

PART I: Research Project and Final Paper

(40% of final grade)

Purpose: This project introduces students to language and literacy research and is designed to promote an understanding of the important and complex relationship between theory, research and authentic practice. The project will provide a structured opportunity for students to participate in critical literacy research and praxis and to develop research skills and analytic tools for future reflective practice.

Project Description:

This project introduces you to critical literacy and the concept of *praxis* in the role of learner. You will design and implement a critical literacy project in which you will identify a social justice problem/issue and, through praxis (reflection and action), attempt to redress that problem/issue. You will gather data on this process in the form of documents, audio taped interviews and group meetings (transcribed), and observational notes (field notes) of the process and its results. You will present the project during the last class session. (40% of grade)

The completed paper should present some preliminary understandings about the nature of literacy learning in the particular project you design and implement. The final paper will include the following sections:

- 1) An **introduction** that situates the upcoming paper. Explain what the paper will be “doing” and articulate the definition of literacy you have come to understand in your course readings and class discussion. State your research question in this section.
- 2) A brief discussion of the **context** of the project, the problem/issue you addressed, and any descriptive information about physical or virtual space/s, participants, etc.
- 3) A brief **theoretical** section that frames, as well as provides a foundation for, your project, analysis and interpretation of the data. Cite appropriate references from class readings or other sources using APA style (<http://www.apastyle.org/>).
- 4) A discussion of the **methods** used in the conduct of the activity. Be sure to describe the project in detail, what you did as you designed and implemented the project, and describe the data you collected.
- 5) An elaborated discussion of the processes and consequences of the project. What did you learn from the **data analysis**? This section is data based; therefore, it should be an analytic reporting of the data associated with your project. This is where you discuss the overall literacy events and practices in which you participated, what you observed in these events/practices, what praxis you followed and the consequences of the project overall. Make sure you have evidence (e.g. data excerpts) for claims made. Weave in theory when appropriate to support your argument.
- 6) The **implications** section. This section should include a discussion of what you think this all means (the so-what?) and what implications you believe your findings have on the teaching and learning of literacy. Be sure to include a discussion of how you might design and implement a critical literacy project such as this in K-12 classrooms. You should also include a description and reflection of the experience of the group learning process you went through in the analysis and writing of this project and relate this discussion to the theories covered in class.
- 7) **Appendices**. Attach all the analytical work completed for the project (e.g. documents, field notes, interview transcripts, artifacts produced and/or analyzed, etc.). Include agreement page signed by all group members indicating equitable work distribution in this section. Papers without complete appendices will not be accepted.

Make sure the title page includes the names of all authors.

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Research Project and Final Paper Rubric

Name/s: _____

Criteria	1 Unacceptable/ Insufficient	2 Needs Improvement	3 Basic Understanding	4 Outstanding
Theoretical Framework	There is no theoretical framework, or the one provided does not help explain the analysis and discussion of consequences, and makes no connections to course materials or the analysis presented.	The paper articulates a theoretical framework that provides some foundation for the analysis and discussion of consequences, and makes some tenuous connections to course materials, but misses some important links.	The paper articulates a theoretical framework that provides an adequate foundation for the analysis and discussion of consequences. The theoretical framework draws clearly on relevant course materials.	The paper articulates a rich and coherent theoretical framework that provides a convincing foundation for the analysis and discussion of consequences, and draws meaningfully on relevant course materials.
Definition of Literacy	The definition of literacy is not articulated.	The definition of literacy is vaguely articulated and is tenuously connected to the course readings and data analysis.	The definition of literacy is adequately articulated and is somewhat grounded in the theoretical framework, course readings and data analysis.	The definition of literacy is clearly articulated and is explicitly grounded in the theoretical framework, course readings and project analysis.
Research Question	There is no research question, or the question has no relationship to the rest of the paper.	The project and paper are loosely structured around a research question with little connection to the theoretical framework.	The project and paper are structured around a clear and focused research question, but not clearly connected to the theoretical framework.	The project and paper are well structured around a clear and focused research question, which is embedded within the theoretical framework.
Context Description	The context is not described or described in insufficient detail to give a sense of the project or the problem/issue addressed.	The context is described but key details are missing. Minimal information about the problem/issue addressed and why it is important.	The context is adequately described, including a clear description of the problem/issue addressed and why it is important.	The context is richly described, including a detailed description of the problem/issue addressed and why it is important.
Study Methods	The methods used to analyze the data are not described. There is little or no explanation of how the study was conducted.	The methods used to analyze the data are minimally described. The explanation of how the study was conducted is superficial.	The methods used to analyze the data are adequately described. The paper includes an explanation of how the study was conducted.	The methods used to analyze the data are thoroughly described. The paper includes a clear explanation of how the study was conducted (e.g. what data were collected and how).

