

Queens College CUNY
Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education
 Spring, 2012

EECE 746: NONFICTION FOR CHILDREN

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 4:00-6:00; Thursdays, 2:00 to 4:00, or by appointment
Class Times: Thursdays, 4:30-7:00 PM, 108 PH

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

3 hr.; 3 cr. Elective course within the Children’s Literature Specialty. Students become acquainted with quality nonfiction books for children, and explore ways to promote children’s comprehension of informational books.

Conceptual Framework: Queens College Principles for Educator Preparation (QC-7)

This course is aligned with the Core Values of the Education Unit of promoting Equity, Excellence, and Ethics in urban schools and communities. More specifically, the Education Unit is committed to preparing teachers and educational professionals who: a) build inclusive communities that nurture and challenge all learners; b) demonstrate professionalism, scholarship, efficacy, evidence-based practice and reflection; and c) value diversity, democracy, and social justice.

This course is being offered by the Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education, which is part of the Education Unit at Queens College. The Education Unit seeks to promote equity, excellence, and ethics in urban education and is committed to developing competencies in all teacher preparation and other education professional candidates that will enable them to:

- Hold high expectations for all learners,
- Work as change agents to promote equity and social justice,
- Foster nurturing and challenging democratic learning communities, and
- Respect and honor diversity.

This course is aligned with the Education Unit’s commitment to preparing educational professionals to work in diverse urban and suburban communities. Specifically, the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that candidates will develop/demonstrate at the successful completion of this course are directly linked to the Education Unit’s seven principles: 1) discipline specific competencies, 2) learning and development, 3) families and urban communities, 4) diversity, inclusion, democracy and social justice, 5) language and literacy, 6) curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and 7) technology.

Education Unit’s Core Values

Equity: Building inclusive learning communities that challenge and nurture all students

Excellence: Encouraging professionalism, scholarship, and evidence-based and reflective practice

Ethics: Valuing diversity, democracy, and social justice

Education Principles

2, 3, 4, 5, 6

1, 2, 5, 6, 7

3, 4, 6

COURSE GOALS:

1. Evaluate the quality of nonfiction books for children.
2. Explore a wide variety of genres, structures, and forms of nonfiction for children.
3. Explore reading and writing nonfiction online for children.
4. Explore effective teaching methods for reading and writing nonfiction for children.

5. Explore inquiry-based learning using children's nonfiction and wonder books.

COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS:

Bamford, R. & Kristo, J. V. (2003). *Making facts come alive: Choosing and using quality nonfiction literature K-8* (2nd ed.). Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon.

Hoyt, L. (2002). *Make it real: Strategies for success with informational texts*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

You will need a bound notebook (like an elementary school notebook).

Children's Books:

You will read one of the following books with your book club group:

- (a) Curtis, C. P. (1999). *Bud, Not Buddy*. New York: Delacorte Press.
- (b) Hesse, K. (1997). *Out of the dust*. New York: Scholastic.
- (c) Koller, J. F. (1991). *Nothing to Fear*. New York: Gulliver Books.
- (d) Laskas, G. M. (2007). *The Miner's Daughter*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- (e) Muñoz-Ryan, P. (2000). *Esperanza rising*. New York: Scholastic.

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY:

The following articles are on our class Blackboard site:

Akhondi, M., Malayeri, F. A., & Samad, A. A. (2011). How to teach expository text structure to facilitate reading comprehension. *The Reading Teacher*, 64 (5) 368-372.

Chase, M. (2008). The warp and the weft: Using mentor texts to weave together reading, science, writing, and art. *Journal of Children's Literature*, 34 (2), 60-67.

Colman, P. (2007). A new way to look at literature: A visual model for analyzing fiction and nonfiction texts. *Language Arts*, 84 (3), 257-268.

Cudd, E. T. & Roberts, L. (1989). Using writing to enhance content area learning in the primary grades. *The Reading Teacher*, 42 (6), 392-404.

Dreher, M. J. (1998/1999). Motivating students to read more nonfiction. *The Reading Teacher*, 52 (4), 414-416.

Duke, N. K. (March, 2004). The case for informational text. *Educational Leadership*, 40-44.

