EDUC 324: Teaching Language Arts in the Elementary and Middle School

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Dordt College

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Course Description: This course covers the content, methods, and materials of language arts instruction in the elementary and middle school. The teaching of writing will be the central focus into which teaching spelling, grammar, listening, speaking, and viewing will be integrated. The need for integrating language arts into the content areas will be addressed.

Course Goals:
The course is designed to develop teachers who can:
1. understand that all language (reading, writing, speaking, viewing, and listening) is a gift from God to be used obediently.
2. write a thematic statement that articulates a Christian philosophy of language learning that considers a biblical view of the learner and the learning process.
3. understand how educational philosophies (e.g. constructivism, behaviorism) direct current language learning practices and strategies (e.g. process writing, skill and drill).
4. be able to critique the current educational philosophies which impact language arts instruction.
5. understand the process of writing and how to promote active, successful writing within the classroom.
6. develop techniques and strategies for teaching spelling, listening, writing, drama, speaking, and viewing.
7. develop the ability to think and write reflectively about educational practices in language arts.
8. understand that integration is essential to the language arts.
9. plan and write an integrated unit that considers biblical principles of learning and considers the individuality of the learner.
10. understand the various methods of evaluating student performance in the language arts.
11. develop the ability to write in a legible manner while practicing different styles of handwriting.

Course Materials:
Required:
• Course Pack

The following items will be needed for projects:
Book-Feb. 2
• Cardboard-two pieces (6" x 9")
• One 16" x 12" piece of contact paper, material, or heavy wrapping paper (do not use shelf liner)
• Needle and thread
• One piece of construction paper (9" x 12")
• Several sheets of plain white typing or copy paper
• Scissors
• Glue or rubber cement
Puppet-Feb. 18
• Scissors
• Sock
• Yarn
• Material scraps, buttons, etc.
• One small piece of cardboard
• Glue gun (if you have one)
Methods of Instruction:
Instructional activities used in this course include lectures, demonstrations, portfolios, writing, and group work. I will attempt to use the kinds of classroom organization and activities that I hope you will use with your students. Because of this class attendance is crucial. This class includes a three-hour practicum.

Course Requirements and Assignments:
1. Attendance and Participation. All class members are required to attend class having completed the assigned readings and should be willing to participate in class. Punctual daily attendance is expected. If you are unable to attend class, send an e-mail message. (Class goals: 1-12) Participation will be evaluated on the following factors:
   - Preparation for class-Having readings and portfolio assignments done for each class
   - Readiness and willingness to share with others
   - Support of others’ learning
   - receptiveness to others’ contributions
   - Punctual daily attendance

   10 points

2. Portfolio. A portfolio of writings and activities will be kept for Teaching Writing and the articles assigned from the packet. Most readings require that you do some type of follow-up writing or activity. You will be asked to practice using some of the many ideas presented in the text. At designated times you should hand in the portfolio. At this time I will make comments and assign points based on completion of the assignments.

   Since a portfolio is generally a collection of works in process, do not feel that each piece needs to be polished; however, college level writing is expected. Some assignments ask you to brain-storm ideas for your unit or to write objectives and others ask you to write in a specific genre. All writings should be brief. Consider one single spaced page to be about average for each day’s assignment (unless otherwise indicated-Jan. 26 two pages).

   In order to practice penmanship (which is part of this course), I will ask you to use different styles of handwriting for four specific assignments and to evaluate your own handwriting using the evaluation sheets provided in the packet. See the class schedule for the assignments. Samples of the styles are in the course packet.

   Up to twenty points will be given for each week’s portfolio items for a total of 100 points. See the packet for the scoring rubric and the last page of this syllabus for some guidelines.

   Use loose-leaf paper or typing paper and place your portfolio entries in a pocket folder with your name, date, and chapter or article title on each entry. Please put your name on the front of the folder. Hand in one copy of the portfolio evaluation sheet each time you hand in your log (evaluation sheets are in your packet). I will use this sheet for evaluation. For the four times I ask you to practice handwriting, you need to hand in a handwriting evaluation sheet (copies are in the packet). You are expected to evaluate your own handwriting. Hand in the handwriting sheet filled out.

