

EDLA 531 Literacy in Community and Family Arenas
Summer 2012
Master of Arts in Education Program
Eastern Mennonite University (Harrisonburg)

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Course Description:

Addresses literacy development in a larger scope than traditionally covered through school, focusing on personal, cultural and political issues related to adult literacy. Addresses adult literacy in the context of various settings, including family literacy, workplace literacy and community literacy programs.

Class Meetings:

<i>Day, Date, Time</i>	<i>total time met for session (30 min. lunch break)</i>
Monday, July 23	8:00-4:30 p.m. 8.0 hrs.
Tuesday, July 24	8:00-4:30 p.m. 8.0 hrs.
Wednesday, July 25	8:00-4:30 p.m. 8.0 hrs.
Thursday, July 26	8:00-4:30 p.m. 8.0 hrs.
Friday, July 27	8:00-4:30 p.m. 8.0 hrs.
Research	<u>2.0 hrs.</u> 42.0 hrs.

Course Rationale: Few courses are offered in literacy that explore family, community adult, and critical literacies, yet there is much happening in our local community in these arenas. This is especially true in adult education, workplace literacy, second language learning, and early intervention literacy programs with preschool children. This class differs from other literacy courses in that it emphasizes psychological, cultural and political aspects of literacy as these occur in family, community, and adult literacy contexts. EDLA 531 is not a methods course designed to demonstrate teaching strategies, rather it explores the teacher's role as an advocate for promoting literacy in school and non-formal contexts.

The National Center for Family Literacy (2008) indicates that parental literacy is one of the single most important indicators of a child's success. They further cite survey studies estimating that approximately 30 million adults in the United States have extremely limited literacy skills. Teacher practitioners and reading specialists are on the front-line to provide leadership in addressing literacy needs as we enter the 21st century.

Instructional Strategies:

Strategies include class discussions, problem-based learning, video-viewing analysis, interviews, critical analysis of text, research reviews from current literature, pair-share discussions, brief lectures and power point presentations by students.

Conceptual Framework: “Preparing Caring, Reflective Teachers for the Changing World”. The EMU Teacher Education Program endorses the theme *Teaching boldly in a changing world through an ethic of care and critical reflection* as the conceptual framework from which its beliefs and outcomes are based. The Teacher Education Program envisions preparing informed lifelong leaders and learners who value the dignity of all persons and are ready and willing to share a pilgrimage of openness and continuous growth as they invite others to join them. These caring, reflective educators will offer healing and hope in a diverse world. Six performance outcomes focus all course and candidate outcomes.

M.A. in Education Program Outcomes:

Scholarship (S): to acquire advanced knowledge through core curriculum courses and organize and integrate that knowledge into professional practice.

Inquiry (I): to generate questions and to use critical thinking to self-assess, to view problems from multiple perspectives, to make informed decisions, and to engage in action research for educational change.

Professional Knowledge (PK): to acquire advanced pedagogical and specialty area knowledge in order to create cultures of change and manage environments conducive to learning, setting high expectations, and implementing appropriate instruction and assessment practices.

Communication (C): to develop communication strategies (verbal, nonverbal, and technological) which support collaboration and resourcefulness to empower self and others.

Caring (CR): to develop a nurturing spirit that advocates for students, encourages social and ethical responsibility, and promotes restorative peacebuilding in diverse settings.

Leadership (L): to act as social change agents by working collaboratively to bring about fair and just systemic change within educational contexts.

Course Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Examine literacy as an act of empowerment and as such be able to clearly analyze dynamics of power in workplace, adult, and family literacy programming in the U.S. and abroad including third-world literacy initiatives. (S, I, PK, C, CR, L)
2. Assess literacy within school and society as cultural discourse including English Language Learners (ELLs) and be able to clearly articulate to the constituents of workplace, adult, or family literacy programs the purpose and goals of such programs. (PK, C, CR, L)

3. Identify the political-social environments of literacy programs and be able to suggest ways based upon research and best practice how goals and outcomes of workplace, adult, and family literacy programs can be negotiated in order to maximize learning opportunities for invested parties. (S, I, C, CR, L)
4. Explore historical, philosophical, and sociological connections among schools, communities with family and workplace literacy. (S, PK, I, C)
5. Analyze how the goals of participation in workplace, adult, and family literacy programs affect the teaching techniques and outcomes of specific program development. (PK,L)

Required Texts:

Barton, D. (2007). *Literacy: An introduction to the ecology of written language*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Purcell-Gates, V (1995). *Other people's words: The cycle of low literacy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

*Selected case studies on workplace, family, or community literacy will be furnished for further study.

Course Requirements:

In Class Activities:

Attendance: Please contact your instructor if any absences are anticipated. According to policy, a course grade may be lowered if class time is missed. See the *EMU Graduate Catalog (2011-2012)*.

Student Participation (10%). You are expected to function in a leadership capacity at various points in the course. This may involve such activities as giving a short presentation, reviewing selected articles or leading a discussion group. The class is designed to be highly interactive and participatory.

Articles (30%). You are asked to identify and then write a personal reflection on 3 articles selected from the professional literature. Select 3 different topics from family literacy, community literacy, workplace literacy and critical literacy. Using each article as a touchstone, write 3 specific questions you wish to pose to your colleagues to facilitate class or group discussions. Each entry is worth 10% of the final grade. Length of the entry should be approximately 1.5-2.0 pages double spaced 12 pt. font. Assignments for
Tuesday: Family Literacy
Wednesday: Community Literacy
Thursday: Workplace or Critical Literacy

Power Point Presentations (25%)

You are asked to pair with another person to create and present a 20-minute power point

presentation on a topic or sub topic from the themes of the course and then lead a 5-10 minute discussion on the topic following your presentation. Time will be provided usually at the end of the day for preparation. Possible topics will be generated within class time e.g. *Incorporating family literacy into a school program, Freire's pedagogy for adult learning, etc.*

Outside of Class Activities:

Interview (25%). You are asked to identify a librarian, adult learner, literacy tutor, or Adult Basic Education (ABE) teacher to interview. The interview should focus on the interviewee's experience in the field of community and family literacy and their views about (1) why there is a need for literacy education, (2) what is most important about teaching literacy, and (3) the problems literacy students and teachers encounter. You are asked to write a 4-6 page paper giving the background of the interviewee, summarizing the content of the interview and analyzing the interviewee's contribution in light of course readings and discussions. **This assignment is due: August 10, 2012.**

Book Analysis (10%). This is only required if you wish to achieve an A or A- grade in the course. The Book Analysis assignment requires you to select a book from the following list to read and analyze. You may propose a different title, but it must be pre-approved by your instructor. The paper is to be 5-8 pages in length with a focus on the theoretical position of the book's author. Include an analysis of the ideas and your own perspectives on the book. All books are available from Amazon.com, usually as inexpensive used paperbacks. **This assignment is due: August 10, 2012.**

Choose one of the following to read and analyze. Other selections may be made with instructor's approval.

Lost in Translation, Eva Hoffman

This is a beautifully written autobiography about a 12-year-old Polish Jew who fled Nazi Poland with her family and immigrated to Canada. Her story revolves around language – her psychological identification with Polish, her grief at having to abandon Polish, her struggle to become proficient in English. This is a good choice for readers who appreciate the beauty of language.

Hunger for Memory: the Education of Richard Rodriguez, Richard Rodriguez

Here is another autobiography, this time about a young Hispanic child growing up in California. This is primarily an ESOL story. Much of his account centers on the socio-economic implication of second language speaking. It is also a story of “poor boy makes it big”, as Rodriguez chronicles his journey through the American school system.

*Lives on the Boundary, Mike Rose **

Finally, here is a third autobiography. Mike Rose is an educator who began life as an at-risk child and struggled to finish high school and college. His story is somewhat parallel

to Richard Rodriguez, except he speaks English only. The story focuses on the social and economic aspects of growing up under-educated.

Ways with Words, Shirley Brice Heath

You may be familiar with this classic work from other courses. Shirley Brice Heath conducted an ethnographic study of how children from different social groups learn to use language, and how these differences affect their success in school. This book explores how Black English is taught to children, and focuses on the ways that language is used in the poor black and poor white community.

The Meaning of Adult Education, Eduard Lindeman

This is a classic Adult Education text. Lindeman wrote it during a time of growth in adult education, when many factory workers attended night school to improve their basic skills. This book is more a work of philosophy and theory than a story. Lindeman speaks to the personal empowerment of education, of the ways that adult education can directly affect the quality of one's life.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Paulo Freire

This book is an impassioned call for education that goes beyond raising individuals up by improving their skills to prepare them for work in our society. Freire advocates education that actually transforms society itself. This will be an uncomfortable read for the average American educator, but it addresses issues that educators who understand education as empowerment will want to know more about.

Orality and Literacy: Technologizing the Word, Walter Ong

This is probably the most technical book on this list, although it does not deal with computer technology, as the title might imply. Readers will have to wade into it slowly in order not to miss too much. Ong writes as a historian-philosopher, and this work examines the history of literacy in the Western world, and especially the ways that literacy changes how we think.

Illiterate America, Jonathan Kozol

Addresses the national crisis of illiteracy by combining case histories and proven statistics with a specific program to conquer the problem.

You may wish to also consult ***Coming to America: 50 Greatest Works of Immigration Literature*** at <http://oedb.org/library/features/coming-to-america:-50-greatest-works-of-immigration-literature>

Course Evaluation:

Evaluation: Students will receive one grade for all components of the course based on the following criteria and grading scale:

Grade of A. A grade of "A" in the course requires attendance at all sessions; initiative; clear evidence of planning and contribution to group tasks; careful and reflective

responses to assigned readings. Projects must be developed at the proficient level characterized by control of purpose, coherence of structure and originality. Requires completion of all projects as identified. Deadlines met.

Grade of B. A grade of “B” in the course requires attendance at class sessions within guidelines; active participation in group tasks; completion and response to assigned readings; evidence of careful thought and preparation. Projects must be developed at the competent level. Competent is characterized by control of purpose and coherence of structure. Extra time required for completion. You may contract for a grade of “B” by completing all assignments except for the book analysis project. All basic assignments must be at the proficient or competent level.

Grade of C. A grade of “C” in the course is characterized by: missing the equivalent of four 75 minute periods; by showing little evidence of planning and organization in group tasks; by not completing at required activities at the competent level; by turning in assignments late.

Below C. Failure to meet expectations in the course.

Grading Scale:

94-100 = A
91 - 93 = A-
88 - 90 = B+
84 - 87 = B
80 - 83 = B-
77 - 79 = C+
72 - 76 = C
70 - 71 = C-

Academic Integrity: The responsibility to foster and guard academic integrity rests with all members of the academic community. A foundation of mutual trust is essential to the learning community. Any incidents of academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade for the work submitted and a "Record of Academic Dishonesty" filed in the graduate dean's office. Students are asked to meet with the professor (and other affected persons, where appropriate) to examine the effects of the dishonesty on others and to develop an accountability plan.

Special Accommodations Statement: If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability, or has emergency medical information to share, please inform the instructor of your needs.

References:

Berger, A. & Shafran, E.A. (2000). *Teens for literacy*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

- DeBruin-Parecki, A. & Krol-Sinclair, B. (Eds.). (2005). *Family literacy: From theory to practice*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.
- Gallo, M. L. (2004). *Reading the world of work: A learner centered approach to workplace literacy and ESL*. Krieger Publishing Company.
- Goad, T.W. (2002). *Information literacy and workplace performance*. Quorum Books.
- Gowan, S. G. (1992). *The politics of workplace literacy. A case study*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Handel, R.D. (1999). *Building family literacy in an urban community*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Harrington, L. & Riecke, C. (1994, manual). *How to add family literacy to your program*. Syracuse, NY: Literacy Volunteers of America.
- Lilly, E. & Green, C. (2003). *Developing partnerships with families through children's literature*. Prentice Hall.
- Morrow, L. M. (1995). *Family literacy: Connections in schools and communities*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.
- Richardson, M.V. & Sacks, M.K. (2003). Making a future for the adolescent through literacy: Family, school, and community. *Theory to Practice*.
- Rodriguez-Brown, F.V. (2003). Family literacy in English language learning communities: Issues related to program development, implementation, and practice. *Theory to Practice*.
- Kliewer, C. (2003). Family literacy and local understanding: Literate citizenship for children with disabilities. *Theory to Practice*.
- Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education: Critical teaching for social change*. Chicago, IL: University Chicago Press.
- Taylor, D. (1998). *Family literacy: Young children learning to read and write*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Wiley, T. G. (1996). *Literacy and language diversity in the United States*. McHenry, IL: Center for Applied Linguistics and by Delta Systems Co., Inc.

Selected web sites:

Family Literacy:

<http://www.flreads.org/Family-Literacy/links.htm>

<http://www.famlit.org/ncfl-family-literacy/>

Workplace Literacy:

http://www.ns.literacy.ca/workplace_resources.htm

Literacy General Interest:

<http://www.springfield.k12.il.us/schools/lawrence/instructional/>