

**University of Texas at El Paso**  
**RED 3342-005 – Content Area Literacy (CRN 23591)**  
**Spring 2014**

Instructor: Dr. Amy Bach

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Office hours: Tues 3-5pm, Thurs 10-12pm or by appt.

Thursdays, 12:30-3:20pm

Location: Education 312

**Course description:**

Methods and materials for developing maturity in reading and study skills, especially in the content areas from K-12. Special emphasis is given to the development of interest, the matching of students to proper materials, and instructional techniques for integrating the teaching of skills with the teaching of content. Field experience required.

**Course objectives:**

RED 3342 provides an overview of literacy instruction in the content areas, with an emphasis on grades 4-12. This core course incorporates the Texas Examinations of Educators Standards (TExES) standards for grades 4-8 and 8-12. The TExES standards are closely aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), which can be downloaded at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=6148>. This course will provide numerous opportunities to connect theories of reading and writing with both the TExES standards as well as the TEKS. Core course include the following TExES Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) EC-12 competencies:

- Plans instruction and ongoing assessments that motivates students and are responsive to their developmental characteristics and needs (PPR I, Competency 1).
- Plans learning experiences and designs assessments that are responsive to differences among students and that promote all students' learning (PPR I, Competency 2).
- Designs effective and coherent instruction and assessment based on appropriate learning goals and objectives (PPR I, Competency 3).
- Plans effective, engaging instruction and appropriate assessments (PPR I, Competency 4).
- Applies principles and strategies for communicating effectively in varied teaching and learning contexts (PPR I, III; Technology Applications I-V, Competency 7).
- Monitors student performance and achievement; provides students with timely, high quality feedback; and responds flexibly to promote learning for all students (PPR I, III; Technology Applications I-V, Competency 10).

**Student learning outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Develop and apply a meaningful understanding of literacy in the content areas through the creation of sample activities, lesson plans, and inquiry units (TExES Language Arts and Reading 8-12 Standard I);
2. Examine ways to work with students to become critical, empowered, and engaged readers and writers;
3. Select and use a variety of media and texts, including trade books, textbooks, videos, and other forms of technology, in order to engage students in content area literacy (TExES Language Arts and Reading 8-12 Standard IV);
4. Creates an effective bilingual and multicultural learning environment by demonstrating sensitivity to students' diverse cultural backgrounds and generational/acclimation differences, showing respect for regional language differences, incorporating the diversity of the home into the classroom setting, and applying strategies to bridge the home and school cultural environments (TExES Bilingual Generalist 4-8, Standard I)
5. Evaluate the importance of reading for understanding and apply reading and study strategies for various types of literary and non-literary texts (TExES Language Arts and Reading 4-8 Standard IV; TExES Language Arts and Reading 8-12 Standard II, III);
6. Analyze writing as a recursive, developmental, integrative, and ongoing process and apply this understanding through engagement in the writing process with course assignments (TExES Language Arts and Reading 4-8 Standard V; TExES Language Arts and Reading 8-12 Standard V, VI);
7. Demonstrate word analysis skills and strategies in order to enhance students' vocabulary development and conceptual understanding (TExES Language Arts and Reading 4-8 Standard III; TExES Language Arts and Reading 8-12 Standard VII)
8. Apply inquiry-based approaches to literacy teaching and learning through the development of sample activities, lesson plans, and inquiry units (TExES Language Arts and Reading 4-8 Standard VI);
9. Interpret, analyze, and produce visual images and messages using multiple forms of media and technology and be able to provide opportunities for students to do the same (TExES Language Arts and Reading 4-8 Standard VII; TExES Language Arts and Reading 8-12 Standard IX);
10. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of oral communication by creating ways to foster listening and speaking skills of students through sample activities, lesson plans, and inquiry units (TExES Language Arts and Reading 4-8 Standard I; TExES Language Arts and Reading 8-12 Standard VIII);
11. Apply basic principles of assessment in the development of sample activities, lesson plans and inquiry units (TExES Language Arts and Reading 4-8 Standard VIII).

