



EDUC 680: How Children in Developing Countries Learn to Read Summer 2017, Online Class

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Purpose of the Course

The purpose of this online course is to introduce you to the ways in which children learn how to read in the early years. The goal is to prepare you to:

- Develop an understanding of how children acquire and improve reading skills
- Consider the factors that support learning
- Support the rationale for investing in early grade reading
- Consider the importance of language in learning how to read
- Find, read and analyze early grade reading initiatives that have happened in your country or region
- Engage with practitioners from around the world who are or will be involved in early grade reading initiatives
- Understand assessments of early grade reading including the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)
- Articulate the ways in which learning how to read can be complemented by learning how to write
- Design a country profile for early grade reading

The course will be relevant to those interested in early grade reading for both international and U.S.-based contexts.

Course objectives:

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Articulate why reading is important for human development;
2. Explain the research and theory behind learning in general;
3. Explain how children learn the skill of reading, and the role of teachers and direct instruction in reading acquisition;
4. Describe how you would plan and implement action research;
5. Describe critical factors for reading acquisition in a multi-lingual context, including the difference in strategies needed for teaching reading in the first (L1) and second (L2) languages;
6. Describe how a curriculum and materials can support early grade reading; and
7. Create and present an analysis for applying this knowledge to your own context and work.

Topics and Methodology

The course will cover the following modules:

1. What is learning?
2. Making the case for investment in early grade reading
3. Language issues
4. Reading acquisition: Introduction and Print Skills (Phonemic Awareness and Phonics)
5. Reading acquisition: Meaning-making skills (Vocabulary, Fluency and Comprehension)
6. Improving reading skills: Component skills and practice
7. Improving reading skills: Writing and Reading
8. Assessing reading skills: Assessment for learning
9. Assessing reading skills: Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)
10. Improving reading skills: Time on task
11. Special topics in early grade reading

This course will combine elements of both theory and practice and in doing so will require participants to read literature, review films, and engage in a mix of individual and small group activities. Our readings will be drawn from both scholarly journals and in-depth reports on learning, reading, writing and assessment. Individual and group work will invite you to use the readings to reflect upon, write and share the evolution of your thinking throughout the duration of the course.

Action Research is integrated into this course. By practicing this methodology, you will develop a valuable skill and process that will support your decisions on how early grade reading initiatives can be implemented in a specific context. This methodology will require you to seek out information beyond what has been assigned in the course, conduct analyses, design action plans, test your plans, and then reflect upon and revise those plans. This process will occur multiple times during different timeframes but the cycle of inquiry will remain the same.

This is an online course and includes both synchronous and asynchronous interaction. Students will primarily learn from the course materials provided online in modules, supplemented by course units that will emphasize, illustrate and/or demonstrate key principles from the key topics. Students will also engage in interactive learning through discussion of course-related topics, group work and the completion of learning exercises. Reflective written assignments will help students to personalize the material and see its relevance to their lives. Group work will be decided upon and scheduled early on in order to align schedules and provide advance planning.

This online course structure is different in many ways from a course in a traditional classroom context, but most students find it to be an excellent way to learn. Online courses have certain advantages over classroom courses (e.g., flexibility), but there are some disadvantages as well (such as the need to be a self-starter and self-motivated). Taking an online course is therefore not an ideal option for everyone. Consider carefully whether this course is a good fit for your needs and abilities. There are some documents in the folder entitled “Guidelines and Considerations” that may be able to help you assess whether this class is a good fit for you.

The assignments are cumulative but are divided up into smaller assignments throughout the course. The final project is a case study of a particular context that includes the relevant considerations for early grade reading initiatives as well as recommendations for next steps (for example, a review of early grade reading initiatives in Nepal, bilingual-intercultural education and its implications for early grade reading in Guatemala, issues surrounding the transition from L1 to L2 in Mali, etc.)

I will assess each individual assignment, providing feedback that should inform your final project. The course is graded.

Course Requirements

This course requires the active participation of all class members: reading and sharing feedback, helping others develop their ideas, and expressing your own thoughts in class activities and small-group work.

- In order to take this course, you should have at least 7 hours per week dedicated for reading, writing and discussion. For your participation to be helpful to everyone, it is essential that you follow the course schedule and complete the required readings by the date required.
- Please let me know in advance if you will be traveling or expect to be unavailable for an extended period of time. I expect you to communicate with classmates and small group members so as to minimize the impact of your absence.
- I will be available via email for any questions you may have about the course and will try to respond within 48 hours.
- All assignments are due when indicated. You should review all assignments at the beginning of the class to ensure that you allow enough time for each. Some assignments require you to contact people and so you should schedule these conversations in advance of these assignments.
- You will be graded for this course.

