

*George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Early Childhood Program
Teach for America and Excel Public Charter School*

**EDUT 511 (3 credits)
Developmental Pathways of Diverse Learners, Birth- Adolescence
Fall 2009**

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**Office Hours: Before or
after class or by
appointment**

Course Description

This course examines child and adolescence development from diverse perspectives. In this course, students address typical and atypical physical, social, emotional, language, and intellectual development, and explore the role of individual differences and culture in understanding and interpreting child and adolescent development. Students will also explore the role of theories in providing frameworks for understanding and interpreting child and family growth and development. Factors that facilitate development and may place children at developmental risk and actual disability will be examined. Students will acquire appreciation for the critical role of families and their diversity in supporting the development of the child.

Relationship to the Program

This course is required to meet the requirements for DC licensure in Early Childhood Education, Preschool-Third grade. Students should consult the Mason- Teach for America Advising Information Document for more information about program and licensure requirements.

Course Format

This course utilizes a distributed learning format requiring active participation of all students. Students are expected to complete all class readings prior to each session so as to engage in active dialogue, productive learning, and critical reflection. Activities will include instructor presentation, small group discussions, students' group presentations, guest speakers, videos, and whole class sharing to support course content. In addition, a Blackboard on-line component of coursework as well as an on-line course on Child Abuse and Neglect Training are required.

Overall Student Outcomes

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

1. Describe the major theories of development and demonstrate the skill to critically examine the theories as they apply to the lives of culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families.
2. Examine the transactional nature of overall development in the context of the family, community, socioeconomic conditions, and culture.
3. Identify typical developmental milestones of diverse children from birth through

adolescence and their cultural and socioeconomic variations.

4. Observe and describe overall development, including the social emotional domain as it occurs in natural environments and through play.
5. Identify environmental and biological/physical/medical at risk factors that can contribute to possible developmental risk and atypical development across domains.
6. Discuss the etiology of major disabilities and demonstrate the skill to select culturally and linguistically appropriate resources to use with diverse families and their children.
7. Identify culturally and linguistically responsive professional practices that facilitate development in various domains.
8. Explain the effect of child abuse and neglect on development.

Relationship to Professional Standards

This course is aligned with the following integrated standards of the Council for Exceptional Children and National Association for the Education of Young Children.

- Human growth and development:
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the physical, social emotional, and intellectual development of children and the ability to use this understanding in guiding learning experiences;
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the nature and characteristics of major disabling and at-risk conditions, including social-emotional development issues;
 - Demonstrate an understanding that children's development occurs in the sociocultural context of family and community;
 - Develop an understanding of the role of culture, language, and disability theories of family-centered intervention;
 - Develop an understanding of the role that economic, social, racial, ethnic, religious, physical, and mental factors may play on development issues related to but not limited to attention deficit disorders, substance abuse, child abuse, and family disruptions;

Required Texts

Badrova, E., & Leong, D.J. (2003). Chopsticks and counting chips: Do play and foundational skills need to compete for teacher's attention in an early childhood classroom? *Young Children on the Web*, May, 1-8. Article on the web at http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200305/Chopsticks_Bodrova.pdf

1Delpit, Lisa (2006). *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. Revised Edition. New York: The New Press. ISBN 10:1595580743.

Korakek, D. (2004). *Spotlight on Young Children and Play*. Washington, DC: NAEYC. ISBN 10:1928896162

Paley, V.B. (2004). *A Child's Work: The Importance of Fantasy Play*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press.

Trawick-Smith, J. (2010). *Early childhood development: A multicultural perspective (Latest Edition)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. ISBN: 0-13-046576-3

¹ Read this book prior to first class.

Required Reading (selected chapters) at www.nap.edu

Shonkoff, J. P. & Phillips, D. A. (2000). *Neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington, DV: National Academy Press. ISBN: 0309069882

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 and mandatory. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must call the instructor and inform him or her.
3. The university requires that all pagers and cell phones be turned off before class begins. The use of laptops is only allowed for note taking and course related assignments.
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 graduate students occasionally have serious problems that prevent work completion. If such a dilemma arises, students should speak to the instructor in a timely fashion.
5. Modifications needed due to disabilities or special circumstances to meet course requirements as outlined in syllabus must be discussed with instructor prior to the assignment due dates.

Written Assignments

All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation as graduate-level writing. The American Psychological Association (APA) style (5th edition) will be followed for all written work. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the GMU library web guide at <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/>.

All written assignments must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. The University Writing Center (Robinson A114) 703-993-1200 is a free writing resource open to all GMU students, including graduate students. The Writing Center offers individual, group, and online tutoring sessions in a comfortable, supportive. The English Language Institute also offers help to graduate students who are second language learners.

