

WELCOME TO ELRL 625!

I want to welcome you back to another cyberspace course in the Reading Program. I believe that you all have taken ELRL 617 and so should be comfortable using BB! Now we can really learn about using technology and literacy in our teaching! Before we begin, be sure to print out this letter and keep it handy! Now, let me remind you of the "nuts and bolts" for our second cyberspace trip. I am providing this information in the form of frequently asked questions:

Does my computer need to be able to do anything special?

In addition to the technical recommendations given to you by the WPUNJ IT services, you need to be sure you:

- **Have an up-to-date antivirus program running at all times throughout the course;**
- **Use Microsoft Word and Microsoft Office**
- **Download the Adobe Acrobat Reader and Powerpoint Viewer (information for these free downloads is available at the BB homepage);**
- **Consider using a high-speed internet access line rather than a telephone connection (I recommend this but it is not required).**

Email Addresses

WPUNJ requires you to use your WPUNJ email account and so do I. The university forwards all campus information to this account and you should check it regularly. I will hold you accountable for all communications that I need to forward to you at this account. As well, I expect you to email me from this account—if you use a different account I will not be responsible for ensuring that I will read and respond to your messages. A final reminder ... be sure to check your account regularly and delete any unnecessary information as it may overload the account.

What do I do if I have a technical problem?

Here are some helpful contact points...

Remember: At the slightest hint of a technical problem be sure to complete the BB Helpdesk at <https://liberty.wpunj.edu/bb/support-center/default.cfm> at the BB homepage site. A copy of your completed form is sent to me so that I know you have registered your problem (the

Blackboard tech support people will respond within 24 hours, often just as quickly on weekends):

You can access the helpdesk even if you can't log onto the WPUNJ homepage or the Blackboard homepage by going directly to this link: <https://liberty.wpunj.edu/bb/support-center/default.cfm>. Include the course number and description of your problem. If you do not register your problem I will not credit you for any missed work.

If you experience your own computer problems or expect to be away on a family vacation during the semester, I will still hold you responsible for your work in this class. First you need to contact me if you have your own computer problems. Then, you need to continue your participation using your school computer. You can also work at your local public library and/or visit the WPUNJ campus and use one of the numerous student computers available to you (you'll need to show your WPUNJ ID card for this).

For anything having to do with class that is **NOT** technical, please feel free to contact me at: maluk@wpunj.edu
Please remember that I am a reading teacher—not a technical support person!

Will We Ever Meet On Campus?

YES!

ONE REQUIRED FACE-TO-FACE MEETING:

You are required to attend 1 class "in person" on the William Paterson University campus. Please mark this date on your calendars and inform me immediately through a private email if you have any conflicts:

- **Monday, January 31st, from 7:30-10:00** (WPUNJ Cheng Library on main campus). If this conflicts with another WPUNJ course please inform me immediately so I can have you excused from that course.

Counting the Weeks:

We will count our weeks beginning on Tuesdays. So, for example, our first week of class will be the week of Tuesday, January 18th (through Monday, January 24th).

What About Our Required Readings?

For this class you will choose a text you wish to read from the following list. Visit the publisher directly or use the Amazon or Barnes and Noble websites or bookstore to browse for these texts. At our F2F meeting on 1/31 we will choose our text.

1. Daniels, H. & Zemelman, S. (2004). *Subjects Matter: Every Teacher's Guide to Content-Area Reading*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
2. Moje, E. (2000). *"All the Stories that We Have": Adolescents' Insights about Literacy and Learning in Secondary Schools*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
3. Mueller, P. (2001). *Lifers: Learning from At-Risk Adolescent Readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
4. Robb, L. (2000). *Teaching Reading in Middle School: A Strategic Approach to Teaching Reading that Improves Comprehension and Thinking*. New York: Scholastic.
5. Smith, M. & Wilhelm, J. (2002). *"Reading Don't Fix No Chevys": Literacy in the Lives of Young Men*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

In addition, you must join a professional organization from the list below. If you already belong to one, you must select a second, different one to join. Your choices are:

1. The National Council of Teachers of English at <http://www.ncte.org/> Recommended if you are in the language arts concentration—purchase any one, two or more of their journals.
2. The International Society for Technology in Education at <http://www.iste.org/> Recommended if you are in learning technologies or media—purchase any one, two or more of their journals.
3. Fairtest at <http://www.fairtest.org> Recommended for any program or concentration you are enrolled in and if you are concerned about standards, testing and literacy—purchase their quarterly newsletter and any other materials you may wish.
4. Rethinking Schools at <http://rethinkingschools.org> Recommended for any program or concentration you are enrolled in and if you are interested in new and thought-provoking teaching activities—purchase their quarterly magazine and any other materials you may wish. (Out of all the organizations above, I believe this one gives you the most for your money!)

