

MORAVIAN COLLEGE
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Education 390Z: Special Topics in Education
Teaching and Learning in the New York City Public Schools
Fall 2007

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Friday
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Room 320A

The New York City Department of Education is the largest public school system in the United States, educating approximately 1.1 million students each day in more than 1200 schools. In his 2007 State of the City speech, mayor Michael Bloomberg announced new reforms designed to empower building principals, ensure accountability, strengthen teaching, and provide equitable funding. Course registrants will experience the impact of these reforms firsthand as they spend one full day each week teaching and learning in a New York City public middle school. Students enrolled in this special topic course will also meet in a weekly seminar to discuss their teaching and their reading of *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflicts in the Classroom*, *The Skin That We Speak: Thoughts on Language and Culture in the Classroom*, *The Power of Their Ideas: Lessons for America from a Small School in Harlem*, *Teaching Reading to Black Adolescent Males: Closing the Achievement Gap*, and *Literacy with an Attitude: Educating Working-Class Children in Their Own Self-Interest*. Prerequisites: EDUC 150 Education in American Culture, EDUC 155 Educational Psychology, EDUC 242.2 Including Students with Special Needs. Signature of Dr. Shosh required. \$400 fee for bus and subway transportation.

Essential Question: *What are the most effective methods for teaching and learning in our nation's urban secondary schools? How do we know?*

Objectives

1. To develop teaching approaches and teacher behaviors which promote student engagement and student achievement in diverse urban learners.
2. To articulate, defend, and enact a personal philosophy of urban education.
3. To design, implement, and reflect upon effective standards-based instruction that leads to demonstrable student engagement and achievement in the urban classroom.
4. To teach and learn in an environment where knowing is negotiated, distributed, situated, constructed, developmental, and affective.

Required Texts

Delpit, Lisa. *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom, Updated Edition*. New York: New Press, 2006.

Delpit, Lisa and Joanne Kilgour Dowdy, eds *The Skin That We Speak: Thoughts On Language And Culture in the Classroom*. New York: New Press, 2002.

Finn, Patrick. *Literacy with an Attitude: Educating Working-Class Children in Their Own Self-Interest*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999.

Meier, Deborah. *The Power of Their Ideas: Lessons for America from a Small School in Harlem*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.

Steward, Kelly. *Closing The Achievement Gap In Urban English Language Arts Secondary School Classrooms: Summer School Student's Perspectives*. Unpublished Honor's Thesis. Moravian College. Bethlehem, PA.

Tatum, Alfred. *Teaching Reading To Black Adolescent Males: Closing The Achievement Gap*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 2005.

Selected Resources

- Allington, R. (2001). *What really matters for struggling readers: Designing research-based programs*. New York: Longman.
- Beers, K. (2003). *When kids can't read—What teachers can do: A guide for teachers 6-12*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003.
- Beers, K., Probst, E., & Reif, L. (Eds.) (2007). *Adolescent literacy: Turning promise into practice*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2007.
- Bell, S. (2005). *Applying flow theory to sixth grade language arts*. Unpublished Master's Thesis. Moravian College. Bethlehem, PA.
- Codell, Esmé Raji. (1999). *Educating Esmé: Diary of a Teacher's First Year*. New York: Algonquin Books.
- Daniels, H. (1994). *Literature circles: Voice and choice in the student-centered classroom*. York, Maine: Stenhouse.
- Heath, S. (1983). *Ways with words: Language, life, and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Meeks, L & Austin, C. (2003). *Literacy in the secondary English classroom: Strategies for teaching the way kids learn*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Michie, Gregory. (1999). *Holler If You Hear Me: The Education of a Teacher and His Students*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Monseau, V. & Salvner, M., eds. (2000). *Reading their world: The young adult novel in the classroom, Second edition*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Heinemann.
- Myers, W. (2001). *Bad boy: A memoir*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Paulsen, G. (1993). *Nightjohn*. New York: Bantam, Doubleday, Dell.
- Pirie, B. (1997). *Reshaping high school English*. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Smith, M., & Wilhelm, J. (2002). *Reading don't fix no chevys: Literacy in the lives of young men*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Thomson, J. (1987). *Understanding teenagers' reading: Reading Processes and the teaching of literature*. Norwood, S.A.: Australian Association for the Teaching of English.
- Tompkins, G. (1998). *50 literacy strategies: Step by step*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Tovani, C. (2000). *I read it, but I don't get it: Comprehension strategies for adolescent readers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse.
- Writerscorps. (2003). *Paint me like I am: Teen poems from writerscorps*. New York: Harper Collins.

Key Web Links

Annenberg Media Teacher Resources

<http://www.learner.org/>

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)

<http://www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd/index.jsp/>

International Reading Association

<http://www.reading.org/>

Listen Up!

