

Section 2: Program Summary

Language Arts (BX): Elementary Major and Minor

The University Detroit Mercy (UDM), a Catholic institution whose mission flows from the educational traditions of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas and the Society of Jesus, exists to provide excellent student-centered undergraduate and graduate education in an urban context. A UDM education seeks to integrate the intellectual, spiritual, ethical, and social development of students. It emphasizes the worth of the individual. Further, the University expects its diverse graduates to be distinguished world citizens, community members, and leaders who:

- Reflect on the meaning of their lives.
- Think and communicate clearly, imaginatively, and effectively.
- Process the skills and competencies of a college education.
- Understand diverse cultural heritages.
- Have a sense of social responsibility and a desire to serve society.

(2003-2005 Undergraduate Catalog, 89-91)

UDM's Core Curriculum (Published in the *Undergraduate Catalog*, which is a link on the web site) consists of a set of requirements (48 hours) based on six objectives that express, in further detail, this academic purpose. The list of approved core courses is published in the *Schedule of Classes* issued for each term. Education candidates seeking certification in Language Arts graduate from the College of Liberal Arts and Education which requires 6 additional hours in the University Core. The requirements are the same for Objectives 1-Communication Skills, 2-Mathematical and Computer Skills, 3-Scientific Literacy, and 4-Meaning and Value. For Objective 5-Diverse Human Experiences, candidates are required to complete six additional hours in history, literature, aesthetic experiences, or comparative experiences as well as the 12 required of all students. As Language Arts candidates complete an interdisciplinary course of study (English, Communication, and Theatre), they are not eligible for the option in Objective 6-Social Responsibility to use a capstone seminar for three hours of the six hours required in this objective.

UDM offers teacher certification with endorsement in Language Arts (BX) for individuals who wish to teach in elementary schools. The Language Arts Education program is aligned with the *Michigan Curriculum Framework (MCF)* to ensure that candidates are prepared to teach the language arts of listening, speaking, viewing, reading and writing—traditionally and electronically to elementary age children in grades K-8. In the elementary school curriculum, Language Arts is frequently taught within a block of time so that students use interdisciplinary relationships to learn concepts and skills. The teacher certification program for Language Arts is designed to provide a solid foundation of concepts and principles useful to prospective teachers for integrating the language arts.

A. Philosophy, Rationale, and Objectives

Philosophy: The philosophies of the English, Communication, Theatre, and Education Departments complement the mission of UDM and its Core Curriculum

objectives. The departments share the common belief that knowledge and understanding begin with a strong foundation in the academic content and in the principles of inquiry inherent in the languages arts, specifically English, Communication, and Theatre. The program emphasizes the preparation of teachers who combine a strong background in the subject matter of reading and writing, speaking and listening, literature and language. Language Arts teachers know how to integrate Language Arts instruction and possess the pedagogical understanding to plan and implement a program in elementary schools that is consistent with current research and practice for developing literacy in the Language Arts. For elementary education candidates to be prepared to teach students from diverse backgrounds, socio-economic status, and abilities in urban, suburban, and rural settings, UDM English, Communications, Theatre, and Education faculty members believe they must be provided with a program that fully integrates Language Arts academic knowledge with a strong pedagogy program. The faculty members from these four departments, therefore, collaborate with each other to ensure that candidates receive the appropriate instruction, content, pedagogy, and advising to become effective elementary educators.

Rationale: The essence of the Language Arts is communication—exchanging and exploring information and insights to help students make sense of the world. To participate in today’s and tomorrow’s society and workplace, Education candidates must be able to engage successfully in listening, speaking, viewing, visually representing, reading and writing activities, and various technology for a variety of different purposes and situations. To accomplish the above goals the Language Arts Education program offers a wide variety of literature, writing, and communications courses that will increase candidates’ understanding of themselves, their communities, and their world; thereby preparing them to teach these skills to their elementary students.

Objectives: The general objectives for the preparation of all elementary and secondary teacher education candidates, including those with a Language Arts major or minor, are delineated in the *Conceptual Framework of the Education Department*, which is published annually along with the “Education Department’s Code of Ethics” in its *Teacher Education Handbook*. This *Framework*, which complements the Michigan Department of Education’s Standards for the Language Arts program, the Entry-Level Standards for Michigan Teachers (ELSMT), and the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification: Language Arts (2003) identifies three dimensions of the role of teacher:

- A *scholar* who uses the research-knowledge base for teaching integrated with the liberal arts and sciences disciplines.
- An *inquirer* who is skilled in decision-making based on ethical, critical, and reflective thinking.
- A *moral agent* who values and acts according to the UDM values and the “Department of Education Professional Code of Ethics.”

