Instructor: Jennifer Nabers  
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This course offers an introduction to the best practices and methods for teaching English/Language Arts in middle school. This course will teach you to plan lessons and units, select texts, create assignments, lead discussion, provide feedback, and make assessments of student work. This course is designed to prepare students for the edTPA portfolio and Illinois state teaching licensure, student teaching, and a career in the classroom.

**Required Texts:**

**Electronic Texts**
2. Illinois Professional Teaching Standards: [https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL_prof_teaching_stds.pdf](https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL_prof_teaching_stds.pdf)
5. A selection of readings, articles, and resources will also be shared via Google Drive

**Assignments:** Each week, you must prepare for class by reading the assigned selections. You will be creating lesson plans, weekly “practice” assignments and reflection papers, teaching a sample lesson of 15 minutes to the class, and creating a unit plan. You will use your own resources, those from this course, and from various online sites (I recommend sticking to ReadWriteThink and other professionally managed curriculum sites rather than using TeachersPayTeachers. More on that later). You don’t need to reinvent the wheel, but I do expect you to disclose and cite your resources in your lesson plans. Practice the ethical behavior you wish to model for your students.

In your plans, you will cite IBSE Professional Teaching Standards and the Common Core Standards. You will be expected to know and be competent in citing and using this language and
terminology, so it’s a good idea for us to practice using this language now. You might also consider knowing/using the IBSE Social Emotional Learning Performance Descriptors, NCTE standards, the Teaching Tolerance Framework, or your own personal goals for students in your lesson plans.

**April 3: What is Middle School Reading, Writing, and Language Arts?**

**In class:**

*Five Truths about Middle School Students* (Traits of Writing, page 25)

Introduction to YA literature and *Notice & Note* strategies

The Skills vs. Content debate

**Homework due 4/10:**

- Reflection paper: Think back to yourself as an English student in middle school. Was there a connection between “school” reading and writing and “free” reading and writing? What is your most vivid in class memory of middle school English? Why do you think it’s stuck with you?
- Choose one of the Notice & Note strategies and read its corresponding chapter in part 3 of the text. Find 2 excerpts from a MG appropriate text that you could use to teach the signpost and bring them to class

**Readings for 4/10:**

1. Questions 1-4 in *Notice and Note* (pages 12-26)
3. *Reading Strategies Handbook* (bring to class on 4/11)

**April 10: Middle School Reading & Lesson Planning**

**In class:**

Diving in to the Common Core

A quick primer on Lesson Planning

Understanding differences in ELA classroom models

**Homework:**

- Create a reading lesson plan using one of the strategies from the Reading Strategies book and a middle school appropriate level text.

**Reading for 4/17:**

2. Skim the *Teaching Tolerance Framework*
3. The September 2017 issue of English Journal is all about Multicultural Literature. Choose one of the following to read.
   o Kedley, Kate, and Jenna Spiering. "Using LGBTQ Graphic Novels to Dispel Myths about Gender and Sexuality in ELA Classrooms." English Journal, vol. 107, no. 1, Sept. 2017, pp. 54-60.

April 17: How Identity Impacts Reading & why Representation Matters
In class:
Speaker: Elisa Gall, Children & Youth Librarian at Deerfield Library, contributor to Reading While White blog.

Text selection & creating an inclusive classroom
How to use the Teaching Tolerance Framework in lesson planning.

Homework due 4/24:
- Choose an inclusive MG novel and read the first 50 or so pages. Create a lesson that addresses one of the anchor strands in the Teaching Tolerance framework AND either a strategy from the Reading Strategies Handbook or a Notice and Note strategy.
- Reflection paper: What is the most challenging idea you learned about bringing inclusivity into the middle school classroom? What makes you most nervous? In what area are you most confident?

Reading for 4/24:
1. Chapters 2-6 from Traits of Writing: The Complete Middle School Guide
2. NCTE Position Statement: Professional Knowledge for the Teaching of Writing (2016)

April 24: Teaching Writing
In class:
The Six Traits & Writing Workshop
Graphic Organizers and Prewriting Strategies
The Revision Process

Homework due 5/1:
- Create a lesson plan for a part of the writing process.
Reading for 5/1:
1. Chapters 7-9 in *Traits of Writing: The Complete Middle School Guide*
2. Chapters 1-3 in *Mechanically Inclined*

May 1: Writing & Grammar
In class:
Conferencing with student writers
Grammar & mini-lessons

Homework due 5/8:
- Create a lesson plan for teaching a grammar skill that you think is important for middle school writing.
- Reflection paper:

Reading for 5/8:

May 8: Genre Studies
In class:
Non-Fiction *Notice & Note* strategies
Poetry
Comics & Graphic Novels

Homework due 5/15:
- Use an article from Newsela, a textbook, or other non-fiction source as the basis for a non-fiction mini-lesson. Record how you would model how to read the article using a non-fiction strategy from *Notice and Note*.

