

HD 498-698 01P – Fall 2009
Saturdays: 9/12, 9/26, 10/17, 11/07, 11/21, 12/05
Class Location: 55 Eureka, room 32
Faculty: Susan Bernheimer
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(626) 397-1366

July 15, 2009

Welcome to the 2009 Fall ABLE class. Enclosed is a letter that provides written instructions for the required papers and presentations for this program. In addition, please read the book, *New Possibilities for Early Childhood Education: Stories from Our Nontraditional Students* by Susan Bernheimer. You can order the book through mbsdirect.net, or through Peter Lang Publishing, Inc. (1 800 LANG). I would like for you to read this by our first (or at latest) second class meeting. As you read the book, please look for the following:

- a) Importance of understanding all aspects of life stories (both positive and negative experiences) as part of human development.
- b) Pattern of re-occurring issues in a person's life story, and how these eventually lead to new levels of self-awareness and growth.
- c) Any insights you gain into your own life story, and ways you have grown from experiences in your life.

Susan Bernheimer

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BA ABLE LETTER

Fall 2009

Hello!

9Assessment of Experience class (HD 498). The course dates are noted for you above. I am looking forward to our time together. There are some things I'd like you to think about and some writing for you to do to prepare for the first class meeting.

This class serves as part of the process of admission to Pacific Oaks. The purpose of this class will be to help you think about your life experiences in terms that will then translate into papers and in-class presentations in a structured, understandable way. These papers and presentations become the documentation that will validate the credit you hope to earn for your experience. Even though the work will be structured for an academic environment, we encourage you to express yourself in your own voice.

As a bachelor's degree student, the areas in which you will demonstrate competency will be based on your own life experience. You will be writing papers as well as giving at least one in-class presentation depending on your overall unit requirements. Each paper and presentation counts for approximately five units. Part of the first day of class will be spent in individual advising sessions to help you determine your admissions status and just exactly how many papers and presentations will be required of you in this assessment.

The enclosed packet goes into more detail about what should be included in each paper you write. This is an outline only and the areas may not be appropriate to your experience at all; I am only attempting to provide a framework for how you might think about your experience. Please do not be daunted by what you read – everything will become clearer in class! You simply have to start writing.

Before you begin to write a paper, think about your life – the events, the people – and jot down names, places, etc. that have influenced your thinking or actions. Think in terms of your development, your professional experience, your moral struggles, and personal growth. This can be a guide and a resource from which the writing and presentations for the class will evolve.

Because there will be much work to cover during this class, you must come prepared for the first class. It is important that you write at least one draft (typed) of one paper to mail to me, Susan Bernheimer, by September 8. There is an enclosed envelope. I will provide feedback for your rewrite. **BE PREPARED TO WRITE AND REWRITE AND REWRITE SOME MORE!!!!** There are no “wrong” papers but everyone will be asked to do rewrites as it is rare indeed for the first draft to be the final paper! You may redo them three or four times based on the feedback provided. Many students find that writing a human development paper is the easiest paper to write or writing about a particular job experience which shows how you grew or what you learned. All drafts of papers must be 10 pages typed and doubled spaced! For your first paper, please submit a draft, even if it has fewer than 10 pages.

Please read the enclosed guidelines for some questions to consider in writing your first draft. When writing, describe specific experiences that relate to your chosen topic. Keep answering the questions, “How did this affect me and my life?” And, “What did your experiences teach you about human development?” Pay special attention to the question of all the ways each experience affected you, then what you learned about human development. You must use your active voice, “I did...,” etc. These papers are about YOU and what YOU know and what YOU experienced. Do not do research from books. Finally, remember that you are not writing a typical autobiography – we don’t want to hear when you were born and where you went to school or why your parents got divorced. If you are writing a paper on human development then we would like to hear how where you went to school influenced your development i.e. how being the only African-American child in a school of all Anglo children might possibly impact your development both as a child and as an African-American. You must reflect on your experiences and how each affected you, then make connections to what you learned about human development. Tell me what you learned from each experience.

You must prepare an outline (typed) of what you think you might like to do for one in-class presentation. You cannot stand in front of the class and read to us nor ‘lecture’ us. You must involve us somehow. Many bachelors’ students like to do some sort of “sensory” presentation in which they facilitate a group exercise that utilizes one of the five senses. An example might be to utilize some shells as a focus and through visualization take us on a beach walk – the purpose being to share with us the positive effects of visualization or as a relaxation technique. (There must be a purpose – you can’t simply have us go on a beach walk because “it is there.”)

It may seem scary to be asked to “just write” or “prepare for a presentation.” I do understand and want you to know that we will be as supportive as we can. We are here to help YOU and to support YOU in your process. Remember, there are no “wrong” papers. Our job is to help you be as clear as possible concerning your special abilities and knowledge and you will have the opportunity to rewrite all papers and/or redo all presentations until clarity shines!

Again, part of the first class will be spent in individual advising sessions at which time I will also make myself available to answer any questions you have concerning papers, presentations, requirements, et cetera.

My office hours will be Tues. 2-5 p. m and Weds 3-6 p.m. Or by appointment. You can call me at (626) 397-1366, if you have any questions or concerns. Please come prepared. Snacks will be provided the first day of class and each of you will be asked to accept responsibility for one of the other days of the class.

Sincerely,

Susan Bernheimer

First class checklist; what you need to bring with you

all the paper and letters we have sent you
as we will be going over them in class

outline for presentation

questions

whatever you need to be comfortable

BA ABLE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT OF LIFE EXPERIENCE SEMINAR

The Assessment Seminar

This class will provide structure and support for you in documenting and demonstrating how your personal and professional experiences have provided you with the equivalence of college units. Up to 30 units (including upper and lower division) may be documented on the basis of demonstrated competency. In addition, a minimum of 34 residency units at Pacific Oaks must be completed in order to earn the BA degree.

