

**Master of Science in Education Program
MSED 466: Middle Grades Methods: English**

Spring 2022, Mondays 6-9pm, Annenberg Hall 345

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Course Description

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 assess student work.

Course Objectives & Texts

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

1. *Notice and Note: Strategies for Close Reading* by Kyleen Beers & Robert E. Probst (Third edition, 2013)
2. *The Reading Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Readers* by Jennifer Serravallo (2015)
3. *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage, and Style into Writer's Workshop* by Jeff Anderson (2005)

Electronic Texts

1. Common Core Standards for [English Language Arts](#)
2. [Illinois Professional Teaching Standards](#)
3. CASEL's [Guiding Questions for Educators: Promote Equity Using SEL in Your School](#)
4. Learning for Justice's [Social Justice Standards](#)
5. A selection of readings, articles, and resources will also be shared via Canvas

Course Expectations, Policies, and Grading

Please know that I consider this syllabus to be a flexible framework, as our needs and the challenges of learning during a pandemic can cause last-minute changes. Canvas will always have the most up to date information about assignments and readings.

Each week, you must prepare for class by reading the assigned selections. Any reading that I've assigned that isn't from one of our core texts, I'll scan and put on Canvas.

You will be creating lesson plans, weekly "practice" assignments, and reflection papers. 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 Learning for Justice Social Justice Standards, or your own personal goals for students in your lesson plans.

Readings and Assignments

Week 1: Tuesday, March 29, 6-9pm

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 & Peritext and Epitext, Canvas and the Course

Homework due 4/4:

Select two middle grade books published within the last 3 years, one fiction and one non-fiction, that you will read over the next few weeks. (You can borrow from the library or just download to an eReader.) Be ready to informally share/get approval for your potential titles at our next class.

- You will use the texts to practice various low stakes activities – practicing book talks, teaching reading strategies, lesson plans, etc. *You will need final approval for me on the titles, because I want to make sure they are truly middle school appropriate.*

Reflection paper #1: 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? 1-2 pages double spaced.

We'll start using the Reading Strategies Book next week. If you will have trouble getting this text by then, check Canvas for a scan of some relevant pages.

Readings for 4/4:

1. Chapters (Questions) 1-4 in *Notice and Note* (pages 12-26).
2. Chapter 5 of *In the Middle* by Nancie Atwell.
3. Read *The Veldt* by Ray Bradbury.

Week 2: Monday April 4, 6-9pm

From Activities to Lesson Plans

In Class: The *Notice & Note* strategies for fiction, Lesson planning Basics, The Skills vs. Content debate

Homework for 4/11:

Lesson Plan #1: Create a reading lesson plan for *The Veldt* using one of the Notice and Note strategies.

Readings for 4/11:

1. Wilhelm, Jeffrey D., and Michael W. Smith. "The Power of Pleasure Reading: What We Can Learn from the Secret Reading Lives of Teens." *English Journal*, vol. 105, no. 6, July 2016, pp. 25-30.
2. Porter-O'Donnell, Carol. "Beyond the Yellow Highlighter: Teaching Annotation Skills to Improve Reading Comprehension." *English Journal*, vol 93, no. 5, May 2004, pp. 82-89.

Week 3: Monday April 11, 6-9pm

Middle School Reading & Lesson Planning

In Class: Diving into the Common Core, Understanding differences in ELA classroom models

Homework for 4/18:

Choose one of the Notice & Note strategies and read its corresponding chapter in part 3 of the text. Using your selected novel, please find two passages that you believe could be used to illustrate the strategy for next week. Type them out and be prepared to share them with the class.

Reflection paper #2: Describe your current relationship with lesson planning. What are you most comfortable with? What are the challenges or concerns? (1-2 pages double spaced)

Readings for 4/18:

1. Borsheim-Black, Carlin, et al. "Critical Literacy Pedagogy: Teaching Canonical Literature for Critical Literacy." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, vol. 58, no. 2, Oct. 2014.
2. Skim the *Learning for Justice Standards*
3. Choose one of the following to read.
 - Gilmore, Barry. "Saying What We Don't Mean." *English Journal*, vol. 107, no. 1, Sept. 2017, pp. 19-25.
 - Lillge, Danielle, and Diana Dominguez. "Launching Lessons: Framing our Approach to Multicultural, Multivoiced YA Literature." *English Journal*, vol. 107, no. 1, Sept. 2017, pp. 33-40.
 - 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.
 - Crawley, Adam S. "Peritext as Windows, Mirrors, and Maps: LGB+ Representation in the Backmatter." *Voices from the Middle*, vol. 28, no. 2, Sept. 2020, pp. 29-32.

