Language Acquisition for Children of Diverse Backgrounds
CURRINS 501-002 & 003
Department of Curriculum & Instruction
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Instructor: Lynn Sedivy
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Class Location and Meeting Time: END 384 Tuesdays 12:30-3:10  OR  END 346 Thursdays 6:00-8:40

Course prerequisite: Concurrent enrollment in CURRINS 240 required if pursuing new Early Childhood Education program.

Administrative drops: Students who miss the whole first week of classes may be administratively dropped from the course to make space for students wishing to add the course.

Course description: The purpose of this course is to serve as a general introduction to the fields of first and second language acquisition. Research methods and theoretical models of first and second language learning will be studied and the acquisition of first and second language structures will be examined. Socio-cultural factors that affect language learning will be discussed, and bilingualism/biliteracy will be considered within the framework of 2nd language acquisition as well. Finally, an overall goal of this course is for students to be able to interpret 1st and 2nd language acquisition research in ways that will benefit their instruction in diverse early childhood education environments. This course cannot be taken for credit/no credit. If you have chosen this grading option, please complete an add/drop form to change the grading from credit/no credit to graded.

Wisconsin State Teaching Standards Addressed in CURRINS 501
The following Wisconsin State Teaching standards will be addressed:
Standard 1: Learner Development
Standard 2: Learner Differences
Standard 3: Learning Environments
Standard 4: Content Knowledge
Standard 5: Innovative Applications of Content
Standard 6: Assessment
Standard 7: Planning for Instruction
Standard 8: Instructional Strategies
Standard 9: Reflection and Continuous Growth
Standard 10: Collaboration

Course Objectives: Students will...
- Demonstrate knowledge of the theories and research findings surrounding first and second language acquisition;
- Develop the ability to articulate the stages children from a variety of backgrounds go through as they
acquire a language;
- Understand the legitimacy of diverse home and community language systems and reflect those understandings in the construction of learning environments;
- Understand the legitimacy of African American English and implications for those understandings in the classroom;
- Understand what is meant by culturally relevant practice (the social cultural nature of learning) and articulate its grounding in language acquisition research;
- Make the connections between theory, research, and practice regarding language acquisition;
- Apply knowledge of first and second language acquisition in early childhood instruction and demonstrate the ability to create classroom contexts that reflect that knowledge;
- Understand the importance and benefits of bilingualism and the potential barriers.

**Required books:**

**Readings on D2L:**


**General Course Requirements:** Students are expected to come to class prepared to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of assigned readings by participating in discussions, and completing assignments. Assignments should be handed in on time; late assignments lose points. All assignments must be typed.

Please be punctual for class, and if you need to miss a class or are sick, please contact the instructor. Turn cell phones off or put them on silent during class.

**Assignments and Grading:**

**Four reflection papers** (15 points each): The purpose of the reflection papers is to think about and respond to readings, and articulate how the information will be relevant in classroom instruction. Please follow the specific reflection paper guidelines that are given.

**Three quizzes** (10 points each): The quizzes will reflect specific items of importance from the readings, such as theories, individual differences in 2nd language learning, non-language influences, error analysis, and interpretation of SLA research findings.

**Three reading summaries** (5 points each): These will be 2 paragraph write-ups as a way to share readings in class.

**Discussion Leader** (10 points) You will be part of a 4/5-person group that will have the responsibility of creating and conducting a 30-minute presentation on the topic and readings of a particular class session.
Collaboration and communication are the keys to your group’s success, as you will be planning outside of class time. The presentation must be interactive and involve the entire class. Visuals and hands-on activities should be central. Classroom conversation and opportunities to engage in language are significant. All group leaders will share equal responsibility for the success of this task.

**Classroom Observation Paper** (60 points): Observe an English Language Learner participating in an early childhood/ESL classroom setting over a series of visits to the classroom (about 5 observational hours) and note what you learn about the child’s use of English language and his/her first language. Please follow the specific guidelines required for this paper cited below. This observation will take place in your CURRINS 240 field placement, but the assignment is due in CURRINS 501.

**Classroom Observation Paper Guidelines**

(10 pts.) **Part I. Physical and Demographical Description of the Class:** You will need to interview the teacher to obtain some information, such as ethnicities represented, languages represented, special needs present, etc. Draw a representation of the classroom as well. This should be written in descriptive paragraph form, not a bulleted list.

(20 pts.) **Part II. Introduction of Case Study and Description of Observations:** In descriptive paragraph form, provide information about the ELL you have chosen to observe without referring to his/her real name. You will refer to the *Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol* checklist to guide some of your observations. When observing your student, consider the following questions:

- Does the teacher adapt content and provide supplementary materials for the English Language Learner and create language opportunities for ELLs to speak, listen, read, and write?
- Is key vocabulary emphasized and demonstrated?
- Are there a variety of techniques, such as visuals, clear speech, hands on learning, etc. that are utilized to make content comprehensible to the ELL?
- Are scaffolding techniques utilized to support the ELL’s language acquisition and are questioning techniques demonstrated to elicit language production?
- Does the class seem to move at an appropriate pace for the ELL?
- How does the ELL interact in whole group, small group, and one-on-one settings?
- Does the teacher interact regularly with the ELL and check on him/her as much as the other students?
- What is the ratio of ELL initiated interaction vs. summoned interaction;
- Is the ELL given frequent opportunities to practice language?
- Were concepts reviewed in the class?
- What types of errors speaking, writing, and reading does the ELL make? Can you differentiate which errors are due to 2nd language acquisition and which are due to the developmental level of all learners at that age?

