George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
EDUC 542A: Introduction to Elementary Curriculum
3 Credit Hours
Fall 2004
Thursday 4:30-7:10PM; Room A352

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Course Description: This course examines the historical background of education as it relates to elementary schools and curriculum. Students will develop an understanding of the relationship between society and education. In addition, contemporary innovations that influence curriculum development will be explored. Throughout the course, students will experience technology as a teaching tool. Field experience is required. Students with disabilities that need special accommodations are asked to notify the instructor immediately so that arrangements can be made.

Nature of Course Delivery: Students in this course will participate in individual and group activities that focus on the integration of technology by using computers in class. Students will also participate in large group discussions led by the instructor and in small group discussions and activities with their classmates.

Learning Outcomes: At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:
1. identify important historical, philosophical, and sociological foundations underlying the role, development, and organization of public educational practice;
2. identify components of elementary curriculum and different aspects of an elementary classroom environment;
3. discuss contemporary educational innovations and analyze their impact on curriculum and instruction;
4. discuss laws related to students and teachers rights and responsibilities;
5. identify ways in which technology can be used as a tool to support their own teaching and learning;
6. demonstrate facility in basic application software, including word processing, databases, email, and presentation programs.
7. identify procedures for child abuse and neglect recognition, reporting and responding.
Educational Standards: This course addresses the following National and State Standards:

The Virginia State Teacher Education Licensure Regulations for Elementary Education:
1. The use of differentiated instruction and flexible groupings to meet the needs of learners at different stages of development, abilities, and achievement.
2. The use of appropriate methods, including direct instruction, to help learners develop knowledge and basic skills; sustain intellectual curiosity, and problem solve.
3. The ability to utilize effective classroom management skills through methods that will build responsibility and self-discipline and maintain a positive learning environment.
4. A commitment to professional growth and development through reflection, collaboration and continuous learning.
5. The ability to use computer technology as a tool for teaching, learning, research, and communication.

The Virginia State Technology Standards for Instructional Personnel:
1. Instructional personnel shall be able to demonstrate effective use of a computer system and utilize computer software.
2. Instructional personnel shall be able to apply knowledge of terms associated with educational computing and technology.
3. Instructional personnel shall be able to apply computer productivity tools for professional use.
4. Instructional personnel shall be able to use electronic technologies to access and exchange information.
5. Instructional personnel shall demonstrate knowledge of ethical and legal issues relating to the use of technology.

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education Program Standards for Elementary Teacher Preparation:
1. Candidates understand and use a variety of teaching strategies that encourage elementary students? Development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
2. Candidates use their knowledge and understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior among students at the K-6 level to foster active engagement in learning, self motivation, and positive social interaction and to create supportive learning environment.
3. Candidates use their knowledge and understanding of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the elementary classroom.
4. Candidates understand practices and behaviors that identify and develop the competence of a professional career teacher.
International Society for Technology in Education National Educational Technology Standards:

I. TECHNOLOGY OPERATIONS AND CONCEPTS-Teachers demonstrate a sound understanding of technology operations and concepts. Teachers:
   1. demonstrate introductory knowledge, skills, and understanding of concepts related to technology (as described in the ISTE National Educational Technology Standards for Students).
   2. demonstrate continual growth in technology knowledge and skills to stay abreast of current and emerging technologies.

V. PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE-Teachers use technology to enhance their productivity and professional practice. Teachers:
   1. use technology resources to engage in ongoing professional development and lifelong learning.
   2. continually evaluate and reflect on professional practice to make informed decisions regarding the use of technology in support of student learning.
   3. use computer-based technologies including telecommunications to access information and enhance personal and professional productivity.
   4. apply technology to increase productivity.
   5. use technology to communicate and collaborate with peers, parents, and larger community in order to nurture student learning.

VI. SOCIAL, ETHICAL, LEGAL, AND HUMAN ISSUES-Teachers understand the social, ethical, legal, and human issues surrounding the use of technology in PK-12 schools and apply those principles in practice. Teachers:
   1. model and teach legal and ethical practice related to technology use.
   2. apply technology resources to enable and empower learners with diverse backgrounds, characteristics, and abilities.
   3. identify and use technology resources that affirm diversity.
   4. promote safe and healthy use of technology resources.
   5. facilitate equitable access to technology resources for all students.

