

University of Texas at El Paso
RED 5350 (CRN 28171) / BED 5337 (CRN 28170)
Mentoring for Literacy Educators
Spring 2016

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Mondays, 5:30-8:20 pm
Location: EDUC 307

Course Overview:

This course will explore the theory and practice of mentoring, coaching, and teacher development, particularly within the context of literacy education. We will examine topics related to adult learning, feedback practices, professional development, and inquiry-based classroom research. This is a practicum course, where you will be required to engage in hands-on mentoring or coaching in an educational setting for at least ten hours during the semester.

Course Objectives:

The overriding objective of this course is to prepare you to be not only effective mentors and coaches but also effective facilitators of professional development in educational settings. The three primary ways that we will work towards achieving this goal will be through: (1) written reflections on the readings based on your own experiences as a coach or mentor/mentee; (2) the practicum experience; and (3) in-class professional development exercise, where you will work in pairs to practice leading professional development with your peers.

These Course Objectives and accompanying Student Learning Outcomes (listed below) align with the following Texas standard for Master Reading Teachers:

MRT Standard VI: The Master Reading Teacher facilitates appropriate, research-based reading instruction by communicating and collaborating with educational stakeholders; mentoring, coaching, and consulting with colleagues; providing professional development for faculty; and making decisions based on converging evidence from research.

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- (1) Identify and implement effective mentoring and coaching strategies in educational settings;
- (2) Demonstrate an understanding of adult learning and teacher learning processes;
- (3) Show an understanding of the role of teachers' professional knowledge and teachers' reflective practice in effective teaching and learning;
- (4) Analyze and compare different models of teacher development in different educational settings;
- (5) Apply research-based approaches to fostering teacher learning;
- (6) Analyze the different roles played by mentors (guide, coach, consultant, facilitator) and apply problem-solving strategies to teaching/mentoring dilemmas;
- (7) Analyze their own facilitation of peer professional development through video in light of the research on teacher development;
- (8) Employ observation, conferencing, and feedback practices that contribute to teacher growth and development with a chosen mentee;
- (9) Understand and implement collaborative, research-based professional development in educational settings.

Course Readings:

Required texts:

Bean, R.M. (2012). *Best practices for literacy leaders: Keys to school improvement*. New York: Guilford. ISBN: 978-1-60918-941-9. [Available at the UTEP Bookstore under RED 5350 or at online retailers such as Amazon.com or half.com]

Toll, C.A. (2014). *The literacy coach's survival guide: Essential questions and practical answers (2nd ed)*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. ISBN: 978-0-87207-156-8. [Available at the UTEP Bookstore under RED 5350 or at online retailers such as Amazon.com or half.com]

Required articles [can be accessed via Blackboard]:

Allen, D. & Blythe, T. (2015). Facilitating for learning. In *Facilitating for learning: Tools for teacher groups of all kinds*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Athanases, S.V. (2013). Questioning and inquiry in mentoring new teachers of English: A focus on learners. *English Journal*, 102(3), 40-48.

Darling-Hammond, L. & Richardson, N. (2009). Teacher learning: What matters? *Educational Leadership*.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (1998). Teachers as teacher educators. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 21(1), 63-74.

Griffin, S. (2004). I Need People: Storytelling in a Second Grade Classroom. In Brookline Teacher Research Seminar (Ed.), *Regarding Children's Words: Teacher Research on Language and Literacy* (pp. 22-30). New York: Teachers College.

Jonson, K.F. (2002). Passing the torch & Strategies for mentoring. In *Being an Effective Mentor* (pp. 73-116). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Lawler, P. (2003). Teachers as adult learners: A new perspective. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 98, 15-22.

Paley, V.G. (1997). Talking to myself in a daily journal: Reflections of a kindergarten teacher. In *On Becoming a Language Educator: Personal Essays on Professional Development*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Palmer, P. (1998). The heart of a teacher: identity and integrity in teaching. In *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life* (pp. 9-33). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pianta, R.C., La Paro, K.M., and Hamre, B.K. (2008). *Classroom assessment scoring system*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing. [selections]

Zeichner, K.M. and Liston, D.P. (1996). Understanding reflective teaching. In *Reflective teaching: An introduction* (pp. 1-7). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Course requirements:

Successful completion of this course will be based on several key elements, including written syntheses of the readings, a literacy autobiography, a professional development exercise and reflection, and a mentoring/coaching practicum and portfolio. An explanation of each follows:

Reflective Journal (20 points total – 4 points each) – At the heart of this course are the notions of continuous professional learning and reflective practice. One key mechanism for engaging in continuous learning and reflection is through writing –particularly self-reflective writing such as in a journal. As part of this course, we ask that you start (or continue) the practice of informal reflective writing based on events/activities/successes/challenges that transpire in your classroom. We encourage you to keep a hand-written journal in your classroom (or work environment). Over the course of the semester, we ask that you submit 5 reflective journals on certain due dates, mostly in the first half of the term. These submissions can be typed; transcribed from your handwritten journal; or scanned copies of the handwritten journals. The primary audience for these entries is yourself and the course instructor(s); these are not meant to be public writings.

