

ITSF 4013: Literacy and Development

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Office hours: Tuesday 5-6 drop in, Monday 3-5 by appointment (contact Ms. Cambria Russell at crussell@tc.edu)

Class meeting: Grace Dodge Hall 449 Tuesdays 3-5 PM

Course description: What is the relationship between literacy and development? What are the current trends in international literacy programming, specifically in regards to evaluation, teacher training, and curriculum development? In this course, we examine popular definitions of "literacy" and "development" even as we question the assumption that they are causally related. Adopting a social approach to literacy and language, we survey histories of literacy expansion and literacy campaigns, evaluate contemporary literacy policies, and read cross-cultural ethnographies of literacy in order to place literacy and development in historical, social, and cultural contexts. We also learn contemporary approaches to teaching literacy and planning literacy programs. To do this work, we rely on concepts from and debates in anthropology, sociolinguistics, and applied linguistics, as well as critical studies of development.

The success of this course depends upon the construction of a community of active thinkers, listeners, and readers. You will rely on each other for lively debate, respectful dissension, and conscientious, critical readings of your work. Your participation will take multiple forms. Timely and thoughtful completion of the reading, writing, and oral presentation assignments will contribute to the depth of our classroom discussions and group activities. Discussion itself--both talking and listening--is a critical dimension of participation.

Be sure to check that your preferred email address is the one listed on classweb, because I will use that email function to communicate about changes to send announcements and reminders.

Course objectives: This course aims to:

Interrogate prevailing common-sense notions of literacy and development;

Look in-depth at contemporary theories that orient research on literacy and development;

Examine how social relations affect literacy acquisition and use;

Develop a sociocultural perspective of literacy;

Explore contemporary approaches to teaching literacy;

Encourage action literacy projects;

Improve students' critical reading, research, oral presentation, and academic literacy skills.

Accommodations: All faculty members at Teachers College are committed to the inclusion of all students. We strive to make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Access and Services for Individuals with Disabilities for information about registration (166 Thorndike Hall). Services are available only to students who are registered and submit appropriate documentation. As your instructor, I am happy to discuss specific needs with you as well.

Required texts: The following book is available at Labyrinth Books at 536 West 112th Street, between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue.

Freire, Paulo. (1974). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

The remaining articles are available as electronic files. Please bring a jump drive to class during the second week, or see Cambria Russell in 374 Dodge to get a complete set of electronic readings. I suggest you bring the week's readings with you to class each week.

Evaluation

Attendance and Participation: 5 points

Each of you is expected to attend regularly and participate actively in all course experiences. The content of this course emerges precisely at the intersection between students' and professors' interpretations of the concepts, theories and experiences raised by the readings, lectures, and conversations in class. Therefore, the success of this course depends on the commitment of each of you to being an active learner, which means coming to class prepared to share your experiences, perspectives, and questions.

Presentation of project plan for the course: 5 points

By the third week of class, students must email the instructor (lb2035@columbia.edu) using the subject line "project plan for ITSF 4013." The body of the email should contain a one-paragraph description of the option students select for the project (see

below) and an enumerated plan of action for the next steps to carry out the project. *Any changes to the project plan must be cleared with the instructor.*

Attendance at a training session for literacy teachers: 5 points

Someone from New York's Literacy Assistance Center will offer us a Friday teacher training session on pedagogical approaches to teaching adult literacy. The date and time will be announced. Attendance is part of our class.

Responses: 50 points

Using concepts and material from the readings, students will respond to specific questions posed (below). Each journal entry should be 2-4 pages, double-spaced. I recommend you complete these by the date on which we'll discuss the topic, as we will often discuss them in class.

First set (25 points)

