

EDRE 5653: Making the Literacy Connection
Summer 2021 8W2
University of North Texas
Department of Teacher Education and Administration

Instructor: April Larremore, Ed.D.

Course Meets: Via the online platform Canvas

Student Hours: By appointment (via Zoom/phone/FT)

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OVERVIEW & BIG IDEAS

This course takes up sociocultural frameworks for understanding the early (birth to kindergarten) literacy and language development of young children. An underlying assumption we begin with is that children enter our classrooms already full of cultural competencies and communicative resources gained from their experiences in the home and in their local and global communities. Before we can even consider curriculum with and for young children, we have to examine and understand how young children learn, participate, and engage in language and literacy opportunities within their multiple communities of practice (e.g. homes, community centers, religious spaces, daycares, familial networks both close and far, neighborhoods, popular media/culture).

The aim of this course is to understand how to create spaces where language variations, (in)formal literacies, linguistic diversities, and children's identities are framed together in equity-oriented and socially just spaces. In examining the nature and scope of language arts in the early years, we will consider the role of the teacher. How do we observe, inquire, and pay particular attention to creating meaningful experiences that encompass children's interests and identities? In particular, we will work towards designing literacy experiences, resources, and assessments that build on a sociocultural literacy framework that honors and builds from children's linguistic repertoires.

This course was designed with the guidance and support of Tran Templeton and Dr. Haeny Yoon, at Teachers College, Columbia University.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- 1) Gain a broad, theoretical understanding of sociocultural perspectives foundational to literacy acquisition.
- 2) Identify and speak to issues of access, exclusion, and inequities related to language policies and politics.
- 3) Observe, document, and analyze children's literacy competencies.
- 4) Critically examine literacy opportunities offered to children in schools with attention to the intersection of access and identity (e.g. race, class, gender, ability, etc.).
- 5) Conceptualize curriculum that bridges theory-to-practice and home-to-school.

ON THE NATURE OF AN ONLINE COURSE

The underlying assumption of this course is that schools are systemically unjust and inequitable. We will engage in conversations about race, class, sexuality, gender, religion, etc. that may be personal, as well

as political. It is my belief that our work as teachers is never free of either domain, and as the feminist mantra goes, “The personal *is* political”. Because the issues we discuss may feel personal and/or political, you may find yourself agitated or uncomfortable with content, topics, and/or ideas presented by any one person on the community. It is my hope that you will contact me to discuss any of your discomfort so that we can develop a plan to move forward and engage in productive dialogue about these issues.

Please remember that the digital domain often presents challenges, especially as we are unable to see each other’s facial expressions, listen for vocal tones, and see body language. If you are unsure about posting something, it’s oftentimes best to leave it aside, reflect on it, and return to it later. You can also send me a private message if you are feeling unsure about what you would like to post.

Though this is an online course, I have designed it with the aim of interactivity and dialogue among participants (including myself). The diversity of your unique experiences makes for a richer learning experience for all. Therefore, your contributions are important and valuable as learning is a social (Vygotsky, 1979) and dialogic (Freire, 1970) process.

COURSE TOPICS
See Canvas for specific dates/timelines.

Module	Topic/Focus	Assignments
1: June 1-7	Literacy as reading and writing the world: Sociocultural perspectives of language and literacy development Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luke (1994) • Lyiscott (2018) Tedx Talk • NCTE statement on the act of reading • Mia Hood on the reading wars 	Peardeck self-paced provocation FlipGrid introduction Discussion post: What is literacy?
2: June 8-14	At home, at school, and in the world: Multilingual and multiliterate spaces of childhood Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delpit (2012) Teaching Tolerance Keynote • Flores & Rosa (2015) • Boutte & Johnson (2013) • Gort (2019) 	Peardeck self-paced provocation Choose one: Literacy chat or reading synthesis
3: June 15-21	From language to reading: Young children’s emergent language and literacy practices in action Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lindfors (2008) Chapters 1 & 3 • Dyson (1990) • Orellana (2009) Chapters 1 & 3 	Video lecture Assignment #1 due (see assignment bank #1)

