



College of Education and Human Development

Early Childhood Education Program
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<https://gse.gmu.edu/programs/earlychildhood/>

ECED 702.001 Early Writing: Cognition, Language, and Literacy (3:3:0) **Wednesday, 4:30 - 7:10 pm** **Innovation Hall 211**

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Course Description

Examines early writing research and practice related to cognition, language, and literacy in the early education of diverse learners, including special education and multicultural/multilingual education.

Prerequisite(s): Admission to the PhD in Education program or advanced-master's status with approval of course instructor.

Nature of Course Delivery

This course utilizes a seminar format. Seminars will include instructor- and student-led discussions, reflective activities, and student presentations that will take place during class meetings as well as online. Students are expected to complete all class readings prior to each session so as to engage in active dialogue and sharing of ideas. Learning activities will also include independent research and study.

Overall Student Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

1. Describe developmental, social, cultural, affective, and cognitive factors that play a role in early language and literacy development.
2. Analyze, synthesize, and share current research on environments and approaches that promote language and literacy for children, including children with disabilities and those from multicultural and multilingual backgrounds.
3. Design a research proposal based on current research on cognition, language, and literacy.
4. Engage in activities that promote the development of others' as well as their own professional writing.

Professional Standards

This seminar is for students in a number of disciplinary concentrations such as early childhood education, early childhood special education, educational psychology, literacy, multicultural/multilingual education, and special education. Study includes the age range of birth through 8 years old. Research is examined across areas of early childhood education, early childhood special education, bilingual/ESL education, multicultural education, and international perspectives on early childhood education.

Required Texts

Bissex, G. L. (1980). *GNYS AT WRK: A child learns to write and read*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Clay, M. (1975). *What did I write? Beginning writing behavior*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Dyson, A. H. (2013). *ReWRITING the basics: Literacy learning in children's cultures*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Steward, E. P. (1995). *Beginning writers in the zone of proximal development*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Required Articles

For first class:

Dinehart, L. (2014). Handwriting in early childhood education: Current research and future implications. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 15, 97-118.

Kidd, J. K., Burns, M. S., La Croix, L., & Cossa, N. L. (2014). Prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers in high poverty schools speak about young children's authoring (and we need to listen). *Literacy and Social Responsibility*, 7, 50-71.

Additional readings (more will be added as semester continues)

Ball, A. (2006). Teaching writing in culturally diverse classrooms. In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research* (pp. 293-310). New York, NY: Guilford.

Burns, M. S., & Kidd, J. K. (in press). Play and early writing. In D. Couchenour and J. K. Chrisman (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of contemporary early childhood education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Cutler, L., & Graham, S. (2008). Primary grade writing instruction: A national survey. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100, 907-919.

Fitzgerald, J. (2006). Multilingual writing in preschool through 12th grade: The last 15 years. In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research* (pp. 337-354). New York, NY: Guilford.

McCloskey, E. (2011). Inclusion as an instructional approach: Fostering inclusive writing communities in preschool classrooms. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 12, 46-67.

Powell, D. R., & Diamond, K. E. (2012). Promoting early literacy and language development. In R. D. Pianta (Ed.), *Handbook of early childhood education* (pp. 194-216). New York, NY: Guilford.

Rowe, D. W., & Neitzel, C. (2010). Interest and agency in 2- and 3-year-old's participation in emergent writing. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 45, 169-195.

Schrader, C. T. (1990). Symbolic play as a curricular tool for early literacy development. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 5, 79-103.

George Mason University Policies and Resources for Students

- Academic integrity (honor code, plagiarism) – Students must adhere to guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Mason Email – Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, division, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- Counseling and Psychological Services – The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops, and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- Office of Disability Services – Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor in writing at the beginning of the semester <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- The Writing Center (Optional Resource) – The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- University Libraries (Optional Resource) – The George Mason University Libraries provide numerous services, research tools, and help with using the library resources [See <http://library.gmu.edu/>].

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

Core Values Commitment: The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice.

Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

Collaboration

Collaboration is an important human activity that involves shared responsibility in promoting healthy, productive lives, and educational success. We commit ourselves to work toward these goals in genuine partnerships with individuals, families, community agencies, schools, businesses, foundations, and other groups at the local, regional, national, and international levels.

Ethical Leadership

In all professions represented by the college, leadership is an essential component denoting ability and willingness to help lead professional practice to higher levels. We commit

ourselves to practice ethical leadership through deliberate and systematic attention to the ethical principles that guide all leaders in a moral society.

Innovation

We have a history of creating dynamic, innovative programs, and we are dedicated to continue creating innovative approaches in all areas of our work. We commit ourselves to seeking new ways to advance knowledge, solve problems, improve our professional practice, and expand on our successes.

