



Course Syllabus

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| COURSE NUMBER: ECED 5830 | COURSE TITLE: Topics in Early Learning: The Child as Naturalist | TERM: SP07 |
| SITE: WEBG | INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION: Lori Diefenbacher, 961-2660 ext. 8054 966-4829 (home) | CREDIT HOURS: 3 |

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Through activities and discussions, this course will introduce techniques and experiences that encourage a conservation ethic and nurture environmental awareness in young children. While a survey of environmental themes will be key, emphasis will be placed on the importance of nature education at the early childhood level.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

| Course Outcomes | Program Goals | SOE Goals, SOE Dispositions, and MoSTEP/Prof Standards Addressed |
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| Participants will learn to design classroom activities which foster a respect for nature | ECED Goals: 1, 2, 3 | MoSTEP 1, 4, 5; SoE 1, 2, 3.1, 3.2, Dispositions 1, 2, 3 |
| Participants will develop techniques for outdoor/indoor nature experiences | ECED Goals: 1, 2, 3 | MoSTEP 1, 4, 5; SoE 1, 2, 3.1, 3.2 |
| Participants will appreciate multicultural attitudes toward nature. | ECED Goals: 2, 3 | MoSTEP 7.2; SoE 4.1 Dispositions 1, 2, 3 |
| Participants will collect techniques and activities which enhance nature awareness | ECED Goals: 2, 3 | MoSTEP 1, 4, 5; SoE 1, 2, 3.1, 3.2 |
| Participants will build and appreciate their adult awareness of nature. | ECED Goal 1 | MoSTEP 9.1; SoE 3.1 Dispositions 1, 2, 3 |

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| Participants will learn to support environmental education with other curricula. | ECED Goals 1, 2, 3 | MoSTEP 1, 4, 5; SoE 1, 2, 3.1, 3.2 |
| Participants will learn to become “greener” teachers. | ECED Goals 1 | MoSTEP 9.1; SoE 3.1 Dispositions 1, 2, 3 |

Schedule of required readings, class preparations and assignments, lectures, discussions, student presentations, out-of-class assignments and exams.

Session 1: **BORN TO BE WILD.** Introductions. Review of syllabus and assignments. Discussion of why children need nature and how we can teach nature education. Multiple intelligences: the eighth intelligence. Development domains and nature education. Nature journals.

Assignment: Read pages 1-31 in *The Geography of Childhood*. Read chapters 1, 2 Louv. Begin nature journal (MoSTEP 1.1, 9.1; SoE 3.1). Bring plastic bag of dirt and container to put it in.

Session 2: **NATURAL PLAYGROUNDS.** Decomposition, worms, etc. Gardens. Food chain. Insects. Trip to local natural area.

Assignment: Read *The Sense of Wonder* by Rachel Carson. Nature journal. Read pp. 33-75 in *The Geography of Childhood*. Chapters 3, 4 Louv. (MoSTEP 1.1, 1.3,1.5, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.4, 7.2. 9.1, 10.1; SoE 1.3, 3.1, 3.2)

Session 3: **EXPLORATION.** Habitats, discovery, hiking ideas.

Assignment: Chapter 4, Louv. Nature journal. (MoSTEP 1.1, 1.3,1.5, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 7.2. 9.1, 10.1; SoE 1.3, 3.1, 3.2)

Session 4: **SHARING NATURE.** Discussion of the relationships that unfold from a closeness to nature. Trip to local natural area.

Assignment: Read *Sharing Nature With Children* by Joseph Cornell. Choose activity to teach and present next week in class. (MoSTEP 1.1, 1.3,1.5, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 7.2. 9.1, 10.1; SoE 1.3, 3.1, 3.2)

Session 5: **GO WITH THE FLOW.** Flow Learning. Strategies for keeping the sense of wonder alive. **Assignment:** Curriculum activity (Due Session 7). Read pp. 78-108 in *The Geography of Childhood*. Nature journal. (MoSTEP 1.1, 1.3,1.5, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 7.2. 9.1, 10.1; SoE 1.3, 3.1, 3.2)

Session 6 & 7: **NOT EVERYTHING MOVES.** The nonliving components of life. Sun, Soil, Water, and Air. **Assignment:** Read, “Gardening with Children.” Nature journal. Read pp. 109-end in *The Geography of Childhood*. Read “Hundreds of Ladybugs.” Write a 3-4 page

paper reflecting on the experiences and readings of the course and the influence they will make on your classroom. (MoSTEP 1.1, 1.3,1.5, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 7.2. 9.1, 10.1; SoE 1.3, 3.1, 3.2)

Session 8: **THE GREENER THE BETTER.** (July 10) Turn in nature journals. Look at curriculum projects. The rhythm of the year in the classroom (seasons celebrated indoors and outdoors). The greener teacher and classroom conservation. How to teach conservation without scaring children. (MoSTEP 1.1, 1.3,1.5, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 7.2. 9.1, 10.1; SoE 1.3, 3.1, 3.2)

Grades

A--Completes all assignments on time with extended interpretation of required work, including research and documentation. Writing skills are excellent. Consistent participation in and enthusiasm for class activities.