   In addition to doing the assigned writing, feel free to also use your log to ask me questions about upcoming assignments or other aspects of language arts. For example, early in the semester you might have an idea for a topic for your unit. You could ask me about the appropriateness of the topic or how you could integrate language arts into a unit using this topic. You could also ask me these questions in person and through e-mail so you decide whether you want to use the log in this way. I will collect the response logs five times. See the class schedule for the days.

   Because the success of this class is dependent on being ready for each class, I will be calling on students at random to read or show their portfolio. So be prepared. (Class goals: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10,11) 100 points

3. Individual Project-(Class goal: 6) Choose one of the following:
   a. Spelling-Give an age appropriate spelling test to an elementary age child (grades 1-8). The various tests are included in your packet. Follow the directions for giving the test then use information in the packet to analyze the stage of spelling the child is at. Use this information to write a short (2-3) page report that explains the stage of development the child is at and then suggest three strategies for moving the child ahead in his/her spelling. The articles plus the materials on reserve will be helpful to you. Include the child’s spelling test or a copy of it. See me if you want to do this project but can’t locate a child. An example will be presented in class when we study spelling. A scoring rubric is included in the packet.
b. Develop two folder games that are related to language arts (grammar, spelling). These games must be student ready with all materials necessary for a small group of students to be able to play the game. Think of the games as materials that you could put in a learning center. Directions for the game should be included along with a one-page paper explaining the grade level, what skills are taught, and when and how you could use the games. These games should be neat and attractive and represent current thinking on teaching and learning spelling and grammar. Materials on reserve plus other materials in the LRC can give you helpful ideas. An example folder game will be shown in class when we discuss spelling. A scoring rubric is included in the packet. Please do not hand in games that have simply been photocopied from a magazine or book.

c. Teaching Ideas File. This file should include ten activities. Each should be typed on a separate sheet of paper or 5” x 8” note card. The file can include activities for teaching spelling, grammar, penmanship, a genre of writing, creative dramatics, listening activities, etc. There are many idea books in the LRC that will help you with this project. The mix of ideas is up to you. On each card or sheet of paper include the title of the activity, the grade level it is intended for, the source, the skill that is being taught, a brief rationale, and enough information so that another teacher could pick up your activity and use it. On the last few pages of the packet are sample writing ideas—these are not developed for the file but give you an idea of the type of collection I have in mind. Of course please don’t use these for your file. A scoring rubric is included in the packet. Note: You may include ideas that you use in your unit or wrote up in your portfolio. An example card is pictured below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title: Spelling Cheerleading</th>
<th>Skill: Whole group oral spelling practice</th>
<th>Grades: 2-5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Rationale:** Spelling cheerleading is a way to incorporate kinesthetic, auditory, and visual learning into spelling practice. The words used can be from the weekly spelling list or from the word wall of high frequency words. This type of activity is most appropriate when the configuration of the words is dissimilar (ex: like, to, bag). This is also a good alternative to the chant and clap activities that are often done with the word wall.

**Procedure:** The children will have to have some previous knowledge for this activity to work. When they learn penmanship the teacher needs to call the children’s attention to the attic, ground floor, and basement letters.
- The cheerleading movements are based on the penmanship line positions with the children standing tall with arms raised straight above their heads for attic letters, standing with arms on hips for ground floor letters, and hand touching the floor for basement letters. See diagram.
- The teacher selects a leader. The student comes to the front of the class, selects a word from one listed on the chalkboard or from the word wall then leads the cheer and movements. The children as a group do the cheers together.
- You could add variety by having a child come to the front and do the cheerleading motions without the cheer and have the students guess what word the student performed. Again this works best with a list of words that have varying configurations.


Note: You can combine projects 2 and 3 by doing one folder game and five teaching file activities—however you can’t make a card for the folder game you made. The activities must be all different.