**Course readings:***Required books:*

Vacca, R.T., Vacca, J.L., and Mraz, M. (2013). Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> Ed. Boston: Pearson. ISBN: 10: 0-13-337625-7 [This book can be purchased at the UTEP bookstore or online through venues such as Amazon.com, half.com, or Barnes and Noble.]

*Recommended book (for Pair Strategy Demonstration):*

Allen, Janet (2004). *Tools for Teaching Content Literacy*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse. ISBN: 1571103805 [This book can be purchased online through venues such as Amazon.com, half.com, or Barnes and Noble.]

*Tradebook Choice:*

Collins, S. (2008). *The Hunger Games*. New York, NY: Scholastic Press.  
ISBN: 13: 978-0-439-02348-1.

Munoz-Ryan, P. (2000). *Espranza Rising*. New York, NY: Scholastic Press.  
ISBN: 13: 978-0-439-12042-5.

Sachar, L. (1998). *Holes*. New York, NY: Random House Children's Books.  
ISBN: 978-0-440-41480-3.

*Required readings (in addition to textbook chapters)*

Week 1

Beers, K. (2003). A defining moment. In Beers, K. *When Kids Can't Read, What Teachers Can Do: A Guide for Teachers 6-12* (pp. 1-7). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Week 2

Freire, P. (1987). The importance of the act of reading. In Freire, P. and Macedo, D. (Eds.), *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World* (pp. 29-36). South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey.

Lenski, S. (2011-12). What RTI means for content area teachers. A commentary from *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 55(4), 276-282.

Schoenbach, R. et al. What is reading? An excerpt from *Reading for Understanding. The Quarterly*, 38-39.

Week 3

Conradi, K., Jang, B.G., Bryant, C, Craft, A. & McKenna, M. C. (2013). Measuring adolescents attitudes toward reading. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 56(7), 565-576.

[Center for Media Literacy: Literacy for the 21st Century](#)

Week 4

Au, K. (2006). Discourses and literacy in the home and community. In *Multicultural issues and literacy achievement* (pp. 37-54). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Brisk, M.E. and Harrington, M.M. (2007). Working effectively with bilingual students. In *Literacy and bilingualism: A handbook for all teachers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (pp. 15-47). Mahwah,

NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Week 6

Allen, Janet (2004). *Tools for Teaching Content Literacy*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Week 7

Allen, J. (2007). Mastering the art of effective vocabulary instruction. In Beers, K., Probst, R.E., & Rief, L., *Adolescent literacy: Turning promise into practice*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Week 13

Daniels, H. et al (2007). Writing to learn. In Daniels, H. et al. (Eds.), *Content-area writing: Every teacher's guide* (pp. 20-29). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Week 14

Wilhelm, J. (2008). Moving toward a reader-centered classroom. In “*You gotta BE the book*”: *Teaching engaged and reflective reading with adolescents* (pp. 22-37). New York: Teachers College.

Week 15

Trade book choice: *The Hunger Games*, *Esperanza Rising* or *Holes* (can be purchased at University Bookstore or online at Amazon.com or other distributors).

Bean, T. W. (2003). Using young adult literature to teach content. North Central Regional Educational Laboratory: Learning Point Associates.

Week 16

Afflerbach, P. (2004). Assessing adolescent reading. In Jetton, T.L. and Dole, J.A. (Eds.), *Adolescent Literacy Research and Practice* (pp. 369-391). New York: Guilford.

