

Making the Most of Adolescent Literature

Course Syllabus

Catalog Description

When teachers integrate adolescent literature into the curriculum, students are given an opportunity to learn about themselves and the world during a critical time in their development. Recent research on reading development suggests a growing number of evidence-based practices that can help students with the complex process of reading to make meaning. In this workshop, participants will learn how to select literature for students of varied needs and how to improve students' reading comprehension through questioning techniques. They will also explore a wide range of literature response strategies and techniques for assessment. Throughout the workshop, participants will use the Literacy Matters web site as a source of information about adolescent literature. As a final product, participants will create a classroom lesson based on the strategies learned in this workshop.

Prerequisites

This is an introductory course for teachers, technology specialists, curriculum specialists, professional development specialists, or other school personnel. Participants are expected to have regular access to computers. In addition, participants should be proficient with using email, browsing the Internet, and navigating to computer files.

Goals

This workshop will enable participants to:

- Understand how adolescent literature can address the developmental needs of young adolescents
- Learn techniques for selecting appropriate literature for adolescents
- Access web sites which support and enhance the selection and use of adolescent literature in the classroom
- Learn strategies for motivating students to enlarge their repertory of reading selections
- Learn strategies for responding to literature through discussion, written expression, arts and crafts, drama, and the use of multimedia
- Explore assessment methods for student understanding of adolescent literature, including portfolios

As a final product, participants will create a lesson plan for teaching adolescent literature using the knowledge they have gained from the sessions.

Assessment and Course Requirements

Each session includes readings, an activity, and a discussion assignment, which participants are required to complete.

Course Products

Workshop participants are expected to complete weekly assignments, including active participation in the online discussion board. In addition, participants will develop and share their ideas to incorporate tools and strategies presented in the workshop into their own curricula.

Participants will use the Adolescent Literature Lesson Plan Template to create a lesson plan based on the strategies and concepts they have explored throughout the workshop.

Discussion Participation

Participants will be evaluated on the frequency and quality of their discussion board participation. Participants are required to post a minimum of two substantial postings each session, including one that begins a new thread and one that responds to an existing thread. Postings that begin new threads will be reviewed based on their relevance,

demonstrated understanding of course concepts, examples cited, and overall quality. Postings that respond to other participants will be evaluated on relevance, degree to which they extend the discussion, and tone.

Required Readings, Activities and Assignments

Session One: The Value of Adolescent Literature

In this session, we will define adolescent literature and explore the ways in which it can impact the development of young adolescents. We begin by reviewing why adolescent literature should be an important part of the curriculum and how it speaks directly to the developmental needs of young adolescents. We will be using links from the *Literacy Matters* website as an anchor throughout this course.

As an activity, each participant will reflect on his or her own experience as an adolescent reader by answering six questions listed in a mini-survey. Participants will then survey three friends or colleagues and reflect on information gained when participating in the online discussions.

Session Two: Selecting Literature

In this session we will focus on how to select adolescent literature that is compelling and motivating for students. We will also learn about booktalks, a specific strategy for motivating adolescent readers.

Participants will read:

- *Selecting Literature* on the Literacy Matters website
<http://www.literacymatters.org/adlit/selecting/intro.htm>
- *A Portrait of Popularity: An Analysis of Characteristics of Novels from Young Adults' Choices for 1997*
<http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/fall99/chance.html>

As an activity, students will look at several examples of booktalks online and then make a list of five characteristics of a good book talk.

Session Three: Reading Strategies

In this session, we will explore and discuss research-based reading strategies that can help students better comprehend and make meaning of adolescent literature. In addition, we will begin thinking about what to include in the adolescent literacy lesson plan you will be completing for your final project in this workshop.

Participants will read:

- *Research about Strategic Reading Instruction* which provides a quick overview of the characteristics of readers in the middle grades and the strategies found by educational researchers to improve reading.
<http://www.vismt.org/programs/vri/research.html>
- *Language Arts Reading Strategies*, which includes information about strategies students can use before, during, and after reading.
<http://www.howard.k12.md.us/langarts/Curriculum/strategies.htm>

As an activity, students will select one of the seven strategies described in *Mosaic of Thought: Teaching Comprehension in a Reader's Workshop* to explore further and to discuss how he or she might use the strategy in the future.

Session Four: Response Strategies

In this session, we will investigate classroom strategies for responding to literature through discussion, written expression, arts and crafts, drama, and the use of multimedia. Students will be given a choice of five readings about ways to respond to literature and students will be asked to visit at least two that are relevant to their classroom needs.

As an activity, students will visit *Web English Teachers Book Report Ideas*. (<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/bookreports.html>) They will review three or more options for alternate ways to respond to reading, choose a new response strategy to try out with their students, and then reflect on how they will use this idea in the future.

Session Five: Assessment

In this session, we will read about and discuss effective assessment techniques, with a particular focus on portfolio assessment. We will also have the opportunity to create rubrics to measure how well students have performed on their assessments.

Participants will read:

- *Understanding Authentic Classroom-Based Literacy Assessment*, by Sheila Valencia
<http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/res/litass/>
- *Middle Reading/Speaking Portfolio*, from the Cincinnati Public Schools website.
<http://www.cpsboe.k12.oh.us/standard/middle/MRPRSMP.htm>

As an activity, students will visit various websites to deepen their understanding of portfolios and the stages of implementing portfolio assessment. Students will make notes and prepare to discuss how they can integrate them into their literacy curriculum.

Session Six: Creating an Adolescent Literature Lesson Plan

In this session, we will create and share adolescent literature lesson plans, and review the essential concepts of the workshop.

Participants will read:

- *S.C.O.R.E. Cyber Guides Language Arts CyberGuides* which are supplementary, standards-based, web-delivered units of instruction centered on core works of literature.
<http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/SCORE/cyberguide.html>
- *Making Adolescent Literature Matter eworkshop: Teacher Lessons* which is an excellent teacher-developed web-based anticipation guide for the story "Bud Not Buddy."
<http://www.literacymatters.org/lessons/budnotbuddy.htm>

As a final activity, students will use the *Adolescent Literature Lesson Plan Template* to design a lesson that teaches a specific adolescent literature text. This lesson can be integrated into a unit teachers have already developed, or it can be a new addition to the curriculum. Finished templates will be posted for peers to view on the discussion board.