Week 4: Monday April 18, 6-9pm

How Identity Impacts Reading ... and case studies

In class: Guest Nisha Sharma, YA author. Identity & Reading & the KidLit Landscape, Text selection & creating an inclusive classroom, How to use the Teaching Tolerance Framework in lesson planning.

Homework due 4/25:

Lesson #2: Using one of your books, 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 #3: 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? (1-2 pages double spaced)

Readings due 4/25:

1. Review the Six Traits of Writing-- there are lots of books on the Six Traits, but there are so many free web-based resources there's no need to buy a text. [I recommend this one](#) by Smekens.
2. NCTE Position Statement: Professional Knowledge for the Teaching of Writing (2016)

Week 5: Monday, April 25, 6-9pm

Teaching Writing...and classroom management

In Class: The Six Traits & Writing Workshop, Graphic Organizers and Prewriting Strategies, The Revision Process

Homework due 5/2:

Lesson #3: Create a lesson plan for a part of the writing process.

Reflection paper #4: What is the strength of using a model like the Six Traits when talking to students about writing? What appeals to you about this model as a teacher? What are the drawbacks of thinking about writing in this way—either for yourself or for middle school kids?

Reading for 5/2:

1. Chapters 1-3 in *Mechanically Inclined*
2. *Why They Can't Write* by John Warner: pages 1-27 and 146-175.
3. Shanahan, Eileen. "From Finding Error to Finding Wonder: A Shift in Grammar Instruction." *Voices from the Middle*, vol. 28, no. 3, March 2021, pp. 14-19.

Week 6: Monday, May 2, 6-9pm

Writing & Grammar...and Interviewing

In Class: Conferencing with student writers, Grammar & mini-lessons, Strategies for interviewing for teaching jobs

Homework due 5/9:

Lesson #4: Create a lesson plan for teaching a grammar skill that you think is important for middle school writing.

Reflection paper #5: Think back to times you received feedback on your written work from a teacher. Was the experience positive or negative? Can you analyze why you had the emotional response that you did? Do you think students are more "sensitive" to feedback on writing than on other kinds of work? Why? (1-2 pages double spaced)

Reading for 5/9:

1. Kowalchuk, Ilya, et al. "Pop Culture Classroom Presents...Discovering Literacy Through Comics." *Voices from the Middle*, vol. 24, no. 4, May 2017, pp. 9-14.
2. Capella, David and Baron Wormser. Selections from *A Surge of Language* (2004)
3. We'll use the *The Reading Strategies Book* again on 5/9, so please bring it to class.

Week 7: Monday, May 9, 6-9pm

Graphic Novels, Poetry, Nonfiction

In Class: Guest: Librarian Laura Wally Johnson. Non-Fiction *Notice & Note* strategies, Poetry, Comics & Graphic Novels

Homework due 5/19:

Lesson 5: Using your non-fiction book, write a mini-lesson. Record how you would model how to read the article using a non-fiction strategy from *Notice and Note*.

Reading due 5/19:

1. Chapters 1-4, and chapter 7 from *Academic Conversations: Classroom Talk that Fosters Critical Thinking and Content Understandings*
2. Grouping without Fear (handout)
3. Skim CASEL's [Guiding Questions for Educators: Promote Equity Using SEL in Your School](#)

Week 8: Monday, May 16, 6-9pm

Student Engagement and Social Emotional Learning

In Class: Guest Elissabeth Legendre. Student Engagement and why it Matters, Leading a discussion, Forming Groups and fostering healthy student behavior

Homework due 5/23:

Reflection paper #6: Think back on a class where you felt a high level of engagement, and another 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?

Lesson Plan #6: 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?

