

George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
Early Childhood Program-UTEEM

***UNDERSTANDING DIVERSE YOUNG LEARNERS (BIRTH - AGE 3):
Universality and Diversity in Child and Family Development***

**EDUT 421/ 521 (3 Credits)
COURSE SYLLABUS
Spring 2004**

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Before and After Class

Course Purpose and Relationship to Program:

This course is offered as one of the strands in the Unified Transformative Early Education Model (UTEEM), a teacher training model providing an integrated approach to preparing teachers to work with culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children, their families and their community. Teachers are prepared to work with young children with diverse learning needs in a variety of inclusive community settings. This strand is offered in conjunction with three other courses linked to a full-time field placement with diverse young children. This course enables them to continue their study of development and to increase their skills as observers and interpreters of the behavior of very young children as it is seen in family and community contexts.

Course Description and Format:

This course provides students with knowledge of the development of infants and toddlers in family/cultural contexts. Students will explore the role of the family, community, and the early childhood educator in providing frameworks for understanding and interpreting behavior of children birth through age three. Students will examine factors that facilitate development as well as research and discuss the factors that place infants and toddlers at developmental risks and examine the means for preventing some of these risk factors. They will learn about various disabilities and about the ways in which risk factors and disabilities affect the functional capacities of very young children. The opportunity to explore the community and its positive resources upon the family will be an important area of exploration for the student. An appreciation of the critical role of families and culture in supporting the development of infants and children will be integrated throughout the course. Students will be given the opportunity to explore their early development and the effects it has provided upon their work with young

children.

This class will meet for seven days, approximately every other week over the course of the semester. This enables students to continuously link their internship experiences with the knowledge they are acquiring in the classroom. The course is structured as a seminar and active participation is expected of all students. Activities will include small group discussions and presentations, whole class sharing, and reflection through journaling and quick writes. Students are expected to utilize their course readings during class sessions to respond to questions and engage in productive learning and to integrate course readings and class information into their written assignments to demonstrate content knowledge. In addition, as a member of a group, students will plan and lead a seminar on a topic pertinent to the early care and education of very young diverse children and their families. It is expected that the group presentation will contribute to their understanding of the key theories, research, and practices related to the overall development of very young children and their families. Guests, films, and other experiential learning activities will be included in the seminar to facilitate student learning.

Overall Student Outcomes:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of typical patterns of growth and development from the prenatal period to age three.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of major theories and constructs that are used to describe and explain patterns of development among infants and toddlers.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of sources of risk factors that contribute to developmental variation in children from birth to age three.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the developmental process of parenting during the infant-toddler period of child development.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of cross-cultural understandings of child development.
6. Understand the role of culture in child-rearing practices and its role in describing and making meaning of the behavior of infants and toddlers.
7. Demonstrate knowledge of the implication of specific disabilities and risk factors in the infancy period, including resources available to families.

Required Texts:

American Psychological Association. Publication manual of the American Psychological Association.

Batshaw, M.L. (2001) *When your child has a disability*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H.

Brookes. ISBN: 1557664722

Gowen, J. W. & Nebrig, J. B. (2002). *Enhancing early emotional development*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes. ISBN: 1-55766531-1

Small, M. (1997). *Our babies ourselves: How biology and culture shape the way we parent*. New York: Anchor Books. ISBN: 0385483627

Trawick-Smith, J. (1997). *Early childhood development: A multicultural perspective*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. Continued from Fall semester.

Recommended Texts:

Bowley, J. (1969). *Attachment. Volume I*. New York: Basic Books. ISBN: 0465005438

Brazelton, B. T & B. G. Cramer. *Earliest Relationship: Parents, Infants, and the Drama of Early attachment*. Perseus Publishing. ISBN: 0201567644

Sterling Honig, (2002) A. *Secure Relationships: Nurturing Infant/Toddler Attachment in Early Care Settings*. Washington, DC: NAEYC. ISBN: 1928896030

Course Requirements:

As a student in this class, you are expected to:

1. Be prepared for all class sessions by reading all assigned materials. Attend and actively participate in all class sessions. You are responsible for notifying the instructors ahead of time if you are unable to attend. You are expected to bring the assigned textbook for the day and other assigned materials to class.
2. Prepare for class by completing all assigned readings prior to each session and engage in active dialogue and sharing of ideas.
3. Complete all written assignments on time and as assigned unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructors. Attend class on day assignment is due and be ready to share learning process with other students.
4. Maintain an interactive, reflective, dialogue journal to be read by full time UTEEM faculty and/or instructors.
5. Plan and implement a group presentation on an assigned topic. Work as a team member. Engage in dialogue to ensure that all voices are respected and understood. Be respectful of time commitments and learning styles.

