



EDU 639 Trends and Current Issues in Second Language Acquisition

Instructor:

Phone:

Email:

Course Dates:

No Classes:

Time:

Location:

This course will examine current theory, trends, and issues regarding second language and academic English acquisition, including understanding knowledge, dispositions, and attitudes that enable teachers to work effectively with K-12 learners.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course participants will:

- Analyze and evaluate prominent ***theories*** of second language and academic English acquisition, including:
 - Stages and characteristics of first and second language acquisition
 - BICS and CALPS
 - Sociocultural factors
 - Types of English Language Learners
- Analyze their own and their students' academic English acquisition in light of these theories
- Develop strategies to accelerate their students' academic English acquisition in light of these theories
- Analyze and evaluate current instructional ***trends*** in academic English acquisition, including:
 - The New York State ESL Learning Standards and Performance Indicators
 - The New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT)
 - The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)
- Analyze their own and their students' academic English acquisition in light of these trends
- Develop strategies to accelerate their students' academic English acquisition in light of these trends
- Analyze and evaluate current ***issues*** that affect second language and academic English acquisition, including:
 - Immigration and student mobility issues
 - Legally mandated resources for ELL students
 - NCLB / AYP pressures
- Analyze their own and their students' academic English acquisition in light of these issues
- Develop strategies to accelerate their students' academic English acquisition in light of these issues

Required Texts

1) Ahearn, C. et al. (2002) *The diversity kit: An introductory resource for social change in education*. Providence, RI: Educational Alliance at Brown University.

Part II: Culture—pp.3-55 and Part III: Language—Learning a Second Language, pp.25-52.

Available online at the Educational Alliance at Brown University,
<http://www.alliance.brown.edu/tdl/diversitykitpdfs/diversitykit.pdf>

Download the PDF file and print the above pp. from each section.

2) Freeman & Freeman (2002). *Closing the achievement gap: How to reach limited-formal schooling and long-term English learners*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann.

Available in the Barnes & Noble bookstore at 5th Avenue and 18th Street

3) Short, D. & Fitzminnons, S.(2007). *Double the work: Challenges and solutions to acquiring language and academic literacy for adolescent English language learners—A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Washington, D.C.: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Available online at <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/DoubleWork/index.html>

Download the PDF file.

4) Recommended: Brown, H.D.(2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching (4th Edition)*. White Plains, NY: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.

Requirements

1) Attendance is required. Most work will be done in class. Class participation is mandatory since this will be an interactive class. 30%

2) Homework: Assigned readings each session and a 3-page response to each reading. Readings will be from the book by Freeman & Freeman. 40%

3) Final project: Interview an ESL or English as a Second Language Learner in your class. Interview format will be provided. ** Reflective responses following the interview found on p.7 of syllabus; final papers include interview plus a section describing your new knowledge. 30%

4) All papers must be typed using APA format.

Session 1: Introductions: What do we know about second language and academic English acquisition?

- Complete an initial questionnaire
 - Demographic and professional experience (where, what, who, how long you've taught, etc.)
 - Have you learned a second language and studied academic content in that language? Explain.
 - Activity: "Autobiography of a language learner." Discuss what was easy and what was hard about learning a second language. Frustrations?
 - How many of your students are English language learners?
 - What do you know about accelerating your students' academic English acquisition and content-area literacy? What works? What are the challenges?
- Introductory getting-to-know-you activity: Memorable Students, Memorable Teachers: A Quick-Write
- Read vignette: "Chance Encounter." Discuss reflections in groups.
- Introductory Webcast: *English Language learners in the Middle and High School*
<http://colorincolorado.org/webcasts/middle#discussion>. (Featuring Dr. Deborah Short)
- Small group discussions: Dr. Short described four challenges facing middle and high school teachers in terms of educating ELL students. Describe the ways your school is addressing those challenges. In

addition, describe other challenges that you face as a faculty in educating your ELL students. Then brainstorm some solutions to those challenges. Groups report back, using their chart paper.

- Overview of syllabus, course requirements

Assignments for Session 2

- Read Freeman and Freeman, Chapter 1: Older struggling English Learners
- Respond to Question 8 in a 3-page paper: Review the 4 keys for school success for older English learners. To what degree does your teaching follow those keys? Give examples. How could your teaching be changed to more closely reflect the keys?

