

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**Early Childhood Education /UTEEM Program**  
**Creating Environments and Adapting Curriculum for Diverse Learners, Ages 3-5**  
**EDUT 514**

**Fall 2005**  
**3 credit hours**  
**Thursdays 9:00-4:00**  
**Robinson A349**

**Cecelia Alvarado, MA**  
**(540) 752-7551**  
**calvara2@gmu.edu**  
**Office Hours: Thursday, 4:00-5:00 or by appointment**

**Introduction:**

This course is offered as one of the strands in the UTEEM Early Childhood Education Program, providing an integrated approach to preparing teachers to work with young children. Teachers are prepared to work with children with diverse learning needs and their families in a variety of inclusive community settings. This strand is offered in conjunction with three other courses and linked to a full-time field placement with diverse young children. Students participating in this course are enrolled as a cohort full time in the UTEEM project or by permission of the program coordinators.

**Course Description:**

This course provides students with an understanding of developmentally appropriate programs and practices for culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children. The students will explore, plan, and implement curriculum and environments using individually responsive, age-related, and culturally appropriate methods and materials. This strand will provide student interns with an understanding of the important role of play, active exploration, the construction and representation of knowledge, social interaction with peers and family members, and peers and families as significant others in children's intellectual and linguistic development. Interns will develop an appreciation for curricular adaptations unique to a variety of settings. Interns will also begin to practice the use of critical reflection as a teacher research strategy for work with culturally and linguistically diverse young learners.

**Objectives:**

At the completion of this course, students will:

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

preferences, motivation, interaction styles, developmental status, learning history, cultural variables, and levels of participation of three to five year old children.

2. Demonstrate the ability to plan curriculum activities that are respectful of family identified outcomes, preferences, interaction styles, and cultural lifeways.
3. Demonstrate the ability to apply current research on effective developmentally appropriate practices to teaching diverse young children.
4. Demonstrate the ability to select culturally, linguistically, and ability responsive materials that have multiple purposes, are adaptable and varied, and promote play and learning.
5. Demonstrate the ability to construct learning environments appropriate to the many settings (classroom, home, community) in which young children function so that children can learn through active exploration and interaction with other children, materials and adults.
6. Demonstrate the ability to plan and implement integrated and meaningful learning activities for diverse young children.
7. Demonstrate the ability to utilize systematic problem solving strategies to address dilemmas encountered in diverse educational and community settings.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the varied theoretical frameworks guiding early childhood curriculum approaches and practices.
9. Begin the process of becoming a reflective practitioner.

### **Required Books:**

Ballenger, C. (1999). Teaching other people's children. New York: Teacher's College Press. ISBN 080 77 37 895.

Gartrell, D. (2004). The power of guidance: Teaching social-emotional skills in early childhood classrooms. Washington, DC: NAEYC (Delmar).

Hull, K., Goldhaber, J. & Capone, A. (2002). Opening doors: An introduction to inclusive early childhood education. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. ISBN 0-395-81101-5

Plous, S. (2002). Understanding prejudice and discrimination. Boston: McGraw Hill.

### **Recommended Resources:**

Abraham, M., Morris, L., and Wald, P. (1993). Inclusive early childhood education. Communication Skill Builders. ISBN 0-88450-635-5

Bredenkamp, S. and Copple, C. (1997). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs. Washington, D.C.: NAEYC

Bredenkamp, S. & Rosegrant, T. (Eds.) (1992). Reaching potentials: appropriate curriculum and assessment for young children, vol. 1. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

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

Derman Sparks, L. (1989). Anti-bias curriculum: Tools for empowering young children. Washington, D.C.: NAEYC. ISBN 0-935989-20-X

Roopnarine, J.L. & Johnson, J.E. (1993). Approaches to early childhood education, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Merrill.

Teaching Tolerance (A Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center). (1997). Starting Small: Teaching tolerance in preschool and early grades. Montgomery, AL (text & video resource)

### **Course Format:**

This class will meet on Thursday's from 9:00 ¥ 4:00 for seven sessions. There will be one half-day session mid-way through the full time teaching internship on November 3, from 1:00-4:00 p.m. Students will continuously link what they are doing in their field sites with what they are learning in this class. The class will have a seminar format that requires active participation of all students and will utilize guest lecturers from the community to support content from readings.