Reading due 5/15:
1. Chapters 1-4, and chapter 7 from *Academic Conversations: Classroom Talk that Fosters Critical Thinking and Content Understandings*
2. Grouping without Fear (handout)

May 15: Student Engagement
In class:
Student Engagement and why it Matters
Leading a discussion
Forming Groups and fostering healthy student working behavior
Homework due 5/22:
- Reflection paper: Think back on a class where you felt a high level of engagement, and other when you felt disengaged. Connect your personal feelings to what you’ve learned about student engagement. How does it help explain why you felt the way you did?
- Write a lesson plan on any topic that moves students from small to large groups, and includes explicit discussion and engagement strategies. What directions will you give to groups, how will you group them, how will you move them back together to finish the lesson?

Reading due 5/22:
1. Chapters 1-3 from *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students* by Susan Brookhart (2008)
2. Formative Assessment Toolkit (handout)

May 22: Assessment & Feedback
In class:
Formative & Summative Assessment
Feedback vs. Grading
Explanation & guidelines for final project

Homework due 6/5:
Unit Plan for a four-week ELA unit will be due on 6/5

Reading for 5/29:
1. *Mapping a Route towards Differentiated Instruction* by Carol Ann Tomlinson
2. Chapter 1 from *Differentiation in Middle & High School* by Kristina J. Doubet and Jessica A. Hockett

May 29: Differentiation
In class:
Guest Speaker: Julie Badynee, learning specialist
Why and how to differentiate?
Learning differences and accommodations

Homework due 6/5:
Unit Plan for four week ELA unit will be due on 6/6

Reading due 6/5:
June 5: Technology in the Classroom

In class
   Academic technology in the ELA classroom
   Sharing Unit plan presentations

ILLINOIS PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS (IPTS), 2013

1. Teaching Diverse Students - The competent teacher understands the diverse characteristics and abilities of each student and how individuals develop and learn within the context of their social, economic, cultural, linguistic, and academic experiences. The teacher uses these experiences to create instructional opportunities that maximize student learning.

2. Content Area and Pedagogical Knowledge - The competent teacher has in-depth understanding of content area knowledge that includes central concepts, methods of inquiry, structures of the disciplines, and content area literacy. The teacher creates meaningful learning experiences for each student based upon interactions among content area and pedagogical knowledge, and evidence-based practice.

3. Planning for Differentiated Instruction - The competent teacher plans and designs instruction based on content area knowledge, diverse student characteristics, student performance data, curriculum goals, and the community context. The teacher plans for ongoing student growth and achievement.

4. Learning Environment - The competent teacher structures a safe and healthy learning environment that facilitates cultural and linguistic responsiveness, emotional well-being, self-efficacy, positive social interaction, mutual respect, active engagement, academic risk-taking, self-motivation, and personal goal-setting.

5. Instructional Delivery - The competent teacher differentiates instruction by using a variety of strategies that support critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and continuous growth and learning. This teacher understands that the classroom is a dynamic environment requiring ongoing modification of instruction to enhance learning for each student.

6. Reading, Writing, and Oral Communication - The competent teacher has foundational knowledge of reading, writing, and oral communication within the content area and recognizes and addresses student reading, writing, and oral communication needs to facilitate the acquisition of content knowledge.

7. Assessment - The competent teacher understands and uses appropriate formative and summative assessments for determining student needs, monitoring student progress, measuring student growth, and evaluating student outcomes. The teacher makes decisions driven by data and curricular and instructional effectiveness and adjusts practices to meet the needs of each student.

8. Collaborative Relationships - The competent teacher builds and maintains collaborative relationships to foster cognitive, linguistic, physical, social and emotional development. This teacher works as a team member with professional colleagues, students, parents or guardians, and community members.

9. Professionalism, Leadership, and Advocacy - The competent teacher is an ethical and reflective practitioner who exhibits professionalism, provides leadership in the learning community, and advocates for students, parents, or guardians, and the profession.