Journals should be written in first person and should: (1) describe an event or activity that took place in your classroom/work setting; and (2) your thoughts and reflections on the event/activity. (Questions that can guide this reflection include: What happened? What can explain what transpired in this event/activity? How did I handle it? What went well? What could I have done differently or better? What will I do next time?) Reflective journal entries can be as long as needed but no shorter than 300 words. They will be due on the Sunday before class on Blackboard on the dates designated in the syllabus.

Reading Responses (20 points total – 5 points each) – To facilitate understanding of and discussion about the reading, you will be do written responses tied to the required readings. The reading response should be 500-750 words in length, and should do three main things: (1) summarize the main arguments of the readings; (2) identify common themes/threads across the readings; and (3) make connections between the theme(s) of the reading and in relationship to your own (present or future) mentoring/coaching practice. You should also include any questions that you thought of while reading.

You will be expected to post your journal entries to the class discussion board on Blackboard by the Sunday before class at midnight on the dates designated on the syllabus. There will be four reading responses throughout the semester based on the readings. You can earn up to 5 points for each reading response. Points will be deducted for late responses. A rubric 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 mentor/coach. To that end, I would like you to write a literacy autobiography that contemplates your own life experiences with reading/writing, language, and mentoring. You can use the piece to think about your own origins with language(s) and literacy and also to express your current beliefs about yourself as a reader/writer/speaker and (future) mentor/coach. 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 mentors and coaches; and (2) to learn about one another and help build our classroom community.

Your autobiography will have **two formats**: (1) **written essay format** – which should be 4-5 pages (double-spaced) in length (5 points); and (2) **pecha kucha** presentation – where you will develop a 6-minute, 20-slide PowerPoint presentation (5 points). More information on the pecha kucha presentation will be provided in class.

Comparative Analysis of Teaching and Professional Development (5 points) – During Week 3, you will have the opportunity to learn about Finland’s educational system and their approach to teaching and professional development. You will be asked to complete a chart that compares teachers and professional development in Finland and the U.S.; information to complete this chart can be found in the readings and videos for this week.

Professional Development Exercise and Reflection (15 points; 10 points for lesson, 5 points for reflection) – In addition to writing about the readings, you will also have an opportunity to lead part

of a class session on the topics covered in the readings for that week. You will sign up in advance to facilitate the class session. The class facilitation is meant to serve as a practice-run in professional development for teachers; in this way, you will not only develop and lead the class session but will also reflect on and write about the experience, using video recording as a basis for self-analysis and peer-feedback. More details on class facilitation will be provided in class and on Blackboard.

You should send your professional development plan to us for review one week prior to the class session; your plan should be sent to course preceptor Susan Clark at ksclark2@miners.utep.edu by the **Monday of the week prior to class at midnight**. You should **copy your fellow peer-facilitators, professor (elmein2@utep.edu), and Graduate Assistant (dppineda@miners.utep.edu) on the email**. During that same week, you will meet with one member of our team to conference on your planned lesson; we will provide feedback to you at that meeting. You should send the revised plan to us by Sunday (day before class) at noon. *If you do not send a draft of your facilitation plan by the Monday before your scheduled facilitation, we will assume that you are not going to conduct the peer-led facilitation.*

Immediately following your professional development exercise, you should submit a written reflection of the exercise. In the reflection, you should describe a 5-minute segment from the video and analyze what went well and what could have gone better. The reflection should be approximately 500 words in length. The professional development reflection is due on Blackboard within a week following your peer-led facilitation.

Facilitation date	Due date - written reflection
February 22	February 29
February 29	March 7
March 14	March 21
March 28	April 4
April 18	April 25

Practicum portfolio (30 points) – One crucial component of this course is a field-based experience with mentoring and professional development via a practicum project. As part of this project, you will engage in 6 hours of observation in an educational setting, as well as at least 2 hours of conferencing with your mentees/collaborators. The culminating document of your experience will be an electronic practicum portfolio, where you record and reflect upon your field-based mentoring experience. The practicum portfolio consists of five components, each of which will be explained in detail below:

- (1) **Overview** – Includes a short introductory essay where you explain your philosophy of coaching/mentoring and the context in which your coaching/mentoring took place (5 points);
- (2) **Observation notes** – Includes field notes from mentoring site (10 points);
- (3) **Conference summaries** – Includes pre- and post-conference feedback provided to mentee (5 points total; 2.5 points each);
- (4) **Final essay** – In this essay, you should link findings/reflections from your field experience to course readings and scholarly research (10 points).
- (5) **Final presentation** – Please plan to present an overview of your practicum to your classmates. Your oral presentation should be 5 minutes and may include PowerPoint/Prezi.

