

SYLLABUS

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Course Prefix & Number: EDSE 667, Section 001

Course Title: Cognitive Development of Diverse Young Children

Semester & Year: Fall, 2005

Meeting Time/Days: Tuesdays, 7:20 pm – 10:00 pm

Location: Thompson Hall, Room 110

PROFESSOR:

Name: Bob Stechuk, M. Ed.

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Office hours: By appointment.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Prerequisites: *Admission to a Mason graduate program.*

A. Course description from the University Catalog

Explores conflicting views about how young children think and learn. Addresses cognitive theoretical approaches of leading researchers, and emphasizes their relevance to educational practice. Addresses characteristics of children with cognitive disabilities, children from multilingual and multicultural backgrounds, and those living in poverty, along with the educational implications of those characteristics. Requires field experience.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY:

The course will be conducted primarily as a seminar. It is expected that students will prepare to actively participate in each class session. In addition, course content will be delivered through lecture, on-line discussions, in-class activities and cooperative learning groups.

STUDENT OUTCOMES:

This course is designed to enable students to demonstrate:

1. understandings of typical and atypical cognitive development in diverse young children;
2. knowledge of biological, social, cultural, and affective factors that play a role in early cognitive development;
3. knowledge of the influences of first and second language acquisition upon cognition;
4. knowledge of current research on working memory, executive functioning, and theory-of-mind in young children;
5. the ability to review, critique, and apply current research on cognitive development to various educational applications; and
6. the ability to create effective learning environments and experiences for diverse young children so that they receive opportunities that challenge them cognitively.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS:

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 area of early childhood.

EDSE 667 is aligned with the following integrated standards of the Council For Exceptional Children (CEC) and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), as listed below:

- *Child Development and Learning*

This course prepares early childhood special educators to:

- 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*

This course prepares early childhood special educators to:

- 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.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Bialystok, E. (2001). *Bilingualism in development: Language, literacy, & cognition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Meadows, S. (1996). *Parenting behaviour and children's cognitive development*. New York: Psychology Press.

Schneider, W., Schumann-Hengsteler, R., & Sodian, B. (Eds.), (2005). *Young children's cognitive development: Interrelationships among executive functioning, working memory, verbal ability, and theory of mind*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA:

A. Requirements.

1. Class Participation.
2. Research Article: Written Critique & In-class Presentation.
3. Child Observations.
4. Final Paper/Presentation.

B. Performance-Based Assessments. TBD.

- C. **Criteria for evaluation.** Detailed rubrics for each assignment will be distributed well in advance of their due dates.

D. Grading Scale.

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

Participation in class discussions	10%
Child Observation – Play	15%
Child Observation – Inclusive Curriculum	15%
Research Article: Written Critique & In-class Presentation	15%
Final Paper/In-class Presentation.	45%
Total	100%

Guidelines for Written Assignments:

All written assignments will be evaluated for content and style. The American Psychological Association (APA) manual (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:

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.

Develop points coherently and thoroughly. Ensure that points are clearly linked to the topic.

Refer to appropriate readings, studies and examples to document and support your statements, using citations that conform to APA 5.0.

Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling and grammar.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Rubrics for individual assignments will be distributed and discussed in class in advance of assignment due dates.

1. Participation in Class Discussions (10 points).

Students are expected to respond to the readings and in class activities. Students will be expected to attend class and participate in discussions, giving feedback and sharing ideas, observations, and strategies.

Due: ONGOING

2. Child Observations (30 points).

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

a. Play Observation (15 points).

This observation will focus on a child at play. You may observe any child under the age of eight (8) years old, for a total of one hour, while at play.

Students may choose from among the following options for conducting play observations:

1. observe one child on one occasion for a total of one hour occasion;
2. observe one (1) child on three (3) separate occasions, for 20 minutes each; or
3. observe play interactions between one or two adults and one child on one or more occasions that total one hour.

Detailed field notes that objectively describe the child's behaviors on a moment-by-moment basis should be kept and turned in with the written paper. The written paper should address each of the following areas: 1) provide a detailed description of the child's demonstrated play behaviors; 2) identify specific skills (cognitive, linguistic, affective, adaptive, and/or physical) that the child demonstrated during play; and 3) discusses environmental influences on the child's play.

