

new file

COURSE OUTLINE

*Education 486-4 Organic Teaching in the Primary Classroom
Fall, 1979*

*Selma Wassermann
Maureen Cuming
Sheila Luetzen*

Description

This course examines the philosophy of Sylvia Ashton-Warner and its applications to teaching in the primary classroom. Concepts underlying the "organic classroom" and development of teaching skill in the use of the key vocabulary approach to beginning reading instruction will be emphasized. Teachers will be asked to use their primary classrooms as laboratories in which they may work towards the development of skill in "organic teaching," in the presence of videotape feedback.

This course is offered primarily for in-service teachers. Pre-service students may enrol with special permission of instructors.

Three types of experiences are included in this course:

(a) Outputs - opportunities for students to experience the "breathing out" activities of the organic classroom, through personal explorations with a variety of media

(b) Intake - opportunities for students to receive instruction and participate in practice sessions in the teaching methodology of the organic classroom

(c) Workshops - opportunities for students to share, examine, and critically analyze, through videotape feedback, their classroom applications of organic teaching

Class Meeting Times

**Wednesdays 4:30 - 8:30 pm
Room to be announced**

Course Objectives

- (1) To increase understanding of the concepts and principles underlying the Sylvia Ashton-Warner philosophy of "organic teaching"
- (2) To promote understanding of how organic classrooms work
- (3) To develop teaching skill in the following:
 - taking the key vocabulary
 - conducting teacher-pupil conferences
 - organizing an organic classroom
 - analysis of teacher-student interaction strategies
- (4) To further acquaintance with the literature and research related to organic teaching
- (5) To increase self-awareness with respect to personally held educational beliefs and attitudes related to teaching practices, child growth and development, and curriculum
- (6) To promote increased understanding of the young child and his growth needs: physical, emotional, social and intellectual -- and their relationship to the form and structure of the primary classroom

Course Requirements

Students are required to attend and participate in all aspects of the program.

Students are required to complete the assigned readings.

Students are required to make three videotapes of classroom applications of organic teaching and share these in workshop groups.

Evaluation

The completion of all course requirements presented above form the basis for evaluation. There are three components in the final evaluation:

(a) Self evaluation. Students assess their fulfillment of course requirements in a self-evaluation instrument.

(b) Faculty evaluation. Students discuss their self evaluations with faculty in a final interview during which the faculty member also assesses student performance.

(c) Grading. Final grades are determined by faculty. They are based upon two criteria:

- (1) the degree to which students have fulfilled course requirements
- (2) the quality of the student's work

Readings

Ashton-Warner, Sylvia. *TEACHER*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963.

Ashton-Warner, Sylvia. *SPEARPOINT*. New York: Knopf, 1973.

Ashton-Warner, Sylvia. *SPINSTER*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959.

Elkind, David. *A SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHILD FROM BIRTH TO SIXTEEN*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1974.

Wassermann, Selma. "Organic Teaching in the Primary Classroom," *PHI DELTA KAPPAN*, Volume 58, November, 1976, No. 3.

Wassermann, Selma. "Aspen Mornings with Sylvia Ashton-Warner," *CHILDHOOD EDUCATION*, Volume 48, April, 1972, No. 7.

Wassermann, Selma, "The Story of the Vancouver Project," *YOUNG CHILDREN*, Volume 33, May, 1978, No. 4.

Clear now.

You will wish to have
this complete outline for 486 - for
your files. It will probably help
to answer ^{many of} your questions about
the course.

Handwritten initials

For files
We need a section
leading into
Special topics
courses. They are
now said to
and contain
the necessary
along with
the old 486.



EDUCATION 486-4

ORGANIC TEACHING IN THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM

MINI-HANDBOOK

Prepared by
Selma Wassermann
Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University

Introduction: "I love everyone, even God."

If you have ever been intimately involved in the lives of young children, you will know that they are terribly, wonderfully, marvelously, impossibly special. Healthy young children are fully in tune with themselves and with their worlds; and they come to each human encounter with a spontaneity and a genuineness that is not to be found again in any later stage of development. In fives and sixes you will find that remarkable interface of attributes of self-sufficiency, serenity, seriousness, sociality, carefulness, with their extreme opposites -- with frequent and repeated swings from one position to the other! The young child has a logic all his own; when he tells us "Don't put out the light; I can't see how to sleep" -- he is following his own inner order of making sense out of the world. If we do not understand him, it is because we haven't broken his code. He, of course, understands it completely.

"Where does the light go when it goes out?"

"Up the wires."

The education of young children has a special importance. We need to educate, to challenge, to inspire, to socialize -- with all the sensitivities of angels -- so that we do not trample the imagination, the spontaneity, the creativity and the self-sufficiency in the process. For the child is the father to the man. What we do, in these early childhood years, will have profound effects upon the shaping of the adult person-- on who he is and on what he is to become.

