

WEBSTER UNIVERSITY COURSE SYLLABUS

NOTE: The syllabus is subject to change in response to student needs and topics of interest that emerge.

EDUC 2850.01 Foundations of Early Childhood Education

Spring 2005

10:00-11:20 T-R

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COURSE DESCRIPTION (Student Focus, Rationale, Scope)

This course addresses the historical, philosophical, psychological and social foundations of early childhood education. It is designed to help students gain understanding of the state of the art of early childhood education and the forces shaping its future. Field observations and participation with children and adults are required. Prerequisites: EDUC 3150 Education in a Diverse Society, EDUC 2070 Child Development or PSYC 2040 Child Psychology. Must be completed with a grade of B or better.

LEARNING OUTCOMES (Goals and Objectives)

Students will be able to:

1. understand the social, philosophical and historical background of early childhood education and its impact on current practice
2. understand past and current learning theories and how to apply those theories in an early childhood program
3. understand the importance of parent/family involvement in early childhood education
4. identify and examine developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and can develop activities incorporating DAP including the areas of technology
5. understand issues surrounding diversity and how to meet the needs of children with special needs and diverse cultures
6. describe and implement various observation techniques
7. examine accredited early childhood programs and identify the strengths and challenges within programs
8. critically reflect on their role as a teacher working with young children
9. understand and follow the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct

STANDARDS INTEGRATION

The five NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation serve as an organizing framework for the alignment and integration of Council for Exceptional Children Division of Early Childhood (CEC/DEC) Content Standards, Missouri Standards for Teacher Education Programs (MoSTEP), Webster University School of Education (SOE) Goals and Dispositions, the National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers (NETS) and the PRAXIS Series of Professional Assessments for Beginning Teachers (Education of Young Children 0021). Since the content of the standards often overlap in this alignment, the emphasis of each standard has determined its placement. These standards are addressed and integrated into the content and assignments of this course when appropriate.

Program Standards Related to Course

NAEYC Standards

1. Promoting Child Development and Learning

Knowing and understanding young children's characteristics and needs

Knowing and understanding the multiple influences on development and learning

3. Observing, Documenting and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families

Knowing about and using observation, documentation, and other appropriate assessment tools and approaches

5. Becoming a Professional

Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field

Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines

Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice

Integrating knowledgeable, reflective and critical perspectives on early education

Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession

CEC/DEC Content Standards

1. Foundations

Students understand the models, theories and philosophies that form the basis for inclusive practice.

Students understand the trends and issues in early childhood education and early childhood special education.

2. Development and Characteristics of Learners

Students know and demonstrate respect similarities and differences of individuals with and without exceptional learning needs.

4. Instructional Strategies

Students understand strategies to facilitate integration into various settings.

5. Learning Environments and Social Interactions

Students understand and foster environments where diversity and independence are valued.

9. Professional and Ethical Practice

Students understand personal cultural biases and differences that affect their teaching.

Students seek methods to remain current regarding research-validated practice.

10. Collaboration

Students understand the models and strategies of consultation and collaboration to facilitate the successful transitions of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

MoSTEP Standards

1. Foundations of Early Childhood Education

The early childhood teacher:

- understands the historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education, including early childhood education, to include major early childhood curriculum models.
- understands and recognizes the interaction of biological, medical, personal-social, child-family interactions, and environmental factors which may place children at risk or cause disabilities in children.
- understands major theories of teaching and learning, including their logical and empirical foundations and the applications of these theories to diverse learners.
- articulates and applies an educationally sound philosophy (i.e., a coherent set of beliefs, concept, and attitudes) of early childhood education as a basis for making professional decisions.

2. Promoting Child Development and Learning

The early childhood teacher:

- understands young children's characteristics and needs, including development disabilities and giftedness, their impact on development and learning, and the proper use of appropriate resources and services.
- knows and understands major theories of cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development, multiple influences on young children's development and learning, and possible interactions among influences.
- uses developmental knowledge to create healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environments, materials, resources, and activities appropriate to various developmental levels of all children, birth through age eight.

