

**Curriculum and Instruction in English, ED 262B**  
**Fall, 2003: Assignment #1**  
**Grossman and Compton**

**Investigating students' reading of literature/  
Teaching strategies for reading literature**  
**Due October 28**

This assignment provides you with an opportunity to explore how an individual student reads and engages with a literary text. We will teach you some tools, including the think-aloud and clinical interview, for trying to make more visible **how** students read challenging text. If we better understand how our students are engaging with texts and some of the difficulties they may encounter, we will be able to plan instruction more effectively.

The second part of the assignment asks you to identify a strategy for reading literature that you think would benefit the student you interviewed and then to design a lesson to teach that strategy to a class. The lesson should build upon your observations of the student's engagement with literature. Finally, as always, we ask you to reflect on what you learned from this assignment.

***Tasks:***

This assignment has several components that you will need to complete before you can write the final paper.

***Getting Ready***

1. Choose a student from one of your classes with whom to work. Try to choose a student about whom you have questions regarding their reading comprehension; a student who poses a puzzle. You may want to use the same student for both this assignment and your adolescent case study.
2. Choose a short text (a poem or a very short story) you can work with the student to see how he/she reads and engages with literature. Choose a text that you suspect will be slightly challenging for the student, but will not be so difficult that they will have no chance of understanding it. The text should provide you with opportunities to see how your student works through complex reading processes, and should therefore not be too easy.
3. As you read through the text, think about what specific features might pose difficulties for students. Is the vocabulary likely to be unfamiliar? Is syntactic structure unusual or challenging? Are allusions made to other literary texts, events or people? Also, think through the strategies you used to understand this text. Did you re-read? Did you look up words?
4. Have your student think aloud as he/she reads the text (we will model this in class). Be sure to take note of the kinds of strategies the student uses, and the kinds of

challenges he/she encounters. Remember, your job is NOT to teach the text but to get inside your students' thinking and reading processes! Do not feel you need to give your student the "correct" interpretation. Keep notes of the ways that your student is making sense of the text, how they are puzzling through the text, what strategies they are using. Following the think-aloud, you may want to engage them in some questions about their process of understanding the text and what they might do next (e.g. clinical interview).

5. Critically analyze what it is your student understands about the text using evidence from the assessments to support your analysis. Identify a strategy for reading literature that would help your student make sense of this particular text. This can be a strategy that the student does not seem to be using, or a strategy that they are using ineffectively.

**Written Report:**

**The written product for this assignment includes 3 sections:**

**I. Description and Analysis of Student Reading (3-5 pages)**

- a) *Description of text and student:* Describe the text and your rationale for choosing it. Part of your description should include your own understanding of the text, and why you believe it is important for students to understand this text. Also, describe the student you selected and your reasons for selecting this particular student.
- b) *Description of what you learned about student's reading:* Using evidence and ideas you have gathered from your interactions with the student, describe what you learned about the student's understanding from the think aloud and interview.
  - i) What reading strategies do you see the student using?
  - ii) What puzzles do you notice regarding the student's understanding? How might you account for them?
  - iii) what specific strategies might help this student in reading and interpreting literature?

**II. Lesson Plan:** Based on your analysis, identify a particular strategy for reading literature that you might teach this student and the rest of the class. **Develop a lesson plan** that is designed to help students develop this particular strategy for reading literature. Remember to include the following items in your lesson plan (see summer assignment for details):

- a. Your goals and objectives for student learning
- b. The specific content for the lesson
- c. How you plan to help students learn this content
- d. How will you know what students have learned.

**III. Reflection: (2 pages)**

What did you learn about assessing understanding as a result of working on this project? What questions do you have about assessment and/or understanding literature? What issues about assessment does this raise for you?

### **Assessment**

Your understanding of assessing understanding (whew) will be based on the following criteria:

*Completeness:* You have completed all of the required tasks and have included all of the components of the final report.

*Thoughtfulness and thoroughness:* You have gone through the evidence of students' understanding and have considered each one thoughtfully. Your analysis is thorough, accounting for both understanding and lack of understanding, and integrates readings from the class. You offer specific evidence from your interaction with the student to support your analysis of understanding. Your reflection addresses what you have learned from this assignment, as well as the questions that persist.

*Quality of lesson plan:* The lesson plan identifies a specific strategy for reading literature (e.g. not a literary device), and develops an engaging lesson for helping students learn to use this strategy in their own reading. The plan is detailed enough so that your colleagues would be able to use and adapt it. The lesson must also provide opportunities for students to practice the strategy you are trying to teach. Students should be actively engaged in using the strategy.

*Quality of writing:* Your final report is well organized, clearly written, and free of grammatical and spelling errors. The report reflects positively on your professional role as an English teacher.

## Assessment of Students' Understanding of Literature Rubric

| Criteria | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|----------|---|---|---|
|----------|---|---|---|

*Completeness*  
all pieces of  
assignment are  
included

*Specificity*  
Specific examples  
are drawn from the  
assessments to  
support claims or  
conclusions about  
student  
understanding

*Thoroughness/Analysis*  
All assessments are  
drawn upon. Strengths  
and weaknesses of  
different assessment  
tools are discussed

*Instructional Implications*  
Implications for  
instruction follow from  
the analysis and  
aim to support students'  
understanding

*Quality of Writing*  
Paper is clearly written  
and is free of  
mechanical errors