(30 pts.) **Part III. Observations: Analysis, reflection and conclusions**

- Reference as many readings as you can regarding your observations;
- Overall, in your opinion and based on what you’ve learned from this class, was this ELL’s
needs being met to ensure successful language acquisition?

- What methods of instruction are beneficial to this ELL in the classroom?
- What ways could instruction be improved for this ELL?

**In class final (50 points):** Synthesis and demonstration of knowledge acquired in the area of 1st and 2nd language acquisition will be the focus of the final.

**Class participation, punctuality:** (30 points)

**Total points:** 255 points

The final course grade will be determined as follows:

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<th>Points Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>94-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>87-89.9%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>77-79.9%</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>67-69.9%</td>
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<td>90-93.9%</td>
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<td>84-86.9%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>74-76.9%</td>
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<td>64-66.9%</td>
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<td>80-83.9%</td>
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<td>70-73.5%</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>60-63.9%</td>
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**D2L course website:** We have a course website on Desire 2 Learn (D2L), which you can access through the UWM homepage: [www.uwm.edu](http://www.uwm.edu) or directly through this link: [https://idp.uwm.edu/idp/Authn/UserPassword](https://idp.uwm.edu/idp/Authn/UserPassword). Use the same username and password you use to access PAWS and your UWM email. Our D2L course website allows you to access course files (in “Content”), exchange messages with other students in class, take quizzes and submit writing assignments (in the “Dropbox”).

**ECE Program Policies**

**Early Childhood Education Attendance Policy:**

In the ECE Program we believe strongly that the development of strong relationships supports us in creating productive learning communities, a model that we hope you take with you into your professional work as a classroom or childcare teacher. All of the program/professional courses are interactive and discussion based. Missing class means missing the interaction and the collaborative construction of knowledge. It is difficult if not impossible to make this up. Thus, we take attendance and participation in class very seriously. So, for any ECE program class, more than two absences will require you to submit a letter of explanation to the Early Childhood Committee, and may result in the requirement to retake the course. More than three absences may result in a failing grade in the course.

**Early Childhood Technology Policy**

We realize that cell phones and laptop computers are a mainstay of student life for many of you. Should you find it necessary to bring a cell phone to class, please turn it off before class begins. If you are expecting an emergency call, please notify the instructor before class and step out into the hallway to take your call. Text messaging during class is strictly prohibited, and will result in the loss of your participation points for that day. Use of your laptop during class for any outside social networking or
other outside coursework is also prohibited. Again, these activities will result in the loss of your participation points for that class period.

**C or Better Policy**

The grade of a C or better must be earned in this course in order for it to fulfill the professional requirements of the Early Childhood Certification program. This course cannot be taken for credit/no credit.

**Fitness to Teach Policy**

All ECE students should have received the ECE Fitness to Teach Policy via email from the ECE Program Manager, Rachelle Alioto, or at your admission orientation. This document specifies the professional behaviors and characteristics that are expected of you as you progress through the program and into your work as a teacher. Please make sure that you have read and understand the information detailed in the document. Should concerns arise, this policy will be the reference point for a plan of action for moving forward.

**University Policies**

The Secretary of the University Web site ([http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf)) contains the following University policies:

1. **Students with disabilities.** Notice to these students should appear prominently in the syllabus so that special accommodations are provided in a timely manner.
   [http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/](http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/)

2. **Religious observances.** Accommodations for absences due to religious observance should be noted.
   [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm)

3. **Students called to active military duty.** Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty should be noted. Students: [http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm) Employees: [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S40.htm](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S40.htm)

4. **Incompletes.** A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf)

5. **Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment).** Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff.
   [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf)

6. **Academic misconduct.** Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. [http://www4.uwm.edu/osl/dean/conduct.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/osl/dean/conduct.cfm)

7. **Complaint procedures.** Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed
to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm

8. Grade appeal procedures. A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S28.htm

9. Other The final exam requirement, the final exam date requirement, etc.
http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm
# Course Schedule