Due March 14

60 points
4. Integrated Unit. You will be preparing an integrated teaching unit of five lesson plans. This unit should show what you learned in this class and is a substitute for a final test. This unit should integrate a topic or theme from a content area with the language arts. In this unit you will be challenged to integrate biblical principles and struggle with what it means to teach Christianly. Use what you learned from the Tompkins' book, the packet readings, and this class to integrate aspects of reading, writing, listening, speaking, drama, and viewing. Your unit should include at least one genre of writing (Chapters 3-10) and at least one mini-lesson. Include spelling, penmanship, drama, and grammar sometime in the unit. See Tompkins page 61 and this syllabus for an outline of a mini-lesson and some examples. Make sure that this unit is original and not simply copied from other sources. Check your unit for clarity as well as spelling and grammatical errors. The course pack contains an evaluation sheet, a model outline, and a sample unit; refer to these pages when preparing your unit. This unit should be typed and be about five pages in length. Hand in two copies of your unit. The unit is due on Feb 25. You may do this unit alone or with a self-selected partner. Selected highlights of your units will be shared on Feb. 26 and 28. (Course goals: 1,2,5,6,8,9,10)

Due Feb. 25 170 points

*Note-All assignments are due during class time on the dates listed below. If you have a special problem meeting a deadline, please see me.

*Note-Students with special learning needs should see me to discuss how I can help you meet the course requirements.

*Note-The integrated unit, spelling activity, and teaching file activities should be typed. The portfolio can be handwritten or typed except for the special days when they should be handwritten (see schedule).

*Note-The chapter reading assignments refer to the Tompkins' book and the titles refer to the articles in the course pack. Writing assignments are in italics.

Grading Scale
A 340-306
B 305-272
C 271-238
D 237-204
F 203-and below

Tentative Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 F</td>
<td>Chapter 1, pages 1-28 &amp; Class syllabus</td>
<td>Language a Gift from God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 M</td>
<td>Chapter 1, pages 28-45 &amp; Better Writing from the Start: Using Beginnings and Endings to Teach Craft</td>
<td>The Writing Process, Brainstorming, Clustering, &amp; Quick writes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. (a) Brainstorm ideas for unit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Create a cluster for topic, label type of cluster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 W</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>Instructional Approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Using Zaner Bloser manuscript (printing)</td>
<td>Video-The Writing Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>write a log sharing your thoughts about the advantages and disadvantages of the two types of writing discussed in the chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 F</td>
<td>Chapter 11 (pages 329-345)</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Identify five words you commonly misspell and create a spelling log for these words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hand in portfolio, remember to include the evaluation sheets: (1) handwriting and (2) portfolio. Assignments 1-3. Remember to evaluate your own handwriting; I will evaluate the portfolio.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
24 M Sort, Search, and Discover: Spelling in the child-centered classroom.

4. Look at curriculum materials and come to class with an idea for teaching spelling. You may photocopy the activity or type up a summary. Try to find an idea that you will be able to use in your unit.

26 W Chapter 11 (pages 345-368) & Spelling, Grammar, Handwriting, and Other "Questionable" Practices & Sharing the Tools of the Writing Trade & A Talk with Donald Graves

5. Using Zaner Bloser cursive (script) react to the points the various authors make about spelling, handwriting, and grammar. Make this log 2 pages.

28 F Sentence Building

6. Look at curriculum materials (Write Source or others) and come to class with an idea for teaching grammar. It can be a game, a writing activity, etc. (avoid worksheets). Think in terms of something you can put in your unit. You may photocopy, write, or type the activity.

Hand in portfolio, remember to include the evaluation sheets: (1) handwriting and (2) portfolio. Assignments 4-6.

31 M Ten Task of Curriculum Writing & Integrated Instruction in the Christian Classroom

Decide whether you want to do your unit alone or with a partner

7. For your unit, write (a) a thematic statement, (b) list of objectives, and (c) a list of the concepts you want to teach. Make sure you tell me what grade the unit is intended for. Consult Walking with God in the Classroom for how to write the thematic statement, the objectives, and curriculum materials for concepts and grade level.

