



CollegeCoursesOnline

Professional Growth with a Personal Touch



# Boys and Literacy

Sample Pages



Dr. Anne F. Goiran-Bevelhimer

# **Boys and Literacy**

**Text**

Dr. Anne Goiran-Bevelhimer  
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## **Welcome from College Courses Online**

**College Courses Online** provides high-quality professional growth courses for teachers in an asynchronous online independent study format in partnership with nationally accredited institutions for university level graduate credit or continuing education units. The mission at College Courses Online is to help you meet your professional growth needs with a personal touch.

The courses offered through College Courses Online are research based, correlate to the Common Core Standards, and focus on offering you exceptional learning opportunities to deepen your content knowledge, enhance teaching effectiveness, refine best practices and increase student engagement.

We believe in providing teachers with professional growth opportunities that are practical, meaningful and useful. To that end, we take great care to create course content that is relevant and energizing. We create assignments that offer choice and flexibility to meet your personal and professional needs and learning styles. We believe that applying what you learn to classroom practices is at the heart of any good professional growth. Learn it today and apply it tomorrow.

Above all we aim to energize and nurture your passion for teaching and learning through new ideas and tapping into your creativity. We want to support you in the great work you do and to remind you that what you do everyday MATTERS!

Welcome aboard! We look forward to meeting you, getting to know you and working with you!

## Welcome from Your Instructor

Welcome to the course *Boys and Literacy*. I am your instructor, Anne Goiran-Bevelhimer, Ed.D. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you, tell you a little about myself and invite you to contact me as you go through the course with any questions, modifications or adjustments to the course work that will help you to get the most from this experience.

A teacher since 1976, I have worked as a classroom teacher K-12 and as a teacher of teachers. After completing my doctorate in 1982, I became an affiliate faculty member with national accredited institutions, creating professional development graduate level classes for teachers. Having spent many years in the K-12 classroom and working with teachers, I know how important it is to find professional development that is worthwhile. Today, I am the founder and instructor of College Courses Online, a provider of professional development online and independent study courses for teachers in partnership with nationally accredited institutions offering graduate credit and continuing education units.

College Courses Online is dedicated to designing courses to help you grow the passion for learning and teaching while also meeting the rigor of graduate level requirements. Offering you choice, activity and flexibility while focusing on practical application are key components of each of our courses. We know how busy you are and the demands you already deal with. We get to the heart of the matter and aim to inform and energize you!

At College Courses Online we do not have set due dates for assignments or assigned discussion groups that you must attend. The asynchronous format of our online and independent studies allows for freedom in how and when you work on your courses. Though we know the limitations of an independent study mean that you are mostly working on your own, you are encouraged to chat with colleagues, other adults in the profession and with us as you go through the course work. We want you to feel that this course is about YOU, not about us. Though there are course requirements and grade expectations, there is also the invitation for you to participate in making suggestions or modifications to the assignments to best suit your personal and professional needs. Just send an email with your ideas and we will collaborate with you to meet your needs.

You can earn credit in as little as 6 weeks or take up to a year from your date of registration with College Courses Online to complete your course work. You can send your work as you get it done or as a complete package. We want to honor your autonomy and independence while also offering you the support and encouragement to meet your personal and professional needs.

We believe that the hard work and time you devote to your course work is valuable. We honor you by reading your work and giving you our feedback. We also recognize that once your work is in, you want your credits, grades and transcript as soon as possible. We make every effort to give you a quick and timely turn around and submit information to the nationally accredited agency partnered with CCO where you have registered for credit. At College Courses Online we are dedicated to professional growth with a personal touch.

I look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,  
Dr. Anne  
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## Course Information

**Registration:** If you are reading this, you have registered for your course and these are your course materials. Welcome!

**To earn graduate or continuing education credit** for your course work please visit the national accrediting institutions partnered with College Courses Online on the Cart & Registration page [www.collegecoursesonline.com/](http://www.collegecoursesonline.com/) Additional fees apply.

Once a course is complete or the one-year from date of registration with College Courses Online has expired it is not possible to “change” registration. You are welcome to re-register for a course. Please see Terms and Conditions on [www.collegecoursesonline.com/](http://www.collegecoursesonline.com/)

**Correspondence:** Use the text, activities, outside reading and writing assignments to complete the course requirements. Please send all your work for this course via email to your instructor. You may send your work all at once or unit by unit. Feel free to correspond with your instructor if you have any questions or concerns or if you have an idea for a modification that will make the course a more meaningful experience for you.

