

**George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Early Childhood Education/ UTEEM Program
Integrating and Adapting Curriculum Across Content Areas for Diverse Learners, K-3
EDUT 614**

**Fall 2005
3 credit hours
Robinson A412
Thursday 9-4:00**

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Office Hours: After class and by
appointment**

Introduction:

This course is offered as one of the strands in the Unified Transformative Early Education Model in Early Childhood (UTEEM), a teacher training model providing an integrated approach to preparing teachers to work with diverse young children and their families. Teachers are prepared to work with children with diverse learning needs in a variety of inclusive school and community settings. This course is offered in conjunction with three other courses (development/assessment; math/science; and language/literacy) and linked to a full-time field placement with diverse young children in kindergarten through third grade classrooms. Students participating in this course are enrolled full time as a cohort in the UTEEM program.

Course Description:

This course provides students with an understanding of developmentally appropriate programs and practices for teaching children in kindergarten through the third grade. The students will explore, plan, implement, and evaluate curriculum and environments using individually, age-related, and culturally appropriate methods and materials. This course will provide student interns with an understanding of strategies for planning and implementing a community of learners that is inclusive of children with diverse abilities and needs. In particular, there will be a focus on curriculum adaptations based on the knowledge and experiences of a child, family, and community, an understanding of learning styles, and the integration of knowledge of effective practices with curriculum expectations across all content areas. This is an integrative class which will enable students to link their knowledge in specific content areas to the broader picture of managing the classroom's environment, implementing an integrated curriculum across content areas, and applying the philosophical principles related to effective instruction of diverse young learners. This course continues to develop reflective practices and use of a variety of problem solving strategies needed to be effective classroom teachers.

Overall Student Outcomes:

At the completion of this strand, students will:

1. Demonstrate the ability to plan curriculum activities which are responsive to the interests,

preferences, motivation, interaction styles, developmental status, learning history, cultural variables, and levels of participation of children in kindergarten through grade three.

2. Demonstrate the ability to plan, implement, and evaluate an integrated approach across curriculum areas based on school, district, and state curriculum goals and objectives.
3. Demonstrate the ability to implement instruction that is linked to children's interests and developmental capacities, that is informed by family and community knowledge and experience, that is relevant to the curriculum, and that promotes learning competence.
4. Demonstrate the ability to select culturally, linguistically, and ability responsive materials that have multiple purposes, are adaptable and varied, and promote learning.
5. Demonstrate the ability to construct learning environments that support positive behavioral and learning expectations.
6. Demonstrate the ability to apply systematic problem solving approaches to dilemmas encountered in interactions in the internship experience.
7. Demonstrate the emerging skill to conduct a professional development presentation.
8. Demonstrate the ability to use analysis and reflection to better understand the K-3 learning environment and one's own role as an early childhood educator in that environment.

Professional Standards and Student Outcomes:

This course is aligned with the following integrated standards of the Council of Exceptional Children and National Association for the Education of Young Children (CEC and NAEYC). These professional guidelines were used to design the learning activities and internship experiences which prepare early childhood professionals in the UTEEM program.

Child Development and Learning

- 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;
- Apply knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity and the significance of socio-cultural and political contexts of family, culture, and society;
- Demonstrate understanding of developmental consequences of stress, child abuse, and trauma; protective factors and resilience; the development of mental health; and the importance of supportive relationships.

Curriculum Development and Implementation:

- Plan and implement developmentally appropriate integrated curriculum and instructional practices based on knowledge of individual children, the community, curriculum goals and content, and takes into account culturally valued content and children's home experiences, language, and interests;
- Plan, implement, and explain the rationale for developmentally and functionally appropriate methods and activities that include play, environmental routines, individual activities, small group projects, open-ended questioning, group discussion, problem solving, cooperative learning, parent-mediated activities, and inquiry experiences to help young children develop intellectual curiosity, solve problems, and make decisions;
- Make specific adaptations for the special needs of children who have unique talents, learning and developmental needs, or specific disabilities;
- Incorporate information and strategies from multiple disciplines in the design of intervention strategies to encourage children's physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, and cognitive development;
- Create, evaluate, and select developmentally appropriate materials, equipment, and environments;
- Develop and evaluate topics of study in terms of conceptual soundness, significance, and intellectual integrity;
- Support and facilitate family and child interactions as primary contexts for learning and development;
- Use individual and group guidance and problem-solving techniques to develop positive and supportive relationships with children, to encourage positive social interaction among children, to promote positive strategies of conflict resolution, and to develop personal self-control, self-motivation, and self-esteem;
- Provide a stimuli-rich indoor and outdoor environment that employs materials, media, and technology, including adaptive and assistive technology;
- Demonstrates understanding of the influence of the physical setting, schedule, routines, and transitions on children and use these experiences to promote children's development and learning; and
- Select intervention curricula and methods for children with specific disabilities including motor, sensory, health, communication, social-emotional and cognitive disabilities.

