

George Mason University
Graduate School of Education, Special Education Program

Language Acquisition and Communication for Diverse Infants and Toddlers

EDSE 456/556, Sec 001, Spring 2004 (3 credit hours)

Enterprise Hall (ENT) 279

Monday, 4:30-7:10

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Course Description:

This course provides students with an understanding of early language development in terms of each of the five major components of language. Speech, language, and communication are discussed, particularly its interrelatedness with cognitive and socio-cultural development. The importance of adult-child interaction and the impact of cognitive ability, cultural diversity, bilingualism, and language disorder are also examined.

Course Objectives (reference CEC standards):

At the completion of this course, students will:

1. Discuss the major patterns of early language development in terms of each of the five components of language as well as individual and cultural differences that may be exhibited in infants and toddlers (*CEC Standard 6: Language*);
2. Discuss the developmental, social, cultural, affective, and cognitive factors that play a role in early first and second language acquisition (*CEC Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners*);
3. Apply current research on early first and second language acquisition, including the research on language and cognition, language and culture, language disorders and communication deficits, adult-child interaction, and culture/environment (*CEC Standard 3: Individual learning Differences*);
4. Support the early communication efforts of infants and toddlers in a culturally and developmentally responsive manner (*CEC Standard 6: Language*), and
5. Design and implement varied communicative activities that support the interaction between diverse infants and toddlers and their families (*CEC Standard 7: Instructional Planning*).

Assignments	Dates	Points	
		Grad	Undergrad
Focus Child Introduction	Week 3	5	5
Autobiographical Language Story	Week 2	5	5
Focus Child Dictionary	Week 12	10	15
Video, Transcription and Language Analysis	Week 8	15	20
Reflections Log	Ongoing	20	25
Family Language/Literacy Guide & Presentation	Weeks 12, 13	25	30

*Creating a Language and Literacy Rich Environment	Week 10	20	
*Graduate			
		<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>

General Requirements

1. The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. In addition, reading in professional journals will be necessary to complete the major assignment. Because the class is structured around discussion and small group activities pertaining to infant and toddler language and literacy development, it is imperative that you keep up with the readings and participate in class.
2. Class attendance is important. If, due to an emergency, you will not be in class call or email the instructor before class and leave a message.
3. It is expected that assignments will be turned in on time at the end 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 problem arises, please speak to the instructor in a timely fashion.

Guidelines for Participation

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

- ❖ Readings are completed prior to class as is evidenced by the ability to discuss and write about the concepts presented and examined in the texts.
- ❖ Outside preparation for in-class activities is apparent as is evidenced by materials brought to class and the ability to participate fully in related activities.
- ❖ Active involvement in in-class learning experiences is apparent 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.

Guidelines for Written Assignments

All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation as graduate-level writing. The American Psychological Association (APA) style (5th edition) 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. You will use the spell check, and have someone else look at it if you feel necessary. When in doubt, 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/>.

Minimum Criteria for Evaluation

1. Writing is concise and clear.
2. Appropriate references are made.
3. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.
4. Double space work, use size 11 font and 1" margins, unless otherwise noted.

ASSIGNMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Focus Child Introduction

Assignment (5 points)

Introduce your focus child to the class.

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to help you to synthesize the information on your focus child and then to share this information with your classmates.

Format

Part I

Choose a focus child, aged 0-3 years old. This can be a child with whom you are familiar or you can receive referrals from classmates or the instructor. Be sure that the child's environment is conducive to you being in the room with the child as you make your observation.

Part II

Collect information on your focus child:

- 1) Type of observation setting
- 2) Name (does not have to be their real name), age and gender of child
- 3) How long child has been in the setting
- 4) Ages of other children in setting
- 5) Typical or atypical development of child
- 6) Cultural and linguistic distinctions
- 7) Adult/child ratio of setting
- 8) Diversity of setting population

Part III

Introduce focus child to the class; this should take approximately 5 minutes.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. Your introduction shows evidence that you have acquired the necessary information on the focus child.
 2. The information is presented clearly and concisely.
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Autobiographical Language Story

Assignment (5 points)

Illustrate a significant personal early childhood language or literacy experience.

Purpose

Such an illustration serves to explore the connection between your approach to providing language/literacy experiences for children with your own personal history with language and literacy.

Format

Part I

In class, will brainstorm what would be a language or literacy experience that one might have as a child. You will reflect on your own early childhood language and literacy experience that was particularly significant and memorable

Part II

You will write a two-page account of that experience. The account will relate the language and/or literacy experience, and its significance, in terms of age/development, adult-child interaction, cultural influences, community influences, and how that experience has had an influence on you.