Expectations for written assignments

1. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. Remember that longer is not necessarily better.
2. Develop points coherently and thoroughly. Ensure that points are clearly linked to topic.
3. Refer to appropriate readings, studies, and examples to document and support your statements. Citations must adhere to APA guidelines. Avoid judgmental statements.
4. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

The Performance- Based Assessment MUST be posted to Task Stream when the assignment is due. No Final Grades will be posted until all materials are on task Stream.

Grading Scale:

A 95-100 B+ 87-89 B- 80-82 F below 70

Assignments

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Developmental theory perspective points | 15 |
| 2. Observations (3 child; 3 opportunities) | 30 points |
| 3. Statement of understanding | 30 Points |
| 4. Attendance and participation including Blackboard assignments | 15 points |
| 5. Successful completion of Child Abuse and Neglect Training | 10 points |

1. Developmental Theory Perspective

In order that all class members leave this course with an overview of the most prominent developmental theories in the field of early childhood education and gain a critical perspective on the values and liabilities of different theories and their application, students will prepare a review of an individual theory. Some of these key theoretical perspectives include Maturational, Behaviorist, Psychoanalytic, Cognitive-developmental, Sociocultural and Ecological systems theories. Within these perspectives there are prominent theorists. In class, we will discuss these theorists and you will decide on one to explore in more depth, mainly using your text. You will place the theorist in a major framework. You will write-up (3 pages double spaced maximum – you can also propose a different assignment medium, e.g., power point, if you want and after approval of instructor this can replace the 3 page paper) which will include

1. Background of the theorist
2. His/her main theoretical orientation, including key tenets
3. How this theorist would explain cultural differences that are apparent in development
4. How this theorist would explain variation in development, including disabilities
5. What do we know from more recent research about these theories.

This assignment will assist you in writing up your statement of understanding. Students will work in small groups on this assignment.

2. Observations of Children and their Educational Contexts

All teachers need to develop skills as observers of children. They learn most about children by studying their behavior directly, observing with objectivity, making careful notes and reflecting upon them thoughtfully. Accurate observations make valuable contributions toward planning for one child's learning or improving curriculum for the entire group. There are a variety of informal and formal methods of observing that you are exposed to which we will explore in class. As part of this assignment, you will include observations on Physical and Motor Development, Cognitive Development, Symbolic Thought Language and Literacy and Social and Emotional Development. To observe the different domains of development, students will apply three different methods of observations:

- Anecdotal Notes: Notes you make during the week about one child in your class. Take notes about characteristics that you notice about this child, something of significance that the child may do or say, a pattern of behavior that you think is interesting. Observe the child for 10 minutes being careful to write down

everything the child says and does given your observational focus.

- Time or event sampling: Observations that focus on the occurrence of certain behaviors or on certain times of the day. More information will be provided in class.
- Play observation: Observe a child playing using any method of observation you choose including available developmental profiles and guidelines assessing play. More information will be provided in class.

Students will observe three different children using the above methods. A written report based on each observation is required (no more than two pages). When writing your report address ways in which you will use the information you gathered and explain the influence this will have on the formal assessment system you already have in place.

3. Statement of Understanding

The purpose of this assignment is to synthesize the theories and research related to development of young children ages birth to adolescence and to link it to observations of children over the course of the semester, plus all class readings to demonstrate students' understanding of **Physical and Motor Development, Cognitive Development, Symbolic Thought Language and Literacy and Social and Emotional Development**. Critically reflect on personal view, assumptions, beliefs, and understandings about how children develop and the role of the socio-cultural context on development and how it impacts children and families of diverse backgrounds.

Format: The following three major components are required: (1) review of major theories, including the key theorists associated with the view and examples of development, learning, and practice; (2) discussion of development in the early childhood years, including the readings and observations/personal examples; and (3) critical reflections focused on views of children of diverse backgrounds, including a discussion of challenges, strengths, practices and questions.

Major theories: Based on the initial reports on the theorists that you and your colleagues shared in class, prepare a visual to illustrate your understanding of the major theories and theorists. You should provide an explanation of the major theories of child development and highlight how they apply to children from birth to adolescence, in particular to children of culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse backgrounds. Discuss contradictions, strengths, research, theorists/researchers, and personal observations/experiences that link to theories. Give examples of interventions, professional practices, materials, interactions observed or used that are examples of the tenets of the theory. Specific examples of how what you observed a child/children doing relates to the specific theory. Also describe some of the common practices associated with each of the theories. **Appendix A provides a sample visual and criteria to address.**

Early Childhood Development: This section should rely on all class material, reading, assignments to describe children's of physical and motor development, cognitive development, symbolic thought language and literacy and social and emotional development and the issues related to atypical development and at risk factors. The discussion of each domain should include a synthesis of the key concepts. Statements and explanations should be supported with direct links to the readings, presentations, and

research. Examples and observations should be used to demonstrate an understanding of how development manifests itself in early childhood children of diverse backgrounds.

