

READ 3530
Course Framework
Reading Across Content Areas
Spring 2003
Room 319

Contact Information

Bob Fecho

309J Aderhold

Office Phone: 706 542 4615 Secretaries: 706 542 2718 Fax: 706 542 3817

bfecho@coe.uga.edu (This is the best way to contact me)

Home phone: 706 548 0982 (Between the hours of 8:00 AM & 10 PM and only when all other attempts at communication have been exhausted)

Consultation Hours: The hour before and the hour after class are the best bets for scheduling appointments to talk, although other times can be scheduled.

Session Dates, Times, & Place

January 14, 21, 28

February 4, 11, 18, 25

Room 319

March 4, 11, 25

April 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

12:30 – 3:15

Our Common Task and What It Means for Us

By registering for this class, you have either tacitly or overtly asked the following question: What does it mean to teach and use reading as a way for constructing knowledge in content areas? By the end of this course, we all should leave with a deeper and more personal understanding of what reading looks like in and how it transacts with the teaching of math, social studies, language arts, and science. But the key question is just how will we accomplish that. What do we need to do as a group to make this happen?

That is our mutual task as a small learning community: trying to figure out how we can investigate that question and deciding upon the kinds of work that will both further our understanding as it helps express and share what we are coming to know. What are the questions we need to ask? What kinds of activities do we need to do?

Bottom Line Assumptions

- We have an overarching and focus questions to get us started
- We know we must produce useful products that will both further and display our understanding of these questions by the end of the course.
- In between, we know we must use our time together in productive ways to help us investigate our question and arrive at some endcourse understanding.
- In order to make this happen, three agendas will be in constant transaction: those of the students, the teacher, and the stakeholders beyond the classroom (e. g., the university, state education departments, etc.).
- We have the capacity, the will, and the time to negotiate these agendas in order to come to a deeper understanding of this question.
- The capacity, the will, and the time are all somewhat limited dimensions

Course Description

This course will investigate the theories, research, practices, pedagogies, issues, perspectives and complexities of teaching and using reading across content areas. In doing so, course members will take inquiry stances on the subject and develop personal understandings of the material. The classwork will call upon student personal experience, expectations, research and theories about the subject matter as well as upon the experiences, expectations, research, and theories of those working in the field. These efforts will culminate in projects that will expand our individual and collective knowledge base of the subject matter. Although effort will be made to give a broad sense of middle school content area reading, this course will encourage depth of focus and personal investment. At base, the more you put into this course, the more you will get out. In addition, all participants will be encouraged to interrogate their current beliefs about teaching and learning literacy and should be able to document the ways that this course has changed, expanded, or deepened those beliefs.

Course Cautions

Because I advocate an inquiry-based pedagogy and because I intend to practice what I preach, the course framework that follows is just that--a framework. The work of our collective inquiry will flesh out and extend this skeleton in ways that reflect our individual and mutual interests. The framework we start with will not be the framework we end up with. Therefore, understand that anything written here could change as the course progresses, knowing that such change would come only as the result of class negotiation and, hopefully, with adequate warning.

Because parts of this course are left open for negotiation, you need to become comfortable with uncertainty. In some ways, this framework is very explicit, but at other times it remains open for possibility. The positive side of this openness is that the course builds from our needs and reflects the vision of all the stakeholders. The down side is that we enter the course with a few more question marks than many students are used to or are comfortable with. My request is to trust the process. I feel it's worth sacrificing some up front specificity in order to construct a course that more nearly fits the needs of its participants.

Also, an inquiry-based course is built upon questioning, honesty, and trust. I value discussions where people disagree, but listen to what others say and grow from the difference. A key concept of this course is the need for people to self and other interrogate. What I mean by that is each of us should not only call into question the stances of the texts we read and those of our fellow learners, but also our own stances. Therefore nothing should be taken at face value, not even our own beliefs. We should see this course as an opportunity for making the familiar strange and the strange familiar.

