EDUT782: Policy Perspectives Affecting Diverse Young Learners
Robinson A 101

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 4:30-6:00, or by appointment

Class Day: Tuesday/Thursday: 7:00 – 10:05, Saturday: 9:00 – 12:05

Prerequisites: Admission to a the graduate Early Childhood Education degree program

Course Description:

Explores historical and current trends and issues involving legislation and policy in early childhood education, bilingual education, early childhood special education, and multicultural education. Focuses on the historical role of social advocacy, development of advocacy skills, and collaboration and consultation with other professionals and staff in early childhood education. Addresses the continuum of services and context of service delivery at the local level and also at the state and national levels.

Students will also explore their roles as leaders in the field of education and learn how to develop leadership skills. Students will, as well, explore the unique role of education in a democratic society, including how the principles of equity and access relate to increasing
opportunities for young children and their families who are at risk for disenfranchisement due to cultural, linguistic, and ability diversity.

**Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organization:**
This course is part of the George Mason University Graduate School of Education Special Education Program (area of early childhood special education), the UTEEM Program (Early Childhood, Early Childhood Special Education, bilingual/ESL) for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the Early Childhood Education EPK-3 master’s degree and licensure program. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Division for Early Childhood, the major professional organization addressing Early Childhood Special Education, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the major professional organization addressing Early Childhood Education, as well as TESOL, the major professional organization for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

The content of this class and the performance based assessment embedded in this class addresses the following specific standards:

**CEC Standard 1: Foundations.** Special educators

a. Understand the field as an evolving and changing discipline based on philosophies, evidence-based principles and theories, relevant laws and policies, diverse and historical points of view, and human issues that have historically influenced and continue to influence the field of special education and the education and treatment of individuals with exceptional needs both in school and society

b. Understand how these influence professional practice, including assessment, instructional planning, implementation, and program evaluation

c. Understand how issues of human diversity can impact families, cultures, and schools, and how these complex human issues can interact with issues in the delivery of special education services

d. Understand the relationships of organizations of special education to the organizations and functions of schools, school systems, and other agencies

e. Use this knowledge as a ground upon which to construct their own personal understandings and philosophies of special education

**CEC Standard 10: Collaboration.** Special educators:

a. Routinely and effectively collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways. This collaboration assures that the needs of individuals with ELN are addressed throughout schooling
b. Embrace their special role as advocate for individuals with ELN; Promote and advocate the learning and well being of individuals with ELN across a wide range of settings and a range of different learning experiences

c. Are viewed as specialists by a myriad of people who actively seek their collaboration to effectively include and teach individuals with ELN

d. Are a resource to their colleagues in understanding the laws and policies relevant to Individuals with ELN

e. Use collaboration to facilitate the successful transitions of individuals with ELN across settings and services

In addition, this course is designed to meet professional standards for teachers of young children (NAEYC) and for teachers of English Language Learners (TESOL). These are:

NAEYC Standards

Key Element 5a: Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field

Key Element 5b: Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines

Key Element 5c: Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice

Key Element 5d: Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education

Key Element 5e: Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession

TESOL Standards

Domain 5: Professionalism

Standard 5.a: ESL Research and History. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of history, research, and current practice in the field of ESL teaching and apply this knowledge to improve teaching and learning.

Standard 5.b: Partnerships and Advocacy. Candidates serve as professional resources, advocate for ESOL students, and build partnerships with students’ families.

Standard 5.c: Professional Development and Collaboration. Candidates collaborate with and are prepared to serve as a resource to all staff, including paraprofessionals, to improve learning for all ESOL students.

Course Objectives:

At the completion of this course, students will:

1) describe the historical role of social advocacy and the role of educators in advocating for young children to ensure equity and access in service delivery;

2) demonstrate the ability to implement actions through collaboration and consultation with professional peers and staff;

3) describe the legislation and policy-making process related to culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families;
4) describe the continuum of services and the fiscal and regulatory context of service delivery at the local, state, and national levels;
5) describe the administrative aspects and legal mandates for early childhood programs;
6) identify characteristics of leaders and analyze own leadership skills;
7) analyze a current policy issue related to the lives of culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families and plan and implement an appropriate awareness/advocacy/leadership response.

In addition, students should be advised of the following Graduate School of Education requirements:

1) Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.
2) Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code
3) Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See http://mail.gmu.edu and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.
4) Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

Required Texts:


Additional Resources:


Since current policy readings are often found on the websites associated with advocacy and policy organizations, we will identify several readings that can be obtained from the web. These will be listed with the appropriate class week on the syllabus and may form the basis of class discussions. In addition, we encourage you to access these sites as you proceed with your group and independent research projects. We also encourage you to collect and share policy related articles in our weekly class sessions.

Professional organizations, school boards, school administrators, state departments, and local school systems all have websites on which they post their policy statements.

Some examples of sites include:

http://www.tcrecord.org (a publication of Teacher’s College, Columbia University)
http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/idea (the United States Department of Education Site)
http://naeyc.org (National Association for the Education of Young Children)
http://www.childrensdefense.org (Children’s Defense Fund)
http://www.edweek.org (Education Week)
http://www.pdkintl.org (on-line versions of Kappan, a publication of Phi Delta Kappa)
http://www.nieer.org (National Institute for Early Education Research)
http://www.zerotothree.org (Zero to Three, National Center for Infants and Families)
http://www.nbcdi.org/ (National Black Child Development Institute)
http://nectac.org/ (National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center)
http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~scpp/crosswalks/toolbox/ (Your source for teaching, training and staff development resources that reflect cultural, linguistic and ability diversity and content)
http://www.peatc.org/ (website of the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center, Virginia’s Parent Training and Information Center)
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/ (website of the Virginia Department of Education)
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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>* Syllabus and assignments</td>
<td>▪ Begin collecting policy articles from newspaper</td>
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<td>* Defining policy</td>
<td>▪ Begin reading Kozol</td>
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<td>* Early guidance on the individual and group projects</td>
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<td>* The role of education in democracy – policy implications</td>
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<td>* The current policy context, challenges and opportunities.</td>
<td>▪ Policy news regarding young children – bring articles regarding policy and young children</td>
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<td>* Defining and regulating high quality programs</td>
<td>▪ Read Chapters 1 &amp; 11, Cryer &amp; Clifford</td>
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<td>* Becoming and early childhood leaders and advocate</td>
<td>▪ Read pp. 1-17, Brown &amp; Mazza</td>
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<td>▪ Continue reading Kozol</td>
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<td>* Family Engagement and Support</td>
<td>▪ <strong>First Weekly Reading Log Response and Question Due</strong></td>
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<td>* Self Advocacy</td>
<td>▪ Read Cryer and Clifford, Chapters 2&amp;4.</td>
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<td>* Sign up for Current Issues Projects</td>
<td>▪ Read Brown &amp; Mazza, pp. 18-33</td>
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<td>▪ Bring policy news</td>
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<td>▪ Continue reading Kozol</td>
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<td>▪ Begin an autobiography or biography of someone you consider to be a leader. This must be completed by 6/18/09</td>
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<td>▪ Second Weekly Reading Log</td>
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| * Access and funding issues  
* Inclusive services for children with disabilities  
* Family and peer advocacy  
* Further discussion of Current Issues Projects | Response and Question Due |
|---|---|
| * Cryer and Clifford, chapters 3&8  
* Brown & Mazza, pp.56-78  
* Bring policy news regarding young children with disabilities  
* Continue Kozol  
* Continue reading biography/autobiography | |

| * Policy issues affecting program content  
* Services for dual language learners  
* Work on CIP Projects | |
|---|---|
| * Cryer and Clifford, chapter 6  
* Brown & Mazza, pp. 79-101  
* Bring policy news regarding dual language learners; review NAEYC website for position statements  
* Continue Kozol  
* Continue biography/autobiography | |

| * Becoming a leader and advocate for diverse young learners; leading in diverse communities  
* Policy regarding high quality personnel  
* CIP Groups | |
|---|---|
| * Cryer and Clifford, chapter 5  
* Brown and Mazza, pp. 125-135  
* Bring policy news  
* Continue reading biography/autobiography  
* Continue Kozol  
** Third Weekly Reading Log Response and Question Due | |

| * Historical factors affecting current services  
* Information as advocacy  
* Class will meet at Afro-American Historical Association of Fauquier County, 4243 Loudoun Avenue, The Plains, VA 20198; 540.253.7488 | |
|---|---|
| * Complete Kozol  
* Continue biography/autobiography | |

| * Advocacy for children and families living in poverty  
* Community organizing  
* CIP groups | |
|---|---|
| * Cryer and Clifford, Chapter 9  
* Brown and Mazza, pp. 102-124  
* Continue biography/autobiography  
* Bring policy news regarding young children living in poverty | |

| * Over-representation and disproportionality  
* Advocacy in the courts | |
|---|---|
| * Bring policy news  
* Reading TBA  
* Bring assigned CIP reading for class mates. | |
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<tr>
<th><em>CIP Advocacy Fair</em></th>
<th><strong>Fourth Weekly Reading Log Response and Question Due</strong></th>
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<td><em>Readings to be assigned by CIP groups</em></td>
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<th><em>No Formal Class</em></th>
<th><strong>Work on CIP Reflections</strong></th>
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<td><em>Prepare for Leadership Book Group</em></td>
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<th><em>Book Club – Discussion of autobiography or biography of someone you consider being a leader. Consider implications for leadership to ensure equity and access for culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families.</em></th>
<th><strong>Finish biography/autobiography.</strong></th>
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<td><em>Brown &amp; Maza, pp. 136-end</em>* Reflections due from CIP groups*</td>
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| *Book Club Reflection Due – I cannot accept work after this date. Grades will be posted on 6/22.* | **Post reflection on why you consider this person to be a leader. Consider implications for leadership to ensure equity and access for culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families. Consider how it relates to your own leadership style and goals. Reflect on the book club itself and how it affected your view of your leader. Link to Brown and Mazza.** |

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Rubrics for all of the assignments will be provided in class prior to the due date of the assignment.

