BILITERACY AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT (TED 6301)
Teaching, Learning and Culture
The University of Texas at El Paso
Spring 2014

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Class meets: Wed 5:30-8:20, EDUC 100
Office hrs: Wed, 3:00-5:00 (and by appt.)
EDUC 805

COURSE DESCRIPTION

From the Graduate Catalog: Analysis of scholarly issues with a focus on the role of language acquisition
in the academic development of the bilingual/bicultural student. Examines language beyond the practice
of signification and looks at the subjectivities of language with implications for curriculum and
instruction. Centers on the role of language as a mediator for learning and a powerful force in the
construction of meaning across curricular areas.

We explore biliteracy/bilingualism from an ecological perspective, i.e., its development occurs in a
historically, socially, ideologically specific context, as well as in the minds of biliterate learners. Literate
practices are situated so that participants’ beliefs, language use, forms of literacy, power relations, use of
mediational tools and resources all have an impact on biliterate development.

Drawing mainly on the research literature in sociolinguistics, linguistic anthropology and social
psychology, we explore the interaction between literacy development, disciplinary boundariea, and
learning/development. No prior background knowledge in either applied linguistics or bilingual
education is assumed, but students are expected to inquire about any background issues which are
unfamiliar. For that reason, the professor may recommend additional readings to individual students.

The course is organized to promote development of scholarly inquiry and writing. Through
dialogue and interaction with their peers and with the professor, we will engage with the literature in
literacy/biliteracy and academic development.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

You should be able to do the following things by the end of the course. You will be able to read and
synthesize the research literature in literacy/biliteracy and academic development. You will be able to read
and respond to your peers’ scholarly and reflective writing, and to improve your own academic writing
based on instructor and peer feedback. You will develop a topic on an aspect of biliteracy research that is
of current relevance to the academic development of bilingual/biliterate learners and that is connected to
your own scholarly interests. Based on this topic, you will (1) select and critique an empirical research
article and lead a class discussion; (2) make observations of bilingual/ biliterate interaction and make
conclusions about those interactions; and (3) write a final paper on biliterate development, and (4) and
create a poster for public presentation and critique.
ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Syntheses and Portfolio
The purpose of this ongoing assignment is to spark critical dialogue about the research literature through writing. You will turn in weekly syntheses of readings.

Features of the Weekly Reading Syntheses:
• Do not merely summarize the readings. However, make sure that you do provide a correct account of the main ideas of each article.
• Make connections. The task in the synthesis paper is not to summarize the assigned texts, but rather to establish links between the ideas in several texts. Identify a theme that cuts across readings, and show how multiple texts illustrate or speak to that theme.
• Include an introductory paragraph in which you tell the reader (1) the theme you are going to write about and (2) how you will structure the synthesis.
• Demonstrate how the themes are present across the readings. Don’t stop at listing the themes, but instead develop it by providing specific examples from the readings (short quotes and paraphrases of key ideas). Your own words matter here!
• Be selective in the details you include. You have very limited space, so your language choices must be succinct, concise, and clear.
• Make sure that your presentation of the author’s ideas are correct. However, be critical of all readings. For example, be sure to point out any weaknesses or areas of disagreement. Substantiate your claims, and be explicit about what you are basing them on (other readings, your personal experience, observation, media).
• Use APA to reference the literature. (Include a list of references cited at the end of the paper)
• Each synthesis should be approximately 500 words, excluding references.
• You may attend, summarize and synthesize two lectures related to literacy/ biliteracy to substitute for a reading assignment.

Synthesis portfolio:
1. Bring your synthesis to class on the day they are scheduled to be discussed. You may not turn in syntheses late for credit, but you should still include it in your portfolio.
2. Read and consider all comments on your syntheses. Please revise your work in response to these comments, to be included in your portfolio.
3. Keep your syntheses and comments in a portfolio. You will submit at the end of the semester (along with the synthesis below) at the end of the semester. You will include both versions of the syntheses.
4. Write a 500 to 750 word final synthesis paper summarizing your learning and what you still want to explore in the area of biliteracy and academic development.

Leading class discussion
Each week a different student will prepare to lead the class in discussion of one of the readings. Note that by leading a discussion I do not mean that you will providing a lecture or summarizing the readings. Instead, create opportunities for the whole class to join in the discussion.
Assume that everyone will have read the same article or chapter. Your task as discussion leader is to raise questions based on the reading and to promote discussion about them, rather than to summarize or outline the research. Handouts and/or Multimedia and multi-modal presentations are strongly encouraged—to the extent that they promote thoughtful discussion by the whole class.

**Observation assignment**

The purpose of this assignment is for you to gain hands-on experiences observing, documenting and analyzing bilingual/ biliterate interaction. You are not expected to have specialized linguistics preparation to do this assignment.

