UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE
Department of Literacy, Language, and Culture

EDU 559:
Aspects of Reading for Multilingual Learners

Fall 2014

ONLINE

Course description

This course examines the role of literacy in the K-12 and adult classroom for linguistically and culturally diverse learners in local and global contexts. A critical analysis of the developmental nature of the reading process as it applies to young learners, as well as application to older learners with varying degrees of first language literacy, is a major emphasis. An examination of first language and cultural and linguistic diversity influences on reading in a second language and multiliteracies in the light of current applied linguistics research is also a major emphasis.

Course outcomes

Students will be able to:

1) understand appropriate literacy frameworks for effective instruction of culturally and linguistically diverse learners of various literacy and cultural backgrounds, including the pedagogy of multiliteracies and culturally-appropriate pedagogical practices;
2) cognize the impact logographic, syllabic, and alphabetic variables of learners’ first languages (L1) have on literacy in English (students’ L2);
3) know the influence family and the sociocultural have on ESL reading;
4) understand the history of the English orthography and its uniqueness;
5) know specific areas of metacognitive and metalinguistic differences between English L1 reading and English L2 reading;
6) learn metalinguistic strategies for assisting learners in reading;
7) develop a broad understanding of English lexicon and the practices for expanding vocabulary knowledge;
8) learn scaffolding strategies for predicting, processing, and reflecting on reading narrative and expository texts;
9) investigate, read, and understand current research on teaching reading to multilingual learners;
10) be able to assess reading progress and link it to further instruction and research.

Course values

- Democracy – Students will be exposed to multiple views and perspectives with regard to instruction in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms. They will utilize inclusive dialogue and be encouraged to express their views through active participation in class discussion.
• Civility and Caring – The instructor will model the use of constructive communication, protection of individual dignity, and empathy, compassion, and openness. Students will be expected to demonstrate these qualities in their interactions with the instructor and peers. Evidence of differentiation for students will be expected to be included in the final products created by students in this course.
• Equity and Diversity – Course content will include ways to differentiate for a variety of learner types including struggling readers and individuals from different cultures. Students will be expected to include differentiated elements in their lesson plans.
• Social Justice – Students will adjust instruction, as needed, to empower all learners to develop literacy skills in order to be active members of society. Aspects of culture and cultural communication are presented and modeled, with students practicing them through experiential learning activities as well as dialogue with the readings and classmates.
• Ethical Practice – Instructor will engage in and insist on the highest level of professional practice. Students demonstrate culturally sensitive practices through their classroom instruction.
• Scholarship – Students will examine research, theory, and best practices to guide their own content area instruction and assessment. Students will be able to conduct introspective, autoethnographic studies as well as to relate to the community of practice which extends beyond the walls of the classroom.
• Professional Learning and Continuous Improvement – Students and instructor will participate in ongoing dialogue to exchange ideas for mutual and continuing professional growth.

Method

Knowledge is socially constructed. In this class, we will construct personally meaningful knowledge through online discussion and reading. You will be actively involved in this process by interacting with your peers and me and also by critically reading the required texts.

Required materials


2) Articles (see the course outline, below). These have been posted on Blackboard. Log in and then open the folder “Articles.” Please print them out (optional but recommended), read them, and be ready to discuss them online.

Requirements and grading policy

1) Readings, preparation, and participation in class activities and discussion (30%).

You need to be “present” online to be able to participate in the collaborative learning process. Because knowledge is constructed socially, it is extremely important that you “come to class” online prepared and actively participate in the asynchronous discussion. I recommend logging
in at least three or four times throughout the week, Monday through Saturday. Sunday is our day off.

Discussion topics will be posted every Monday, except when Monday is a holiday or a vacation day. See the course outline (below) and USM’s academic calendar. Participation in the online discussion via Blackboard discussion forums is required. In order to participate in the online discussion, please read the required texts and be prepared to discuss topics and issues explored in the readings. Quality is more important than quantity, but please make sure that your online posts are between 75-200 words each or longer. Following your initial post to respond to the introduction (posted by me), please interact with your peers and continue participating in the discussion throughout the week by posting your thoughts and comments. Naturally, I will continue participating in the discussion by asking additional questions in response to some of your posts and commenting on the subject matter to facilitate the discussion process. Three posts a week is the absolute minimum. Post at least three by Sunday morning.

Take notes in the optional researcher’s log (see below) as you read and after you read. Be ready to participate in our discussion while online, post any questions you may want to discuss with your peers online, and be ready to share your understanding of the reading materials with others. Two points (2%) will be deducted for each absence, i.e., each week of discussion missed. If you miss three weeks, you will not be able to pass this course.

