Language & Learning in Home & School Settings (EDUC 525; [28127])
Fall Semester, 2011

Instructor: Mary Schleppegrell
Office: 4109 SEB
Office Phone: 734-647-2449
Office Hours: Thursday 4:00 - 5:00 p.m., and by appointment
E-mail Address: mjschlep@umich.edu
Class Meetings: Thursdays, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m., 2346 SEB

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?
- How are spoken and written language similar and different?
- How does written language develop?
- What do teacher 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.
Readings
Required book:

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

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 October 20th (35% of grade).
4. Complete a project of your design related to language development (Project #2; we will discuss options in class and you will develop a proposal and discuss it with me). Due at the last class session December 8th (35% of grade).

Schedule of topics and readings

September 8  Introduction to Course
What is language? How is language learned? How do we study language development? What role does language play in school learning? What do teachers, teacher educators, and researchers need to understand about language and language development?


Bring to class: The Menyuk and Brisk book.
**September 15**  
**Language development in the first years**  
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?

Readings:  
Menyuk & Brisk chapters one and two


Bring to class:  
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).

**September 22**  
**Linguistic constructs for studying language development**  
How do we study language development? How do we ensure that our conclusions about children's development are valid and reliable? Why is it important to be able to assess children’s language development?

Readings:  


Review in preparation for language analysis project:  

Bring to class:  
Speech function analysis of the language sample handed out in class
September 29  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.

October 6  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: A book or article you plan to read for our October 27 discussion session.

October 13  Language development in the primary school years: developing academic 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.

**October 20**

**Language and dialect**
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 that teachers need to know about?

**Readings:**


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

**October 27**

**Discussing topics of interest**
What other topics are you interested in exploring this semester? This session will give you an opportunity to share a reading, outline an issue, and engage in discussion on a topic of interest to you.
November 3  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?


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.

November 10  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


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
November 17  
**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


Bring to class: Written language analysis

December 1  
**Classroom discourse across content areas**  
What kind of classroom discourse supports students’ language development?  
How does that vary by subject and discipline?


December 8  
**Project reports**

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