Duke, N. K. & Billman, A. K. (2009) Informational text difficulty for beginning readers. In E. H. Hiebert & M. Sailors (Eds.), *Finding the right texts: What works for beginning and struggling readers* (pp. 109-128). New York: Guilford Press.

Go to following link:

http://books.google.com/books?id=2wkYBVGfzSMC&lpg=PA109&ots=anAV_Xf1Eo&dq=nonfiction%2C%20text%20difficulty&lr&pg=PA124#v=onepage&q=nonfiction,%20text%20difficulty&f=true

Gill, S. R. (2009). What teachers need to know about the "new" nonfiction. *The Reading Teacher*, 63 (4), 260-267.

Guillaume, A. M. (1998). Learning with text in the primary grades. *The Reading Teacher*, 51 (6), 476-486.

Harvey, S. (2002). Nonfiction inquiry: Using real reading and writing to explore the world. *Language Arts*, 80 (1), 12-22.

Henry, L.A. (2006). SEARCHing for an answer: The critical role of new literacies while reading on the Internet. *The Reading Teacher*, 59 (7), 614-627.

Leu, D., McVerry, G., O’Byrne, W. I., Zawilinski, J., Castek, J., et al. (2009). The new literacies of online reading comprehension and the irony of No Child Left Behind: Students who require our assistance the most, actually receive it the least. In L. M. Morrow, R. Rueda, & D. Lapp (Eds.), *Handbook of research on literacy instruction: Issues of diversity, policy, and equity*. New York: Guilford.

Robb, L. (2002). Multiple texts: Multiple opportunities for teaching and learning. *Voices from the Middle*, 9 (4), 28-32.

Roser, N. L. & Keehn, S. (2002). Fostering thought, talk, and inquiry: Linking literature and social studies. *The Reading Teacher*, 55 (5), 416-426.

Serafini, F. (2011). Expanding perspectives for comprehending visual images in multimodal texts. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 54 (5), 342-350.

Young, T. A. & Vardell, S. (1993). Weaving Readers Theater and nonfiction into the curriculum. *The Reading Teacher*, 46 (5), 396-406.

Zarnowski, M. (2008). The craft of historical nonfiction writing: Learning from mentor texts. *Journal of Children’s Literature*, 34 (2), 43-50.

Zawilinski, L. (2009). HOT Blogging: A framework for blogging to promote higher order thinking. *The Reading Teacher*, 62 (8), 650-661.

THURSDAYS, 4:30-7:00 PM:

Session/ Date	Topics (Tentative)	Readings	Assignment / Materials
1 2/2	Overview: Why nonfiction? What is nonfiction? The Common Core State Standards How we have used nonfiction in our classrooms Sources of quality nonfiction Choosing Quality Nonfiction		

<p>2 2/9</p>	<p>Evaluating nonfiction books, Part I: Accuracy and organization Expository v. Narrative Expository text frames Understanding text structure</p>	<p>B & K (2003), ch's 1 & 2</p>	<p>Bring in high-quality nonfiction book(s) for accuracy and organization Bring in a bound notebook for your Wonder Book</p>
<p>3 2/23</p>	<p>Evaluating nonfiction books, Part II: Access features and visual displays; integrating information from texts and visual displays; examining detailed visuals Wonder Books</p>	<p>Akhondi, Malayari, & Samad (2011) B & K (2003), ch. 3 Harvey (2002)</p>	<p>Bring in high-quality nonfiction book(s) for access features and visual displays</p>
<p>4 3/1</p>	<p>Evaluating nonfiction books, Part III: Design, incorporating “radical change” features, having instructional conversations about design Exploring visual literacy</p>	<p>B & K (2003), ch. 4 Serafini (2011)</p>	<p>Bring in high-quality nonfiction book for aspects of design Criteria #1 Book Review</p>
<p>5 3/8</p>	<p>Evaluating nonfiction books, Part IV: Writing style, mentor texts, craft lessons</p>	<p>B & K (2003), ch. 5 Chase (2008) Zarnowski (2008)</p>	<p>Bring in high-quality nonfiction book for writing style Criteria #2 Book Review</p>
<p>6 3/15</p>	<p>Awards criteria: a summary of our work so far A new way to look at literature Discussing upcoming assignments Exploratory talk Book Club #1</p>	<p>Gill (2009) Colman (2007) Book Club Book (Part 1 of 3)</p>	<p>Bring in: (a) a high quality non-fiction book (about the Great Depression) (b) high-quality nonfiction books for emergent, early, transitional, and self-extending readers to share Criteria #3 Book Review Hand in Wonder Books #1</p>
<p>7 3/22</p>	<p>Choosing books for our readers A balanced literacy framework: key components for nonfiction instruction</p>	<p>B & K (2003), ch. 6 Duke & Billman (2009) Book Club Book (Part 2 of 3)</p>	<p>Bring in high-quality nonfiction books for emergent, early, transitional, and self-extending readers to</p>

	Explicit Instruction Book Club #2		share Criteria #4 Book Review
8 3/29	Read aloud and shared reading of non-fiction Reading Comprehension Strategies, Part I Book Club #3	Book Club Book (Part 3 of 3) B & K (2003), ch. 11, 14 Hoyt (2002), ch's 1-8	
9 4/5	Reading Comprehension Strategies, Part II Inquiry work	Hoyt (2002), ch's 9-16 Guillaume (1998) Young & Vardell (1993)	Bring in a non-fiction text that you can convert into a Reader's Theater text (as described in Young & Vardell)
10 4/19	Reading Comprehension Strategies, cont. Developing reading pathways Inquiry group work, Part 1	B & K (2003), ch. 12 Hoyt (2002), ch's 17-20	Bring in many kinds of non-fiction texts (to explore reading pathways)
11 4/26	Writing nonfiction strategies Expanding and exploring what counts as nonfiction for children: nonfiction magazines Inquiry group work, Part 2	Revisit Hoyt (2002), ch. 20 Cudd & Roberts (1989) Dreher (1998/1999)	Strategies for Reading Nonfiction
12 5/3	Writing nonfiction strategies, cont. Reading and writing online: blogs, wikis, webpages, e-mails, social networks, etc. Inquiry group work, Part 3	Henry (2006) Leu et al. (2009) Zawilinski (2009)	Hand in Wonder Books #2
13 5/10	Building text sets for integrated units of study One model of inquiry work Inquiry group work, Part 4	Revisit Hoyt (2002), ch. 14 Robb (2002) Roser & Keehn (2002)	Bring in texts connected to the Great Depression (including children's books) Strategies for Writing Nonfiction
14 5/17	Revisiting the Common Core Standards Creating a classroom community for n.f. Group presentations Taking stock of our learning	Duke (2004)	Group oral presentations

ASSIGNMENTS, DUE DATES, AND GRADING PLAN

Grading for this course is based on a point system out of 100 total points. You will receive a final letter grade, based on the following point scale:

Final Points	Grade Equivalent
97-100	A+
93-96	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
60-69	D
0-59	F

Assignments: Type and double-space all assignments, using 12-point Times New Roman font, with one inch margins all around, and do your best proofreading for punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Follow the guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition* (tutorial available FREE at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). For the proper use of citations and references, simply pay close attention to the formatting of this syllabus, all the journal articles, and our textbooks for this course.

To alleviate pressure on you, due dates are recommended, and I will accept all assignments until May 17th without penalty. Any assignments received after May 17th will be deducted 10% of the grade. There are two advantages to completing the assignments by the due dates: (a) the course work will be more manageable because you will spread out your work so that it does not all pile up; (b) you will have the opportunity to re-write any assignments for a re-grade. Conversely, you will not be able to re-write any assignments handed in after the specified due date for a re-grade.

1. Participation

Class Attendance and Participation: Scheduled class sessions are an integral part of the course. I keep careful records of attendance and participation. You are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, be prepared, and participate in all discussions and group work. You are considered late if you arrive after I take attendance at the start of class. I completely understand that emergencies arise, but in the event of an absence or lateness, please let me know as far in advance as possible. Please confirm illnesses, medical procedures, or emergencies with doctors' notes or other verification. Your latenesses will accumulate and more than two absences will result in a lowered final grade. **You are responsible for the content of all class work, regardless of lateness or absence.**

This course demands professional behavior, which includes respect for the instructor and your peers, attentiveness, and a positive attitude. Sleeping, using your cell phone, instant

messaging, or other uses of electronics. Let me know if you must receive or make a call during class time, and please step out of the room for this purpose.

