

**EDUC 687T: Materials and Technology for Early Grade Reading  
Fall 2018, Online Course**

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**Purpose of the Course**

The purpose of this course is to help you develop a critical appreciation of the system of developing material resources to support reading. The goal is to enable you to:

- Explain the continuum of materials and technology appropriate for supporting children's reading acquisition.
- Describe effective features of textbooks, classroom teaching/learning materials, teachers' guides, coaching and mentoring materials, supervision and monitoring materials, and materials for community and family support of reading.
- Design materials, considering content, readability, cost and logistic aspects as well as explain strategies for field testing and publishing materials.
- Analyze distribution issues.
- Articulate how policy and systems can be aligned for supporting continuous use and improvement of materials and technology for early grade reading.

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

**Course objectives**

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

- Define what technology and material means for early grade reading.
- Identify the materials and resources needed to support children's reading acquisition.
- Articulate how policy and systems can be aligned for supporting continuous use and improvement of materials and technology for early grade reading.
- Design materials considering technical, contextual, cost, and logistic aspects.
- Design materials using locally available resources.
- Explain the importance of field testing materials.
- Analyze and suggest ways to improve the publication process of materials.
- Identify production and distribution challenges and suggest ways to address them.

## Topics and Methodology

The course will cover the following topics:

1. What are materials? What is technology?
2. Design, publication, distribution, and use of:
  - a. textbooks
  - b. classroom teaching and learning materials (including leveled readers, games, posters, etc.)
  - c. teachers' guides and scripts
  - d. materials/technology for coaching and mentoring of teachers (including distance education and support materials)
  - e. supervision and monitoring materials/technology
  - f. materials for community and family use to support children's reading
3. Policy and systems for materials and technology
4. Assessing materials
5. Pros and cons of digital technology
6. Equity and materials and technology

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 reading, materials and technology. 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 the system of material and technology can be analyzed and improved for promoting better early grade 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, asynchronous course. 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. Case-study driven 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.

### 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 us know** in advance if you will be traveling or expect to be unavailable for an extended period of time. We expect you to communicate with classmates and small group members so as to minimize the impact of your absence.
- 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

Assignment	Pts.
1. Participation in discussions	25
2. <b>Paper #1, due Week 5:</b> 2-page single-spaced paper, describing the centrally-produced early-grade reading materials/technology used to support children’s reading in your country or context.	20
3. <b>Paper #2, due week 9:</b> 2-page single-spaced paper, describing central and/or regional or local materials/technology relating to the development of: 1-teachers’ guides and scripts; 2-teacher coaching and mentoring activities; and 3-the assessment, supervision and monitoring of materials and technology.	20
4. <b>Final paper/product, due December 11, 2018:</b> 3-5-page single-spaced paper describing the findings of the Action Research project about materials/technology that you will set in motion during Week 3 of this course.	35
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS</b>	<b>100</b>
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.** We will not accept e-mailed or paper copies of your assignments.

**Assignment Descriptions:**

**Your first paper #1, due Friday, October 5, Week 5:** Single-spaced paper, describing the centrally-produced early-grade reading materials/technology used to support children’s reading in your country or context in the way of: 1) textbooks; 2) classroom teaching and learning materials; 3) digital resources; 4) materials relevant to family and community. Do a strengths-and-needs analysis of the materials/technology.

The goal of this paper is to get you to consider ways the knowledge and skills addressed over the past four weeks apply or might apply to your work. Even if you are not actually involved with work that addresses textbooks, classroom materials, digital resources and/or family- and community-related materials, please consider ways each of these is or could be relevant to work you are doing, have done, or might do, concluding with an overall assessment of the status of centrally-developed materials.

You will be assigned a mentor who will be available to help if you have difficulty seeing the connections we're asking you to make.

**Your second paper #2, due on Friday, November 2, Week 9:** 2-page single-spaced paper, describing central and/or regional or local materials/technology relating to the development of: 1) teachers’ guides and scripts; 2) teacher coaching and mentoring activities; and 3) the assessment, supervision and monitoring of materials and technology. Do a strengths-and-needs analysis of initiative(s), including recommendations from the literature for initiatives that might be implemented where none exist.

**Final assignment, due Monday, December 10** 3-5-page single-spaced paper describing the findings of the Action Research project about materials/technology that you will set in motion during Week 3 of this course.

Action Research is described as “a disciplined inquiry done by [an individual] with the intent that the research will inform and change his or her practices in the future. This research is carried out within the context of the [practitioner’s] environment—that is, with [those with whom] the [practitioner] works—on questions that deal with educational matters at hand. Implicit in the term action research is the idea that [practitioners] will begin a cycle of posing questions, gathering data, reflection, and deciding on a course of action.” (Ferrance, E. (2000). *Action Research*. Northeast and Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University.)

