

Indiana University School of Education
COMMITTEE ON TEACHER EDUCATION

COURSE/PROGRAM CHANGE

Change in Credits for M469 Content Reading Methods in Secondary School Subjects

1. Description of Change

M469 is the Content reading methods course for secondary subject matter areas. There are M469 sections for social studies preservice teachers, math and science (a combined course due to enrollment), foreign language, and English. M469 is a variable 2-3 credit course. Currently it is offered as a 2 credit course. M469 was a 3 credit course until it was changed when the Secondary Anchor program was created. Before this program was created, all M469 sections were separate sections of M464, which was a 3 credit course. M464 is still offered as a 3 credit course. Students currently enrolled in M464 include physical education/health, art, special education, and theater preservice teachers, but also some social studies, math, and science, and English preservice teachers.

We request that M469, which is a variable 2-3 credit course, be changed to a 3 credit course.

2. Rationale

There are 3 related rationales for this proposed change:

a) There is not an effective way to cover the necessary content in M469 in the limited amount of time. All M469 course instructors, faculty and associate instructors, have expressed that several key areas in their courses remain underdeveloped because of this. These areas include: increased focus on literacy learning within particular subject areas, working with English language learners, differentiation strategies for struggling readers and special needs students, and meaningful technology integration of reading strategies in content areas. Each of these topics represents an increasing area of concern.

* See attached letter by Anne Elsener for description of the need for more academic discipline specific possibilities if the course changes from 2 to 3 credits. Her letter also speaks to the possibilities of technology integration if the credit allotment changes to 3 credits.

In terms of working with English language learners and struggling readers:

- The number of English language learners is growing exponentially across the country with the majority of these students being in upper middle school and high school. Indiana, in fact, has the third fastest

growing percentage of population of non-native English speakers. M469 students need more instructional time to learn to best meet these students' needs. Students in M469 courses this semester have also echoed these concerns.

- In terms of differentiation strategies for struggling readers and special needs populations - there is a varying exceptionalities course currently required, but it is predominantly conceptual. The M469 course could be used to apply knowledge about language processing disorders to accommodations in literacy teaching and learning.

* See attached syllabus from Dr. Stephani Carter for M469 English and the two assignments that she is not able to include in a 2 credit course. These assignments appear on pp. 5-6 (bold-faced and underlined). Also, see the attached letter from Anne Elsener that also speaks to this issue.

b) Secondary reading issues are gaining additional attention in educational policy initiatives across the country. Led by professional organizations in reading and literacy, there is increased recognition that all secondary teachers are teachers of reading and must assume responsibilities for teaching reading in their respective content areas. This recognition also has potential political implications that merit consideration. For example, consider reading issues at the elementary level, which remain highly politically charged. Just last week Indiana University was the target of a research 'study' entitled *What Indiana's Education Schools Aren't Teaching about Reading* by the National Council on Teacher Quality, an organization led by political conservatives Chester Finn and E.D. Hirsh that supports a "market sensitive approach to the structure of the profession." The research is fundamentally flawed and the Literacy, Culture, and Language Education faculty has already issued a response to the study's suspect claims, standing upon the depth and quality of reading instruction offered in the elementary program. In Secondary area content reading, we want to strengthen the foundation of our reading methods instruction to be best prepared for these kinds of challenges.

c) The quality of instruction in M469 is best when faculty have opportunities to teach this course as part of their typical faculty load (2 three-credit courses a semester). The quality of syllabi, course assignments, and relationships with schools all improve when there is long-term commitment, which is best achieved when faculty can be directly involved with the course. Due to recent School of Education policy, M469 becomes a less viable course for faculty to teach because it no longer counts as part of a full semester load (e.g., faculty now need to find another 1 credit course to teach in addition to M469).

3. Faculty staffing

There are 6 sections of M469 offered across the year (2 in Fall and 4 in Spring). Currently faculty and associate instructors teach M469. No additional staffing will be necessary to accommodate the change in M469 from 2 to 3 credits.

4. Documentation of Standards

This proposed change would enable M469 course instructors to better address the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and International Reading Association (IRA) guidelines for teaching English language learners.

5. Integration with Existing Programs

The proposed change would not alter the field experience or content methods courses that accompany M469.

6. Implementation Timeline

We plan to implement the change beginning spring semester 2010.

7. Assessment Plan

Program area faculty will continue to evaluate the M469 experiences of students. This will occur primarily through monthly meetings of all faculty and AIs who teach M469 courses. These meetings over the past year, in fact, have led to this proposed change.

8. Program Faculty/Department Chair Approval

This proposed change has been reviewed and approved by James Damico, the coordinator of the content reading courses (M464 and M469) and by Mary Beth Hines, the chair of the Literacy, Culture, and Language Education Department.