DUE: October 4.

b. Observation of a Child with a Disability (15 points).

The focus of the second observation will be to observe the development of one child with a known disability. Students may choose from among the three options for observation as in the assignment for observing play.

Detailed field notes that objectively describe the child's behaviors on a moment-by-moment basis should be kept and turned in with the written paper. The written paper should address each of the following areas: 1) provide a detailed description of the child's demonstrated behaviors; 2) identify specific skills (cognitive, linguistic, affective, adaptive, and/or physical) that the child demonstrated during play; 3) discusses environmental influences on the child's behaviors; and 4 identify implications for inclusive classroom practices.

DUE: October 25.

3. Research Article: Discussion & Critique (15 points).

Select a research article from the Blackboard site on a topic that is of interest to you. Alternately, you may identify your own article from a peer-reviewed journal (if you have any questions about what this means, see me). Read the article carefully and prepare both a written product and an in-class presentation.

Written product (10/15 points). Your written analysis of the article must contain each of the following:

- i. The *full citation* for the article, in APA (5th edition) style.
- ii. A brief description of the *purpose(s)* of the study.
- iii. A discussion of the *methods* used in the study.
- iv. Identification of the *major findings and conclusions* of the author(s).
- v. Your own *discussion and critical comments* of the article.

The written product must be **no more than two (2) pages in length. A more complete scoring rubric will be distributed well in advance of the due date.**

Class presentation (5/15 points). Prepare a 10 minute presentation to the class of the article you selected. You may pose questions, ask for comments, share your own insights and/or create an activity to assist others to understand the main points of the article.

DUE: November 22.

4. Final Paper (45 points).

The purpose of this assignment is for you to demonstrate in writing your integrated understandings about the cognitive development of young children.

Your paper should integrate from among the following:

- Theory, research, and practice;
- Your own ideas and experiences;

- Assigned course readings; and
- articles you select and read on your own

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 paper must include at least five citations from research published in peer-reviewed journals.

Finally, 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 does – or could - reflect elements of these theoretical perspectives. Be sure to cite both assigned readings and articles you have identified on your own to support your discussion.

DUE: December 6, 2005.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:

All students must abide by the following:

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

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 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.

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.

GMU Email

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.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
Aug. 30	Course Overview	In-class activities.
Sept. 6	Bilingualism and Cognition Intelligence and Language	Bialystok, Chapter 7
Sept. 13	Theoretical Perspectives on Cognition Cognition and Culture	In-class handouts.
Sept. 20	Theoretical Perspectives	Meadows, Chapters 1 - 3
Sept. 27	Adults & Child Cognition	Meadows, Chapters 4 - 6
Oct. 4	Infant Cognition	In-class handouts. Observation #1 (Play) Due
Oct. 11	NO CLASS MEETING. GMU Holiday.	
Oct. 18	Bilingualism & Meta-Level Topics Environments & Outcomes	Bialystok
Oct. 25	Executive Functions, Working Memory	Schneider et al. Chapters 1, 2 & 3 Observation # 2 (Inclusion) Due
Nov. 1	Theory of Mind	Schneider et al. pp. 83 – 89; Chapters 5 & 6
Nov. 8	NO CLASS MEETING.	
Nov. 15	Theory of Mind; Diverse Learners	Schneider et al. Chapters 8, 10 & 11
Nov. 22	Article Presentations	Article Critiques Due.
Nov. 29	Article Presentations Cognitive Development: State-of-the-Art	Schneider et al. Chapters 12 & 13
Dec. 6	Paper Presentations Closing Comments Course Evaluation	Final Paper Due & In-Class Presentations

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC(S)***COURSE***
Assignment rubric

Name: _____

Date: _____

	No Evidence 1	Beginning (Limited evidence) 2	Developing (Clear evidence) 3	Accomplished (Clear, convincing, substantial evidence) 4	SCORE
CRITERIA					

Comments: