

George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
College of Education and Human Development
EDCI 603
Trends, Issues, and Research in Early Childhood Education
3 Credits
Fall 2005
Wednesdays 4:30-7:10
Lecture Hall 3

Instructor:

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Office hours: T 4-5:00; W 3-4:30; before and after class; or by appointment

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability please inform your instructor as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made.

Course Description

The advanced study of early childhood education that examines current trends, historical origins, recurring issues, research findings, and resulting program developments in the field. EDCI 603 examines trends and issues from multiple vantage points and serves as an impetus to delve deeply into current tensions in the field.

Course Outcomes

1. Students will identify and analyze current trends in early childhood education.
2. Students will describe the issues and controversies regarding the care and education of young children.
3. Students will explain the research and theoretical frameworks undergirding optimal teaching and development of young children.
4. Students will represent orally and in writing an informed perspective on trends and issues in the field, including influential historical, cultural and political processes.

Readings:

Isenberg, J. P. & Jalongo, M. R.. (Eds.) (2003). *Major trends and issues in early childhood education: Challenges, controversies, and insights* (2nd edition). New York: Teachers College Press.

Additional assigned readings available through class handouts or GMU libraries e-reserves

College of Education and Human Development Statement of Expectations:

All students must abide by the following:

Dispositions

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

Honor Code

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Responsible Computing

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.

Disabilities

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.

Electronic Requirements

Students must activate and access their GMU email accounts. Go to [Http://mail.gmu.edu/](http://mail.gmu.edu/) to access your GMU email.

Students will also be expected to access Blackboard to download agendas and other pertinent course documents. Blackboard can be accessed by going to <http://blackboard.gmu.edu>.

There is a link to e-reserve articles on the Blackboard site (click on the external links toolbar) or e-reserve articles can be accessed at <http://oscr.gmu.edu> and click on search electronic reserves toward the top of the page.

Relationship of EDCI 603 to ASTL Student Outcomes and NBPTS Propositions

EDCI 603 is designed to enable practicing teachers to identify current trends and issues from multiple perspectives in early childhood education and to address the challenges and controversies that emerge from them. It assumes that students will continually challenge their assumptions and evaluate the effects of their choices on others. EDCI 603 addresses the GEHD priorities related to Diversity; Reflective, Research-Based Practice; and Technology.

EDCI 603 also addresses the following approved national “Guidelines for Advanced Degree Candidates” (NAEYC, 1996). They will be able to:

- Critically examine alternative perspectives regarding central issues in the field.
- Develop and evaluate programs for children from diverse cultural and language backgrounds as well as different ages and ability levels.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues and other professionals.

EDCI 603 addresses the following National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for Early Childhood Generalist Certificate:

Proposition II	Promoting Child Development and Learning
Proposition IV	Reflective Practice
Proposition VIII	Professional Partnerships

Nature of Course Delivery

This course is delivered primarily through large and small group discussion; it is critical for you to keep up with the readings and to participate in class. Instructor and student generated questions related to course readings and assignments/projects will often be the focus of group discussions. Be prepared to discuss the content of the text and its relation to your teaching experiences, course assignments, and projects, and to ask questions for clarification, exploration, or to promote discussion. The instructor will use a lecture methodology periodically for brief periods of time. Students will also be engaged in activities designed to encourage the application of materials from the readings and discussions to early childhood practice.

General Requirements

1. Class attendance is both important and required. If, due to an emergency, you will not be in class, you must contact the instructor via phone or email. Students with more than two absences may drop a letter grade or lose course credit.
2. 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, please speak to the instructor in a timely fashion.

3. 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 critical for you to keep up with the readings and to participate in class.
4. According to university policy, all beepers and cell phones should be turned off before class begins.

Specific Course Requirements

1. *Class Participation:* The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. In addition to readings required for class discussion, articles will be distributed according to the appropriate topic. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities pertaining to trends and issues in early childhood, it is imperative that you keep up with the readings. (Outcomes 1, 2, 3)

Class Participation is worth 15% of the final grade.