The Organic Classroom is one approach to the education of young children that is both sensitive to the intellectual and academic development of young children, as well as mindful of cultivating the rich inner world of the child. The Organic Classroom seeks to promote literacy as well as the creative imagination -- placing equal value on each. The Organic Classroom is the context in which the young child may grow and learn, in ways which sensitively and

thoughtfully attend to the child's inner life -- "supplying the conditions in which both the teacher and child can be themselves." (Ashton-Warner)

One important purpose of the program, Organic Teaching in the Primary Classroom, is to increase your knowledge base with respect to the "what" of the organic classroom. To that end, experiences and activities have been designed to further your understanding with respect to the following questions:

- What is an organic classroom?*
- What is the role of output in the organic classroom?*
- What is K.V.? Why is it the preferred mode of beginning reading instruction?*
- What is intake? How are skills taught? How does this experience interface with K.V.?*
- What are the four movements into reading?*
- What is the developmental nature of the 5-6-7 year old? How does the organic classroom meet these developmental needs?*
- What kinds of teacher-student interactions will best promote organic classroom learning outcomes?*

A second important purpose of this program is to provide experiences which will help you to develop teaching skills required to implement successful and effective organic classrooms. Instructional strategies emphasized are:

- Organizing output activities*
- Taking the K.V.*
- Organizing intake activities*
- Development of instructional materials*
- Working at the 2nd and 3rd movements*
- Diagnosing individual learning needs*
- Utilizing appropriate teacher-student interaction strategies*

Experiences and Activities

The instructional format of the program, *Organic Teaching in the Primary Classroom*, includes the following experiences and activities to help you to increase your knowledge base, as well as improve your classroom teaching skills. While there will be activities that are teacher-directed, and occasionally didactic presentations of information, the program chiefly emphasizes a "practice task" and "classroom trials" mode of instruction. Based upon the theory that people learn those skills best which they engage in for sustained and extensive practice sessions, you will be required to "practice" instructional strategies in both the university classroom as well as your own classroom, in the presence of focused videotape feedback.

The experiences and activities included in the program are:

- (1) Readings -- so that you may study the literature and current research in the areas of the growth and development of young children and organic classroom teaching
- (2) Workshops -- so that you may receive training in specific curriculum and instructional skills
- (3) Seminars -- so that you may examine issues and questions related to aspects of the course
- (4) Practice tasks -- so that you may increase your skill in specific instructional strategies
- (5) Classroom trials -- so that you may have opportunity to try out organic teaching in your own classroom in the presence of a support system of fellow students and teaching staff
- (6) Group sharing and critical evaluation of classroom trials -- so that you may examine your classroom applications of knowledge and skill learned in the course on videotape playback

Specific Requirements

- (1) Complete all readings on reading list, plus mimeographed materials distributed during the course.
- (2) Attend all classes.
- (3) Participate in outputs, workshops and seminars.
- (4) Complete required practice tasks, demonstrating increased levels of competence.
- (5) Conduct required number of videotaped classroom trials, with self-analysis of work.
- (6) Share required videotapes of classroom trials in seminar group.
- (7) Participate with supportive, but professional critical feedback to other students who share tapes of classroom trials.

Working Towards Increase Understanding and Teaching Competence

Area 1: Increase of Knowledge Base and Theoretical Understanding
(in the areas specified below)

1.1 What is an organic classroom?

Check (✓)
when
completed

Experiences and Activities:

- 1.1.1 Read TEACHER
- 1.1.2 Read SPEARPOINT
- 1.1.3 Read SPINSTER
- 1.1.4 Read, "Organic Teaching in the Primary Classroom"
- 1.1.5 Read, "Aspen Mornings with Sylvia Ashton-Warner"
- 1.1.6 Read, "The Story of the Vancouver Project"

- 1.1.7 View videotape A: The Vancouver Project
- 1.1.8 View slides of an Organic Classroom

- 1.1.9 Study the 486 classroom model

1.2 What is the role of output in the organic classroom?

Experiences and Activities:

- 1.2.1 Read TEACHER
- 1.2.2 Read SPEARPOINT
- 1.2.3 Read, "Organic Teaching in the Primary Classroom"
- 1.2.4 Read, "The Story of the Vancouver Project"
- 1.2.5 View Videotape A: The Vancouver Project
- 1.2.6 View slides of an Organic Classroom

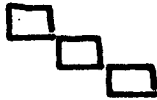
- 1.2.7 Attend an "output" workshop

1.3 What is K.V.? Why is it a preferred mode of beginning reading instruction?

Experiences and Activities:

- 1.3.1 Read TEACHER
- 1.3.2 Read SPEARPOINT
- 1.3.3 Read, "The Story of the Vancouver Project!"
- 1.3.4 Attend the K.V. workshop

- 1.4 *What is intake? How are the skills taught? How does this experience interface with K.V.?*