B--Complete all assignments on time, meeting expectations. Consistent participation in class activities.

C--All assignments completed but not on time and lacking in details.

RESOURCES:

Textbooks: *The Geography of Childhood*, by Gary Nabhan, Stephen Trimble, *Sharing Nature with Children*, by Joseph Cornell, *The Sense of Wonder*, Rachel Carson *Last Child in the Woods*, by Richard Louv.

Selected handouts.

EVALUATION: (basis of evaluation with explanation regarding the nature of the assignment and the percentage of the grade assigned to each item below)

| Assessments | Links to Course Outcomes | Percentage of Grade |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Curricular project | Participants will learn to design classroom activities which foster a respect for nature Participants will learn to support environmental education with other curricula Participants will collect techniques and activities which enhance nature awareness | 20% |
| Oral presentation (Cornell) | Participants will develop techniques | 20% |

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| | for outdoor/indoor nature experiences Participants will collect techniques and activities which enhance nature awareness | |
| Reflective paper on texts and experiences | Participants will collect techniques and activities which enhance nature awareness Participants will learn to become “greener” teachers. | 10% |
| Nature journal | Participants will build and appreciate their adult awareness of nature. Participants will learn to become “greener” teachers. | 25% |
| Biography | Participants will learn to support environmental education with other curricula. Participants will learn to design classroom activities which foster a respect for nature | 15% |
| Dispositions (attitude, attendance, participation) | Participants will learn to become “greener” teachers. | 10% |

GRADING SCALE: Grades

A--Completes all assignments on time with extended interpretation of required work, including research and documentation. Writing skills are excellent. Consistent participation in and enthusiasm for class activities. 91-100%

B--Complete all assignments on time, meeting expectations. Consistent participation in class activities. 81-90%

C--All assignments completed but not on time and lacking in details. Under 80%

Note: ALL PAPERS/PROJECTS MAY BE RETURNED VIA A SELF-ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE. PAPERS ARE NOT AVAILABLE FOR PICK-UP IN THE SOE OFFICE.

1. ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:

Students at Webster University are expected to practice academic honesty.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is intentionally claiming that another person’s work is his/her own or implying that another person’s work is his/her own (through inadequate or inaccurate citations of reference material.)

Students:

- Should not copy whole portions of text from another source as a major component of papers or projects.
- Should identify the title, author, page number/webpage address, and publication date of works when directly quoting small portions of texts, articles, interviews, or websites.
- Should appropriately identify the source of information when paraphrasing (restating) ideas from texts, interviews, articles, or websites.
- Should follow the guidelines of the American Psychological Association Style Guide when referencing all research sources.

Consequences of Academic Dishonesty:

For further information about the consequences of academic dishonesty please consult the Webster University Student Handbook.

2. ACCESSIBILITY/ACCOMODATIONS POLICY:

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations contact the Director of the Academic Resource Center, Dr. Pat McLeese, at (314) 968-7495.

Early Childhood Education Program Goals

ECED Goal 1: Demonstrates competence as a teacher researcher through ability to observe, document and analyze children's ideas, learning processes, and actions

ECED Goal 2: Applies an interdisciplinary, collaborative, and ecological systems-oriented approach to early education, that encourages family and community participation;

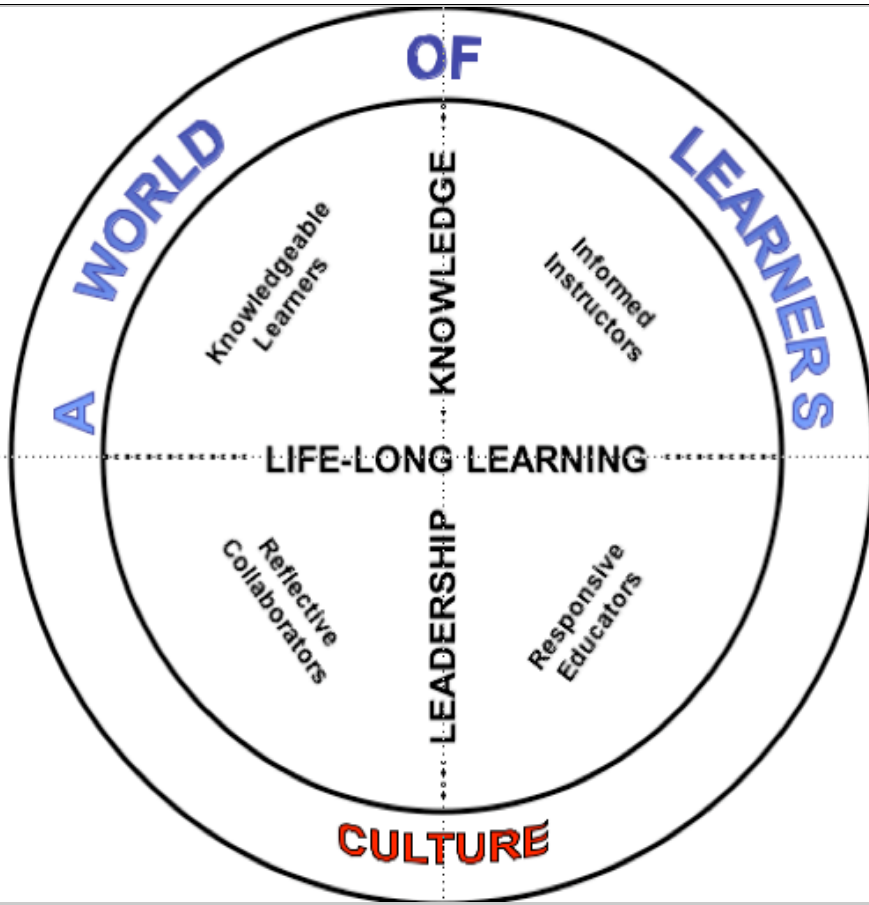
ECED Goal 3: Creates curriculum that: is grounded in an understanding of subject matter, developmental theory, and ongoing research; promotes inquiry and multiple forms of expression

