EDRD 345
Language and Literacy in Early Childhood Education I

I. Descriptive Information

A. Course Number and Title
   EDRD 345 Language and Literacy in Early Childhood I

B. Catalog Description
   Introductory examination of key concepts in language and literacy theory (birth through age 8) and implications for educators.

C. Course Credit
   Three (3) hours

D. Prerequisites
   None

E. Intended Audience
   Undergraduate early childhood education majors

F. Instructor
   As assigned

G. Class meeting dates/times
   As assigned

Important Note: There are five sections of this course and five instructors. We have common convictions about language and literacy theory and practice; we address the same goals and we do much planning together. At the same time, we have favorite texts, engagements, structures, and sequences for helping our students understand those ideas. In other words, we are not clones of each other. That is a good thing. Just as you will appreciate the autonomy to bring visions of great teaching to life in ways that suit who you are as a teacher, so do we. Therefore, join us in honoring our differences and know that comparisons across instructors are counterproductive. We admire each other tremendously for our individual as well as collective strengths.

II. Statement of Course Goals and Objective

A. Goals
   Participants in this class will develop understandings of current theories of language and literacy education and specific connections between those theories and the construction of supportive environments, practices, and assessments for diverse communities of language users and literacy learners from birth through age eight.

B. Objectives: Students will:
   1. Demonstrate an understanding of language and literacy learning as social, cultural, political, and strategic making meaning processes as young children learn about and through language.
   2. Demonstrate an understanding of historical and political antecedents to the current knowledge base in language and literacy.
3. Understand the legitimacy of diverse home and community literacies and language systems and use that knowledge to build a repertoire of culturally relevant instructional possibilities, including technology-based strategies, for literacy learning and teaching that support the success of all students.

4. Understand political, institutional, and personal issues related to English language learners and speakers of African American Language including the recognition of multilingual resources in classrooms, the impact of language marginalization, and implications for the construction of learning environments that support the success of all students.

5. Build knowledge of what it means to use literacy critically to question, innovate, and effect change.

6. Understand and plan for responsible literacy assessment and use it to inform instruction.

7. Use growing knowledge to connect theory to practice for the purpose of evaluating, justifying, and generating literacy practices for instruction and assessment that addresses the needs as well as knowledge of all students.

8. Build knowledge of SC state standards in the English Language Arts as related to classroom literacy practices.

9. Build knowledge of at least one national/international professional literacy organization.

III. Required Texts, Memberships, and Materials

Books, Other Texts, Professional Membership

- Creating Welcoming Classrooms: A Practical Guide to Home-School Partnerships with Diverse Families, JoBeth Allen

- Confronting Racism, Poverty, and Power: Classroom Strategies to Change the World, Catherine Compton-Lilly

- On Solid Ground, Sharon Taberski

Student membership in the National Council of Teachers of English www.ncte.org ($20)

Selected Articles/Book Chapters (posted on Bb or available to you at www.ncte.org through your student membership to NCTE)

- A copy of the South Carolina State Standards for the English Language Arts (ELA) for Early Childhood-grades PreK-2 http://ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/cso/standards/

Other Materials

- 2 spiral bound sketch pads with unlined blank paper

- Markers and pencils

- One small dry erase board and dry erase markers.
• One set of plastic letters (try the Dollar Store)

• One spiral bound pad of half-size chart paper (an example will be shown in class; you can find them at Education Wonderland on Broad River Rd or in Lexington – 24”X16” - $7.29)

• 1 disposable camera (to send home with your partner/child so you can learn more about his/her family, home, and community)

• A large 3-ring binder and dividers

• A digital camera to use to take pictures as you work with your child partner. Pictures will need to be printed (possibly enlarged).

• Audio tape recorder and tapes or digital recorder.

**IV. Professionalism**

Being a teacher is an *awesome professional responsibility*. You are an advocate for young children, their families AND for the profession. The way you present yourself says volumes about your respect for the profession and others. Writing a great paper or teaching a dynamic lesson mean little if you do not *exude maturity and poise* in your actions, conversations, and reflections. Thus, as you study to become a teacher, there is much expected of you . . .