4: June 22-28	<p>Belonging and participation in children's literate communities</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dyson & Genishi (2013) • Yoon (2021) • Jenkins (2006) • Kliewer (2008) 	<p>PearDeck self-paced provocation</p> <p>Choose one: Literacy chat or reading synthesis</p>
5: June 29-July 5	<p>Multimodal literacies: How children's literacies take shape and form within social practices</p> <p>Texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosie Flewitt, Multimodal ethnography/DigiLitEY Methods Corner • Flewitt (2012) • Bengochea, Sembiente, & Gort (2020) • Zapata, Valdez-Gainer, & Halworth (2015) • TBD 	<p>FlipGrid multimodal poetry reading</p> <p>Assignment #2 due (see assignment bank #2)</p>
6: July 6-12	<p>Power, knowledge, and critical literacies</p> <p>Texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vasquez, Janks, & Comber (2019) • Luke video on critical literacy • UBC Okanagan video of critical literacy in action • Vasquez (2017) (Ch. 1) • Leland, Harste, & Huber (2005) • Wood & Jocius (2013) 	<p>PearDeck self-paced provocation</p> <p>Choose one: Literacy chat or reading synthesis</p>
7: July 13-19	<p>Giving dimension to critical literacy with multimodal & multi-literacies</p> <p>Texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Templeton (2013) • Crafton, Brennan, & Silvers (2017) • Flewitt, Nind, & Payler (2009) • Ghiso & Low (2012) • Wessel-Powell, Lu, & Wohlwend (2018) 	<p>Assignment #3 due (see assignment bank #3)</p>
8: July 20-23	<p>Literacies for Black liberation: <i>Woke Kindergarten</i> as a critical multimodal event</p> <p>Texts:</p>	<p>Assignment #4 due: <i>Woke Kindergarten</i> as a <i>multimodal critical literacy event</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reading of <i>They, She, He Easy as ABC</i>, a book about pronouns • A reading of <i>Wings</i>, a book about a Black boy's ability to fly, in spite of the adults and other children around him who think less of him. • A reading of <i>Mr. Tiger Goes Wild</i>, a book that problematizes the idea of civility and propriety (respectability politics) 	
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GRADES

Your grade will be evaluated out of 1000 points. 895 points or more equals an A, for example. Please turn assignments in on time since our timeline is very tight. I don't want to be responsible for keeping tabs on you; it doesn't help you, me, or our relationship. Keep in mind that if you turn an assignment in late, there may be a penalty. I also will not be able to provide you with thorough feedback if you turn your work in late.

IMPORTANT DATES

Please refer to the following website for registration, drop, pass/fail, etc. dates for the accelerated online program: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/summer-5w1-10w-and-8w2-sessions#AOP>

06/08: Last day to drop without a W on the record.

- See <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/dropping-class>

06/09: Drops from this point on will show up as W on transcripts

07/02: Last day to drop a course and to withdraw from all classes.

07/23: Last class day

NOTEWORTHY

[Please see Canvas for course and departmental policies.](#)

Food/Housing Insecurity: The UNT Food Pantry is open. Please visit the website for more details, or contact me: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>. A student with difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, is urged to contact the Dean of Students, Suite 409 at the University Union.

University Mental Health Services: We are currently facing not only a pandemic, but for students of Color, and particularly Black students, the recent (and numerous historical) cases of police brutality and violence (not only by police) done to Black bodies may be challenging your fortitude. UNT has resources to support students who may find it difficult to find joy at this time: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/>. You can also contact the center at 940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu. For mental health resources, please refer to the following website: <https://speakout.unt.edu/content/mental-health-resources>

Title IX Services: Sexual discrimination, harassment, & assault: The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are civil rights violations. UNT's Dean of Students'

website offers a range of resources to help support survivors, based on their needs:

<http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources>. Renee McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate and she can be reached via email at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648.

