

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Early Childhood Education Program

EDUT 413/513
Foundations of Language and Literacy for Diverse Learners (3:3:0)
Fall 2009

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Course Description

Examines complexity of language acquisition and literacy development. Focuses on typical and atypical language development, connections between language and literacy, and diversity of communication styles in families and cultures. Emphasizes first and second language acquisition.

Nature of Course Delivery

The class will have lectures, discussions, group work formats and will require the active participation of all students.

Learner Outcomes

This course is designed to enable students to:

1. Describe the developmental, social, cultural, affective, cognitive, and educational factors that play a role in typical and atypical language development, first and second language acquisition, and reading and writing development.
2. Describe the reading and writing acquisition processes and the interaction among phonological awareness, phonic decoding, spelling, word recognition, reading fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing.
3. Demonstrate the ability to apply current research on typical and atypical language development, second language acquisition, home language, family communication, play, storytelling, and emergent literacy to various settings.
4. Describe the English language structure, including phonology, orthography, morphology, syntax, and semantics.
5. Describe vocabulary acquisition including variation in word meaning.
6. Demonstrate the ability to select children's literature and design meaningful literacy activities that reflect and appreciate cultural, linguistic, and ability diversity.
7. Describe text characteristics including student content preferences, discourse structure, and comprehension, vocabulary, phonemic and syntactic complexity.
8. Describe technology use for early language and literacy instruction and assessment.
9. Describe effective collaboration with school-based teams to identify, select and evaluate children's literature and other materials that meet students' reading needs and interests whether being used in classrooms, libraries, or with parents and caregivers.
10. Summarize the history of reading instruction methodologies and philosophies.

Professional Standards

This concentration is approved for licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia and it complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The course content has been designed to address the following standards and competencies.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

- Standard 6 Communication

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

- Standard 1 Promoting Child Development and Learning

Virginia Professional Endorsement Competencies

- Reading

Virginia Early Childhood Competencies

- 2 Knowledge and Skills: Reading/English

Required Texts

Burns, M. S., Griffin, P., & Snow, C. E. (2000). *Starting out right: A guide to promoting children's reading success*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Genesee, F., Paradis, J., & Crago, M. B. (2004). *Dual language development & disorders*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Paley, V. G. (1998). *The girl with the brown crayon*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Course Requirements

General Requirements

1. The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities, it is imperative that students keep up with the readings and participate in class.
2. Class attendance is important. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must call the instructor and leave a message.
3. The university requires that all pagers and cell phones be turned off before class begins. Laptops and other electronic devices are to be used for educational and learning purposes only and should not be used during class time to check email, surf the web, or communicate with people outside of the class unless part of the class activity.
4. It is expected that assignments will be turned in on time (the beginning of the class in which they are due). However, it is recognized that graduate students occasionally have serious problems that prevent work completion. If such a dilemma arises, students should speak to the instructor in a timely fashion.

Attendance

Attendance in class is important to students' learning; therefore, students are expected to make every effort to attend class sessions. Absences, tardiness, and leaving early may negatively affect course grades. The following policy is from the university course catalog:

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

Written Assignments

All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation as graduate-level writing. The American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition (APA) style will be followed for all written work. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. (Use spell check!) If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work. When in doubt, they should check the APA manual. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the GMU library web guide at <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/>.

Students will

1. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
2. Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.
3. Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. (Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.)
4. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

Grading Criteria

A = 95 – 100	A- = 90 – 94	B+ = 87 – 89	B = 83 – 86
B- = 80 – 82	C = 70 – 79	F = < 70	

A+ is possible if work is of exceptional high quality and includes work above and beyond that required for the course.

Grading Policy

Students in a graduate program must maintain a 3.000 GPA (B average). Endorsement coursework grades must be C or better for undergraduate courses, and B or better for graduate courses. Grades of B minus or better are required for all graduate-level education coursework for licensure. Students with a C or lower in a licensure course must re-take the course and earn a B minus or better to be recommended for Virginia licensure. Only two grades of C will be allowed for completion of the master's degree.

Assignments

Attendance and Participation (15 points)

Because active participation and engagement are imperative for optimal learning, preparation for and participation in in-class activities will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Students attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period.
- Students complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class as evidenced by their ability to discuss and write about the concepts presented and examined in the texts as well as participate fully in related activities.
- Students are actively involved in in-class learning experiences as is evidenced by (1) participating in all activities, (2) engaging in small and large group discussions, (3) completing written work related to the activities, and (4) supporting the participation and learning of classmates.
- Students show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-class discussions, activities, and written reflections.