To do so, we need to take honest stances and to say what we believe and not what we think others want us to say. However, we also have to consider the values, concerns, and time of others. Therefore critique should be issue-oriented and not personal in intent. Responders should feel free to make sense as they speak, but to not monopolize the time of the group. On the other hand, we all need to be able to hear critique as an enabler of change and not as personal attacks. I promise to reward quality of argument and not how much the argument agrees with my perspective.

Finally I tend to fall behind schedule. I could keep up with the schedule as announced, but that would mean cutting short interesting and useful discussions, as well as ignoring ideas that get generated by the class. So I prefer allowing for depth, breadth, and student input rather than just covering a plan. My advice is to stay up with the schedule and just refresh yourself with the readings if we get behind.

The Importance of Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening

The course will make a better case for what I will mention here, but it is important from the onset that we all understand how these literacy components play out in the course and why. Because this course is about literacy and we expect teachers to take larger professional roles in the academic community, I expect to see sophistication and growth in these literacy components. To put this in perspective, I believe there are no perfect writers. Toni Morrison has a Nobel Prize, but she will be the first to tell you that she works to improve her writing. Unless we can interpret our own experience and that of others through the reading of various texts and then synthesize those interpretations into our own theory of education, we who teach will be unable to take control of our own classrooms and will not be able to help others do that for themselves. I will do all we can in the various assessment activities to give you feedback that will help you to further develop your ability to use these literacy components. All I ask is that you come with a willingness to learn, to interrogate your own beliefs, and to interrogate the beliefs of others.

Course Expectations

After taking this course, students should be better able. . .

- To understand the importance of using reading as a means to further understanding in content areas like math, science, social studies, and language arts.
- to express their theories regarding content area literacy pedagogy, to call upon substantive personal experience and educational literature to support those theories and to access a repertoire of generic activities that grow from and transact with those theories.
- to sketch the major issues in content area literacy pedagogy and to air their views on the topics with substance and depth.
- to coordinate an integrative plan for content area literacy curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- to reflect upon their own practice through systematic and intentional inquiry and to think and act more like teachers who take an inquiry stance on their classrooms.
- To see the possibilities of their practice through an inquiry lens

General Educational Philosophy

- Everyone has a right to an education
- No one has a right to deny anyone an education
- Each class member has a responsibility for his or her own education
- Each class member has a responsibility for the education of all others in the class
- Depth and breadth of understanding generally supercede coverage of material
- What one believes is fairly useless unless we understand why and how also

What This Course Isn't

This course IS NOT . . .

- a place where you will learn all there is to know about content area reading
- a hodge-podge of teaching gadgets, props, and gee-whiz activities
- consumed with coverage
- about leaving thoughts uninterrogated, stances unchallenged, and lives unexamined
- a place where we will tell you what to think and know
- about merely replicating the way you've probably been taught many times in the past
- about merely replicating the way you've probably taught in the past

Course Questions

Overarching Question

- **What does it mean to teach and use reading as a way for constructing knowledge in content areas**

Group Focus Questions

1. What role has reading played in my life and the lives of others and what does that mean for my future classroom?
2. How important is reading for young adolescents?
3. What should be considered when teaching and using reading with young adolescents?
4. What is my evolving theory of teaching and learning reading, why do I support it and what is hopeful and problematic about this theory?
5. What role could reading play in my classroom and what specific classroom activities would support my evolving theory.
6. What are the issues that confront content area teachers as they try to use reading to further learning of their content?
7. What further questions are evoked by my exploration of these questions

Core Readings

Albright, J., Purohit, K. & Walsh, C. (2002). Louise Rosenblatt seeks QtAznBoi@aol.com for LTR: Using chat rooms in interdisciplinary middle school classrooms. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 45 (8), 692-705.

Allen, J. & Labbo, L. (2001). Giving it a second thought: Making culturally engaged teaching culturally engaging. *Language Arts*, 79 (1), 40-52.

