

Texas State University
Project SUPERB Immersion:
Language, Culture and Lived Experience
May 2016 Session
Working Syllabus
SPSY 5378

Class Facilitator: Cindy Plotts, PhD
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Class Time: TBD
Classroom: TBD
Office Hours: MTW 1 – 3:30

Course Description

This “Language, Culture, and Lived Experience” course is a dynamic exercise in the exploration of the self, cultural immersion, and Spanish language acquisition in cultural context. The learning journey promises to engage participants in critical self-reflection, as they create and recreate their own narratives through a cultural and language aesthetic that promises to push the boundaries of their imagination.

The Llano Grande community, a nationally renown community based group founded for the purpose of building cultural assets with public school students, teachers, and families will facilitate this process in tandem with Texas State professors and community members.

Students will read from an interdisciplinary literature list that comes from education, sociology, anthropology, and economics. The readings will be augmented by community experience that include a number of complex and interrelated issues that contribute to the development of lived experiences of children, families and school personnel including demographic shifts, culture, language, race, gender, power, politics and economics to name a few. Students will engage in conversations with citizens in the local community and classmates to learn about community issues as they expand their understanding of school and community and the manner in which language and culture influence their development.

Course Rationale

It has been well documented that schools are not isolated from society. Many theorists argue that schools are a microcosm of their local communities, and that social, cultural, and economic forces impact the learning and teaching in schools. It is critical for school psychologist to have an understanding of these socio-cultural issues and the environments in which schools find themselves. Schools are cornerstone institutions charged with preparing our children for a productive and successful life as citizens. Thus, it is critical

for school and community personnel to understand the forces that contribute to their success and/or challenges. It is imperative that school psychologists understand the conditions of children, families, and their environments including school, home, neighborhood/community, and the politics that are shaping the conditions and context. Project SUPERB scholars will be immersed in the culture of the Rio Grande Valley, and hosted by Llano Grande Center for Research and Development (llanogrande.org).

Course Objectives

Students will:

- Comprehend the forces impacting schools in a democratic society.
- Explore and evaluate challenges, possibilities and opportunities facing schools and families.
- Describe these challenges and opportunities as experienced through community and organizational placements.
- Develop strategies for analyzing issues and data from their campus and communities through exposure to a variety of theoretical perspectives (including sociological, anthropological, economic, and critical pedagogy).
- Analyze the sociocultural, political and economic context of education through literature, conversation, and experiential processes.
- Understand cross-cultural concepts that impact communication in their schools and in their community.
- Understand provocative and complex issues that impact the success of children and schools.
- Evaluate the conditions of schools and communities through an equity lens.
- Apply ethical principles to deal with sensitive issues.
- Synthesize the process of learning and leading as public action.

Process for Teaching and Learning

The pedagogical process for this class will be grounded in critical pedagogy and supported with community placements and public engagement. Students will be asked to engage in a reflective process as they go inward to explore the world around them. The class will be hands on and highly dialogical; and students are expected to be prepared and engage in conversations about topics and content presented in the readings.

Guiding principles for class include the following:

- Self-directed yet interdependent work;
- internal incentives and curiosity;
- a climate of mutual respect, collaboration and support;
- participatory decision making;
- mutual assessment;
- inquiry projects and experiential learning;
- self-assessment and reflection.

Assignments & Grading Criteria

33 points Reflective Journal on placement and lived experience

- 33 points Participation in three Learning Exchanges on issue of language & culture within community
- 34 points Development and production of a personal digital story

Texts Required

Guajardo, M. A., Guajardo, F., Janson, C., Militello, M. (2016). *Reframing Community Partnerships in Education: Uniting the Power of Place and Wisdom of People*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Block, P. (2008). *Community: The structure of belonging*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Resource:

Glass, G. (2008). *Fertilizers, pills, and magnetic strips: The fate of public education in America*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. **(This book is in the library in electronic format).**

Additional reading for the course will be on TRACS

Organization of Learning in Action: Assignments

Assignment 1:

Reflective Journal

-Revisit and explore your own development. You might want to review and reflect on your development since you came into the School Psychology program and use it as a benchmark or starting point to answer the questions, though we do encourage you use this opportunity to explore the core of your own development with your cultural context and ecologies.

-What have I changed?

-How did I change?

-Why did I change?

-What is my emerging educational philosophy?

- What is my emerging school psychology practice philosophy?

Keep a reflective journal on the lived experience during your field placement
Electronic document is encouraged and visual/concrete symbolic representations of learning experiences are also very helpful.

Assignment 2

Community Learning Exchange (CLE) Engagement

Three CLE will be hosted: first will be introduction and orientation to summer experience; second will be on reflection and meaning making of experience; third will be on evaluation and development of a digital story.

Assignment 3

DigitalStory for critical self-reflection

Development and production of a digital story on development and awareness of language, culture and place within self, organization and community

Tentative Schedule

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| Jan. 25 th | 1 st Orientation meeting (Texas State campus) |
| March 21 st | 2 nd Orientation meeting (Texas State campus) |
| April 25 th | 3 rd Orientation meeting (Texas State campus) |
| May 9 th | Travel to EdCouch – Elsa, TX |
| May 10-13 | Community Learning Exchange – 1 |
| May 16-20 | Community Learning Exchange – 2 |
| May 23-26 | Community Learning Exchange – 3 |
| May 27 th | Travel to San Marcos, TX |