2. *Group Project: Topical Seminar:* Each student will participate as a member of a team whose purpose is to prepare and conduct a seminar on a current trend or issue. Each team will conduct a one and a half to two hour seminar that will emphasize broad exploration of the topic and active participation by the class. Team members will assume equal responsibility for planning and completing this assignment. (Outcomes 1, 3, and 4)

The Topical Seminar is worth 25% of the final grade.

DUE: Dates to be decided in class

3. *Article Responses:* Students will respond thoughtfully and analytically to two different readings (see Guidelines for Article Responses for the list of articles to choose from for the article responses). A central purpose of this assignment is to reflect on your own learning. In your response you need to clarify your own thinking, raise questions about teaching and learning, and critique the article. Your article response needs to include the article reference in APA style. (Outcomes 2, 3, 4)

Article Responses are worth 20%

DUE: Article Response 1 is due no later than October 19th; Article Response 2 is due no later than November 16th

4. *Position Paper:* Each student is required to write a comprehensive position paper on a self-selected topic. Details about the paper will be provided and discussed in class. Participation in writing feedback groups for in-class feedback and work on your final paper is also part of this assignment. You will meet with classmates periodically to talk about our own research and provide feedback to others on their research process. We will discuss in class when you will be responsible for having drafts of your writing to share with copies for each of your group members. The paper should be from 10-12 pages. (Outcomes 3, 4)

The Position Paper is worth 40% of the final grade and is due December 14th.

Evaluation

Class Participation Assessment 15%

Class participation will be evaluated using the following rating scale:

RUBRIC FOR PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

		<i>LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE</i>		
<i>ELEMENT</i>	Distinguished (13.5-15 pts.)	Proficient (12-13 pts.)	Basic (11.5-9 pts.)	Unsatisfactory (8 or less pts.)
Attendance & Participation	The student attends all classes, is on time, is prepared and follows outlined procedures in case of absence, the student actively participates and supports the members of the learning group and the members of the class.	The student attends all classes, is on time, is prepared and follows outlined procedures in case of absence; the student makes active contributions to the learning group and class.	The student is on time, prepared for class, and participates in group and class discussions. The student attends all classes and if an absence occurs, the procedure outlined in this section of the syllabus is followed.	The student is late for class. Absences are not documented by following the procedures outlined in this section of the syllabus. The student is not prepared for class and does not actively participate in discussions.

Article Responses 20%

Criteria for evaluation of each article response include depth of reflection on the content of the article, quality of the questions posed and connections made related to teaching and learning, and critique focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the article. The summaries must demonstrate graduate level writing (at a minimum it means that words are properly spelled; punctuation is appropriate; sentences are complete; verb/subject, pronoun/antecedent agree; and writing is appropriately concise and clear). A rubric that will be used to evaluate the article responses will be discussed and distributed in class

Group Project Topical Seminar 25%

Evaluation of the group project topical seminar will involve self-assessment as well as peer and instructor feedback. Specific criteria will focus on:

- clear presentation of information learned from history, theory, research, and pedagogy;
- adequate coverage of multiple perspectives and critical questions;
- inclusion of a complete handout packet; and

- a variety of presentation techniques that involve class members in discussing the issue.

Position Paper 40%

Criteria for evaluation will include ability to summarize and analyze the article and related references, present strengths and weaknesses of the article, and represent your opinion as well as writing clarity and coherence (writing that demonstrates graduate level writing). Specific criteria for different parts of the paper will be discussed in class.

