

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Graduate School of Education

EDUC 542: Foundations of Education

Summer 2012

Tuesdays/Thursdays 4:30 pm - 8:15 pm, Thompson 1017

May 22, 2012 – June 21, 2012

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Course Description

Examines the historical, philosophical, and sociological foundations of education as they relate to elementary schools, with a particular emphasis on teaching a culturally diverse population. Students will develop an understanding of the relationship between society and education. Prerequisite(s): Admission to the Elementary Education licensure program.

Learning outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

1. identify important historical, philosophical, and sociological foundations underlying the role, development, and organization of public educational practice;
2. discuss contemporary educational initiatives and analyze their impact on educating a culturally diverse population of students;
3. discuss laws related to students' and teachers' rights and responsibilities

Nature of the Course

This course is structured to utilize multiple instruction formats. We will engage in face-to-face class sessions, as well as regularly scheduled online discussions and activities. Face to face class sessions will include small/large group discussions and tasks, lecture, and student leading of discussions.

Course Assumptions

This course operates with the assumption that knowledge is socially constructed and the most meaningful learning opportunities are those where you have the opportunity to offer and explore diverse perspectives with peers. To do this, you are expected to regularly contribute to class discussions as well as genuinely listen to peers as they do the same. Agreement is not mandatory; consideration and respect are. This means that you must be "present" throughout all discussions and activities.

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education Program Standards for Elementary Teacher Preparation

1. Candidates use their knowledge and understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior among students at the K-6 level to foster active engagement in learning, self motivation, and positive social interaction and to create supportive learning environment.
2. Candidates use their knowledge and understanding of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the elementary classroom.
3. Candidates understand practices and behaviors that identify and develop the competence of a professional career teacher.

8 VAC 20-25-30. Technology standards

- A. Instructional personnel shall be able to demonstrate effective use of a computer system and utilize computer software.
- B. Instructional personnel shall be able to apply knowledge of terms associated with educational computing and technology.
- C. Instructional personnel shall be able to apply computer productivity tools for professional use.
- D. Instructional personnel shall be able to use electronic technologies to access and exchange information.

Readings

Sheets, R. H. (2005). *Diversity pedagogy: Examining the role of culture in the teaching-learning process*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Spring, J. (2012). *American education* (15th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Kozol, J. (2005). *The shame of the nation: The restoration of apartheid schooling in America*. New York: Broadway Publishing.

Additional selected readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Assignments

Readings and Dialectical Journals (20 pts)

There is a good deal of reading in this course and it is your responsibility to read the assigned book and article selections for every class. Just completing the readings, however, is not enough to maximize your learning opportunities. You also need to analyze the readings in terms of your prior learning, personal experiences, and class discussions. Therefore, it is expected that you employ active reading strategies by utilizing a dialectical journal. In this journal, you will explicitly note places in the text that stand out to you and explore why in a brief note. You may question, disagree, agree, identify confusion, etc. A dialectical journal is a conversation between you and the text. See the handout describing dialectical journals for more information.

- The journal for the day's readings should be completed before the class period begins.
- The journal will count towards your weekly class participation and you are expected to bring it to each class session. Each week I will choose two students to share their journal entries with the class, and at several points I will ask you to submit your journal without advance notice.
- Journal entries should be brief, yet thoughtful, and demonstrate genuine consideration of the text.

Online Discussions and Activities (15 pts)

Blackboard will be utilized as a space for extending face-to-face class learning. After class each week, you are expected to log in to blackboard and post a response. This serves as a type of "exit slip" to help you process your immediate learning and to provide me insight into your developing understanding and perspective. Each day there will be a directive for your post. An example directive might be "What is one thing that you learned? What is one question you are wondering right now?" It is expected that your response is brief and that you connect your response to class discussion and the readings. You must post by _____ and then post at least one response to a peer by _____ (these days/times are to be decided in class).

Education Autobiography (10 pts)

This autobiography is an informal story of your own experiences in K-12 education. Your written narrative should have two parts. First, provide an overview of your recollections and impressions of your schooling. This should include a description of what kinds of schools you attended, what kinds of classes you were in, and how these spaces shaped and supported your aspirations. You may also want to talk about how you felt about school in general, who was typically in your classes, and the ways in which your family interacted with your education. This section of your paper should include specific data about the demographics and achievement data of your elementary and/or high school's student body as defined by race, social class, gender, disability, and language. All states have something similar to the links below. If you need help locating one for your home state, let me know.

<https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/reportcard/> (Virginia)

<http://www.nclb.osse.dc.gov/> (DC)

The second half of your paper should explore how these experiences relate to why you want to be a teacher and what kind of teacher you want to be. Think about how your own experiences with school present both opportunities and challenges to your work with your future students. What assumptions do you have about schooling and how do those shape your thinking about being a teacher? What do you anticipate will be easy? What do you anticipate will be a challenge?

Note: This should be a personal experience narrative and written as such. It should be 4-5 pages.

Philosophical Case Creation (5 pts)

Using what you will learn about various philosophies of education, create short vignettes that illustrate a philosophy in action in a classroom. In other words, imagine yourself as a teacher who is aligned with each of the philosophies we discuss in class. Include such details as your approach to curriculum planning, interactions with students, room arrangement and decoration, parent relationships, etc. Each vignette should concern the same grade level at the same school.

Current Events (10 pts)

Small groups of four students will select a current events news story (video clip or news article) to share with the class. The story should relate to an educational issue connected to the theme of the week the small group has been assigned (gender, race/ethnicity, disability, language, social class). Links to the story should be posted to Blackboard 48 hours before class so that the other students and instructors can familiarize themselves with the issue. The group will be allotted 20-30 minutes in class to facilitate a discussion about the story. The group will be responsible for a one-page handout summarizing the story and identifying 2-3 essential questions they would like to address with the class. Individually, each student will write a 1-page reflection of their presentation examining the themes raised by the in-class discussion and connecting them to course readings.