1. **Preparation and Participation**

   Students are expected to have completed assigned readings prior to class and participate in group discussions and activities. They are, further, expected to demonstrate principles of equity and access in their own participation, through their leadership behavior and their supporting of the leadership of others. Included in the points is preparation for course sessions via the Reading Response Logs, as well as participation in blackboard discussions after group presentations. (30% of total grade)
Participation is graded according to the following criteria (10%):

a) Attending all classes on time, unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor;
b) Completing all assignments on time;
c) Participating in large group discussion and activities on a regular basis;
d) Participating in small group discussions and activities on a regular basis;
e) Working as a collaborative group member, supporting the participation of classmates.

Reading Response Logs are graded according to the following criteria (20%):

a) Response logs are completed and turned in prior to the appropriate class session. *I will not accept logs after the beginning of class, as these will be used for discussion.*
b) Response logs show evidence of having reflected on and integrated the assigned readings and websites.
c) Response logs show thoughtfulness in formulating questions for class discussion. These do not have to be word processed. (four due @ 5 points each)

2. **Leadership Book**
You are to select a book of your choice that is an autobiography or biography of someone you consider to be a leader. Come to class prepared to discuss what you have learned about leadership on June 18. In addition, prepare a paper that includes: 1) a review of the text; and 2) a reflection about implications for leadership and advocacy on behalf of culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families. (30% of grade)

The Leadership book assignment will be graded according to the following criteria:

a) Text is appropriate to the assignment
b) Summary captures key themes of the text and the leader it describes
c) Reflection shows thoughtfulness, depth, and breadth in the discussion of leadership attributes, issues of equity and diversity, links to own leadership
d) Participation in the book club session is active and helps classmates see the leadership implications of this text.
e) Reflection provides links to Brown and Mazza, as well as other course readings, and to class discussions.

3. **Current Issues Project**
With the help of faculty, students develop ideas for a project addressing current trends and issues in educational policy in Early Childhood Special Education, Bilingual Education, Early Childhood Education, and Multicultural Education. For each project, in small groups, students are responsible for facilitating the class’s understanding of the
issue and creating an advocacy opportunity. Based on your research of the issue, on June 13, you are to select one brief reading that the class must read in preparation for class. Your in-class presentation will be about 30 minutes. As a group, you are to show shared leadership in helping the group understand the issue and involving them in an activity that helps them better engage in the action you have planned. You will also describe the action you have planned. During the week of your presentation, you need to provide a brief handout and overview of your topic, a policy brief. The second element of the project is an advocacy action. This may include attending a public hearing, preparing a letter, and others as appropriate.

The nature of each current issues project will depend upon the group’s topic and will be discussed in depth in class.

Elements of the CIP Process:

1. Decide Broad Issues
2. Do Research on the Topic
3. Decide Narrow Advocacy Issue and Target Audience

Elements of Policy Brief:

1. Make it short, no more than one page front and back
2. Identify clearly what the issue is and what needs to be “fixed.”
3. Explain who is hurt by current policy/needs to be helped by new policy and implications for things not changing.
4. Provide evidence – what’s the research. Make it clear and simple for the reader who is unfamiliar with early childhood special education.
5. Link to the right person/target audience.
6. Provide a clear, workable solution and an identifiable action.

Deciding on an Action:

Consider feasibility and doability. Match your action to the issue and the target audience (refer to 5 and 6 above).

This assignment is worth 40% of your grade, and it is the PBA for this class. Note: Every student registered for this course is required to submit the identified PBA to TaskStream. TaskStream information is available at http://taskstream.com. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed, upon completion of the required submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

The assignment will be graded according to the following criteria:

a) The policy brief is short, provides a brief overview of the topic, key findings, and recommended actions and shows evidence of obtaining appropriate information from
relevant professional and community organizations (e.g., DEC, NAEYC, Zero to Three) (refer to list of websites above).

b) The in-class presentation gave accurate and appropriate information, involved class members, showed evidence of equal participation and contribution of all group members, showed flair that reflected the groups thought and effort and engaged the class.

c) The selected reading provided an adequate background for class members.

d) The action was appropriate for the topic. Group members provided evidence of completing the action.

e) The individual reflection:
   - Describes group planning and implementation process.
   - Critically analyzes own role as a group member.
   - Critically analyzes own role as a group leader, linking to elements identified in reading and in class.
   - Critically analyzes the project outcome and its potential impact.
   - Provides specific examples/documentation of the planning process, including electronic correspondence.

   - Incorporates electronic postings and discusses own contribution to the process.

Summary of Projects and Grading

Course Grading:
1. Participation and preparation  
   30%
2. Leadership Book Group  
   30%
3. Current Issues Project  
   40%

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<th>Assignment of Grades:</th>
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<td>A+</td>
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<td>94-97</td>
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<td>90-93</td>
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<td>70-79</td>
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<td>&lt;70</td>
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Weekly Reading Log

Name:______________________________________________  Date________________

References:

What is important about this/these reading(s) that contributes to an understanding of policy concerning diverse young learners and their families?

How does the reading relate to/influence your own role/practice?

What questions come up for you that you would like to see discussed related to this reading?