Disciplinary Literacy- Grades 5-12
Addressing Discipline-Specific Literacies in the Classroom
Online Graduate Course

Course Description

In an era of increasing accountability, educators need tools to more effectively convey subject matter. Teachers need instructional expertise in literacy skills related specifically to their disciplines in order to improve student abilities to understand complex text and gain deeper understanding of concepts needed for college, career, or workforce readiness. These necessary literacy skills include the concept of disciplinary literacy. According to Cynthia Shanahan (2015), "Rather than focusing on the similarities of literacy in content areas, disciplinary literacy focuses on the differences . . . [These differences] stem from the way these disciplines create, communicate, and evaluate information."

The focus of this course will be on creating the instructional skills necessary to deepen student understanding. Teachers will examine and analyze the unique characteristics of the literacy patterns of their individual discipline and acquire strategies for addressing these patterns in order to improve comprehension. Disciplinary literacy needs to be seen not as an add-on, but as a means to an end, that end being deeper understanding and transfer of learning for all students. Teachers will leave this course equipped to address discipline-specific literacies and to prepare students for college, career, and workforce readiness.

Required Text

The required textbook for this course is Literacy in the Disciplines: A Teacher's Guide for Grades 5-12 by Thomas DeVere Wolsey and Diane Lapp. With this text, educators will learn to approach their specific content area from the standpoint of the literacy it utilizes. This text defines disciplinary literacy as it applies to each subject area, and it provides the tools and skills needed for content area teachers to successfully teach complex texts.

Hardware & Computer Skills Requirements

Computer & Internet access required. Students must have regular access to a computer and be able to use computer skills to successfully complete this course. Many problems instructors and students run into stem from mis-configured browsers, incorrect software versions, pop-up blockers, and other issues. Most of these issues can be prevented by performing the browser tune up before the course or once a problem arises. Often students find it easier to use *Mozilla Firefox*, *Google Chrome*, or *Safari* rather than Internet Explorer; for some applications Internet *Explorer* may work well.

Learner Outcomes
Students will:

- develop an understanding of disciplinary literacy.
- compare differences between content area and disciplinary literacy and compare the strengths of each.
- analyze how the concept of disciplinary literacy helps teachers to teach more effectively.
- differentiate the characteristics of the literacy of their specific discipline.
- apply the concept of collaboration to their teaching.
- apply the concepts of vocabulary learning in the disciplines as well as the implementation of vocabulary learning.
- create the concept of argumentation to their discipline.
- design instruction that supports reading within their discipline.
- apply the concepts of close reading to their teaching.
- apply the concept of questioning when reading closely.
- analyze the importance of writing in the disciplines.
- create both writing to learn and public writing assignments for their teaching.
- prove the role of graphic organizers when teaching.
- apply the role of multimodal tools in the disciplines.
- synthesize the concepts of close reading by creating a close reading plan.

Course Requirements

In the online format this is a sixty-hour, three credit graduate level course completed over a thirteen-week period. Modules One through Nine will be completed one per week. Module Ten will be completed over a two-week period so students will have time to revise and complete the final integration project.

Student Requirements

1. Participation: Students will engage with the content through responses and reflections
2. Collaboration: Students will collaborate with colleagues to share and discuss course content.
3. Application: Students will create evidence of learning through chapter activities.
4. Application: Students will demonstrate learning through creation of a final project.
5. Reflection: Students will reflect on their learning in a final reflection.

Grading Criteria

Assignment	Points	Grading Scale	
Reflections 11@5	55	140-126	A
Collaboration	10	125-112	B
Chapter Activities 8 @ 5	40	111-98	C
Final Project	25		
Final Reflection	10		
TOTAL	140		

*Note: The 2012 Graduate Catalog (pp.20-21) and The College's online **course** grading system TEI instructors use does not make any provision for B-,C+ or D.*

Student Academic Integrity

Participants guarantee that all academic class work is original. Any academic dishonesty or plagiarism (to take ideas, writings, etc. from another and offer them as one's own), is a violation of student academic behavior standards as outlined by our partnering colleges and universities and is subject to academic disciplinary action.

Course Outline

Module One: An Introduction to Disciplinary Literacy
Content:
>   1. Student introductions
>   2. Individual expectations
>   3. Course sessions, resources, and requirements
>   4. Defining disciplinary literacy
>   5. Content area reading
>   6. Reconceptualizing literacy
>   7. Assignments

Module Two: Literacy Demands of Experts in the Disciplines
Content:
>   1. Disciplinary Literacy Characteristics
>   2. Positioning Literacy in the Disciplines
>   3. Disciplinary Literacy Principles
>   4. Assignments

Module Three: Instruction that Supports Academic Language Development
Content:
>   1. Effective interactions in collaborative groups
>   2. Socratic seminars
>   3. Other grouping options
>   4. Discussing content with disciplinary terms

     5. Language frames

     6. Assignments

Module Four: Instruction that Supports Academic Vocabulary
Content:

1. Teaching vocabulary
2. Vocabulary Tiers
3. Choosing the words to teach
4. Strategies for teaching vocabulary
5. Word association and related visual and verbal approaches
6. Assignments

Module Five: The Art of Argumentation
Content:

1. Appeals
2. Fallacies
3. Defining an argument
4. Support and refutation
5. Graphic Organizers
6. Arguing in the various disciplines
7. Sources
8. Assignments

Module Six: Reading Carefully
Content:

1. Read-Alouds
2. Shared reading
3. Think Alouds
4. Other strategies (summarizing, self-monitoring, etc.)
5. Text structures
6. Reciprocal teaching
7. Assignments

Module Seven: Instruction that Supports Close Reading in the Disciplines
Content:

1. Close reading
2. Types of text
3. Rereading
4. Annotating
5. Questioning during close reading
6. Text dependent questions
7. Talking about the text
8. A plan for close reading
9. Close reading in action
10. Assignments

Module Eight: Instruction that Supports Writing in the Disciplines
Content:
1. Why writing is important
2. Writing instruction
3. Writing in the disciplines
4. Three traps to avoid
5. The role of collaboration in writing
6. Improving students' writing
7. Assignments

Module Nine: Using Graphic Organizers and Multimodal Tools in the Disciplines
Content:
1. Types of organizers
2. Alternatives to Venn diagrams
3. Adapting KWL
4. Other organizers
5. Designing your own organizer
6. Assignments
7. Multimodal Tools defined
8. The role of technology
9. The importance of format
10. Assignments

Module Ten: Assessment and Final Project
Content:
1. Assessment and feedback
2. Rubrics
3. Literacy in the Disciplines
4. Student final reflection
5. Student final project