Theories of Verbal Communication
Fall 2012
Monday 4 – 6/30 pm
Dr. Lorraine Dagostino
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Ext 4620
Home Phone (603) 595-7378
Office Hours: Before class on Monday, Wednesday 2- 4 pm (Please make an appointment)

Purpose of the course:

The purpose of the course is to introduce graduate students to theoretical concerns and issues in Language Arts and Literacy. Students will be expected to complete the assigned readings and written work for each session, to participate in class and group discussions, and to complete independent work during the course.

The course has as its goals the development of higher-order thinking skills of analysis and synthesis of the material read. Students also should gain an understanding of various theoretical and conceptual perspectives on a range of topics in Language Arts and Literacy. Students will demonstrate that they have achieved these goals by the work that they include in their portfolio and major project.

Conceptual Framework: Education for Transformation:

The central tenets of the conceptual framework of the Graduate School of Education are Excellence, Equity, Inquiry and Collaboration. This course aims to achieve these tenets by examining theoretical issues that encourage a high level of thinking and high standards of performance with regard to these theoretical issues that will form the underpinnings of a doctoral students in-depth inquiry of a topic for research projects. Students will collaborate in discussions and analysis of each others work as a way to exchange their understandings and viewpoints on many theoretical concerns. The topics encourage examination of areas of research that influence verbal learning of many types of learners in terms of ability and intelligence. There is much focus on problem-solving around these theoretical issues as they influence instruction, curriculum and assessment.

Assignments:

Weekly assignments will consist of sets of readings – one on general topics and the other on models. Portfolio assignments will take two forms – one for general topics and the other for models. The major project will focus on understanding and analyzing theoretical frameworks and related research. The projects may vary from student to student. These assignments will be explained more completely later in the course requirements
Students are expected to attend class and to complete their work in a timely fashion with all work submitted in their portfolio at a designated date. Grades will be earned according to the UML guidelines.

**Texts and Reading:**

Ruddell, Robert B., Unrau, Norman J. (Editors) Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading (latest edition)
Krashen, S. Explorations in Language Acquisition and Use NH Heinemann 2006
Levy and Ransdell The Science of Writing NJ Lawrence Erlbaum 1996

**Recommended Readings that may be useful for major projects:**

Vygotsky, L. Language and Thought (latest edition)
Brisk, Maria Bilingual Education 2nd Edition NJ Lawrence Erlbaum 2006
Rosenblatt, Louise The Reader, The Test and The Poem – A Transactional Theory of Literature (latest edition)
Pinker, Stephen The Language Instinct
Calendar:

9/10 and 9/17 Session 1 and 2: Overview and Background
Understanding Theory and Scientific Thinking relative to Aspects of Language
Models: Literacy and Language Arts
Developing A Dissertation Proposal
Sample Proposal Hearing Presentation

9/24 Session 3: Fluency and Automaticity; R & U #16 and #40

10/1 Session 4: Literacy and Identity/Interactive Model: R & U #9 and #41

10/8 Session 5: Affective Issues: R & U #34 and #50

10/15 Session 6: Comprehension Concerns: R & U #23 and #43
Ideas for Projects

10/22 Session 7: Work Session/Conferences

10/29 Session 8: Individual Differences/Writing; R & U #17 and #49, L & R #2 and #7

11/5 Session 9: Disability/Metacognition: R & U #18 and select one from Section 4

11/12 Session 10: Second Language; R & U #10 and Krashen

11/19 Session 11: Literacy Instruction and Oral Communication: R & U #36 and
Listening or/and Speaking (students will find material)

12/3 Session 12: Work Session/Conferences
12/10 Session 13: Student Reports

PROJECTS AND PORTFOLIOS DUE: Last class meeting
Assignments

1. Weekly Assignments (50% of grade)

Each week you will have sets of readings one on a special topic and one on a theory or model. For each type of reading you will have a different format for your portfolio work. Criteria for evaluation consists of completeness, accuracy and nature of thinking (i.e. analysis, reasoning, reflective response)

Written Format for Theories and Models:

1. Category and Purpose of Model/Concept/Processes/Theory
2. Components/Processes
3. Relationships among the components and processes
4. Underlying assumptions (Language, Intelligence, Learning, Thinking, Affect, etc)
5. Related Questions and Hypotheses on Researchable Issues: Theoretical and Applied
6. Things left unsaid/ Problems raised

Written Format for General Readings:

1. Point of view of the article
2. Random Thoughts
3. Questions and Problems Raised
4. Relationship to Theory

These formats are approximations to guide your writing. Some readings may need variations.

2. Major Assignment (50% of grade)

Your independent project will be chosen from the 11 options listed below. Criteria for evaluation consists of completeness of the work, accuracy, appropriate analysis and synthesis and reflective thinking. Student will develop evaluation criteria for the selected project.

Option 1: Focus on one model of Verbal Communication

Identify a problem and related questions or hypotheses
Select a theoretical framework to study the problem
Review articles relevant to the problem and the theoretical framework in an annotated bibliography (Approximately 15-20 articles)
Write a report of 10 pages that addresses the six areas you have been discussing in your portfolio
Option 2: Comparison of Contrasting Models

Identify two theoretical frameworks that attempt to explain some aspect of verbal communication
Identify their contrasting parts and positions
Review articles that discuss research on each framework (15-20 articles)
Write a report of 10 pages that compares and contrasts the two frameworks including an analysis of each framework

Option 3: Investigate the work of one researcher

Identify a researcher and the line of inquiry and the theoretical background represented in this person’s work
Research and complete an annotated bibliography on the researcher’s work
Write a report of 10 pages summarizing the work and discussing the contribution that this person has made to education

Option 4: Design a major project

Identify a problem that you wish to explore in some fashion
Do adequate background research on the problem
Describe your project and get Professor’s approval
Carry out your work
Indicate evaluation criteria specific to your project

Option 5: Conceptualize a study

Conceptualize a study to validate the theory or model of your choice. Be sure to describe the entire validation process and give reasons for your decision about what you do.

Option 6: Vygotsky’s work

Read Vygotsky’s work – Language and Thought. Identify the primary ideas in his work and generate testable hypothesis and questions. Review empirical work that uses or tests Vygotsky’s ideas.

Option 7: Model Development

Select one theorist and his/her model and examine it at 2 or 3 stages of development. Identify the changes in the model and the implications for diagnosis, instruction and assessment. Note too the changes in the assumptions of the model – if any.
Option 8: Reading and Writing

Select a model of reading a second model of writing and evaluate them for similarity in showing both processes as composing processes

Option 9: Build your own model

Option 10: Pinker’s work

Read Pinker’s work – The Language Instinct. Identify the primary ideas in his work and general testable hypothesis and questions. Review any empirical work that uses or tests Pinker’s ideas.

Option 11: Review research on some aspect of the New Literacies

The focus of this option will be decided between the student and the professor of the course at least midway through the course.

Evaluation of each of the options will vary as the requirements of each options differs. Part of the student’s assignment is to lay out evaluation criteria in light of the requirements of the assignment.
The course has as its primary goal the development of the higher-order thinking skills of analysis and synthesis. Students should gain an understanding of various theoretical and conceptual perspectives on a range of topics in Language Arts and Literacy. A focus of the course is to understand theory and scientific thinking relative to aspects of language as a way of studying theories and models. The specific models that will be considered will vary from semester to semester, but often will address ideas relative to comprehension, affective concerns, literacy theory, second language learning, and oral communication. Assignments will consist of weekly readings and writing on assigned material and a major project chosen from several options.