Blachowicz, C. & Fisher, P. (2002). Vocabulary in the classroom: A theoretical and practical perspective. In *Teaching vocabulary in all classrooms* 2nd edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Beach, R. & Myers, J. (2001). A practice-oriented curriculum for inquiry into social worlds. In *Inquiry-based English instruction. Engaging students in life and literature*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). Literacy and intrinsic motivation. *Daedalus*, 119, 115-140.

- Fecho, B. (1998a). Learning with April. *The Quarterly of the National Writing Project*, 20 (1), 18-19.
- Fecho, B. (1998b) Chalkdust. *PhilWP Update*, 11(2), 2, 6.
- Fecho, B. (in press). Refusing to go along with the joke. In *Running loose in harness: Reading, writing, and inquiring with urban adolescents*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Freire, P. (1983). The importance of the act of reading. *Journal of Education*, 165, 1, 5-11.
- Guthrie, J. & Anderson, E. (1999). Engagement in reading: Processes of motivated, strategic, knowledgeable, social readers. In J. Guthrie & D. Alvermann (Eds.). *Engaged reading: Processes, practices, and policy implications*. New York; Teachers College Press.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching!: The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice*, 34 (3), 159-165.
- Langer, J. with Close, E., Angelis, J. & Preller, P. (2000). *Guidelines for teaching middle and high school students to read and write well: six features of effective instruction*. Albany, NY: National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement.
- Nieto, S. (1999). Culture and learning. In *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural communities*, 47-71. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Schoenbach, R., Greenleaf, R., Cziko, C., & Hurvitz, R. (1999). *Reading for understanding*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
- Wilhelm, J. (1998). Big stuff at the middle level: The real world, real reading, and right action. In R. Bamford & J. Kristo (Eds.). *Making facts come alive: Choosing quality nonfiction literature K-8*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

Project 3 must contain references to two readings that pertain to your work other than these cited above. Those readings can be articles, chapters, or whole books. You can find them on your own online, at the library or at a bookstore, but you can also visit my office and access my files.. If looking for articles, I prefer you use journals of the major professional organizations (e.g., NCTE: *Research in the Teaching of English*, , *Language Arts*, *English Journal*; IRA: *Reading Research Quarterly*, *The Reading Teacher*; NRC: *Journal of Literacy Research*; NCTM: *Mathematics Teacher*, *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School*; NCSS: *Social Education*, *Middle Level Learning*; NARST: *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*). Three strong general educational journals are *Harvard Educational Review*, *Educational Leadership*, or *Teachers College Record*.

Literacy Domains

These domains will act as a frame for the course, providing you with lenses with which to view readings, discussions, and your own experience. We believe that any substantial look at literacy needs to involve all six domains. They are not discrete and do transact with each other. However they will remain as background for this course.

Sociocultural (What are T & S bringing & encountering?)

What do issues of culture, context, politics, & identity have to do with reading?

Curricular (What are T & S reading?)

What counts as useful and substantive material for reading?

Cognitive (What and how are T & S thinking?)

What and how are readers thinking when they read?

Affective (What are T & S feeling?)

What motivates students to see the worth of reading and what discourages students from reading?

Pedagogic (What are T & S doing?)

What can we do within & without classrooms to help students become more thoughtful and critical readers?

Assessment (What are T & S coming to understand?)

What is it we can do within & without classrooms to understand how our students achieve and struggle as readers and to help them to better facilitate their own reading?

Requirements

The work you do in this class is divided into two categories for evaluation: process and product. The **Process Requirements** are those on-going types of activities that help you make daily or weekly meaning of the course. For the most part, your grade is determined here by your participation. In other words, if you do these activities with a serious effort to learn from them, then you will receive full credit. I feel that doing these types of activities helps you to learn more, so I reward you for doing them with serious effort behind them.