This experience will also help you to understand the methodological challenges in much of the research on bilingualism/ biliteracy which we read in this course.

You will observe a bilingual person in his/ her two languages as they participate in learning activities. You are encouraged to work in pairs for this assignment. If you are monolingual, you must work with a peer who is bilingual.

There are no stipulations as to the amount of time the observation will take place because that depends on the nature of the activity you observe. A learning activity can include, for instance, the person participating orally in a classroom activity, doing a homework task, explaining something to someone, solving a problem, learning how to play a game, learning how to do a new task at work, learning how to program a new alarm clock, etc.

You will make notes of your observations. You are not expected to audio or video record.

Find a person who you know and who understands that this assignment is something purely for learning purposes. You (or someone on your team) must know the non-English language. You can ask one of your fellow students, but do not ask one of your own students (consent). Obtain written verification that the person understands that no identifying information is to be used and that you will not share this information with anyone.

**What to observe**

Bilingual people tend to establish domains of use. Read the Grojean (1998) article on methodology in the course reader. In some domains they use one language and in others they use the other language. For instance, some might work with only English speakers and always use English around work, but then they might go home and watch telenovelas in Spanish, but talk about it with family in English. Thus, the domain “work” is in English mode and “telenovela” domain is in bilingual (English/ Spanish) mode.

Before your observation, ask your participant what parts of their life they use almost always English, almost always Spanish (if that’s their language) or both evenly. You want to be able to observe them in doing an activity related to their monolingual mode (either Spanish or English) and to their bilingual mode (Spanish/ English). You will therefore need two observations. This is why working in pairs is encouraged!
Some Notes on Recording Observations

Note taking is an individual matter, and as long as one records all the data needed for analysis at some later date it is not of great importance which procedure is followed. There are certain steps common to most note-taking that may be useful, but may not necessarily apply in all cases.

1. You may choose to observe the setting without taking notes, and then write your observations immediately after the activity has concluded. Others feel more comfortable taking notes at the time they are observing, and some even use taperecorders to capture the events. In the latter case, more obtrusive data gathering may make the participants uncomfortable. You have to make an individual judgment here, but keep in mind the idea is to look at behavior in as natural a setting as possible.

2. Record basic details such as date, time, place, general setting, and people involved. A sketch of the setting or seating might be useful here. It is important to capture as much of the context as possible, since it helps in the interpretation of observations and conclusions about what they mean.

3. Be descriptive rather than evaluative. Your notes and observations are the "raw data", and you should avoid terms that have multiple meanings or that are ambiguous in nature, such as "hostile", "disrespectful", etc. An example: "Most of the people at the meeting were nervous". How many is "most"? How did you know they were "nervous"? What specific behaviors did they engage in that made you reach your conclusions?

4. Take complete notes. Incomplete notes do not allow for correction or reanalysis, nor do they supply enough of the context to know how judgments or conclusions were reached, or what caused people in the situation to act how they did.

5. Record direct quotations if you can, and indicate if you are paraphrasing, since this may change the meaning intended. Also, since this is an important part of your "raw data", it if often helpful to include it in your final write up to document what you are saying.

6. Take notes immediately after leaving the setting. This improves the reliability of what you are seeing. It is often desirable to include pieces of your observations in your write to illustrate key points.

7. Make your notes focused. Information that is considered noteworthy will depend on the general problem you are looking at, the specific questions you want answered, and your own conceptual framework. Try not to be fragmented and random in your notes.

8. Maintain the confidentiality and trust of those whom you are observing. Make sure you have their permission before you make any observations, recordings, etc., and never divulge names or other identifying information in any written materials you hand in or in class discussions about your project.

Points to Consider in drawing conclusions

- To what extent does the person use only one language in monolingual mode or both languages equally in bilingual mode?
- How does the nature of the learning situation impact (or not) the person’s language use?
- What interactional or sociolinguistic factors seem to be at play when the bilingual switches into bilingual or monolingual mode? This can include audience, topic, or place.
- Are any products of the activity evident (for instance writing completed)?
- Are any artifacts used to support the activity?
Some Notes on Format

This assignment should not exceed 6 pages. In some cases you might want to append something to the end of the report, for example a copy of a worksheet or lesson you might have observed or other materials that you think are relevant. That is acceptable, however you should keep the body of the report within the page limit. While use of references may be useful at the end of the report, use of extensive references is not necessary. In terms of structure of your report, the following outline might be helpful:

- Introduction
- Description of Setting One
- Description of Setting Two
- Conclusions about this person’s bilingualism/ biliteracy

Final Paper

- The purpose of this assignment is for you to read deeply on an aspect of biliteracy and academic development that is interesting to you and relevant to the course readings. You are strongly encouraged to build on the insights gained from the observation assignment.
- Ideally, the topic you select for the final project should be relatable to and to the article discussion you lead. We will spend some time in class generating questions about biliteracy and considering how to structure research that explores them.
- You will meet with the professor to discuss your paper in preparation. The meeting will be conducted in my office, telephone or Skype, and it will last more than 30 minutes.
- Your paper must be related to an issue or question directly related to biliteracy/academic biliteracy, and should be 20-25 pages long, excluding references and (optional) appendices.
- Use APA style.

