

Instructors:

<p>Maren Aukerman 221 Cubberley aukerman@stanford.edu Tel.: 650-721-1307 Office hours: by appointment</p>	<p>Paolo Martin Office hours: by appointment pcmartin@stanford.edu Office hours: by appointment</p>
---	--

This final course in the literacy sequence is organized around **recognizing and engaging students as sense-makers**. It will address the following: **How can literacy instruction transform?** The transformative potential of literacy instruction discussed in this course falls into three overlapping domains:

- a) how fully we decide to honor and engage with children’s voices and perspectives in all their unruly complexity;
- b) how we select texts and curricular activities that for their ability to challenge and engage; and
- c) how we support meaningful dialogue in the classroom.

In the process of exploring these domains, we will wrestle with a number of important questions, including:

What is reading comprehension? At its core, reading comprehension is about making sense of text. It is possible to make sense of texts in many different ways, and children often make sense of texts differently than their teachers and peers do. *A premise of this course that the teaching of reading should be focused most of all on children’s textual sensemaking rather than primarily on getting students to produce “right” answers about what texts mean.*

Who is a sense-maker? All of us! Children arrive at school already sense-makers—intelligent and thoughtful people who make decisions about what social interactions, texts, and their observations about the world might mean. Every child engages in sensemaking, and every child learns about the world through opportunities to make sense of things and through opportunities to learn how others are making sense of those things. But, while sensemaking is something all children do, every child’s sensemaking is unique. Sometimes children’s sensemaking is hard to understand, but working toward such understanding, as a teacher, matters both interpersonally and pedagogically. *A premise of this course is that teachers of reading should trust, value, and seek to understand both the social and the textual sensemaking of each child they teach.*

How can teachers deepen the ways in which they trust, value, and seek to understand children’s sensemaking? Close, non-evaluative observation and high-quality dialogue are both crucial. Observation enables us to notice what students *are* doing and understanding rather than focusing heavily on what they are *not* doing or understanding. Orchestrating high-quality dialogue in the classroom enables us to a.) hear the emerging ideas students offer at the conversational table; b.) engage with those ideas in a serious way; and c.) communicate curiosity and respect for those ideas. *A premise of this course is that close observation and high-quality dialogue take practice; a small-group text discussion is an ideal place for such practice, but what you learn about noticing and dialoguing will serve you well beyond this instructional format.*

How do children extend and transform their textual sensemaking? The beauty of different children bringing different textual ideas into play during discussion is that children are hearing and evaluating *multiple* ways of reading the text and of drawing upon textual evidence. Powerful pedagogical dialogue goes beyond making space for multiple voices to be heard; it also creates the opportunity, even the necessity, of students wrestling deeply with their own and each other’s ideas about what a text might mean. *A premise of this course is that students’ varying, often conflicting ideas about the world and about textual meaning should drive the conversation during text discussions.*

How can a teacher orchestrate instruction so that wrestling with peers’ ideas about text becomes a practice that is meaningful and sensible to students? If the teacher focuses classroom dialogue on getting students to share her/his own understandings of a text, it may well pre-empt the need for students to listen deeply to each other, and their need to evaluate the ideas and evidence others present. If student ideas are to take center stage, the teacher may need to bite her/his tongue at times, particularly when ideas come up that don’t reflect her/his understanding of the text. But the teacher absolutely plays an ongoing active role in the conversation, for example, as someone who helps surface student ideas and who invites other students to share in her/his curiosity about the textual thinking students share. When discussion doesn’t seem to be “working,” or when the teacher wants discussion to evolve to become more powerful, it is the teacher’s responsibility to examine how her language and instructional choices need to change to make space for that. *A premise of this course is that teacher language and decision-making play a pivotal role in allowing students to wrestle fruitfully with one another’s textual sensemaking: by learning to identify particular kinds of talk moves, consider their effects, and subsequently adjust your own participation in nuanced ways, you can be agentive in orchestrating these kinds of discussions.*

Sounds great if kids are on the right track as far as what the text means, but what if they aren’t? Ah, there’s the rub, and a place where we expect this class to be a challenge and an exercise in learning to trust your students. It’s much easier to trust, value, and seek to understand the textual ideas that align with our own, but it’s arguably even more important to trust, value, and seek to understand textual ideas that don’t. There is evidence that students who have the opportunity to wrestle with each other’s thinking are actually at an advantage when it comes to lasting understandings (Nystrand, 1997), suggesting that focusing on whether a student got this one part of the text “right”

may short-circuit opportunities for deeper comprehension in the long run. But beyond that, *a premise of this course is that students who engage in discussion centered on student textual ideas are learning more than just what a text means, or the content information a text communicates: they are learning what it can mean to communicate ideas, marshal evidence and engage with each other's ideas; they are developing ideas about what reading is, what it is good for, and who they are as readers; they are developing intellectually curious and critical dispositions toward content, learning, dialogue, and their own textual ideas; and, finally they are learning to see each other (or not) as particular kinds of intellectual partners and resources. Teaching reading is about all of these things.*

Course goals

Throughout the quarter, you will work toward developing an inner pedagogical compass that enables you to do the following:

1. Use talk, observation, and student reading/writing to get to know your students, allowing you to orchestrate instruction that is meaningfully contingent on their particularities and commonalities as literacy learners and as people;
2. Recognize how children variously make sense of text, and various ways you can support their text comprehension as they dialogue with you and with each other;
3. Consider how student curiosity, questions, inferences, and background knowledge can play a critical role in classroom meaning-making;
4. Identify how students' everyday language and social relationships can serve as resources for learning;
5. Facilitate text discussions that are oriented toward making student sense-making central to the conversation;
6. Consider the affordances of various discursive moves, text genres, and instructional activities;
7. Locate aspects of text that might pose a challenge to different students, as well as means of supporting students in working through these challenges;
8. Work and converse with other educators around all of the above.

Nature of the seminar

You will not receive many lectures in this class: each class will depend, instead, on the ideas we develop with one another as we engage in an ongoing conversation about pedagogy. We ask that you bring your own experiences as a reader/writer/thinker/teacher into dialogue with those of others, and with the course readings. Our classroom community depends on all of us making the commitment to one another to read thoughtfully, so that we can work together to critically unpack those readings during class. For the sake of your own learning, but also for the sake of the learning community

to which you belong as a part of STEP, *please complete all the readings, bring copies to class with you, and be prepared to talk about them.* This quarter is particularly intense as you juggle augmented placement responsibilities with a range of coursework, but the course will mean much more to you, and to your STEP colleagues, if you read carefully.

Course readings

Course readings will be available on the coursework website. Also make sure you secure one of the following books (n.b.: *Click Clack Moo* and *Zoo* should be available in Spanish if needed). Grade level bands are approximate; use your own judgment about which book might be best for your students.

**Click Clack Moo: Cows that Type*, by Doreen Cronin (Recommended for grades K-1; a version is available in Spanish under the title *Clic Clac Muu: Vacas Escritoras*.)

**Zoo*, by Anthony Browne (Recommended for grades 1-3; a version is available in Spanish under the title *Zoológico*)

**Shortcut*, David McCaulay (Recommended for grades 3-5; not available in Spanish)

Expectations during class

Consider what it is that you hope for and expect from your own students! You are asked to be a student who engages deeply with the subject matter and gives it your all. We expect you to engage with your colleagues to seriously challenge your thinking and your teaching practice. The class depends on your contribution: please be on time, complete the readings for each class in advance, bring the readings and any assignments with you, and participate fully in the activities/ discussions during the seminar. *If you must miss a class, please let Maren and Paolo know in advance, via email if possible.*

Cell phones & digital devices: Please turn off and put away cell phones before class starts, as a matter of professionalism and as a courtesy to your colleagues in the class. If you bring a computer or other digital device to class, you are committing to using it responsibly and respectfully (no instant messaging, checking e-mail, emergency lesson planning, etc.); please hold yourselves and each other accountable to this standard.

Assignments summary

You will receive more detailed information on these assignments:

1. Plan and facilitate 2 discussions. One will be with a small group; the other may be either small-group or whole-class, depending on your preference. Sessions will generally last between 30 minutes and an hour. The instructional focus of the conversations is eliciting and responding to student ideas about text, better understanding students' sense-making and participation, and exploring ways of getting students to engage with each other's ideas. There is no graded written component to this assignment, but you will be asked to turn in draft questions and to reflect on your discussions. You are asked to audio or video record the discussions you facilitate in order to help you be more reflective on your language in your final project.

2. Meaningful instructional practices group presentation. As a group, you will read several articles on an instructional theme, discuss them, and prepare a class activity and a handout that explains and animates the type of instruction in a memorable way. You will assemble a list of texts (a text set) that could be used in relation to this instructional theme, providing a short précis of each.

3. Final project: dialogic discussion preparation and reflection assignment. You will generate a narrative sketch explaining how you might use a text to facilitate dialogically organized discussion, and you will write an accompanying reflection in which you reflect in part on your language during your 2 discussions, using the video/audio recordings from those discussions as a resource.