ASSIGNMENTS

GENERAL GUIDELINES

For 3 of the 4 assignments, I will offer you a bank of potential inquiries for you to pursue **one**. This is meant to give you some more flexibility and freedom to pursue matters that may interest you with regard to language and literacy.

- One rule is that at least one of your assignments (out of the four total) this semester should take shape of an essay (e.g. it should be written).
- Another is that, with any of these options, you need to make sure it can/does reflect course content and readings. You'll need to get creative about that in some cases.
- Finally, you will most definitely need to do external research and inquiry on any/all assignments you choose. If you need guidance, don't hesitate to reach out to me but do so before Saturday evening. Any external texts you use should be noted in a reference list.

You are also free to **develop your own assignment one time (except for the final)**, it must be discussed with me before Thursday of the week the assignment is due). Because we only have 8 weeks and only so much mental and emotional capacity to withstand so many readings and hold so many ideas, this is a space for you to pursue an interest of your own. The requirements for your own assignment include:

- It has to be guided by an inquiry and must result in a tangible product (can be written, oral, multimodal, etc.).
- It cannot be a repetition of any other course assignment but can be an extension of an assignment that you've done for another class that you would like to pursue.
- It has to be related to the current (or previous) week's topic.

ASSIGNMENT BANK #1

1) Professional development module. For this option, you can create your own professional development module (either web-based or powerpoint-based for in-person delivery). This should be focused on the topic for the week with the goal of providing other practitioners insight into the language practices of diverse populations. If you have a related interest, or an area that you'd like to zoom in even further, you can choose that path. Include a rationale with learning objectives, content, at least one activity, and a final assessment. The module should demonstrate your mastery of the topic, as well as additional inquiry/research you've done into the topic. If you include any of the texts for participants, you should include them in ways that convey your knowledge of them. You might, for example, include backend presenter notes that allow me to see your rationale for their use. If you include audio please do not include more than an hour of content for me to listen to. All of that time adds up, and I want to be able to give meaningful feedback.

2) Analysis of childhood spaces. In this assignment, you can draw upon your childhood or the childhood of a child with whom you are familiar. With this assignment, you should map out (either in writing or in images & writing) the various spaces the child inhabits and the language and literacy events and practices that occur within those spaces. The product should be a double-spaced, 3 to 4 page write-up

or a multimodal presentation with voiceover narration. It should describe the spaces and literacy events. You can choose any platform you'd like as long as I am able to have access to it as well.

3) **Op-Ed response to a [Forbes article by Natalie Wexler. \(Links to an external site.\)](#)** This is a recent article on the ways that current literacy instruction oppresses Black and Brown children. Warning: it can be triggering as it exploits the current moment and makes false equivalences. The author claims that withholding phonics instruction from minoritized populations is a form of oppression and draws similarities to the police state. For this assignment, you should use the sociocultural perspective from course ideas and readings to counter this argument in your own op-ed (opinion editorial). The product should be a 3 to 4 page, double-spaced paper written in an op-ed or academic style. You might also choose to create a podcast (interviews with framing using course content).

ASSIGNMENT BANK #2

1) **Studying children's literacies from children's perspectives.** This assignment requires you to study and analyze the way a child or children engage with a text (book, T.V. show, movie, video game, website). In the vein of the Jenkins's reading on *PeeWee's Playhouse*, you will want to take notes on the responses the child(ren) have to the text that ***they themselves have chosen***. Their interaction should be largely on their own, ***without your interference or guidance***. This should not be a text that you choose for them. In a double-spaced, 3-4 page paper or a multimodal presentation, present responses to the following points:

1. What is the text, and what are some of its themes or big ideas?
2. What kinds of knowledge do the children need to have to engage with this text, to be part of this literate community? This refers to cultural knowledge (e.g. a child needs to know what "cowabunga" means in the *Simpsons*) but could also include technical knowledge, for example (e.g. a baby needs to know how to turn the pages of a board book).
3. How do the children interact with this text, including how did they come to choose it (if known)? Where do they find pleasure in the text? How do they make sense of it and with it? If several children are consuming it, you might capture moments in which the children are making sense of it together.