Required Texts:

Bredekamp, S. and Copple, C. (Eds.). 1997. Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. **(Continuing use from prior semesters)**

de Melendez, W. R. & Ostertag, V. (1997). Teaching young children in multicultural classrooms. Albany: Delmar Publishers.

Katz, L. & Chard, S. (2001). Engaging children's minds. Ablex. ISBN: 1567505015.

McCaleb, S. (1994). Building communities of learners. New York: St. Martins Press. ISBN: 0-8058-8005-4.

Thompson, S. J., Kushner Benson, S. N., Pachnowski, L. M., Salzman, J. A. (2001). Decision-making in planning and teaching. New York: Longman. ISBN: 0-8013-3135-8. **(optional)**

Bredekamp, S. and Rosegrant, T. (Eds.). 1995. Reaching potentials: Transforming early childhood curriculum and assessment, vol. 2. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children. ISBN: 0-935989-73-0 **(Optional)**

Course Format:

This class will meet on Thursdays from 9:00-4:00, except during weeks of internship experience. Students will continuously link what they are doing in their field sites with what they are learning in class. The seminar format of the class requires active participation of all students. Guest lecturers from the community will be invited to support content from the readings.

Course Requirements:

1. Attend all class sessions (unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructors).
2. Prepare for class by completing all assigned readings and participating in all class discussions.
3. Complete and turn in all assignments on time.
4. Maintain daily reflective journal and submit to instructor on day of class session.
5. Modifications needed due to disabilities or special circumstances to meet course requirements as outlined in syllabus must be discussed with instructor.

Course Grading:

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| 1. Participation and preparation for class | 10pts |
| 2. Five Meaningful Dilemmas (due on 9/29,10/13, 10/27, 12/1, 12/8) | 15pts |
| 3. Child/Family/Community Knowledge and Experience | 20pts |
| 4. Transforming Curriculum: Unit plan, analysis, and reflection | 30pts |
| 5. Videotape Self-Analysis and Reflection | 15pts |

6. Planning for Positive Learning and Guiding Behavior

10pts

Description of Assignments

1. Meaningful Dilemmas:

Select a situation from your internship experience that has perplexed you, caused you anxiety, or made you wonder. Describe the situation and list the questions that you wish to be discussed. Use the attached form. This will be used in class discussions for the purpose of encouraging reflection and practicing a variety of systematic problem solving approaches. (5 @ 3 points each, 15 points total)

2. Child/Family/Community Interests, Knowledge and Experience

This assignment is designed to help you consider how you would create a culturally responsive learning environment for the children in your class. You are to use the McCaleb and deMelendez readings as guides to help you plan the information gathering approach you use to learn from the children and families. Use various information gathering strategies to identify children's classroom interests and preferences, and to gather insight on the knowledge and experiences offered by their families/communities. Conduct an analysis of the classroom environment. Use deMelendez as a guide, including Appendix K, to help you examine the opportunities available for the children to learn in your internship setting.

Be prepared to share your learning on **Oct 3**. Your paper should include the following:

- 1.) Description of information gathering strategies used;
- 2.) description and discussion of what you learned;
- 3.) discussion of the implications of your findings for planning meaningful learning activities in the context of your classroom;
- 4.) explicit linkages to McCaleb and deMelendez; and a
- 5.) personal reflection on this process for you as a teacher responsible for establishing strong partnerships with families and communities and creating a culturally responsive classroom.

3. Transforming Curriculum: Integrated Project Work, Analysis and Reflection

This semester you will develop and implement two project based learning plans. Through the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of these plans, you will demonstrate your ability to integrate across curriculum areas, respond to the individual learning needs of diverse young children, link family stories to established classroom curriculum goals and objectives, and conduct teacher research.

I. Integrated Project Plan: You will work with a classmate to develop, implement, and evaluate a two week thematic unit. You will analyze and reflect on the entire project implementation process including an assessment plan and tools from your assessment strand. Your written paper should include any products, pictures, children's feedback and other pertinent evidence of project work. Be prepared to participate in a team discussion to analyze and reflect on the project process.