Grading Scale:

A=93-100; A- =90-92; B+ =88-89; B=80-87; C=75-79

Proposed Class Schedule

Class Session	Topic	Readings
Week One -- 8/31	Course Introduction, Issues, Trends, and Controversies	Isenberg & Jalongo, Introduction; In Class Reading;
Week Two -- 9/7	Developmental Issues	Isenberg & Jalongo, Chapter 1; Case, Griffin & Kelly, pp. 37-49 (handout); Bailey article
Week Three – 9/14	Curriculum/Instructional Models; DAP and Standards in Early Childhood	Isenberg & Jalongo, Chapter 5; Case, Griffin & Kelly, pp. 16-29 (handout); Geist & Brown article
Week Four – 9/21	DAP and Standards in Early Childhood	Geist & Brown article; Neuman & Roskos article; Van Horn et al., article
Week Five -- 9/28	Library Presentation (if presentation can be scheduled) Seminar Preparation Meet in Small Groups on Campus	
Week Six – 10/5	Assessment	Isenberg & Jalongo, Chapter 6; NAEYC position statement on assessment; Dodge, Heroman, Charles, & Maiorca; Maxwell & Clifford; Shepard & Smith (handout)

Week Seven – 10/12	Play	Isenberg & Jalongo, Chapter 8, ACEI Position Statement on Play; Choose to focus on Article 5.1, 5.2, or 5.3 (handouts) Distribute Seminar Packets for 10/19
Week Eight – 10/19	Seminars	Seminar Packet Article Response #2 is Due
Week Nine – 10/26	Diversity, Children and Families	Isenberg & Jalongo, Chapters 2 & 4; Moseman article
Week Ten – 11/2	Early Literacy	Isenberg & Jalongo, Chapter 7; IRA/NAEYC Position Statement; Stahl & Yaden article Distribute Seminar Packets for 11/9
Week Eleven – 11/9	Seminars	Seminar Packet
Week Twelve – 11/16	Technology	Isenberg & Jalongo, Chapter 9; Karchemr et al. article; Davis & Shade article; Distribute Seminar Packets for 11/30 Article Response #2 is Due
Week Thirteen – 11/23	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving	
Week Fourteen – 11/30	Seminars	Seminar Packets
Week Fifteen – 12/7	Inclusion – Addressing Differentiated Instruction	Isenberg & Jalongo, Chapter 3; McCay & Keys article; McCormick, Wong, & Yogi article
Week Sixteen – 12/14	Child Care and Early Childhood Policy The Profession	Isenberg & Jalongo, Chapter 10; Chapter 12 Position Paper Due

Guidelines for Seminars

Working in teams, you will plan and conduct a full seminar that addresses the key points of a contemporary issue or trend in early childhood education (see potential list). This in-depth examination of an issue or trend will provide a perspective of the past, present, and future by documenting the historical origins of current thinking. Each seminar will include diverse perspectives on the issue grounded in theory and research, and illuminated with examples. The issue will be related at some point to competent teaching and learning. The seminar will be an interactive event that actively engages the other class members. Please provide a summary packet of readings for each class member the week preceding your seminar.

Seminar Groups Need to do the Following:

1. *Research your issue.* Look for relevant articles and/or books that pertain to your issue or questions. Share the main ideas with your seminar group. Readings should include history, theory, research and pedagogical applications. Each student is responsible for finding readings that address: *current research, classic studies, recent history (how has the domain changed in the last decade?), theoretical foundations, implications for practice, and the relationship of the issue to our broader society.*
2. *Discuss your issue.* Seminar members will meet to discuss their readings both in class and out of class. Discussion should include identifying main ideas, analyzing and critiquing, and generating implications for your own practice. Give examples from your own classroom or other sites which illustrates the main points of discussion, particularly the controversies involved. New questions may arise which will guide further reading and discussion. The more actively you contribute to the discussion, the more coherent you become about your own understandings. Before you adjourn your seminar group decide on next steps.
3. *Lead Seminar and Discussion.* Each seminar group will be responsible for presenting the main issues and ideas of its topic. The focus of this session will be to share information in interesting ways and lead class discussion about critical questions, points and issues. A packet should be prepared to give to class members prior to the seminar. It should include: *a summary of the topic/issue, relevant research and practical articles, an outline of the presentation, and a reference list of readings using APA style.*

The instructor's packet should include two research articles from each seminar group member. These should be the articles that you have referenced in your summary.

Potential Seminar Topics

Seminar topics should provide thoughtful and critical examination of issues and controversies surrounding our practices, policies, and professional development. These

topics may fall within one of the following three categories:

A. Social, Political, Historical Trends and Issues Influencing Young Children

Children's Development of Competencies; Current Legislation and Social Policy; Effects of Developmental Issues on Children; Policies on Children and Families; School Reform Efforts

B. Curriculum Trends and Issues

Assessment; Early Mathematics Learning; Early Science Learning; Issues of Language, Cultural; and Economic Diversity; Standards and Early Education; Technology in Early Education; The Arts in Early Education

C. Professional Development

Accountability Issues; Teachers' Knowledge and Beliefs; Teacher Research and Inquiry; Early Childhood Teachers' Development

Guidelines for Article Responses

The article responses encourage learners to ask questions; critique the authors central ideas by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the article; and make connections between the article and class discussion and assigned readings. Your article responses need to include a reflection on what the readings mean to you as an early childhood educator, how you relate to the author, and how you can or cannot apply these ideas into your current practice. Article responses are not descriptive, rather they provoke thinking about why and how questions.

Each response should be two to three double-spaced, typed pages. Be sure to include the APA reference of the article to which you are responding. The goal of this assignment is to think about the key ideas of the article in an in-depth manner. A rubric for the article responses will be discussed in class.

Articles and Assigned Readings to Choose from for the Article Responses

Article Response One (Weeks One – Seven)

Bailey, Are critical periods critical for early childhood education.

Neuman & Roskos, The state of state pre-kindergarten standards.

Van Horn et al., Effects of developmentally appropriate practices on children's development: A review of research and discussion of methodological and analytical issues.

Moseman, Primary teachers' beliefs about family competence to influence classroom practices.

Article Response Two (Weeks Seven –Twelve)

Stahl & Yaden, The development of literacy in preschool and primary grades: Work by the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement.

Maxwell & Clifford, School readiness assessment.

Dodge, Heorman, Charles, & Maiorca, Beyond outcomes, how ongoing assessment supports children's learning and leads to meaningful curriculum.

Karchmer, Mallette, & Leu, Early literacy in a digital age: moving from a singular book literacy to the multiple literacies of networked information and communication technologies.

Guidelines for Position Paper

Each student should select a current trend or issue that is of interest and relevant to their professional role. Assume that your audience consists of other professionals in your field (e.g., early childhood educators, special educators, families, and administrators). The purpose of your paper is to inform your audience of theoretical knowledge about your topic and the resultant implications for practice. It should address the historical origins, and be grounded in philosophy, theory, and research. Clear connections between past, present, and future trends must be established. The paper should incorporate a minimum of 10 references, including landmark studies in the field, and recent research literature. The APA reference style should be used. The procedure in writing a position paper is described below:

- Select a recent journal article on a current issue/trend from a professional journal. I will assist you in providing suggestions and approving the choice.
- The first section of the paper is a **summary**. Briefly summarize the article's content.
- The second section of the paper is an *analysis* of the author's major strengths and weaknesses in presenting his/her ideas. This section is called the **criticism**.
- The third section for a position paper is your opinion or *position* on the topic. In this section, your ideas are set forth and should be substantiated by the literature in the field (e.g., theory and research).

Submit both the journal article and your position paper to me. The evaluation of the completed paper focus on the following criteria:

- a. The topic is coherently presented and summarized.
- b. Complex ideas are articulated clearly and effectively.
- c. A sufficient number of references are used.
- d. The criticism and position are logically organized, linked to the summary, and explain connections between past, present, and future trends.