2) **Anne Haas Dyson's Playhouse.** With this option, you can explore further the extensive work of Anne Haas Dyson, whose scholarship focuses on children's writing from children's own perspectives. This entails your reading and analyzing at least 2 other articles (besides the one assigned this week and the one last week). Looking across all 4 articles, discuss either in a double-spaced 3-4 page paper or in a multimodal presentation:

1. What are major ideas and themes across all the works you read?
2. What are the connections across her findings?
3. Based on her work, what would be Dyson's recommendations for policy and practice?

3) **Professional development module.** For this option, you can create your own professional development module (either web-based or powerpoint-based for in-person delivery). This should be focused on the topic for the week with the goal of providing other practitioners insight into the literacy worlds of children (within their own childhood communities). If you have a related interest, or an area that you'd like to zoom in even further, you can choose that path. Include a brief rationale with learning objectives, content, at least one activity, and a final assessment. The module should demonstrate your mastery of the topic, as well as additional inquiry/research you've done into the topic. If you include any

of the texts for participants, you should include them in ways that convey your knowledge of them. You might, for example, include backend presenter notes that allow me to see your rationale for their use. If you include audio please do not include more than an hour of content for me to listen to. All of that time adds up, and I want to be able to give meaningful feedback.

4) Analysis of childhood spaces. *Because this is available for this module, you'll want to take into account the topics we've explored in weeks 3 and 4: how language practices are brought to bear in reading and writing practices and/or how children's own communities with one another influence their literacy practices.*

In this assignment, you can draw upon your childhood or the childhood of a child with whom you are familiar. With this assignment, you should map out (either in writing or in images & writing) the various spaces the child inhabits and the language and literacy events and practices that occur within those spaces. The product should be a double-spaced, 3 to 4 page write-up or a multimodal presentation with voiceover narration. It should describe the spaces and literacy events. You can choose any platform you'd like as long as I am able to have access to it as well.

ASSIGNMENT BANK #3

1) Analyze the multimodal affordances and critical potentialities of children's texts. This assignment requires you to analyze at least three (3) children's texts (picture books, chapter books, games, television shows, etc.) that exist in a child's literacy space. In what ways are these texts multimodal, and how do the multimodal elements and affordances (see Flewitt (2012) clarification on affordances) contribute to the child's literacy learning and social practices? What types of critical inquiries do the texts potentially address and/or how might their multimodalities afford or invite critical inquiry? What social issues or opportunities to "read the world" & engage in critical inquiry are available through texts? What kinds of questions could be posed for further inquiry? Present a **coherent** piece of writing (3-4 page paper) or multimodal (Powerpoint with voiceover; video; flip book, etc.) text from your analysis. Don't just write a paper where you're responding to the questions without any sense of organization. Your work as an author (just as kids do when they author) is to make sure the audience can stay with you.

2) Professional development module. For this option, you can create your own professional development module (either web-based or powerpoint-based for in-person delivery). This should be focused on the topic for the week with the goal of providing other practitioners insight into multimodal and/or critical literacies. If you have a related interest, or an area that you'd like to zoom in even further, you can choose that path. Include a brief rationale with learning objectives, content, at least one activity, and a final assessment. The module should demonstrate your mastery of the topic, as well as additional inquiry/research you've done into the topic. If you include any of the texts for participants, you should include them in ways that convey your knowledge of them. You might, for example, include backend presenter notes that allow me to see your rationale for their use. If you include audio please do not include more than an hour of content for me to listen to. All of that time adds up, and I want to be able to give meaningful feedback.