Course Grading:

1.	Participation and preparation for class	10%
2.	Blackboard discussions	10%
3.	Group Observation	20%
4.	Cultural Influences and Development	
	(a) Autobiography	10%
	(b) Cultural Research Paper	20%
	(c) Reflections	5%
5.	Group Presentation and Information File Project	25%

Topics and Reading Assignments

Jan. 22-23	UTEEM Orientation: Introduction to Infants/Toddlers and Families; Beginning a journey of critically reflective practice surrounding the sensitive issues of self-identity, race, culture, and ethnicity related to Beverly Daniel Tatum's book <i>"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?"</i> ; Prejudice Reduction Workshop facilitated by the National Coalition Building Institute.
Jan. 29	Own Cultural Influences: Understanding self; learning/interaction style; "ghosts in the nursery" or own perception of children; and Overview of Course Syllabus
Feb. 10	<p style="text-align: center;">The Adult-Child Dyad:</p> <p>Selection of Group Project Topics: Temperament, Early Brain Development, Maternal Depression and Other Risk Factors, Premature and Medically Fragile Infants and Toddlers, and Caring Community; and Finalize Groups for Cultural Reflections</p> <p>Video: <i>The First Years Last Forever</i> Reading: Trawick-Smith, Ch. 7 DUE: Journal Entry, Birth Story</p>
Feb. 24	<p>Socio-emotional Development: Attachment, Infant Mental Health and Family Systems, Earliest Relationship and emotional development, Temperament</p> <p>Group Presentation: Temperament Guest Speaker: <i>Judy Martens, Attachment/Infant Mental Health Specialist</i> Video: <i>Getting in Tune: Creating Nurturing Relationships with Infants and toddlers</i> Reading: Gowen & Nebrig DUE: Autobiography, including Birth Story</p>

- March 9 *SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS*
Please note: You are entitled to only one week of spring break during the semester. If your site takes a formal spring break at another time, you are to go to your site this week.
- March 16 Role of Culture: Childrearing practices, biology and culture, parenting/caregiving
 Typical Development: Cognition
Group Presentation: Early Brain Development
Video: Contrasting Perspectives
Reading: Small, Our babies, ourselves
DUE: Bring and Share Research Articles from Library Search
- Mar 30 Atypical Development: Getting the diagnosis; Growing up with a disability; Nutrition and Feeding, Motor development; Positioning, Disability and culture.
Guest Speaker:
Group Presentation: Premature and Medically Fragile Infants and Toddlers
Reading: Trawick-Smith, Ch 6, 18
 Batshaw, Ch 3, 6-8
 Young Exceptional Children, Summer 2001, p. 2-9
DUE: Group Observation of Infant-Toddler
- April 5-23 ***NO CLASS-FULL TIME INTERNSHIP***
- April 27 Working with Culturally Diverse Families;
 Abuse and Neglect and Young Children
 Guest Speaker: Fairfax County, Abuse and Neglect Specialist
Group Presentation: Maternal Depression and Other Risk Factors and Caring Community
DUE: Cultural Research Paper
- May 5-6 Family Stories

DUE: Autobiographical/Cultural Reflection
- May 7 Program Evaluation/Reflections

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. Blackboard Discussions

10 points

The purpose of these assignments is to promote dialogue and sharing among students. Students will be required to log-on to the blackboard discussion to respond to readings, provide ideas, and participate in on-going discussions. General guidelines for the discussion are provided below, more details for the format will be provided in class. Students will be graded for their own participation, in terms of information and content, as well as their responsiveness to peers in the small group discussions.

- Developmental Red Flags and Activities (whole class posting)

As part of our discussion on developmental domains, you will need to identify developmental red flags, and activities which would help to facilitate development for **one** area of development discussed (cognitive development, social/emotional development, or motor development). You will be expected to do this prior to the class session the topic will be discussed. (3 points)

- Cultural and Developmental Influences on Self Regulation/Behavior (small group discussion)

Each student will be assigned to a small group to participate in an on-going discussion via Blackboard. Students will be expected to participate in dialogue regarding children's behavior. Students will share observed behaviors, and each group will discuss specific developmental and cultural issues that may be impacting children's behavior. Students will also consider various intervention strategies, specifically linked to developmental issues and understanding. You will be graded based on your own posting, as well as your participation and responses. You must provide some links to your readings during your discussion. (7 points)

DUE: Ongoing

2. Group Observation

20 Points

As part of a small group, you will observe an infant or toddler at a site of your choosing. You are expected to observe a child and describe their overall development. You must address their cognitive, motor, social/emotional development, including their play with toys and families/caregivers. You are expected to write an individual paper, but feel free to discuss your observations with each other when you debrief on your observation. Include brief observation notes and reflections on how your group experience affected your understanding of development. Also include activity ideas/recommendations for all observed areas of development. The specific format for the observation and paper will be discussed in class. Use Trawick, Gowen & Nebrig, Batshaw, and other readings to help you understand your observations.