Course readings are always a key component of class discussions. I collect individual and group responses to assigned reading (both for homework and in class), and your responses are included in this grade. Your participation grade also includes responding promptly to e-mail communications by me, when necessary, interacting on the Blackboard site (including the Class Blogs), and participating on our www.goodreads.com group site (QC EECE 746, Spring, 2012).

Points: 15 points

2. Using Criteria to Examine Nonfiction Literature

Each week, after reading the assigned chapter in *Making Facts Come Alive*, use the information in the chapter to describe and evaluate a nonfiction book for children. The book you select might be *one* of the books recommended in the chapter **or** a book that has received one of the prominent awards for children's nonfiction:

- Orbis Pictus
- Robert F. Sibert
- Golden Kite
- Boston Globe-Horn Book
- Children's Book Guild Nonfiction.

In addition, you might look at annual lists:

- American Library Association Notable Children's Books (www.ala.org)
- Bank Street College Children's Book Awards Committee (<http://www.bankstreet.edu/bookcom/awards.html>)
- International Reading Association Children's Choices (www.reading.org/choices/)
- Notable Children's Trade Books in the Field of Social Studies (www.ncss.org/resources/notable/)
- Outstanding Science Trade Books for Children (www.nsta.org).

You will write three papers out of the four criteria that we learn. For the three papers, select two books for younger children (preK-3) and one for older readers (3-8), or two books for older children and one for younger readers. Each criteria paper is approximately 3 pages or 750 words in length.

Criteria #1: Accuracy and Organization Due 3/1

1. Provide a complete citation and summary highlighting the main idea and the distinctive features of the book.
2. Discuss the book's **accuracy**. Examine the book jacket, verso of the title page, introduction, author's note, illustrator's note, and bibliography. What can you tell about the author's credentials? What is the copyright date of the book? Does it influence its accuracy?
3. Describe the book's **organization**. What is the overall structure of the book? (enumerative, sequence, chronological, compare-contrast, cause-effect, narrative) Is the organization appropriate for the content? Is it logical? Is the structure effective for providing information and does it support the reader?

Criteria #2: Access Features and Visual Displays Due 3/8

1. Provide a complete citation and summary.
2. Describe the **access features** provided: table of contents, index, glossary, sidebars, bibliography, author's and illustrator's notes. How do these features provide access to the ideas in the book?
3. Describe the type(s) of **visual displays** provided: photography, diagrams, maps, tables. How do these displays supplement and extend the written text? How can teachers support children's understanding of these displays?

Criteria #3: Design Due 3/15

1. Provide a complete citation and summary.
2. Describe the distinguishing features of the book's **design** such as: book shape and size, binding, dust jacket, cover, endpapers, page layouts, typography and ink. How can teachers support children's understanding of book design? What would be important to talk about?

Criteria #4: Writing Style Due 3/22

1. Provide a complete citation and summary.
2. Describe and give examples of the distinguishing features of the book's **writing style** such as: clarity and coherence, use of figurative language, voice, tone, vivid language, vocabulary, lead and conclusion. How can teachers help children appreciate the author's style?

Points: 30 Points (10 Points each)

3. Strategies for Reading Nonfiction

Select one of the books you read for this course **or** a well written article from a children's magazine such as *Cobblestone*, *Time for Kids*, *National Geographic for Kids*, or *Ranger Rick* to share with one or more children (K-6) as a means of helping them explore and understand nonfiction. Magazine articles need to be approved by me before you begin this assignment. Besides sharing the book or article, provide opportunities for interacting with the information by using one or more strategies from *Make It Real* (Hoyt). Choose **one or more** of these strategies:

- (pp. 39-41) Building Prior Knowledge of the Topic
- (pp. 47-51) Creating a Wall Story
- (pp. 58-60) Read, Cover, Remember, Represent, Retell
- (pp. 76-78) Using the Making Words Strategy with Informational Text
- (pp. 90-91) Making a Reading Plan
- (pp. 104-109) Frontloading
- (pp. 114-117) Prereading Word Sorts
- (pp. 120-125) Scaffolding Reader Questions
- (pp. 126-127) Cause and Effect
- (pp. 128-129) Conducting Interviews
- (pp. 139-141) Sketching My Way Through the Text
- (pp. 98-99) Inferring in Informational Text

