

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Early Childhood Education Program

EDUC 597.695 - 20637
Special Topics in Education: Curriculum and Instruction (3:3:0)
Spring 2011

Professor: Deepa J. Aier

Office phone: 480 277 5839

Office location: Robinson A 103A

Office hours: by appointment

Email address: daier@gmu.edu

Course Description

Explores special topics in the principles of learning, curriculum development, and relationship between assessment and instruction. Examines role of play and active exploration in learning. Addresses the role of families and culture in children's learning.

Nature of Course Delivery

The class will have lecture, discussion, and group work formats and will require active participation of all students.

Learner outcomes

This course is designed to enable students to

1. Plan meaningful curriculum activities that are responsive to the interests, preferences, motivation, interaction styles, developmental status, learning history, and cultural variables of the child and family.
2. Demonstrate how meaningful curriculum activities link to VA Foundations of Learning Standards for Early Childhood Education.
3. Develop individual and group activity plans and implement strategies to facilitate functional cognitive, social, communication, motor, and adaptive development.
4. Plan and adapt curriculum activities that are respectful of family-identified outcomes, preferences, interaction styles, and cultural norms.
5. Develop and reflect on various behavior management strategies for culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families.
6. Apply current research on effective developmentally appropriate practices to teaching young children from diverse backgrounds and varying abilities.
7. Analyze and design appropriate environments and materials to include addressing developmentally appropriate practices, anti-bias curriculum, and inclusion settings.
8. Utilize problem-solving strategies to address dilemmas encountered in diverse educational and community settings.
9. Analyze and describe the varied theoretical frameworks guiding early childhood curriculum approaches and practices.
10. Describe how ongoing data collection and management of classroom plans can be used to monitor child progress in the context of daily activities.
11. Analyze one's own teaching practices and set appropriate goals for teaching change.

Professional standards

This course is aligned with the standards established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Required Texts

Readings as assigned

College of Education and Human Development Expectations and Resources

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

Note: To determine whether the campus is closed due to inclement weather, call 703-993-1000 or go to www.gmu.edu.

Course Requirements

General Requirements

1. The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities, it is imperative that students keep up with the readings and participate in class.

2. Class attendance is important. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must call the instructor and leave a message.
3. The university requires that all pagers and cell phones be turned off before class begins. All in-class usage of electronic devices, which includes telephones, laptops, etc., must have approval of course instructor. Laptops and other electronic devices are to be used for educational and learning purposes only and should not be used during class time to check email, surf the web, or communicate with people outside of the class unless part of the class activity.
4. It is expected that assignments will be turned in on time (the beginning of the class in which they are due). However, it is recognized that students occasionally have serious problems that prevent work completion. If such a dilemma arises, students should speak to the instructor in a timely fashion.

Attendance

Attendance in class is important to students' learning; therefore, students are expected to make every effort to attend class sessions. Absences, tardiness, and leaving early may negatively affect course grades. The following policy is from the university course catalog:

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

Written Assignments

All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation. The American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition (APA) style will be followed for all written work. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. (Use spell check!) If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work. When in doubt, they should check the APA manual. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the Mason library web guide at <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/>. Students may consult the Writing Center for additional writing support.

Students will

1. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
2. Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.
3. Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. (Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.)
4. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

Grading Criteria

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| A = 95 – 100 | A- = 90 – 94 | B+ = 87 – 89 | B = 83 – 86 |
| B- = 80 – 82 | C = 70 – 79 | F = < 70 | |

A+ is possible if work is of exceptional high quality above and beyond that required for the course.

Grading Policy

All CEHD undergraduate and graduate students are held to the university grading policies as described in the Academic Policies section of the current catalog, which can be accessed at <http://catalog.gmu.edu>. Those students enrolled in a CEHD Licensure Graduate Certificate program, however, must earn a B- or better in all licensure coursework. A degree-seeking graduate student will be dismissed after accumulating grades of F in two courses or 9 credits of unsatisfactory grades (C or F) in graduate courses. A 3.0 grade point average is required for completion of the graduate degree.