Product Requirements, on the other hand, not only must be done, but are held to a higher standard of evaluation. These are performance assessments that grow out of your ongoing process and give us some idea of how well you are coming to grasp the material of the course and how well you express yourself about your growing knowledge base. These projects are both educative and auditive, meaning they will help you to learn, but will also help you to self-evaluate. In addition, merely trying hard is not enough here. The quality of your expression of your knowledge will also be evaluated.

Process Requirements (40% of the final grade)

1) Attendance (10% of final grade)

Being present at 14-15 sessions = a grade of 4

- Being present at 13 sessions = a grade of 3
- Being present at 12 sessions = a grade of 2
- Being present at 11 sessions = a grade of 1
- Being present at fewer than 10 sessions = a grade of 0

2) Data Gathering Processes (Due February 11. 30% of final grade)

A critical inquiry class requires a good deal of support because it generates a multiplicity of texts and ideas. We need ways to manage the many threads of learning that emerge, to remain connected as a community, and to develop a range of perspectives. Therefore the following three processes are designed to help you learn as well as to give us feedback about what you are coming to know.

For Processes A, B, C, select three different activities from the list below.

- Interview one person of your generation and one person from an older generation about how they see themselves as a reader and the role reading has played in their lives.
- Interview an avid middle school reader and interview a reluctant middle school reader about how they see themselves as a reader and the role reading has played in their lives.
- Complete a reading inventory by keeping a log of everything you read in one day or follow someone and track their reading
- Sit in a public place and describe people's reading habits
- Interview a teacher who enjoys reading and one who doesn't about the ways they use reading in the classroom and in their lives
- Read biographical writing in order to understand the role reading played in the lives of the person who is the subject of the piece
- Interview people about their reading habits
- Write a few chapters of your own literacy memoir
- Read something of length that you've never read before and keep a journal of your own reading process
- Read something that represents a reading challenge to you and keep a journal of your own reading process
- Come up with an idea of your own for looking more closely at how reading plays out in our lives. I suggest, however, that you check with me before following up on your idea.

Process A due 1/28. Process B due 2/4. Process C due 2/11. Bring to class & be ready to share in small groups

The following rubric will be used to grade these three processes:

- 4 = All deadlines were met and work showed serious purpose and thought
- 3 = Only one or two deadlines were missed, but serious purpose and thought went into the work
- 2 = Many deadlines were missed or little serious purpose or thought went into the work
- 1 = Many deadlines were missed and little serious purpose and thought evidenced
- 0 = One, two or all three processes went undone

Product Requirements (60% of the final grade)

1) Project #1 (Due February 18. Worth 20% of final grade)

Based upon data collected through the three data gathering processes, readings and discussions in class, and your own experiences, develop a suitable format to illustrate the following:

- What you've learned through the data about the ways reading transacts in our lives and the degree of importance reading holds for a range of people.
- What all this might mean for your future classroom

2) Project #2 (Due April 1. Worth 20% of your final grade)

In a format that proves useful and based upon Project 1, our readings and discussions to date and your own data gathering and experience, make an argument by providing evidence of the following:

- Summary connection to Project 1
- What, from your perspective, should be considered when teaching and using reading with young adolescents? Why?
- A description of your evolving theory of teaching and learning reading?
- A rationale for supporting this theory
- A discussion of what is hopeful and problematic about this theory?

3) Project #3 (Due May 5. Worth 20% of your final grade)

In a format that proves useful and based upon Projects 1 and 2, our readings and discussions to date and your own data gathering and experience, make an argument by providing evidence of the following:

- Summary connection to Project 2
- The role reading could play in your classroom
- Specific classroom activities that would support your evolving theory
- A rationale for these theory and practice connections
- A discussion of issues that confront content area teachers who use reading
- What questions and directions all this work points you toward

Grading

It is important to understand that although completing all the work is both useful and necessary, such completion alone does not necessarily qualify anyone for an A. It is necessary to satisfy the quantity requirements of this course, but it is equally important to satisfy the quality requirements also. Work that merits a grade of A must be pushed to levels of excellence. Work that is good merits a grade of B and so on down the line. When you complete work, you need to take that work to task. Is it original in thought? Does it develop ideas with depth? Does it use language with facility? Does it make unique, interesting, and practical assertions that are backed by substantive and thoughtful research? Does it have potential to be published outside the confines of this course? Does it have impact? Does it make the reader take notice? If so, then your work is in the ballpark of excellence.