Readings due 5/23:

1. Chapters 1-3 from *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students* by Susan Brookhart (2008)
2. Formative Assessment Toolkit (handout)
3. Quiet-Friendly Comment Guide.
4. Tomlinson, Carol Ann. "Learning to Love Assessment." *Educational Leadership*, vol. 65, no. 4, Dec.-Jan. 2008.
5. Chapter 1 from *Differentiation in Middle & High School* by Kristina J. Doubet and Jessica A. Hockett
6. Chapter 7 of *The Differentiated Classroom* by Carol Ann Tomlinson

Week 9: Monday, May 23, 6-9pm

Assessment, Feedback, and Differentiation

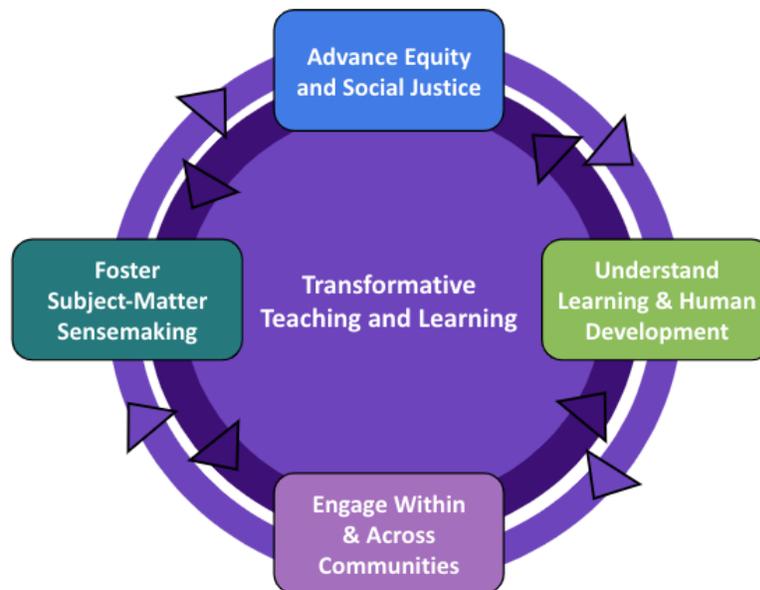
In class: Formative & Summative Assessment, Feedback vs. Grading, How to Differentiate. Prep for final exam.

Homework: Reflection Paper #7: What did you learn in this course? What's missing? What's next?

Week 10: Monday, June 6, 6-9pm

In class exam? TBD on the first day of class.

Northwestern Teacher Education Guiding Commitments



The Northwestern Teacher Education Program's Guiding Commitments are:

- A statement of values about education for dignity, theories of learning as a social, cognitive, ethical and cultural process, and belief in the power of practices that create culturally sustaining & anti-racist learning environments
- Tools for strengthening our cultural life living through Course, "Discipline", Program, and Community
- Opportunities to build knowledge, enact practices/ performances, cultivate dispositions

Student Attendance Policy

Student attendance at every class meeting is expected. Your presence as part of a collaborative learning community is key to your development and the development of your colleagues. If for some reason you must be absent from a class session, you must inform the instructor before your absence. Because of the short number of overall class sessions in the quarter system, missing two class sessions puts your ability to pass the class in jeopardy. Missing three class sessions will result in an automatic grade of "Incomplete" and you will have to retake the class at another time.

Academic Integrity Policy

Students in this course are required to comply with the policies found in the booklet, "Academic Integrity at Northwestern University: A Basic Guide". All papers submitted for credit in this course must be submitted electronically unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Your written work may be tested for plagiarized content. For details regarding academic integrity at Northwestern or to download the guide, visit: <https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/index.html>

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Northwestern University is committed to providing the most accessible learning environment as possible for students with disabilities. Should you anticipate or experience disability-related barriers in the academic setting, please contact AccessibleNU to move forward with the university's established accommodation process (e: accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; p: 847-467-5530). If you already have established accommodations with AccessibleNU, please let me know as soon as possible, preferably within the first two weeks of the term, so we can work together to implement your disability accommodations. Disability information, including academic accommodations, is confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

COVID-19 Testing Compliance

To protect the health of our community, Northwestern University requires unvaccinated students who are in on-campus programs to be tested for COVID-19 twice per week.

Students who fail to comply with current or future COVID-19 testing protocols will be referred to the Office of Community standards to face disciplinary action, including escalation up to restriction from campus and suspension.

Prohibition of Recording of Class Sections by Students

Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy and state law. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact [AccessibleNU](#). Unauthorized use of classroom recordings – including distributing or posting them – is also prohibited. Under the [University's Copyright Policy](#), faculty own the copyright to instructional materials – including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute these materials. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.