### **Course Requirements:**

1. Attend all class sessions (unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructors). If you miss a class, contact the instructor by phone or e-mail within 24 hours of the class meeting time.
2. Prepare for class by completing all assigned readings.
3. Actively participate in all class discussions and activities.
4. Complete all written assignments and projects on time. These will be discussed in class, and it essential that you come prepared. Late assignments will receive a 10% reduction in possible points awarded. Absence from class does not allow work due that day to be

submitted late. If you are unable to come to class on a day that an assignment is due, it must be submitted via e-mail by the beginning of class or receive the lateness reduction.

5. Maintain an interactive, reflective, dialogue journal to be read by full time UTEEM faculty.

**Note:**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See [gse.gmu.edu](http://gse.gmu.edu) for a listing of these dispositions. Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Ode. See [http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC\\_H12](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.

If you require accommodations or modifications due to a disability or other circumstances, please consult with the course instructor. The University is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide support and offers resources through the Disability Resource Center and the Writing Center. 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](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc) or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC. Additional resources are available through the university's assistive technology center.

**Course Grading:**

1. Participation and Preparation for Class	10%
2. Meaningful Dilemmas (due 9/22, 10/6, 10/20, 11/3, 12/1)	20%
3. Environment Analysis (10/6)	15%
4. Pluricultural thematic plan (preliminary ideas 10/20 – 5 %, draft plan 11/3 – 10%, reflections 12/1 – 15%)	30%
5. Teacher research: Memos, Video, and Reflective Analysis (12/10 – 12/12)	25%

(\*Before beginning assignments, see assignment rubric which describes how points will be awarded for the assignment.)

**Topics and Reading Assignments**

Aug 30-31	UTEEM Orientation - Introduction to:	Ballenger, Plous, pp. 1-78
	Getting to know UTEEM faculty and fellow students	
	Culture in Lives of Children Ages Three to Five	
	Early Memories and Family Stories	
	The Cultural Lens of the Provider	
	Bias and Discrimination – role in the culture and implicit role in service delivery	
	Program Overview	
	Cohort Ground Rules	

Sept 1 (1-4 p.m.)	Intro to course and to each other Overview of syllabus Instructional Routines Instructional Strategies	
Sept 8	Defining curriculum Key principals of appropriate practice Role of reflection and dilemmas	Hull, chapters 1& 3 Bredekamp & Rosegrant (resource)
Sept 22	Planning for individuals and groups Lesson plans, thematic plans, adaptations Program models in ECE	Hull, chapters 4&5 de Melendez, 2, 3, 4, 7, Appendix K Abraham et al. (resources)
	<b>Dilemma 1 Due</b> <b>Guests: Program Models in ECE</b>	
Oct 6	Welcoming all children, including children with disabilities. Planning supportive environments	Hull, 2&7 De Melendez resource
	<b>Guest: Environmental Planning</b> <b>Dilemma 2 Due</b> <b>Environment Analysis Due</b>	
Oct 20	Implementing the pluricultural classroom: Developing pluricultural thematic plans. Systematic problem solving Incorporating play and the arts Heroes and Holidays – avoiding the tourist approach	Hull, 6 de Melendez(resource) Anti-bias Curriculum (resource)
	<b>Dilemma 3 Due; Thematic Plan Preliminary Ideas Due</b>	
Oct 31-Nov30	<b>Full-time internship</b>	
Nov 3	1-4 p.m. Sites in the morning	Begin Gartrell
	<b>Dilemma 4 Due</b> <b>Preliminary Integrated Pluricultural Thematic Plan Due</b>	
Dec 1	Creating a positive social climate for diverse learners. Family perspective	Finish Gartrell

Guiding young children: The problem solving approach.  
Systematic problem solving  
Child Abuse Identification and Prevention

**Dilemma 5 Due – Focus on Behavior and Guidance  
Thematic Implementation Reflections Due**

Dec 8            Becoming a reflective teacher in an inclusive            Hull, 3 & 8  
early childhood classroom.