Note: Since some of you will be working with a partner for your unit, you both don't have to hand in this assignment. One person can put it in their log but make sure you note this in your log and say whom you are working with. Partners, please hand in logs together.

Feb. 2 W Chapter 3 Book Making

8. Using D'Nealian manuscript (printing) journal about problems you have encountered or anticipate encountering when using journals

Bring supplies for book making

4 F Chapter 5 Copy Cat Books

9. Assume the identity of a historical or literary figure and write a simulated letter

Hand in portfolio, remember to include the evaluation sheets: (1) handwriting and (2) portfolio. Assignments 7-9.

7 M "Doing" literature: Using drama to build literacy Drama as part of the language arts & "I never thought I could be a star": A Readers Theatre ticket to fluency.

10. Using what you read in the article, create an activity that you can use in your unit that incorporates drama.

9 W Developing children's classroom listening strategies & Viewing: the neglected communication process...

11. Using D'Nealian cursive (script) React to articles on topic of listening and viewing in the classroom.
11 F Chapter 6 & Biographical Collage

Biographical Writing and Memoir

12. Write a short personal narrative
Hand in portfolio, remember to include the evaluation sheets: (1) handwriting and (2) portfolio. Assignments 10-12.

14 M Hand in individual projects
Share ideas in class

16 W Chapters 12 & Make Room for Rubrics
Assessing Students' Writing

13. Create a scoring rubric for one genre of writing for your unit.
(see examples on pages 391, 392; consider both process and content) Note: If you are working with a partner, you both don’t have to hand in this assignment. One person can put it in their log but make sure you note this in your log and say whom you are working with. Please also hand in logs together to make it easier for me.

18 F Chapter 7
Expository Writing

14. Describe two activities listed in the chapter or others you know about that are good alternatives to the typical encyclopedia (copied) report.

21 M Poetry Writing

15. Write a poem using one of the poetic forms suggested in the chapter
Hand in portfolio, remember to include the evaluation sheet. Assignments 13-15.

23 W Puppet making

Bring in puppet making supplies Chapter 9

25 F Unit dues

Hand in two copies of unit

28 M

UNIT SHARING

PORTFOLIO GUIDELINES

- The portfolio serves three purposes in this course:
  (1) to give you an experience in keeping a portfolio
  (2) to give you some practice in using the ideas in the chapters
  (3) to hold you accountable for the readings
- Use a pocket folder or a folder with a spine where paper can be added. Use loose leaf paper for the penmanship assignments and computer or loose leaf paper for the other assignments. Please date and label each entry and put your name on the cover of your portfolio.
- Make sure you read the entire chapter and/or article before attempting to do the assignment. After having read the assignment, if you have a question please feel free to e-mail me. I much prefer e-mail to telephone calls or voice mail. I do access my e-mail at home, but I don’t listen to my voice mail except when I am in my office.
- You are asked to do four specific assignments in various handwriting styles. These are identified in the course schedule. Please use the appropriate style for these assignments and evaluate your own handwriting using the evaluation sheets provided in the packet. I realize some people need more work on handwriting then others. If you really struggle with handwriting, I suggest you do some additional practice on your own. It will only make your transition to teaching easier.
- A portfolio represents works in progress from which students periodically select a piece to polish.
- For entries where I ask you to react to issues and opinions expressed, make sure you give specific references to what you are agreeing or disagreeing with. A page reference, quotation and author’s name will help me understand what point is being discussed. Feel free to ask questions about things you don’t understand from the readings. Give me something to react to.
- You should consider the point of view of the author when reading the chapters or articles. It helps to understand a piece if you consider the world view that the author is espousing and how this shapes his/her view of writing instruction. Feel free to critique the world view of the author and to suggest ideas that you think are more consistent with a biblical world view. Remember I am not looking for one way of thinking, but for your honest attempt to consider educational issues from a Christian perspective.
- Feel free to bring in your own experiences with a topic. This can be from your own elementary and middle school experience or from mini-teaching and observations during your years in the Teacher Education Program.