Research-Based Practice

The best practice in any discipline is based upon sound research and professional judgment. We commit ourselves to basing our instruction, scholarship, and policy recommendations on well-established principles that, wherever possible, emerge from research and reflection on its implications for professional practice.

Social Justice

Social justice embodies essential principles of equity and access to all opportunities in society, in accordance with democratic principles and respect for all persons and points of view. We commit ourselves to promoting equity, opportunity, and social justice through the college's operations and its missions related to teaching, research, and service.

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. 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. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must call the instructor and leave a message or send an email before class. 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.

3. In line with Mason's policy that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious holidays, students shall be given an opportunity to make up, within a reasonable time, any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observations in advance of the class that will be missed. Notice should be provided in writing as soon as possible.
4. During face-to-face meetings, cell phones, pagers, and other communicative devices are

not allowed in this class. Students must keep them stowed away and out of sight. Laptops or tablets (e.g., iPads) may be permitted for the purpose of taking notes only, but students must submit a request in writing to do so. Engaging in activities not related to the course (e.g. gaming, email, chat, etc.) will result in a significant deduction in their participation grade.

5. 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 students occasionally have serious problems that prevent work completion. If such a dilemma arises, students should speak to the instructor prior to the assignment due date (when possible). If the student does not communicate with the instructor, a late penalty will be applied.
6. Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/> for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when responsible for a task, students will perform that task. When students rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, they will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind), students will ask for guidance and clarification.

Written Assignments

All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation. The American Psychological Association, Sixth 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 Mason library web guide at <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/>. Students may consult the Writing Center for additional writing support.

Students will do the following:

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
B- = 80 – 82

A- = 90 – 94
C = 70 – 79

B+ = 87 – 89
F = < 70

B = 83 – 86

Grading Policy

In addition to meeting all university and College grade requirements, Ph.D. in Education students must also meet the following requirements:

1. Ph.D. in Education students must have at least a B average in all courses below the 900- level on their approved programs. Any C grade must be offset by an A grade.
2. No more than three credits of C in a student's Ph.D. in Education Program of study may be counted toward degree requirements. Students may not accumulate more than a total of two C grades in their programs of study. Students who do so are dismissed from the program. All components of the program are important because they are interrelated. All require serious commitment and study and a level of performance appropriate to doctoral study. This requirement seeks to ensure such performance.
3. Courses in which students receive less than a C final grade must be repeated and passed with a C or better to meet program graduation requirements.
4. In addition to the policies stated in 1, 2, and 3 above, University policy states a graduate student is dismissed upon accumulating either an F in two courses, or upon accumulating nine hours of unsatisfactory grades in graduate level courses.

Specific Course Assignments

Assignments	Due Dates	Points
Attendance & Participation	Ongoing	15
Weekly Questions and Reflections	Ongoing	15
Annotated Bibliography	December 2	15
Student-Facilitated Seminar	November 11 November 18 December 9	20
Research Proposal	December 16 by 7:15pm	35
TOTAL		100

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 post at least two questions related to the readings on Blackboard before class.
- 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 and online learning experiences as is evidenced by (1) participating in all activities, (2) engaging in small and large group discussions, (3) using laptops and other electronic devices only to support discussion and learning and not for non-academic uses during class time, (4) completing written work related to the activities, and (5) supporting the participation and learning of classmates.
- Students show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-class and online discussions, activities, and written reflections.

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

Weekly Comments/Questions and Reflections (15 points)

Students will post comments/questions on assignments on the Blackboard course blog prior to each class. These questions will come from their immersion with the course readings and will contribute to stimulating and thought-provoking class discussions. After each class, students will post a weekly reflection related to the readings, discussion, and activities.

Annotated Bibliography (15 points)

Students will develop an annotated bibliography that includes at least 10 research articles on an early writing topic of interest. Entries will include the following:

- accurate bibliographic information presented in APA style
- a summary of the argument or thesis, the results, and the conclusions
- an analysis of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the article

Students will submit their annotated bibliography on Blackboard discussion board. They will then read their classmates annotated bibliographies and respond on Blackboard.

Early Writing for Diverse Young Learners Seminar (20 points)

Students will facilitate an hour seminar on early writing for diverse young learners. To prepare for the seminar, students will read extensively. As they read, they will prepare an annotated bibliography (see above assignment) with 10 research articles. Additional books, book chapters and other resources (e.g., essays, white papers, videos, websites, etc.) can be added to the bibliography at this point but this is not required. During the seminar development process, students will provide face-to-face and online help and feedback to classmates.

Students will select two research articles for their classmates to read prior to the seminar and will email information on how to access the articles at least two weeks before the seminar. On the evening of the seminar, students will introduce the topic, present relevant background information using audio and/or visual aids, facilitate the discussion, and close the discussion with a summary and some future questions and thoughts to explore. They will provide handouts to support the learning and discussion. They will post their annotated bibliography on Blackboard for their classmates' reference. In addition, students will post feedback for

each facilitator on Blackboard after the seminar and prior to the next class session.