It is expected that you will invest 30 hours of independent study **per** credit hour.

You will work one-on-one with the instructor.

As soon as your completed work is received, we make every effort to give you a quick and timely turn around. You will receive feedback and responses to your work as soon as possible.

**Transcripts:** Grades will be sent to the nationally accredited partner associated with CCO as soon as registration with the nationally accredited partner is confirmed and you have met all the course requirements. Please visit the nationally accredited partner web site for more information.

Transcripts will come from the accrediting institution.

If you did not register for graduate credit or continuing education units, you may request a Certificate of Completion from College Courses Online indicating the course by title and Carnegie Unit Hours.

**Schedule:** This course is delivered asynchronously; that means you may register any day of the year with College Courses Online. Registration with the nationally accredited institution partnered with CCO is a separate process, with additional fees and some time restrictions.

Your date of registration with College Courses Online is your start date. You may submit all work and complete the course anytime between 6 weeks to one year from your date of registration.

Your time is yours to manage. At College Courses Online we do not have set due dates for assignments or assigned discussion groups that you must attend. Work any time of the day, any place, and submit work via email when you are in a Wi-Fi environment.

College Courses Online does not have an “extension” policy, nor do we bug you about your end date, but if you need a little extra time past your end date, send us an email. We want you to have a great experience taking a course with College Courses Online!

## Course Overview

Understanding the nature of boys, and accepting boys' preferences in reading and writing as unique to their gender is half the battle of connecting boys to literacy. Boys do read. They just don't admit where they get their information, wanting to appear competent as if they just naturally acquired information. In general, boys perceive "reading" more as a tool, rather than a pastime. Boys prefer nonfiction or informational texts to fiction, visual literacy to books, and short, to the point articles like magazines or websites. Boys like to dip into reading and then put what they've read into action. Boys tend to be realists, and practical about their reading habits, focusing on what is interesting to them and what is relevant to their lives and interests.

Boys seem to follow a Machiavellian principle where learning is a means to an end. Boys apply themselves when there is purpose to their learning or something to be gained. Becoming more aware about boys and how they learn helps us to better design curriculum and instruction to meet boy's learning needs in the classroom. And interestingly enough, what seems to work for boys, is good for girls too.

Based on the research about boys and learning, boys respond to structure, challenge, and feedback. They prefer factual information, strongly motivated by a need and desire to be competent in an area of interest. Boys prefer learning that is efficient, short and to the point. Boys are interested in conserving energy. Perhaps that is why many boys ask, "Does this count?" In school activities, boys often do the minimum required to pass a class, even though they have potential to do more, and will if it is a self-chosen topic of interest. They learn better from a multi sensory approach. Boys prefer to make their own choices about what they learn and how to present it. They like action and humor. They like experiences that "flow" as described by psychologist, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, boys like activities that are characterized by interest, passion, mastery, and being in the here and now. For most boys, meeting personal criteria and goals is more important than pleasing the teacher or others.

The intent of this class is to learn about boys – their nature, their brain wiring and how and what they read. You will discover that the more you gear your literacy instruction to meet the rationale of boys, the easier it will be to engage boys actively in literacy. The research supports that what seems to be good for boys is good for girls, too!

Use the text, outside reading and writing activities to complete the course work. A syllabus is available on [www.collegecoursesonline.com](http://www.collegecoursesonline.com)

# Course Requirements

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This course is delivered asynchronously; you may start anytime and will work one-on-one with the instructor. You are expected to invest 90 hours of independent study to this course. You may submit all work and complete the course anytime between 6 weeks to one year from your date of registration.