II. Family Stories/Social Studies Project

You will also be responsible for developing an interdisciplinary plan focused around the lives of the families in your classroom. The social studies content area may be an appropriate time in the schedule to implement this project. McCaleb presents the idea that through validation, reflection, and inquiry children can be researchers who generate new knowledge relevant to the classroom experience. Read McCaleb for guidance on the design and implementation of this family centered project work. Your plan must include how you presented the idea of the project to the cooperating professional, children, and families. Consider developing written/visual products and/or designing activities that will help you introduce the idea that children can be researchers of their own lives. The time frame for the plan should be for at least two weeks. **On Dec 8**, be prepared to share your project work. In your presentation, consider the items listed above:

- 1.) How the children and families helped generate the themes and products for the project;
- 2.) Plans for involving family and community resources;
- 3.) Evaluation plan for feedback from children, families, and community; and

For the final product, describe your plan. Provide **two copies** of a detailed description of what happened, discuss modifications made during implementation of project, feedback from children, and an analysis and reflection of the planning and implementation process, discuss what went well, what would you change, and what did you learn about children and about yourself as a teacher. Use McCaleb and deMelendez to help you reflect on your role as a culturally responsive practitioner. Presentation and final written product are due December 14-15.

4. Videotape Self-Analysis and Reflection

During the full time teaching experience, videotape yourself on at least two occasions for at least 20 minutes total. Use your reading to help you reflect on your practices. Place particular attention to questioning techniques, issues related to gender bias, responsiveness to linguistic and ability diversity, and children's reaction to curriculum. Ask your university supervisor and/or your cooperating teacher to view a videotape with you and to help you analyze your teaching and classroom discourse style. Write a short analysis and reflection of their feedback

and your findings. Submit one VHS videotape and **Two copies** of written analysis **due Dec 1.**

6. Planning for Positive Learning and Guiding Behavior

The purpose of this assignment is to encourage reflection about the school and classroom environment and the impact that it might have on children's behavior. Observe and describe a situation(s) involving a child or a group of children that has perplexed you and is related to behavior or misbehavior issues. This paper will be used in class for a problem solving activity. Consider including as many perspectives as can be gathered to more adequately describe the situation or issue. Also describe the guidance plan that is in place to handle similar situations. You may consider this as a more detailed dilemma or case study that permits you to tell a fuller story from several perspectives. In your description, consider the full range of experiences that the child/children may bring to the situation, including family, cultural, ability, language, and other factors. Do not analyze situation or link to readings; tell the story. **Submit two copies.**
Due Oct. 27.

Tentative Topics and Reading Assignments

Sept 2	Introduction and overview Becoming a Reflective Practitioner Identifying Personal Style of Learning	
Sept 15	Defining curriculum Transforming Curriculum: Project Based Learning; Using Family Stories for Project Based Learning Identifying Key Features of Project Work Steps in Planning for Project Work	Katz & Chard, 1, 2,4& 5 McCaleb, 1,2
Sept 29	Developmentally Appropriate Practices, K-3 Planning for Integrated Project Work Selecting Instructional Objectives Across Content Areas	Bredekamp, Part 5 McCaleb, 4 Katz & Chard, 6-9
In class: Identify project's instructional objectives using SOL's <i>Dilemma 1 due</i>		
Oct 13	Building Communities of Learners Families and Communities Within a Transformative and Inclusive Educational Context Exploring the Sociocultural-Historical Context Planning for Integrated Project Work (cont) <i>Child/Family/Community Interests assignment due</i> <i>Dilemma 2 due</i>	McCaleb, 5-10 Katz & Chard, 10-11
Oct 27	Creating Responsive Learning Environments Designing and Selecting Learning Activities Connecting with children's real-life experiences Planning the Physical Environment <i>Planning for Positive Learning and Guiding Behavior assignment due</i> <i>Dilemma 3 Due</i>	Resources: McCaleb & deMelendez 3, 8,9

Oct 31- Nov. 30 Full time at site
Individual meetings with instructor scheduled

Dec 1	Beyond discipline Organizing the classroom to support positive learning and to guide behavior Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner Systematic problem solving linked to dilemma <i>Dilemma 4 due</i> <i>Videotape Analysis Due</i>	Reading to be determined
Dec 8	Developmentally appropriate curriculum in the Current school climate: "The big picture". <i>In Class Activity: Present an overview of the Family Stories Project you implemented during your full time internship. Bring products, artifacts, photographs, etc. to help you describe your role, and process and outcome of the project work.</i> <i>Dilemma 5 due</i>	Bredekamp

Meaningful Dilemma #1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (Circle one)

SS Number:_____

Date:_____

Setting (No names):

People Involved (descriptors or first name only):

Description of Situation (tell a rich story and include background information we may need to understand the dilemma):

What perplexed me about the situation was...