

Learning and Teaching in the Early Childhood Classroom

15:251:578 Section 01

Fall 2011

3 Credits

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Office Hours: Available Upon Request	Prerequisites or other limitations: None
Mode of Instruction: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input type="checkbox"/> Seminar <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid <input type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Permission required: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Directions about where to get permission numbers: <i>Individual instructor(s) should be contacted for information regarding special permission numbers</i>

Learning goals:

Teachers know and understand:

- 2.1 How students construct knowledge, acquire skills and develop habits of mind and how to use instructional strategies that promote student learning;
- 2.2 How student learning is influenced by individual experiences, talents and prior learning, as well as language, culture, family, and community values;
- 2.3 How to identify and teach to the developmental abilities of students, which may include learning differences, visual and perceptual differences, cultural and socio-emotional differences, special physical or emotional challenges and gifted and talented exceptionalities;
- 4.1 How to plan instruction based on students' needs, developmental progress and prior knowledge;
- 4.2 Available and appropriate resources and materials for instructional planning;
- 4.3 Techniques for modifying instructional methods, materials and the environment to help all students learn;
- 4.4 A variety of instructional approaches and the use of various technologies, to promote thinking and understanding;
- 6.2 How the classroom environment influences learning and promotes positive behavior for all students;
- 8.1 The power of communication in the teaching and learning process; and
- 9.1 The importance of meaningful parent/family involvement in education in addressing the unique student needs and the perspectives to be gained from effective school/home interactions that contribute to high-quality teaching and learning.

Teachers value and are committed to:

- 1.5 Appreciating multiple perspectives and conveying to learners how knowledge is developed from the vantage point of the knower;

- 1.6 Enthusiasm for the discipline(s) they teach and in making connections to every day life;
- 2.4 The educability of all children and adolescents;
- 2.5 The belief that all children and adolescents bring talents and strengths to learning;
- 2.6 Appreciation for multiple ways of knowing;
- 2.8 The belief that all children and adolescents can learn at high levels and achieve success;
- 4.5 The development of students' critical thinking, independent problem-solving and performance capabilities;
- 5.3 The belief that students' strengths are the basis for growth and their errors are opportunities for learning;
- 8.3 Being a thoughtful and responsive listener, and
- 9.6 Being willing to work with parents/families and other professionals to improve the overall learning environment for students.

Course catalog description:

Addresses teaching strategies and curricula appropriate for the young child aged 3 to 8. Emphasizes the role of play in learning and development and instructional strategies to foster cognitive, social, and emotional development. Curriculum planning around integrated, thematically related experiences explored.

Other description of course purposes, context, methods, etc:

This is an introductory course that examines the complex relationships between learning and teaching in early childhood classrooms. The focus will be integrating theory with practice. We will use your field placement and personal stories as well as those of teachers, children, and other theorists to examine the diverse ways young children learn and the many strategies that might be employed when teaching them. Throughout the class we will consider and practice a variety of teaching strategies, examine the curriculum content that young children might explore, and learn about the diversity of contexts in which early childhood education takes place. Attention will be paid to multiple sources for curriculum decision making -- social, historical, political, developmental, and personal. Specifically this course will enable you to:

- develop an understanding of the various theories, research trends, and socio-historical factors that have shaped and are shaping current early childhood practices.
- become familiar with a variety of early childhood curricula and the diverse contexts in which young children are educated, including the addressing of the needs of English language learners and the accommodations necessary for students with special needs.
- plan curriculum for children ages 3-8 years that uses strategies and materials that responds to the ways young children learn, addresses an array of subject matter knowledge, and anchors instruction in the state's K-12 learning standards.
- become experienced with using observation techniques as a tool for planning a student-centered curriculum, refining your own teaching practices, and documenting children's learning.

Required texts:

- Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.). (2008). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs* (3rd Edition). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. ISBN-9781928896647
- Epstein, A. S. (2007). *The Intentional Teacher: Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children's Learning*. Washington, Dc: NAEYC. ISBN-9781928896418
- All other readings will be posted on the Sakai site for this course.