Use the text, outside readings, activities and writing assignments to complete the following course requirements:

- I. TEXT: 70 pts. Please read the text and complete the 21 exercises. You will complete the following objectives.**
  - 1. Describe boys and literacy in the classroom**, using anecdotal experiences, analysis of boys' performance on literacy assessments, and your classroom experience. Respond to the exercises in the text.
  - 2. Identify the problem with boys and literacy.**
    - a. How do you perceive the problem of boys and literacy? What do you hope to gain from this course?
    - b. Complete the activities described in the text- observations, interviews, reviewing books in your library, and creating a collage showing what you believe about the nature of boys.
  - 3. Analyze findings from research on boys and literacy.**
    - a. Read and review current research about boys' performance in school literacy. Discuss your response in writing.
    - b. Read and review the current research, resources and information about boys in the areas of brain growth development, learning styles and psychology. Discuss your insights in writing.
  - 4. Value the difference in learning styles between boys and girls through reading and writing exercises.**
    - a. Identify the nature of boys, their psychology, and the developmental differences between boys and girls. Explore how this might affect a boy's learning, K-12.
    - b. Learn about the biology of the brain, differences in brain development for boys and girls, how a boy's brain functions and is effected by hormones.
    - c. Create literacy instruction that integrates, values and supports boys' nature, development and brain growth.
    - d. Incorporate learning style preferences for boys, such as action, hands-on activities, and competition
    - e. Discuss implication for curriculum and instruction based on how boys think, behave and learn.



5. **Choose best practices for boys and literacy.**
  - a. Extrapolate from the research about boys, the nature of boys and their brain growth development to create a list of priorities to address in reviewing existing curriculum and instructional practices in literacy. Collect ideas for creating a more boy-friendly literacy environment.
  - b. Make a list of priorities to guide your curricular and instructional practices.
  
6. **Review literacy texts for boys.**
  - a. Identify boy-friendly literature in the genres of nonfiction literature and fiction literature that focus on archetypal literature, action literature, adventure and survival literature; humorous literature; short texts such as short stories, newspaper articles and magazines. Explore visual literature, such comic books, graphic novels and picture books.
  - b. Review your classroom library to assess a balance of boy-friendly reading material.
  - c. Collect paired texts, fiction and nonfiction on the same topic.
  - d. From what you have learned about boys, discuss ways of motivating boys to read and write required school texts and assignments.
  - e. Evaluate boy-friendly literature lists, web sites and resources. Create a list that will be useful to you.
  
7. **Categorize and collect fiction, informational and visual texts that match boy friendly criteria.** Identify boy-friendly literature for your library: nonfiction literature, focusing on topics that are of interest to the boys in your grade level; fiction literature by authors who appeal to boys that focus on archetypal literature, action literature, adventure and survival literature or series; literature that is humorous; short texts, such as short stories, newspaper articles, or magazines. Explore visual literature, such as the literature of comic books, graphic novels and picture books. Make lists of boy friendly literature.

## II. OUTSIDE READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: 70 pts.

1. **Distinguish and recognize the nature of boys and their learning preferences.** Use literature that focuses on the behavior of boys. Read one fiction and one nonfiction text (book, movie, article) to learn about the nature of boys (Ex. You might choose the classic novel, *Lord of the Flies* (1954) by William Golding and the nonfiction, informational text, *Going with the Flow: How to Engage Boys (and Girls) in Their Literacy Learning* (2006) by Michael Smith and Jeff Wilhelm.) Note the nature of boys, how they interact, and how they learn. Make a list. Use what you learn about boys in your literacy instruction. Write a short essay reporting your findings. 1-2 page essay. **20pts.**
  
2. **Teacher as researcher.** This text offers you a short history of the research about boys, gathered from a variety of sources. In this assignment you are asked to continue to update the research. Review current research about boys. Spend a

minimum of 5 hours reading. Choose scholarly journal articles, web sites, or books about boys. Compare your findings with previous research. Evaluate your findings in a 1-2 page essay. Cite your source(s). **20 pts.**

**3. Explore literacy for boys. Choose two of the following exercises: 10 pts. Each**

- a. Create a list of paired texts - fiction and nonfiction texts on a similar topic- to match interests of boys. Please see examples in Literacy for Boys: Some Ideas for lesson Plans for examples. Create a list of 20 pairs (minimum), documented in an annotated bibliography.
- b. Use what you know and have learned about boys and what they like to read. Choose 5 texts that would be appealing to the boys you work with. Read with boys in mind. Document the texts in an annotated bibliography. Choose a variety of texts - fiction, non-fiction, humorous, a short text, and a comic book or graphic novel - that meets boy-friendly criteria.
- c. Demonstrate your knowledge of literacy for boys and ways to motivate boys to read through creating a book talk or book teaser, appealing to boys' learning style preferences. Write 5 book talks or book teases.
- d. Develop 5- text sets, each set on a topic that is of interests to boys. Use a variety of genres to build each set, from print to web: fiction, nonfiction, picture books, magazine articles, newspaper articles, short texts, web sites, comic books, graphic novels, film. Create a minimum of 5 text sets. Choose a minimum of three genres for each text set. Document your text sets in an annotated bibliography.