2) Literacy autoethnography (30%): 500-600 words. Due: 10/15 (email, PDF preferred).

Autoethnography is a research method that allows you to explore an aspect of your own identity as a literate person. No one knows you better than you know yourself. You are the expert. However, you are not writing an autobiography, an opinion piece, or simply listing events and presenting data. This is a structured paper with a clear thesis statement and a personally meaningful analysis of relevant data.

3) Final paper (40%): 1500-2000 words. Due: 12/14 (email it to me by midnight, PDF preferred).

Your final paper will be a synthesis/research paper in which you will explore a particular L2 literacy topic or issue. You can pick any topic that is relevant to what we will be doing in this class. I will need to approve your topic and discuss it with you before you can write your final paper (email or come see me during my office hours). I will work with you throughout this semester on making sure that your final draft is good. Specific criteria, including the rubric, will be posted on Blackboard. You will be asked to post an abstract/description of your paper and a handout online (a PowerPoint presentation, converted to a PDF file, is recommended but not required).

OPTIONAL - Researcher’s log

You are not required to keep a log. However, I highly recommend it. Your researcher’s log will be similar to a journal. Take notes in your researcher’s log as you read and after you read as
well as when you do additional research on your own throughout this semester. This can be done once or twice a week. Feel free to experiment with the format. The content is much more important because you will use some of it when working on the literacy autoethnography and your final paper. Things you can include: thoughts and concerns, information from different sources, summaries, quotations, questions, side notes, vocabulary, pictures, graphs, charts, poetry, emoticons, and anything else related to your work/research – whatever helps you generate ideas.

You will receive detailed instructions and checklists for all of the above. All assignments must be completed before the final grade for this course can be issued. Late papers will not be accepted.

Furthermore, plagiarism is prohibited. It is unethical and will result in a failing grade for the assignment in question or for the whole course. When working with sources and using other researchers’ ideas, give credit.

Cite your sources using the APA (6th edition) format: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

A = 93-100%, A- = 90-92%, B+ = 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B- = 80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C = 73-76%

Academic support

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. At any point, if you encounter difficulty with the course or feel you could be performing at a higher level, consult with me.

Students experience difficulty in courses for a variety of reasons. For problems with writing skills or time management, make an appointment to see a tutor at USM Learning Commons Tutoring (780-4228), http://www.usm.maine.edu/learningcommons/tutoring-services. Help is also available in Portland through the Counseling Center, 105 Payson Smith (780-4050), and the Office of Academic Support for Students with Disabilities, 242 Luther Bonney (780-4706).

Technology support (including Blackboard-specific questions and issues)

USM Help Desk: send an email to helpdesk@usm.maine.edu or call 780-4029.

Library support

Live support is available during business hours. Go to http://usm.maine.edu/library and click on “Ask us / A librarian is only a click away” to chat with a librarian. You can also call the USM Library in Portland (780-4270), Gorham (780-5345), or at LAC (753-6540). Remember that, as a USM student, you have already paid for access to online article databases through our library’s website (EBSCO Host/Academic Search Complete, JStor, and others).
**Course outline**

9/2  Introduction: L2 literacy and our community of practice

9/8  Foundations of L2 literacy: Culturally and linguistically diverse students as scientists
   1. HPE, Chapter 1

9/15 L2 literacy: Language, culture, and cognition
   1. HPE, Chapter 2

9/22 Phonemic awareness, phonics, whole language, and ELLs
   1. HPE, Chapters 3 & 4

9/29 Second language acquisition and vocabulary development
   HPE, Chapter 5

10/6 Schemata and imagination: Reading comprehension strategies
   1. HPE, Chapter 6


10/13-10/14 October vacation

10/15 The theory and pedagogy of multiliteracies (Part 1)
   Submit your autoethnography

10/20 The theory and pedagogy of multiliteracies (Part 2)

10/27 Accuracy and fluency
   1. HPE, Chapter 7

11/3 L2 writing and the other three skills: A sociocultural perspective
   1. HPE, Chapter 8

11/10 Authentic assessment and L2 literacy
   1. HPE, Chapter 9

11/17 Inclusive literacy instruction
   HPE, Chapter 10
Thanksgiving vacation (one-on-one consultations continue, November 24-25)

12/1  Conclusion

12/8  Presentations – Post an abstract/description of your paper and a handout online by 12/12. A PowerPoint presentation, preferably converted to PDF and posted online, is optional.

Email your final paper to me by midnight, 12/14.