Poster presentation

You will present a preliminary version of your paper at a poster session during the penultimate class, and we will give you feedback you can use to improve the final paper. For further information on poster preparation, use AERA guidelines.

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of grade</th>
<th>Due date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly reading synthesis</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>weekly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading discussion</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>varies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation of an emergent bilingual</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4/04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading synthesis portfolio</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4/30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final poster presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5/07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5/12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Criteria for Grading

A Outstanding scholarship. Performance that significantly exceeds the requirements and qualitative expectations of the course. Superior mastery of subject matter. Initiative and self-direction leading to significant study and related activity beyond course requirements.

B Good Scholarship. Performance that fully meets all the requirements and qualitative expectations of the Course. Solid mastery of subject matter.

C Marginal Scholarship. Performance that barely meets the requirements and qualitative expectations of the course. Marginal mastery of subject matter. Does not meet the expectations of graduate course work.

COURSE POLICIES

1. **Academic honesty.** Academic honesty is always expected. The UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures will be followed. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person as one’s own. And, collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Furthermore, academic dishonesty, such as submitting work you did in another class for credit in this class is forbidden. If you have any questions about this, please consult with the professor.

2. **Academic writing.** Practicing and developing your scholarly writing is one of the course objectives. We will be reading many examples of academic writing this semester that should serve as models as you develop your own style of academic writing. I will provide examples of the specific genres of each assignment (synthesis papers, observation, poster).

3. **Changes to the schedule.** It may become necessary to make changes to the schedule to suit student interests and/or to accommodate for any unexpected issues. Any changes to the schedule of readings and assignments will be posted on the course Blackboard site and discussed in class.

4. **Late work.** Students are expected to bring their weekly syntheses with them to each class. No late work is accepted.

5. **Attendance and participation.** Attendance is required for every class meeting, and you are expected to arrive on time and remain for the duration of each class. However, because unexpected events do occur, you are allowed **ONE** absence before your grade is affected. Please reserve your absence for an emergency. Two absences will lower your grade. Three absences is considered excessive, and you will be asked to drop the class. It is the student’s responsibility to catch up after an absence. Participation is graded based on the quality of your contributions to class discussion, your preparedness to discuss readings, and the opportunities you take to lead academic classroom discussions.

6. **Incompletes.** No incompletes will be given for this course unless there are extenuating circumstances. Please talk to the professor ASAP if such a situation arises. In any case, incompletes
will be given only if a student has passed the first half of the course and provides evidence of a
documented illness or family crisis which genuinely precludes successful completion of the course.
7. **Accommodations.** Any student who qualifies under the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)
should contact the professor at once. We will make every effort to make sure the conditions support
your learning and full participation in the course. If you have a disability you may self-identify by
providing documentation to the Office for Disabled Student Services. If you have a condition which
may affect your ability to exit safely from the premises in an emergency, or which may cause an
emergency during class, you are urged to discuss this in confidence with the appropriate staff at the
Office for Disabled Student Services.

**SCHEDULE OF REQUIRED READINGS**

Required readings are electronically available on the course Blackboard site. The ♦ icon indicates a
podcast you will need to retrieve/listen to online. Optional readings will occasionally be posted for those
interested in reading more about a given topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date (Wed)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Discussion leader</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module I: Language and Literacy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/22</td>
<td>Introduction to course, assignments, policies and participants</td>
<td>Gee (1987/2008)</td>
<td>Esquinca</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/29</td>
<td>Language and language variation</td>
<td>Chaika (2008); Romaine (2001)</td>
<td>Arrieta</td>
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<td>Module II: Biliteracy and Academic Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/05</td>
<td>Norma González colloquium</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Definitions of bilingualism</td>
<td>Baker (2006); Edwards (2006); Grosjean (2012)</td>
<td>Rodríguez</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2/19</td>
<td>Language use and practices: translanguage</td>
<td>García (2009); Ritchie and Bhatia (2006);</td>
<td>Sahr</td>
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<td>Module III: Ideologies of Bilingualism/ Biliteracy in Schools</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3/19</td>
<td>Bilingual identities</td>
<td>Monzó &amp; Rueda (2009); Murillo (2010); Bartlett (2007)</td>
<td>Gregory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### References