Session 2: What factors affect second language acquisition?

(Materials needed: *The Diversity Kit*: Part III: Language—Learning a Second Language, pp.25-52)

- Introduction to second language acquisition theories. pp.25-42 in Diversity Kit (pp.31-35, p.35 Activity; Vignette, pp.42-48)
- How are theories different or complement first language acquisition theories?
- Contextual Factors in Second Language Acquisition
- Cummins: BICS and CALPS
- Common Underlying Proficiency
- What is sociolinguistic and pragmatics? Small Group Activity

Assignment for Session 3

- Read: *Freeman & Freeman*, Chapter 2: What do Older English Learners Need?
- Respond to one of the questions on p. 47 in a 3-page paper. Be prepared to share in class.

Session 3: What other significant concepts are needed to learn how language is learned?

- How long does it take to learn a second language: Reading by Virginia Collier (1989)
- Teaching by Principles from H. Douglas Brown: communicative competence: Chapter 2
- What is acculturation?
- What is assimilation?
- Groups debate the pros and cons of assimilation vs. acculturation?
- Read the following article: Kohls, L.R. (1984). The values Americans live by. Washington, D.C.: The Washington International Center. Take a position on this article. Has the recent change in demographics in the U.S. changed the “values” Americans live by? Write a - page position paper about this article. Be able to defend your opinions with facts.

Assignments for Session 4

- Review Teaching by Principles.
- Respond to questions #1 and #6 in a 3-page paper. Be prepared to share in class.
- Write a 3-page position paper on Kohls’ article.

Session 4: What is the relationship between culture and language acquisition?

(Materials needed: *The Diversity Kit*: Part II: Culture—pp.3-55)

- Brainstorm in groups, “What is culture? What are the many factors that make-up culture. Group comes up with definition of culture to share with the group.
- What is culture? Read *Diversity Kit* “Overview: Culture, Identity and Development” pp. 3-30
- Slide show activity about the concepts related to culture.
- Class activity based on the reading.
- How to map a people? Class activity that looks at the many perspectives of understanding a culture: How can you apply this idea in your classroom?

- Iceberg conception of culture: What are the implications for teaching?

Assignments for Section 5

- Try Mandala Activity or Biodoodle Activity in your class.
- Bring in student samples due Session 6. Examples and hand-outs will be provided.
- Read Article, “Profoundly multicultural questions,” by Sonia Nieto (December 2002/ January 2003). *Educational Leadership*, 60(4), pp.6-10. Write a 3 page reflection paper on the concepts presented in this paper. How does this apply to your classroom?

Session 5: What does research tell us about adolescents and second language issues?

(Library Assignment: Meet on the 5th floor, Library, 43 W.23rd St.)

- Read a model article about second language issues and literacy instruction that develops an outline for the basis of a research article:
- “School” reading and multiple texts: Examining the metacognitive development of secondary-level preservice teachers,” by Lesley M, Watson, P.& Elliot, S. (2007). *Journal of adolescent and adult literacy*, 51(2), pp.150-161.
- Introduction to on-line resources, including data bases.
- Find an article in one of the data bases about adolescent identification, culture, and second language issues. Critique the article using the guiding questions and outline which will be given to you. 5 pages minimum, typed, APA format.

Assignment for Session 6

- Complete library activity for next session. Each week late, a grade is dropped.

Session 6: Trends Part 1: What are my students expected to know and be able to do in New York State?

How are they assessed?

- Share Biodoodle activities with groups. Discuss how the process went? What were the results? Did you learn anything new from your students from these activities?
- Read article, “Affirming identity in multilingual classrooms.” Cummins, J. *et al* (2005). *Educational Leadership*, Vol.63(1).
- NYS ESL Standards and Benchmarks
- Activity using standards and benchmarks
- What is the NYSESLAT? Analysis of this tool. How does it measure students’ progress in English?
- How does the study of linguistics help students pass the NYSESLAT?
- What are informal assessments that you use in your classroom to assess learning?
- Video: Stages of Language Acquisition as seen in classrooms.

Assignment for Session 7

- Bring in an informal assessment that you use with your classes. We will work in pairs to discuss these assessments and their impact on second language learners. How could they be adapted to fit the needs of ELLs?
- Download the NYSESLAT for your grade level. Be prepared to discuss in Session 7.