Anders, Patricia L. and Guzzetti, B.J. (2005). Content area literacy assessment. *Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas, Second Edition*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

**Course requirements:**

Successful completion of this course will be based on several key elements:

*Discussion postings (40 points)* – To facilitate understanding of and discussion about the reading, you will be expected to do regular discussion postings during the semester. In the posting, you should respond to the prompt posted in Blackboard based on the week's readings. The posting should be at least 300 words in length. In order to have an ongoing exchange of ideas with peers, you will be part of a discussion group with whom you will share your weekly postings. You will be assigned to groups at the beginning of the semester. Your response to the prompt will be due by the **Wednesday** before class by midnight, and you will be expected to respond to one classmate's posting by **Friday** (after class) at midnight. The idea here is to begin generating

a discussion around the readings before coming to class and to continue those discussions after our in-class meetings.

Each discussion posting and peer response will count 4 points (3 points for your posting, 1 point for the peer response). **Points will be deducted for late responses. No responses will be accepted more than a week late.** A rubric for the postings can be found in the appendix.

*Literacy autobiography (10 points)* – As part of this course, you will have the opportunity to reflect on your own literacy history and the ways in which your experience with literacy has influenced your perspective as a pre-service teacher. To that end, I would like you to write a literacy autobiography that contemplates your own experiences with reading and writing. You can use the piece to think about your own origins with literacy and to express your current beliefs about yourself as a reader/writer. The purpose of this assignment is two-fold: (1) to reflect on our own literacy histories and the ways in which those histories influence us now as students and pre-service teachers; and (2) to learn about one another and help build our classroom community. The autobiography should be 3-5 pages, double-spaced in length. Feel free to explore various formats for writing (i.e. short vignettes, poetry, interviews). I will be looking for thoughtfulness and originality in your writing, as well as clarity in communicating yourself and your ideas. A rubric for the autobiography can be found in the appendix.

*Pair strategy demonstration (10 points)* – In order to apply the strategies that we read, learn, and talk about in class, you will work with a partner to develop a strategy demonstration in the content area of your choosing. You can draw on the readings in class, including Janet Allen's *Tools for Teaching Content Literacy*, to develop your strategy. This demonstration can be thought of as a mini-lesson that incorporates a literacy strategy that would normally be part of a larger, more complete lesson. Your demonstration should last between 10-15 minutes, and you should engage your peers in participatory, hands-on learning. On the day of your demonstration, you should provide a one-page handout that includes the following: (1) a short explanation of the strategy and its purposes; (2) the steps used to do the strategy; and (3) ways that the strategy can be adapted to support English language learners. A rubric for the pair strategy demonstration can be found in the appendix.

*Mid-term and Final Exams (30 points total, 15 points each)* – There will be two exams in this course, one mid-term and one final. One key purpose of these exams is to help prepare you for the TExES certification exam that you will be required to take after graduation. The mid-term will cover all readings and class content from the first eight weeks of the course, while the final exam will be comprehensive, covering all readings and class content from the entire semester. Both exams will be on Blackboard and questions will be multiple choice and short answer and will be similar to those found on the TExES/ExCET exam.

*Class Participation (10 points)* In a community of learners, participation in class discussions and collaborative group work is key to our success as learners. I encourage you to ask questions and actively engage in class discussions and tasks. For homework readings, you are given a list of questions for each chapter covered in the course to use for Blackboard Discussion postings. You may want to bring your Discussion postings to class to refer to during discussions and tasks. Participation points will be given for completed tasks submitted in class.

**Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes:**

Assignment	Due Date	Point value	Assessment of Learning Outcomes
Online discussion postings	Ongoing	40 points	Learning Outcomes #1-10
Literacy autobiography	2/19/14	10 points	Learning Outcomes #1,2,5,8
Pair strategy demonstration	4/10/14	10 points	Learning Outcome #4,6
Mid-term and Final Exams	3/27/14-Midterm 5/15/14-Final	30 points	Learning Outcomes #1-10
Class Participation	Ongoing	10 points	Learning Objectives #1-10

**Grading:**

- A 90-100 points
- B 80-89 points
- C 70-79 points
- D 60-69 points
- F Below 59 points

**Attendance Policy:**

Your attendance and active participation are vital to this course. The Teacher Education Department considers missing **two weeks** of class as excessive. The student may be dropped for lack of attendance. If you miss two weeks of class, contact me immediately.