Please note that there will be additional required professional readings and Internet websites to read throughout the semester and I will provide you with these.

When Does Class Begin?

On **January 18th** (or at the latest **January 20th**) please go into Blackboard and log into class, ELRL 625-80, and look for the course buttons marked:

1) Course Information for an on-line copy of this welcome letter, the course syllabus and weekly schedule

2) Assignments to find guidelines for the written assignments you will need to complete. We will work with the course information in a variety of different ways, including large and small group discussions, private message exchanges, chat room conversations, Internet quests, assigned readings, and interview activities.

What Can I Do While I'm Waiting For Class To Begin?

Go to the IRA website (www.reading.org) and read the following position statement:

Adolescent Literacy (Do not read the summary. Read the entire Document!)

How Often Must I Participate/Log On?

Reflect back to our online discussion board messages from ELRL 617 and think about what you can try differently in the BB discussions for this semester. For this course, I will expect you to log-on **AT LEAST TWO TIMES per week, including one log-on between Tuesdays and Fridays and a second between Saturdays and Mondays.** Even though you have fewer "required" participation days, I expect you to read all messages and make your discussion board comments meaningful and appropriate for the week's course content discussions. Let's see how we can use our writing in this second course to become more direct with our comments and specific in our remarks. Avoid making short, vague comments like, "Yes, I agree with you" when responding in a discussion or personal comments like "Did you have a great weekend?" in the course content forums. Be more discerning in your use of the different forums I created and be more succinct in your comments. Also, consider the reader and the text. Use paragraphs more frequently so the text is more appealing to our reader eyes.

A note of caution: In previous semesters some students interpreted my words above to mean that the more posts they made the higher their grade would be. Two thoughtful comments and/or replies to other posts during a week will receive a higher grade than 5-10-15 posts per week. This is a three credit graduate level course and not a 24-hour per day IM-ing experience! Also, posts made after the due date for a discussion forum will not be given

credit. There is no way to "make up" missed work by posting after the calendar date on a discussion forum. If you follow these simple directions, you and your classmates and I will have an enjoyable experience. Finally, I will program the discussion forums this semester to allow access for reading after the due date but not for posting comments.

One more word about participation and contributions ... I do not consider a posting like, "I agree" or "What do you think?", or any personal comments (such as: "Do you know 'so-and-so'?", "Did I meet you in last year's class?", "I think I worked with your husband at ... ", etc.) as thoughtful, academic, and learning-supportive comments.

You also need to know that as the teacher responsible for this course, I automatically receive information regarding the number of times and minutes each one of you spend on-line. These statistics are available to me throughout the semester and I check them periodically and as the need arises.

What Must I Do When I Can't Log Onto Blackboard and/or I Experience Other Technical Difficulties?

Please remember that I am **NOT** a technology specialist. I **CAN NOT HELP** with computer problems, including logging onto blackboard, losing e-mail messages, or deciphering errors. **BUT**, there are marvelous, helpful, efficient, technology specialists who **CAN** help you.

Use the BB Support Center form at <https://liberty.wpunj.edu/bb/support-center/default.cfm> to report technical difficulties. I will be less sympathetic this semester with technical problems and will not give you credit for missed time if you do not file a report. If there are personal computer problems refer to my comments earlier.

Please **DO** contact me during the semester regarding questions, issues, and concerns regarding our work together this semester.

Kathleen Malu at maluk@wpunj.edu . My office hours are Wednesdays, 4:00-6:00 and 8:40-9:40, p.m. and by appointment.

*You might remember that in the CIRL 617
Welcome Letter, I included the following:
“Help, Teacher! I’ve never taken a course in
cyberspace before!”*

But now this no longer holds true! You have successfully completed ELRL 617
and you are now “old hands” with online learning ... **So.....** Relax! Enjoy!
Take those risks you were hesitant to take in ELRL 617 ... and now we're
.....

b l a s t i n g o f f !