Prepare a **paper** which should include the following parts:

1. Context: Where and when the work took place; student(s); teacher
 2. Book or Journal Article: A citation and brief summary, why it was selected, description of unique features.
 3. Strategy or Strategies: Tell which strategy or strategies you selected and why.
 4. Procedure: Tell how you initiated, maintained, and completed the reading. Tell what you said and did, and then describe in detail how the child(ren) responded. **Provide samples of children's responses.** Discuss how you used one or more ideas from the Hoyt book.
 5. Conclusions: Tell what you learned from this experience. Comment on (1) the literature you used, (2) the strategy or strategies, and (3) the children's responses.
- To get full credit, your paper should be thoughtful and detailed.

Points: 20 Points

Due date: 4/26

4. Strategies for Writing Nonfiction

Using the information in chapter 20 of *Make It Real* (Hoyt), design and conduct an investigation with one or more students (K-6). Your investigation should include: (1) a double page layout, (2) a brief investigation of the topic, (3) a conscious effort to use the features of information text, (4) concise, information written about the topic, (5) topic-related borders.

If you are working with younger children, you might want to use key words like teacher Tom Wrightman (see pp. 300-305). Older students can do simple notetaking paragraph writing and subtitles like students in teacher Natasha Hays' class (see pp. 305-308) or reading, summarizing, and paragraph writing like teacher Diane Gast (see pp. 309-311). All investigations should include visual features such as captions, sidebars, headings, illustrations, bold type, and borders.

Also consider Investigation Alphabet Books (p. 312) and Hero Investigations (p. 313). There are a number of variations you can consider.

Submit a report including the following:

1. Context: Where and when the investigation took place; student(s) age and grade.
2. Topic of the investigation
3. Detailed description of how you introduced, developed, and completed the investigation. Discuss (1) the use of modeled writing, (2) introducing examples of visual design and format, (3) investigating the topic, (4) working on a final product.
4. Student samples.
5. Your reflection on the experience: Your thoughts about (1) the investigation process, (2) your role in supporting student investigation, and (3) the student work. Comment specifically on the work of one or more children.

Points: 20 Points

Due date: 5/10

5. Group Inquiry Presentation

Your group will take on an inquiry topic that we develop in class, research the topic, and present your findings in class. Your group must create a digital presentation of the information. Some options are:

- PowerPoint or Prezi
- Digital movie (using iMovie or Movie Maker or Photo Story or Animoto)
- Podcast
- Google Maps “story”

Presentations will be evaluated according to these criteria: (1) clarity and thoughtfulness of presentation, (2) extent and accuracy of new information offered, (3) engagement of the audience, (4) design elements, such as use of images, font and format, soundtrack, text, layout, etc., (5) brevity: approximately 5 minutes.

Due date: 5/17

Points: 5 Points

6. Wonder Book

Keep a Wonder Book, as Harvey (2002) describes. We will use this Wonder Book in class to respond to the interactive read-aloud, to your Book Club book, and to keep notes for your inquiry project, so please bring your Wonder Book with you to class. In addition, use other ideas that Harvey lists (we will also try some of these ideas in class). You will be graded for Volume, Thoughtfulness, Variety, and overall Maintenance of the book. I will grade your Wonder Book twice. Have 10 or more entries each time, for a total of 20 or more entries.

Due dates: 3/15 and 5/3

Points: 10 Points

CUNY POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Academic Dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion as provided at:

<http://qcpages/qc.cuny.edu/provost/policies/index.html>

ADA Statement:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Special Services Office, Kiely 171; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information about services available to Queens students contact: Dr. Miriam Hickey, Special Services Office, 171 Kiely Hall, 718-997-5870 (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM). From there you can find out who the contact person is and his or her e-mail address.

USE OF STUDENT WORK:

All teacher education programs in New York State undergo periodic reviews by accreditation agencies and the state education department. For these purposes, samples of students' work are made available to those professionals conducting the review. Student anonymity is assured under these circumstances. If you do not wish to have your work made available for these purposes,

please let the professor know before the start of the second class. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.