Course Expectations and Grading

We have high expectations for the quality of your work. We expect you to engage deeply with course concepts by thinking, reading, writing, and teaching to the absolute best of your ability. We expect critical dialogue, tough questions, and a willingness to take on, in an honest way, the risk of deeply exploring something that may feel quite unfamiliar, conceptually and pedagogically. Because we strongly believe you will do so, *we hope and expect that every student in this class will earn an A.* (We will not be giving A+'s or A-'s because we want you to take intellectual and pedagogical risks as learners and as teachers without being burdened by whether you are going to get a top grade.)

Our primary goal in responding to your assignments is to provide feedback and engage in conversation about the work you have done. Thus, we will provide comments but not any letter grade, numerical grade, or rubric score on your written assignments. If we think your work needs further revision to both benefit your thinking and meet course expectations, we will ask you to edit, rewrite, or submit an addendum to what you have turned in. We see this as an organic part of the learning process, and most students who need to resubmit assignments go on to excel in our course.

We will give a B grade only to students who have completed the main course requirements but have not fully met our course expectations, which include:

1. Regular, on-time attendance (except in highly unusual circumstances, you are not allowed to miss more than one class session);

2. Coming to class prepared, having closely read required readings and having completed any fieldwork or other preparation you are asked to undertake;
3. Rigorous, open-minded, and respectful class participation (note that, although we strongly encourage everyone to speak up in whole-class discussions, you will not be penalized for not doing so, as long as you participate in other ways);
4. Generating a video clip and 3 high-quality written assignments that meet the requirements set out in instructions that will be provided for each (in some cases, you may need to submit revisions);
5. Turning in all work *and* any requested revisions on time.

We do not anticipate giving any grade below a B, but reserve the right in rare cases to do so if course requirements are not met. Should you have any questions about your progress in the course, please do not hesitate to talk with your section instructors about it.

Please note that, if permission is granted to turn in an assignment late, you will receive credit but may receive few, if any, additional comments on your work.

Expectations for assignments

Please keep the following in mind for all assignments:

- *Stanford Honor Code.* You are expected to follow the Stanford Honor Code. For a full explanation of the Stanford Honor Code, please go to

<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm>

If you have any questions about how it applies to a particular assignment, please ask. Note that it is considered a violation of the Honor Code to accept notes, or summaries in any form, from another student on an assigned reading that you have not yourself read.

- *Work quality.* Care about your work, and do your best. Do better than your best: push yourself to take risks and make commitments that will further develop the quality of your work, as you would hope your own students would do. Enlist the support of others: in this class, you are encouraged to have others help you edit and revise your work. You are also encouraged to make use of the resources available at the Stanford Writing Center: see <http://swc.stanford.edu/>.
- *Respect and privacy.* Please guard the privacy of students and cooperating teachers by using only pseudonyms for those who appear in your writing.

For students with documented disabilities

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). SDRC staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an *Accommodation Letter* for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the SDRC as soon as possible since timely notice is

needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066).

Meaningful instructional practices group presentation (small group)

You will work with a group to read and present on one of the following special literacy topics:

- a) Reading and writing picturebooks with children
- b) Participatory action research: Children conducting their own inquiries into the world around them
- c) Critical literacy: Students empowered to unpack texts and assumptions
- d) Drama in the elementary classroom: Embodying literacies
- e) Exploring literacy in the digital age: Using new media for children's stories.

The specific readings for each group are listed below.

1. Reading and Writing Picturebooks with Children

- Pappas, C. et al., Research Directions: Multimodal Books in Science-Literacy Units: Language and Visual Images for Meaning Making
- Sipe, Talking back and talking over: Young children's expressive engagement during picturebook readalouds
- Roser, Maloch, and Bomer (2012): "Looking, Thinking, Talking, Reading, Writing, Playing...Images", Language Arts.
- Zapata, A. et al. Bilingual Picturebook Making in the Elementary School Classroom

2. Participatory Action Research: Inquiries into Contexts & Environments

- Serebrin, W. & Wigglesworth, C. Loving "Killdeer Pond": The Multiple Signs of Children's Inquiry
- Burke, K. & Greene, S. Participatory Action Research, Youth Voices, and Civic Engagement
- Lynn Gatto, "Lunch Is Gross": Gaining Access to Powerful Literacies.

3. Critical Literacy: Unpacking Texts & Assumptions

- Leland, C. and Bruzas, S.. Becoming Text Analysts: Unpacking Purpose and Perspective.

- Mellor, B., & Patterson, A. Teaching readings?
- Hermann-Wilmarth, J. and Ryan, C.. Research & Policy: Doing What You Can: Considering Ways to Address LGBT Topics in Language Arts Curricula

4. *Drama: Embodying Literacies.*

- Whitmore, K. Becoming the Story in the Joyful World of “Jack and the Beanstalk”.
- Dyson, A. The Ninjas, the X-Men, and the Ladies: Playing with Power and Identity in an Urban Primary School.
- Edmiston, B. Going up the Beanstalk: Discovering giant possibilities for responding to literature through drama.

5. *Multimodal storytelling & digital media.*

- Emert, T. Interactive Digital Storytelling with Refugee Children
- Husbye et al. Critical Lessons and Playful Literacies: Digital Media in PK–2 Classrooms
- Damico & Riddle. Exploring Freedom and Leaving a Legacy: Enacting New Literacies with Digital Texts in the Elementary Classroom.

BLIS Schedule of Readings/Assignments 2017

	Readings	Assignments & class preparation
<p>Class 1- Thursday, 4/6</p> <p>Thinking critically about texts and readers</p>	<p>Moore, A. (1996). Assessing young readers: Questions of Culture and Ability.</p> <p>Schwanenflugel & Knapp (2017). Three myths about ‘reading levels’ and why you shouldn’t fall for them.</p> <p>Lewis, M. et al. (2001). Dangerous discourses: Using controversial books to support engagement, diversity, and democracy.</p>	
<p>Class 2- Monday, 4/10</p> <p>More about texts and readers.... Plus, what is a transformative perspective (and why should we care)?</p>	<p>Hall, L. (2009). Struggling Reader, Struggling Teacher. An examination of student-teacher transactions with reading instruction and text in social studies.</p> <p>Bersh, L. (2013). “The Curricular Value of Teaching about Immigration through Picture Book Thematic Text Sets”. Read closely pp. 47- 50. The rest you may read now or save for future reference.</p>	
<p>Class 3- Thursday, 4/13</p> <p>Meaningful comprehension in the age of the Common Core.</p>	<p>Newkirk, T. (2016). Unbalanced literacy: Reflections on the Common Core.</p> <p>Aukerman, M. (2008). In praise of Wiggle Room: Locating comprehension in unlikely places.</p> <p>Discourse patterns: Parts 1 & 2: Test Questions versus Authentic questions; Uptake (pp. 1-7) AND Part 5: Coding.</p> <p>Norms for talking with others about video discussions handout</p>	

<p>Class 4- Thursday, 4/20</p> <p>Examining language and interaction during text discussion</p>	<p>Nystrand, M. (1997). Dialogic instruction: When Recitation becomes Conversation (Opening Dialogue, Ch.1).</p> <p>Summary of Nystrand and Gamoran, Ch. 2</p> <p>Discourse patterns: Part 3: Specific kinds of Authentic Questions</p> <p>Text recommendations for dialogically organized discussions</p>	<p><i>Assignment for class: Bring your text for your first discussion, as well as a list of 5-10 authentic questions you could ask about the text you will be reading. We will provide further instructions on this assignment. Email your questions in a word document to Paolo by 8 pm on 4/19.</i></p>
<p>Class 5- Thursday, 4/27</p> <p>Conceptualizing literacy development in transformative ways</p>	<p>Aukerman & Chambers Schuldt (2016). Closely Reading “Reading Closely.”</p> <p>Aukerman. (2015) . How Should Readers Develop Across Time? Mapping Change <i>Without</i> a Deficit Perspective.</p> <p>Discourse patterns: Part 4.</p> <p>What drives the water cycle? Transcript.</p> <p>Some Myths and Realities about the Teacher’s Role in Dialogically Organized Instruction.</p>	<p>By today, facilitate your first discussion on one of the following texts: Click Clack Moo, Zoo, or Shortcut. Video or audio record it.</p> <p>Presentation 1.</p>
<p>Class 6- Thursday, 5/4</p> <p>African American Vernacular English in the literacy classroom</p>	<p>Dyson, A. & Smitherman, G. (2009). The Right (Write) Start: African American Language and the Discourse of Sounding Right</p>	<p><i>By today, facilitate your second discussion (on text of your choice). Video or audio record it.</i></p> <p>Presentations 2 & 3.</p>

<p>Class 7- Thursday, 5/11</p> <p>A framework for creating critically literate classrooms</p>	<p>Harste, J. (2014). The Art of Learning to Be Critically Literate.</p> <p>Lewis, Leland, and Harste, "Why do we need an instructional theory of critical literacy?" In Creating Critical Classrooms: K-8 Reading and Writing with an Edge.</p> <p>Guide for Selecting Anti-Bias Children's Books http://www.tfcbooks.org/guide-anti-bias-childrens-books</p>	<p>Presentations 4 & 5.</p> <p>Final paper is due May 19th.</p>
---	---	--