

**George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
ECE Program**

**EDUT 423/523
EDSE 456/556**

Language Acquisition and Communication for Diverse Infants and Toddlers

Fall 2005

**Monday, 4:30-7:10
Robinson A412**

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Office hours: after class or by appointment

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 will be discussed, particularly in terms of its interrelatedness with cognitive and socio-cultural development. The importance of adult-child interaction and the impact of bilingualism, cultural diversity, cognitive ability, and language disorder will also be explored. Students will further their understanding of diversity of communication styles in families, communities, and cultures.

Course Outcomes

This course is designed to enable students to:

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;
2. Discuss the developmental, social, cultural, affective, and cognitive factors that play a role in early first and second language acquisition;
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;
4. Support the early communication efforts of infants and toddlers in a culturally and developmentally responsive manner; and
5. Design and implement varied communicative activities that support the interaction between diverse infants and toddlers and their families.

Required Texts

- Harding-Esch, E., & Riley, P. (2003). *The bilingual family: A handbook for parents* (2nd ed.). United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Hulit, L. M., & Howard, M. R. (2002). *Born to talk: An introduction to speech and language development* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Required Articles

Required articles are listed in the course schedule and can be accessed through e-reserves at <http://oscr.gmu.edu>. Click on search electronic reserve at the top of the page. Select Susan Keightley and enter the password.

Mode or Nature of Course Delivery

Course delivery will be through mini-lectures, cooperative learning groups based on learning theorists, and case study groups linking student learning to national standards and program/student outcomes. To meet course objectives, the delivery of EDUC 613 is accomplished through a combination of experiential learning activities, in-class collaborative work groups, and mini-lectures designed to help meet the needs of all learners and learning styles. These include:

- Presentations (i.e., mini-lectures, often assisted by Power Point and other visuals);
- Discussions (i.e., active involvement of students in learning by asking questions that provoke critical thinking and verbal interaction);
- Cooperative learning (i.e., small group structure emphasizing learning from and with others);
- Collaborative learning (i.e., heterogeneous groups in an interdisciplinary context);
- Guest lectures;
- Student sharing and mini-presentations;

Honor Code

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of George Mason University and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the members of George Mason University, have set forth the following code of honor: Any individual who is caught in the act of cheating, attempting to cheat, plagiarizing, or stealing will be brought forth before a council of their peers. In the event that the individual is found guilty, he or she will be punished accordingly. For further information, please refer to the University Catalog or Website at www.gmu.edu.

Students with Special Needs

Students who require any special accommodations or those with disabilities that may affect their ability to participate fully in the course are encouraged to work with the instructor to ensure their successful participation.

This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the series, programs, or activities of all state and local governments. Under ADA a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as: learning, working, walking, speaking, hearing, breathing, and/or taking care of oneself. If a student has disability and needs course adaptations or accommodations because of that disability, it must be established with the faculty, in writing, at the beginning of the semester so arrangements can be made. Please call the Disability Resource Center for required documentation (703-993-2474).

Course Requirements and Explanation of Assignments

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, students should contact the instructor and leave a message.
3. The university requires that all pagers and cell phones be turned off before class begins.
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 may occasionally have serious circumstances arise that prevent the completion of work by the assigned due date. If such a dilemma arises, please speak to the instructor in a timely fashion.

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, 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 you are not confident of your own ability to catch errors, have another person proofread your work. 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/>.

Expectations

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.

Assignments

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Participation	Ongoing	10
Family Calendar Activities and Children's Literature Database/Book Talk	10/3	20
Language Sample and Analysis	11/7	25
Language Delays and Disorders Research Brief Presentation (not required for Undergraduates)	11/28	20
Family Project and Presentation	12/5	25
Total		100

<i>Grading Scale</i>	
A	94 – 100
A-	90 – 93
B+	87 – 89
B	80 – 86
C	75 – 79

Participation

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

- Readings and outside preparation for in-class activities are completed prior to class as is evidenced by the ability to discuss and write about the concepts presented and examined in the texts as well as participate fully in related activities.
- Active involvement in in-class learning experiences is apparent as is evidenced by participating in all activities, engaging in small and large group discussions, completing written work related to the activities, and supporting the participation and learning of classmates.
- Critical reflective thinking is apparent through in-class written and oral activities.
- One on-line class is scheduled and will be counted toward your participation grade.

Children's Literature Database and Book Talk

Students will create a user-friendly database of at least 10 children's books that are culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate for diverse infants and toddlers and their families. The database will include the following information:

1. complete and accurate bibliographic information (title, author, illustrator, copyright date, city of publication, and publisher)
2. identifiers that will help database users access books (e.g., related themes, topics, concepts, etc.)

3. clear and concise descriptions of the books that include sufficient detail for readers to gain a clear understanding of the content of the book
4. culturally and developmentally appropriate examples of activities families and teachers may do with infants and toddlers related to the books (at least one per book)
5. notes about the representation of diversity as appropriate
6. notes about why the book is appropriate for infants and toddlers

Students will bring at least five of the books to class to share with classmates. Students will be given five minutes to provide a book talk about one or two of the books. 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. Students will e-mail the database to the instructor which will then be forwarded to the class. The database and book talk will be evaluated using a scoring guide based on the criteria listed above.

Of those ten books, choose one that can be developed into a Family Calendar:

Family Calendar Activities

Working individually or with a partner, students will create six family-friendly calendar activities related an appropriate book for toddlers and their families. The activities will be culturally and developmentally appropriate and will include a variety of ways for families and young children to interact with the book and its content. Types of activities will be brainstormed in class and class time will be allotted to begin developing the activities. Because the descriptions will be included in a calendar that will be distributed to families, the entries must be 50 words or less and must be carefully edited.