Grading policy:

Evaluation of Written Work: These qualities will be valued in your work:

- Responsiveness to the task or question: Are you fulfilling the requirements of the assignment.
- Clarity and organization of writing.
- Conciseness – try to write in a non-repetitious way.
- Completeness and depth – Present the necessary amount of detail to support your points. Write or present as though your audience is not an expert on your topic and in a way that demonstrates depth of analysis of the topic.
- Independent judgment – Go beyond the information presented by others. Be critical, seeing both strengths and weaknesses and support opinions with your own reasons.
- Relevance – Connections between your work and the content and organization of 300:412 should be clear.
- Attention to professional style – Papers should be typed or word-processed and follow APA format. (You can find a good summary of how to use APA format at the following website: , <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>) Please use Times New Roman 12pt font, 1 inch margins, and double space all of your assignments.
- On lateness – If you need an extension of time on an assignment please contact me before the date when the paper is due. If you do not contact me, your grade on the assignment will be dropped one letter grade for every class period it is late.

Summary of Requirements

Class participation	10 points
Web Postings	10 Points
Observation Paper	25 points
In-Class Presentation & Lesson	25 points (10 - group grade/15 - indiv grade)
Curriculum Unit	30 points

Letter Grade Equivalents

93-100	A
88-92	B+

83-87	B
78-82	C+
73-77	C
68-72	D+
60-67	D
Below 60	F

Attendance Policy:

If you must miss a class please make sure that you talk to a fellow student who can help you catch up on what was discussed in your absence. If you miss more than one class during the semester without a bona fide medical reason (including a doctor's note) your grade for the course will automatically be reduced as follows: 2 classes - ½ grade, 3 classes - 1 full grade, 4 classes - failing grade.

Assignments¹:

1) Class participation

Class participation is crucial to your understanding and application of course content. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings and to participate in class activities. I will take note of participation in every class.

2) Class Web Postings

Each student is required to *initiate* a reflection on the class Sakai website **twice** during the semester. These postings should deal with issues, readings, or lectures that you feel strongly about it. Reflections mean questions that were raised, assumptions that were challenged and ideas for practice that you thought about. **In addition**, each student will *respond* to at least **five** postings initiated by other students. This means you must post on Sakai a total of **SEVEN** times during the semester.

3) In-Class Presentation on a Teaching Technique

Teaching requires using a range techniques or strategies. These strategies are derived from various theories of how children learn. In groups of three to five, you will research at least two strategies (using readings that will be provided) and be prepared to explain them to the rest of the class (via a jigsaw activity). Each group member will prepare a written lesson plan that incorporates all of these techniques. (This lesson can be used for your Integrated Curriculum Unit as well.) The group will then choose one of those lesson plans to present to the class. You will decide as a group which lesson to use for the demonstration. Remember, you are trying to teach us the lesson **and** demonstrate the teaching techniques at the same time. You can role-play the lesson, using some of your group members as students, or you may ask us to be students. A final written product will include a summary of the techniques, each of the group members lesson plans, and a brief summary of what you have learned from this experience. ***Please submit your lesson plan on Sakai in our class dropbox and on ePortfolio.***

3) Observations of Early Childhood - Observing Children within the Cultural Context of their Classrooms

¹ Including exams, papers etc.

Being able to observe children and their learning is a critical component of early childhood curriculum planning, enactment, and evaluation. You are to do two observations, one will be in your practicum setting and the other will be to the assigned preschool setting. In both observations, you will take note of the physical and social environments of the school and how responsive those environments are to students' home cultures. For example, you will look for communication with parents including languages used; what books, materials, and pictures are used; how to teachers interact with children around issues of language and culture. Then you will focus on the social interactions between children and how issues of race, class, gender, and culture mediate those interactions. You will focus mainly on one child to better understand him/her as a learner. (approximately 7-10 pages) ***Please submit your paper on Sakai in our class dropbox and bring a hard copy to class with a copy of your observation notes.***

4) Integrated Curriculum Unit

This assignment will be completed in the context of a group, but each individual will develop and hand in an individual unit plan. Assigned groups will be given a class context (i.e. urban or suburban; children with special needs). Each individual student will then develop an integrated unit plan on a topic or theme of their choice. ***Please submit your unit plan on Sakai in our class dropbox and on ePortfolio.***

Your curriculum unit should include:

- Title of Unit and Grade Level(s)
- Length of unit (days and periods)
- NJ content standards that are addressed
- Prerequisite knowledge: Describe what students should know and have done before the unit
- The goals of the unit
- The most important ideas to be addressed in the unit
- Resources needed - create an annotated bibliography of resources that you could use to teach that topic
- A description of how you will develop relationships with the community and with families and keep them involved in the unit
- An explanation of how the unit integrates across curriculum areas
 - Provide an overview of all lessons (at least 5 in total) that comprise the unit - this overview should include the title of each lesson, the objectives of each lesson, and a short paragraph describing the lesson itself
- Identify and address potential difficulties students may experience with the content
- A description of the educational context will be provided for you. In all other aspects of the unit plan, you must take this contextual description into account. How will you respond to the cultural and social needs of students? How will you use the cultural and social strengths of your class and community?
- Describe your formative and summative assessments for the unit. How are your assessments linked to the goals of the unit?

