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**AEDS 518 Portfolio**

**Course Goal 1: Articulate a personal rationale for content area literacy instruction**.

When I first started this course this semester, I claimed I was not going to be an English teacher. Now that it is the end of the semester I see how I will be an English teacher almost daily. There are several needs for content area literacy. Even as a future mathematics teacher, my students will encounter plenty of English language daily and will need to be literate to be successful. Since these words are going to be content area specific words, they will not be taught in their English class and it will be up to me to make sure my students know them, understand them, and can apply them correctly which means I will be teaching them English.

In my adolescent literature class, I was required to teach a lesson about a book to my fellow classmates as I would teach the lesson to a class full of students. For this assignment, I chose the book *Heartland* by Lauren Brooke. This is a book about a family with a rehabilitation farm for horses. Since most of my students are mostly likely not familiar with horses, they would not be familiar with the specialized and technical words that are used when talking about horses. To address this issue with my students, I used a pre-reading activity that would make the students familiar with the vocabulary used in the book before we started reading the book. I handed out a worksheet with a list of specialized and technical words that were found in the book. We went over the words and the meanings. We were able to recognize which words were specialized words that they had heard previously in other context like the words bay or chestnut. To the students they originally meant a body of water or nuts you eat at Christmas, respectively. After learning the new meanings as they would be applied in the book the students were able to understand that they are used to describe the colors of horses. I also had slides prepared to be able to show the students the difference between the horses that were those colors. We also saw a lot of words that you would only find used to describe horses like the word gelding. After we went over the different meanings of the words, I handed out another worksheet. This worksheet had a crossword puzzle. This required the students to read the definition and match it with the correct word. This was a vital exercise to make the students familiar with the words through practice.

I had explained to the students that the author wanted us to be able to visualize each horse individually so we could connect better with the story. This activity was essential for my teaching. My students would have struggled with comprehending and indentifying with the characters in the book without this assignment. They would have read that Copper was a chestnut gelding and not had a clue what that meant. This can create a disconnect with students where they are simply reading the words but not fully connecting, understanding, or comprehending what it is saying and meaning. When students struggle with this, they are less likely to even master the remembering stage of blooms taxonomy. From this activity I learned firsthand the importance of pre-reading exercises like we learned in this class.

For my future teaching, even if it does not involve reading a book, I will always use a pre-reading exercise. In Mathematics, my students will learn numerous words that have two or more meanings along with words that are only used in math. If my students are not familiar with these words or do not understand how they apply to math, they will not be able to fully comprehend what is being taught in math. Introducing the vocabulary words before the students will need to know them will be vital in my classroom and implemented daily.

**Course Goal 4: List specific strategies for addressing the content area literacy needs of struggling readers and English language learners**.

One assignment that was given in this course was to write a paper about the content area literacy needs of struggling readers and English language learners. When I started that assignment, I thought the only difficulties that would be encountered would be if the students did not know the meanings of technical math words like polygon. I thought struggling readers would just not know as many of the words as the other students. Through my research I found many areas where struggling readers and English language learners would be deficit.

One of the main areas I identified for struggling readers and for English language learners were word problems. Students will also encounter words problems in mathematics that I need to make sure my students know how to read and understand what it is asking. Struggling readers usually do not have as high of a lexile level as their peers and may not be able to read or understand even common words. When this happens, the students will not even attempt the problem or may think the problem is asking something else. English language learners will struggle with this problem as well. Their English vocabulary of even the most basic words may be very low and students will not understand what the question is asking because they cannot read what the word says. These students may know how to do the problem correctly if told what the problem says versus being forced to read what the problem says.

One of the other requirements for the paper was to find ways to help these students in their needs. I read many books with many different techniques. Some of these techniques may not be practical in a daily mathematics classroom. However, I was able to find many that were. With this information I have learned, I will be able to better meet the needs of my students. Through this course, we have learned how to use some of these many techniques like the Frayer model. Graphic organizers will be extremely helpful in putting into practice. These are great tools for specialized words that have two meanings. Students are able to identify the meaning they are already familiar with and then compare to its new meaning in math. They can list examples and counter examples. This helps them fit these words into their already existing schema. Another great but simple technique for English language learners and struggling readers is to simply have them follow along a written sheet of instructions as you read aloud. This will help the students associate the words as they are read. If the student is a struggling reader or English language learner the student may understand the word and its appropriate meaning but just have trouble reading the words. Over time the students will be able to improve their reading skills as well.

**Course Goal 5: Identify strategies for incorporating writing opportunities in content area instruction**.

When people think on mathematics, they rarely think of writing. Even though students will encounter reading everywhere in mathematics, writing with the exception of copying down notes or solving problems is not very common. One opportunity I used to incorporate writing into mathematics was found when I was taking a multi cultural education class and was required to incorporate multiculturalism into my teaching. I created an assignment for the students to complete during the first semester of school. The students had to present a presentation to the rest of their classmates on a topic having to do with mathematics. It could be on an important person in the field of mathematics or an invention that is used. The students would have to write a paper that would be turned in for a grade discussing the research they had found. It had to be at least a page long. As an example I completed the same project and presented it to them. For my example, I researched the abacus. It was the very first instrument used to add numbers together. I presented information in a PowerPoint about its inventor. We looked at pictures of them. I even created a project for the students to do. We all made an abacus in class out of skewers and beads. After making them, we learned how to use them to add. In the end, I passed out a copy of my paper that I had written that included all of the information I had presented to them so they had a reference. By making the paper into a well rounded project, the students would not stress over writing a paper. They were encouraged to have fun with it and include an activity. By taking the focus off the paper itself and explaining it was only a formal way to provide me with all of the information they had found researching, the students overlooked the fact they were writing a paper for a mathematics class.

Since taking this class this semester, I have learned that it is not only up to the language arts teachers to teach reading and writing. Reading and writing should be implemented into every classroom. With the techniques, importance, and applications that I have learned this semester, I know I will be able to utilize all of it in my classroom. The applications were the best help to see just how much of a difference it really makes to the students and how more they can learn when these needs are addressed.