Assignments and Grading

1. Weekly Participation: completion of reflections on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to read • Connecting Sounds and Symbols • Comprehension • Writing and reading • Policies and Instructional Time 	30 points
2. First Paper: Country Context Write a 2-page overview of the facts and issues related to early grade reading in your country or context	10 points
3. Second Paper: Write a 2-page analysis of how to improve component reading skills in your context	10 points
4. Third Paper: Write a 2-page paper about assessing reading skills in classrooms and through EGRA in your context	10 points
5. Final Assignment: To be decided....	40 points
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS	
Points	Grade
94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
0-72	F

ALL PAPERS SHOULD BE SINGLE-SPACED and SUBMITTED through the appropriate link on the BLACKBOARD WEBSITE. I will not accept e-mailed or paper copies of your assignments.

Incompletes

Students who are unable to complete course requirements within the allotted time because of severe medical or personal problems may request a grade of Incomplete from me **by August 5, 2017**. Normally, incomplete grades are warranted only if a student is passing the course at the time of the request and if the course requirements can be completed by the end of the following semester (December 5, 2017). If I grant you an incomplete, I will require, by August 5, 2017, a one-page write-up from you including

1. A description of the work that remains to be completed,
2. A description of how you intend to complete the unfinished work, and
3. The date by which the work is to be completed.

Accommodation Statement

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services, you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements. You can get more information on how to access Disability Services at <http://www.umass.edu/disability/>

Academic Honesty Statement

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent. Follow the link below for detailed information on the Academic Honesty Policy

http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/

References for Course Readings

Abadzi, H. (2007). *Absenteeism and beyond: Instructional time loss and consequences*. Washington: World Bank.

Benson, C. (2004) *The importance of mother-tongue based schooling for educational quality*. (Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005, The Quality Imperative). Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001466/146632e.pdf>

Bransford, J.D, Brown, A.L., & Cocking, R.R. (2000). How children learn. In J.D. Bransford, A.L. Brown, & R.R. Cocking (Eds.), *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience and school* (pp. 79-113). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Chard, D.J., Pikulski, J.J. & Templeton, S. (2000). *From phonemic awareness to fluency: Effective decoding instruction in a research-based reading program*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin. Retrieved from http://www.eduplace.com/state/author/chard_pik_temp.pdf

- Combs, B. (2012). *Assessing and addressing literacy needs: Cases and instructional strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Florez, M. & Sammons, P. (2013) *Assessment for learning: effects and impact*. Oxford University: CfBT Education Trust.
- Gove, A., & P. Cvelich. (2011). *Early reading: Igniting education for all (Revised edition)*. (Report by the Early Grade Learning Community of Practice). Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute.
- Gove, A., & Wetterberg, A. (2011). The early grade reading assessment: An introduction. In A. Gove, A. & A. Wetterberg, (Eds.) *The Early Grade Reading Assessment: Applications and Interventions to Improve Basic Literacy*(pp. 1-38). Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International. Retrieved from <http://www.rti.org/pubs/bk-0007-1109-wetterberg.pdf>
- Graham, S., & Hebert, M. A. (2010). *Writing to read: Evidence for how writing can improve reading*. (A Carnegie Corporation Time to Act Report). Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- International Reading Association and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2013). *The Reading/Writing Connection*, Retrieved from http://www.reading.org/Libraries/resources/reading-writingconnection_final.pdf
- Learning Point Associates. (2004). *A closer look at the five essential components of effective reading instruction: A review of scientifically-based reading research for teachers*. Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates.
- Penner-Wilger, M. (2008) *Reading fluency: A bridge from decoding and comprehension*. Ottawa, Canada: AutoSkill. Retrieved from https://eps.schoolspecialty.com/EPS/media/Site-Resources/Downloads/research-papers/other/Fluency_Research.pdf?ext=.pdf
- Pikulski, J.J. & Chard, D.J. (2005), Fluency: Bridge between decoding and reading comprehension. *The Reading Teacher*, 58(6), 510-519.
- Roskos, K., Strickland, D., Haase, J., & Malik, S. (2009). *First principles for early grades reading programs in developing countries*. Washington, D.C.: USAID. Retrieved from http://www.reading.org/Libraries/association-documents/EarlyGradesToolkit_Final.pdf
- Sørensen, T. B. Review of Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). Retrieved on May 1, 2017 from: <http://download.ei-ie.org/Docs/WebDepot/EGRA%20note%2015%20July%202015.pdf>
- Trudell, B. (2009) Local language literacy and sustainable development in Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29(1), 73-79.

