T&L 529
Language Development in Children

Instructor: Michael Paul Gallo                                      3 credits
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Office hours. Monday 3:30-5:00, T&H 8:30-10:30, 12:30—1:30, & 3:30-4:30

Course Description:
Language is central to the human experience. It arises in all cultures and can be learned effortlessly by most children. In fact, children can’t resist it – deprive them of language and they will create their own. The structure of language, and the way it is learned, reflect the intricate organizational power of the mind of the human species. In this course we will study the development of speech and language in young children and its influence on early literacy and young children’s thinking. How is language and thought related? We will also focus on how language and literacy development is shaped by culture and is influenced by cultural bias. By gaining a deeper understanding of the processes of and influences on language development, we will be better able to establish rich environments that support the development of language and literacy in children of all ability levels.

Course Objectives:

1. To understand the development of language in children, birth through age eight and its relationship to early literacy.
   (ESPB-ECE-Standard 8.81, INTASC # 1 & 2)

2. To stimulate an increased interest in the regular observation of children as a necessary requirement in the understanding of the educational needs of children.
   (ESPB-ECE-Standard 8.8.6, INTASC #8)

3. To apply knowledge of the development of language in real practice through observations of children and their work or play.
   (ESPB-ECE-Standard 8.8.1 & 8.8.6, INTASC # 1, 2, & 8)

4. To demonstrate the need for and develop skill in the writing of clear and accurate observational reports.
   (ESPB-ECE-Standard 8.8.6, INTASC # 8)

5. To understand atypical language development and methods employed to accommodate the stimulation of language and early literacy development.
   (ESPB-ECE-Standard 8.8.7, INTASC # 1 & 2)

Required Texts:
In lieu of a textbook articles will be assigned and students will be required to search out and share journal articles related to language development, early literacy, and young children’s thinking.

Recommended Readings:


**Course Requirements:**

1. **Class Presentations** – Each Student will be required to make a presentation and lead the class discussion on various course topics. When in charge of a topic students will need to provide three articles for the other students to read and use as discussion springboards during class. The instructor will provide copies of the articles if the article or reference is provided within 3 school days of class (i.e. the Wednesday before class)

2. **Children’s/Juvenile Fiction Reaction Paper** – a 4-5 page book reflection detailing your reactions to a book of your choice & instructor’s approval. Include specific references to passages in the book to support your assertions. Apply concepts, ideas, and knowledge discussed and gained from class to your reaction to the book. This book must address an issue related to children and literacy, language development, culture and/or cognition. Some ideas might be a book that addresses the issue of ESL, ELL, Hearing Impairment, Speech/Language Difficulty, Autism, mental handicap. This paper is due by Monday April 2.
3. **Class activities** - Various in class activities will be conducted. These activities will be worth 5 points each and will not be able to be made up unless prior arrangement is made with the instructor.

4. **Child Language & cognition study / Final Presentation** – You will be required to select a child to do a language/cognition study over the duration of the semester. Details of this study will be outlined on a separate sheet of paper. You will also be required to present the highlights of this study in a presentation on the last days of class. The paper must be 6-10 pages in length and show at least 3 cited references. The presentation should be 15-20 minutes in length and detail the highlights so the class has a basic understanding of the child’s language and literacy abilities and its relationship to the child’s cognition. The paper will be graded according to the depth of writing, mechanics/grammar, and the connection between theory and practice.

**Exceptionalities:**

If you have emergency medical information to share with the instructor, if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, or if you need accommodations in the course because of a disability, please make an appointment with the instructor. My office location is Education 10 (in the “basement”) and the hours are as indicated at the beginning of the syllabus. If you plan to request disability accommodations, you are expected to register with the Disability Support Services (DSS) office. 190 McCannel Hall, 777-3425. You can see the DSS website at www.und.nodak.edu/dept/dss

**Class Schedule:**

There will be no class on the following dates: Please use this time wisely to complete the required assignments:

- **Monday, January 15** Holiday: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- **Monday February 5** Begin working on your child study
- **Monday, February 19** Holiday: President’s Day
- **Monday March 26** Continue working on your child study, children’s literature assignment
- **Monday, April 9** Holiday: Easter Monday

**Class 1: January 8**
- Introductions
- Syllabus and Assignment Review
- The uniqueness of Human Language

**Student In Charge of Topic**
- Michael

**Class 2: January 22**
- Language Activity
- Theories of Language Development
- **For next class: Please bring your favorite children’s book**

**Class 3: January 29**
- Paralinguistics/ an in class activity
- Development of Communication in Infants

**Class 4: February 12**
- Parentese (Motherese) Is there a difference in how fathers & mothers talk with their children?
- How should parents talk with their children?
- Stages of Language Development

**Class 5: February 26**
- Listening skills, is it just accidental? How? Why?
- Children with hearing difficulties/ what do we do?
- Begin video: “For a Deaf Son”

**Class 6: March 5**
- Finish Video “For a Deaf Son”
The effects of hearing loss on language development
Sign language as means of communication for ALL children

Class 7. March 19
What is the relation between language and thought
What came first: Language/or thought. Piaget VS Vygotsky
(2 students: I cover Piaget I cover Vygotsky)

Class 8: April 2
Phonemic Awareness & Literacy
Phonics Pros & Cons
Book discussion: What did you read? What did you learn?

Class 9: April 16
Marie Clay’s Writing Principles. Spelling stages
Letter formation. How do we help children along the path to writing?

Class 10: April 23
Language and Culture What’s the big deal?
ESL/ELL Should children be forced to forgo their native language?

Class 11: April 30
Final Presentations – final child study papers due

If you have any questions or concerns, please fell free to call me or to e-mail me. I will get back with you as soon as I can.

Please turn your cell phone off in class – if you need your phone on, please use the vibrate mode.

Thank you for being a part of this class.
Always remember: Talk, Play, & Read, Read, Read