Due dates:

Component	Due date
Pre-observation conference summary	April 10
Observation Notes – Part I (first 3 hours)	April 17
Post-observation conference summary	April 25
Observation Notes – Part II (second 3 hours)	April 28
Practicum portfolio with essay	May 9

More details about the project and portfolio are available on Blackboard under "Important Documents."

Grading:

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

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes:

Assignment	Point value	Assessment of Learning Outcomes
Reflective Journals	40 points	Learning Outcomes #1-9
Literacy Autobiography	10 points	Learning Outcomes #2-3
Comparative Analysis – PD Models	5 points	Learning Outcome #4
Professional Development Exercise	15 points	Learning Outcomes #1,2,5,7
Practicum Portfolio	30 points	Learning Outcomes #1-3,5,7-9

Professor's Expectations:

Expectation #1: Attendance and Thoughtful Engagement

This course is designed to include large and small group discussions, reflective exercises, hands-on experiences, and presentations as a way to encourage each person to become an active participant in a collaborative learning process. The course thus requires the active participation of each student. This necessitates that students engage in ongoing critical readings of, and commentary on, the assigned course texts, and that they ask meaningful questions and raise relevant issues during class discussions.

Because this course is designed to create a context in which trust, honesty, and collaboration are possible, it is vital that each of you are here, both physically and intellectually, during each class session and that you are on time. Your attendance *and* punctuality are viewed as a sign of respect for your instructor and classmates; they are important criteria for building rapport and understanding between all of us as a community of learners. If extenuating circumstances make it necessary for you to miss a class, arrive late, or leave early, please let the instructor know ahead of time; excessive absences (missing more than 15% of face-to-face class time) could result in your being dropped from the course.

Expectation #2: Building Classroom Community

With a course of this nature, your active and reflective contributions to the class are essential. As we develop our ideas about mentoring, you will be asked to reflect critically on the readings for the course, to participate in in-class activities, and to dialogue with your colleagues. You will also be asked to implement what you learn by utilizing these principles and strategies in your mentoring practicum, and to engage in reflection on this experience.

The content and structure of this course may lead to discussions that uncover the very different positions and perspectives we each bring with us to the classroom. It is crucial that we all take responsibility for creating a safe environment in which open and respectful dialogue can occur. This course should be a place in which we can discuss our differing beliefs and our questions without concern about being judged or having confidential information shared outside of the group. Being respectful of, and patient with, others is a central tenet of this course.

Expectation #3: Critical Engagement with the Readings and Assignments

This course encourages both rigor and reflection. You will be asked not only to read the course readings, but also to respond to them in a way that is thoughtful and analytical. The assigned readings for each class session are listed on the syllabus. You are expected to have read and responded to all of the readings before each

class meeting (see course schedule for dates). Furthermore, you are expected to integrate concepts from the readings into classroom discussions and written assignments and presentations. To be clear, being critically engaged with the readings does not mean that you should necessarily agree with them.

A Note on Research/Inquiry:

The purpose of this course is to prepare master's level students to be effective mentors and facilitators of professional development. As part of this preparation, you will have the opportunity to engage in hands-on data collection and analysis through the case study and mentoring practicum project. Unless you have approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), no data collected as part of the case study practicum project should under any conditions be presented in any public outlet, for example, in a conference presentation, research colloquium, or publication. All participants shall remain anonymous.

Attendance Policy:

Absences for any reason are discouraged. If extenuating circumstances make it necessary for you to miss a class, arrive late, or leave early, please let the instructor know ahead of time; excessive absences (missing more than 15% of face-to-face class time) could result in your being dropped from the course.

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 Center for Accommodations and Support (CASS) located in Union E Room 106. Students who have been designated as disabled must reactivate their standing with CASS 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 Ethics:

Academic dishonesty is an assault upon the basic integrity and meaning of a University. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts which erode the University's educational and research roles and cheapen the learning experience not only for the perpetrators, but also for the entire community. It is expected that UTEP students will understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts.

