

EDUC 687 – L1 & L2 Language Development and Literacy (Reading Development in Second Language Learners)

Spring I Semester 2006

Wednesday, 3:30 – 6:30 p.m

Lynch Middle School Library, Holyoke, MA

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The following is a general description for the semester's topics, activities, and requirements. The instructor will modify these in response to the licensure needs, interest, and concerns of class members. To stay abreast of any modifications, readings, or support materials participation in WebCT is highly encouraged. Contact the University's OIT department or email online if needed to resolve access issues.

This course covers the topic of reading and reading instruction through the lens of first and second language development. We will specifically examine early reading and language development and support as applied to teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students in classroom settings. In addition, we will compare and contrast first and second language acquisition at different levels of development.

The goal is to learn how linguistically diverse students can build their literacy and reading skills in English drawing on the language, culture, and experiential background that they bring. Our work and main goals center on:

- understanding the issues faced by second language learners in building their knowledge and skills in reading
- critically examining a variety of approaches and curricula and their impact on English language learners' success in acquiring reading behaviors, knowledge, and skills that enable them to flourish and participate in the learning community
- looking at evidence from children's work, talk, and behavior as well as from sociocultural and psycholinguistic research in order to analyze theories and curricula as well as build on and expand participants' knowledge of best practices in teaching and learning.

A second major goal is to critically examine current reading curricula used in Massachusetts public schools as well as exemplary programs and strategies used nationwide. Through our activities we will set criteria for quality reading programs that build on the knowledge and skills of second language learners and address their particular needs. We will examine and compare and contrast materials and curricula used in your

classrooms and districts, such as Read 180, America's Choice, Reading First, Success for All, Guided Reading, and Compact for Reading, as well various web pages for parents and teachers focused on reading, such as WBGH's *Between the Lions* and *Reading is Fundamental*. These programs will be critiqued and enhanced through our study of transformative, identity-driven best practices that promote reading and literacy and intergenerational learning in meaningful ways and contexts, including multimodal literacy and community participation. We will also consider relevant global examples of approaches and needs for equitable access and opportunity of immigrant, second language learning populations.

We will also focus on policy recommendations for the preparation, use and monitoring of reading programs focused on raising the achievement of all students, including Second Language Learners.

READINGS

There is no required textbook for this class. The sources we will use include the curricula you bring from your schools and the assigned readings from articles or book chapters chosen from the attached **Bibliography**.

Readings will be available either via web pages or on the *UMass Library Ereserves* webpage (<http://ereserves.library.umass.edu>). Some will be made available in class as handouts and in our Educ 687 class Reading folder on **WebCT**. You will need a password to access the readings on **Ereserves and WebCT**. Most computers have or can easily download for free Adobe Acrobat application to open files in .pdf file format. For access to **WebCT**, you'll just need to be officially enrolled in the course and have an OIT account.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & SKILLS

The goal of the class is to provide teachers with the content and thinking that will help them effectively support the language development and reading achievement of second language learners. Our course objectives align with the competencies and skills required for the NTASC and National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, including¹:

(a) Plans Curriculum and Instruction.

- 1 Draws on content standards of the relevant curriculum frameworks to plan sequential units of study, individual lessons, and learning activities that make learning cumulative and advance students' level of content knowledge.
3. Identifies appropriate reading materials, other resources, and writing activities for promoting further learning by the full range of students within the classroom.

¹ Source: www.doe.mass.gov. Look under Educator Services::Teaching and Learning:: Professional Standards for Teachers.

6. Draws on resources from colleagues, families, and the community to enhance learning.

(b) Delivers Effective Instruction

2. Communicates high standards and expectations when carrying out the lesson:
 - a. Uses a balanced approach to teaching skills and concepts of elementary reading and writing.
 - b. Employs a variety of content-based and content-oriented teaching techniques from more teacher-directed strategies such as direct instruction, practice, and Socratic dialogue, to less teacher-directed approaches such as discussion, problem solving, cooperative learning, and research projects (among others).
 - c. Demonstrates an adequate knowledge of and approach to the academic content of lessons.
 - d. Employs a variety of reading and writing strategies for addressing learning objectives.
 - e. Uses questioning to stimulate thinking and encourages all students to respond.
 - f. Uses instructional technology appropriately.
 - g. Employs appropriate sheltered English or subject matter strategies for English learners

(d) Promotes Equity

2. Works to promote achievement by all students without exception
Assesses the significance of student differences in home experiences, background knowledge, learning skills, learning pace, and proficiency in the English language for learning the curriculum at hand and uses professional judgment to determine if instructional adjustments are necessary.