Criteria for Evaluation

- ❖ The paper will reflect that you have reflected on and analyzed the language/literacy experience including all the criteria and its long-term significance.
 - ❖ The paper is written clearly and follows the paper-writing guidelines as stipulated in this syllabus.
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Focus Child Dictionary

Assignment (10/15 points)

Create a compendium of vocabulary words or gestures your focus child communicates over the course of the semester.

Purpose

This dictionary will serve to chronicle the focus child's vocabulary and communication development.

FormatPart I

Through the course of the semester, you will observe your focus child. One of the objectives of these observations will be to document the child's growing English-language vocabulary. You will date each entry for the dictionary and indicate the age range of the child from beginning to end of the semester.

Part II

You will write the dictionary as a list of words or gestures the child has learned in chronological order, not alphabetical. The word entries will be dated, be designated by parts of speech, and will have a brief descriptor of the context of the utterance.

Criteria for Evaluation

- ❖ The paper has evidence that you have observed the child over the course of the semester.
- ❖ The dictionary is clearly written, and will include a brief description of the child including age, length of time in the observation environment and cultural background, including all languages spoken in the home and observation environment.

Video, Transcription and Language Analysis**Assignment (15/20 points)**

Videotape one segment involving your focus child interacting with the children and caregivers in his/her learning environment. The videotape will be at least 15 minutes long. Transcribe the tape and write a five-page analysis of the language sample of the focus child and an analysis of interactions with the child.

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to provide an opportunity for you to collect, transcribe, and analyze a spontaneous language sample of an infant or toddler in a natural communicative context and to gain a better understanding of the caregiver's role and style in children's language development.

Format

Videotape your focus child interacting with other infants & toddlers and caregivers during play, transcribe the interactions, and submit an analysis of your observations.

Part I

Videotape an infant/toddler during play for approximately 15 minutes (may consist of more than one observation). Maintain anecdotal records of the situation around the time of the taping. These records should include information such as (a) the date, time and setting; (b) the people present at the time of data collection; and (c) background information on the child that may affect the language sample (e.g., child's mood, home language/dialect, gender racial and ethnic variable, etc.).

Part II

Submit this session on a VHS tape or a CD with your transcription and written analysis.

- ❖ Transcribe your language sample. Submit transcriptions of (a) the vocalizations and gestures, (b) the possible intent of the communication, and (c) the responses of the child's communicative partner(s).
- ❖ Analyze the language sample of the child and submit a four- to five-page analysis of your data written in APA style and using reference citations. Your analysis should include specific examples from the language sample to support your conclusions and should link your findings to the readings. The analysis should include the following:
 - Background information necessary to understanding the context, children, and any other factors that might affect the analysis.
 - An analysis of your focus child's patterns of language development. Present evidence of the child's knowledge of linguistic rules or principle (i.e., pragmatic,

semantics, syntax, morphology, and phonology) that underlies the verbal and non-verbal behavior.

- An analysis of the functions of language most commonly used by the child. Present evidence to support your conclusions and link your findings to your readings.
- A description of linguistic elements that may be in the child's repertoire but were not observed during your language sample.
- Reflections on what you learned from the sample analysis process and what else you may need to explore to gain a better understanding of the child's language development.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. Fifteen minute VHS recording or CD submitted with the written work.
2. Transcription accurately conveys the vocalizations and gestures of the child and clearly describes the possible intent of the communication as well as the response of the child's communicative partners(s).
3. The analysis is accurate and is supported by evidence from the language sample and is clearly linked to appropriate references. It is written in a clear and professional manner, with evidence of thoughtful organization and careful editing.

Reflections Log

Assignment (20/25 points)

Maintain an ongoing log of reflections from class presentations and discussions, readings, and out-of-class work.

Purpose

The purpose of the reflections log is to:

- ❖ Provide an opportunity to record observations, thoughts and reactions;
- ❖ Use writing as a tool for learning; and
- ❖ Encourage you to reflect upon your readings, observations, and learning.

Format

The reflections log will consist of written reflections that will be submitted at the end of class each night. Put your name and date on each entry. Focus on the questions:

- ❖ What important concepts did I learn?
- ❖ What was the most interesting or surprising fact in the class tonight?
- ❖ How does this information relate to my work with my focus child?
- ❖ What concerns may I have based on my new knowledge of a particular topic?

