

ELEM 3250 Mid-Term Assignment  
Fall 2012

10/11/12

Philosophy of Literacy Education Revision 1

Literacy is crucial to an individual's success in today's society. Reading is a primary source of gathering information, and writing is an important source of communication. A lot of what we know about the world, we have learned from reading. Literacy determines success in school, success in learning to read, and success in life. Ever since I can remember, my parents read me a bedtime story every night. I would sit on my mom or dad's lap and watch them point to the words as they said them out loud. Eventually, I was able to read along with my parent every night. Before I knew it, I was reading to my parents. I think that it is crucially important for parents/caregivers to support literacy at home. Children have their first encounters with literacy at home before entering the school system. While students do learn in school from their teachers, home is where literacy skills get the opportunity to expand. My mom got me involved in the summer reading program every year at the library, which gave me extrinsic motivation to read outside of the school year. By completing a certain number of books on the summer reading list for my age, I received a prize. Correlation studies have shown that supportive home literacy environments help to enhance children's emergent literacy abilities.

Each student needs to be provided with literacy instruction that best suits him/her, as opposed to using the one-size-fits-all approach. In grade school, I enjoyed the writing assignments where I was able to write about myself and my life experiences. It is important to take your students' interests into account. When students read or write about something they can connect to, they enjoy it and retain more information. Building writing into your daily schedule by creating opportunities for students to write throughout the school day helps to increase literacy use in the classroom. You can have your students sign their names on an attendance sheet, graph the weather in the morning, or many other simple tasks that can be added to your daily routines. Through integrating reading and writing with science and social studies, you can increase your students' depth of vocabulary. Without integrating reading and writing into other subjects, many students will enter intermediate grades with a huge vocabulary deficit. Teachers should make sure they are using a wide variety of literacy resources and materials in their classrooms throughout the school year.

When having class discussions about a piece of literature, teachers should constantly be asking the students comprehension questions. The comprehension questions the teacher asks should require the students to develop a deep understanding of the text. Students need to understand that literacy is a part of their every day lives. In class, we did a literacy dig that helped us realize the importance of being literate. If you cannot read the label on a medicine bottle, then how do you know how much medicine to take? Large visible word walls in the classroom help to introduce and continue to aid primary students with reading and writing. All children should be given equal opportunities to receive literacy education in public school systems. Literacy is a critical factor that is a part of our every day lives. Strong literacy skills can enhance your chances of success in today's world.

Works Cited

Shelly Macdonald, et al. "Family Literacy Practices And Home Literacy Resources: An Australian Pilot Study." *Journal Of Early Childhood Literacy* 12.2 (2012): 113-138. ERIC. Web. 3 Sept. 2012.

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Johnston, P., Ivey, G., & Faulkner, A. (2011). Talking in class: Remembering what is important about classroom talk. *The Reading Teacher*, 65(4), 232-237. doi: 10.1002/TRTR.01033

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### Narrative Reflection

In my first paper, I ranted on and on about the importance of literacy at home for students. I gave examples of my childhood experiences with literature, from my parents reading to me every night to my mom signing me up for the summer reading program at the local public library. I stressed the importance of supportive home environments and family members for children's success in literacy. I also explained why literacy is such an important factor for someone to be successful in making a living in today's society. My views that I expressed in my first paper have not changed at all. I still believe that literacy should be introduced to children way before they start grade school, and parents need to be supportive of their children and literacy at home. I have only enhanced my beliefs in my second paper. It was hard to sum up my very own philosophy of literature education in one single spaced essay. So far in this class I have already at least doubled my beliefs on literacy education.

I have started to believe that it is important to include reading and writing in all of the daily activities and routines used in a classroom. Reading and writing should be integrated into other subjects as well, such as science and social studies, so students broaden their vocabulary. Students need to get as much literacy experience possible while in primary grades; because once they get older, they begin applying their knowledge and adding onto it. There are multiple ways that literacy can be added to daily activities and routines or to social studies and science lessons. When I went into my practicum class, I noticed that my teacher was using writing in her lesson about fall. The students drew a picture of fall and wrote a sentence to describe it. When they moved onto their math lesson (counting numbers), the teacher had the students read off the numbers out loud as she pointed to them on her chalkboard. Through watching the students use many of the six different language arts in just one hour, I realized how important it was for the teacher to incorporate literacy into her lesson plans. *Writing in Early Childhood Classrooms: Guidance for Best Practice* talked about creating opportunities for children to write during daily activities and routines. I thought that the article made great points and gave good

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examples for creating different writing opportunities for the students. The article suggested building approximately fifteen minutes into the daily schedule for composing ideas to print. Setting aside those fifteen minutes, "not only elevates the importance of writing in children's daily learning but also ensures that writing will be done regularly." Another part of that paragraph said, "This writing may contain both pictures about what children have experienced as well as children's attempts to capture their language through the use of scribbles, letter-like shapes, letters, or just writing their name. What matters is that they write to represent their thoughts and ideas." I decided that it is not hard to add reading and writing to routines but that you do have to be creative when doing so.

*Classrooms That Work: They Can All Read and Write* argued why social studies and science still needed to be taught in primary grades and also integrated with reading and writing. The section states, "Children who have not had regular science and social studies instruction usually enter the intermediate grades with huge vocabulary deficits....Young children need to be increasing the size and depth of their meaning vocabularies so that they can comprehend the more sophisticated and less familiar text they will be reading as they get older." With children engaging in science and social studies units, they are discovering real reasons for reading and writing.

