



**EDUC 687R: Role of Community and Family in Supporting Early Grade Reading
Spring 2017, Online Course
3 Credits**

Instructor: Cristine Smith, Associate Professor
Furcolo Hall N160
University of Massachusetts, Amherst 01003
(413) 545-2731
E-mail: cristine@educ.umass.edu

Purpose of the Course

The purpose of this course is to help you learn about research and evidence-based strategies to improve community and family participation in supporting early grade reading. The goal is to enable you to use research to make a plan for how the early grade reading project or system in your country can improve or extend its efforts to engage community members and families to support the local school and young children's efforts to read fluently and with full comprehension by the end of primary school.

Course objectives:

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

- Explain the importance of community and family engagement in supporting early grade reading in and out of school;
- State how to identify stakeholders such as parents and siblings, PTA members, local leaders and other community members who can play a role in supporting early grade reading;
- Explain evidence-based models of effective community and school relationships in developing countries;
- Identify the factors that can influence community or family's involvement in supporting early grade reading in the context or setting within which you work;
- State evidence-based strategies for assessing and influencing family and community members' beliefs about reading acquisition;
- Describe how to employ social marketing approaches to increase community members' and families' motivation to support all children's acquisition of reading;
- Articulate strategies for working with multiple donors in one community or school; and

- Demonstrate a plan for using evidence-based strategies to increase community and family involvement in support of early grade reading in the context or project within which you work.

Topics and Methodology

The course will cover the following topics:

1. The rationale for family and community involvement in supporting early grade reading
2. Issues of equity in family and community support for all children to read
3. Models of community, family and school interaction around reading
4. Theories of social marketing and their applicability to increasing community and family support for reading
5. Assessing strengths, needs and beliefs of community stakeholders and families about children's reading
6. Evidence-based strategies for engaging the **family** in support of children's reading
7. Evidence-based strategies for engaging the **community** in support of children's reading
8. Public-private partnerships to support early grade reading success
9. Components of a plan for piloting and scaling up evidence-based strategies for community and family support of children's reading

This course will combine elements of both theory and practice. We will draw our readings from both scholarly journals and in-depth reports on community and family engagement in reading acquisition. You will use the readings, video lectures and other presentations, and class online discussions 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 to integrate strategies to involve community and family in supporting children's reading 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 that includes only asynchronous interaction. Students will primarily learn from the course materials provided online that will emphasize, illustrate and/or demonstrate principles about the key topics. Students will also engage in interactive learning through discussion of course-related topics and the completion of learning exercises. Reflective written assignments will help students to personalize the material and see its relevance to their lives and work. I will provide feedback on each assignment. The final project is a plan for using evidence-based strategies for community and family involvement in reading in your own context.

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.

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 online discussion.

- 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 can be reached by e-mail at any time to answer questions, discuss concerns, or clarify issues that arise. Please allow 24-36 hours for me to return your email. My email is listed at the bottom of each page of this syllabus and is also listed on the home page of the Blackboard course website.
- 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.

Assignments and Grading

1. Full participation in online discussions throughout the course	20 points
2. Write a 3-page single-spaced paper where you analyze the relevant research on the rationale for and strategies to engage families and communities in supporting children’s reading acquisition. DUE MARCH 6, 2017	25 points
3. Write a 3-page single-spaced action research paper describing your findings from visit(s) to a community to see their current or assess their potential involvement in supporting early grade reading. DUE MARCH 27, 2017	25 points

4. Final project: Create a plan for piloting and/or scaling up evidence-based strategies for increasing community and family support of children’s reading in your project or context. DUE APRIL 29, 2017	30 points
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS	100
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 OR PRODUCTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED through the appropriate link on the BLACKBOARD WEBSITE. I will not accept e-mailed 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 the tenth week of the course**. 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. If I grant you an incomplete, I will require, by the tenth week of the course, 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

The Academic Honesty Policy was established to ensure that the learning environment at the university is honest and fair. The policy is designed to provide faculty and students with options for handling incidents. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

- Cheating - intentional use or attempted use of trickery or deception in one's academic work
- Fabrication - intentional falsification and/or invention of any information or citation
- Plagiarism - knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own work
- Facilitating dishonesty - knowingly helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty

The Academic Honesty Board handles all cases of academic dishonesty on campus. Formal definitions of academic dishonesty, examples of various forms of dishonesty, and the procedures which faculty must follow to penalize dishonesty are contained in the Academic Honesty Policy. There are two main pathways for resolving cases where dishonesty is suspected: the informal resolution and the formal charge. Both these paths require that the faculty member first inform the student of the concern and offer a meeting. See <http://umass.edu/honesty>

Week	Date and Focus of Class	Readings to be completed	Assignments Due
1	January 23, 2017 Introduction The importance of family and community involvement in early grade reading	Full Syllabus Evans, M.D.R., Kelley, J., Sikora, J., and Treiman, D. (2010). Family scholarly culture and educational success: Books and schooling in 27 nations. <i>Research in Social Stratification and Mobility</i> , 28(2): 171-197. Ochoa, C. (2012). <i>Technical Session 2: Community Involvement and Parental Support</i> (presentation). Save the Children DCSF. (2008). <i>The Impact of Parental Involvement on Children's Education</i> . Nottingham, UK: DCSF Publications, pp. 1-12.	Do readings Do one post for Discussion Forum (by Friday night) and respond to two other people's posts (by Sunday night) Watch video lecture or PowerPoint (if posted)
2	January 30, 2017 The importance of family and community involvement in early grade reading	Cao, Y., Ramesh, A., Menendez, A., & Dayaratna, V. (2014). <i>Out-of-School Parental and Community Involvement Interventions: Literature Review</i> . Washington, D.C.: USAID. Save the Children International. (2016). <i>Lessons in Literacy: 8 principles to ensure every last child can read</i> . London, UK: Save the Children International. (Read Principle 2 and Principle 6.) Chowa, G.A.N., Masa, R.D., and Tucker, J. (2013). <i>Parental Involvement's Effects on Academic Performance: Evidence from the YouthSave Ghana Experiment</i> . Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina, CSD Working Papers N. 13-15	Do readings Do one post for Discussion Forum (by Friday night) and respond to two other people's posts (by Sunday night) Watch video lecture or PowerPoint (if posted)
3	February 6, 2017	Day, E. E., MacNeil, D. J., & Bredenberg, K. E. (2011). <i>First</i>	Do readings