All work in this class will be graded on a 0-4 scale with 0 representing little or no effort and 4 representing excellent effort. Individual rubrics will be provided for each assignment at appropriate times prior to that assignment. Averages will be computed based on the percentages assigned above. Due to the limited scale, all averages are rounded DOWN to the nearest tenth. Letter grades will be assigned by the following scale:

3.5—4.0	A	3.0—3.4	B	2.5—2.9	C
2.0—2.4	D	0—1.9	F		

General Rubric

- Depth and Organization of Thought and Expression 20 %
Includes the specificity with which arguments are supported, the logical flow of the language and ideas, the sequencing of details, and the aptness of the detail. The detail is organized in such a way that it deepens the grasp of the subject matter and delves beneath the surface. We're looking for work that asserts and deepens perspectives through clear and useful anecdotal and referenced support.
- Originality of Thought & Expression 20 %
Includes deft and interesting use of language, deft and interesting insight into matters discussed, deft and interesting connections, and deft and interesting patterns of thought. We're looking for work that feels original in thought and execution.
- Synthesis of Ideas 20 %
Includes the way the ideas in the text come together as a whole, the way the text includes and rethinks the work of the class, and the way the text includes and rethinks the readings, assigned and otherwise, of the class. We're looking for writing that takes the ideas of the class and makes new meaning rather than merely rehashing.
- Mechanics 20 %
Includes spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, usage, writing conventions such as title pages and page numbers, physical presentation, pronunciation, presence, correctness of detail, completion of all tasks, and use of APA formatting where applicable. We're looking for work that shows a professional's care for all aspects of a final product.
- Connection to Expectations 20 %
Includes the depth that the work provides testimony for the evidence expected as well as energy and seriousness of effort that was brought to execution of the work. We're looking for work that completes what it sets out to do with vigor and engagement.

Grading Scale

Each component of the rubric counts as an equal fraction of the total grade for that project and will be assessed on a 4-0 scale as follows:

4 = Superior Evidence Shown

The work shows clear evidence that the writer went beyond the expectation of competent effort by taking the care and effort to distinguish the work as an original, complex, and vigorous example of that criterion. It fulfills its potential given the limits of production and has impact.

3 = Useful Evidence Shown

The work is useful and clearly reflects an ethos of care and concern in terms of fulfilling the needs of the criterion, but doesn't necessarily distinguish itself beyond the expectations of a competently crafted piece. It shows good intention and effort, but lacks impact.

2 = Adequate Evidence Shown

The work fulfills minimum quality standards for the criterion, but shows little enthusiasm or intention to do more. It promises more than it delivers.

1 = Little Evidence Shown

The work does little to fulfill minimum quality standards for the criterion.

0 = No Evidence Shown

The work shows no evidence of any effort to fulfill the criterion

Submission of Work

Hard Copies of work should be turned in during class or in the reading department offices during normal working hours (8 AM – 5 PM, M-F). In class, give the work directly to me. In the department offices (Suite 309), give the work to a secretary or you can give it to me if I'm in my office and not occupied with colleagues or other students. Don't just put it in my mailbox or slide it under the door after hours. The chances of it getting lost are too great if those two methods are taken.

Electronic copies are fine with me as long as the following criteria are adhered to:

- The work is sent as a Microsoft Word or Power Point attachment
- The work arrives by midnight of the deadline

Taking Notes

There is little lecture format in this class. Therefore you will need to take notes differently. Here are our suggestions.