Experiences and Activities:

- 1.4.1 *Read TEACHER*
1.4.2 *View Videotape A: The Vancouver Project*
1.4.3 *Attend "intake" workshop*

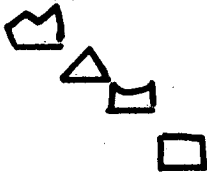
- 1.5 *What are the four movements? How do they work in moving a child into reading?*



Experiences and Activities:

- 1.5.1 *Read TEACHER*
1.5.2 *Attend "four movements" workshop*
1.5.3 *Examine teaching materials*

- 1.6 *What is the developmental nature of the 5-6-7 year old? How does the organic classroom meet these developmental needs?*



Experiences and Activities:

- 1.6.1 *Read TEACHER*
1.6.2 *Read SPEARPOINT*
1.6.3 *Read A SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHILD or, Fraiberg, THE MAGIC YEARS*
1.6.4 *Attend "kids" workshop*

- 1.7 *What kinds of teacher-student interactions will best promote the learning outcomes emphasized in the organic classroom?*

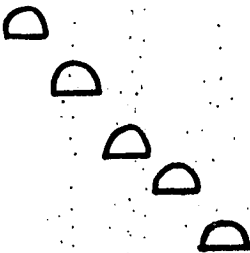


Experiences and Activities:

- 1.7.1 *Read Interactions mimeographed materials*
1.7.2 *Attend "interactions" workshop*

Area 2: Increase of Skill in Instructional Strategies
(in the areas specified below)

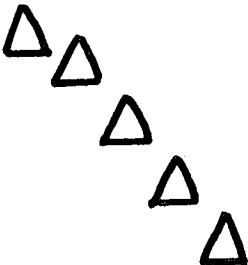
2.1 Organizing output activities



Experiences and Activities:

- 2.1.1 Complete tasks in the 1.1 and 1.2 series, page 5.
- 2.1.2 Acquire sufficient output materials for your classroom
- 2.1.3 Initiate output activities in your classroom
- 2.1.4 Dialogue with colleagues and staff about problems and successes
- 2.1.5 Make a videotape to share with class, showing how output functions in your classroom. (Videotape should show a 10 minute interval of output session)

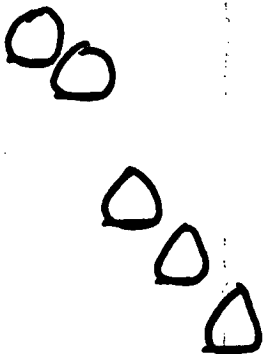
2.2 Taking the K.V.



Experiences and Activities:

- 2.2.1 Complete tasks in the 1.3 series, page 5
- 2.2.2 Do at least 4 practice sessions with fellow students, in taking the K.V.
- 2.2.3 Begin work with 1 - 3 children in your own classroom, taking K.V.
- 2.2.4 Dialogue with fellow students and staff about your problems and successes
- 2.2.5 Make a videotape of a successful K.V. session with one child. (This session should be no longer than 10 minutes)

2.3 Organizing intake activities



Experiences and Activities:

- 2.3.1 Complete tasks in the 1.4 series, page 5
- 2.3.2 Develop a plan for organizing intake activities in your classroom. Dialogue with fellow students and staff about your plan. Get critical feedback on it.
- 2.3.3 Re-think your plans, and make any modifications you require.
- 2.3.4 Initiate an intake session for your class. Dialog with fellow students and staff about it.
- 2.3.5 Make a videotape of a 10 minute interval of your intake session to share with group.

2.4 *Development of teaching materials*

Experiences and Activities:

- 2.4.1 *Examine the K.V., first and second movement materials in the centre*
- 2.4.2 *Construct one book at each of these movement stages*

2.5 *Working with children at the second and third movement stages*

Experiences and Activities:

- 2.5.1 *Complete tasks in the 1.5 series*
- 2.5.2 *Dialogue with fellow students and staff re development of appropriate second and third movement activities*
- 2.5.3 *Develop at least five second and third movement activities, as examples of what you would do in class.*
- 2.5.4 *Try these out and discuss with fellow students how they worked, and what modifications need to be made*

2.6 *Diagnosing individual learning needs*

Experiences and Activities:

- 2.6.1 *Complete tasks in the 1.6 series, page 6*
- 2.6.2 *Do a brief case study of a child in your class with learning problems. Make thoughtful diagnoses of his/her difficulties; develop a working hypothesis; identify appropriate interventions and curriculum plans*

2.7 *Using appropriate interactions*

Experiences and Activities:

- 2.7.1 *Complete tasks in the 1.7 series, page 6*
- 2.7.2 *Do four practice sessions, of at least 10 minutes each, using reflective, non-judgmental, and extending responses, using a tape recorder for each session.*
- 2.7.3 *Play back each tape, and analyze the nature of your interactions in each practice session.*