

George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
Advanced Studies in Teaching and Learning
EDUC 784: Capstone Seminar in Early Childhood Education (3 credits)
Spring 2006

Professor:

C. Stephen White, Ph.D.

GMU Graduate School of Education

451A Robinson A

703-993-2031

E-mail: cwhite1@gmu.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 3:00 – 4:00 or by appointment

COURSE DATES/TIMES/LOCATIONS:

4:30 – 7:10

1/25; 2/1; 2/8; 2/15; 2/22; 3/1; 3/8; 3/22; 3/29; 4/5; 4/12; 4/19; 4/26; 5/2; 5/10

338 Innovation Hall

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.

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.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

This course is designed to enable students to:

- A. Synthesize and reflect on knowledge gained through coursework in the master's program in education.
- B. Examine applications of educational theories and research to their own teaching and learning process.
- C. Demonstrate competency in writing ability and coherent communication of knowledge.
- D. Demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively in small groups to construct a joint knowledge base about a case.
- E. Present information in a disciplined, clear and concise manner.

RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRAM GOALS & PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION

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

EDCI 784 also addresses the following approved national *Guidelines for Advanced Degree Candidates* (NAEYC, 1996) 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 IV; Promoting Child Development and Learning; Standard V, Knowledge of Integrated Curriculum; Standard VI, Multiple Teaching Strategies for Meaningful Learning; and Standard IX, Reflective Practice.

READINGS – CLASS HANDOUTS

Campbell, D. M., Cignetti, P. B., Melenyzer, B. J., Nettles, D. H., & Wyman, R. M. (2001). *How to Develop a Professional Portfolio* (second ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon. We will be reading pp. 70-74.

Jalongo, M. R. & Isenberg, J. P. (1995). *Teachers' stories: From personal narrative to professional insight*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass. We will be reading: preface and chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (2001). Early Childhood Generalist Standards (2nd ed.). Available online:
www.nbpts.org/candidates.gide/whichcert/01EarlyChild 2004.html

National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (2001). Early Childhood Generalist Portfolio (2nd ed.). Available online:
www.nbpts.org/candidates/guide/06port/06_ec_gen.html

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.

RELATED RESOURCES

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th Ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

MODE OF COURSE DELIVERY

This course will meet in a seminar style that focuses on individual responsibility for course requirements.

GSE SYLLABUS STATEMENTS OF EXPECTATIONS

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following: Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://www.gse.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions.

HONOR CODE

As stated on the GMU web site: “Please familiarize yourself with the Honor System and Code, as stated in the George Mason University *Undergraduate Catalog*. When you are given an assignment as an individual, the work must be your own. Some of your work may be collaborative; source material for group projects and work of individual group members must be carefully documented for individual contributions.” Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

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.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Students who require any special accommodations or those with disabilities that may affect their ability to participate fully in the course are encouraged to work with the instructor to ensure their successful participation. 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.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

All students must use their GMU email account.

1. CRITICAL RESPONSE TO READING (15%)

Students will respond critically and analytically to a reading related to early childhood. As a group we will be developing a rubric for the critical response. (See guidelines in following pages)

2. CULMINATING PROJECT (50%)

Choose ONE of the following; (see guidelines on following pages)

Option 1: Teaching portfolio using selected NBPTS guidelines

Option 2: Writing for publication

3. POSTER PRESENTATION OF CULMINATING PROJECT (10%)

see guidelines on following pages

4. GROUP DISCUSSION OF EARLY CHLDHOOD CASES (25%)

Each group of students will choose two cases or stories and be responsible for leading a discussion based on 5 higher order questions pertaining to the case. We will decide in class when each group is to lead their case study discussion. (See guidelines on following pages)

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

Grading Scale:

A = 94-100

A- = 90-93

B+ = 86-89

B = 80=85

C = 70-79

F = Below 70 - did not meet course requirements

PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments for This Class
Jan 24	Introduction to the course; The core of teaching and learning	Read : Jalongo & Isenberg, preface – class handout
Feb 2	Individual Work – Determining Culminating Project Work on Critical Reading Response Begin Case group planning	
Feb 7	Constructing teaching portfolios for professional development Instructor Handouts Guest Speaker: ECE NBCT	Read: Jalongo & Isenberg, chapter 1 Case (handout) Teitle, Chapter 9 (handout) Campbell, Cignetti, Melenzyer, Nettles, & Wyman, pp. 70-74 (handout) Instructor Handouts
Feb 15	The portfolio question: The power of self-directed inquiry Early childhood Generalist Standards: What are they and what do they mean for teacher quality?	Read: NBPTS ECE Generalist Standards, Preface, Introduction, Standards I & II Case Group Planning
Feb 22	Portfolios and their consequences: Developing as a reflective practitioner Student Led Case Analysis: The Practice of Reflection	Read Jalongo & Isenberg chapter 4 NBPTS ECE Generalist Standards, Standards III & IX Critical Reading Response Due
March 1	Project Group support Meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Portfolio entry – Documented Accomplishments ▪ Writing for publication – Literature Review Student Led Case Analysis: Dilemmas in Teaching	Read Jalongo & Isenberg chapter 5 NBPTS ECE Generalist Standards, Standards IV & V
March 8	Project Group support Meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Portfolio entry – Documented Accomplishments Writing for publication – Literature Review Student Led Case Analysis: Professional Development	Read Jalongo & Isenberg chapter 6 NBPTS ECE Generalist Standards,, Standards VI & VII
March 15	Spring Break – No Class	

March 22	Project Group support Meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Portfolio entry – Documented Accomplishments Writing for publication – Literature Review Student Led Case Analysis: What Students Can Teach Us	Read Jalongo & Isenberg chapter 3 NBPTS ECE Generalist Standards, Standard VIII
March 29	Project Group support Meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Portfolio entry – Documented Accomplishments Writing for publication – Literature Review Large Group Case Analysis: How Narrative Connects	Read Jalongo & Isenberg chapter 2 NBPTS ECE Generalist Standards, Standard X
April 5 April 12	Project Group support Meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Portfolio entry – Documented Accomplishments Writing for publication – Literature Review	
April 19 April 26	Project Group support Meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Portfolio entry – Documented Accomplishments Writing for publication – Literature Review	
May 3	Project Group support Meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Portfolio entry – Documented Accomplishments Writing for publication – Literature Review	
May 10	Poster Sessions: Highlights from Teaching Portfolios and Writing for Publication Written Projects Due Course Wrap –Up	

GUIDELINES FOR CRITICAL RESPONSE TO READING

A critical response to a reading encourages learners to ask questions, to notice and reflect, and to connect and inquire. It can lead to active, hypotheses 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 should reflect what your reading(s) meant 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. Critical response 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 using the APA reference) to which you are responding. The goal here is depth of understanding.

Please include a copy of the reading you are responding to when you turn in your critical response.

Evaluation will depend upon the inclusion of the following parts of critical reflection:

- Part 1: Description: Describe the article in no more than a single paragraph. Describe the key ideas/points of the article.
- Part 2: Analysis: Analyze and apply the description to what is know about the field of early childhood education. In part 2 address the potential reasons, perspectives, and interpretations related to the points you summarize in the description.
- Part 3: Synthesis: 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?). Indicate what you would do differently because of this reading or what you learned that would help you in the future in your own setting.

Culminating Project Guidelines

Option 1 – Teaching Portfolio Entries*

Entries Based Primarily on Student Work Samples.

One essential source of evidence about a teacher’s practice is student work: what are the children asked to do, how student responses are interpreted by the teacher; and what does the teacher do with the information the student work provides. There are many kinds of student work. The following two portfolio entries sample types that are important for generalist teachers of children. Each of the student work wimples is individually contextualized and situated by the teacher, using the following **Written Commentary**.

1. *Building a Classroom Community*: Demonstrate your knowledge and skill in creating a classroom environment that supports all aspects of children’s learning and development and also deepens student understanding of an important social studies concept through integration of social studies and the arts.

Choose a social studies concept relevant to the age group you are teaching. Prepare a **written commentary** that explains and illustrates how you build classroom community. **Analyze** the videotape by describing specific dialogue, events, or children. See NB Guidelines Entry 2 and Standards I, II, IV, V, VI and IX.

OR

2. *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-VII and IX.

OR

Entries Based on Work Outside the Classroom .

1. *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.

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

Option 2 – Writing for Publication

Select a journal that meets your needs and prepare an article for publication according to the published guidelines for that journal. Please submit the selection of your journal and the published guidelines to me. Be sure to follow the guidelines exactly as published and submit a copy of them with our final product. Typically, most journals require a cover sheet, and abstract of the article’s content, illustrative material (e.g., student writing sample or a photograph), and APA writing style.

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 or feedback form. **Group 1** includes Jimmy, Pam, and Vallerie; **Group 2** includes Lisa, Sherry, and KJ.

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.

Guidelines for Poster Presentation

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
- Clarity and organization
- Quality of information
- Relevance to Early Childhood Education Practice
- Originality and 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.