The second belief that I added was the actual importance of literacy in our every day lives. In class we did a literacy dig activity in groups. The actual worksheet that we were given told us to complete a search throughout our house for items, materials, and anything else that required us to read on a daily, if not hourly or minutely, basis. We were told to find at least five items in our house that required the use of literacy skills; but we had to avoid the obvious ones, like books and magazines. For each item we found, we would have to say where we found it, explain the overall importance of it, and how it promotes literacy. Instead, in our groups, we went around the building and right outside of the building to find examples of literacy. We recorded videos as to why our item(s) promoted literacy. We all came back together and shared our videos. I realized that without literacy you would not know what a stop sign was, how much medicine you should be taking, and many more really crucial symbols and words. While reading chapter twelve of *Classrooms That Work: They Can All Read and Write*, I noticed that literacy was crucial to every activity that the students participated in throughout a typical school day. Literacy is used in choice centers, the morning message, shared reading, writing, assigned centers, independent reading, teacher read-aloud, and math/social studies/science. The students get to read and write about ideas that interest them.

My third belief is towards comprehensive questions and positive language being used with students. I think it is important to always ask open-ended questions to keep students engaged and to make sure you are requiring deeper thinking skills. By asking your students comprehensive question, you are developing a greater understanding of their knowledge. That way you know what they are understanding and what they are struggling with. In the journal article we read, *Talking in Class: Remembering What's Important About Classroom Talk*, the questions the teacher asked the students about what they had read required them to use decision making skills. The teacher said, "I found it hard trying to keep [characters] Mia and Sophie apart. Did you have trouble with that? How did you manage that?" After Sam tells about the life of one of the two characters spiraling downward, Amy asks, "If you were her best friend, what would you tell her?" The article suggested turning the students' attention to the process of how they came up with an

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answer. The article gave many different examples of how to approach students with questions to encourage discussion and comprehension. My beliefs will only continue to broaden and may perhaps change. I will, however, always believe that literacy is one of the most important factors in an individual's life.

Checklist

<b>Notebook Section &amp; Assignments</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> when completed	<b>Comments supporting your efforts</b>
<b>Class Meetings Notes:</b> 8/27 9/4 9/10 9/17 9/24 10/1	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Thorough notes and worksheets from activities done in class to match up with them all in correct order by date.
<b>Practicum Observations/Notes:</b> Completed Chart #1 Completed Chart #2	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Watched Mrs. Mills the first observation, but had a substitute for the second observation. I was able to still fill out the observation chart some.
<b>Lesson Planning &amp; Reflections:</b> BDA Template with commentary BDA Example BDA Template for planning	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	I used the example and template when planning my first lesson for practicum. The example and template were very helpful.
<b>Methods Demonstration:</b> Notes from planning Notes from demonstrations	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	I have my notes that were submitted and my scratch paper notes that I used while planning the lesson. I also have the handouts from each group that taught their method.
<b>Writer's Notebook:</b> 8 entries	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have 10 entries.
<b>Writing Portfolio:</b> Notes about Writing Topic, genre, & format	<input type="checkbox"/>	Still a little confused on what I want my writing topic to be, but I have made some charts to help me narrow down my options.
<b>Reading Notes:</b> Jones chapters 1-4 CTW chapters 1, 3 + Word Wall, 5, & 12 Gerde article Johnston article Allen article	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	I have thoroughly enjoyed just about all of the reading assignments we have had. I have learned a lot from each one. They are very time consuming.

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Self-Reflection

So far throughout this course, I have not missed a class. I agree that it is important to be in class gathering my own interpretations of the information being presented. I have shown up to every class completely prepared with all of my assignments completed and ready to discuss them. I look forward to every class that we have, because I learn more about the importance of teaching literacy and how to teach it. I have not missed a practicum day either. We had a substitute teacher the second day that we went for observation, so I felt a little cheated out of an observation. I still learned from the observation the day we watched the substitute though. I have kept all of my assignments up to date, but I need to start doing them right after class on Monday nights while I still have everything we learned that night fresh in my head. I do not like sending e-mails asking questions, because I feel like I am bothering my teachers with them. Therefore, I normally just try and read the instructions a few more times and figure them out as best as I can. I need to get over my fear of asking questions via e-mails. I also need to make sure I pay attention to everything said in class so that you will not have to repeat information.

I always make sure that I get to class with at least ten minutes to spare, because I like to get myself set up at my table before class starts. I also show up on time to my practicum to prove to the school faculty that I am a responsible student. I did come to one class this semester very sick and had a hard time focusing, but I did not want to miss out on the information that we were learning that day. The day I came in sick I did not participate in asking questions and only participated in the class discussions a few times. Other than the day that I was sick, I think I have come to every class ready to participate. I have not been able to resolve the problems that I am having with my practicum group. I ended up doing the entire methods demonstration, and it stressed me out. I am now finding it impossible to get both of them to meet with me and help with the group lesson plan that we are working on. I would rather work alone, so that others are not getting credit for my hours of hard work. I need to figure out how to get them more involved. Teaching requires working together, and group skills are an important part of that.

For the rest of the semester, I plan on attending every class and practicum on time and being prepared to participate. I will start doing my assignments way ahead of time to give myself time to perfect them. I will also make sure that my assignments are all turned in on time. I plan on participating more and asking more questions, if I have them. I am going to take responsibility and solve the problem I am having with my group by talking to them in an adult manner without getting upset. I am also going to make sure that I connect what I learn in class to my teaching experiences in order to get the most that I can from this course.