Your choice of an Action Research topic and question (which, of course, may evolve over the course of the research) about materials will depend entirely on your circumstances.

- If you are working in a supervisory capacity in a school or school system, for example, you may want to assess the effectiveness of various ways of generating interest in specific materials/technology among subordinates (possible Action Research question: *What do teachers need to know about new materials in order to be willing to consider integrating them into their work?*)
- If you are working in a classroom, you may want to assess the impact of various materials/technology on student learning (possible Action Research question: *In what ways to ICT materials improve student learning over “hard copy” materials?*)
- If you are not directly involved in an instructional setting, you might conceive of materials/technology that would be useful in a setting with which you are familiar, sharing your proposal with others familiar with the setting, and using your recommendations to modify the proposal.
- If you not directly involved in an instructional setting, you might also develop a vehicle by which to determine the effectiveness of materials/technology on your own learning.

Step 1, by Week 3 - Select and clarify an Action Research question, data to be collected, and methods for collecting and recording the data that you will study over the duration of the course.

Step 2, Weeks 3-11 - Collect and analyze data being collected, tentative conclusions, new data to be looked into, etc., sharing findings with colleagues and mentor.

Step 3, by December 11 - Submit paper.

Recognizing that this process can be complicated and even vexing, each student will work closely with one of the two instructors throughout the process, communicating by email and Skype as necessary.

### 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 us **by Week 10**. 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 (May 2019). If we grant you an incomplete, we will require, **by Week 10**, 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>

Wk	Date and Focus of Class	Readings to be completed	Assignments Due
1	SEPTEMBER 4, 2018  <b>Introduction</b> <b>What are materials?</b> <b>What is technology?</b>	Full Syllabus  Kumler, Todd J., Linden, Leigh L. (2011) <i>Improving reading skills by encouraging children to read in school: a randomized evaluation of the Sa Aklat Sisikat reading program in the Philippines</i> , Ama Baafrā Abeberese pp 1-4  Davidson, M. (2013). <i>Books that children can read: Decodable books and book leveling</i> . Washington, D.C.: USAID. Available at <a href="http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00JW1V.pdf">http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00JW1V.pdf</a>  USAID Egypt. (n.d.). <i>Early Grade Reading Textbook Analysis</i> . Girls Improved Learning Outcomes PP 6-7 ON THREE FACTORS FOR READABILITY	Discussion post  Watch video lecture: Overview of Course
<b>Topic 1: From the practitioner's point of view</b>			
2	SEPTEMBER 10, 2018  <b>Design, publication, distribution, and use of textbooks</b>	Sharp, D., Bransford, J. and Lee, T. (n.d.). <i>Launching Successful Readers: The Role of ICT in Early-Grade Literacy Success</i> . The Life Center. ( <a href="#">click here to access</a> )  Veriava, Faranaaz. (2015) <i>Why textbooks are a crucial part of every child's learning journey</i> <a href="https://theconversation.com/why-textbooks-are-a-crucial-part-of-every-childs-learning-journey-50252">https://theconversation.com/why-textbooks-are-a-crucial-part-of-every-childs-learning-journey-50252</a>  Global Education Monitoring Report (2016). Every child should have a textbook, Policy Paper #23. ( <a href="#">click here to access</a> )	Discussion post  Read Powerpoint on Design, Publication and Use of Textbooks
3	SEPTEMBER 17, 2018  <b>Design, publication, distribution, and use of classroom teaching and learning materials (including leveled</b>	USAID. (2014). <i>Best Practices for Developing Supplementary Reading Materials</i> . Washington, D.C.: USAID Available at: <a href="http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00JV69.pdf">http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00JV69.pdf</a>	Action Research Project topic due.  Read PowerPoint on Materials and Tech for Classroom/Supplementary Materials

	<b>readers, games, posters, etc.) PART I: UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES</b>		
<b>4</b>	SEPTEMBER 24, 2018  <b>Design, publication, distribution, and use of classroom teaching and learning materials (including leveled readers, games, posters, etc.) PART II: Digital resources</b>	Piper, B., Jepkemei, E., Kwayumba, D., Kibukho, K. (2015). Kenya's ICT Policy in Practice: The Effectiveness of Tablets and E-Readers in Improving Student Outcomes. <i>Forum for International Research in Education</i> , 2(1): 3-18.  Pouzevara, S., Mekhael, S.W., and Darcy, M. (2014). Planning and Evaluating ICT in Education Programs Using the Four Dimensions of Sustainability: A Program Evaluation from Egypt. <i>International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology</i> , 10(2): 120-141.	Discussion post and power point.
<b>5</b>	OCTOBER 1, 2018  <b>Design, publication, distribution, and use of materials for community and family use to support children's reading</b>	Trudell, B. & Ndunde, J. (2015). <i>Making Space for Local Knowledge: Community-based Literature and Internationalized Education</i> . Nairobi, Kenya: SIL Africa.  Hanemann, U., McCaffery, J., Newell-Jones, K., and Scarpino, C. (2017) <i>Learning together across generations: Guidelines for Family Literacy and Learning Programs</i> . UNESCO. PP 12-17 + 93-98	<b>Paper # 1 due Friday October 5</b>
<b>Topic II: From the supervisor's point of view</b>			
<b>6</b>	OCTOBER 8, 2018  <b>Design, publication, distribution, and use of teachers' guides and scripts</b>	RTI. (2014). <i>USAID/Kenya Primary Math and Reading (PRIMR) Initiative: Final Report</i> . Read pp. 11-18.  Anderson, Jenny. (2018) <i>The Controversial Silicon-Valley</i>	Read PowerPoint Summary: Materials and Tech for Scripted Lessons and Teacher Guides