Language and Literacy Autobiography (10 points). DUE: September 23.

Students will write and share their language and literacy autobiography. They will gather their language and literacy story by talking with family members and/or thinking back on their childhood, adolescence and into their adulthood. Write a two-part paper. Part one provides three literacy or language events narrated in detail; part two presents reflections on the influence the language and literacy upbringing/experience has had on the person's life as an adult.

The types of stories and information that might be included in the autobiography will be brainstormed in class. After completing the autobiography, students will share highlights from their story with a small group of classmates.

Inquiry into Research-Based Teaching Practices (20 points). Due: October 14.

Students will work with a partner or partners to research a teaching practice that enhances the language and literacy development of culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse children.

Specific topics of inquiry will be brainstormed in class. Once topics are selected, students will develop a list of questions to guide their inquiry. They will use these questions to conduct a library search for research on the selected topic.

Students will use the findings from their research to develop a written product that will be used to share the information with their classmates. The product might be, for example, a website, a PowerPoint presentation, a brochure or handbook, or a research brief. Students will prepare a 15- to 20-minute presentation that shares pertinent information about the research-based practice and engages classmates in a hands-on experience.

Research Article: Written Critique and In-class Presentation (20 points).**DUE: November 4.**

Students will search data-bases to identify the types of studies that have been conducted on topics that are of interest to them. They will then identify one article from a peer-reviewed journal for written review and in-class presentation.

Written product (10 points). The written analysis of the article must contain each of the following:

- i. Provide the *full citation* for the article, in APA (5th edition) style.
- ii. state the *purpose(s)* of the study.
- iii. summarize the *measures and methods* used in the study.
- iv. identify the *major findings and conclusions* of the author(s).
- v. present your own *discussion and critical comments* of the article.

The written product must be no more than three (3) pages in length. **Students must turn in a copy of the article along with their review.**

Class presentation (10 points).

Students will prepare a 15 minute presentation to the class on the article they selected. The presentation will:

1. identify why the article was selected
2. review the purpose, methods, and major conclusions of the study
3. encourage discussion and comments through questions, small group activities, or other means.

Students will provide a one-page handout to assist the audience to understand some of the key information in the article or to support an activity to obtain class participation.

Family Language or Literacy Handout (15 points). Due: December 2.

Students will compile a language and/or literacy handout that can be used by families as a resource for (a) understanding the complex nature of children's language and literacy development and (b) obtaining materials and activities that can enhance their own children's language and literacy development. The handout will summarize of students' understanding of key topics presented in class.

Final Reflective Statement. (20 points). Due: December 16.

Students will write a 5-6 page reflective statement that integrates ideas, topics, and information presented during the class along with a discussion of future professional goals. The sources for the reflective statement can include the assigned course readings, information obtained from presentations on research-based practices or article reviews, or from other relevant readings.

CEHD Syllabus Statements of Expectations

All students must abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> for the full honor code.
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/1301gen.html>. Click on responsible Use of Computing Policy at the bottom of the screen.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

Note: To determine whether the campus is closed due to inclement weather, call 703-993-1000 or go to www.gmu.edu.

Course Schedule & Topics

Date	Topics	Readings & Assignments Due
Sep 2 #1	Looking at Language	In-class handouts & activities.
Sep 9 #2	Early Literacy; Beginning Reading	Snow, Burns & Griffin: Foreword; pp. 2 – 58.
Sep 23 #3	Language, Culture, and Cognition First and Second Language Acquisition	Genesee, et al.,: pp. 3-22; 27-37; 39-59 Autobiography Assignment Due.
Oct 14 #4	First and Second Language Acquisition Typical and Atypical Language Development	Genesee et al.,: 18-22; 66-88 Research-based Teaching Practices Assignment Due. In-class Presentations.
Nov 4 #5	Reading & Writing	Paley: all Research Article Review Assignment Due. In-class Presentations.
Dec 2 #6	Reading & Writing Families as Language Environments Collaborations and Partnerships	Snow, Burns & Griffin: 61-122 Family Handout Assignment Due. In-class Presentations.
Dec 16 #7	Another Look at Language	 Reflective Statement Assignment Due.