WEBSTER UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Vision: " . . . We all must work to make this world worthy of its children." (Casals, 1970)

Mission: The School of Education at Webster University provides its students with the knowledge, experiences, and practical tools that help them guide both themselves and others toward lifelong learning. The School of Education is a community of educator-scholars who apply critical reflections and creative energies to enhance learning in schools and other educational settings. The faculty strives to support this community by modeling effective teaching practices based on sound theory and research. Personalized approaches create a challenging, yet supportive environment that permits the risk-taking necessary for learning and growth. The School of Education encourages its faculty and students to work actively toward this end, keeping in mind that action must be rooted in visionary, yet realistic, thinking. This thought and action process underscores the development of an inner-directed self-understanding, an outer-directed global perspective, and an appreciation of human diversity that arises from both.

Theme: Developing a world of learners through knowledge, leadership, and life-long learning.



The universal mandala (a circle with intersecting vertical and horizontal lines) graphically represents the conceptual framework of the School of Education. The outer circle provides the framework for a "world of learners" in cultural settings. The two axes represent the theme components of knowledge, leadership, and life-long learning. These lines are broken to emphasize the fluid relationship of the goals and integrated concepts. Each quadrant represents one of the school's four goals for its candidates: to develop knowledgeable learners, informed instructors, reflective collaborators, and responsive educators.

Goals

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

The knowledgeable learner:

- 1.1 knows content that supports conceptual understanding;
 - 1.2 applies tools of inquiry to construct meaningful learning experiences;
 - 1.3 identifies developmental factors in student learning; and
 - 1.4 understands theoretical principles of effective instruction to plan learning experiences.
2. Education candidates will incorporate multiple assessment and instructional strategies to support effective educational practices based on research and theory.

The informed instructor:

- 2.1 designs curriculum based on students' prior knowledge, learning styles, strengths, and needs;
 - 2.2 understands and uses a range of instructional strategies;
 - 2.3 uses a variety of communication modes, media, and technology to support student learning; and
 - 2.4 employs a variety of formal and informal assessments to monitor learning and modify instruction.
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:

- 3.1 values and integrates reflection to grow as a professional;
 - 3.2 promotes communication and collaboration with colleagues, families, and community leaders;
 - 3.3 seeks relationships with families and students to support student learning; and
 - 3.4 initiates change that benefits students and their families.
4. Education candidates will demonstrate respect for diversity through responsive teaching and learning that values individual differences.

The responsive educator:

- 4.1 understands and responds appropriately to issues of diversity
- 4.2 acknowledges social and cultural contexts to create effective teaching and learning environments;
- 4.3 adapts instruction to the learner's knowledge, ability, and background experience; and
- 4.4 identifies resources for specialized services when needed.

Dispositions:

NCATE defines dispositions as "the values, commitments and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth. " (Professional Standards, p. 53) There is significant value in focusing attention on qualities that make an effective teacher.

1. Understands and Respects Self
 - 1.1 Understands and respects that s (he) may be different from others
 - 1.2 Embraces an openness to change (adaptability, flexibility)
 - 1.3 Exhibits curiosity
 - 1.4 Engages in reflection

2. Understands and Respects Others
 - 2.1 Understands, respects, and responds appropriately to diversity in a variety of settings
 - 2.2 Exhibits empathy
 - 2.3 Commits to fairness and honesty
 - 2.4 Listens respectfully to other points of view

3. Understands and Respects Professional Communities
 - 3.1 Commits to professional behavior in university and school cultures
 - 3.2 Practices informed decision-making in university and school cultures
 - 3.3 Communicates and collaborates in university and school cultures
 - 3.4 Accepts academic rigor (willingness to work/ high expectations)
 - 3.5 Affects change with courage and confidence