

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Education

Course Title: Cognitive Development of Diverse Young Children
Program Code, Course Number and Section Number – [EDSE 667 001]
Semester and Year – [Fall 2004]

Instructor: Stephanie R. Kent, MA

Class Date & Time: Tuesday 4:30 PM – 7:10 PM

Class Location: Robinson Hall B124

Contact Information and Office Hours: Office Hours by Appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores critically & in detail conflicting views about how young children (infancy through age 8) think & learn. Cognitive theoretical approaches such as Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky & other leading researchers are addressed, their relevance to educational practice emphasized. Issues such as the characteristics of children with cognitive disabilities, children from multilingual and multicultural backgrounds and those living in poverty are addressed along with their educational implications.

Prerequisite: Admission to a Graduate School at George Mason University. Field experience is required.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of typical and atypical cognitive development in young diverse children.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the developmental, social, cultural, affective, and language factors that play a role in early cognitive development.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the various cognitive factors which play a role in first and second language acquisition.
4. Demonstrate the ability to apply current research on cognitive development to various educational settings.
5. Demonstrate the ability to create and interact in a way with diverse young children so that they receive opportunities that challenge them cognitively.

RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRAM GOALS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of early childhood. EDSE 667 is aligned with the following integrated standards of the Council For Exceptional Children and National Association for the Education of Young Children as listed below

- Child Development and Learning - Course prepares early childhood special educators to meet part of:
 - Apply theories of child development, both typical and atypical, and apply current research with emphasis on cognitive, motor, social-emotional, communication, adaptive, and aesthetic development in learning situations and family and community contexts.
 - Identify specific disabilities, including the etiology, characteristics, and classification of common disabilities in young children, and describe specific implications for development learning in the first years of life.
 - Apply knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity and the significance of sociocultural and political contexts for development and learning and recognize that children are best understood in the contexts of family, culture, and society.
- Curriculum Development and Implementation - Course prepares early childhood special educators to meet part of:
 - Incorporate information and strategies from multiple disciplines in the design of intervention strategies.
 - Support and facilitate family and child interactions as primary contexts for learning and development.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

This course is taught using lectures, discussions, case studies, field experiences.

TEXTS AND READINGS

Bialystok, E. *Bilingualism in development: Language, literacy and cognition*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Rogoff, B. *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Shonkoff and Meisels. *Handbook of early childhood intervention (2nd edition)*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All students must obtain and use an electronic GMU mail account with access to the Internet. GMU makes such accounts available and provides training at no cost to the student.

- A. Written Observations (2 Separate Observations)
- B. Information File Small Group Project
- C. Research Based Instructional Strategies Paper
- D. Preparation for and Participation in Class

POSSIBLE EVALUATION SCHEMA

Grading Scale:

A = 93 - 100	A- = 90 - 92	B+ = 86 - 89
B = 80 - 85	C = 79 - 70	F = Below 70

1. Participation in class discussions	10%
2. Written Observation Assignments (20% each)	40%
3. Information File Small Group Project	25%
4. Statement of Understanding/Theoretical Perspective Paper	25%
Total	100%

HONOR CODE

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of George Mason University and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the members of George Mason University, have set forth the following code of honor. Any individual who is caught in the act of cheating, attempting to cheat, plagiarizing, or stealing will be brought forth before a council of their peers. In the event that the individual is found guilty, he or she will be punished accordingly. For further information, please refer to the University Catalog or Website at www.gmu.edu.

Class Outline and Readings

Aug. 31	Overview of Course Theories of Child Development Jigsaw Reading	Article/Handout (to be given in class)
Sept. 7	Cognition in the Sociocultural Context Play and its relationship to development	Rogoff Chap. 1-3
Sept. 14	NO CLASS MEETING—Use time for Small Group planning	
Sept. 21	Brain Development and Research	Handouts/Articles (to be given in class)
Sept 28	Symbolic Thought, Play, Language and Literacy Jigsaw Reading	Rogoff Chap. 4, 7 &9 Article/Handout (to be given in class)
Oct. 5	Inclusion and welcoming the child with special needs; Cultural And family influences <i>Guest Speaker: Kim Amenabar</i> Due: Observation #1	Shonkoff and Meisels Chap 5 Articles and Handouts Rogoff Chap 6
Oct.12	<i>Columbus Day Holiday observed.. University Calendar</i>	
Oct. 19	Social Emotional Development; Temperament and how it relates to development	Articles/Handouts
Oct. 26	Bilingualism in Development <i>Guest Speaker: Dr. Elaisa Gosnell</i>	Bialystok Chap 2, 3,4
Nov. 2	Developmental Disabilities & Assessment Due: Observation #2	Shonkoff & Meisels Chap 1, 2 &11 Article/Handout (to be given in class)
Nov. 9	Infancy; Genetics, newborn and developmental issues	Article/Handout (to be given in class)
Nov. 16	Service Delivery Models & Systems <i>Guest Panel</i>	Shonkoff & Meisels Chap 17-19
Nov. 23	Development and Play in the Primary Years	Articles/Handouts (to be given in class)
Nov. 30	Due: Resources Information File Project Due GROUP PRESENTATIONS	
Dec. 7	Reflection/ Re-visiting Developmental Theories Due: Statement of Understanding/Theoretical Perspective Paper	

Guidelines for Written Assignments:

All written assignments 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/reources/edu/>.

All written assignments must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully.

Expectations:

1. Present ideas in a clear, concise and organized manner. Remember that longer is not necessarily better, but make sure that you completely answer the assignment questions.
2. Develop points coherently and thoroughly. Ensure that points are clearly linked to the topic.
3. Refer to appropriate readings, studies and examples to document and support your statements.
4. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling and grammar.

ASSIGNMENTS:

(Rubrics for individual assignments will be distributed and discussed)

1. Participation in Class Discussions: Students are expected to respond to the readings and in class activities. Students will be expected to attend class and participate in class discussions, giving feedback and sharing ideas, observations and strategies. Attendance is expected during all group presentations on November 30 (10 points)

Due: ONGOING

2. Child Observations

The purpose of this assignment is to spend time observing children to gain a better understanding of development. The first observation will focus on children at play. The second observation will be observing the cognitive development of a child.

a. Play Observation (20 points) <Observation #1>

This observation will focus on children at play. You should observe 2 children playing. The two children should exhibit different types of play skills (ie: one who is strong in the area of play and one who may be facing challenges in this area). Your detailed summary of the two children should consider what each child is working on through his/her play, that is, their goal of play. Specifically, you should include the following: 1) Description of what you observed 2) description of the levels and functions of play children exhibited 3) information regarding the environment, curriculum and adult roles which may have impacted the children's play 4) examples of the children's actions/behaviors/skills related to the theoretical perspective/theorist and how what you observed relates in some way to theoretical models discussed in class. Use your course readings to support the information you provide in the detailed summary.

DUE: October 5

b. Developmental Observation (20 points) <Observation #2>

The focus of the second observation will be to observe the development of one child. It would be helpful to make more than one observation of this child over the semester. Your observations for this assignment should use play/cognitive development as the central focus for describing the child's development. You should provide details of the child's development (cognitive, social/emotional and physical/motor development) especially as it relates to his/her play skills. Your developmental observation should also include information related to the child's family. Issues to consider would include: a) how the child plays at home b) social context of the family and the child c) transition from home to school and d) family influences including culture, language and other family characteristics. Lastly, include 3 activities or strategies that you would plan which are directly related to your observation of the child's skills in the areas of play, cognition and motor development.

DUE: November 2

3. Resources Information File Project:

Working in small groups/pairs identify a disability or special need that is of interest to you. Obtain information about this topic and about available resources. Schedule a meeting with the instructor BEFORE beginning your research to discuss the focus of your topic and presentation. You should develop a presentation that will explain the nature of the disability or special need, how it affects children's development, and ideas/resources for professionals working with children with this special need. The purpose of your class presentation will be to inform your classmates about the topic. Consider what they need to know, as professionals, about this issue. Prepare handouts that will be of use to them in their future work with young children. Your group presentation should include: 1) an overview/description of the topic 2) the impact on a child's and family's development 3) cultural views and influences related to the topic and 4) information for professionals to work with the child. You should provide a handout to your classmates as well as a complete set of your work for the instructor. This handout should include (at a minimum) 1) description of the disability or special need 2) practical information for working with children 3) information related to cultural issues & variations and 4) a listing of resources/references BE CREATIVE in presenting this info to class. (20 points)

Each group member will need to submit an individual reflection of the project. This will include your thoughts on researching and accessing materials and reflections of the impact this topic may have had on you. In addition, you should reflect on the group process and your participation as a group member. (5 points)

DUE: November 30 Groups will present this day as well

4. Statement of Understanding/Theoretical Perspective Paper:

The purpose of this assignment is for you to demonstrate your understanding about the development of young children in a theoretical context. You are to give examples from your own observations of children and your teaching as well as providing citations from your readings. Your paper should provide an explanation of the various theoretical frameworks discussed over the semester. This should provide an explanation of the theories as you understand them, with support from your readings. In addition, your summary should consider how different theorists would explain children's behavior and your own teaching practices. Use the observations for this class to discuss various child actions and behaviors in a theoretical context. Give specific examples of how what you observed the child doing relates to each of the theories. In addition, consider your own teaching practices and identify teaching strategies/behaviors that can be linked to each of the theoretical frameworks discussed throughout the semester. Be sure to clearly state how your teaching style reflects elements of these theoretical perspectives. That is, state what behavior/strategy you employed and how you see a relationship to the various theoretical frameworks discussed. Be sure to cite readings to support your understanding and interpretations. (25 points)

DUE: December 7