

WEBSTER UNIVERSITY
COURSE SYLLABUS

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

EDUC 4830.01 in conjunction with EDUC 4831 and 4832 (pre-kindergarten and early elementary practicum placements)

Early Childhood Curriculum
Dr. Cheryl Breig-Allen

Fall, 2004
10:00-11:20 TR

COURSE DESCRIPTION (Student Focus, Rationale, Scope)

This course combines a theoretical and experiential investigation of curriculum for children ages birth through eight years, with primary emphasis on pre-kindergarten through the elementary grades. It emphasizes the roles of the teacher as observer, collaborator, facilitator, and organizer. Students will learn how to develop curriculum projections that are based on 1) ongoing documentation and study of children's current understanding and interests; 2) child development theory and research; 3) values and goals established with parents and community; and 4) consideration of contextual variables related to the school environment, family, and peer relationships. Emphasis is placed on continuity of learning experiences for children, integration of subject matter knowledge through project studies and daily life experiences, and a negotiated learning process which allows children and teachers to adjust and readjust their expectations through ongoing questioning and reorganization of experiences.

LEARNING OUTCOMES (Goals and Objectives)

The student will:

1. develop the skills of listening to children, observing and documenting their ideas, actions, words, and work.
2. draw upon knowledge of developmental theory, multicultural perspectives, and ongoing study of particular children when preparing the learning environment and learning experiences.
3. learn how to support children's learning in regard to the content areas of language arts, science, social studies, art, music, drama and movement through integrated learning experiences, project studies, and daily living experiences.
4. learn how to support autonomy and reciprocity among children.
5. act as a mentor and co-learner who provokes curiosity, creative thinking, consideration of multiple perspectives and research among children and adults.
6. develop skills of observation, documentation and research in order to continuously inform curriculum decisions and teaching responses.
7. learn how to collaborate with parents as partners in the development, analysis, and implementation of curriculum.

TEXTS

Carter, M. and Curtis, D. (2001). The Art of Awareness: How Observation Can Transform Teaching. Redleaf Press.

Bredenkamp, S. and Rosegrant, T. (Eds.) (1995). Reaching Potentials: Appropriate Curriculum and Assessment for Young Children. Volume 2. NAEYC, Washington DC.

Katz, L. and Helm, J.H. (2000). Young Investigators: The Project Approach in the Early Years. Teachers College Press.

Supplemental Readings: Project Construct materials to be distributed.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Curriculum Design, Documentation, Implementation, and Reflection Papers

Students will conduct a series of focused observations of children in their practicum classrooms. Students will design, implement, document and then analyze a series of learning experiences for a small or large group of children in collaboration with practicum cooperating teacher. Students will submit two papers, one at mid-term and the other as a final paper using the following framework to design, document, and implement a curricular study and reflect upon their work with the children. Papers will be evaluated in terms of the quality of thought, organization, and integration of resources.

Background and Rationale:

Review and discuss the information and observations used to help determine the appropriateness of this curriculum design. What sources influenced your decision to design this experience and how you designed it? These might include:

- observation and study of these children;
- information obtained about prior experiences of children (at school, home or community);
- information obtained about these children's interest or dispositions;
- curriculum goals;
- concerns and values of their parents;
- priorities and interests of the teaching team;
- understanding of child development and theories of learning; and
- curriculum and assessment guidelines suggested by NAEYC or other sources of literature on appropriate curriculum and assessment

Goals/Hypotheses/Questions:

- What do you intend for children to learn? What do you anticipate they will learn? What will they gain from this experience?;
- What questions do you have about children's learning processes and thoughts that might be answered through this experience?; and
- You may identify potential learning outcomes in a more specific way through the statement of objectives (e.g., the children will compare and contrast texture, smell, size, shape, and shades of color of seeds in fruits and vegetables).

Projected Plans, Strategies, and Procedures:

- Selection and organization of materials, tools, and containers to be used by children;
- Organization and preparation of the environment (Consider time, temperature, flow of activity, sound, organization of furniture arrangement of teacher and children in space, etc.);
- Preparation of children and/or parents (e.g., note sent home about upcoming study or a note to request that the child bring something or do something in preparation for the experience);
- Selection of children who will participate;
- Questions, comments, or memories that you might share with children to help them reflect and reconnect with prior learning or experiences that are related to the experience at hand;
- Flow and pace; and
- Procedures.

Plans for Documentation and Assessment:

- What kinds of documentation will enable you to examine behavior and achievements related to the goals, hypotheses, questions, and/or intended learning objectives?;
- What methods of observation would be most useful and feasible (e.g., running records, time sampling, interviews, video recording, audio recording, or photographs)?;
- What tools/technology is needed? (e.g., video camera, tape recorder, paper and pencil, clip boards, still camera)?;
- Who will collect or record the observations?; and
- How will you coordinate your plans with other teachers?

Reflection and Implementation:

- Examine documentation/assessment data;
- Reflect upon and analyze these records in regard to the goals, hypotheses, questions, and/or intended learning objectives; and
- Look for other significant outcomes that may have been unanticipated.

Possible Implications for Future Work with These Children:

- Discuss possible implications for future work with these children.

Implications for Future Teaching Situations:

- Discuss what you learned that might be applied in future teaching situations.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance will be taken and penalties imposed for excessive absences.

WRITTEN WORK

Assignments are due at class time on the date specified. Failure to turn in a paper on time can result in a penalty of one grade. Assignments are expected to be free of mechanical, typographical, grammatical, and spelling errors.

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, including text and any supplemental readings. Class participation is strongly encouraged as we all have experiences from which others can learn. We need to build and construct our knowledge as we proceed through this course.

COURSE CALENDAR

8/24-26 Introduction to course, content, and expectations. Get acquainted and develop a profile of the class as individual and group learners. Review of practicum placements and requirements. Introduce core competencies required by the state of Missouri for early childhood curriculum.

Discussion topics:

- Goals for learning in this course (individual and group);
- Looking at learning (presentations of examples);
- Identification of strategies and experiences that should be incorporated in this course;
- Brainstorm possible methods of assessment;
- Examination of knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions related to observation in early childhood education;
- Review of developmental theories and conceptual frameworks for early childhood curriculum;
- Introduction to the practicum experiences with emphasis on methods of observation.

Assignment:

Read and complete exercises in Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2 in *The Art of Awareness*, and *Project Construct Domains, Areas, and Goals for Students* (attached to syllabus). Be prepared to discuss both readings and exercises in class.

8/31-9/2 Orientation to practicum placements, meet cooperating teachers, study the environment. Examine the philosophy, history and values of the College School and relate to Project Construct and other curriculum frameworks with which we are familiar. (This class period will count toward your practicum contact hours.) Make plans for first day of practicum (observations, participation, reflection).

Discussion Topics:

- What is curriculum? ;
- What is it that teachers need to know about a school's educational philosophy, history, culture, and values that influence curriculum?;
- How can you learn about these forces on curriculum?; and
- How can we align international, national, state, district, and school level perspectives on curriculum?

Assignment:

Read and complete exercises in Chapter 3 in The Art of Awareness. Read Chapters 1, 2, and 3 in Reaching Potentials, and Chapters 1 and 2 in Young Investigators. Prepare practicum journals. Read copies of The College School's philosophy statement, promotional literature in order to understand the goals, philosophy, practices, and procedures. Be prepared to discuss this information in class.

9/7-9 Continuity of experiences for children and integrated learning-the project approach, thematic studies, and ongoing experiences. Planning, projecting, and implementing transformational curriculum. Discussion of student observations.

Assignment:

Read and complete exercises in Chapter 4 and 5 in The Art of Awareness. Read Chapters 3, 4, and 5 in Young Investigators.

9/14-16 Reaching potentials of children with special needs. Integrating anti-bias, multicultural planning into the total curriculum. Working with parents. Discussion of student observations.