EDCI 603 References

Articles on E-Reserves

- Bailey, D. B. Jr., (2002). Are critical periods critical for early childhood education? The role of timing in early childhood pedagogy. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 17*, 281-294.
- Davis, B. C., & Shade, D. D. (1999). Integrating technology into the early childhood classroom: The case of literacy learning. *Information Technology in Childhood Education (1999)*, 221-254.
- Dodge, D. T., Heroman, C., Charles, J., & Maiorca, J. (2004). Beyond outcomes, how ongoing assesment supports children's learning and leads to meaningful curriculum. *Young Children, 59*(1), 20-28.
- Geist, E., & Baum, A. C. (2005). *Yeah, Buts* that keep teachers from embracing an active.curriculum. *Young Children, 60*(4), 28-36.
- Isenberg, J. P., & Quisenberry, N. (2002). Play: Essential for all children. *Childhood Education, 79*(1), 33- 39.
- Karchmer, R. A., Mallette, M. H.& Leu, D. J. Jr. (2003). Early literacy in a digital age: Moving from a singular book literacy to the multiple literacies of networked information and communication technologies. In D. M. Barone & L. M. Morrow (Eds.), *Literacy and Young Children* (pp. 175-194). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Maxwell, K. L., & Clifford, R. M. (2004). School readiness assessment. *Young Children, 59*(1), 42-46.

- McCay, L.O., & Keyes, D.W. (2001/2002, Winter). Developing social competence in the inclusive primary classroom. *Childhood Education*, 78(2), 70-78.
- McCormick, L., Wong, M., & Yogi, L. (2003). Individualization in the inclusive preschool: A planning process. *Childhood Education*, 79(4), 212-217.
- Moseman, C. C. (2003). Primary teachers' beliefs about family competence to influence classroom practices. *Early Education and Development*, 14(2), 125-153.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1998). *Learning to read and write: Developmentally appropriate practices for young children*. Washington DC: author.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2004). Where we stand on curriculum, assessment and program evaluation. *Young Children*, 59(1), 51-53.
- Neuman, S. B., & Roskos, K. (2005). The state of state pre-kindergarten standards. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 20(2) , 125-145.
- Stahl, S. A., & Yaden, D. B. Jr. (2004). The development of literacy in preschool and primary grades: Work by the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement. *The Elementary School Journal*, 105(2), 142-165.
- Van Horn, M. L., Karlin, E. O., Ramey, S. L., Aldridge, J., & Snyder, S. W. (2005). Effects of developmentally appropriate practices on children's development: A review of research and discussion of methodological and analytical issues. *The Elementary School Journal*, 105(4), 325-351.

Handouts – Articles Distributed in Class

Case, R., Griffin, S., & Kelly, W. M. (2001). Socioeconomic differences in children's early cognitive development and their readiness for schooling. In S. L. Golbeck (Ed.), *Psychological perspectives on early childhood education* (pp. 37-63). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Golbeck, S. L. (2001). Instructional models for early childhood: In search of a child-regulated/teacher-guided pedagogy. In S. L. Golbeck (Ed.), *Psychological perspectives on early childhood education* (pp. 3-34). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Paciorek, K. M., & Munro, J. H. (Eds.) (1999). *Sources, notable selections in early childhood education* (Section 5.1, Freidrich Froebel, pp. 115-121). Guilford, CT: Dushkin.

Paciorek, K. M., & Munro, J. H. (Eds.) (1999). *Sources, notable selections in early childhood education* (Section 5.2, Mildred B. Parten, pp. 122-127). Guilford, CT: Dushkin.

Paciorek, K. M., & Munro, J. H. (Eds.) (1999). *Sources, notable selections in early childhood education* (Section 5.3, Millie Almy, pp. 128-137). Guilford, CT: Dushkin.

Paciorek, K. M., & Munro, J. H. (Eds.) (1999). *Sources, notable selections in early childhood education* (Section 9.4, Lorrie A. Shepard and Mary Lee Smith, pp. 229-238). Guilford, CT: Dushkin.