- Keep a Generic Activities section in your notebook, so when different activities are demonstrated, you can note how they were done and have all these notes in one place.
- Keep a Running Questions section in your notebook. Many ideas will get started during sessions, but not brought to resolution. As we continue to discuss these ideas, you can keep running questions, comments, and other notes centralized in one place.
- Have your notebook out at all times.
- Take notes on things that your peers say.
- Take notes whenever we do an activity that pulls broad discussions together.
- Make a point of going back over your notes and other class writings routinely and considering what is being said about practice and theory. In short, do your own pulling together. A split-page format facilitates this.

Notification of Teacher Research

As a Teacher Researcher, Dr. Fecho routinely collects, analyzes, interprets and reports on data as it concerns his courses. This allows him to improve the way he teaches as well as to add to the body of knowledge we know about critical inquiry pedagogy. Normal observation, recording of sessions and teacher/student exchanges, teacher-initiated journals and field notes, and samples of student work are all within the realm of access by the teacher for research purposes, since they constitute accepted practice for understanding the nature of pedagogy. Any students who prefer that their work in this class not be considered for purposes of research should indicate so in writing to Dr. Fecho, who is also available and willing to answer all questions about such research.

Course Protocol

This course brings certain unique considerations. Since we run three hour sessions feel free to bring food and drink with you and to eat it in class. All I ask is that we deal with any mess we make. I personally find breaks counterproductive because they destroy momentum and flow, so we will run two hours and thirty minutes straight and end each session fifteen minutes early. If you need to visit the restroom, smoke a cigarette or just get some distance from a discussion, take a few minutes to do so. However please try to limit these moments when you leave the room to transitions in the class, of which there should be several, and try to return as quickly as possible. For those of you who find these chairs uncomfortable and need to stretch, stand, pace the back of the room, or even lie on the floor, feel free to do so.

Also, due to the intense nature of the course, absences and lateness will prove problematic for both you and the dynamics of discussion. Try to be present and on time so we can get the most out of our group inquiry in the limited time we have. Finally, I do all I can to start and end on time. It is rare that I will run past our end time and equally rare that class doesn't begin within five minutes of our start time.

Notes

General Course Framework

This framework is a tool and is in no way definitive. It is intended to provide a sense of the scope of the course as it was originally conceived. However, any course based upon critical inquiry principles should be responsive to the needs of the participants and is, therefore, subject to change, which is also why some cells below have been left empty.

The course is divided into three areas of focus: The role of writing in our lives (first five weeks); An investigation of the range of sound reading theory (second five weeks); Connection reading theory to content area classrooms (last five weeks).

Week & Frames	Focus Question	Class Activities	Readings	Projects & Processes
January 14	What do we understand about ourselves and our relationships with the focus questions?			
January 21	What happens when we call basic assumptions about school into question?	Unpack the course framework	Course Framework; Fecho (1998a & b)	
January 28	What role has reading played in your life and the lives of others and what does that mean for your future classroom?	Mucking with data	Freire	Process A
February 4	How important is reading for young adolescents?	Mucking with data	Schoenbach et al Chap 1	Process B
February 11		Mucking with the data		Process C
February 18	What should be considered when teaching and using reading with young adolescents?		Schoenbach et al Chap 2 & Chap 3	Project 1

Week & Frames	Access Question	Class Activities	Readings	Projects & Processes
February 25			Langer; Blachowicz & Fisher	
March 4	What does it mean to motivate and engage students?		Csikszentmihalyi ; Schoenbach et al Chap 4	
March 11			Guthrie & Anderson, Fecho Chapter 8	
March 25	What role does culture play in the teaching of reading?		Nieto, Ladson-Billings, Allen & Labbo	
April 1	What are some concrete ways to embed reading in content area classrooms?		Albright et al; Beach & Myers; Wilhelm	Project 2
April 8	What role could reading play in my classroom and what specific classroom activities would support my evolving theory.		Schoenbach et al Chap 5 & 6	
April 15			Schoenbach et al Chap 7 & Chap 8	
April 22				
April 29	What have we come to understand at this juncture?	Course Discussion		Project 3 (Due May 5)