Attendance and Participation (15 points)

Because active participation and engagement are imperative for optimal learning, preparation for and participation in in-class activities will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Students attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period.
- Students complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class as is evidenced by their ability to discuss and write about the concepts presented and examined in the texts as well as participate fully in related activities.
- Students are actively involved in in-class learning experiences as is evidenced by (1) participating in all activities, (2) engaging in small and large group discussions, (3) completing written work related to the activities, and (4) supporting the participation and learning of classmates.
- Students show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-class and online discussions, activities, and written reflections.

In-Class Support (10 points)

Students will complete the in-class support form and email/fax it to the instructor two days prior to the in-class support date listed in their schedule. The purpose of the in-class support is to help students make connections between institutes, community meetings, and **knowledge enacted** in the classroom. For this activity, students will 1) select one child to interact with either at center time or small-group time, 2) identify the **intentional teaching strategy** to be enacted with this child, and 3) determine the type of support to best support implementing this **intentional teaching strategy**.

Planning Play (75 points)

Students will write a series of three lesson plans that focus on planning play (e.g., in the block area, dramatic play area etc.). They will base their plans on their knowledge of the (1) strengths, needs, and interests of the children in their classroom; (2) 5 modules of the STEP professional development – i.e. LEARN, Intentional Teaching, Culturally Responsive Practice, Assessment and Instruction, and Inclusion; (3) the common site curriculum; (4) assigned readings; and (5) other pertinent readings identified by the student. This assignment is to be completed in the following steps:

Step 1 (30 points) – *Planning Play*. Students will plan play using the template guide provided to clearly delineate lesson overview, teaching and learning, family resources and adaptations, and assessment and management procedures.

Step 2 (25 points) – *Enactment and reflection*. Students will videotape themselves teaching one of their planned play activities. Students will use the reflection guide provided to analyze their

videotapes and critically reflect on (1) effective implementation of planned play activity and (2) effective intentional teaching, including (a) meeting individual children's needs and interests regarding culture, language, ability; (b) using specific intentional teaching strategies identified through in-class support forms; (c) bridging assessment/instruction; and (d) integrating intentional teaching and the curriculum adhered to by school/center. At the community meeting, the students and instructor will collectively view and reflect on videos presented.

Step 5 (20 points) – *Connecting to STEP*. Student will document evidence of implementation of the plan specifically how they connected the three planned play activity and its implementation to one of the module from the STEP professional development. Students will present this connection by any one of the following methods (1) photo album specifically documenting connection among planned play activity, implementation, and STEP module; (2) poster presentation; or (3) a six-page paper.

Course Schedule and Topics*

| Date | Topics | Readings & Assignments |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| August 31 Institute | LEARN model Intentional teaching | |
| September 1 Institute | Intentional teaching strategies Bridging assessment, instruction, and curriculum Including all children | |
| September/ October Community Meeting | Setting up procedures for in-class support and community meetings | |
| October Community Meeting | Enacting intentional teaching strategies Assessing needs of teachers as related to course outcomes | **In-class support form |
| November/ December Institute | Culturally responsive practice Developing vocabulary through children's literature Inquiry-based learning for concept and vocabulary development | Readings as assigned |
| November Community Meeting | Enacting intentional teaching strategies Using knowledge of curriculum and children's strengths, needs, and interests to plan instruction | **In-class support form Readings as assigned |
| December Community Meeting | Enacting intentional teaching strategies Planning, analyzing, and refining instruction | **In-class support form Readings as assigned Knowledge of curriculum and children narrative (Step 1) |
| January Community Meeting | Enacting intentional teaching strategies Ongoing assessment, reflection, and networking | **In-class support form Readings as assigned Instructional planning and lesson analysis (Steps 2 and 3) |
| January/February Institute | Integrating intentional teaching with the curriculum | Readings as assigned Enactment, reflection, and networking (Steps 4 and 5) |
| February Community Meeting | Enacting intentional teaching strategies Being a reflective practitioner | **In-class support form Readings as assigned Reflective video analysis |
| March/April Institute | Reconstruction Review | |

*Subject to change based on needs and interests of students

** Return completed in-class support form on Monday before on-site meeting