**Respectful Listening and Interaction:** You are expected to be a courteous participant in all class activities and conversations with children, peers, everyone at the host school, and your professor. No cell phones (leave them in your car), side conversations, or texting are allowed in class. Remember that facial expressions and posture can give the impression of respect or disrespect. Choose the former.

**Promptness:** You are expected to arrive so that you are ready to start at 8:00. Arriving early is particularly important when we begin working with children - *you will need that time to get organized*. More than one late arrival will begin a deduction of points (one point for every tardy) from your final course grade.

**Absences:** Attendance is required. The final grade may be lowered by one FULL LETTER grade for absences more than 10% of class time with or without an excuse. For this course, that means one class session. However, because of the nature of this class, it will very difficult to successfully complete course assignments if there are ANY absences.

IF you must be absent, it is imperative that you contact the instructor BEFORE class begins via email. We work with children who count on your attendance. It is not appropriate to send messages with other students or to email me about an absence after the fact.

Missed class time that involves work with children cannot be made up. Your child will miss an important time with you AND you will miss an opportunity to collect data to inform your final projects.
Students are responsible for ensuring that a study partner is designated to pick up handouts and explain missed content in the event of absence. This is YOUR responsibility, not the instructor’s.

**Professional Dress:** This means:
- No jeans, sweatpants, jogging suits, shorts or tight or low-cut pants.
- Comfortable *professional* shoes are the appropriate choice. No flip-flops.
- No mini-skirts, bare midriffs, halter/tank tops; no tight, low-cut or see-through tops or blouses. Be sure your top comes down far enough and your pants high enough to cover skin even when you reach up or bend over!
- Dress as you would want your own child’s teacher to dress; give the profession dignity – dignity can be stylish (and comfortable) too 😊

**Communication:** You are responsible for checking USC EMAIL EVERY DAY. Participate in Blackboard discussions when requested to do so.

**Plagiarism:** Passing off someone else’s written work or part of any work (from a peer or from an online or other source) as your own is plagiarism. “Any student who violates this rule or who knowingly assists another to violate this rule shall be subject to discipline” (the Carolina Community: USC Columbia Student Handbook and Policy Guide).

**Being Prepared:** Each class session, you are expected to be present, on-time, and prepared. Absences, tardies, and lack of or limited preparation will be noted and reflected in the points you receive for Professionalism.

V. **Academic Course Requirements**

**A. LITERACY NOTEBOOK**

You will need a three-ring binder that will become your Literacy notebook. In it, you will organize reflections, handouts, articles and other items from this course.

**B. EARLY-SEMESTER REFLECTION**

For the fifth week of class, you will be asked to reflect on your work to this point and your understanding of expectations. Guidelines will be provided in class.

**C. READING AND SYNTHESIS OF LEARNING**

Each week, you will read assigned texts carefully and respond thoughtfully in a reflective synthesis of learning about each text. A format will be provided for you and can be downloaded from Blackboard after the second week of class. Please use the downloaded formats to type within them, print them off, and organize them in your Literacy Notebook. These reflections will be used to support discussions in class and MUST reflect very careful, thoughtful (not skimmed) reading. They will also be used toward the end of the semester to help you describe key literacy practices and important theoretical concepts for the literacy structures assignment. Bring your syntheses to class each week in your Literacy Notebook.
D. GETTING TO KNOW A CHILD

As you work with a child this semester, you will collect data (take photos, save work, write down quotes from the child’s responses, tape record interactions, etc). You will reflect in writing (in your Literacy Notebook) following each session with your child-partner using guidelines provided in class. Reflections will align with what we are exploring in class in terms of literacy concepts that children demonstrate as readers and writers.