DUE: March 30, 2004

3. Cultural Influences and Development

(a) Autobiography

10 points

This paper will help you consider your own family and cultural influences on childrearing practices and beliefs. Think back to your earliest memories, and what you have been told about your birth and how you were as a child (infant/toddler). Also, consider your impressions of how babies and children are treated in your family today. Write a description of how various childrearing and developmental issues are practiced based on cultural and family beliefs, routines and rituals. Use Gowen & Nebrig as a resource to help you explore your family story.

Due: February 24, 2004

(b) Cultural Research Paper

20 points

The purpose of this paper is to develop a research-based understanding of development and child rearing practices and the impact of culture.

Identify a culture other than your own that you want to examine more in-depth. Ideally, this is the culture of your focus child and family, as well as the culture you are studying for the other strands. Write a research paper that is both reflective of the culture you have chosen and integrates all reviewed topics within child development. The paper should synthesize the cultural influences and beliefs as it relates to child rearing practices and development. In particular, you will consider issues related to:

- feeding, sleeping, and toileting behaviors
- temperament and attachment
- developmental domains and issues
- views of disability
- family influences and factors

The cultural research paper should incorporate and synthesize the child development research studies related to this cultural group and also address the cultural community's unique childrearing practices. In addition, describe how you gained first hand knowledge from your family and how their insight compared/contrasted to the research literature. Also address how you would advocate for families from this cultural group in an early care and education setting.

Use your course readings and information, as well as information from your own research. Incorporate at least FIVE RESEARCH BASED JOURNAL ARTICLES as part of your comparisons, examples and/or references. Follow APA guidelines.

Due: April 27, 2004

(c) Autobiographical/Cultural Reflection

5 points

After the completion of all other assignments, reflect and consider how an understanding of your own cultural background influences your understanding of other cultures. Think about all of the course discussions, readings, and assignments, as well as your journal entries, as you reflect upon the influence of culture on development and childrearing practices. Examine your own thoughts about culture and development and how these may have changed or evolved over the semester. Also, discuss how your own cultural influences and beliefs affect your teaching practices and interactions with children and families. Be specific in describing examples of how your understanding of your own culture, as well as other cultural beliefs and practices has, and will continue to, influence you as a teacher. What concerns might you still have? What else would you like to know and learn? What will you do to continue growing and reflecting in this area to help you as a teacher?

DUE: May 5, 2004

4. Group Presentation and Information File Project:

25 points

Working in small groups, research your assigned topic and plan and implement a 1 hour presentation. Obtain information about this topic and about available resources that you might use as an early interventionist/educator. Schedule a meeting with the instructors **before** beginning your research to discuss the focus of your topic and presentation.

You should develop a presentation that will explain the nature of the disability, risk factors, or issue, how it affects children's development, and ideas/resources for professionals working with children with this special need/issue.

The purpose of your class presentation will be to inform your classmates about the topic. Consider what they need to know, as professionals, about this issue. Prepare handout(s) that will be of use to them in their future work with young children.

Your group presentation should include: (1) an overview/description and research related to the topic; (2) the impact on a child's and family's development; (3) cultural views and influences related to the topic; and (4) information for professionals to work with the child. You should provide a handout to your classmates, which includes (at a minimum): (1) a description of the disability/special need or issue; (2) practical information for working with children; (3) information related to cultural issues and variations; and (4) a listing of resources/references. Be creative in presenting this information to the class.

You must bring any sample brochures or other resource materials you received/collected on your topic, as well as information related to your experiences in contacting/talking with agencies while preparing your information file. **Be sure to contact agencies and organizations early in the semester to allow time for items to be mailed.**

Due: Ongoing (20 points)

In addition, as an individual, you will include your own reflection of the project, focusing on your thoughts on researching and accessing materials, and reflections of the impact this topic had on you. You will also provide reflection on the group process, and your participation as a group member. Submit this reflection as an attachment to an email to Professor.

Due: Electronic file, One week after presentation, Ongoing (5 points)