4. Observing, Documenting and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families

The early childhood teacher:

- understands the goals and benefits of systematic observation, documentation, and other effective assessment strategies.

7. Demonstrating Growth in Becoming a Professional

The early childhood teacher

- understand policymaking, legislation and regulation, and advocacy issues impacting children and their families and collaborates with others in an advocacy role.
- understands how to organize and operate various types of early childhood programs, the multiple roles that early childhood professionals may assume, and the challenges facing the profession.

SOE Goals

1. Education candidates will demonstrate knowledge of subject matter, knowledge of the learner and knowledge of pedagogy based on inquiry and scholarship.

The knowledgeable learner

- identifies developmental factors in student learning.
- understands theoretical principles of effective instruction to plan learning experiences.

2. Education candidates will incorporate multiple assessment and instructions strategies to support effective educational practices based on research and theory.

The informed instructor

- understands and uses a wide range of instructional strategies.

3. Education candidates will reflect on the roles educators take as leaders of change through collaboration with colleagues, students, and families in schools and communities.

The reflective collaborator

- values and integrates reflection to grow as a professional.

4. Education candidates will demonstrate respect for diversity through responsive teaching and learning that values individual differences.

The responsive educator

- understands and responds appropriately to issues of diversity.
- acknowledges social and cultural contexts to create effective teaching and learning environments.

SOE Dispositions

1. Understands and Respects Self
2. Understands and Respects Others
3. Understands and Respects Professional Communities

NET Standards

5. Productivity and Professional Practice

Students identify ways to use technology to enhance their productivity and professional practice

6. Social, Ethical, Legal and Human Issues

Students identify technology resources that affirm diversity.

PRAXIS Content Categories

1. Child Development and Foundations
3. Diversity and Exceptional Needs and Supporting the Learning Environment
4. Relationships with Families and Professionalism

TEXTS

Essa, Eva L. (2003) (4th edition). Introduction to Early Childhood Education. Clifton Park, NY: Thompson Delmar Learning

Additional readings will be distributed during class sessions. Be prepared to discuss readings in class.

Audio-visual: Video and slides will be used to illustrate and examine concepts and strategies presented in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Observation Reports

Students will conduct a series of focused observations in early childhood programs. The purpose of these observations is to acquaint the student with a variety of classrooms, as well as, characteristics of quality early childhood programs from infancy to early primary. Students will submit a paper for each observation dealing with a number of sub-categories that form paper headings under which observations are briefly and concisely recorded.

Infant-Toddler

Montessori

Project Construct

Multiple Intelligences

Reggio Emilia

Students follow a focused observation sheet to gather information in specific areas with key questions dependent on the program to guide their observations.

Context (location, type of school, age of children, ratio of children to teachers, date and time, duration of visit)

Environment and Materials (description and diagram of the physical space, organization of materials)

Children and Teachers (What are the children doing? What seems to be the teacher's role? Be specific; take down exact words when possible.)

Curriculum Design (Evidence of specific philosophical and theoretical base that is translated into practice and methodology, e.g., **Infant-Toddler**: use of Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP); **Montessori**: learning life skills, didactic materials; **Project Construct**: children as active learners constructing their own knowledge; **Multiple Intelligences**: children using their strengths to build proficiency in other categories of intelligence; **Reggio Emilia**: children in small groups exploring a topic in-depth).

Reflections and Implications for Practice (What information did you gain from this observation that supports understanding of the nature of young children and how they learn? What practical ideas provide direction for structuring curriculum, organizing learning environments, and supporting interactions with children?)

After each observation is completed we will discuss salient points in class. Students are expected to include information gathered during these discussions within the context of their reflections.

Infant-Toddler (How does this program support the idea that children develop their expectations of the world by living inside relationships with people and things and by observing the relationships around them?)