	Date and Focus of Class	Readings to be completed	Assignments Due
1	Week One: May 22, 2017 <u>Module One</u> Course Overview, Introductions	Full Syllabus Comings, J.P. (2014). An evidence-based model for early-grade reading programmes.	Introduce yourself online & Post reflections about the Comings reading.
2	Week Two: May 29, 2017 <u>Module Two</u> What is Learning?	How Children Learn, Chapter 4, pp. 79-113 Handout: The Brain and Learning	Post reflections on Learning to Read
3	Week Three: June 05, 2017 <u>Module Three</u> Making the case for investment in early grade reading	Gove, A. & P. Cvelich. Early Reading: Igniting Education for All. pp. 1-57 UNESCO (2011), <i>Education Counts</i>	Assignment (Due Friday, June 9): First paper: Country Context
4	Week Four: June 12, 2017 <u>Module Four</u> Language of Instruction	Altinyelken, H.K., Moorcroft, S., and Van der Draai, H. (2014). The dilemmas and complexities of implementing language in education policies: Perspectives from urban and rural Uganda. Benson, C. The Importance of Mother-Tongue based schooling for Educational Quality. pp. 1-25 Stone, R. Mother tongue instruction – A summary of the benefits	Post reflections on Force Field Analysis
5	Week Five: June 19, 2017 <u>Module Five: Unit 1</u> Reading Acquisition: Introduction and Print Skills	Chard, D.J., Pikulski, J.J. & Templeton, S. From Phonemic Awareness to Fluency: Effective Decoding Instruction in a Research-based Reading Program. pp. 1-12 Learning Point Associates (2004). A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers. (p. 1-16 only)	Post reflections on Connecting Sounds and Symbols
6	Week Six: June 26, 2017 <u>Module Five: Unit 2</u> Reading Acquisition: Meaning Making Skills	Learning Point Associates (2004). A Closer Look at the Five Essential Components of Effective Reading Instruction: A Review of Scientifically Based Reading Research for Teachers. (p. 17-end) Rasinkski, T. (2004). Creating fluent readers.	Post reflections on Comprehension

		Mudzielwana, N.P. (2013) Research-based teaching comprehension strategies: Bridging the gap.	
7	Week Seven: July 03, 2017 <u>Module Six: Unit 1</u> Improving Reading Skills: Component Skills and Practice	Roskos, K., Strickland, D., Haase, J., & Malik, S. First Principles for Early Grades Reading Programs in Developing Countries. pp. 1-23 Dubeck, M.M., Jukes, M.C.H., Okello, G. (2012) Early primary literacy instruction in Kenya. Reading Programme – Karnakata Learning Partnership OR Banerji, R., Chavan, M. and Rane, U. (2004). Learning to Read.	Assignment (due Friday, July 7): Second paper: How to Improve Reading Skills
8	Week Eight: July 10 21, 2017 <u>Module Six: Unit 2</u> Improving Reading Skills: Writing and Reading	International Reading Association and NICHD. The Reading/Writing Connection, pp. 1-11 Graham, S., & Hebert, M. A. Writing to read: Evidence for how writing can improve reading. pp. 1-26	Post reflections on Writing and Reading
9	Week Nine: July 17, 2017 <u>Module Seven: Unit 1</u> Assessing Reading Skills: Assessment for Learning	Florez, M. & Sammons, P. Assessment for Learning: Effects and Impact. pp. 1-27	Post reflections on classroom assessment
10	Week Ten: July 24, 2017 <u>Module Seven: Unit 2</u> Assessing Reading Skills: Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)	Gove, A. & Wetterberg, A. Chapter 1, The Early Grade Reading Assessment: An Introduction, pp. 1-38. Sørensen, T. B. Review of Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Optional* - The EGRA Toolkit – Second Edition.	Assignment (due Friday, July 28): Third Paper: Assessing Reading Skills and EGRA in Your Context
11	Week Eleven: Jul 31, 2017 <u>Module Six: Unit 3</u> Improving Reading Skills: Time on Task	Abadzi, H. Absenteeism and Beyond: Instructional Time Loss and Consequences. pp. 1-83	Post reflections on Official Policies and Actual Instructional Time

<p>12</p>	<p>Week Twelve: August 07, 2017</p> <p><u>Module Eight</u></p> <p>Special Topics in Early Grade Reading</p>	<p>Lecture by Dr. Stanislas Dehaene on ‘Reading the Brain”</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSy685vNqYk</p> <p>JPAL at MIT Video series on Early Grade Reading</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5Dr5MK6NSso7hBRoW7CwzfdqBvegAkWD</p>	<p>Assignment (due Friday, August 14):</p> <p>Final Assignment:</p> <p>Analysis of and recommendations for improving how children learn to read in your context - TBD</p>
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