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Project and Data Analysis	The discussion of the processes and consequences of the project does not draw on the theoretical framework to make a case about the nature of literacy learning in the problem/issue examined. The analysis of literacy events and practices, the praxis followed, and the consequences of the project are not adequately described. Analysis identifies no specific data segments as evidence, and does not include close readings of the transcribed data. The analysis moves does not demonstrate increased understandings.	The discussion of the processes and consequences of the project draws vaguely on the theoretical framework to make a case about the nature of literacy learning in the problem/issue examined. The analysis of literacy events and practices, the praxis followed, and the consequences of the project are somewhat described. Analysis identifies few specific data segments as evidence, and inconsistently includes close readings of the transcribed data. The analysis moves somewhat towards increased understandings.	The discussion of the processes and consequences of the project draws adequately on the theoretical framework to make a case about the nature of literacy learning in the problem/issue examined. The analysis of literacy events and practices, the praxis followed, and the consequences of the project are described adequately. Analysis identifies some specific data segments as evidence, and includes close readings of the transcribed data. The analysis moves towards increased understandings.	The discussion of the processes and consequences of the project draws very effectively on the theoretical framework to make a case about the nature of literacy learning in the problem/issue examined. The analysis of literacy events and practices, the praxis followed, and the consequences of the project are described in rich detail. Analysis identifies specific data segments as evidence, and includes careful close readings of the transcribed data. The analysis moves towards deep understandings.
Evidence	The conclusions drawn are weakly or inadequately supported by the evidence presented. There is little in the way of summation that includes discussion of the wider implications (for research, practice, policy, theory) of the work. The conclusion does not show evidence of a perspective that takes into account potential critiques.	The conclusions drawn are somewhat supported by the evidence presented, though with partial rather than full success. There is a summation of the central points made and some discussion of the wider implications of the work. The conclusion provides some evidence of a perspective that at least considers potential critiques.	The evidence presented adequately supports the conclusions drawn. There is a clear summation of the central arguments made and some discussion of the wider implications of the work (for research, practice, policy, and/or theory). The concluding arguments show some evidence of a critical perspective that takes into account potential critiques.	The evidence presented fully, richly supports the conclusions drawn. There is a clear and convincing summation of the central arguments made as well as discussion of the wider implications of the work (for research, practice, policy, and/or theory). The concluding arguments show evidence of a critical perspective that takes into account potential critiques.