3) Critical analysis of childhood spaces. *Because this is available for this module, you'll want to take into account the topics we've explored in weeks 5 & 6: multimodality and critical literacy.*

In this assignment, you can draw upon your childhood or the childhood of a child with whom you are familiar. With this assignment, you should map out (either in writing or in images & writing) the various spaces the child inhabits, and the texts that occupy those spaces. The product should be a double-spaced, 3 to 4 page write-up or a multimodal presentation with voiceover narration. It should describe

the spaces as well the literacy events in their multi-modalities and their potential for critical literacy. You can choose any platform you'd like as long as I am able to have access to it as well.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT

Below are the choices for three audiovisual read-alouds done by *Woke Kindergarten's* abolitionist educator Akiea Gross (pronouns: them/them). Akiea actively works toward Black liberation (and thus liberation for all). For the assignment, you should watch **one** of the videos and produce an analysis of the following:

- at least 7 multimodal elements that are present in the reading and their accompanying effects;
- at least 4 of the critical literacies that Akiea is asking for us to engage in through the reading. You can frame the critical literacies in terms of a question (example: What does it mean to be liberated from social norms?) or in terms of an idea (example: Ki is presenting the idea that liberation is breaking free of social norms);
- Summarize how you think the multimodality of the video can support critical engagement in the text.

I am not asking you to judge whether or not you like this text or if you think it's good or not. In the interest of being transparent: Akiea (they/them pronouns) is a dear friend of mine. We taught together in NYC, and I am in full support of their work. That's exactly why I'm not asking for judgments -- I am far too protective of Akiea to be able to field judgments. It's also simply good practice to write with research and theories to support your thinking rather than simply your own opinions.

Here are the options for [Woke Kindergarten readings](#):

- A reading of *They, She, He Easy as ABC*, a book about pronouns
- A reading of *Wings*, a book about a Black boy's ability to fly, in spite of the adults and other children around him who think less of him.
- A reading of *Mr. Tiger Goes Wild*, a book that problematizes the idea of civility and propriety (respectability politics).

Required Course Readings

Bengochea, A., Sembiante, S. F., & Gort, M. (2020). Attracting and Responding to an Audience: Preschoolers' Multimodal Composing in Show-and-Tell Activity. *Language Arts*, 97(3), 135-145.

Boutte, G. S., & Johnson, G. L. (2013). Do educators see and honor biliteracy and bidialectalism in African American language speakers? Apprehensions and reflections of two grandparents/professional educators. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 41(2), 133-141.

Crafton, L. K., Silvers, P., & Brennan, M. (2017). Creating a critical multiliteracies curriculum: Repositioning art in the early childhood classroom. In *Multimodal Perspectives of Language, Literacy, and Learning in Early Childhood* (pp. 67-86). Springer, Cham.

Delpit, L. (2012). Teaching Tolerance Keynote [Video file]. Retrieved from www.youtube.com.

Dyson, A. H. (1990). Talking up a writing community: The role of talk in learning to write. In S. Hynds & D. Rubins (Eds.), *Perspectives on talk & learning* (99-114). National Council of Teachers of English.

Dyson, A.H., & Genishi, C. (2013). Social talk and imaginative play: Curricular basics for young children's language and literacy. In D.E. Alvermann, N.J. Unrau, & R.B. Ruddell (Eds.), *Theoretical models and processes of reading* (6th ed., pp. 164-181). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Flewitt, R. (2012). Multimodal perspectives on early childhood literacies. *The SAGE Handbook of Early Childhood Literacy, 2nd ed.* London: Sage, 295-309.

Flewitt, R., Nind, M., & Payler, J. (2009). If she's left with books she'll just eat them': Considering inclusive multimodal literacy practices. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 9*(2), 211-233.

Ghiso, M. P., & Low, D. E. (2013). Students using multimodal literacies to surface micronarratives of United States immigration. *Literacy, 47*(1), 26-34.

Gort (2019). Developing bilingualism and biliteracy in early and middle childhood. *Language Arts, 96*(4), 229-243.

Heath, S. B. (1982). What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and school. *Language in Society, 11*(1), 49-76.

Leland, C., Harste, J., & Huber, K. (2005). Out of the box: Critical literacy in a first-grade classroom. *Language Arts, 82*(4), 257-268.

Leu, K. H., Templeton, T., & Yoon, H. (2016). Co-inquiry, co-construction, collaboration: The emergence of curriculum. *Language Arts, 94*(1), 54.

Lindfors, J. W. (2019). *Children's language: Connecting reading, writing, and talk*. Teachers College Press.

Luke, A. (1994). *The social construction of literacy in the primary school*. Macmillan Education AU.

Luke, A. (2015). Critical literacy [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UnWdARykdcw>

Lyiscott, J. (2018). Why English class is silencing students of color [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/jamila_lyiscott_3_ways_to_speak_english

Kliewer, C. (2008). *Seeing all kids as readers: A new vision for literacy in the inclusive early childhood classroom*. Brookes Publishing.

Perry, K. (2014). "Mama, sign this note": Young refugee children's brokering of Literacy practices. *Language Arts, 91*(5), 313-325.

Templeton, T. N. (2013). Teacher as Researcher: Young Children as Forces of Nature: Critical Perspective in a Preschool Classroom. *Childhood Education, 89*(3), 185-187.

UBC Okanagan. (2018). Critical literacy: Children as changemakers in their worlds [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yuamzeQX6c4&t=1s>

Vasquez, V. M. (2017). *Critical literacy across the K-6 curriculum*. Taylor & Francis.

Vasquez, V. M., Janks, H., & Comber, B. (2019). Critical literacy as a way of being and doing. *Language Arts*, 96(5), 300-311.

Wessel-Powell, C., Lu, Y. H., & Wohlwend, K. (2018). Walking dead literacies: zombies, boys, and (re) animated storytelling. *The Reading Teacher*, 72(3), 313-324.

Wood, S., & Jocius, R. (2013). Combating "I hate this stupid book!": Black males and critical literacy. *The Reading Teacher*, 66(8), 661-669.

Yoon, H. S., Llerena, C., & Brooks, E. (2016). The unfolding of Lucas's story in an inclusive classroom: Living, playing, and becoming in the social world of kindergarten. *Bank Street Occasional Paper Series*, 36(5).

Zapata, A., Valdez-Gainer, N., & Haworth, C. (2015). Bilingual picturebook making in the elementary classroom. *Language Arts*, 92(5), 343.

Other Recommended Readings

Aukerman, M., Grovet, K., & Belfatti, M. (2019). Race, ideology, and cultural representation in Raz-Kids. *Language Arts*, 96(5), 286-299.

Collins, K. M., Wagner, M. O. C., & Meadows, J. (2018). Every story matters: Disability studies in the literacy classroom. *Language Arts*, 96(2), 114-118.

Dyson, A. H. (2006). On saying it right (write): "Fix-its" in the foundations of learning to write. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 41(1), 8.

Gillanders, C. (2018). ¿Cómo Lo Escribo en Inglés o en Español? Writing in dual-language learners. *The Reading Teacher*, 71(4), 421-430.

Iddings, A. C. D., Risko, V. J., & Rampulla, M. P. (2009). When you don't speak their language: Guiding English-language learners through conversations about text. *The Reading Teacher*, 63(1), 52-61.

Luke, A. & Kale, J. (1997/2017). Learning through difference: Cultural practices in early childhood language socialisation. In E. Gregory (Ed.), *One child, many worlds* (pp. 11-29). New York, NY: Routledge.

Moll, L. C., & González, N. (1994). Lessons from research with language-minority children. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 26(4), 439-456.

Paley, V. G. (2011). Voices Inside Schools: Getting to Know Derek. *Harvard Educational Review*, 81(4), 745-750.

Reaser, J., Adger, C. T., Wolfram, W., & Christian, D. (2017). *Dialects at school: Educating linguistically diverse students*. Routledge.

Taylor, S. V., & Leung, C. B. (2020). Multimodal Literacy and Social Interaction: Young Children's Literacy Learning. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 48(1), 1-10.

Thomas, E. E. (2016). Stories still matter: Rethinking the role of diverse children's literature today. *Language Arts*, 94(2), 112.

Winograd, K. (Ed.). (2014). *Critical literacies and young learners: Connecting classroom practice to the common core*. Routledge.

Yoon, H. (2019). Playful literacies, creativity, and multilingual practices. *Reading Teacher*, 72(5), 551-557.