In the last weeks of the semester, you will use these reflections and data collected during work with the child to develop a document for the child and his/her family. The document will reflect - explicitly and specifically - all that you have learned about your child partner as a reader and writer – what he/she knows and can do dispelling possible stereotypes and deficit views. The document should be seen as a form of a thorough case study written to be accessible to the child and his/her family. You will use data collected from your sessions with the child to provide evidence/demonstrations of what the child knows.

During the semester, you will write three letters related to work with your child partner. Each letter must be approved by the instructor before sending it:
- A letter introducing yourself to the child and his/her family
- A letter thanking the child and his/her family
- A letter to the child’s teacher thanking her for allowing you to work with the child

E. LITERACY STRUCTURES: THEORY & PRACTICE

At the end of the semester, you will work in groups to describe and define the literacy practices we have read about and implemented this semester, backing them up with your knowledge of theory. In your description you will include:
- A thorough description of the practice (what, why, how)
- Necessary materials and equipment
- Descriptions of how you would ensure that this practice:
  - is culturally relevant
  - embraces children’s home languages while building proficiency in English
  - makes children’s existing knowledge visible and builds from it
  - capitalizes on the social nature of learning
  - engages children in thinking critically about texts of all kinds
  - supports children in using a balance of cue systems, focusing on meaning-making (semantics) as a primary reading strategy
  - supports children in using the most helpful phonics strategies
  - meets specific SC ELA Standards
- Reference to and direct quotes from readings to support your explanations.

F. END-OF-SEMESTER REFLECTION

With your Literacy Notebook at the end of the semester, you will turn in a final reflection that will detail your learning through the course including how that learning addresses SC English Language Arts Standards. You will use your weekly synthesis of
readings to develop this reflection. Guidelines will be provided in class.

**VI. Administrative Course Requirements**

Attendance is required as the university attendance policy states in the Graduate Studies Bulletin: “Students are expected to attend all regular class meetings. Unsatisfactory class attendance may be considered adequate reason for the instructor to request that the student withdraw from the course. Students are responsible for ensuring that a study partner or friend is designated to pick up handouts in the event of absence. Students are also responsible for familiarity with all material covered during absences. This is to be accomplished in the manner deemed most effective by the student: meeting with a fellow student, sending in a tape recorder, studying a fellow student’s notes, etc.

**VII. Evaluation and Grading**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Notebook</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early-Semester Reflection</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading and Syntheses of Learning</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Getting to Know a Child</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy Structures: Theory and Practice</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of Semester Reflection</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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93-100=A 89-92=B+ 85-88=B 81-84=C+ 77-80=C 70-76=D

**VIII. Major Topics of the Course**

A. Historical perspectives on language and literacy learning.
B. Literacy pedagogy as socially, culturally, and politically grounded
C. The process of emerging as literate from birth
D. Literacies as based in strategy-based processes
E. Language and literacies as culturally-specific: Cultural biases that impede teaching and learning and the connection to issues of social justice.
F. Implications for culturally relevant pedagogy: the construction of environments that support diverse learners including those representing a range of socioeconomic, ethnic and second language communities.
H. English language learners in the literacy classroom.
I. Specific literacy practices for assessment and instruction
J. Understanding the inequities and debilitating consequences of deficit views of children and families; learning to recognize what children know as readers and writers and how to build instruction from that point
I. The relationship between state and national standards and methods of supporting young children as language and literacy learners in schools and child care settings

**IX. Mode of Instruction**

Reading and literature discussion
Written reflection and response
Demonstration lessons; Lecture
Implementation of and reflection on literacy strategies with children

X. Schedule of Class Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introduction to the course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Language Acquisition and Emergent Literacy: Historical perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Sociocultural perspectives on literacy learning</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>African American Language: structures and history</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>English language learning</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Literacy learning as strategy based</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Critical perspectives on literacy learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Practices (assessment and instruction) that support diverse groups of literacy learners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Practices (assessment and instruction) that support diverse groups of literacy learners</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Practices (assessment and instruction) that support diverse groups of literacy learners</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>Connecting theory to practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Connecting theory to practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Presentation of case studies; review of key concepts from the semester</td>
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XI. Bibliography