1. Spend two days observing, noting, and reflecting on your literacy practices. In your response, address some of the following questions. What type of reading and writing do you do related to the major institutions in your life (e.g., school, places of worship, commercial spaces, banking, etc) and how are they different? What type of reading and writing do you do at home (e.g., shopping lists, letter writing, reading stories to children, reading on the internet, participating in an on-line chat-room, reading a bill, reading a cereal box, etc.) and how are they different? How do these literacy practices position you differently? What do they mean to you? What new literacies have you learned recently, if any, and how have you learned them? What kinds of power differentials are evident in your literacy practices? Which literacies do you possess, why, and what do they allow you to do? What literacies don't you have access to, why, and what do they prevent you from doing? (Use Barton and Hamilton 1999; Street 1993)
2. Select a fairly delimited activity or setting, such as a classroom, museum, birth class, religious service, or post office. Conduct a two-hour mini-ethnography of literacy practices in that space. Observe the visual environment; what texts can you find? Describe the particular texts in this space. If you can, photograph or collect them. Describe particular literacy events: observe the activities around these texts, focusing on participants, settings, behaviors, and ways of talking about the text. Finally, interview people about their literacy activities; try to understand the meanings of literacy in this activity or setting. How do the literacy practices in this setting or activity privilege some and disempower others? Would you characterize the model of literacy used by participants in this setting or activity as autonomous, ideological, both, or neither? Give examples of evidence to support your categorization. For examples of micro-ethnographic studies, see www.literacy.lancs.ac.uk under "student projects" (Use Barton and Hamilton 1999; Street 1993)
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Freire's dialogical pedagogy? (Use Freire 1974; Bartlett 2005; Dyer and Choksi; and/or Archer and Jellema 1998)
4. Imagine you have been hired to develop a training strategy for adult literacy teachers in South Africa. What steps would you take to develop that strategy? What priorities would you set and why? (Use Rogers 2006; Carrie Cargile's in-class presentation)
5. Imagine you have been hired by the World Bank to assess the impact of literacy education on development in Bangladesh. How will you fulfill this assignment while maintaining an ideological model of literacy? What kind of study might you complete? What are the limitations of an ideological approach to such a study? (Use Maddox 2005)

Second set (25 points)

1. What instructional approach(es) appeal to you? Why? (use Auerbach 2001; Papen 2005; Rogers 1999)
2. Imagine you've been hired to plan an adult literacy program in China. What steps might you take to plan such a program? (Use Papen 2005; Rogers 1999; Ross 2005)
3. Related to #2 above: In planning an adult literacy program in China, what language(s) will you include in the curriculum and in the classroom? How? Why? (Use Ross 2005; Rao and Robinson-Pant 2006; Herbert and Robinson 2001; Robinson 2005)
4. Does literacy empower women? (Use Aikman, 1999; LeVine et al 2001; Maddox, 2005; Robinson-Pant, 2004; or Rockhill 1987)
5. What have you learned in this class? How might your work, research, or activities be influenced by what you have learned?

Project: 35 points

The oral presentation counts for 15 points

The written presentation counts for 20 points

Students will have *three choices* for the project: students may participate in a group project, doing a 40 minute group presentation and completing some action project with the group; students may individually find a literacy organization and volunteer with that organization for a *minimum* of 20 hours over the course of the semester, keeping a weekly journal in which they reflect on those experiences, and giving a 10 minute presentation about their experiences; or, *if students are unable to do the first or second option*, they may work individually to complete a 15-20 page research paper on a topic related to literacy

and development and give a 10 minute oral presentation to the class. *I strongly recommend that, if possible, students select option 1 or 2. In the third week of the class, each student will submit to me a plan for their action or research project. See below for details:*

1. GROUP PROJECT: Groups of 4-6 people may develop a research or action project to work on over the course of the semester. Each group will give a 40 minute class presentation and produce some type of written document. Below I list some ideas for group projects.

a. Using (at least in part) learner-centered and participatory approaches, prepare a teacher training workshop and guide for a literacy organization. The written product of the training should include the following components:

- i. A discussion of the political and historical context
- ii. An introduction to the organization, its history, and its philosophy
- iii. Adult literacy: definitions and dimensions
- iv. Learner profiles and needs assessments
- v. Approaches to teaching speaking & listening (for English learner populations)
- vi. Approaches to teaching reading & writing
- vii. Suggestions for working with the specific population served by this organization
- viii. Sample lesson plans
- ix. Resources (books, articles, textbooks and websites) and tips for selecting and developing materials
- x. A conclusion

[The International Rescue Committee has indicated an interest in having a group develop a guide for tutors of adult refugees. Contact person: Carrie Cargile cnc2115@columbia.edu]

b. Develop a curriculum for a literacy organization. The curriculum should include the following:

- i. A discussion of the political and historical context
- ii. An introduction to the organization, its history, and its philosophy
- iii. Adult literacy: definitions and dimensions
- iv. Learner profiles and needs assessments
- v. A description of the instructional approach adopted, explaining why it was selected and how it has been adapted to fit learner needs
- vi. Suggestions for working with the specific population served by this organization
- vii. Sample lesson plans
- viii. References and resources (books, articles, textbooks and websites)
- ix. A conclusion

[The organization Sauti Yetu, which provides educational services to African immigrant women, would like a group to develop a curriculum for their program. See their website www.sautiyetu.org and contact Director Zeinab Eyega at zeyega@sautiyetu.org]

c. Develop a literacy program for an educational organization.