(e) Meets Professional Responsibilities.

4. Collaborates with colleagues to improve instruction, assessment, and student achievement.
6. Reflects critically upon his or her teaching experience, identifies areas for further professional development as part of a professional development plan that is linked to grade level, school, and district goals, and is receptive to suggestions for growth.

The essential questions that drive our course objectives are:

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are the main issues in reading development for second language learners?
- What are the assumptions and theories that underlie the current approaches to literacy and language development?
- What is the role of phonics, decontextualized teaching and explicit instruction of phonological principles in language learning? What are the particular challenges for second language learners?

- What is the definition and purpose of reading?
- What is the impact of reading and language approaches and curricula on English language learners' success in acquiring reading behaviors, knowledge, and skills that enable them to flourish and participate in the learning community?
- What are the stages and principles of first and second language acquisitions and how does one impact the other?
- What attitudes, practices, situations, and policies affect how children, staff, and families might show differences in the way they use language?
- How can teachers adapt instruction to build on and make connections with first language knowledge, skills, and strategies?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your attendance and completion of Reflections (see below under **Reflection Papers and Final Project**) are expected at every class. If extenuating circumstances interfere with your presence in one of the classes, it is your responsibility to communicate with the instructor and with class members you are working with in order to inform yourself of activities and assignments. Please note that you cannot pass the course if you have more than 2 absences. See below under **Grading** for specific weight given to each requirement.

GRADING

Weekly assignments include brief reflections and analyses as well as readings and research using the Internet. If you cannot have regular access to computers and the Internet in any way, including using the university computer lab, please speak to me about alternate assignments. No one will be excused from assignments because of lack of access to resources. I will make every effort to help you connect with the needed resources or provide alternative assignments, but you must take the initiative to contact me in advance and offer suggestions for alternatives from the bibliography or elsewhere. In fairness to all, assignments are due on the date indicated, whether you are present in class or not. You can choose to send completed assignments via email, post on WebCT, or use regular mail.

If you have any visual, cognitive, linguistic, or other sensorial issues that interfere with your meeting the course requirements outlined in this syllabus, please let me know so I can make the necessary adjustments for you.

20% Class Preparation: Completion of assignments by due dates. Class preparation also includes handing in written reflections. These are the basis for class discussions, so are essential

30% Attendance and thoughtful contributions to the full class and in your smaller teams.

50% Final Project

Please see under **Focus Questions for Reflections & Final Project** for further details. The grade and final project includes a brief, videotaped presentation of your Final Project with your partner. Please be sure to sign permissions.

It is important to understand that although completing all the work is both useful and necessary, such completion alone does not necessarily qualify anyone for an A.

Depending on your past coursework, you may be able to opt for a non-graded mark – Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. Please notify the professor by the second week of class if you are seeking this option in order to understand the requirements. Please note that you are still required to fulfill the same requirements, and the following criteria apply:

SATISFACTORY

- Thoughtful completion of the weekly assignments
- Active participation in weekly discussions and groupwork
- Accurate and thorough planning and completion of all assignments and final projects outlined in the syllabus

UNSATISFACTORY

- One or more missing or incomplete assignments
- Low participation in or frequent (more than 2) from weekly discussion and group work
- Inaccurate or poorly conceived and executed final project

FOCUS QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTIONS & FINAL PROJECT

Focus Questions for Reflection #1: Contextualized, decontextualized, explicit, balanced or transformative: The great debate

In the reflection paper (one- two pages): Taking on either a PRO or CON position as assigned, discuss the arguments presented in the required readings below, as well as the report from the NRP (Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read): www.nationalreadingpanel.org.

During our next session, you will engage in a debate that will ask you to fully present either the PRO or the CON arguments around the phonics debate. The readings and reflection paper should prepare you for the debate.

- Basic Phonics by Stephen Krashen
TEXTESOL III Newsletter (in press) www.sdkrashen.com/articles/basic_phonics/

- Is In-School Free Reading Good for Children? Why the National Reading Panel Report is (Still) Wrong by Stephen Krashen

www.sdkrashen.com/articles/in-school%20FVR/

- Phonics vs. Whole Language by Beth Dixon

This article explores both sides of the issue, followed by discussion questions.

www.webct.com/service/ViewContent?contentID=2543963

The following brief position articles given in class are also required:

- Ehri & Stahl, Beyond the smoke and mirrors :Putting out the fires;
- Garan, More smoking guns: A response to Linnea Ehri and Steven Stahl, and
- Garan Beyond the smoke and mirrors: A critique of the National Reading Panel Report on phonics.

