

George Mason University  
Graduate School of Education  
Program: Advanced Studies in Teaching and Learning  
EDCI 784: Capstone Seminar in Early Childhood Education (3.3.0)  
Spring, 2004

Instructor: Dr. Marlene Henriques, NBCT

Hours: Mondays, 4:30-7:10

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or by appointment

Prerequisites: Students must have completed the early childhood emphasis of the graduate program except for the seminar, be in the final semester of the early childhood emphasis of the program, or obtain permission of the Program Coordinator.

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A culminating seminar devoted to analyzing and synthesizing knowledge and skills gained through graduate coursework as it applies to early childhood education. Students will examine teaching and learning through core studies and preparation of a major final project.

**II. STUDENT OUTCOMES**

This course is designed to enable students to:

1. Synthesize and reflect on knowledge gained through coursework in the master's program in education.
2. Examine applications for educational theories and research to their own teaching and learning process through completion of portfolio entries.
3. Demonstrate competency in writing ability and coherent communication of knowledge.
4. Demonstrate the ability to construct a joint knowledge base about a case.
5. Utilize Power Point presentation technology.
6. Present information in a disciplined and concise manner.

**III. RELATIONSHIP OF COURSE TO PROGRAM AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION (NAEYC)**

EDCI 784 addresses the *GSE priorities* of advanced studies, performance-based assessment systems, and reflective, research-based practice. It is designed as a culminating experience to enable early childhood educators to synthesize their knowledge through a major final project.

EDCI 784 also addresses the following approved national "*NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation*" to: a) extend...knowledge and understanding of the child in the family and cultural context, b) extend and further develop their knowledge and understanding of theories and content of curriculum and instruction and alternative models and methodologies, and, 3) engage in reflective inquiry and demonstrate professional self-knowledge.

EDCI 784 also addresses the following *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for the Early Childhood Generalist Certificate*: Standard I, Understanding Young Children; Standard II, Equity, Fairness and Diversity; Standard III, Assessment; Standard IV, Promoting Child

Development and Learning; Standard V, Knowledge of Integrated Curriculum; Standard VI, Multiple Teaching Strategies for Meaningful Learning; Standard VII, Family and Community Partnerships; Standard VIII, Professional Partnerships, and Standard IX, Reflective Practice.

#### **IV. REQUIRED TEXTS**

Jalongo, M.R. & Isenberg, J. P. (1995). Teachers' stories: From personal narrative to professional insight. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2001). Early Childhood Generalist Standards (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) San Antonio, TX: The Psychological Corporation.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2001). Early Childhood Generalist Portfolio. San Antonio, TX: The Psychological Corporation. (Selected Sections)

#### Additional References:

Driscoll, A. (1995). Cases in early childhood education: Stories of programs and practices. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Teitle, L. (1998). Experienced Teachers Construct Teaching Portfolios: A Culture of Compliance vs. a Culture of Professional Development. In N.Lyons, (Ed.), With portfolio in hand: Validating the new teacher professionalism, pp.143-155. New York: Teachers College Press.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (1989). Toward high and rigorous standards for the teaching profession. Washington, DC: Author.

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (1996). What matters most: Teaching for America's future. Summary Report. New York: Author.

— (2001). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, D.C.: APA. Or use [www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org) (FAQs)

#### **V. MODE OF COURSE DELIVERY**

Individual study and seminar style course that focuses on individual responsibility for course requirements.

#### **VI. COURSE REQUIREMENTS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA**

1. Reflecting on Standards (20%)
  - Students will become familiar with the NBPTS standards and show ways these standards are implemented in the classroom setting
2. Students will respond critically and analytically to readings related to early childhood education. (guidelines attached.) (10%)
3. Culminating Project (60%)
  - a. Students will prepare an NBPTS portfolio entry on documented Accomplishments (20%)
  - b. Students will prepare an NBPTS portfolio entry on literacy (30%)
  - c. Students will prepare a PowerPoint Presentation on literacy (5%)

- d. Students will prepare a poster for presentation (guidelines attached) (5%)
- 4. Critical Responses to Readings (10%) (guidelines attached)

NOTE: Students are requested to turn off their pagers and cell phones before class begins.