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

Additional Resources:

The following journals can assist you in your inquiry practicum project. These are just some examples. Most of them can be found electronically using the UTEP Library website:

Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy
The Reading Teacher
Language Arts
Anthropology & Education Quarterly
International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism
Bilingual Research Journal
Reading Research Quarterly
Linguistics & Education

Course Schedule:

	Topic(s)	Readings & Assignments
Week 1: F2F January 25	Introduction to the course Overview of mentoring, teacher learning, and teacher development	<i>(Readings should be completed before class session listed for that week)</i> Draw names/dates for Pecha Kucha Presentations
Week 2: Online February 1	Setting the context for mentoring: What does it mean to be a teacher/mentor?	Paley, Talking to myself in a daily journal Palmer, The heart of a teacher: identity and integrity in teaching Reflective Journal #1 (RJ1) due on Blackboard by 1/31 at midnight Literacy autobiography essay due on Blackboard by 2/4 at midnight
Week 3: F2F February 8	Teacher learning: What does it mean to learn in a professional setting? **Draw names/dates for peer-led facilitation and set up pre-facilitation conferences**	Lawler, Adult learning and professional development Allen & Blythe, Facilitating for learning Feiman-Nemser, Teachers as teacher educators Reading Response #1 (RR1) due on Blackboard by 2/7 at midnight Pecha Kucha Presentations (5)
Week 4: Online February 15	Comparing models of teaching and professional development	Maynard & Furlong, Models of mentoring Darling-Hammond & Richardson, What we can learn from Finland's successful school reform "Finnish First" videos (2) Reflective Journal#2 (RJ2) due on Blackboard by 2/14 at midnight Comparative Analysis of PD Systems due by 2/18 at midnight Conference with Group #1 for 2/22 facilitation
Week 5: F2F February 22	Teachers as literacy leaders **Peer-led facilitation by Group #1**	Bean & Dagen, Chapters 1-2 Reflective Journal #3 (RJ3) due on Blackboard by 2/21 at midnight Pecha Kucha Presentations (5) Conference with Group #2 for 2/29 facilitation

Week 6: F2F February 29	Literacy coaching in elementary and secondary schools **Peer-led facilitation by Group #2**	Bean & Dagen, Chapters 3-4 Reading Response #2 (RR2) due on Blackboard by 2/28 at midnight Pecha Kucha Presentations (5) Conference with Group #3 for 3/14 facilitation
Week 7: No class March 7	SPRING BREAK - No class	
Week 8: F2F March 14	Coaching and teacher change **Peer-led facilitation by Group #3**	Toll, Chapters 1-3 Reflective Journal #4 (RJ4) due on Blackboard by 3/13 at midnight Identify mentee and mentoring site Signed commitment letter due by 3/20 at midnight (scanned and sent via email)
Week 9: F2F March 21	Methods for mentoring: conferences, observations, and feedback practices	Jonson, Strategies for mentoring Athanases, Questioning and inquiry Field notes handout Reading Response #3 (RR3) due on Blackboard by 3/20 at midnight Set up pre-observation conference with mentee for week of 4/4 (before 4/10) Conference with Group #4 for 3/28 facilitation
Week 10: F2F March 28	Mentoring/coaching and communication **Peer-led facilitation by Group #4**	Toll, Chapters 5-7 Reflective Journal #5 (RJ5) due on Blackboard by 3/27 at midnight
Week 11: Online/On-site April 4	Conducting a pre-observation conference	Beginning Teacher Support & Assessment (CA) – videos of sample pre-conferences (on Blackboard) Conduct pre-observation conference with mentee prior to 4/10 Conduct 6 hours of practicum observations and post-conference with mentee between 4/4-4/15 Pre-conference summary due 4/10 by midnight Conference with Group #4 for 4/13 facilitation
Week 12: Online/On-site April 11	Conducting observations	Beginning Teacher Support & Assessment (CA) – videos of sample post-conferences (on Blackboard) Pianta et al, Ch 1-2

		<p>Conduct 6 hours of practicum observations and post-conference with mentee between 4/4-4/22</p> <p>Observation notes (Part I) due on Blackboard by 4/14 by midnight</p> <p>Conference with Group #5 for 4/18 facilitation</p>
<p>Week 13: F2F April 18</p>	<p>Coaching/mentoring and reflective practice</p> <p>**Peer-led facilitation by Group #5**</p>	<p>Zeichner & Liston, Understanding reflective teaching</p> <p>Boreen et al., Ch 6</p> <p>Reading Response #4 (RR4) due on Blackboard by 4/17 at midnight</p>
<p>Week 14: Online/On-site April 25</p>	<p>Coaching/mentoring and teacher inquiry communities</p>	<p>Lytle & Cochran-Smith, Teacher research</p> <p>Griffin, I need people</p> <p>Post-conference summary due 4/25 by midnight</p> <p>Observation notes (Part I I) due on Blackboard by 4/28 by midnight</p>
<p>Week 15: F2F May 2</p>	<p>Wrapping up: Lessons learned in the mentoring practicum</p>	<p>Practicum presentations & final reflections</p>
<p>Week 16: May 9</p>	<p>EXAM WEEK – No class</p>	<p>Practicum portfolio due to Blackboard by 5/9 at midnight</p>

F2F = Face-to-face class session at UTEP

Syllabus is subject to change.