Reflective Practitioner Paper (40 pts) PBA

In order to become reflective practitioners for a multicultural classroom, candidates must reflect on a variety of professional issues that teachers confront in their day-to-day teaching as well as the broader educational and social context that affects the work of public school teachers. To this end, the candidates will analyze a current issue/innovation around race and culture, gender equity, special education, social class, or language diversity. They will then relate it to historical and sociological trends/perspectives as well as to their own experiences.

*A detailed task description and rubric is attached.

Grading Scale

A=93-100; A-=90-92; B+=87-89; B=80-86; C=70-79; F=below 70

Remember: A course grade less than B requires that you retake the course.

University, College, and Elementary Program Policies

CEHD Student Expectations

Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor. One cell phone will remain on in class that is registered with the Mason Alert System. Visit <https://alert.gmu.edu>, to find out more about Mason's alert system for GMU emergencies.

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].

Honor Code. To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal integrity, GMU has set forth a code of honor that includes policies on cheating, attempted cheating, lack of class participation in group work, plagiarism, lying and stealing (see link above). The Elementary Program abides by these policies and takes them seriously.

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 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/>].

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/>].

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to the following five values: collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. For more information about our core values, please reference <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

Course Calendar

Date	Topic/Guiding questions	Reading/Assignment Due
May 22	<i>Introductions</i> What does “Foundations of Education” mean? What is the purpose of schooling? Are you <i>Willing to be Disturbed</i> ? Terminology	Reading TBA *after class: online reflection post
May 24	<i>Philosophical Foundations of Education</i> What does it mean to learn? What is the best way to teach?	Reading TBA *after class: online reflection post Education Autobiography Due
May 29	<i>The Social, Economic, and Political Goals of School</i> Why do we teach what we do? What are the effects of the goals of school?	Reading TBA Philosophical Cases Due
May 31	<i>Gender & Education</i>	Reading TBA *after class: online reflection post
June 5	<i>Race, Ethnicity & Education</i>	Reading TBA *after class: online reflection post
June 7	<i>Social Class & Education</i>	Reading TBA *after class: online reflection post
June 12	<i>Students with Disabilities Education</i>	Reading TBA *after class: online reflection post
June 14	<i>English Language Learner Education</i>	Reading TBA *after class: online reflection post

June 19	<i>The state of education today and current issues</i>	Reading TBA *after class: online reflection post Current Events Analysis Due
June 21	<i>Implications for teaching our students today</i>	Reading TBA *after class: online reflection post PBA Due TBD

Note: Calendar is tentative and may be modified in line with course needs.

Performance Based Assessment

“The dynamic of social change requires an active concern about the denial of equality of opportunity and equality of educational opportunity” (Spring, 2008, p. 117).

In consideration of the above quote, this assignment will offer you an opportunity to expand your understanding of the needs and strengths of your potential students and initiatives/efforts that may best meet those needs. Taken another way, you will explore the following question: **Why should you be concerned about the denial of equality of educational opportunity and how can you as a teacher affect equality of educational opportunity?**

Follow the steps below to successfully write this scholarly paper:

1. Select a category from one of the groups discussed this semester of which you would like to learn more:
Students with disabilities (you may want to select a disability)
Gifted students (you may want to focus on a type of giftedness)
Gender (equity)
Race/ Ethnicity (select one)
English language learners (you may want to focus on a native language)
Students living in poverty

2. Pick an educational innovation found in the Spring textbook (or discussed in class) that is considered potentially effective for this group of students. For example,
multicultural education
multilingual education
charter schools
school choice/vouchers
inclusion
self-contained classrooms

Note: There will be multiple “innovations” that hold potential for different groups of students. For this assignment, dig deep into just one.

3. Find peer-reviewed research articles and class readings that address your topic. If you are not sure about whether a research journal is peer-reviewed consult with me.
4. Take notes as you read about best educational innovations for that group.
5. Write your paper. You may want to include the following as headings so that you and the reader [your instructor] can know exactly where you are headed and whether you have addressed all of the content requirements:
 - Introduction/background of the identified population (may include U.S., VA, demographics),
 - Implications of young learners in this population,

- Implications of teachers such as yourself (compare/contrast your background) teaching this population of students,
- Description of the innovation that will meet some of needs of this population,
- Background and historical information of innovation,
- Strengths of the innovation,
- Weaknesses of the innovation,
- Implications for teachers employing innovation (implications answer the statement “therefore...”),
- Implications of the innovation for the identified population of learners.

While you are writing the paper make sure that you are doing the following:

- integrating concepts from readings,
- integrating class discussions, and integrating experiences and/or personal reflection.

While you are writing the paper make sure that:

- it is logically organized
- has an introduction that includes the goals/purpose of the paper
- has a clear thesis in the introduction
- has points representing strengths and weaknesses of the innovation,
- has smooth transitions between ideas,
- ends with a conclusion that restates the main points of the paper (without introducing new ideas).

While you are writing the paper make sure that:

- Information is presented clearly within the page limits (8-10 pages)
- the paper has no grammar or spelling errors.

While you are writing the paper make sure that you follow APA format. Your format should include:

- title page,
- headings,
- page numbers,
- in text reference &
- cite reference
- multiple (2 or more), some (1), none (0) references.

Before you turn in your paper do the following:

- Read and/or re-read it.
- Do spell check and grammar check.
- Ask someone whose writing you respect to read and advise you on how you can improve your paper.
- If necessary, visit the Writing Center.

Grading:

You have MET Standard 3 if you earn a 3 or 4 two or more times.

You have MET Standard 4 if you earn a 3 or 4 three or more times.