

EDUC. 385-4
WHOLE LANGUAGE
INTERSESSION, 1988.

"Whole language in its essence goes beyond the simple delineation of a series of teaching strategies to describe a shift in the way in which teachers think about and practise their art."
Sharon Rich, 1985, p. 717.

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Purposes

The purposes of this course are to help beginning and experienced teachers a) understand the theoretical foundations on which whole language instruction is based and b) develop practical strategies for a whole language approach both in language arts and throughout the classroom curriculum.

Goals

Students in this course will:

1. understand the theoretical and research foundations of the whole language approach;
2. become familiar with a variety of instructional strategies for implementing a whole language approach;
3. become familiar with strategies for assessing children's language and evaluating individual progress in a whole language program;
4. clarify personal beliefs about the teacher's role in a whole language program;
5. be able to articulate a rationale for using a whole language approach in their own classrooms, supported with examples from current educational literature and classroom practices.

Content Overview

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| Week 1: | Introduction to Whole Language |
| Week 2: | Developing Meaning through Oral Language |
| Week 3: | Developing Meaning through Reading |
| Week 4: | Developing Meaning through Writing |
| Week 5: | Designing an Integrated Whole Language Program |
| Week 6: | Evaluation in Whole Language |

Format

The course addresses both theories of whole language development and instruction and the more practical, day-to-day aspects of teaching using a whole language approach. Therefore classes will include a variety of learning opportunities such as lectures, class discussions, small-group tasks, experiential learning activities and student presentations.

During the course students will be asked to participate in activities which model whole language teaching strategies. Participants are encouraged to study these experiences from the viewpoint of learners as well as teachers.

Readings

Required

Hansen, J., Graves, D., & Newkirk, T. **Breaking Ground: Teachers Relate Reading and Writing in the Elementary School.** ISBN 435-08219-1

Newman, Judith (ed). **Whole Language Theory In Use.** ISBN 435-08224-2

Recommended

Booth, D., Swartz, L., & Zola, M. **Choosing Children's Books.** ISBN 0-921217-12-9.

Calkins, L. McCormick. **The Art of Teaching Writing.** ISBN 435-08246-9.

Waterland, L. (1985). **Read With Me: An Apprenticeship Approach to Reading.** Thimble Press. ISBN 0-903355-17-5

Throughout the course the instructor will suggest additional articles and books for enrichment reading pertinent to topics discussed in class.

Assignments

1. Maintain a double-entry journal as a tool for making meaning of your learning experiences during the whole language course. Complete brief journal writing activities assigned by the instructor. At the end of the course submit to the instructor a journal summary which documents your overall professional growth and insights during the course.

Due Session 12

20%

2. Read several children's novels or picture books. Following the guidelines provided by the instructor, choose one or more that you like and prepare a short (**no more than 8 minutes**) book talk to present in class.

Due Session 5

15%

3. Choose at least one professional book (other than the required readings) or a selection of 4-5 journal articles to enrich your understanding of language development, whole language theory or a related topic. Use the double-entry journal described in class to record and analyze your responses to the reading. Prepare a brief written analysis of the book which summarizes its content and evaluates its usefulness to teachers of whole language. Be prepared to discuss your reading in class.

Due Session 9

15%

- 4a. Examine and critique a commonly-used basal reader, addressing its strengths and weaknesses. Describe how you might use one unit from the reader as part of a whole language program, explaining what you would teach and how you would extend the stories in the unit.

OR

- 4b. Develop, implement and evaluate a writing project in your classroom using pre-writing, writing and post-writing activities and conferencing procedures. Prepare a written summary describing and evaluating your project.

OR

- 4c. Develop a presentation for parents, administrators and/or colleagues which explains the rationale for a whole language approach, illustrates some of the teaching strategies you might use in your classroom program, and describes some methods you might use to evaluate pupil progress.

Due Session 11

40%

PLEASE NOTE: ASSIGNMENT 4 MAY BE DONE AS A GROUP ASSIGNMENT

Evaluation

Assignments will count 90% toward the course grade. The remaining 10% will be based on participation. Participation will be assessed on the basis of the individual's involvement in class activities, contributions to discussion, and sharing of ideas and materials. Thoughtfulness as well as frequency of contributions will be considered.

Students will be expected to participate in a final evaluation conference with the instructor or teaching assistant during the last week of classes or the immediately following week.

Grading Criteria

- A Represents superior (A-) to exceptional (A+) performance which goes beyond the specified requirements of the assignment(s).
- B Represents good (B-) to very good (B+) performance which meets all the specified requirements of the assignment(s).
- C Represents acceptable (C-) to satisfactory (C+) performance.
- D Represents clear deviation from acceptable standards, including: Major factual inaccuracies, major gaps in the knowledge base, ambiguous, unclear or inaccurate presentation, poor organization leading to lack of coherence, and major errors in style.
- E Represents serious deviation from acceptable standards, including all the deficiencies of a D plus a major misunderstanding of the focus of the assignment.
- F Represents a lack of content in major areas of the assignment.