Support for Wellness and Mental Health

COVID-19 Classroom Expectations

Students, faculty, and staff must comply with University expectations regarding appropriate classroom behavior, including those outlined below and in the [COVID-19 Code of Conduct](#). With respect to classroom procedures, this includes:

Policies regarding masking and social distancing evolve as the public health situation changes. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with current masking, testing, Symptom Tracking, and social distancing requirements.

- In some classes, masking and/or social distancing may be required as a result of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation for the instructor or a student in the class even when not generally required on campus. In such cases, the instructor will notify the class.
- No food is allowed inside classrooms. Drinks are permitted, but please keep your face covering on and use a straw.
- Faculty may assign seats in some classes to help facilitate contact tracing in the event that a student tests positive for COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seats.

If a student fails to comply with the [COVID-19 Code of Conduct](#) or other University expectations related to COVID-19, the instructor may ask the student to leave the class. The instructor is asked to report the incident to the Office of Community Standards for additional follow-up.

Exceptions to Class Modality (for hybrid or in-person sections)

Class sessions for this course will occur in person. Individual students will not be granted permission to attend remotely except as the result of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation as determined by AccessibleNU.

Maintaining the health of the community remains our priority. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID do not attend class and update your Symptom Tracker application right away to connect with Northwestern's Case Management Team for guidance on next steps. Also contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange to complete coursework.

Students who experience a personal emergency should contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange to complete coursework.

Should public health recommendations prevent in person class from being held on a given day, the instructor or the university will notify students.

Northwestern Teacher Education Working Professional Dispositions

At Northwestern University, we affirm that teaching is a scholarly, complex endeavor that requires an understanding of the intertwined nature of theory and practice. Teachers need to develop knowledge, skills,

practices, and critical reflection, while they also actively and consistently demonstrate professional dispositions. We define dispositions as professional attitudes, stances, values and beliefs; we have collaboratively developed our program dispositions for transformative teaching and learning. Through integrated coursework, developmental advising, and field experiences, we commit to supporting educators as they develop both their pedagogy and professional dispositions.

Below each **bolded disposition** we have included descriptors that elaborate how each disposition might be enacted. This is not an exhaustive list and there are other ways that educators may demonstrate these dispositions. By design, some indicators do appear under multiple dispositions given the intersecting nature of these categories.

Commitment to Advancing Equity and Justice

- Engage in self-reflection to understand your own identity, internalized biases, positional privileges, and your impact in any space.
- Demonstrate a recognition that teaching grounded in equity and social justice is essential in any setting and in the teaching of all subject matter.
- Work to understand how inequity shows up in different settings and take steps to disrupt those patterns.
- Identify and strive to address inequities and power relations of systemic racism, sexism, socioeconomic classism, heteronormativity, ableism, and other forms of human oppression.
- Cultivate interactions that demonstrably value all students and stakeholders and their ideas.

Sense of Professional Responsibility and Commitment to Ongoing Growth

- Demonstrate self-awareness and self-management.
- Engage in self-reflection to understand your own identity, internalized biases, positional privileges, and your impact in any space.
- Demonstrate an openness to feedback and integrate feedback into action.
- Seek out resources, feedback, and support based on interests and/or needs.
- Engage in critical self-reflection and reflection on practice; explain rationale for decisions grounded in research, theory, and lived experience.
- Apply feedback and demonstrate a willingness to make changes.
- Take action to learn and meet the professional expectations for each context (this includes everything from professional records to attendance to attire).
- Meet all legal and ethical requirements (including related to how to appropriately engage with students, colleagues, and stakeholders).
- Engage in a way that is reliable and trustworthy (this includes being punctual, prepared, present, etc.).

Reverence for Learners and Learning

- Demonstrate a commitment to all students as individuals with unique strengths and experiences; seek to understand and build relationships with all students.
- Maintain high expectations for all students; value and prioritize opportunities to advance learning.
- Recognize the complexity of teaching and learning.
- Demonstrate a strengths-based perspective and actively question and push back on deficit thinking.
- Value students' contributions and their diverse ways of knowing and being; commit to understanding students' thinking.

Focus on Collaboration

- Seek to build meaningful relationships by understanding, working with, and learning from others.

- Value the contributions of families and community members and actively work to meaningfully connect with them.
- Seek to understand and build relationships with schools, families, and communities as particular types of intersecting systems within a larger ecosystem that shape our students' lives.
- Maintain a focus on recognizing students' strengths, advancing learning (own and others), and finding positive solutions during all interactions.