Readings and Materials:
6. Virginia’s *Standards of Learning for K-6* (http://www.pen.k12.va.us)
Electronic Requirements

Students must have access to email and the internet, either at home, work or GMU campus. GMU provides students with free email accounts which must be accessed for information sent from the university or the Graduate School of Education. Go to Http://mason.gmu.edu/ for information on accessing email.

After introductory training, students will also be expected to access Blackboard prior to every class session to download agendas and other pertinent course documents. Blackboard can be accessed by going to http://blackboard.gmu.edu.

George Mason University 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. Code in the University catalog can be found online at http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html.

George Mason University Policy on Disabilities:

This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the series, programs, or activities of all State and local Governments. Under ADA a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as: learning, working, walking, speaking, hearing, breathing, and/or taking care of oneself. If a student has a disability and needs course adaptations or accommodations because of that disability, it must be established with the faculty, in writing, at the beginning of the semester so arrangements can be made. Please call the Disability Resource Center for required documentation (703-993-2474). The Disability Resource Center website is at http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/
Course Requirements:

1. **Educational Philosophy (4-6 pages) (20%)**: Being aware of their personal philosophical approach to education will benefit students as they develop an understanding about teaching styles and beliefs. Students will write a paper describing their education philosophy. To identify their philosophy, students should use information from their readings, class discussions, and experiences. The philosophy should include information regarding the goals of education, roles of students, roles of teachers, teaching methods, and assessing student learning.

2. **Field Observation Journal (1 page or less) (15%)**: Fifteen hours of field experience is required for this course. Students will document their activities and observations during their field experience in the school. The first entry should include information about the size and demographics of the school, the grade level, and days and times they will be in the school. Students will write a REFLECTIVE journal entry for each time they visit the school. Students should include observations about teaching style, discipline techniques, classroom dynamics, groups that you observe, and the use of technology. Be sure to include questions that may arise during the observation, as well as comments regarding what you learn.

3. **Review Paper (8-10 pages) (35%)**: Students will select a topic on curricular approaches from the following list: Standards-Based Learning, Cooperative Learning, Direct Instruction, Technology Integration, Constructivism, and Culturally Responsive Teaching. Students will research the topic and write an 8-10 page paper. Included in the paper should be a description of the innovation, significant historical information, current impact on education, and future implications of the innovation. References to the literature must be included in APA style.

4. **Law Presentation (15%)**: In small groups, students will present information on current laws that have an impact on education. Laws may include copyright laws, privacy issue, protection of students on the Internet, religion, least restrictive environment, sexual harassment, violence in schools, child abuse, and Brown vs. Board of Education. Students will research the current law and present different interpretations of the law and its influence on education. Visual charts and graphics may be used to help clarify concepts. See LawQuest at [http://mason.gmu.edu/~dspragu1/lawquest.html](http://mason.gmu.edu/~dspragu1/lawquest.html)
5. **Portfolio/Personal Development Plan (10%)**: Students will develop a portfolio that includes a professional development plan. The purpose of the portfolio at this point in the elementary program is to focus on your professional development plan and specific assignments from EDUC 542 and 543 such as your educational philosophy, case study, and field experience reflections. You will be adding to this portfolio throughout the program.

6. **Blackboard Discussions (5%)**: Students will respond in three electronic discussions related to class topics through the use of GSE’s conferencing system, Blackboard. You can access this electronic bulletin board at [http://blackboard.gmu.edu](http://blackboard.gmu.edu)

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**Grading Scale**: A=93-100; A-=90-92; B+=87-89; B=80-86; C=70-79

**Remember: A course grade less than B requires that you retake the course.**

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**Evaluation**: Since this is a graduate level course, high quality work is expected on all assignments and in class. Grades will be based on the completion of course requirements and on the scope, quality, and creativity of the assignments. All assignments will be graded. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. You may negotiate an extension for one assignment prior to its due date without penalty. Otherwise, one letter grade will be deducted for each day that an assignment is late. In addition, all field experiences must be completed satisfactorily in order to pass this course.

