

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

**EDSE 456/556, EDUT 423/523 (cross-listed)**  
**Developing Language, Literacy, and Communication in Young Children (3:3:0)**  
**Fall 2009**  
**Mondays, 7:20 – 10:00 pm**  
**Robinson A 243**

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### **Course Description**

This course examines strategies to develop language, literacy, and communication in young children with varying abilities, and explores the importance of adult-child interaction as well as the effect of bilingualism, cultural diversity, cognitive ability, and language disorders.

*Field Experience Required.*

### **Nature of Course Delivery**

The class will have lecture, discussion, group work formats and will require active participation of all students.

### **Learner Outcomes**

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Explain the ways current research influences instructional practices, including research on first and second language acquisition, language and cognition, language and culture, language disorders and communication deficits, adult-child interaction, and culture/environment.
2. Describe ways to support the early communication efforts of young children in a culturally and developmentally responsive manner.
3. Design and implement varied communicative activities that support the interaction between diverse young children and their families.
4. Select children's literature and design meaningful literacy activities that reflect and appreciate cultural, linguistic, and ability diversity.
5. Create and promote a print rich environment for diverse young children.

### **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. The course content has been designed to address the following standards and competencies.

#### ***Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)***

- Standard 6 Communication

### ***Virginia Early Childhood Special Education Endorsement Competencies***

- Understanding of speech and language development and intervention methods, including the effects of disabling and at-risk conditions on young children

### ***Virginia Professional Standards***

- Reading

### **Required Text**

Hulit, L. M., & Howard, M. R. (2006). *Born to talk: An introduction to speech and language development* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Bardige, B. S., & Segal, M. M. (2005). *Building literacy with love: A guide for teachers and caregivers of children birth through age 5*. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE.

## **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.

## Submission of Performance-Based Assessment

This course has a Program Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) that **MUST** be uploaded and submitted to Task Stream for evaluation when the assignment is due. **Only PBAs posted to TaskStream will be graded.** This means that **NO** final grades will be posted until all materials are on Task Stream.

## 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 is 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.

### Children's Literature Resource List and Book Talk (15 points)

Students will create a family-friendly resource list of at least five children's books that are culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate for diverse infants and toddlers and their families. The list will include the following information:

1. complete and accurate bibliographic information (title, author, illustrator, copyright date, city of publication, and publisher)
2. clear and concise descriptions of the books that include sufficient detail for readers to gain a clear understanding of the content of the book
3. culturally and developmentally appropriate examples of activities related to the book that families and teachers may do with children (at least two per book)
4. notes about the representation of diversity as appropriate
5. notes about why the book is appropriate for infants and toddlers

Students will bring at least 2 of the books to class to share with classmates. Students will be given 10 minutes to provide a book talk. The book talk should include an overview of the book, ways the book can be shared and enjoyed with infants and toddlers, and ideas for follow-up activities related to the book.

The resource list and book talk will be evaluated using a scoring guide based on the criteria listed above.

### Language Analysis Project (40 points): *This is the NCATE 8 Language, Literacy, and Communication Performance-Based Assessment that shows evidence of meeting CEC Standard 6 Communication.*

Students will videotape themselves interacting with a focus child with exceptional learning needs and whose culture is different from their own. The recording will be approximately 10 minutes in length. They will transcribe the interactions, write an analysis of their findings, and provide a critical reflection.

The students will write a paper that includes the following components:

**1. An analysis of the focus child's language sample (CEC 6a).** Students will write a four- to five-page, double-spaced analysis that

- Includes background information necessary to understanding the context, child, and any other factors that might affect the analysis
- Compares and contrasts the child's language development with knowledge about typical and atypical language development
- Discusses the child's use of language and the ways in which exceptional conditions interacted with the child's experiences and use of language
- Uses evidence from the transcript to support assertions about the child's language development and use
- Cites appropriate and relevant references

**2. An analysis of the student's use of individualized strategies when interacting with the focus child (CEC 6b).** Students will write a two- to three-page, double-spaced analysis that

- Describes how they used effective individualized strategies in the video
- Explains how as the caregiver they use and/or would use individualized strategies in other contexts to enhance their focus child's language development and to teach communication skills
- Uses evidence from the transcript to support assertions about how they used effective strategies
- Cites appropriate and relevant references

**3. An explanation of the ways the student's communication methods matches their focus child's language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences (CEC 6d).** Students will write a one- to two-page, double-spaced explanation of how the communication methods they used or would use with their focus child match the child's language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences.

