

READ 3420
READING INSTRUCTION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Fall 2008

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I. Overview of the Course

READ 3420, Reading Instruction in the Elementary School, is part of a four-course sequence in literacy instruction for prospective elementary teachers at the University of Georgia. The other three courses include the following: (1) READ 3430, Reading Assessment in the Elementary School; (2) ELAN 3110, Children’s Literature and Oral Language; and (3) ELAN 4120, Language and Literacy. Though the content of all four courses should be considered as complementary and integrated, this course in particular will focus on the principles behind effective reading instruction and will provide practical strategies for the classroom based on these principles.

II. Course Objectives

A professional, knowledgeable, and caring teacher is vital to students’ success. It is my intention that you leave the class with the following understandings, skills, and attributes:

- a sense of the importance of early literacy instruction, along with the importance of your role as a teacher in building young people’s literacy
- a commitment to lifelong learning from your students, from your colleagues, from reflection, and from professional development in the area of literacy
- foundational knowledge regarding principles behind effective reading instruction, including a knowledge of phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension
- foundational knowledge of different theories of reading, including sociocultural theories that stress the importance of valuing students’ interests, cultures, experiences, and languages and actively connecting them to literacy learning

III. Required Readings

Tompkins, G. E. (2006). *Literacy for the 21st century: A balanced approach* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Georgia Department of Education. *Georgia Performance Standards*. Available online at:
<http://www.georgiastandards.org/>

International Reading Association. (1998). *Phonemic awareness and the teaching of reading: A position statement from the board of directors of the International Reading Association*. Available online at:
http://www.reading.org/downloads/positions/ps1025_phonemic.pdf

International Reading Association. (1997). *The role of phonics in reading instruction: A position statement from the International Reading Association*. Available online at:
http://www.reading.org/downloads/positions/ps1018_phonics.pdf

Stahl, S. (1992). Saying the “P” word: Nine guidelines for exemplary phonics instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, 45(8), 618-625.

IV. Course Content

Date	Topic	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Class 1: August 21	Introductions and Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">● review course content● importance of early literacy and excellence in literacy instruction● balanced approaches to literacy: immersion and explicit instruction● finding materials		

Class 2: August 28 8:00 a.m.	Philosophies and Approaches to Reading; Effective Teaching; Motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • qualities and characteristics of effective literacy teachers • models and philosophies of reading • affective dimensions of literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tompkins, Chapter 1 • Georgia Performance Standards for English Language Arts for the grade level you are interested in teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussion board (first posting due August 26)
Class 3: September 4	Pre-readers; Phonemic Awareness; Phonics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building literacy even before students read • phonemic awareness: what it is and how to teach it • phonics: what it is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tompkins, Chapter 3, pp. 75-96 • Tompkins, Chapter 4 pp. 110-124 • “Phonemic Awareness and the Teaching of Reading,” IRA’s position statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussion board (first posting due September 2) • group instructional procedures activity (three groups)
Class 4: September 11	Phonics and Spelling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaching phonics • spelling and word recognition development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tompkins, Chapter 4 pp. 124-148 • “The role of phonics in reading instruction”: IRA’s position statement • Stahl article 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussion board (first posting due September 9) • group instructional procedures activity (three groups)
Class 5: September 18	Comprehension Instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategy instruction: pre-reading, during reading, and post-reading • text selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tompkins, Chapter 7, 8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussion board (first posting due September 16) • group instructional procedures activity (three groups)
Class 6: September 25	Vocabulary Instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selecting and reinforcing words • explicit instruction and immersion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tompkins, Chapter 6 • Read Georgia Performance Standards in one content area for the grade level you are teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • post <i>activity plan</i>: <i>comprehension instruction</i> on the discussion board (activity plan due Sept. 23; response due Sept. 25)
Class 7: October 2	Content Area Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making literacy instruction support content-oriented objectives • multimodality: “reading” diagrams, demonstrations, nature, videos, number/symbol combinations, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tompkins, Chapter 2, 14 • Read Georgia Performance Standards in one content area for another grade level you are teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • post <i>activity plan</i>: <i>vocabulary instruction</i> on the discussion board (first posting due September 30)
Class 8: October 9	Fluency and Sight Words <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaching high frequency words • fluency: what, why, and how 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tompkins, Chapter 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • post <i>activity plan</i>: <i>content-area literacy instruction</i> OR <i>phonics instruction</i> on the discussion board (first posting due October 7)
October 16	FIELD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teach a literacy-enhancing activity and post reflection on discussion board (first posting due on October 14)
October 23	FIELD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teach a literacy-enhancing activity and post reflection on discussion board (first posting due on October 21)
October 30	FIELD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teach a literacy-

			enhancing activity and post reflection on discussion board (first posting due on October 28)
November 6	FIELD		● teach a literacy-enhancing activity and post reflection on discussion board (first posting due on November 4)
Class 9: November 13	Integrating Instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● planning units ● reading/writing workshop ● shared reading, guided reading, independent reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tompkins Chapter 3, pp. 96-109 ● Tompkins, Chapter 13 	● post one <i>revised activity plan</i> (first posting due November 11)
Class 10: November 20	Working within Institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● using basal reading programs ● using/supplementing available materials ● involving parents and the community ● continuing professional development ● collaborating with paraprofessionals and other teachers ● maintaining personal and professional integrity 	● Tompkins, Chapter 10, 11	● post <i>unit outline</i> on discussion board (first posting due on November 18)
November 27	Fall Break		
Class 11: December 4	Special Topics Selection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● critical literacy ● writing instruction ● online reading and writing ● leading whole-class and small-group discussions ● ??? other subjects that interest you 	<i>readings will be given to you on November 13 based on your area of interest</i>	Literacy Handbook Due
December 11	Final Exam from 3:30 to 6:30		
Monday, December 15	Course Evaluations and Final Reflections Due		

V. Description of Assignments

(1) **Discussion board:** On WebCT each week, you will be expected to post a 300-400 word response (about three paragraphs) to that week's readings. Along with incorporating the main ideas from the readings, this response might include the following:

- (1) questions you have about the readings
- (2) ideas for implementing the principles from the readings into your own classroom practice
- (3) descriptions of teachers you've seen who have implemented what you've read about
- (4) ideas you disagree with

The first posting to the discussion board will be due two days prior to class to enable people to read and respond to it. The second posting will be due by noon on the day of class. In the second posting, you will answer your colleagues' questions, brainstorm and share ideas with them, recommend activities, and more. This second posting should be 200-300 words, or about two paragraphs.