Additional resource:

Gutiérrez, K., Asato, J., Pacheco, M., Moll, L., Olson, K., Horng, E., Ruiz, R., Garcia, E., & McCarty, T. (2002). Sounding American: the consequence of new reform on English language learners. *Reading Research Quarterly* 37 (3), 328-343.

For each of the positions, reflect on:

- What are the assumptions about what skills matter?
- What are the goals of reading?
- How are L2 learners discussed?
- How is the role of L1 in L2 learning discussed?
- How do the recommendations in the NRP relate to the transformative, critical pedagogy you have been studying in the Masters program?
- Do you have relevant evidence from your classroom to support or refute your PRO or CON position?

Focus Questions for Reflection #2: Describe the reading program and strategies used in your classroom (see **SECTION III: Language Pedagogy and Teacher Education** in www.esperantic.org/esf/f-r3.htm#three for examples. This reflection paper is a draft of Part I of the final project (see below). Address the following in your description:

- What are the goals?
- What is the role of the teacher? Of the learner?
- What are characteristics of the teaching/learning process?
- What is the nature of student-teacher interaction? Student-student interaction?
- How are learner feelings (affective and motivational factors) dealt with?
- How are language and culture viewed?
- What language areas and skills are stressed?

- How is the role of L1 in L2 learning discussed?
- How is prior experience
- How is evaluation conducted?
- How are learner errors dealt with?

Focus Questions for Reflection #3: Begin a reading profile for the case study.

1. Consider what to track to create a reading profile of a focus L2 learner. What questions would you ask in these areas? What other areas of interest?
 - Reading inventories (multimodal, environmental print, function and level of text)
 - Reading behavior of child at home and at school (opportunities, quantity, attitudes, interests, environment)
 - L1 and L2 oral comprehension & expression
 - L1 reading strategies
 - L2 reading strategies
 - Comprehension
 - Genres and styles of choice
 - Impact and motivation
 - Social and cultural impact
2. Bring in an observation of a 15 minutes reading activity or a transcript of 5 minutes talk of your L2 learner during a reading response/conversation/read aloud activity. You and a class partner will work together on a case study of one focal child. Ideally, you would both take turns observing the child and the instruction, so you should either negotiate with your principal for professional development time during school hours or arrange for video and/or audio taping and analyze the tape together.

Focus Questions for Reflection #4: Observing focus child in a meaningful reading activity.

1. With your partner, design a meaningful reading activity/project that taps into the focus child's prior knowledge and interest, as well as target the parts of language that you have identified as most challenging for the student. The activity can be a modification or extension of the classroom curriculum you are using.
 - How does the activity relate to the classroom curriculum?
 - What questions would you ask before, during, and after the activity?
 - What does the child know/need to know about the content and the language skill? (consider our discussion from *Class #3: What skills matter?*)
 - What resources will you draw on?
 - Why is the activity meaningful and motivating to student?
 - How will the child follow through at home?

Focus Questions for Final Project: Case Study of an L2 learner

All of the parts are built on the reflections written for class. The reflection papers will be used in class for discussion and small group activities, and can generate valuable input for you to consider in crafting your final paper. Most of the parts can be done together with your partner, and in-class time will be devoted to feedback and discussion of the reflections, methods, and findings, and plans. The final Part (Part IV) should be written individually.

Introduction: a brief portrait of the psychological, family, environmental, and historical background of the focus child (Igoa Voices of the Children section in *The inner world of the immigrant child* as examples).

Part I: a description of the reading program/approach you use in your classroom (revised from Reflection #2)

Part II: A description of the methodology used to track your focus child's progress (revised from Reflection #3)

Part III: Reading profile using the criteria and methods identified in Reflection #3. Include the initial observation of the focus child you did at the time of Reflection #3. You will also include your revised reflections #4, and an outline of the stages of L1 and L2 of your *focus child*.

Part IV: Analysis of what you learned about L1 and L2 development, relationship, transfer, and use in your focus child, critique of the curriculum's role in promoting or inhibiting reading and language development in your focus child, and recommendations for policy, choice, and adaptations regarding reading curricula for second language learners.

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