A more detailed explanation of these objectives is found in the *Teacher Education Handbook* and the *Conceptual Framework of the Education Department* on the website.

These general objectives, in addition to complementing the University mission and the Language Arts department’s philosophy, reflect the key ideas expressed by the Michigan State Board of Education in the resources named previously. The content categories of the MTTC Language Arts (Elementary) test have been reviewed by the Education faculty members, who believe that the Language Arts program of studies effectively prepares candidates for certification as teachers of Language Arts in the elementary classroom.

Sub area	Approximate Percentage Of Questions on Test
Meaning and Communication	28%
Literature, Genre, and Craft	36%
Skills and Processes	36%

Meaning and Communication

- Demonstrate an understanding of the integrated nature of the English language arts.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the social, cultural, and dynamic nature of verbal and nonverbal language.
- Demonstrate familiarity with concepts relating to language development and acquisition of first and second languages.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the elements of effective communication in a variety of rhetorical situations.

Literature, Genre, and Craft

- Demonstrate familiarity with concepts relating to the structure of language.
- Demonstrate an understanding of literature as oral, written, and visual texts.
- Demonstrate familiarity with a wide variety of high-quality contemporary and classical literature for children and young adolescents.
- Demonstrate familiarity with techniques that authors use to convey meaning, enhance appreciation, and influence an audience.
- Demonstrate familiarity with critical standards used to evaluate texts and mass media.

Skills and Processes

- Demonstrate familiarity with multiple strategies for determining the meaning of unfamiliar words and concepts in text.
- Demonstrate familiarity with inquiry processes and the resources appropriate for investigating particular questions or topics.
- Demonstrate familiarity with the nature of the writing process.
- Demonstrate familiarity with the special skills required in the production of mass media.

Demonstrate familiarity with techniques for student goal setting, reflection, and self-assessment at different linguistic developmental levels.

The fundamental goal of the Language Arts program is to provide Elementary Education majors and minors with a rich understanding of the profound role that language plays in the personal, political, social, ethical, and moral arenas of their lives. We inculcate in them the mastery of language they need to influence those arenas—both in their own lives and in the lives of others—and to do so with a high level of discernment and a strong commitment to service. Not only are they prepared to meet the objectives of the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification and the National Council of Teachers of English objects, but they are also ready to go out into the world as confident, knowledgeable, and committed teachers who will be shining exemplars of the Language Arts program and its commitment to its students.

B. Sequence of Courses and/or Experiences

The sequence of courses listed in Form XX for elementary Language Arts majors and minors provides a systematic study of the principles, terminology, methodology, and fields of study inherent in the English, Communications/Speech, and Theatre disciplines. The sequence of courses required for the Language Arts major and minor have been selected to emphasize the state standards of the teacher education program and the objectives of the MTTC Language Arts test. With the exception of transfer students who present evidence of equivalent course work, as part of the University Core Curriculum all students take ENL 130 and/or ENL 131, depending on the writing abilities determined during their orientation testing program. If a student requires additional instruction and practice in preparation for ENL 131, he/she completes ENL 130 first. In both courses, Education students receive a rigorous classroom education that puts them through the paces of readings, quizzes, and tests, as well as the writing of expository, comparison/contrast, and persuasive essays. Students in ENL 131 must also meet the demands of the research paper. Language Arts candidates then select one course from the “Reading and Writing” list: ENL 201 The Journal, 202 Writing Across the Curriculum, or 205 Introduction to Creative Writing. These writing courses offer students the opportunity to investigate and practice various forms of writing specific to each genre as well as those common to all. ENL 202 provides students with the opportunity to learn about the terminology, methodology, and assumptions of diverse disciplines, from biology to anthropology. No matter which course they select, candidates are engaged in these disciplinary practices through research, oral presentations, and written productions and opportunities to understand how other disciplines use the language arts skills.