Montessori--What element of Maria Montessori's original program did you see?

Project Construct--What clearly defined work areas were set up to support children's learning in specific cognitive concept areas?

Multiple Intelligences--How are learning experiences and children's strengths assessed and curriculum developed that fosters new knowledge thinking?

Reggio Emilia--How is the environment organized to foster interactions, exploration and problem solving? Is project work taking place?

Students write a reflective paper following the outline and points brought out in class discussion. Students will summarize and interpret the information gathered from the observation, citing noteworthy sources. Papers will be evaluated in terms of the depth of observations, quality of thought, integration of resources, organization and mechanics using the following scoring guide.

Scoring Guide for Observation Reports

A	A-	B+	B	B-	B	C+	C	C-	D	F	
Exceeds Expectations (Exemplary/highest level of performance)			Meets Expectations Average/movement towards mastery performance)				Fails to Meet Expectations (Beginning level of performance)				
Observations and Procedures											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observations are detailed and concise Procedure is extended 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observations are objective and clear Followed agreed-upon procedures 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observations lack detail and clarity Did not follow procedure 				
Content Analysis and Implications for Practice											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate sense of the complexity of the context Strong argument and good details to support Sound explanation of thinking Superior quality of research beyond text and class handouts 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate sense of complexity of the context Adequate argument and some details to support Adequate explanation of thinking Interpretations based on text and class handouts 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complex issues need further description and interpretation Weak arguments, few details to support Unclear thinking Few appropriate connections to text or class handouts 				
Organization and Mechanics											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-depth development of ideas through supporting details and evidence Clarity of writing, paragraphing, transitions and sentences make this paper easy for the reader to follow Attractive and appropriate APA manuscript format 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical and clear arrangement of basic ideas Absence of usage and grammatical errors Accurate spelling Careful proofreading Follows APA manuscript format 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas not developed; lacks logic of support; confusing: does not make sense Grammatical errors are numerous enough to interfere with understanding Does not incorporate APA manuscript format 				

2. Participation and Program Analysis

Students are expected to participate in group analysis sessions of the various programs observed since multiple perspectives are vital for deeper understanding. Through these group dialogues, different points of view become part of the group’s long-term knowledge, a building process that opens the possibility for students to continually revise their thinking. Since we all have experiences from which others can learn, we need to build and construct our knowledge as we proceed through this course.

3. Professional Development

Students are responsible for participating in at least one professional development activity during the term (e.g., presentation, exhibit, workshop, conference) and write a reflective paper synthesizing and reflecting upon their learning. As a reflective collaborators, students are responsible for sharing information concerning opportunities of which they become aware. We will engage in discussions concerning these experiences throughout the semester.

Professional Dispositions

“Interpreting and assessing dispositions [of an educator’s professional growth] is often more intuitive than it is descriptive and measurable. Regardless of the difficulty of assessment, there is significant value in focusing attention on qualities that make an effective teacher. [It is possible to be] knowledgeable and perhaps even proficient in integrating theory and practice, but lack the essential dispositions to be a true professional.” (Webster University School of Education Conceptual Framework: Developing a World of Learner through Knowledge, Leadership, and Life-long Learning. Draft 11/4/04, p.12).

The following SOE dispositions aligned with SOE goals will be considered in grade determination.

Disposition	Goal
1.3 Exhibits curiosity	1.2 Applies tools of inquiry
1.4 Engages in reflection	3.1 Values and integrates critical reflection to grow as a professional
2.1 Respects and responds appropriately to diversity	4.1 Understands and responds to diversity
2.3 Commits to fairness and honesty	2.2 Employs a variety of assessments
2.4 Listens respectfully	3.2 Promotes communication and collaboration
3.1 Commits to professional behavior	3.1 Values and integrates critical reflection to grow as a professional
3.4 Accepts academic rigor	1.2 Applies tools of inquiry