Assignment:

Read Chapter 6 in Young Investigators.

9/21-23 Transforming mathematics curriculum. Discussion of student observations.

Assignment:

Read Chapter 4 in Reaching Potentials.

9/28-30 Transforming science curriculum. Discussion of student observations.

Assignment:

Read and complete exercises in Chapter 6 in The Art of Awareness. Read Chapter 5 in Reaching Potentials.

10/5-7 Transforming curriculum in regard to the visual arts, drama, and music. Discussion of student observations.

Assignment:

Read and complete exercises in Chapter 7 in The Art of Awareness. Read Chapters 7 and 8 in Reaching Potentials.

10/12-14 Transforming the curriculum in social studies. Discussion of student observations.

Assignment:

Read and complete exercises in Chapter 9 in The Art of Awareness. Read Chapter 9 in Reaching Potentials, and Chapter 7 in Young Investigators.

10/19-21 Fall Break

- 10/26-28 Transforming curriculum in language and literacy.
Discussion of student observations.
Assignment:
Read and complete exercises in Chapter 8 in The Art of Awareness. Read Chapter 11 in Reaching Potentials.
- 11/2-4 Parents as partners in the development, analysis, and implementation of curriculum.
Discussion of student observations.
Assignment:
Read and complete exercises in Chapter 10 in The Art of Awareness. Read Chapters 6 and 10 in Reaching Potentials.
- 11/9-11 Assessment as learning. Collaborative action research.
Discussion of student observations.
Assignment:
Read and complete exercises in Chapter 11 in The Art of Awareness.
- 11/16-18 More on integrated curriculum, flow of the day, and continuity in the curriculum.
Discussion of student observations.
Assignment:
Read and complete exercises in Chapters 12, 13 and Sample Documentation Displays in The Art of Awareness. Read Chapter 12 in Reaching Potentials.
- 11/23 Revisit issues, experiences and challenges related to children with special needs, minority children and linguistically diverse children.
- 11/25 Thanksgiving Holiday
- 11/30-
12/16 Review and student presentations.

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COURSE SYLLABUS

EDUC 4831
Early Childhood Practicums
Dr. Cheryl Breig-Allen
Fall 2004

COURSE DESCRIPTION (Student Focus, Rationale, Scope)

This experience involves students in working as teaching assistants in an early childhood education setting. A cooperating teacher will guide and support practicum students in getting to know the children in the class and providing and orientation to the curriculum. Students will spend a total of 45 hours per credit hour working with young children in the assigned placement. Supervisory observations will be conducted and regular meetings will be held with the university supervisor. Students will keep a daily journal of their activities with analyses and reflections. The practicum student will analyze observations of children in a variety of learning experiences. The practicum student will collaborate with the cooperating teacher in designing learning experiences for children.

LEARNING OUTCOMES (Goals and Objectives)

The students will:

- examine and reflect on the characteristics of the physical environment that support learning;
- develop skills of observation, documentation and research as a foundation for curriculum that is child originated and teacher framed;
- use principles of developmentally appropriate practice to design, organize, implement, and assess learning experiences for young children;
- observe and reflect on parent participation;
- study and analyze the mission, philosophy, curriculum goals, objectives, experiences, and methods of assessment used in the placement setting.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Daily Journal

Students will keep a daily journal of significant experiences and reflections during the practicum and be prepared to discuss these during the Early Childhood Curriculum Seminar class. In the reflection portion of these entries, students will related their thoughts and observations to concepts addressed through assigned readings, discussions and presentations in the seminar.

Within the journal students will include reflections on observations or experiences related to:

- the physical environment;
- art;
- music;
- physical education;
- social studies;
- science; and
- computers.

Students will select four observations to document, analyze, and submit to instructor. Students will use methods of observation and documentation discussed and presented in class.

For the schedule of texts, required readings, class preparations, assignments, discussions, and student presentations, see syllabus for EDUC 4830.