[The Community Life Program at Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service has asked English/Spanish bilingual members of this class to help develop a bilingual family literacy program for immigrant families. People working on this project will help plan the program and volunteer to teach in it on Tuesday and/or Wednesday sometime between 3 and 8 PM. Contact Rosario at rt2012@columbia.edu]

d. Identify a literacy organization, contact them, and ask if your group can assist them by completing some task, such as developing and implementing a fund-raising strategy, conducting an organizational evaluation and needs assessment, or doing a qualitative study to examine the literacies and literacy needs of current or prospective students.

[The Community Life Program at Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service is looking for tutors who could work on literacy in English and Spanish with children and adults. Contact Flor de Maria Eilets, program director, at 212-987-4422, extension 220, or feilets@lsafhs.org]

e. Conduct a study of three literacy organizations in New York City. Read their newsletters, interview directors and other staff, observe their offices and classrooms. In your report, discuss topics such as: the history of the organizations; how funding has shifted over time, and how that has affected the services provided by the organizations; the philosophy guiding the organization; the teacher training conducted by the organizations; the curriculum employed by the organization; strengths and weaknesses of the organization's approaches; recommendations for improvement.

f. Prepare a literacy study of a region (such as Latin America, Africa, or Asia) and write policy memos on the following topics: evaluation systems and reliability of literacy indicators; teacher training; and curriculum.

g. Using Carr-Hill et al (2001) and the Ross paper on China as a guide, conduct an evaluation of literacy in a single country. Be sure to discuss: the history of literacy programs in this country; current literacy statistics, and the literacy needs of the country; contemporary literacy policy; contemporary literacy programs and their outcomes; and policy recommendations.

h. Develop any other idea for a group project and present it to the instructor.

2. INDIVIDUAL PROJECT: students may individually find and volunteer with a literacy organization for a *minimum* of 20 hours over the course of the semester. To meet the requirements of this option, students will keep a weekly journal (two typed,

single-spaced pages per hour volunteered, for a total of 40 pages) in which they reflect on their experiences at the organization. Students will also give a 10 minute presentation about their experiences to the class.

3. **INDIVIDUAL PROJECT:** students may individually complete a 15-20 page research paper on a topic related to literacy and development and give a 10 minute oral presentation to the class.

Below is a suggested template for lesson plans:

1. Warm-up/Review—encourages learners to use what they have been taught in previous lessons and provides EL Learners with the opportunity to discuss new vocabulary words.
2. Introduction to new lesson—focuses the learners' attention on the objective of the new lesson and relates the objective to their lives. This is especially important for English language learners who will need to use this information outside of class.
3. Presentation—introduces new information, checks learner comprehension of the new material, and models the tasks that the learners will do in the practice stage. This allows English language learners to feel comfortable with new tasks.
4. Practice—provides opportunities to practice and apply the new language or information and to make connections to real life situations.
5. Evaluation—enables the instructor and learners to assess how well they have grasped the lesson and to come up with ways to use this new information or skill outside of class.

Grade summary:

Participation	5 points
Project plan	5 points, due 2/6
Teacher training session	5 points, date tba
Responses, first part	15 points, due 3/6
Responses, second part	15 points, due 4/24
Oral presentation	15 points, variable presentation dates
<u>Written presentation</u>	<u>20 points, due 5/8</u>
Total	100 points

NOTE: All writing assignments should be double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman font, and one inch margins.

NOTE: All assignments are due on the date listed in the syllabus. Late assignments (the paper draft and the final paper) will be penalized two points for each day they are late. Late assignments due to medical or family emergencies will be exempted from penalties on a *case-by-case basis*, but there will be *no exceptions* made as the result of poor planning.

Plagiarism and Acknowledging Sources

To present someone else’s work as your own is to plagiarize. Whenever you quote or summarize someone else's work, you need to acknowledge it. But even when you are simply responding to another person's ideas, it is still necessary to reference that person. This course, and most academic courses, will require you to interact with (and acknowledge) the words and ideas of other people. To prepare for this, in the first weeks of the course we will review the conventions of citation. You can also find information on these conventions in style manuals, which are available at most library reference desks. If you ever have a doubt about the need to cite, I encourage you to ask me. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense; the penalty for plagiarism is failure for the course.