**Disability Policy:**

If you have or believe you have a disability, you may wish to self-identify. You can do so by providing documentation to the Office of Disabled Student Services located in Union E Room 203. Students who have been designated as disabled must reactivate their standing with the Office of Disabled Student Services on a yearly basis. Failure to report to this office will place a student on the inactive list and nullify benefits received. If you have a condition which may affect your ability to exit safely from the premises in an emergency or which may cause an emergency during class, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of Disabled Student Services. You may call 747-5148 for general information about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**Academic Dishonesty:**

Academic dishonesty – which includes cheating, plagiarism, and collusion – is a violation of the norms and ethics of the university community and will not be tolerated.

**Additional Resources:**

Academic journals – The following journals provide valuable information about literacy instruction. Most of them can be found electronically using the UTEP Library website:

*Reading Research Quarterly*

*Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*

*The Reading Teacher*

*Language Arts*

*Anthropology and Education Quarterly*

Websites – These websites are sources of additional information for content area literacy:

International Reading Association – [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)

Reading Online – [www.readingonline.org](http://www.readingonline.org)

National Council for Teachers of English – [www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)

Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts – <https://www.tctela.org>

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics – <http://www.nctm.org>

Texas Council of Teachers of Mathematics – <http://www.utdanacenter.org/tctm>

National Council for the Social Studies – <http://www.ncss.org>

Texas Council for the Social Studies – <http://www.txcss.org>

National Science Teachers Association – <http://www.nsta.org>

Science Teachers Association of Texas – <http://www.statweb.org>

**\*\*Syllabus subject to change\*\***

**Course Schedule:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings/Assignments Due</b>
Jan 23 Week #1	Introductions, Introduction to the course	Beers, A Defining Moment  <b>Post a brief introduction of yourself to your group on Blackboard (BB) by Sunday 1/26 at midnight</b>
Jan 30 Week #2	What is reading? What is literacy? What is content area literacy?	Freire, The Importance of the Act of Reading  Schoenbach, et al. What is Reading?  Lenski, What RTI means for content area teachers  <b>Posting due to discussion group on BB by Wednesday 1/29 at midnight</b>  <b>Peer response due on BB by Friday 1/31 at midnight</b>
Feb 6 Week #3	Literacy in the new millennium	Conradi, et al. Measuring adolescents' attitudes toward reading  Center for Media Literacy: Literacy for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century  Vacca, Vacca, and Mraz, Chs. 1 & 2  <b>Posting due to discussion group on BB by Wednesday 2/5 at midnight</b>  <b>Peer response due on BB by Friday 2/7 at midnight</b>
Feb 13 Week #4	Literacy and cultural/linguistic diversity; Working with English Language Learners	Au, Understanding the gap  Brisk and Harrington, Working effectively with bilingual students  Vacca, Vacca, & Mraz, Ch. 3  <b>Posting due to discussion group on BB by Wednesday 2/12 at midnight</b>  <b>Peer response due on BB by Friday 2/14 at midnight</b>
Feb 20 Week #5	Assessing students and texts	Vacca, Vacca, and Mraz, Ch. 4  <b>Literacy autobiography due by 2/19 at midnight. Email your autobiography as a Word document in an attachment to <a href="mailto:ajbach@utep.edu">ajbach@utep.edu</a>.</b>
Feb 27 Week #6	Planning for content area literacy instruction	Vacca, Vacca, and Mraz, Ch. 5  Allen, <i>Tools for teaching content literacy</i>