Early Writing Research Proposal (35 points) Major performance-based assessment

Students will select an early writing topic of interest. They will write a fully developed conceptual/theoretical framework that synthesizes research related to the topic and develops an argument for the proposed research. This framework will be the basis for the research proposal that will include the proposed research questions, the proposed method, and anticipated results. The conceptual/theoretical framework and proposal will be 15 to 20 double-spaced pages in length. Students will submit completed proposals on Blackboard.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments Due
Sept 2	Course overview and beginning discussion of early writing with focus on preschool and kindergarten aged children	Dinehart, L. (2014). Handwriting in early childhood education: Current research and future implications. <i>Journal of Early Childhood Literacy</i> , 15, 97-118. Kidd, J. K., Burns, M. S., La Croix, L., & Cossa, N. L. (2014). Prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers in high poverty schools speak about young children's authoring (and we need to listen). <i>Literacy and Social Responsibility</i> , 7, 50-71.
Sept 9	Early writing, theory, research, and practice and the broader literacy and language context	Clay, M. (1975). <i>What did I write? Beginning writing behavior</i> . Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. Powell, D. R., & Diamond, K. E. (2012). Promoting early literacy and language development. In R. D. Pianta (Ed.), <i>Handbook of early childhood education</i> (pp. 194-216). New York, NY: Guilford. [on e-reserve]
Sept 16	From emergent through conventional writing, an individual child case study	Bissex, G. L. (1980). <i>GNYS AT WRK: A child learns to write and read</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 15, 16]
Sept 23	Writing research on our young ones	Burns, M. S., & Kidd, J. K. (in press). Play and early writing. In D. Couchenour and J. K. Chrisman (Eds.), <i>Encyclopedia of contemporary early childhood education</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. Rowe, D. W., & Neitzel, C. (2010). Interest and agency in 2- and 3-year-old's participation in emergent writing. <i>Reading Research Quarterly</i> , 45, 169-195. Schrader, C. T. (1990). Symbolic play as a curricular tool for early literacy development. <i>Early Childhood Research Quarterly</i> , 5, 79-103.
Sept 30	From emergent through conventional writing, individual child and classroom case study	Steward, E. P. (1995). <i>Beginning writers in the zone of proximal development</i> . Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. McCloskey, E. (2011). Inclusion as an instructional approach: Fostering inclusive writing communities in preschool classrooms. <i>Journal of Early Childhood Literacy</i> , 12, 46-67.

Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments Due
Oct 7	From emergent through conventional writing, cultural and linguistic diversity	Ball, A. (2006). Teaching writing in culturally diverse classrooms. In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), <i>Handbook of writing research</i> (pp. 293-310). New York, NY: Guilford. [on e-reserve] Fitzgerald, J. (2006). Multilingual writing in preschool through 12th grade: The last 15 years. In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), <i>Handbook of writing research</i> (pp. 337-354). New York, NY: Guilford. [on e-reserve]
Oct 14	From emergent through conventional writing, “Basic Lessons and Basic Tensions”	Dyson, A. H. (2013). <i>ReWRITING the basics: Literacy learning in children's cultures</i> . New York, NY: Teachers College Press. [Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4] Cutler, L., & Graham, S. (2008). Primary grade writing instruction: A national survey. <i>Journal of Educational Psychology</i> , 100, 907-919.
Oct 21	From emergent through conventional writing, “Writing “Basics” in Childhood Spaces	Dyson, A. H. (2013). <i>ReWRITING the basics: Literacy learning in children's cultures</i> . New York, NY: Teachers College Press. [Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]
Oct 22 for Oct 28	Brown Lecture-In person on Oct 22 nd or watch online on Oct 28 th	Teresa L. McCarty, a professor of education and anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles and professor emerita at Arizona State University is the 2015 AERA Brown Lecture in Education Research. McCarty’s research and teaching focuses on language education policy, indigenous/language minority education, youth language ideologies and practices, critical literacy studies, and ethnographic studies of education. Her book, “To Remain an Indian”: Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education
Nov 4	<i>No Class Meeting – Peer work groups and feedback</i>	
Nov 11	Student-Facilitated Seminars	Reading TBA
Nov 18	Student-Facilitated Seminars	Reading TBA
Nov 25	<i>No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday</i>	
Dec 2	Online Class – Research in Writing	Annotated Bibliography Due Post to the Blackboard discussion board. Read classmates annotated bibliographies and respond on the discussion board by December 9.
Dec 9	Student-Facilitated Seminars	Reading TBA
Dec 16	No Class	Research Proposal Due by 7:15 pm