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**Handout**

**Examples of Assignments Using Family Stories**

**For Infant and Toddler Semester:**

**V. Family Literacy Project (30 points)**

Students will **make two books** to share with their focus child. These books will be developed based on observations and interviews with the family of the focus child. Students will create both of the following types of books.

* Book One will be based on an oral story shared in the home or school. This might be a folk tale passed down through the generations, a story about the child or another family member, or an event that recently happened.
* Book Two will be about the child and family in their everyday, natural context. This might be a daily routine such as getting dressed, getting ready to go out, or going to visit somebody.

These books could be used in a classroom or at home to support the language and literacy development of the child.

Students will **write a four-five page, double-spaced paper**, including reference citations as appropriate, that provides clear insights into how they used stories gathered from the child and family to develop the two books and how they could implement meaningful language and literacy activities. They will address how the books could be used to promote cultural and linguistic continuity and how the child responded to the books and activities. They will include the following:

* Description of how the stories were gathered from the focus child and the family, how the story was used to create the books, and how the books were developed to promote cultural and linguistic continuity
* Discussion of the types of activities that took place related to the books, including how they were used to promote cultural and linguistic continuity and how they met the developmental needs of the child
* Explanation of how gathering family stories influenced the planning and implementation of language and literacy activities other than the book activities
* Discussion on how the child responded to the books and activities related to them
* Reflections on what was learned from this assignment about literacy and very young children, including what would be done differently in the future

Students will explain why they created the books and how they used them to enhance language and literacy development as well as promote cultural and linguistic continuity. They will also note other activities they planned and implemented based on the family stories they gathered.

**For Infant and Toddler Semester**

**Family Story**

You will be richly describing a family/community/culture by becoming an informed participant observer in the context of that family’s life. Over the course of this semester you will have many opportunities to interact with families. This assignment asks you to identify a family from a culture other than you own with whom you are working and to get to know them. Then establish with the family a plan to learn from them. You will need to show evidence of at least three contacts, other than what regularly occurs in the program. You may offer to provide them a service, such as childcare; you may attend a community/cultural event with them - be creative. Remember, you are not “diagnosing” them; they are teaching you about their family, their culture, their hopes and dreams for their children, their cultural practices. Your purpose is to get to know them. You final product should include:

1. A family story paper

a. Describe the family. Tell their story. How did they come to be in a place where you met them? Consider the importance of birth stories, immigration stories, courtship stories, intergenerational stories.

1. Describe the cultural context of the family, including the formal and informal community network and system of supports. Remember the importance of Family routines, celebrations, goals. How did this help you better understand another culture?
2. Describe implications of what you learned for your work with this child and his/her family.

d. Describe your process for learning what you learned.

e. Discuss implications for your work with other families of infants and toddlers. How can you support family priorities? What ways of interacting will you support?

f. Reflect on yourself as a gatherer/teller of a family story. What was easy, hard?

g. Reflect on your own family story and how this experience has helped you learn about your own story and its influences on you. Your own family story should be a separate section altogether of the paper.

**For 3-5 Semester**

**Earliest Childhood Memories Paper**

The purpose of this assignment is to help you think about how your childhood influenced the assumptions you have of young children and their families. As an in-class assignment, write a paper describing your memories and how they impacted you. Discuss how it impacted you either negatively and/or positively. Share how it influences the assumptions that you have about young children and their development, especially children with disabilities. Reflect on how your experiences impact your work with culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families.

**For 0-3, 3-5, or k-3 Semester**

**Development/Learning Photo Story**

Compile a Photo Story to tell the story of the child’s development, learning preferences and interests. Through photographs, document your observations of their multiple intelligences, play interests, preferred activities, and their cognitive, social-emotional, and physical-motor development. Include family friendly text in your Photo Story to describe the significance of the action in the photographs. Share your Photo Story with your focus child and their family prior to submitting it. Ask for their input on what else they would like to see included in the Photo Story. The Photo Story could be used to help you describe your focus child in the presentation of the final portfolio. There are several software programs that can be used for this assignment, for example PowerPoint, PhotoStory, and Microsoft Movie Maker. A copy of this Photo Story could be given to the child and their family.

**For Birth- 3rd grade Program**

**My Language Story**

Students will reflect on their own language development story. A particular emphasis is on how language and culture played a role in the development of your identity. Think about your personal language journey in a community in which bilingual language skills and/or regional, racial, or ethnic identities affected your life experiences and interactions with others. Your family may be good sources to help you remember significant events for this story. My Language Story will be shared in class. Students are encouraged to use photos, artifacts or other visuals to tell the story in class. The written (2-3 pages) narrative will be submitted.

**Family’s Bilingual and Immigration Story**

Students will gather a family story of person whose home language is other than English and is either an immigrant or a child of an immigrant. The focus of this assignment is on learning from them by listening to the stories of their language and cultural journey. This is not intended to be an interview, but rather, an opportunity to gain insight from the early life experiences of a bilingual person who is an immigrant or a child of an immigrant. This story will be written (4-5 pages) and shared in class. No last names are to be used in telling or writing the story. Students are encouraged to used artifacts or visuals to help tell the story in class.