write. The one requirement for all

writers, great and small, remains simple: Writers write. Regular, daily practice is the proven route to more fluent, clear and coherent writing. Through journals we (and our students) develop fluency and confidence. Thus, have a special notebook where entries can be made and dated (out of class entries may be typed or word processed, but must be dated.) We will be writing in class for a variety of purposes throughout the semester. Additionally you will be responsible for instigating five entries per week (5-10 minutes of freewriting minimum).

Much of the writing will serve as focus and fulcrum for the exploration and development of concepts critical to the course. You will use your journals to 'try out' writing tasks you and your peers create, respond to information and ideas related to the course, brainstorm, rant, free associate, record, and any of the limitless other whimsical notions which shall occur to you. Additionally, consider ways to make journal writing workable for use in your own classrooms. Attend to what is hard about the task for you. Imagine ways to make it easier for your students. Make the task useful to yourself. Don't drop the ball. This task is evaluated purely on volume as a pass/no pass deal: do it and you get an A for the task, fall short and you don't pass the task. Please initial here to illustrate your active cognition of this essential information.