	Issues of equity in helping all children read	<i>Principles: Designing effective education programs for underserved populations.</i> Washington, DC: AIR, pp. 1-32. (Read and pay attention to information about community and family participation.)	Do one post for Discussion Forum (by Friday night) and respond to two other people's posts (by Sunday night) Watch video lecture or PowerPoint (if posted)
4	February 13, 2017 Theories of behavioral change and social marketing	Schmidt, K. (2014). <i>Applying Lessons from Behavior Change Communications to the Design of an Intervention Promoting Family and Community Support for Learning to Read.</i> Washington, D.C.: USAID. Cao, Y., Ramesh, A., Saffitz, G., Hosein, E., Menendez, Al., Dayaratna, V., Schmidt, K., and DeStefano, J. (2014). <i>Designing Behavior Change Communication Interventions in Education: A Practitioner's Guide.</i> Washington, D.C.: USAID.	Do readings Do one post for Discussion Forum (by Friday night) and respond to two other people's posts (by Sunday night) Watch video lecture or PowerPoint (if posted)
5	February 20, 2017 Research on practices for involving community and family	Menendez, A. (2015). <i>Parental and Community Involvement in Early Grade Reading: A Literature Review</i> (PowerPoint). Washington, DC: USAID. Friedlander, E. & Goldenberg, C. (eds.)(2016). <i>Literacy Boost in Rwanda: Impact Evaluation of a Two-Year Randomized Control Trial.</i> Stanford, CA: Stanford University. (READ ONLY Exec. Summary, Chapt 2 sections 2.5 and 2.6, Chapter 7, and Chapter 8) Kim, Y.-S. G., Boyle, H. N., Zuilkowski, S. S., & Nakamura, P. (2016). <i>Landscape Report on Early Grade Literacy.</i> Washington, D.C.:	Do readings Do one post for Discussion Forum (by Friday night) and respond to two other people's posts (by Sunday night) Watch video lecture or PowerPoint (if posted)

		USAID. (Read Chapter 4 Section C, pp. 57-59).	
6	February 27, 2017 Assessing strengths, needs and beliefs of family and community stakeholders	Watch video lecture	Write a 3-page paper where you summarize and analyze the relevant research on strategies to engage communities and families in supporting children's reading acquisition. DUE MARCH 6, 2017
7	March 6, 2017 Models of community, family and school interaction around reading	Dowd, A.J., O'Donnell, N., Ochoa, C., and Borisova, I. (2010). <i>Community Strategies for Promoting Literacy</i> . Save the Children US. Epstein, J.L. (n.d.) <i>Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement</i> . UNICEF.org	Do readings Do one post for Discussion Forum (by Friday night) and respond to two other people's posts (by Sunday night) Watch video lecture or PowerPoint (if posted)
8	March 13, 2017 Evidence-based strategies for engaging the community in support of children's reading	Trudell, B. & Ndunde, J. (2015). <i>Making Space for Local Knowledge: Community-based Literature and Internationalized Education</i> . Nairobi, Kenya: SIL Africa. Schmidt, K., DeStefano, J., and Cummings, S. (2016). <i>Senegal Behavior Change Communication Research: Kaolack Endline Report</i> . Washington, D.C.: USAID.	Do readings Do one post for Discussion Forum (by Friday night) and respond to two other people's posts (by Sunday night) Watch video lecture or PowerPoint (if posted)
9	March 20, 2017 Evidence-based strategies for engaging the family in support of children's reading	<i>Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. Innovation brief: Engaging Parents in Boosting Children's Early Language and Brain Development</i> , pp. 1-8. Banerji, R., Berry, J., and Shotland,	Write a 3-page action research paper describing your findings from visit(s) to a community to see their current or assess their potential involvement in

		M. (2015). <i>The Impact of Mother Literacy and Participation Programs: Evidence from a Randomized Evaluation in India</i> . Poverty Action Lab.	supporting early grade reading. DUE MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2017 Do readings Watch video lecture or PowerPoint (if posted)
10	March 27, 2017 More Examples	EDC. (2015). <i>Youth Volunteers Can Contribute to Significant Reading Gains: Evidence from the HYVALL project in Senegal</i> . Newton, MA: EDC. EDC. (n.d.). <i>The Community School Alliances Project: Advancing the State of the Art of Community Participation in Basic Education</i> . Newton, MA: EDC. Beyond Access: <i>Hackathon Guide and Reading Camp</i> infographics	Do readings Do one post for Discussion Forum (by Friday night) and respond to two other people's posts (by Sunday night) Watch video lecture or PowerPoint (if posted)
11	April 3, 2017 Components of a plan for increasing or improving Community and family involvement in supporting children's reading	TO BE ASSIGNED	Watch video lecture Do one post for Discussion Forum (by Friday night) and respond to two other people's posts (by Sunday night)
12	April 10, 2017 Applying lessons learned to your own context	No readings	Watch video lecture or PowerPoint (if posted) Final project: Create a plan for piloting and/or scaling up evidence-based strategies for increasing community and family support of children's reading in your project or context. DUE APRIL 29, 2017