These reflections will be collected at the end of class and returned to you the following class session.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. Log entries are collected in a **blue folder with brads**.
2. Log entries will be submitted each class period using the entry forms provided for you.
3. Reflections demonstrate a thoughtful approach to the information presented throughout the semester.

Family Language & Literacy Guide and Presentation

Assignment (25/30 points)

Create a guide that could be shared with your focus child's family and conveys your beliefs and understandings about language and literacy development in diverse infants and toddlers. Include (a) research based understanding about and practices related to typical and atypical language development,

including second-language acquisition, (b) a list of children's literature that can be shared with families, and (c) a collection of culturally and developmentally appropriate activities that are written in a family-friendly manner and can be shared with diverse families.

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to:

- 1) Be able to relate this understanding clearly and concisely for a culturally diverse population.
- 2) Develop language and literacy experiences for infants and toddlers and their families that are designed to support language and literacy development as well as adult-child interactions.
- 3) Demonstrate knowledge of infant/toddler development, current research, and your focus child's culture, interests, and family structure.

Format

Part I

Write an introduction for the guide that articulates your beliefs about and practices related to language and literacy development, use, and practices in diverse infants and toddlers and their families. These beliefs and practices are to be based on research; therefore, sources of information will be cited using APA style. Part I should be at least 3 pages long.

Part II

Create a database of at least 20 books that are appropriate for a diverse population of infants and toddlers with typical and atypical language/literacy development. The database should include the bibliographic information (title, author, copyright date, city of publication, and publisher) and a brief, family-friendly description of each book.

Part III

Describe at least 5 activities that support language development in the home, community, and learning environment. These activities should:

- ❖ Provide a vehicle for authentic, meaningful communication between infants and toddlers, their families and their caregivers;
- ❖ Be designed to be implemented with a diverse population of varying developmental levels, cultural backgrounds, and linguistic environments;
- ❖ Be creative and practical;
- ❖ Be written in a family-friendly manner; and
- ❖ Include a brief rational and sufficient detail.

Part IV

You will present your guide to the class. The presentation will consist of a poster session format of sharing the Part I introduction, the Part II collection of the database of books, and a demonstration of one of your activities, complete with the materials that would be needed to complete the activity. The demonstration of the activity should be approximately five minutes in length and will include your rationale for including it in the family literacy guide and an explanation of how it supports language and literacy development in a culturally and developmentally appropriate manner. Create a one-page handout to disseminate to the class and to submit with your guide.

Creating a Language and Literacy Rich Environment

Assignment (20 points: Graduate)

Analyze and reflect on the language and literacy practices that exist at your focus child's learning environment. Use your observations and reflections to design your own language and literacy rich environment, as if you were the provider that this site.

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to (a) observe, analyze, synthesize and reflect on language and literacy practices that occur in various infant and toddler settings; (b) to take into consideration the culture, interests, families, etc. of the children at your site; and (c) to identify the caregiver's role and the context and materials that would enable you to create a language and literacy rich environment setting.

Format

Part I

Participate in a class brain-storming, small group activity to define the elements of what makes a literacy/language competent environment; this will serve as the outline of what would be in the paper.

Part II

Assess your focus child's literacy/language environment, within the context of second-language acquisition, culture, adult-child interaction, environment, and child development. Describe the environment, focusing solely on the promotion of language and literacy. Consider the role of the caregiver in adult/child interactions, setting up the environment, including materials, and how the family influences the language/literacy environment of this setting.

Part III

Use your observations and results of class discussion to design your own language and literacy rich environment of for your observation site, as if you were the provider. You will reflect on these questions:

- ❖ What does the environment look like?
- ❖ What are some of the literacy and language rich practices that occur?
- ❖ How are you choosing materials?
- ❖ How are you individualizing for the linguistically and ability diverse infants, toddlers and their families?
- ❖ How is early language and literacy linked to the schedule and routines of the day?

Make sure to note family involvement, the caregiver's role, adult-child interactions, the context in which your observations are taking place, and the materials that would enable you to create the language and literacy rich environment. Link your understandings to readings and cite references.

Criteria for Evaluation

1. The paper has evidence that the you went through a process of observation, analysis, and reflection.
2. You show an understanding of the caregiver's role, materials and context needed to promote language and literacy in infants and toddlers.
3. The paper is clearly written and support by appropriate references.