<http://www.listenup.org/>

Middle Web Curriculum Strategies & Links

<http://www.middleweb.com/CurrStrategies.html>

Moravian College Reeves Library Web Sites for Education

<http://home.moravian.edu/public/reeves/books/web/edu.htm>

National Council of Teachers of English

<http://www.ncte.org/>

New York City Department of Education

<http://schools.nyc.gov/default.aspx>

New York Times Online

<http://www.nytimes.com/>

Pennsylvania Power Library

<http://www.statelibrary.state.pa.us/libraries/cwp/view.asp?a=11&q=37628>

Playbill On-Line

<http://www.playbill.com/index.php>

San Fernando Student Film Festival ICan

<http://www.sfett.com/>

Teen Ink

<http://www.teenink.com/>

United Streaming from Discovery Education

<http://www5.unitedstreaming.com/index.cfm>

Write Source

<http://www.thewritesource.com/>

Assignments and Grading

Assignments are due as indicated below. Please note that unless a mutually agreeable revised due date is negotiated with the instructor, any late assignment will lose five percentage points for each calendar day it is late, and any assignment not submitted within two weeks of the due date will receive a "0." It is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for an assignment or for a course.

1. Field Experience Journal	30%
• Entries e-mailed weekly beginning 9/7	
2. Response to Meier	15%
• Due 9/14	
3. Response to Delpit, Dowdy, & Tatum	15%
• Due 11/2	
4. Response to Finn	15%
• Due 11/30	
5. Final Exam: Teaching & Learning in NYC Public Schools	25%
• Due no later than 12/14	

Attendance

Attendance and participation in the field experience placement in New York City is an integral component of this course. If, for any reason, you are unable to attend school on a scheduled Friday, it is imperative that you notify

both the instructor and cooperating teacher as far in advance as possible. Due to the nature and structure of the special topics course, attendance at each weekly seminar is also crucial. If you must miss a session, please call me to explain. When an absence is unavoidable, a written response to the assigned readings must be submitted on or before the next regularly scheduled session. The written response will be evaluated as part of the journal. More than two absences may result in a failing grade for the course.

Academic Honesty

You are encouraged, and in some instances, required to use conventional and on-line secondary source materials, but all work that you submit must be your own. Be certain to cite the sources that you used, and take care to avoid plagiarism, which the *Moravian College Student Handbook* defines as “the use, deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgement” (52). Consult *Writers Inc.*, *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, and the student handbook for more information on this topic. Note that academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the assignment and notification of the Academic Dean, in accordance with Moravian College policy.

Course Schedule

Please note that while every effort will be made to follow the schedule indicated below, the syllabus is subject to change as the instructor deems necessary to help students meet the objectives of the course.

- Friday, August 31:** **Reforming New York City Public Middle Schools**
Course Overview: Logistics & Academics
Mayor Bloomberg’s 8/13/07 Middle School Reform Memorandum
Course Assignments
- Friday, September 7:** **Central Park East: An Alternative Story**
Due: Meier, *The Power of Their Ideas*, preface – p. 90
Journal Entry #1
- Friday, September 14:** **Small Schools & Learning Communities**
Due: Meier, *The Power of Their Ideas*, p. 91–186
Journal Entry #2
Response to Meier
- Friday, September 21:** **The Urban Schools Achievement Gap**
Due: Steward, *Closing the Achievement Gap*, Literature Review & Findings,
pp. xx-xx and xx-xx
Tatum, *Teaching Reading*, Introduction – Chapter 3, p. 1–35
Journal Entry #3
- Friday, September 28:** **Language & Identity**
Due: Delpit & Dowdy, *The Skin That We Speak*, Introduction – p. 30
Tatum, *Teaching Reading*, Chapters 4-6, p. 37–82
Journal Entry #4
- Friday, October 5:** **Skills and Other Dilemmas of a Progressive Black Educator**
Due: Delpit, *Other People’s Children*, p. 11–76
Tatum, *Teaching Reading*, Chapter 7, p. 83–107
Journal Entry #5
- Friday, October 12:** **Language in the Classroom**
Due: Delpit & Dowdy, *The Skin That We Speak*, 31–144
Journal Entry #6
- Friday, October 19:** **Lessons from Home and Abroad**
Due: Delpit, *Other People’s Children*, p. 77–134
Tatum, *Teaching Reading*, Chapters 8–9, p. 109–132
Journal Entry #7
- Friday, October 26:** **Teacher Knowledge**
Due: Delpit & Dowdy, *The Skin That We Speak*, 145–220

Tatum, *Teaching Reading*, Chapters 10–11, p. 133–153
Journal Entry #8

Friday, November 2: **Transforming Practice**
Due: Delpit, *Other People's Children*, p. 135–184
Journal Entry #9
Response to Delpit, Dowdy, & Tatum

Friday, November 9: **Social Stratification**
Due: Finn, *Literacy With An Attitude*, p. 1 –38
Journal Entry #10

Friday, November 16: **Oppositional Identity**
Due: Finn, *Literacy With An Attitude*, p. 39–120
Journal Entry #11

Friday, November 23: **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING**

Friday, November 30: **Critical Literacy**
Due: Finn, *Literacy With An Attitude*, p. 121–208
Journal Entry #12
Response to Finn

Friday, December 7: **Reflecting on Teaching & Learning in NYC Public Schools**

FINAL EXAM DUE VIA E-MAIL BY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 14.