The instructor and other class members will be a part of your process in defining strengths and identifying deficiencies. As such, the seminar will serve as an evaluation group and as part of the admissions process. It is expected that everyone admitted to this class will be able to document some competencies and there is no minimum number of units to be documented.

Most of the class time will be spent on student presentations and individual “advising” meetings with the instructor while out-of-class time will be spent on writing papers.

BA students may do a combination of written papers and in-class presentations. For every 30 units documented, at least one piece (5 units) of work must be a group presentation. At the first class session, each student with the instructor will decide the number of papers and presentations that will be required. In both arenas, instructors are looking for good organization, clarity of thought, personal experience, and clear delineation of knowledge and competence.

Papers and presentations may cover a gamut of topics (human development, working with children, growth through spirituality, generativity, etc.) or one topic or issue examined over the course of your experience. For example, you could have been a young mother so you might write a paper on its impact on human development (“The Impact of Teenage Pregnancy on Adolescent Development”). You may have then created and implemented a program for teen mothers (Parent Education for Teen Mothers’ or ‘Communication and Interpersonal Relationships Between the Teenage Mother and Family’). Think of your themes in terms of psychosocial human development, cognitive human development, and/or hands-on implementation.

Clearly there will be over-lap between personal and professional experiences that will be considered. Participation in an on-going women’s support group may have given you a strong women’s studies background. Parenting an emotionally disturbed or physically handicapped child and learning to find and utilize appropriate resources could certainly be translated into ‘life experience’ credit. Working with a community based parents’ group that has been fighting against racial discrimination in the schools is another example of how volunteer or personal experiences could be applied to the documentation of units.

BA ABLE Writing Instructions

Remember – IF YOU ARE WRITING YOU ARE DOING IT RIGHT. The instructions below are for BA students only. BA students may also do the papers described for the MA students, but MA students cannot do the papers described for the BA students.

Begin to write without a lot of questions from us so that you write from your experience and observations rather than from our questions. This is a new way of thinking about classes – which the content should come from your life rather than our ideas. We will help you shape the papers as you go. When you begin to write these papers, remember that they are DRAFTS.

Your life experience is your textbook and the classroom.

It is important that you think of your life as the classroom and that you are now writing the final paper in the classroom of life where you are now.

Each paper has the three following elements:

1. You tell stories from your experience and observations
2. You reflect on these experiences/observations in terms of how each affected you.
3. What you learned about human development from each experience/observation.
This is really your “constructed” theory from your experience.

Select a theme around which you write your paper. Then examine experiences from your own life to see what you learned about human development. The most important questions you can ask yourself when you write or re-read your papers are: Why do you say that? How do you know that? What did you learn from the experience?

Types of papers

The BA papers can be on any human development topic you have experience with. Some examples from previous semesters are:

The Moral Journey of my Life	Recovery
My Experience as an Immigrant	The Importance of Goals in My Life
Therapy and Gaining Self-Confidence	Overeating: A Personal Experience
Spiritual Principles in Everyday Life	I Hate Being A Student
How I became a Parent Educator	My Life as a Teenager

BA ABLE PRESENTATIONS

Most of you will make one or two presentations for this class, depending how many units you need to assess. This will be an interactive presentation for adults. One workshop is 30 minutes presentation and 10-15 minutes to receive feedback from the participants.

Purpose: To translate what you have learned from your life experiences into oral presentations so that this becomes documentation to gain credit for Pacific Oaks College.

One aspect of working with adults is motivating them to become active learners and this competency will be demonstrated through a 30 minute classroom presentation. Given the nature of adult leaning, this in-class presentation CANNOT be a lecture nor the reading of a paper; you must engage your audience in some interactive/interpersonal learning. Design a presentation that will allow you to share information and contact in areas that will help us in our work with adults. This “workshop” should be a demonstration of your strengths in how you work with adults and how you involve them in learning.

The presentation may work around an activity that we do individually or as a group, but then you must bring the group back together to engage us all in a conversation around the experience.

The presentation must include an introduction of how you are, the purpose of your presentation and what you plan to do. Why is it meaningful to you and what is the purpose of the experience (what you hope we will get out of it)? Tell us why this topic is important to you and/or the context of how you utilize this experience in your work or everyday life.

Possible Topics for Workshops

BA ABLE may choose either Working with Adults or Sensory Experience. Or you may present on a topic of your choice that you know a lot about and would like to share. The presentations may be on the same sorts of experiences as the papers but should not duplicate the papers. Some examples from previous semesters are:

- Making peanut butter with children
- Working with children with special needs
- Music and movement activities
- A nature walk
- Yoga for health and relaxation
- Working with children with clay or other art material
- The importance of listening skills
- Recovery
- The importance of goals in career development

The following are two examples of possible presentations:

Presentation 1: “Developing Curriculum”

Experience: Developed curriculum workshop to share with other teachers.

Focus presentation on ways to develop curriculum as a team process. After a brief introduction of using themes to build curriculum, brainstorm with the group activities for three-year olds using the theme “families.” Finish with a wrap up which focuses on planning as a team and get reactions from class members.

Presentation 2: “Art Activities for the Preschool Child”

Experience: Used art activities extensively in classroom as art is a special interest

After a brief introduction in which you identify yourself, outline your experience in this area and explain the purpose of using this activity with preschool children, lead the class in a finger painting exercise. Let the class experience the sensory and creative aspect of the activity. You must also do a conclusion – checking in with people to see how their ‘experience’ went (did it work as your introduction outlined?), pulling them back into present ‘reality,” et cetera.