Scoring Guide for Professional Development Activities and Reflection Papers

Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Fails to Meet Expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages in multiple or long-term professional development opportunity • Reflection paper makes connections not only to in-class information but includes research about topic of experience • Strong organization, clear transitions and accurate mechanics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages in one professional development opportunity • Reflection paper makes connections to ideas presented in class • Accurate mechanics: grammar, punctuation and neatness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to engage in any professional development opportunity • Reflection paper is not turned in or fails to make any appropriate connections to pertinent information • Grammatical errors, misspellings, and messiness interferes with readability

ASSESSMENT

An average of grades on the observation reports will determine 75% of the final grade. The final 25% of the grade will be determined by attendance, class participation and evidence of professionalism.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance will be taken and is mandatory. Students who miss a class will be required to complete a make-up assignment for the missed class. This assignment will be due the week following the class that was missed. If this make-up assignment is not completed, a half letter grade reduction will be made in the student's final grade. Any situation, which requires excessive absences, should be discussed with the instructor. Students with multiple unwarranted absences will be advised to withdraw from the class.

WRITTEN WORK

Assignments are due at class time on the date specified. Final drafts of assignments will be accepted up until two weeks before the due dates as indicated in course schedule. Such drafts will be returned in one week before the due date with feedback. Upon request, an assignment for which a student has received below a B may be resubmitted. In that case the final grade will be an average of the two grades. Assignments which are not handed in on time will be penalized a half letter grade for each week they are late unless prior arrangements are made. Assignments are expected to follow APA format and be free of mechanical, typographical, grammatical, and spelling errors.

At all times intellectual integrity is to be maintained. Papers turned in for other classes are not to be resubmitted for this class. "Fabrication, falsifying, inventing or misstating data, information or citation in an academic assignment or field experience" is considered to be academic dishonesty. In addition, using the works (i.e., words, images and other materials) or another person as one's own without proper citation is considered plagiarism." Excessive use of direct quotations from primary sources is not acceptable. "This includes submission, in whole or part, of any work purchased or downloaded from a website or Internet paper clearinghouse." (Webster University Graduate Studies Catalog, p.29).

READING AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Reading assignments will be given for each class. Chapters from texts should be read prior to class lecture and discussion on that topic. Students are responsible for all materials for all materials as assigned.

Students who do not complete the requirements of the course must meet with the instructor prior to the end of the course to complete an Incomplete Course Form; otherwise a NC will be issued. Only in the case of urgent situations will an incomplete be granted to the student. In order for an incomplete to be given, the student must have completed all of the course work due prior to the situation.

COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1	Introduction and Review of Course Content and Requirements The Scope and Need for Early Childhood Education, Chapter 1
Week 2	The Triad of Early Childhood Education The Children, Chapter 2 The Families, Chapter 3 The Teachers, Chapter 4
Week 3	Theoretical Influences of Early Childhood Programs, Chapter 5
Week 4	Teaching Learning Philosophies

Week 5	DAP Infants and Toddlers, Chapter 6
Week 6	The Physical Environment, Chapter 7 Scheduling and Curriculum, Chapter 8
Week 7	Montessori Infant-Toddler observation due
Week 8	Cognitive Development through the Curriculum, Chapter 11 Language Development through the Curriculum, Chapter 12
Week 9	Project Construct Montessori observations due
Week 10	Creative Development through the Curriculum, Chapter 9 Emergent Negotiated Curriculum
Week 11	Physical Development through the Curriculum, Chapter 10 Multiple Intelligences Project Construct observation due
Week 12	Reggio Emilia
Week 13	Social Development through the Curriculum, Chapter 13 Guiding Social Behaviors, Chapter 15 Multiple Intelligences observations due
Week 14	Guiding Routines and Group Behaviors, Chapter 14 Professional Development papers due
Week 15	Helping Children Cope with Stress, Chapter 16 Reggio Emilia observations due
Week 16	Wrap-up, Concluding Remarks