**4. A reflection about how CEC Standard 6 was met and insights into the student's learning.** Students will write a three- to four-page, double-spaced reflection that includes the following:

- Critical thoughts about the ways in which completion of this assignment shows the student met the elements of CEC Standard 6.
- Insights into what the students learned and what else they need to explore to gain a better understanding of children's language development

### **Language Delays and Disorders Poster (10 points)**

*Note: Undergraduate students may work in a group of three or four students.*

Students will work with a partner to create a poster about what is known about the language development of children with a specific delay, disorder, or medical condition. The poster will include a description of the medical condition or disability, background information and research, possible effects on language and literacy development, promising approaches to promoting language and literacy development, issues and controversies, and professional and support organizations. Students will include a complete and accurate reference list in APA style. The posters will be shared in class.

### **Family Literacy Project (20 points)**

*Note: Modifications for undergraduate students are noted in parenthesis and italics.*

Students will **make two books (one book)** to share with their focus child. These books will be developed based on observations and interviews with the family of the focus child. Students will create both of the following types of books. (*Undergraduate students will choose one of the following.*)

- Book One will be based on an oral story shared in the home or school. This might be a folk tale passed down through the generations, a story about the child or another family member, or an event that recently happened.
- Book Two will be about the child and family in their everyday, natural context. This might be a daily routine such as getting dressed, getting ready to go out, or going to visit somebody.

These books could be used in a classroom or at home to support the language and literacy development of the child.

Students will **write a six- to seven-page, double-spaced paper (three- to four-page double-spaced paper about one book)**, including reference citations as appropriate, that provides clear insights into how they used stories gathered from the child and family to develop the two books and how they could implement meaningful language and literacy activities. They will address how the books could be used to promote cultural and linguistic continuity and how the child responded to the books and activities. They will include the following:

- Description of how the stories were gathered from the focus child and the family, how the story was used to create the books, and how the books were developed to promote cultural and linguistic continuity
- Discussion of the types of activities that took place related to the books, including how they were used to promote cultural and linguistic continuity and how they met the developmental needs of the child
- Explanation of how gathering family stories influenced the planning and implementation of language and literacy activities other than the book activities
- Discussion on how the child responded to the books and activities related to them
- Reflections on what was learned from this assignment about literacy and very young children, including what would be done differently in the future

Students will explain why they created the books and how they used them to enhance language and literacy development as well as promote cultural and linguistic continuity. They will also note other activities they planned and implemented based on the family stories they gathered.

### **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](http://www.gmu.edu).

### Course Schedule

Date	Topics	Readings & Assignments Due
Aug 31	How social context supports & shapes language	Syllabus review
Sep 7	<i>Holiday: No Class</i>	
Sep 14	Communication & Culture	Hulit & Howard, Chapter 1 Bardige & Segal, Chapter 1-3
Sep 21	Theories of Language Development	Hulit & Howard, Chapter 2 Bardige & Segal, Chapter 4
Sep 28	Language & Cognition	Hulit & Howard, Chapter 3 Bardige & Segal, Chapter 5
Oct 5	Language as the Foundation for Literacy	Hulit & Howard, Chapter 4 Bardige & Segal, Chapter 6 <b>Children's Literature Resource List and Book Talk DUE</b>
Tuesday, Oct 13 Monday classes meet on Tuesday	Developing Language & Literacy through children's literature	Hulit & Howard, Chapter 5 Bardige & Segal, Chapters 7, 8, 9 and appendix
Oct 19	Typical Language Development	Hulit & Howard, Chapter 6 Bardige & Segal, Chapter 10
Oct 26	Typical Speech Development	Hulit & Howard, Chapter 7
Nov 2	Dialects Dual Language Development	Hulit & Howard, Chapters 8, 9 <b>Language Analysis Project, part 1 DUE</b>

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Nov 9	Adult-Child Interactions & Language Development	Bardige & Segal, Chapter 12 <b>Language Analysis Project, part 2 DUE</b>
Nov 16	Developmental Disorders	Bardige & Segal, Chapter 11 <b>Language Analysis Project, part 3 DUE</b>
Nov 23	Language Delays and Disorders	Hulit & Howard, Chapter 10 <b>Language Analysis Project, part 4 DUE</b>
Nov 30	Supporting Language Development	Hulit & Howard, Appendix <b>Language Delays and Disorders Poster DUE</b>
Dec 7	Supporting Literacy Development	Bardige & Segal, Chapter 13
Dec 14	Learning From Family Stories	No readings <b>Family Literacy Project DUE</b> Family Story Celebration