



Course Syllabus

Course Number

COMM 5340

Course Title

Teaching Language and Language Issues

Term

Spring 2008

Credit Hours

3

Instructor Contact Information

Bert Barry Primary email: barrybe@webster.edu

Course Description

Students become familiar with selected native languages of English language learners through comparative linguistic analysis. Study will emphasize learner language and learner perspective in the English language classroom. Furthermore, in considering English language learner experience, students reflect on the larger political and sociological issues surrounding English language learners in the United States. There are no prerequisites to this course, though an introductory course in linguistics would be helpful.

Learning Outcomes

The major goals are threefold: (a) to understand the ways in which world languages are classified and some of their universal and distinguishing features, thus gaining insight into the degree to which selected languages are similar to or different from English, the target language; (b) to appreciate the bilingual person as well as the process of becoming bilingual through psycholinguistic and cultural analysis; and (c) to examine different viewpoints surrounding English language programs in the United States.

Students are expected to:

- a. Define basic linguistic principles pertinent to the course. (MoStep 1a, 1d.)
- b. Identify distinguishing features of selected languages. (MoStep 1a.)
- c. Describe learner language and identify transfer and developmental errors. (MoStep 3a, 3b.)
- d. Apply concepts in comparative linguistic analysis. (MoStep 1a)
- e. Compare and contrast cultural differences that affect learner language, learner experience and classroom etiquette. (MoStep 3d)
- f. Analyze the relationship between language and thought.
- g. Analyze written and spoken learner English. (MoStep 3a, 3b)
- h. Explore and question basic assumptions regarding English language learners (MoStep 1d, 2d, 3d)

Weekly Schedule

Weeks 1 & 2: Language learning and the mother tongue

Weeks 3 & 4: The classification of languages

Weeks 5 & 6: Bilinguality and culture

Weeks 7 & 8: English as a second language and bilingual education

Weeks 9 & 10: Case studies and reactions

Weeks 11 & 12: Public arguments

Weeks 13 & 14: Public arguments

Weeks 15 & 15: Synthesis and reflections

Note: In addition to each weekly topic, weekly readings and discussion will include one language from the Swan and Smith book *Learner English: A teacher's guide to interference and other problems*. All students will read the chapters on Spanish and Catalan, Russian and Polish, Arabic, Japanese, and Chinese. The group will select two additional

languages/language groups based on interest and need.

Textbooks

Swan, M., & Smith, B. (Eds). (2001). *Learner English: A teacher's guide to interference and other problems*. Cambridge University Press.

Commins, N.L. & Miramontes, O.B. (2005) *Linguistic Diversity and Language Teaching*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Assignments Submission

You are required to submit all assignments in a timely manner via the Blackboard Vista Assignments area. Blackboard Vista will stamp your submission date/time automatically. If you are encountering technical problems in Blackboard submission, please contact the Helpdesk at (314) 968 5995 or toll free (866) 435 7270. Also, please contact your instructor as you may be able to submit your assignment using an alternative method.

Online Participation Expectations

You are required to actively participate in weekly online discussions. While there is no specific day/time at which you must log in, I strongly recommend that you log in several times per week to participate. Your participation will be graded on both the quantity and quality of your postings.

Please note that I will not necessarily respond to every posting made. Also, technological and other delays will occur from time to time. If you need to contact me please send an e-mail to barrybe@webster.edu. I do not recommend sending e-mails through the Blackboard Vista site, as they often get lost in cyberspace.

Evaluation

- Response Paper #1: 100 pts.
- Response Paper #2: 200 pts.
- Problem set/Toba Batak: 40 pts.
- Problem set/Turkish: 40 pts.
- Public Argument 1 questions: 40 pts.
- Public Argument 2 questions: 40 pts.
- Public Argument 3 questions: 40 pts.
- Group Project: 200 pts.
- Individual Project: 100 pts.
- Frequent, high-quality participation in discussions: 200 pts.

Student online participation is equal to 20% of the course grade. Each week there are several discussion questions to which each student is required to respond. Oftentimes, you will respond multiple times to the same question, since discussions provide an opportunity to interact with your classmates and the instructor and to analyze complex issues. Your grade will also reflect the quality of your postings.

Grades will be assigned in accordance with the School of Education grading scale as follows:

- A** 930-1000
- A-** 900-920
- B+** 870-899
- B** 830-869
- B-** 800-829
- C** 700-799
- NC 699 and below

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is intentionally claiming that another person's work is his/her own or implying that another person's work is his/her own (through inadequate or inaccurate citations of reference material.)

Students:

- Should not copy whole portions of text from another source as a major component of papers or projects.
- Should identify the title, author, page number/webpage address, and publication date of works when directly quoting small portions of texts, articles, interviews, or websites.
- Should appropriately identify the source of information when paraphrasing (restating) ideas from texts, interviews, articles, or websites.
- Should follow the guidelines of the American Psychological Association Style Guide when referencing all research sources.

For further information about the consequences of academic dishonesty please consult the Webster University Student Handbook.

Accessibility & Accommodations Policy

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations contact the Director of the Academic Resource Center, at (314) 968-7495.

