

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, 2005

Instructor: Dr. Karen Banks
Phone: (703) 620-1297 email: kbanks@gmu.edu
Office Hours: 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.
3. Demonstrate competency in writing ability and coherent communication of knowledge.
4. Demonstrate the ability to analyze a typical instructional 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 "*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.

IV. REQUIRED TEXTS

Holly, M.L. Arhar, J.M., & Kasten, W.C. (2005) Action Research for Teachers: Traveling the Yellow Brick Road. Upper Saddle, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

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 (2nd 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)

V. MODE OF COURSE DELIVERY

Individual meetings and participation in small group meetings.

VI. COURSE REQUIREMENTS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. Critical Responses to Reading (20%)

Students will respond critically and analytically to two (2) research articles related to curriculum/assessment.

2. Culminating Project (50%)

Students will design a pilot action research project related to curriculum/assessment and implement the pilot, if possible. Students will present their design to their peers.

3. Analyze three case studies, at three different grade levels. (30%)

Students will explore variables impacting each student's educational achievement, fully describe each student's strengths/needs, and will explore potential strategies for guiding the improvement of each student's achievement.

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

VII. PROPOSED COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPICS AND READINGS
February 2	Attend EDCI 614 class Explore research questions
February 3	Meet at 3 pm to explore research question
February 9	Attend EDCI 614 class Begin literature search
February 17	Meet at 3 pm to review literature
March 2	Attend EDCI 614 Explore methodology
March 3	Meet at 3 pm Critical Readings Due
March 24	Meet at 3 pm Review progress on research/data analysis Review progress on Case Analyses
April 7	Meet at 3 pm Review progress on research/determining implications Review progress on Case Analyses
April 21	Meet at 3 pm Case Analyses Due
May 4	Attend EDCI 614 class Present Action Research

Guidelines for Critical Responses to Readings

Students should briefly describe, then fully reflect on what the two (2) research articles mean to the student as an early childhood educator and how the student can apply these ideas into the student's current practice. Critical responses are NOT DESCRIPTIVE; rather they provoke thinking about why and how questions.

Each response should be 3-5 double-spaced, word-processed pages. Be certain to identify the material to which you are responding, using APA format. 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 curriculum and assessment. 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---how would you use what you learned in your own classroom. 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)

Action Research Project

Students should select a topic in early childhood education that is of interest and of some immediate relevance to their professional role.

1. Select a topic related to curriculum or assessment on which to base a research question. Formulate a research question.
2. Write a literature review to support researching the question. Use APA format in the text and bibliography.
3. Describe the methodology for conducting the research, including selection of participants, materials and strategies for data collection.
4. Describe how data will be presented/or present data.
5. Explore the implications of potential results/or describe results of the research.
6. Present research design (and results if appropriate) to peers.

(Outcomes 1, 2, 3)

Guidelines for Case Analyses

Analyze three of the cases in Teachers' Stories, or develop case studies from personal experiences for three different age levels. Case analyses will include: 1) Describe the context of each student's experience (home, community, school, peers), 2) Describe each student's academic and social-emotional performance, 3) Develop inferences as to each student's strengths/needs,

4) Develop potential strategies for assisting each student in increasing academic and/or social emotional performance, from a curriculum and assessment perspective.
(Outcomes 1, 3, 4, and 5)