**First day to turn in teacher research paper and video**

Dec 10-12      Semester Reflection and program evaluation

**Last day to turn in teacher research paper and video**

**Description of Assignments**

**Meaningful Dilemmas**

Select a situation from your internship experience that has perplexed you, caused you anxiety, or made you wonder. Describe the situation using the forms you have been given. Always retain one copy. One will be returned to you, and one will be retained by the program. This will be used in class for discussion and for practicing systematic problem solving strategies (4 points each, 20 points total). **Note: for Dilemma 5, please focus on a dilemma related to an issue centered around behavior or discipline. Topics for other dilemmas are at your discretion, based on what is meaningful for you.**

**Environment Analysis**

Draw a model of the room arrangement in your site. First, analyze the environment from your own socio-cultural perspective, through your own lens (as if you were a child). How does the environment reflect you? Then, look at it from the point of view of a child from a culture other than your own or that of the teacher. What messages are conveyed to that child? Does the child “see” him or herself in the classroom? Is there a way to connect to his or her cultural community? How welcoming is this environment for all children? What features support learning? What is this room like from the perspective of a child? What adaptations would you recommend? Discuss the room arrangement or setting from the perspective of the readings. Come to class October 6 with a detailed room arrangement and a brief reflection about what you think about this environment from the perspectives above. After the guest speaker, complete the paper with any additional reflections and recommendations. **Due no later than Oct. 13.** Typed and double-spaced (15 points).

## **Integrated Pluricultural Thematic Unit**

“The teaching of culture and cultural diversity at the early childhood level is an important step in developing a sense of pride and awareness about one’s culture. It is also the first step toward the individual’s realization about the existence of diversity.” (NCSS, 1994) According to Derman Sparks and de Melendez, the time of year in which you are doing your full time internship provides particular challenges to maintaining a pluricultural perspective. During your full time internship, you will be expected to take into account your classroom community and consider how to create a culturally responsive curriculum.

Develop a two-week thematic unit appropriate for the children in your site. Use your readings and resources to develop this multicultural unit following developmentally appropriate practices. Analyze your classroom and consider the ways in which your activities can support and reflect the cultural, linguistic, and ability diversity of your classroom.

**On Oct. 20**, be prepared to share what you have learned about children’s interests and styles from your assessment assignments and possible topics for this pluricultural thematic unit.

**On Nov. 3**, be prepared to submit a draft plan which includes the following: (a) a description of how the theme was selected to consider interests of the children, their developmental status, individual differences/class profile, environmental analysis, and planning web; b) proposed room arrangement and materials; c) description of children’s literature you will use with annotations and discussion of how literacy will be incorporated throughout the theme; d) objectives – group and individual; e) description of adaptations for diverse learners; f) suggested strategies for including families and community members; g) daily schedule; and h) overview of weeks’ activities. Use resources from class handouts and readings.

**On Dec. 1**, be prepared to submit the final plan for the pluricultural thematic unit, as you implemented it. Attach to the plan your reflection on unit implementation, including feedback from children, major adaptations, daily reflective log addressing what happened, what went well, what you would have changed. Specifically discuss your focus child and describe individual adaptations made for him/her as a learner. What worked, what did not? Provide links to what you have learned about the child and his needs from assessment and language classes. As an early childhood multicultural educator, consider how successful you were and what was difficult; link to the issues and recommended practices presented in your readings. Please provide two copies of the paper, one to be returned, one to be retained by the program, and a disc containing the paper. **(Bring plan, products, daily log notes, and your reflection to class Dec. 2).**

## **Teacher Research: Video Analysis and Reflection**

Videotape yourself as you interact with children over the course of the semester, for a total of at least 15 minutes. The time may be spread out over the semester, in different contexts, or all in one setting. Use your videotape to reflect on your role as an early educator. Use all the readings; provide specific references, to help you understand your interactions with children. Thinking of where you are in your development as a teacher at the time of the video, what goals would you set for yourself? Refer to the final chapter in Ballenger, as well as to Chapter 8 in Hull, and to your dilemmas over the whole semester to help you think about yourself as a teacher researcher. What patterns do you notice about yourself? How have you changed? What still feels like a challenge? What do you notice about your interactions with children, your pacing, your voice, your use of materials, your use of culturally appropriate practice? I need a copy of the video to view along with the paper. Please use VHS full-sized tape. If you have a mini-tape, please provide an adaptor. Please turn in two copies of the paper and a disc with the paper on it. I will return one copy and maintain one copy for my records. **May be turned in beginning December 8. Must be turned in no later than December 12.**

**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 (include background information we may need to understand):

What perplexed me about this was...