They also choose one course from the “Writing and Language” list: ENL 301 The Writing of Fiction, 302 The Writing of Poetry, 303 Technical Writing, 304 Writing of Screenplays, 305 Freelance Writing for Print and Web, 306, Research and Research Writing, or 326 History of the English Language. Whichever writing and language courses the Language Arts candidates choose, they develop an understanding of how the writer operates and the mastery of language they need to

shape and enrich their own lives and the lives of their future students. The candidates must choose two courses from the “Literature-Genre” list: ENL 235 The Study of Fiction, 245 Poetry, 255 Film, or 265 Drama. Each course introduces students to the various genres of literature (fiction, poetry, drama), instructing them in the critical vocabulary and concepts necessary for discussing and writing about literary works while also introducing them to various critical approaches to these works (New Criticism, structuralism, psychoanalytic criticism, among others). Language Arts majors choose two courses from the “Diversity Literature” list; minors one: ENL 236 Diverse Voices in Fiction, 285 African American Literature, 295 Folklore, 390 Children’s Literature, or 391 Young Adult Literature. Such courses introduce students to previously marginalized writers and, as in ENL 295, provide Education students with the ethnographic tools to explore various modes of written and oral discourse. ENL 390 and 391 provide students a review of a wide variety of literature and authors appropriate for elementary and middle school students. These courses ensure that Education students have a strong foundational knowledge of authors, periods, and themes as required by MDE Standards.

Students are expected to complete the required CST 101 Fundamentals of Speech during their Freshman year. The majors must then select three courses from the “Communication” list; minors select one: CST 111 Mass Communication, 112 Visual Communication, 204 Interpersonal Communication, 304 Small Group Communication, 305 Theories of Listening Behavior, or 314 Intercultural Communication. These courses provide the students with a flexible repertoire of frameworks and analytical tools to participate in a variety of discourses and with a variety of audiences. It also provides them with the foundation needed to teach appropriate concepts and skills to elementary children. The candidates demonstrate their understanding by submitting oral and written presentations and projects.

Students also take Theatre courses preferably early in their university program and prior to entering the Education program. Majors take both of the “Theatre/Drama” courses (TRE 131 Introduction to Theatre, TRE 161 Fundamentals of Acting, and minors elect one. The study of various plays and performance and production skills sharpens students’ abilities in moral and ethical discernment by exposing them vicariously to the situations faced by characters struggling with issues involving moral choices, ethical dilemmas, social justice, and the spiritual desire to find meaning beyond the every day condition. The courses also provide students with opportunities to explore and practice their personal communication tools—voice, body, and imagination, which will be invaluable to their careers as a teachers.

What ensures that the integrated nature of the Language Arts sequence does not become too fragmented or departmentalized is that every course involves most of the concepts and skills of the Language Arts fields as a whole--reading, researching, writing, listening, speaking, viewing etc. As they complete CST 101 Fundamentals of Speech and ENL 130 and/or 131 during their first university year, they are prepared to participate in the oral and written activities common to the Language Arts courses. Students are expected to take the literature courses after the Core

Curriculum writing and speaking courses. Once they are completed, however, students with the guidance of their advisors are able to create their individual sequence according to their strength and weaknesses, experiences, career goals, and University scheduling of courses. The important factor is that the Language Arts candidates are required to take a wide variety of electives from the English, Communications, and Theatre courses that provide them with a basic understanding of the structure, skills, core concepts, ideas, values, facts, and methods of inquiry of the disciplines of Language Arts.

C. Varied Instructional Approaches

The Language Arts Education program is a group major or minor that provides the candidates with the concepts, methodologies, and instructional strategies of each discipline (English, Communications, Theatre) and Education courses that provide the educational philosophy, theories, backgrounds, and instructional strategies for teaching elementary students Language Arts.

The Language Arts faculty and the Education faculty prepare students to utilize a variety of instructional approaches by modeling creative, logical, and effective teaching practices in their classes. A review of the Language Arts course syllabi reveals the range of teaching methods used by them to instill the skills and knowledge of the disciplines (English, Communication, Theatre, Education): lectures, discussion, simulations, debates, critical analysis of fiction and non fiction—especially articles from major news sources and scholarly journals, student lead classes, creation of community of learners, essays, journal keeping, interactive collaboration/teams, reflective inquiry and writing, video/film, on-line discussion boards, oral readings, labs/workshops, in-class exercises/activities, performances, field projects, project based learning, and service learning.

In the English 200-, 300--level courses, as well as in the other disciplines of this group major/minor, interconnections between words and the world have generated several pedagogies and curricula based on a collaborative model of education. This collaborative model can best be described as “project-based learning,” and it has three key pedagogical features that facilitate student and faculty involvement in, and contributions to our surrounding communities:

Learning by doing.

Learning by doing real-world projects.

Learning by doing real-world projects for large public audiences.

The instructors in the Communication and Theatre courses also combine a theoretical and applied approach to teaching various kinds of speeches and theatre productions that involve individual and collaborative efforts. Students are required to read and view; to analyze written, film, and live performances; and to write critiques and original works in addition to producing and performing for live audiences in the classroom and on a stage.

Education majors and minors observe and learn first-hand a rich range of pedagogical practices and interpersonal skills from their professors in English, Communication, and Theatre that are necessary for them to go on to become excellent teachers themselves.

A review of the Education Syllabi on the website explicates the wide range of instructional methods taught to Elementary candidates in the Education courses. In EDU 401/402 Introduction to Elementary and Secondary Education, the students are engaged in a semester long project of weekly observations (30 hours) in an elementary classroom and writing up the findings as a case study. Through lecture, reading, discussion, a variety of in-class projects (thematic units, case studies in reading) and activities, guest lecturers, and collaborative work, EDU 443 and EDU 478 provide instruction in a variety of methods for teaching learning to read and reading to learn to elementary, middle, and secondary students across the curriculum. In addition to a variety of technology methods used and demonstrated in all the Education courses, EUD 459 Instructional Technology and EDU 600 Computer Use in Education teach a variety of instructional approaches for using many kinds of technology to assess various learning styles of students and to accommodate those learning styles. These courses also develop the candidate's knowledge, skills, and attitudes for applying technology in education settings. These courses were developed to address the Seventh Standard of the Entry Level Standards for Michigan teachers. The other elementary methods courses (EDU 441 Science, 442 Social Science, 449 Mathematics) also use a wide variety of instructional methods to teach the candidates effective strategies for teaching Language Arts to elementary children. Student teaching, EDU 489 for elementary and middle school candidates, provides students with a full semester of K-8 real teaching experiences with both K-8 Cooperating Teachers and College Supervisors. Observations early in the student teacher experience and eight seminars complement their experiences and encourage self reflection and feedback about their instructional methods in collaboration with K-8 Co-operating Teachers and UDM College Supervisors.

D. Elementary and Secondary Level Preparation Differences

Since the Elementary level is the only one that teaches Language Arts as a separate course in the K-12 schools, the Language Arts major and minor is only offered to elementary teacher education candidates.

E. Gender Equity, Multi-cultural, and Global Perspectives

The issues of gender equity, multicultural and global perspectives are addressed throughout the Language Arts courses. Students taking courses in this program read, perform, and analyze a variety of texts to seek information, ideas, enjoyment, and understanding of the individuality, common heritage, humanity, and the rich diversity in their society. Students read, discuss, analyze, and perform both contemporary and traditional literature that incorporates both multicultural and global perspectives. Instructors in the English, Communication, and Theatre courses take great care to include the perspectives of groups whose voices in the past have

been stifled. The roles of women and minority groups have been brought to the center stage, not only through the integration of relevant issues into most course work, but through the creation of specialized courses as well. The Education Courses continue the infusing of equity issues throughout the program.

F. Multiple Methods of Student Assessment

Language Arts majors and minors learn a variety of assessment tools from personal experience in every Language Arts course. Quizzes and exams in courses include objective type questions and rely heavily on essay questions that are evaluated using rubrics. The English, Communication, and Theater departments each maintain a system of evaluation that includes demonstration and documentation of learning processes, abilities, and teaching skills specific to their discipline. All students undergo a number of evaluative standards so that instructors may assess their understanding of material and provide feedback to the students. Quizzes, tests, essays, oral and visual presentations, email interactions, and grading rubrics returned with essays and after performances all constitute a developed system of evaluative feedback for students in the Language Arts program. Conferencing with the students about their work provides the opportunity for both intervention and revision processes prior to the summative evaluation. In-class workshops, peer review sessions, faculty-student conferences, and written commentary on essays or about a performance are all part of the regular and on-going collaborative assessment of student work in Language Arts courses. Such experiences provide the candidates with understanding of assessment that is easily adapted to their own teaching and assessment procedures.

The Education instructors continue these types of assessment procedures; plus in the methods courses they teach candidates how to design, apply, and use assessment results to help K-8 grade students learn and to plan and inform their teaching. Examples include: use of rubrics, checklists, anecdotal records, and performance based assessments. The Elementary methods courses particularly valuable to Language Arts assessment are: EDU 443 Reading, EDU 448 Reading and the Language Arts. EDU 459/600 Technology and Education focuses on examining multiple strategies for evaluating technology-based student products.