Notice that, while you are in the field, you are not required to do any textbook readings. You are, however, still required to post to the discussion board. In these postings, you will answer the following questions: (1) What literacy-promoting activity did you implement? (2) How did you implement this activity? (In other words, please provide a step-by-step

description of what you did.) (3) What did you do beforehand to prepare for this activity? (4) What skill did you intend to build by asking your students to do this activity? (5) What went well when you did this activity? (6) What do you think the students learned, and how do you know they learned it? (7) What would you do differently next time? (8) Overall, what did you learn by doing this activity? *Note: these postings will be longer than three paragraphs since you are not doing any readings on these weeks.*

(2) **Group instructional procedures activity:** With your group, you will choose an instructional procedure from the *Compendium* in your Tompkins book, beginning on page 467. With your group members, you will implement one of these activities with content that aligns with the Georgia Performance Standards. This mini-lesson should take no more than 15 to 20 minutes. During and after the presentation, be prepared to answer the following question: (1) Why did you do this activity? In other words, how would this activity help to build students' literacy and their understanding of a particular body of content? (2) For which grade would you use this activity? (3) What preparation was required of you to make this activity successful? Afterward, be prepared to discuss and reflect on what went well and what you could do differently.

(3) **Activity plan:** We will discuss principles for effective comprehension instruction, content-area literacy instruction, fluency instruction, phonics instruction, vocabulary instruction, and more. After we discuss each set of principles, you will apply them by designing an instructional activity based on the Georgia Performance Standards for the grade level you are teaching. Rubrics and examples will be provided for each activity plan the week before it is due.

(4) **Revised activity plan:** After you are done with your teaching, and after you have received feedback from your colleagues and the instructor, you will choose one of your previous activity plans and revise it on

(4) **Unit outline:** Although we will often address components of reading as though they are separate entities, in reality, they are all interconnected. In this unit outline, you will choose a particular content area from the Georgia Performance Standards, design a unit outline on this content, and show how you would incorporate fluency instruction, vocabulary instruction, comprehension instruction, writing instruction, and—if applicable—phonics instruction into this unit. Rubrics and examples will be provided before the final unit outline is due.

(5) **Literacy handbook:** At the end of class each day, you will be asked to summarize and reflect on the key points that you've learned. At the end of the semester, you will compile all of these pages, along with the instructional activities and the unit outline you have already designed, into a *literacy handbook*. I will then make copies of the activities and unit outlines that your classmates have created and give them to you to put into your own handbook when I return it to you. That way, you will have a wealth of resources to bring with you as you begin your elementary teaching career. A rubric will be provided for the handbook before it is due.

VI. Class Attendance, Participation, and Professionalism

Because much of the course content will be covered through discussion, demonstrations, and activities, attendance is crucial for a full understanding of course material. Therefore, attendance will be a factor in computing your grade. Five points will be subtracted from your grade for each unexcused absence. For an absence to be considered excused, please email the instructor before class with a valid reason for missing class and be responsible for completing the work for that day. Unexcused tardies will result in two points subtracted from your grade.

It is important to be aware of the professional nature of the field you are entering: Parents and caregivers entrust to elementary teachers their most precious possessions—their children. As a result, teachers have a tremendous responsibility involving the care and education of the children in their classes. During the field experience, you will have opportunities to develop professional behaviors that include: (a) being prepared and timely when fulfilling all instructional responsibilities; (b) interacting with children in a warm, respectful, and professional manner; (c) communicating with parents clearly, honestly, and tactfully; (d) maintaining the confidentiality of information about students and families you teach (use first name pseudonyms, not actual names, when referring to students in class or written materials); (e) cooperating with colleagues through planning and instruction; and (f) putting forth the greatest effort possible to enable the children you teach to develop intellectually, emotionally, and socially.

VII. Academic Honesty

Please be aware of and comply with the UGA "Academic Honesty Policy (A Culture of Honesty)", which can be found at http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/culture_honesty.htm. All academic work must meet the standards

contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

VIII. Health Concerns

Students with a disability or a health-related issue who need accommodations should make an appointment to speak with the instructor as soon as possible.

VIX. Grades

Assignment	Available Points
Discussion Boards: Text Readings (x 4)	16 (4 per discussion board)
Discussion Boards: Field Placement Reflections (x 4)	40 (10 per discussion board)
Group Instructional Procedure Activity	6
Activity Plan (x 3)	24 (8 per activity plan)
Revised Activity Plan	8
Unit Outline	10
Literacy Handbook	16
Final Exam	10
Participation	20
Course Evaluation and Final Reflection	3 (extra credit)
Total Points	150

Grading Scale

A: 94-100 A-: 90-93 B+: 86-89 B: 82-85 B-: 78-81 C+: 74-77 C: 69-73

Any score at or below a 68 percent is a C- or lower.

Additional Notes: Deviations to the syllabus may be required. Also, to give credit where credit is due, I borrowed much of the *Class Attendance, Participation, and Professionalism* section from Nancy Edwards.