Schedule

	Topic/Due	Readings
1/ 23	Introduction to the course	
1/ 30	What is literacy? Why does literacy matter?	Barton, David and Mary Hamilton. (1999). Literacy practices. In David Barton, Mary Hamilton, and Roz Ivanic, eds., <i>Situated Literacies</i> . New York: Routledge. pp. 7-15. Education for All Global Monitoring Report. Chapters 5, 6, and 7.
2/ 6	History of literacy expansion and of approaches to literacy and development: An overview PROJECT PLAN DUE	Graff, Harvey. (1982). The legacies of literacy. <i>Journal of Communication</i> 32 (1), 12-26. Jones, Phillip. 1990. Unesco and the politics of global literacy. <i>Comparative Education Review</i> 34(1): 41-60. Limage, Leslie. (1999). Literacy practices and literacy policies: Where has UNESCO been and where might it be going? <i>International Journal of Educational Development</i> . 19 (1), 75-89. EFA GMR Chapter 8. The making of literate societies

2/ 13	Autonomous versus ideological approaches	<p>Bartlett, Lesley. (forthcoming). Human Capital or Human Connections? The Cultural Meanings of Education in Brazil. In <i>Teachers College Record</i> (to be published in July, 2007)</p> <p>Carrington, and Luke, A. (1997). Literacy and Bourdieu's Sociological Theory: A Reframing. <i>Language and Education</i> 11, 2, pp. 96-112.</p> <p>Maddox, B. (2005) Assessing the impact of women's literacies in Bangladesh: An ethnographic inquiry. <i>International Journal of Educational Development</i> 25, pp 123-132.</p> <p>Street, Brian. (1993). Introduction: the new literacy studies. In Brian Street, (Ed.), <i>Cross-cultural approaches to literacy</i>. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-22.</p> <p><i>Recommended:</i></p> <p>Heath, S. B. (1982). What no bedtime story means. <i>Language in society</i>, 11, 49-76.</p> <p>Scribner, Sylvia and Michael Cole. 1981. Unpackaging Literacy. In <i>Writing: The Nature, Development, and Teaching of Written Communication</i>, ed. Marcia Farr Whiteman. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. pp. 71-87.</p>
2/ 20	Paulo Freire	Freire, Paulo. (1974). <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> . New York: Continuum.
2/ 27	Training adult literacy teachers: International challenges; the South Africa case	Rogers, A. (2006). Training Adult Literacy Educators in Developing Countries. Background paper for the 2006 EFA Global Monitoring Report.
3/ 6	Freire's impact on international literacy FIRST SET OF RESPONSES DUE	<p>Archer, D. and Jellema, A. (1998). Response to Dyer & Choksi. <i>COMPARE</i> 28(1), pp. 88-92.</p> <p>Arno, Robert. (1995). Education as contested terrain in Nicaragua. <i>Comparative Education Review</i> 39(1): 28-53.</p> <p>Bartlett, Lesley. (2005). Dialogue, Knowledge, and Teacher-Student Relations: Freirean Pedagogy in Theory and Practice. <i>Comparative Education Review</i> 49(3): 344-364.</p> <p>Dyer, C. and Choksi, A. (1998). The REFLECT Approach to Literacy: some issues of method. <i>COMPARE</i> 28(1), pp. 75-87.</p> <p><i>Recommended:</i></p> <p>Betts, J. (2003). Literacies and livelihood strategies: experience from Usulután, El Salvador. <i>International Journal of Educational Development</i>, Volume 23, 3, pp. 291-298.</p> <p>Purcell-Gates, Victoria and Robin Waterman. (2000). <i>Now we read, we see, we speak: Portrait of literacy development in an adult Freirean-based class</i>. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.</p>
3/ 13	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK	
3/ 20	Learner-centered and participatory approaches to teaching literacy	<p>Auerbach, E. (2001). "Yes, but...": Problematizing participatory ESL pedagogy. In Campbell, P. & Burnaby, B. (eds) <i>Participatory Practices in Adult Education</i>. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Pp. 267-306. (not in our electronic course pack: available through Educat as an e-book)</p> <p>Papen, U. (2005) Literacy and Development: What Works for Whom? Or, How Relevant is the Social Practice View of Literacy for Literacy Education in Developing Countries? <i>International Journal of Educational Development</i> 25 (1), pp 5-17.</p> <p>Rogers, A. (1999) Improving the quality of adult literacy programmes in developing countries: the 'real literacies' approach <i>International Journal of Educational Development</i> 19(3), pp. 219-234.</p> <p><i>Recommended:</i></p> <p>Attwood, G., Castle, J., Smythe, S. (2004), "'Women are lions in dresses': negotiating gender relations in REFLECT learning circles in Lesotho", in Robinson-Pant, A. (ed.) <i>Women, Literacy and Development: Alternative perspectives</i>, London: Routledge</p> <p>Fiedrich, M. (2004) 'Functional participation? Questioning participatory attempts at reshaping African gender identities: the case of REFLECT in Uganda', in Robinson-Pant, A. (ed.) <i>Women, Literacy and Development: Alternative perspectives</i>, London: Routledge</p> <p>Fiedrich, M. and Jellema, A. (2003) <i>Literacy, Gender and Social Agency: Adventures in Empowerment</i>, DfID Research Report 53, September 2003</p>
3/ 27	PRESENTATIONS	
4/	Case studies: China, IRC,	Bruno, A. (2006) Refugee Admissions and Resettlement Policy. Washington, DC:

3	Somali Bantu	<p>Congressional Research Service Report for Congress. Costello, A. and Bebic, S. (2006). Cultural Orientation for Refugees. <i>CAL Digest</i>. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics. Ross, H. (2005). China country study. Unpublished manuscript.</p>
4/ 10	PRESENTATIONS	
4/ 17	Literacies and languages	<p>Rao, N. and Robinson-Pant, A. (2006). Adult education and indigenous people: Addressing gender in policy and practice. <i>International Journal for Educational Development</i> 26, pp. 209-223. Herbert, P and Robinson, C. (2001) ‘Another Language, another literacy? Practices in Northern Ghana’. In Street, B.V. (ed), <i>Literacy and Development: ethnographic perspectives</i>, London: Routledge. Robinson, C. (2005). Languages and literacies. A commissioned study for the 2006 EFA Global Monitoring Report. <i>Recommended:</i> Aikman, Sheila. (2001). Literacies, languages and developments in the Peruvian Amazon. In Brian Street, ed., <i>Literacy and Development</i>. New York: Routledge. pp. 103-120. Freeland, Jane. (1995). “Why go to school to learn Miskitu?”: Changing constructs of bilingualism, education, and literacy among the Miskitu of Nicaragua’s Atlantic coast. <i>International Journal of Educational Development</i> 15 (3), 245-261. Heller, Monica. (1996). Legitimate language in a multilingual school. <i>Linguistics and Education</i> 8 (2), 139-57. Yates, Rachel. (1995). Functional literacy and the language question. <i>International Journal of Educational Development</i> 15(4): 437-447.</p>
4/ 24	PRESENTATIONS SECOND SET OF RESPONSES DUE	
5/ 1	Does literacy empower? Literacy and gender	<p>Aikman, Sheila. (1999). Schooling and development: Eroding Amazon women's knowledge and diversity. In Heward, C. and Bunwaree, S., (Eds.) (1999) <i>Gender, Education and Development</i>. London: Zed Books. LeVine, Robert, Sarah LeVine, and Beatrice Schnell. (2001). "Improve the women": Mass schooling, female literacy, and worldwide social change. <i>Harvard Educational Review</i>, 71 (1): 1-53. Limage, Leslie. (1994). Women’s literacy in worldwide perspective. <i>Convergence</i> 27(2/3): 33-42. Robinson Pant, A. (2000). Women and literacy: A Nepal perspective. <i>International Journal of Educational Development</i> 20, 349-364. Rockhill, Kathleen. (1987). Gender, language and the politics of literacy. <i>British Journal of Sociology of Education</i> 8(2), 153-167. <i>Recommended:</i> Paktar, Archana. (1995). Socioeconomic status and female literacy in India. <i>International Journal of Educational Development</i> 15(4): 401-409. Robinson-Pant, A. (2004) ‘The “illiterate woman”: changing approaches to researching women’s literacy’ in Robinson-Pant, A. (ed.) <i>Women, Literacy and Development: Alternative perspectives</i>, London: Routledge Stromquist, N. (2006). Women’s right to adult education as a means to citizenship. <i>International Journal of Educational Development</i> 26, pp. 140-152.</p>
5/ 8	PRESENTATIONS WRITTEN PRESENTATION DUE	