Socio-cultural context: Within each area of development, there should be a discussion of (a) family/community view of child/children's development, particularly their strengths; (b) how the socio-cultural context (social, political, economic, historical, and personal family story) of the family and community mediates the domain.

Own Assumptions and Practice: Critically reflect on own assumptions, beliefs, and practices associated with children and their families. Discuss how they might impact your observations and professional practice.

This assignment will be submitted on TaskStream. The paper should not exceed 20 pages.

4. Play Blackboard Assignments

The questions for a virtual discussion board will be listed in Blackboard.

Expectations for Discussion: Demonstration of your knowledge and understanding of the material up for discussion as well as responding to your peers; thoughts and comments. The instructor will post the first question followed by small groups' listings. Below are some guidelines that will help you through this process. The discussion will be based on readings listed in the course schedule.

10 Points: All questions are addressed and answered completely. Comments are based on material in the readings and at least one of your comments gives specific information from the readings. Comments indicate clear understanding of the topic and readings. You continue class dialogue by responding to some of the group members posted comments on each of the questions.

8 Points: All questions are addressed. Comments are based on material in the readings and give specific information from the readings. Substantive comments on others responses did not take place.

6 Points: Most questions are addressed. Comments are based on material in the readings and at least one of your comments gives specific information from the readings. Comments indicate clear understanding of the topic and readings. You continue class dialogue by responding to some of the group members posted comments on the questions.

4 Points: Some questions are addressed. Comments are based on material in the readings and give specific information from the readings. Substantive comments on others responses did not take place.

3 Points: Readings were comments on but in a global manner.

2 Points: Not evident that reading was understood.

0 Points: No posting related to the reading.

5. Child abuse and neglect training.

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of Social Work's Virginia Institute for School Services Training Activities (VISSTA) Program offers an online course. This course is entitled "*Child Abuse and Neglect: Recognizing, Reporting, and Responding for Educators*" and is available, at no cost, at www.vcu.edu/vissta/training/va_teachers. **Upon completion of the training, print and**

save a copy of the completion certificate. Give copy of the completion certificate to instructor.

College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) Statement of Expectations

All students must abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> for the full honor code.
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/1301gen.html>. Click on responsible Use of Computing Policy at the bottom of the screen.
- 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 <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

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

Tentative Class Schedule

Date	Topic & Learning Experience	Readings & Assignments Due
ASAP	Participate in blackboard discussion group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paley book • Badrova, E., & Leong
ASAP	Child abuse and neglect training. Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of Social Work's Virginia Institute for School Services Training Activities (VISSTA) Program offers an online course. This course is entitled " <i>Child Abuse and Neglect: Recognizing, Reporting, and Responding for Educators</i> " and is available, <u>at no cost</u> , at www.vcu.edu/vissta/training/va_teachers . Upon completion of the training, print and save a copy of the completion certificate.	
August 26	Context of teaching assignments. Discussion of current teaching assignments, Philadelphia for TFA Corp Members, perspectives and assumptions about children. Course Overview; Review of syllabus and assignments. Play readings - Who is the author and how does it impact the book? Etc. <i>Other People's Children</i> discussion Skills to critically examine theories.	Delpit, L. (2006). Other people's children
September 2	Discussion of framework of books. Who is the author and how does it impact the book? Examination of history of developmental theory, research in Early Childhood Development, and Theories of Child Development. Principles and contexts for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trawick-Smith, Part 1 Chapter 1, & 3 • Shonkoff, Setting the stage-ch.1 (introduction).
September 9	Review of Developmental Theory Perspectives. Observing Child Development within the context of Early Childhood Education Settings. Child observation practice taking 1) anecdotal notes about characteristics that you notice about a child, something of significance that the child may do or say, a pattern of behavior that you think is interesting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment #1 Developmental Theory Perspective • Trawick-Smith, Chapter 2
September 16	Physical and Motor Development and its diversity among young children. What did the theory you reviewed in assignment say about Physical and Motor Development. Did anyone's child observations support what these theories say? Family and resource information on Physical and Motor Development – focus on disabilities, cultural, economic differences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trawick-Smith, Chapters 6, 10 and 14 • Shonkoff, Chapter 8- Brain development • Observation using anecdotal notes due
September 23	Cognitive Development and its diversity among young children. What did the theory you reviewed in Assignment say about Cognitive Development. Did anyone's child observations support what these theories say? How are the play readings and Delpit related to our understanding of Cognitive Development? Family and resource information on Cognitive Development – focus on disabilities, language, cultural, economic differences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trawick-Smith, Chapters 7, 11 and 15 • Shonkoff, Chapter 6- Communication and learning • Observation using event or time sampling due
September 30	Symbolic Thought, Language and Literacy and its diversity among young children. What did the theory you reviewed in Assignment say about Symbolic Thought, Language and Literacy. Did anyone's child observations support what these theories say? How is the content on Symbolic Thought, Language and Literacy related to what you observed? How are the play readings and Delpit related to our understanding of Symbolic Thought, Language and Literacy? Family and resource information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trawick-Smith, Chapters 8, 12 and 16 • Koralek, Young Children and Play • Play Observation is due • Check in with Blackboard discussion on play

	on Symbolic Thought, Language and Literacy – focus on disabilities, language, cultural, economic differences.	
October 7	Social and Emotional Development and its diversity among young children. What did the theory you reviewed in Assignment say about Social and Emotional Development. Did anyone’s child observations support what these theories say? How is the content on Social and Emotional Development related to what is observed on play? How are the play readings and Delpit related to our understanding of Social and Emotional Development? Family and resource information on Social and Emotional Development– focus on disabilities, language, cultural, economic differences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trawick-Smith, Chapters 9, 13 and 17 • Shonkoff, Chapter 5, Self Regulation
October 14	Families in cultural contexts. Family relationships and influence on development. Parenting theories. What did the theory you reviewed in Assignment say about cultures and families? Did anyone’s child observations support what these theories say? Did you see cultural variations in families’ beliefs and views about schooling?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trawick-Smith, Chapter 18 • Delpit (review) • Shonkoff, Chapter 9 • Assignment #3 Statement of Understanding – Draft in hard copy – Final due on Monday October 20th via TaskStream
October 21	Pulling it all together: Early Childhood Development in all contexts. Leftovers. Sharing of Individual “Statement of Understanding”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Appendix A

Developmental theory: _____

Name/s of theorist/s	Main arguments	Continuity/ discontinuity	Role of culture /context	Weakness/ Shortcomings	Impact on educational theories	Applicati
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Rubric for Group Presentation of Developmental Theory

- **14-15 points** - The arguments are developed fully, organized well, and all requirements as described in syllabus are met. The “who, what, where, when, how, and why” are explained using clear and precise language and sufficient detail. Adult principles of learning and critical reflective processes are used to involve class members in active learning. All team members demonstrate an understanding of the theory, its main arguments, weakness, assumptions and concepts. Numerous references and citations to readings, research, class discussions/experiences and other resources are included. All team members take an active leadership role when presenting and in preparation.

- **12-13 points** - Most parts of the components mentioned above are developed and organized well. Team adhered to most of the requirements outlined in the syllabus. A couple of aspects may need to be more fully addressed or developed more deeply to ensure that peers grasped key points of theory. There is inaccuracy in presenting main arguments. Some members of group had a larger role in presentation.

- **10-11 points** – Some aspects of the theory are analyzed, developed and organized well, but not as much detail, organization, or analysis is demonstrated. Some of the requirements outlined in the syllabus are followed. There is inaccuracy in presenting main arguments. Some members of group had a larger role in presentation.

- **No credit**– A few parts of the relevant topic are developed and analyzed somewhat. Organization, analysis, and/or links to particular key points made in readings need improvement. Few of the requirements outlined in the syllabus were followed. Lacking in details and accuracy. Some members of group didn’t participate in preparation and presentation.

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Statement of Understanding Rubric-
Name _____

Total points _____

Assignment Dimension	23 and Below	24-26	27-30
Review of major developmental theories; key tenants; theorist(s) responsible for theory; examples of development, learning and practice (Attach Appendix A- one page for each theory including one you presented on)	Description lacks detail; key concepts are unclear; elements of assignment are incomplete	Adequate description of theory, tenants and theorist(s) including examples. No depth in addressing major theories.	Detailed, very complete description of theory, tenants and theorist(s) including addressing all criteria. Comparison and contrast reflects deep understanding of general theories and major theories in depth
Discussion of development in the early years including research and addressing all domains. Personal examples from different cultural lenses	Lack of clarity, specificity and thoroughness. Didn't address domains.	Fairly clear delineation of stages/milestones and theoretical perspective including cultural differences, examples of development	Very clear delineation of stages/milestones and theoretical perspective including cultural differences, appropriate examples of development and play activities.
Critical reflections of student's own assumptions, beliefs, values and teaching practices	Minimal reflection and critical analysis	Adequate reflection references some of elements listed in	Critical reflection includes links to class discussions, reading and theoretical perspectives, roots of practices, views and values
Use of textbooks, presentations, class discussion is evident in the discussion of own assumptions. APA style of writing is used and evident	Disjointed, lacks reflection on all elements	Covers main elements of statement without making connections and style of writing is not appropriate.	Clarity and reflection on all elements and links between them. APA style of writing is evident.