The instructor may need to make changes as the course moves forward to best accommodate instruction. Chapters/readings listed should be read before the class date where it’s listed.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics/Essential Questions</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Why study language?</strong></td>
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| Class 1 | Introduction to the Course  
Essential Questions:  
- Why study language?  
- What assumptions and beliefs do we hold about lang. development and learning?  
- What is included in the study of lang.? | In class reading:  
*The 5Minute Linguist* (2012):  
- Rodman, R. pp. 7-10.  
- Chapin, P. pp. 11-15.  
- Kohl, H. pp. 149-161. | |
| **The Importance of Linguistic Understanding in ECE** | | | |
| Class 2: | The Importance of Linguistic Understanding in ECE  
Essential Question:  
- What are the building blocks of lang. that will aid in the understanding of language acquisition? | Course text  
| **Understanding the history of language and how it supports ECE instruction.** | | | |
| Class 3: | Understanding the history of language and how it supports ECE instruction.  
Essential Questions:  
- How did oral and written English develop?  
- In what ways have English language changed and shifted?  
- What historical components of language aid in the understanding of language acquisition? | D2L  
- Jigsaw Readings  
- *The 5Minute Linguist* (2012):  
  Chps. 6, 11, 12, 13, 34, 42, 51, & 52 | DUE: Two paragraph summary and reflection based on today’s assigned jigsaw readings. |
| **First Language Acquisition** | | | |
| Class 4: | First Language Acquisition Theories  
Essential Questions:  
- What theories are essential to understand L1 acquisition?  
- How do babies learn language?  
- Do children around the world go through similar stages of lang. development? | Course text  
- Lessow-Hurley, J (2013) Chp. 4  
D2L  
Essential Question:  
- How does the brain process language? | D2L  
- Center on the Developing Child (2007)  
- *The 5 Minute Linguist* (2012) Chp. 17  
- Assign Jigsaw readings! | Discussion Group #2 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Class 6: | Language, Culture, and Identity  
Essential Questions:  
- How does language influence identity?  
- How does one’s language identity affect language learning in the classroom? | Course text  
Jigsaw Readings  
- Purcell-Gates, V. Chp. 8  
- Smitherman, G. (2000) Chp. 1  
- Assign Jigsaw readings! | DUE: Two paragraph summary and reflection based on today’s assigned jigsaw readings.  
DUE: Classroom observation part 1 |
| Class 7: | Language variations, dialects & sociolinguistics  
Essential Questions:  
- What is the difference between dialect and language?  
- What causes accents?  
- How do we meet the linguistic needs of children from a variety of socio-cultural backgrounds? | D2L  
- Schuele, M. (2001)  
Jigsaw Readings  
*The 5 Minute Linguist* Chps. 4, 26, 27, 30, 31, 38-41, 43, 44, & 64  
- Divide class for next week D2L reading. | DUE: Two paragraph summary and reflection based on today's assigned jigsaw readings. |
| **Second Language Acquisition** | | | |
| Class 8: | 2nd Language Acquisition Theory & ECE instruction  
Essential Questions:  
- Who are 2nd language learners?  
- How are 1st & 2nd language acquisition different & how are errors identified and analyzed?  
- What theories are essential for an understanding of effective 2nd lang. acq. in a diverse ECE classroom?  
- How have SLA theories changed historically? | Course text  
D2L  
- Clark, B.  
- Diller, Y. & Kampusu, Y.E. (2009)  
Quiz 2: 1st language acquisition | DUE: Reflection paper 2: Language variation/AAV/dialects |
| Class 9: | Language developments, language/learning disorders, and 2nd language acquisition  
Essential Questions:  
- How do you differentiate between language/learning disorders and second language learning? | D2L  
In class reading:  
*The 5 Minute Linguist* (2012) Chp. 32 & 33 | Discussion Group #3 |
| Class 10: | History of Bilingual Education & Policy  
Essential Questions:  
- What are the origins and history of bilingual education in the US?  
- How has policy affected dual language instruction? | Course text:  
D2L  
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<td><strong>Theory into Practice</strong></td>
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| Class 11: | ELLs in ECE classrooms: Differentiation & inclusion; Dual language instruction programs.  
Essential Questions:  
- How do we meet the individual needs of ELLs in an era of differentiation and inclusion?  
- How are home languages maintained?  
- What is dual language programming? | Course text:  
D2L  
Quiz 3: SLA and bilingual ed. |
| Class 12: | Observing learning & Teaching in the ECE & WIDA standards  
Essential Questions:  
- How can observation inform personal instruction?  
- What are the WIDA/ESL standards? How do these standards affect practice? | Course text:  
D2L  
- Pandey, A.. (2012) Chp 8  
In class reading:  
- Pandey, A (2012) Chp. 9 | Discussion Group #5  
DUE: Classroom Observation Part Two |
| Class 13: | Interlanguage and the perception of errors; research supported instructional strategies.  
Essential Questions:  
- What’s interlanguage and what is the difference between an error and the natural progression of oral and written language?  
- How should mainstream instruction be modified for ELLs?  
- What L1 & L2 instructional strategies are supported by sound research? | Course text:  
D2L  
DUE: Reflection paper 4: TBA |
| Class 14: | Language Objectives and language policy  
Essential Questions:  
- What’s the difference between language and content obj.?  
- What are language policies and how do they affect programming? | D2L  
- Regalla, M. (2012)  
| Class 15: | Final Exam | | |