Grading Scale

A	95 – 100
A-	90 – 94
B+	88 - 89
B	85 – 87
B-	84 – 80
C	70 – 79
F	Below 70

Assignment Calendar

Date	Class Topics	Assignments Due
February 2, 2004 Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Course Overview❖ What are your experiences?❖ Choosing a focus child❖ "Early Messages" video❖ Reflections Log	
February 9, 2004 Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Overview of components of language❖ Word search activity (Hulit & Howard, pp. 1-12)❖ Anatomical and physiological bases of speech, language, and hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Article: Chapter 2: Development of Communication, Language and Speech❖ Hulit & Howard, Appendix A

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Reflections Log Reference article: Chapter 2 of Secord, W., Shames, G. & Wiig, E. (1994). <i>Human Communication Disorders</i>. New York: Macmillian College Publishing Company, Inc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Personal Language/Literacy Experience ❖ Have identified a focus child
February 16, 2004 Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Child Development: 0-3 ❖ Video: Ten Things Every Child Needs (Interaction, Communication, Music, & Reading) ❖ Language Development and Communication ❖ Language Development Reading Activity ❖ Reflections Log 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Hult & Howard, Chapters 1 & 4 ❖ Introduce Focus Child
February 23, 2004 Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Adult-Child Interactions in Language and Literacy Development ❖ Reflections Log 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Harding & Riley, Chapters 1 & 2
March 1, 2004 Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Language Acquisition Theories ❖ Theories Reading Activity ❖ Reflections Log 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Hult & Howard, Chapter 2 & 7
March 8, 2004 Week 6	Spring Recess	
March 15, 2004 Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Language and Cognition ❖ "From Neurons to Neighborhoods" Activity ❖ Reflections Log 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Chapter 6: From Neurons to Neighborhoods: Communication and Cognition ❖ Hult & Howard, Chapter 3
March 22, 2004 Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Atypical Language Development ❖ Speech and Language Disorders ❖ Speech/Language Disorders Reading Activity ❖ Reflections Log <p>Speaker: Anne Taggart</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Hult & Howard, Chapter 8 & 9 ❖ Video, Transcription and Language Analysis
March 29, 2004 Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Second Language Learners ❖ Reflections Log <p>Speaker: Jodi Whiteman</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Harding & Riley, Chapters 3 & 4 ❖ **Communication and Family Culture Interview (Heath)
April 5, 2004 Week 10 (Fairfax County Public Schools Spring Break)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Communication and Family Culture ❖ "Ways with Words" Activity ❖ Reflections Log <p>Speakers: Family Service Worker, EHS Teacher, EHS Coordinator (Higher Horizons), Parent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Heath, Prologue & Chapters 3 & 4 ❖ *Creating a Language and Literacy Rich Environment
April 12, 2004 Week 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Early Head Start ❖ "Linguistic Diversity and Early Literacy: Serving Culturally diverse Families in Early Head Start" ❖ Reflections Log <p>Speaker: Betsi Closter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Hart & Risley, Chapters 3-5 (in class reading and activity)
April 19, 2004 Week 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Literacy: Sharing Books with Babies ❖ Reflections Log 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ **Communication and Family Culture Interview (Heath) ❖ Family Language & Literacy Guide and Presentation
April 26, 2004 Week 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Literacy: Promoting School Readiness in Infants and Toddlers ❖ Reflections Log 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Family Language & Literacy Guide and Presentation

May 3, 2004 Week 14	❖ Presentations	
May 5 – 13, 2004	Exam Period	

Required Texts

Harding, E., & Riley, P (1986). *The bilingual family*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hulit, L., & Howard, M (1997). *Born to talk*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon

Heath, Shirley Brice (1996). *Ways with words*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Hart, B., & Risley, T. (1995). *Meaningful differences*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Recommended Text

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Other References

- ❖ Chapter 2: Secord, W., Shames, G. & Wiig, E. (1994). *Human Communication Disorders*. New York: Macmilliam College Publishing Company, Inc.
- ❖ www.cec.sped.org – Website for the Council for Exceptional Children
- ❖ [From Neurons to Neighborhoods](#)
- ❖ www.ehsnrc.org – Website for Early Head Start National Resource Center
- ❖ www.naeyc.org – Website for the National Association for Education of Young Children
- ❖ www.readingrockets.org – Website for Reading Rockets, a national educational service of public television station [WETA](#) in Washington, D.C. Reading Rockets is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs
- ❖ www.zerotothree.org – Website for Zero to Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families
- ❖ www.nccic.org/itcc - Website for National Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative, Zero to Three