These entries will be evaluated using a scoring guide based on the criteria listed above.

Language Delays and Disorders Research Brief and Presentation

Students will work with a small group to create a research brief about what is known about the language development of children with a specific disability or medical condition and suggested approaches for enhancing their language development. This research brief will serve as a handout for the 15- and 20-minute presentation the group will give to share the highlights of their findings. The format and content of the brief and presentation will be agreed upon in class and a template for presenting the information will be created. At the same time, a scoring guide for evaluating the briefs and presentations will be developed.

When developing the brief, each member of the group will read at least one resource with pertinent information about the language development of children with the identified disability or medical condition. The information will be synthesized and cited as appropriate. A reference list will be included at the end of the brief and the group member who initially read the text will be noted.

The group will provide a 15- to 20-minute presentation that will include an overview of the research findings, suggestions for supporting speech and language development, and time for questions and discussion.

The research brief and presentation will be evaluated using a scoring guide based on the criteria listed above and developed in class.

Language Sample and Analysis

Students will videotape a focus child interacting with an adult in a natural setting, transcribe the interactions, and write a four- to five-page analysis of their findings and a one- to two-page reflection. The adult may be themselves, a family member, or another caregiver.

1. Students will videotape a focus child interacting with an adult for approximately 10 to 12 minutes (may include more than one setting). They will maintain anecdotal records of the situation around the time of the videotaping. These records will 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 variables, etc.). They will submit the videotape with the transcription and written analysis.
2. Students will transcribe the language sample. They will 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).
3. Student will analyze the language sample and submit a four- to five-page, double-spaced analysis of their data written in APA style and using reference citations. Their analysis will include specific examples from the language sample to support their conclusions and will link the findings to the readings. The analysis will include the following:
 - Background information necessary to understanding the context, child, and any other factors that might affect the analysis (i.e. size of family, age and birth order in family, primary family members at home, family education, gender, racial and ethnic variables, home language/dialect, mood that day, etc.)
 - An analysis of the focus child's patterns of language development, including evidence of the child's knowledge of linguistic rules or principles (i.e., pragmatic, semantics, syntax, morphology, and phonology) that underlie the verbal and non-verbal behavior
 - An analysis of the functions of language most commonly used by the child, including evidence to support the conclusions and link the findings to the readings
 - A description of linguistic elements that may be in the child's repertoire but were not observed during the language sample
 - An examination of the strategies used by the adult to support the child's language and cognitive development in a culturally and developmentally responsive manner, including the turn-taking behaviors seen in the adult-child interaction and any continuity or discontinuity of cultural interactional style between the caregiver and the child
4. Students will write a one- to two-page, double-spaced reflection that provides insight into what they learned and what else they need to explore to gain a better understanding of children's language development.

5. Students will submit a hard copy of the transcript, analysis, and reflection.
6. The language sample, analysis, and reflection will be evaluated using a scoring guide based on the criteria listed above.

Family Literacy Project

Students will make two books to share with an infant or toddler.

- Book One will be based on a familiar story shared in the home or school and adapted to the child's environment.
- Book Two will be about the child and family in their everyday, natural context.

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

Students will write a paper, 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. They will include the following:

- A description of how to gather stories from children and families; how to create the books and how the books were developed to promote cultural and linguistic continuity.
- A discussion of the types of activities related to the books that could take place, including how they can be used to promote cultural and linguistic continuity and how they meet the developmental needs of the child.
- An explanation of how gathering family stories can influence the planning and implementation of language and literacy activities other than the book activities.
- (If possible) A reflection on how the child responded to the books and activities related to them.

Students will be given 10 to 15 minutes to share their books and several of their language and literacy activities in small groups. They 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.

The family project will be evaluated using a scoring guide based on the criteria listed above.

EDUT 523 CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments Due
August 29	Syllabus Overview Infant/Toddler Communication	
September 12	Communication and Culture	Harding-Esch & Riley: Chapter 1 Hulit & Howard: Chapters 1 & 8
September 19	Developing Language and Literacy Through Children's Literature	Rosenquest (2002)
September 26	Language Acquisition Theories Language and Cognition	Hulit & Howard: Chapters 2 & 3
October 3	Adult-Child Interactions in Language and Literacy Development Presentations	Database of Children's Literature and Book Talk / Literature Calendar Activities
October 11	Bilingualism	Harding-Esch & Riley: Chapters 2 – 5 and any two case studies
October 17	Typical Language Development	Hulit & Howard: Chapters 4 – 6
October 24	Typical Speech Development	Hulit & Howard: Chapters 7, Appendix
October 31	Supporting Early Language and Literacy Development (BB class) NO CLASS ON CAMPUS	Read an article on BB and write a 1-2 page, double spaced response. Post on site
November 7	Supporting Early Language and Literacy Development Bookmaking <i>Reach Out and Read: Making Books Part of a Healthy Childhood</i> <i>Speaker: Joan Wabschall</i> <i>Program Coordinator</i>	Language Sample and Analysis Diener et al. (2003/04) Lawhon & Cobb (2002)
November 14	Atypical Speech and Language Development: Delays and Disorders	Prizant et al. (2000) Hulit & Howard: Chapter 9
November 21	Atypical Speech and Language Development: Delays and Disorders	Straub (1999) Parparella & Kasari (2004)
November 28	Atypical Speech and Language Development: Delays and Disorders Presentations	Roper & Dunst (2003) Delays and Disorders Research Brief and Presentation
December 5	Learning From Family Stories: Providing Culturally, Linguistically, and Developmentally Appropriate Language and Literacy Experiences Presentations	Infant/Toddler Family Books and Presentations