**4. Literacy Lesson Plan: Apply findings from research to curricular and instructional literacy practices.** Creating a boy-friendly literacy lesson plan that you could use in your classroom. Show connections to the Common Core State Standards in ELA for your grade level and/or your State Standards. 1-2 pages. **10 pts.**

**III. REFLECTION PAPER: 10pts.**

**Evaluate curriculum and instructional practices in literacy with boys, keeping girls in mind.** Synthesize what you have learned about the nature of boys and how they learn. Review what you learned from completing the exercises in the text, the outside readings you chose, the current research on boys you chose to read, the interviews you conducted, your observations about boys and literacy, and your selection of boy-friendly texts. Use the following questions or findings of your own to help you write a 3-4 page reflection paper:

- What did you learn about boys that will be helpful in your curricular and instructional practices?
- What will add to your boy-friendly literacy environment? Please be specific.
- How will you pass on information that is helpful to you to other teachers in your building to better support boys and literacy?
- How will you inform parents about information, literacy and activities they can do to support boys and literacy?

**Sending work:** Send your completed work via e-mail to your instructor at College Courses Online. Sending work via email will ensure the fastest response.

mailto: [annegoiran@collegecoursesonline.com](mailto:annegoiran@collegecoursesonline.com)

Though it is preferred to receive all your work at once, you may send it in pieces over time. Organize your work in a way that works for you and is easy for you to send digitally. Use Word or text documents or respond to each assignment directly on an email. You may use one document or many. Please include the title of the course, the unit, the assignment and your name.

Keep track of where you are in the course, particularly if you complete tasks out of order. Please account for all assignments. You might want to use the Course Requirements as a checklist. Create a system and a checklist that works for you.

If you choose to send your work in hard copy, please be sure it is typed and mail it to:

College Courses Online  
Dr. Anne Goiran-Bevelhimer  
P.O. Box 312  
Galeton, CO 80622.

**Send a SAS envelope if you would like your work returned to you.**

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## **Boys and Literacy: What is the Problem?**

In the spring of 1998, in discussion with educators as part of a Professional Learning Community, the focus was on the results of an alarming disparity between boys and girls scores on reading and writing assessments. The questions that arose were: How can we as teachers provide curriculum and instruction that meets boys' learning styles and interests in literacy? Are there ways of helping boys improve their reading and writing scores on standardized tests? What is particular to boys? How do boys think? How do they learn? How do boys' brains work? How do boys best learn reading and writing?

How much do our expectations about boys color our beliefs about boys? How much do our beliefs about what is 'literacy' and what is not influence our boys' reading habits? Is it important that the disparity between boys and girls scores in reading and writing get closer? Why and for whom? What does it mean? Does this disparity prevent them from doing well in college or in the workforce? Do we as teachers need to modify our beliefs and expectations of boys?

What if we find that "boys will be boys" and no matter what we do in school, there will always be a disparity in favor of girls in academic subjects? Why do boys do better than girls on the SAT scores, for example, in reading and writing? Is there something about the nature of school that inherently does not work for boys? Why do boys dominate the writing fields in the workforce? Is there something about the work place that is inherently compatible with boys? Why is there a disparity in the workforce in favor of boys?

This course arose from those discussions with a focus on exploring the research about boys, their nature, their learning styles, and their brain development to inform educators so they could tweak, modify and develop boy-friendly literacy instruction. Since its beginnings, teachers have reported that the information in this course has been helpful and instrumental in getting boys to read, and become independent in their reading habits. I encourage you to share your findings, too. In this way, we continue to partner our work.

END OF SAMPLE PAGES.  
SEE DETAILS FOR REGISTERING FOR THIS COURSE  
[WWW.COLLEGECOURSESONLINE.COM/](http://WWW.COLLEGECOURSESONLINE.COM/)