		<p><b>Posting due to discussion group on BB by Wednesday 2/26 at midnight</b></p> <p><b>Peer response due on BB by Friday 2/28 at midnight</b></p>
March 6 Week #7	Developing vocabulary and concepts	<p>Allen, Mastering the art of effective vocabulary instruction</p> <p>Vacca, Vacca, and Mraz, Ch. 8</p> <p><b>Posting due to discussion group on BB by Wednesday 3/5 at midnight</b></p> <p><b>Peer response due on BB by Friday 3/7 at midnight</b></p>
March 13	Spring Break	
March 20 Week #8	Activating prior knowledge and interest; Guiding reading comprehension	<p>Vacca, Vacca, and Mraz, Ch. 6 &amp; 7</p> <p><b>Posting due to discussion group on BB by Wednesday 3/19 at midnight</b></p> <p><b>Peer response due on BB by Friday 3/21 at midnight</b></p>
March 27 Week #9	Midterm	Midterm on Blackboard
April 3 Week #10	<b>Instructor presenting at the American Educational Research Association Conference – No Class, however groups meet to prepare Pair Strategy Demonstrations</b>	
April 10 Week #11	Content area reading/study strategies	<p>Vacca, Vacca, and Mraz, Ch. 10</p> <p><b>Pair Strategy Demonstrations</b></p> <p><b>Posting due to discussion group on BB by Wednesday 4/9 at midnight</b></p> <p><b>Peer Response due on BB by Friday 4/11</b></p>
April 17 Week #12	Writing across the curriculum	<p>Daniels et al., Writing to learn</p> <p>Vacca, Vacca, and Mraz, Ch. 9</p> <p><b>Posting due to discussion group on BB by Wednesday 4/16 at midnight</b></p> <p><b>Peer response due on BB by Friday 4/18 at midnight</b></p>
April 24 Week #13	Learning with trade books – Online Class	<p>Wilhelm, Moving toward a reader-centered classroom</p> <p>Vacca, Vacca, and Mraz, Ch. 11</p>

		<p><b>Posting due to discussion group on BB by Wednesday 4/23 at midnight</b></p> <p><b>Peer response due on BB by Friday 4/25 at midnight</b></p>
May 1 Week #14	Integrating trade books into content area literacy instruction	<p>Bean, Using young adult literature to teach content</p> <p><b>Tradebook assignment DUE</b> for Collins, <i>The Hunger Games</i>; Munoz-Ryan, <i>Esperanza Rising</i>; or Sachar, <i>Holes</i></p>
May 8 Week #15	<p>Assessing reading and writing</p> <p>Wrapping up: Key principles and practices</p>	<p>Afflerbach, Assessing adolescent reading</p> <p>Anders and Guzzetti, Content area literacy assessment</p> <p><b>Posting due to discussion group on BB by Wednesday 5/7 at midnight</b></p> <p><b>Peer response due on BB by Friday 5/9 at midnight</b></p>
May 15 Week #16	Exam Week	Final exam on Blackboard

## APPENDIX

### Grading Rubrics for Course Assignments

#### Online Discussion postings (at least 300 words)

Criteria	Possible points	Points earned
Clear, coherent, and well-organized; shows evidence of having read all of the materials	1	
Demonstrates understanding and analysis of the readings; provides details and examples	1	
Makes thoughtful connections across the readings and to life experience and present/future teaching practice	1	
Shows thoughtfulness in peer response(s); adheres to word length (at least 100 words)	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	

#### Literacy autobiography

Criteria	Possible points	Earned points
Focus on assigned topic	2	
Thoughtful and substantive	2	
Clarity and coherence	2	
Originality and creativity	2	
Mechanics (grammar, spelling, punctuation)	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	

**Pair strategy demonstration**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Possible points</b>	<b>Earned points</b>
<b>Explanation of purpose</b>	<i>1</i>	
<b>Explanation of strategy steps</b>	<i>2</i>	
<b>Student engagement</b>	<i>4</i>	
<b>Adaptations for ELLs</b>	<i>2</i>	
<b>Handout/Preparation</b>	<i>1</i>	
<b>Total</b>	<i>10</i>	