George Mason University  
Graduate School of Education  
EDUC 542: Introduction to Elementary Curriculum  
3 Credit Hours  
Spring 2004  
Tuesdays 4:30-7:10PM; Room A350

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Office Hours: By appointment

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 who 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.

___________________________________________________________________________________
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 (during class meeting 2 or 3), 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)

[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.]

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

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

**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. Late assignments will not be accepted without making arrangements with the instructor. 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.)*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>In class: Introductions; Review Syllabus; Why Teach?; Arends Video; Opening e-mail accounts; Intro to Blackboard</td>
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| 1/27  | 2    | In class: Discuss Kozol reading; Using Inspiration, create a Venn Diagram comparing your schooling experience with students in Kozol’s book.  
Out of class: Read Kozol (pp. 7-132 or pp. 133-233). |
| 2/3   | 3    | In class: Powerpoint Introduction; A Webquest about Webquests; Sign up for your Law Webquest topic.  
Out of class: Read Tanner (pp. ix-90) and Arends (Ch. 1). |
| 2/10  | 4    | In class: Guest Speaker (Ken Reinshuttle) on School Laws; Discuss Tanner reading.  
Out of class: Read Tanner (pp. 95-178). Work on Law Webquest. |
| 2/17  | 5    | In class: Discuss Tanner reading.  
| 2/24  | 6    | In class: *Law Presentations*, (joint class session with other 542)  
Out of class: No reading assignment. Prepare for your law presentation. |
| 3/1*  | 7    | *Law Presentations* (This is a Monday due to joint class session)  
Out of class: No reading assignment. Work on Field Experience Journal. |
| 3/9   | 8    | SPRING BREAK  
Out of class: |
3/16    Week 9     In class: Discuss reading; Field trip to the Library; Conducting research on the Internet; Using ERIC database; Teaching about Search Engines Webcast

Out of class: Read Ladson-Billings (ix.-p.53), Arends (Ch. 2), and Levine (pp. 7-22).
Work on Field Experience Journal.

3/23    Week 10    In class: Discuss Ladson-Billings and Arends reading.

Out of class: Read Ladson-Billings (p. 54-167).
Work on Educational Philosophy Paper.
Field Observation Journal Entries (3-6) Due
Blackboard Discussion Posting Due (4/2)

3/30    Week 11    In class: Discuss Constructivism and Levine readings. Using your grade level curriculum, create a constructivist lesson plan.

Out of class: Read eReserve articles on Constructivism and Levine (pp. 52-108).
Download your grade level’s curriculum.
Work on Educational Philosophy paper
Work on Research paper

4/6     Week 12    In class: Discuss Arends and Levine readings.

Out of class: Arends (pp. 97-173) and Levine (pp. 109-149).
Finish Educational Philosophy paper.
Work on Research paper.

4/13    Week 13    In class: Discuss Arends and Levine readings.

Out of class: Read Arends (pp. 177-257) and Levine (pp. 153-185).
Work on Research paper.
Work on Field Experience Journal.
Educational Philosophy Paper Due

4/20    Week 14    In class: Discuss Arends and Levine readings. Create presentation, direct instruction, concept or cooperative learning lesson plan.

Out of class: Read Arends (pp. 275-289, pp. 302-315, pp. 332-346, pp. 361-374) and Levine (pp. 189-230).
Work on Research Paper
Work on Portfolio and Professional Dev. Plan
Field Observations (7-10) Due

4/27 Week 15 In class: 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

5/4 Week 16 In class: Share Portfolios/Professional Development Plans.

Out of class: Portfolio/Professional Development Plan Due

Students are asked to turn off all cell phones and beepers before the start of class.