GRADING SCALE: 94-100 = A; 90-93 = A-; 86-89 = B+; 80-85 = B; 70-79 = C; Below 70 = F

### Guidelines for Critical Responses to Readings

A critical response to a reading encourages learners to ask questions, to notice and wonder, and to connect and inquire. It can lead to active, hypothesis developing, idea building, and engagement. In essence, it provides learners with the opportunity to interact with the ideas being discussed and debated.

Your critical response journals should reflect what your reading(s) mean to you as an early childhood educator, how you relate to the author, writer, or speaker, and how you can or cannot apply these ideas into your current practice. Critical responses are NOT DESCRIPTIVE; rather they provoke thinking about why and how questions.

Each response should be no more than 3 double-spaced, word-processed pages. Be certain to identify the material (e.g. article, book chapter) to which you are responding. The goal here is depth of understanding.

Evaluation will depend upon the following levels of critical reflection:

- Level 1.**      **Describe** the article in no more than a single paragraph. Tells **what** or **which**.
- Level 2.**      **Analyze** and apply the description to what is known about the field of early childhood education. Level 2 addresses *reasons, motives, and interpretation*. Tells **how** or **why**.
- Level 3.**      **Interpret** the description and analysis by synthesizing and evaluating them in relation to you as an early childhood educator (i.e., Imagine yourself in a situation---what would you do?) Tells what you would do *differently* because of this reading or what you learned that would help you in the future in your own setting.

(Outcomes 1,2,3)

*Entry Based on Work Inside the Classroom: Examining a Child's Literacy Development:* Demonstrate your skill in assessing and supporting children's literacy development.

Choose one child to feature as an example of how your work with children fosters literacy development. **Describe** how you foster literacy in your classroom. **Analyze** that child's work samples and **discuss** the child's literacy development; outline your approach to supporting learning. Show how you help parents support their child's literacy development. **Reflect** on your practice. See NB Guidelines, Entry 1 and Standards I-IX..

*Entries Based on Work Outside the Classroom: Documented Accomplishments*

Another essential source of evidence about a teacher's practice reflects those aspects of teaching that do not occur in the classroom with children, but in the teacher's interactions with students' families, school and local community, and colleagues. This entry requires you to submit descriptions and documentation of those activities and accomplishments that illustrate your commitment to the families and communities of your children, and your contributions to the early childhood profession. See NB Guidelines, Entry 4 Standards VIII and IX.

\* NOTE: Meets the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards' Standards and Guidelines for Portfolio Entries. Outcomes 1, 2, and 3

(Outcomes 1, 2, 3)

## **Guidelines for Case Analysis**

Each student will be a member of a group responsible for discussing one of the cases in Teachers' Stories. The group will 1) select a case to discuss, 2) prepare to lead the class in case analysis based on higher order questions, 3) submit 5 higher order questions to discuss the case one week in advance, and 4) read and incorporate information from 2 articles related to the issues in the case. Peers will evaluate groups using a class-developed, peer evaluation rubric and feedback form.

Criteria for evaluation:

- An interesting “hook” to introduce the case and engage the other students.
- At least 5 higher order questions.
- Integration and application of 2 related articles.
- Leading a coherent and engaging discussion.

(Outcomes 1, 3, 4, and 5)

## **Guidelines for Poster Presentations**

Each student will prepare a poster presentation of his/her culminating project using a combination of visual (e.g., graphs, photos, illustrations) and textual information presented on a poster. Posters provide a unique learning opportunity for students to share information because they require students to be very disciplined and concise. To write and present concise statements, students must understand the material completely, internalize the information, and then express it in a clear way to viewers.

Criteria for Evaluation:

Students will use a likert scale to rate their colleagues' posters according to the following criteria:

- Visual attractiveness
- Quality of information
- Relevance
- Originality and the balance of text and visuals.

The final grade for each student will be the average of the ratings from all other students in the seminar.

(Outcomes 1,2,3,4, and 6)