In general, oral and written assignments will be evaluated using an A, A-, B+, B, B-, C or F. The following criteria will be used in the form of a grading criteria sheet or a rubric.

- How much of the assignment was completed correctly?
- Is the required information presented?
- Is the submission neat and well organized?
- Is the submission clearly written or spoken and presented in a logical fashion?
- Is the content of the submission accurate?

The Educational Philosophy Paper, Field Observation Journal, Law Presentation, and Research Paper will be evaluated using rubrics. Each rubric will consist of criteria provided on handouts and will be discussed in class. For the portfolio, the class will develop a rubric that will consist of criteria developed by class members.
Course Outline/Schedule
(Note: Readings and Assignments are due on the day they are cited.)

9/2  Week 1  In class: Introductions; Review Syllabus; Why Teach? Opening e-mail accounts; Intro. to Blackboard; “Teacher Toolkit.”

Out of class: Read Kozol (pp7-132 or pp. 133-233)

Blackboard Introduction Posting Due (Fri. 9/24)

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9/9  Week 2  In class: Discuss Kozol reading; Using Inspiration, create a Venn Diagram comparing your schooling experience with students in Kozol’s book; “Teacher Toolkit.”

Out of class: No assignments due

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9/16  Week 3  In class: PowerPoint Introduction; A Webquest: Introduction to Webquest; Sign up for your Law Webquest topic. “Teacher Toolkit.”

Out of class: Work on Law Webquest

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9/23  Week 4  In class: Guest Speaker (Ken Reinshuttle) on School Laws

Out of class: Work on Law Webquest.

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9/30  Week 5  In class: Discuss transformative teachers/teaching; “Teacher Toolkit.”

Out of class: Read Howard book in its entirety.
Work on Law Webquest.
Prepare for your law presentation.

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10/7  Week 6  In class: Law Presentations. You will be presenting to the other section of 542 (Note: Joint session w/ other section of 542.)

Out of class: No reading assignment.
Choose your Review Paper Topic
10/12  Week 7  In class: Law Presentations (Note: Joint session w/other section of 542 No class on 10/14)

Out of class: Field Observation Journal Entries (1 & 2) Due
Blackboard Discussion Posting Due (10/15)

10/21  Week 8  In class: Field trip to the Library; Preparing for Review Paper. Conducting research on the Internet; Using ERIC database.

Out of class: No reading assignment.
Work on Field Experience Journal.

10/28  Week 9  In class: Discuss culturally relevant teaching; “Teacher Toolkit.”

Out of class: Read Ladson-Billings book in its entirety and
Arends (pp.xiii-91)
Work on Field Experience Journal.

11/4  Week 10  In class: Discuss Dewey’s laboratory school; “Teacher Toolkit.”

Out of class: Read Tanner book in its entirety
Work on Educational Philosophy Paper.
Field Observation Journal Entries (3-6) Due
Blackboard Discussion Posting Due (11/5)

11/11  Week 11  In class: Discuss Constructivism, teacher planning and classrooms as communities. Using your grade level curriculum, create a constructivist lesson plan; “Teacher Toolkit.”

Out of class: Read eReserve articles on Constructivism and
Arends(pp.93-172)
Download your grade level’s curriculum.
Work on Educational Philosophy paper
Work on Research paper

11/18  Week 12  In class: Discuss classroom management, assessment and evaluation

Finish Educational Philosophy paper.
Work on Research paper.
11/25  Week 13  Thanksgiving Break

12/2   Week 14  In class: Discuss planning, conducting, and evaluation of presentation, direct instruction, concept, cooperative learning, problem-based learning and classroom discussion models. In small groups, begin to create a lesson plan that follows one of the models discussed.

Out of class: Work on Research paper.
Work on Field Experience Journal.
**Educational Philosophy Paper Due**

12/9   Week 15  In class: Finish up and teach your lesson to a small group of your peers. Wrap up the semester. Complete course evaluation.

Out of class: Work on Portfolio/Professional Dev. Plan
**Research Paper Due**

12/16  Week 16  In class: Share Portfolios/Professional Development Plans.

Out of class: **Portfolio/Professional Development Plan Due**

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Students are asked to turn off all cellphones and beepers before the start of class