Subtotal: _____

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Implications and “so-what”	The discussion does suggest any implications for the teaching and learning of literacy. There is little or no discussion of what the analysis means. Connections to the research question and theoretical framework are weak or absent. No discussion about how this project might be implemented in K-12 classrooms is present.	The discussion of implications for the teaching and learning of literacy is vague and lacks coherence. The discussion of what the analysis means is vague, and is loosely connected to the research question and theoretical framework. Discussion about how this project might be implemented in K-12 classrooms is vague and loosely connected to the analysis.	The discussion of implications for the teaching and learning of literacy is clear, coherent and insightful. The paper includes an adequate discussion of what the analysis means, and is connected to the research question and theoretical framework. Discussion about how this project might be implemented in K-12 classrooms is adequately detailed and grounded in the analysis.	The discussion of implications for the teaching and learning of literacy is clear, coherent and insightful, furthering our understanding of literacy learning and pedagogy. The paper includes a clear and thorough discussion of what the analysis means, and is explicitly connected to the research question and theoretical framework. Discussion about how this project might be implemented in K-12 classrooms is detailed and well grounded in the analysis.
Clarity and style	The writing reveals a lack of awareness of intended audience in terms of word choice and style. The sequencing of sections may be confusing and/or the transitions between them weakly achieved. The introductory and concluding sections of the paper may be weak or barely discernable to the reader. APA conventions are not appropriately followed.	The writing reveals some awareness of intended audience and some effort to match genre and. However, the writing may at times be unclear or inconsistent; the sequencing of sections may be confusing in some places, transitions may at times be weak, or word choice may be awkward or ill matched to the genre. The introductory and concluding sections of the paper provide only moderate support and clarification for the reader. APA conventions are inconsistent.	The writing reveals a clear awareness of audience, style, and genre. The sequencing of sections and transitions are adequate; the argument is evident across the paper. The introductory and concluding sections of the paper provide support vis-à-vis the paper’s argument and its overall structure. The paper adequately follows APA conventions.	The writing reveals a thoughtful, discerning awareness of audience, style, and genre. The sequencing of sections and transitions are smoothly achieved; the argument built up across the paper is clear and accessible for the reader. The introductory and concluding sections of the paper provide ample support and further clarity vis-à-vis the paper’s argument and its overall structure. The paper follows APA conventions.

Subtotal: _____

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Group Process	Students have not described their design and implementation of the project, process for analyzing the data and writing the paper, nor presented a reflection of the process itself.	Students have somewhat described their process for designing and implementing the project, analyzing the data and writing the paper. The paper includes some reflection of the group's learning process, but connections between this process and theories presented in class are tenuous.	Students have adequately described their process for designing and implementing the project, analyzing the data and writing the paper. The paper includes an adequate reflection of the group's learning process, including some connections of this process to the theories presented in class.	Students have explicitly described their process for designing and implementing the project, analyzing the data and writing the paper. The paper includes a meaningful reflection of the group's learning process, including a connection of this process to the theories presented in class.

Subtotal: _____

Total: _____

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Reading and Literacies Research Project Rubric

IRA Standards for READING & LITERACIES teacher candidates

Based on the research paper submitted, evaluate the extent to which the candidate provided evidence of meeting the specific IRA standards listed below, using the following rubrics:

n/a: Not observable – The topic, level or context for the unit was not appropriate for providing evidence for this standard. (*Whenever this option is not acceptable – e.g., you must provide your assessment – we have indicated it by blackening the corresponding cell*)

1. **Insufficient** – i.e., this standard was not met.
2. **Emergent** – i.e., there is only partial evidence that this standard was addressed or the standard was only partially addressed; more evidence is needed before determining proficiency with respect to this standard.
3. **Basic proficiency**– i.e., the paper provide sufficient evidence of addressing this standard at least at a basic level
4. **Outstanding performance** – i.e., the paper provides an excellent example of addressing this standard.

To arrive to this overall evaluation, please refer to the more detailed explanations provided by IRA for each specific standard (see http://www.reading.org/resources/issues/reports/professional_standards.html).

IRA Standards:	n/ o	1	2	3	4
STANDARD 1: FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE <i>Candidates have knowledge of the foundations of reading and writing processes and instruction. As a result, candidates:</i>					
1.1 Demonstrate knowledge of psychological, sociological, and linguistic foundations of reading and writing processes and instruction.					
1.2 Demonstrate knowledge of reading research and histories of reading.					
1.3 Demonstrate knowledge of language development and reading acquisition and the variations related to cultural and linguistic diversity.					
STANDARD 4: CREATING A LITERATE ENVIRONMENT <i>Candidates create a literate environment that fosters reading and writing by integrating foundational knowledge, use of instructional practices, approaches and methods, curriculum materials, and the appropriate use of assessments. As a result, reading specialist/literacy coach candidates:</i>					
4.1 Use students’ interests, reading abilities, and backgrounds as foundations for the reading and writing program.					
4.2 Use a large supply of books, technology-based information and nonprint materials representing multiple levels, broad interests, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds.					
4.3 Model reading and writing enthusiastically as valued lifelong activities.					
4.4 Motivate students to be lifelong readers.					