EDUC 525: Language & Learning in Home & School Settings
Winter 2014

Professor: Chandra L. Alston
Office: 4045 SEB
Phone: 734-647-1988
E-mail Address: clalston@umich.edu

Class Hours: Wednesdays, 1-4pm
Class Location: SEB 4212
Office Hours: Thursdays, 1-3pm, and by appointment (except 1/9, 1/16)

Course Description
EDUC 525 introduces students to the study of language development from pre-school through the school years. Topics include how language development is related to learning more generally, how language development at home and in the community relates to learning in school, similarities and differences between spoken and written language development, and how classroom discourse contributes to language development, literacy, and subject matter learning. Bilingual development is addressed throughout the course. Students learn to analyze language and develop strategies for supporting children’s language development at school as well as consider approaches to conducting research on language development.

In this course we will study the language development of children from preschool through the school years, looking at learning in the home and community as well as language learning at school. We will engage with questions such as these:

• What is language development?
• How is language development related to learning more generally?
• How does language development at home and in the community relate to learning in school?
• How does language develop during the school years?
• What are the similarities and differences of spoken and written language?
• How does written language develop?
• What do teachers need to know about language-related disabilities?
• How does classroom discourse contribute to language development and subject matter learning?
• What is the relationship between language and literacy?
• How do experiences with other languages and other varieties of English influence learning at school?
• What do teachers need to know about language and language development?

You will learn to analyze spoken and written language and develop strategies for conducting research on language development and for supporting children’s language development at school.

If you have special needs for accommodations, please let me know.

Course Text
• Other assigned articles and chapters are available on the CTools website under the “Resources” link.

Course Requirements
1. Attend class and participate in class discussions, including leading demonstrations of activities that support language development of an age group you are particularly interested in (10% of grade).
2. Complete assigned homework analysis tasks (20% of grade).
3. Conduct an analysis of a young child’s language (Project #1; guidelines will be provided). Due February 26th (35% of grade).
4. Complete a project of your design related to language development (Project #2; we will discuss options in class; you will develop a proposal and discuss it with me). Due at the last class session April 16th (35% of grade).
**Tentative Course Schedule** (subject to change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 15</td>
<td><strong>No Class (Instructor at Research Meeting)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 22</td>
<td><strong>Language development in the first years</strong></td>
<td>How does language develop in young children? How does it vary with children’s different experiences and abilities? What is the role of parents and caregivers? How do we study early language development?  Menyuk &amp; Brisk chapters one and two  A brief reflection on experiences you have had that are informing your view of language development, along with a short statement of your goals for this course and topics you may be interested in pursuing for your final project (total one page, double-spaced).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bring to class:</strong></td>
<td>Speech function analysis of the language sample handed out in class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
February 5  
**Language development in the pre-school years; the foundations of literacy**
What aspects of the home and school environment affect children's language development? What do teachers need to know about pre-school children’s language development? How does language learning in the pre-school years prepare children for literacy?

**Readings:** Menyuk & Brisk chapters three and four


**Reminder:** By now, you should have gotten permission from parents of a young child and either met with the child or else scheduled a time to meet with the child to collect your language samples. This part of your project should be completed this week at the latest.

February 12  
**Language development in the primary school years; the role of oral language in the development of literacy**
How does spoken language contribute to the development of literacy? What support can teachers provide for language development in the classroom? How do we study classroom interaction?

**Readings:** Menyuk & Brisk chapter five


**Bring to class:**

February 19  
**Language development in the primary school years: developing academic language**
What is the role of the teacher in helping students improve their understanding of pragmatics and semantax? What does this look like in classroom settings? What are your experiences with supporting children to understand the structures and uses of language?

**Readings:** Menyuk & Brisk chapter six


**Bring to class:** Transcript of your interaction with a young child for Project #1. We will review the procedures for analyzing your data and address problems you may have encountered.
February 26

**Language, dialect, and identity**
How does speaking a different variety of English affect students’ language development and learning at school? How do dialects of English differ? What do teachers need to know about dialects? In particular, what are the features of African American Vernacular English teachers need to know about?

Readings:

Bring to class:
- Project #1: analysis of a young child’s language

March 5

**U-M Break – NO CLASS**

March 12

**Special Issue – Perspectives on Language and Literacy, The International Dyslexia Association**
What role does syntax and grammar play in understanding language development? How does a focus at the sentence level help teachers understand students’ language instruction needs? What can teachers do to support syntax and grammar development to improve both spoken and written language development?

Readings:
- Farrall, M.L. (2013). The assessment of written syntax
- Eberhardt, N.C. (2013). Syntax: Somewhere between words and text

March 19

**Written language development**
How do children learn to write? How is written language development different from spoken language development? How are notions such as *sentence* and *genre* relevant to writing development? What do teachers need to know to support written language development?

Readings:
Bring to class: Review the guidelines for the final course project and begin to read on the topic of interest to you. Turn in a short description (1-2 pages, double-spaced) of the project you are considering carrying out. Indicate the question/issue you are interested in, list what you have already read on the topic, and identify 2-3 readings that you plan to study as you do the project. Describe the context where you will do the investigation, indicating whether you have already contacted the teacher to seek permission. We will meet to discuss your goals.

March 26

Language development in middle childhood; working with lexicogrammar
How can teachers support language development in upper primary and middle school? What is the role of vocabulary development? How do vocabulary and grammar interact? What is the value of an explicit focus on language and use of a metalanguage?

Readings: Menyuk & Brisk chapters seven and eight

Additional readings TBD

Bring to class: An updated plan for your project (1-2 pages, double spaced), reflecting revisions based on our discussion. Include an annotated bibliography of the readings you have done to develop your project (a list of the readings with a short paragraph indicating how each reading relates to your study and how it is informing your project). Also indicate the status of your plan for classroom observation. I will approve your project based on this plan. You will conduct the observations soon after this date.

April 2

Language development in adolescence; working with abstraction
What challenges students in language development in adolescence? How is “academic language” different from “everyday language”? What constructs do researchers use to study academic language development?

Readings: Menyuk & Brisk chapters nine and ten

Other readings TBD

Bring to class: Written language analysis

April 9

Classroom discourse across content areas
What kind of classroom discourse supports students’ language development? How does that vary by subject and discipline?


April 16

Project reports – Last Class

Bring to class: Your final project. Prepare to present it.