

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

EDUC 489-4 (D1.00)

**SPECIAL TOPICS: TEACHER RESEARCH -- LITERACY IN THE COMMUNITY
(Cat. #88704)**

Summer Session, 1994
(July 4 - 29)
Monday, Wednesday & Friday, 13:00-16:20
Location: MPX 8651/52

Instructor: Judith Newman
Office: TBA
Phone: 291-3395 (messages)

PREREQUISITE: EDUC 401/402

COURSE OUTLINE

Creating a more engaging classroom literacy environment requires an appreciation of the different views of literacy held by community, home, and school. This course will feature a collaborative inquiry into literacy outside of school: what do people say they value? what do their activities reveal about what's important? what questions does "out-of-school literacy" raise for us as educators? It will be organized as a collaborative investigation of the literacy beliefs of various constituencies within the community. The process will focus on using language for learning and getting things done. We will find out about what constitutes literacy in the community at large and how it compares to literacy in our classrooms. The general plan is for us to do some action research and attempt to pull together a written report on our collective findings. We will build our collaborative investigation of literacy in the community from our collective observations. We will likely spend more time making observations in the community. However, the focus of the course will be on making sense of our observations through writing and reading about what we've seen.

The overt agenda of the class will not be about writing and reading. While you will, by the end of our experience, have many opportunities to question the literacy instruction in your classroom, your understanding about teaching writing and reading will emerge from your participation in our teacher research enterprise. Questions will be raised by the reading you do, by your reflective writing, through the research process, and our on-going discussion of instructional issues. As you become familiar with the debates in the literature and how they relate to your own reading and writing, as you become more relaxed about writing, and as you reflect on your pedagogical assumptions, you will see things you might try with your students. But first and foremost, you will be learning about literacy instruction by writing, reading, talking and listening yourself.

EXPECTATIONS

Before class begins in July, there are a number of things to do (see the enlarged course outline for details). Part of the experience will involve learning to use a computer for writing. If you happen to have a portable computer, bring it. Computer access at SFU is also being arranged. Don't worry if you've never used a computer before. There'll be lots of support from people who have experience.

ASSIGNMENTS

This workshop is really about learning and teaching. It's about becoming aware of our learning and considering what implications this has for us as teachers. You are asked to become aware of the learning context created by the instructor for you, and to examine its effect on you. You will be asked to write a final reflection in which you look at ways in which you think your beliefs and strategies have changed, why you think this has occurred, and what you think this means for you as reader, writer, learner and teacher. The use of a portfolio is recommended (see enlarged course outline for details)

READINGS

Wells, G. (1994). *Changing schools from within*. Toronto: OISE Press.

0-7744-0404-3

Plus other selected readings provided by the instructor.