Session 7: Trends Part II: What are the most effective instructional strategies for accelerating students’ academic English acquisition so that they meet NYS standards?

- Discuss informal assessment activity.
- Read Freeman & Freeman, Chapter 3: Research on Effective Practices for Older English Learners
- What is scaffolding? How are activities designed to aid English language learners?

- Six main types of instructional scaffolding according to Aida Walqui (QTEL researcher): modeling; bridging; contextualization; schema building; text Re-presentation; metacognition
- What are some graphic organizers that scaffold learning?

Assignment for Session 8

- Choose **one** of the strategies discussed above. Try one strategy in your classroom. Bring in student samples to discuss in groups. How did the activity work in your classroom? What questions or observation do you have after doing the activity?

Session 8: Trends Part III: What are more effective instructional strategies for accelerating students' academic English acquisition so that they meet NYS standards?

- Comprehension requires fluency, vocabulary, and background knowledge
- Freeman & Freeman: Read Chapter 4: Using Themes to Develop Academic Language and Content Knowledge
- Establishing Background Knowledge: Activity: Word Splash
- Power Point on Vocabulary instruction
- Isabel Beck: Tiered Word Strategy: Choosing vocabulary for instruction
- Graphic organizers for vocabulary instruction
- Use of Spanish cognates to accelerate vocabulary

Assignment for Session 9

- Work on typing up of interview with ELL student, your final project. Also start writing your Reflection piece that goes with the interview.

Session 9: Trends Part III: What are more effective instructional strategies for accelerating students' academic English acquisition so that they meet NYS standards?

- Freeman & Freeman: Chapter 5: Using Routines and Strategies to Scaffold Instruction
- The use of jazz chants and poetry in the classroom to develop intonations of language and increase vocabulary knowledge
- Language Transfer Issues and how they affect ELL writing and speaking
- The use of Predictable Literature in the classroom in order to acquire the patterns of language
- The use of Multicultural Literature in the classroom: practical applications

Assignment for Session 10

- Continue to work on final project.
- Bring in several multicultural books from your classroom or library that are appropriate for second language learners. How to develop text sets.

Session 10: Issues Part I & Part II: What are some major issues affecting acquisition of academic English?

- Freeman & Freeman: Chapter 6: Using the Four Keys to Close the Achievement Gap
- Bilingual Special Education: How can you tell the difference between a language disability and language issues?
- Read the article, "Special Education and English Language Learners: Navigating the Maze." Laws pertaining to special education under the IDEA Act
- Read several case studies of students recommended for special education. What factors lead you to believe that the case is a language issue problem or a language processing problem?
- Power Point from OELA concerning special education and speech issues
- Hakuta Power Point on the History of ELL laws

- Overview of laws affecting ELLs and bilingual education
- Read article: “The New Demography of America’s Schools: Immigration and the No Child Left Behind Act.” Capps *et al.* PDF file available. Published September 30, 2005. URL: <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=3111230>.

Assignment for Session 11

- Work on completing final project. Due next week.

Session 11: Issues Part I & Part II: What are some major issues affecting ELL students’ acquisition of academic English?

- Power point review of what we learned this semester.
- Discussion of Bilingual federal laws and Constitutional issues
- Choose an article to read and discuss in class.
- Personality Factors: Read: Dornyei, Z. (1998). Motivation in second language and foreign language learning. *Language Teaching* (31), 117-135.
- Sociocultural Factors: Read: Hofstede, G. (1986). Cultural differences in teaching and learning. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* (10), pp.301320.
- Linguistic Transference Factors: Read Spada, N. (1997). “Form-focussed instruction and second language acquisition: A review of classroom and laboratory research.” *Language Teaching* (30), pp.73-87.

Session 12: Celebrate Success

- Final Project Due
- Prepare a five minute presentation of the ELL interview and personal reflection

****Reflective Response following interview:**

- Include in your response answers to such questions as “Did you learn anything that surprised you? What? Explain.” “What did you learn about the students you interviewed?” “What did you learn about school in the student’s country?” “What did you learn about the student’s experience in schools in this country?”
- Additionally explain what you learned about trends and issues in this course. Were any evident in your interview? In your school?