Webster University School of Education Vision

“...We all must work to make this world worthy of its children.”
-Casals, 1970

Mission

The School of Education at Webster University provides its students with the knowledge, experiences, and practical tools that help them guide both themselves and others toward lifelong learning. The School of Education is a community of educator-scholars who apply critical reflections and creative energies to enhance learning in schools and other educational settings. The faculty strives to support this community by modeling effective teaching practices based on sound theory and research. Personalized approaches create a challenging, yet supportive environment that permits the risk-taking necessary for learning and growth. The School of Education encourages its faculty and students to work actively toward this end, keeping in mind that action must be rooted in visionary, yet realistic, thinking. This thought and action process underscores the development of an inner-directed self-understanding, an outer-directed global perspective, and an appreciation of human diversity that arises from both.

Theme

Developing a world of learners through knowledge, leadership, and life-long learning.

The universal mandala (a circle with intersecting vertical and horizontal lines) graphically represents the conceptual framework of the School of Education. The outer circle provides the framework for a "world of learners" in cultural settings. The two axes represent the theme components of knowledge, leadership, and life-long learning. These lines are broken to emphasize the fluid relationship of the goals and integrated concepts. Each quadrant represents one of the school's four goals for its candidates: to develop knowledgeable learners, informed instructors, reflective collaborators, and responsive educators.

Goals

1. Education candidates will demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter, knowledge of the learner, and knowledge of pedagogy based on inquiry and scholarship.

The knowledgeable learner:

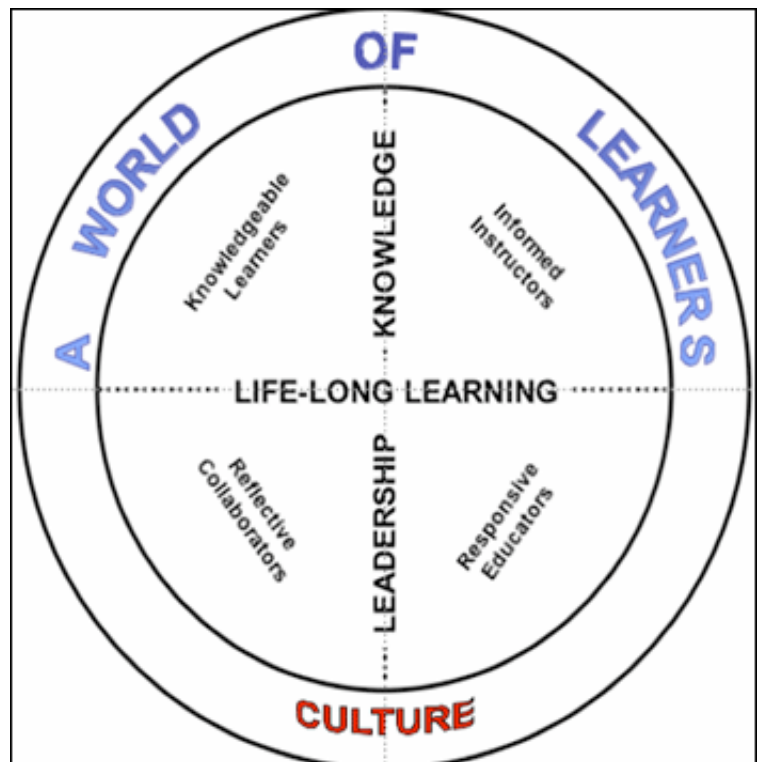
- 1.1 knows content that supports conceptual understanding;
- 1.2 applies tools of inquiry to construct meaningful learning experiences;
- 1.3 identifies developmental factors in student learning; and
- 1.4 understands theoretical principles of effective instruction to plan learning experiences.

2. Education candidates will incorporate multiple assessment and instructional strategies to support effective educational practices based on research and theory.

The informed instructor:

- 2.1 designs curriculum based on students' prior knowledge, learning styles, strengths, and needs;
- 2.2 understands and uses a range of instructional strategies;
- 2.3 uses a variety of communication modes, media, and technology to support student learning; and
- 2.4 employs a variety of formal and informal assessments to monitor learning and modify instruction.

3. Education candidates will reflect on the roles educators take as leaders of change through collaboration with colleagues, students, and families in schools and communities.



The reflective collaborator:

- 3.1 values and integrates reflection to grow as a professional;
- 3.2 promotes communication and collaboration with colleagues, families, and community leaders;
- 3.3 seeks relationships with families and students to support student learning; and
- 3.4 initiates change that benefits students and their families.

4. Education candidates will demonstrate respect for diversity through responsive teaching and learning that values individual differences.

The responsive educator: 4.1 understands and responds appropriately to issues of diversity

- 4.2 acknowledges social and cultural contexts to create effective teaching and learning environments;
- 4.3 adapts instruction to the learner's knowledge, ability, and background experience; and
- 4.4 identifies resources for specialized services when needed.

Dispositions

NCATE defines dispositions as "the values, commitments and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth." (Professional Standards, p. 53) There is significant value in focusing attention on qualities that make an effective teacher.

1. Understands and Respects Self

- 1.1 Understands and respects that s (he) may be different from others
- 1.2 Embraces an openness to change (adaptability, flexibility)
- 1.3 Exhibits curiosity
- 1.4 Engages in reflection

2. Understands and Respects Others

- 2.1 Understands, respects, and responds appropriately to diversity in a variety of settings
- 2.2 Exhibits empathy
- 2.3 Commits to fairness and honesty
- 2.4 Listens respectfully to other points of view

3. Understands and Respects Professional Communities

- 3.1 Commits to professional behavior in university and school cultures
- 3.2 Practices informed decision-making in university and school cultures
- 3.3 Communicates and collaborates in university and school cultures
- 3.4 Accepts academic rigor (willingness to work/ high expectations)
- 3.5 Affects change with courage and confidence