- Describe your unit’s connections to students’ lives
- Modifications for different learners. Describe alternative strategies for diverse learners (i.e. ELL students, students with disabilities, gifted students and students from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds)
- More details will be handed out in class

Academic Integrity Policy:

Any violation of academic honesty is a serious offense and is therefore subject to an appropriate penalty. Refer to <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml> for a full explanation of policies.

Web site:

<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal> (Specific course Sakai access will be available only to those students who have officially registered for this course.)

Course Schedule:

Week	Assignments & Readings	
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions and overview of the course • Personal images of early childhood teaching • Defining early childhood education/curriculum: Exploring the historical foundations of the field 	
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theories of children's learning as a basis of early childhood curriculum: Who are young children as learners? • Working with diverse student populations; • Developmentally Appropriate Practice 	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bredekamp and Copple “Developmentally Appropriate Practice” pages 1-50 • Ryan and Grieshaber, “It’s more than child development: Critical theories research and teaching young children.” • Barnes “Including everyone: A model preschool program for typical and special needs children.”
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play and Learning in Early Childhood Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is play? ○ What is the relationship between play, learning and development? ○ Why is play featured in most early childhood curriculum 	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van Horn “The development of play” • Gallas, Chapter 3, The Languages of Learning • Wondering with Children: The Importance of Observation in

	<p>models?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is the role of play in early childhood programs? ○ What is the role of the early childhood teacher? ○ What are the challenges in teaching in a playful environment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kid-watching techniques - How to observe young children. 	<p>Early Education by George Forman & Ellen Hall. Can be found at: http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v7n2/forman.html</p>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Play and Developmentally Appropriate Practice ● Assessment of young children 	<p>Read (or watch) one of the following articles (to be assigned in class):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lobman “The bugs are coming” ● Wing “Play is not the work of the child: Young Children’s perceptions of work and play. ● Ken Robinson at TED http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity.html ● Wisnewski (TBA)
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lesson Planning ● The conceptual dimensions of the curriculum ● Aims, Goals and Objectives - Lesson Plans 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bredekamp and Copple “Developmentally Appropriate Practice” Chapter 6--The Kindergarten Year ● Krogh and Slentz Planning and Creating the Curriculum ● Epstein: Chapters 1
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teaching strategies that reinforce learning - Part 1 ● Behaviorist theories of learning and teaching techniques: Demonstrating, modeling, feedback, encouraging, praising, helping, telling and instructing, reinforcing (planning time) 	<p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assigned Mac Naughton & Williams chapters (jigsaw)
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Constructivist and socio-cultural views of learning and teaching techniques: Facilitating, suggesting, describing, listening, questioning, recalling. ● Specialist techniques: Co-constructing, problem solving, and scaffolding. 	
8	<p><i>In-Class presentations on Teaching Techniques & Teaching Technique papers due</i></p>	

9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating Curriculum • Across and within content areas • DAP • Identifying appropriate technology applications that will boost instruction 	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hurless & Gittings (2008). Weaving the tapestry: A first grade teacher integrates teaching & learning.
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating the physical and temporal environment • Scheduling and planning for time • Creating environments that support curriculum goals: The where of curriculum • Physical and interpersonal environments • Materials as the texts of the EC classroom 	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bredekamp and Copple “DAP” Chapter 8--The Primary Grades • Cuffaro The social individual in an early childhood setting • Epstein Chapter 2.
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the creative arts in the early childhood curriculum • Reggio Emilia (Unit Planning) 	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loughran “An artist among young artists” • Andress “Transforming curriculum in music” • Smith, “Painting in the lives of children” • Epstein, Chapter 6 & 7
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with families/family involvement/ Addressing difficult issues in the classroom/classroom management • Reexamine lesson plans • ISFP & IEP 	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sturm Creating parent-teacher dialogue: Intercultural communication in childcare • Nagel “Special Education: Jodie and her story”
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Families – Part 2 – Building Community among cultures • Exploring power relationships with young children • Classroom Management with Young Children • Differentiated Instruction • Extending instruction for students who have demonstrated proficiency in relevant standards 	Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delpit The silenced dialogue: Power & pedagogy in educating other people's children • Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms.
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary and conclusions: • Reexamining your 	

	understandings of early childhood education	
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