		Funded Quest to Educate the World's Poorest Kids <a href="https://qz.com/1179738/bridge-school/">https://qz.com/1179738/bridge-school/</a>	
7	OCTOBER 15, 2018 <b>Design, publication, distribution, and use of materials/ technology for coaching and mentoring of teachers (including distance education and support materials)</b>	Burns, M. and Lawrie, J. (Eds.). (2015). <i>Where It's Needed Most: Quality Professional Development for All Teachers</i> . New York, NY: Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies. Read ONLY Recommendation 3 & 4 and Recommendation 7. Piper, B. (2015). Powerpoint on PRIMR project in Kenya: Coaching tools.	
8	October 22, 2018 <b>Assessing materials</b>	Marinelli, C.V., Martelli, M., Praphamontripong, P., Zocolotti, P., and Abadzi, H. (n.d.) <i>Visual and linguistic factors in literacy acquisition: Instructional implications for beginning readers in low-income countries</i> . Washington, D.C.: Global Partnership for Education. PP 1-8 & skim for relevant sections related to assessing materials and areas of general interest.  USAID Egypt. (n.d.). <i>Early Grade Reading Textbook Analysis</i> . Girls Improved Learning Outcomes. Already read pp 6-9; read the rest.  Pallangyo, A. (2016). <i>Developing Quality Books for Every Child</i> . USAID: Global Reading Network.	Discussion post and power point
9	OCTOBER 29, 2018 <b>Design, publication, distribution, and use of supervision and monitoring materials/ technology</b>	<i>A Landscape Analysis of the Global Literacy Sector. (2016). Results for Development</i> . Skim, paying attention to charts showing international programs and their approaches pp 7-10, Regional literacy initiatives pp. 18-19, National 23-28. Key Issues and	No discussion this week  <b>Paper # 2 due Friday, November 2, 2018</b>

		<p>Best Practices, emerging evidence, 33-40.  <a href="https://www.r4d.org/wp-content/uploads/R4D_Project-Literacy-Landscape-Analysis.pdf">https://www.r4d.org/wp-content/uploads/R4D_Project-Literacy-Landscape-Analysis.pdf</a></p> <p><i>Monitoring and Evaluation of ICT in Education Projects: A Handbook for Developing Countries</i> (2005) Infordev.org  Read Executive Summary and Chapter 1, pp. 11-20  <a href="http://www.infodev.org/infodev-files/resource/InfodevDocuments_9.pdf">http://www.infodev.org/infodev-files/resource/InfodevDocuments_9.pdf</a></p>	
<b>Topic III: From the policy-maker's point of view</b>			
<b>10</b>	<p>NOVEMBER 5, 2018</p> <p><b>Equity and materials and technology</b></p>	<p>Rose, P. and Alcott, B. (2015). <i>How can education systems become equitable by 2030?</i> DFID think pieces - Learning and equity. UK: Health &amp; Education Advice &amp; Resource Team (HEART).</p> <p>Burde, D. (2014). <i>Schools for conflict or for peace in Afghanistan</i>. New York: Columbia University Press, PP. 55-57, 57-88.</p>	<p>Discussion post  And power point</p>
<b>11</b>	<p>NOVEMBER 12, 2018</p> <p><b>Policies and Systems relevant to Materials and Technology</b></p>	<p>Fredericksen, B. and Sukhdeep, B. (2015). <i>Getting Textbooks to Every child in Sub-Saharan Africa: Strategies for Addressing the High Cost and Low Availability Problem</i>. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank Group. Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9, pp. 53-106.</p>	<p>Discussion post and power point</p>
<b>12</b>	<p>NOVEMBER 19, 2018</p> <p><b>Wrapping Up</b></p>	<p>No readings or discussion: Work on final assignment</p>	<p><b>Final assignment due Monday, December 10.</b></p>