

*George Mason University  
College of Education and Human Development  
Early Childhood Education Program*

**EDSE 659 Curriculum and Methods: Early Childhood Special Education (3:3:0)  
EDUT 514 Curriculum and Instruction for Diverse Young Learners (3:3:0)**

*Fall 2010 - Mondays, 7:20 – 10:00 pm - Robinson B 102*

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### **Course Description**

Explores principles of learning, curriculum development, and relationship between assessment and instruction. Examines role of play and active exploration in learning. Addresses guiding children's behavior and the role of families and culture in children's learning. *Field Experience Required.*

### **Nature of Course Delivery**

The class will have lecture, discussion, group work formats and will require active participation of all students.

### **Learner outcomes**

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Plan meaningful curriculum activities that are responsive to the interests, preferences, motivation, interaction styles, developmental status, learning history, and cultural variables of the child and family.
2. Demonstrate how meaningful curriculum activities link to VA Foundations of Learning Standards for Early Childhood Education.
3. Develop individual and group activity plans and implement strategies to facilitate functional cognitive, social, communication, motor, and adaptive development.
4. Plan and adapt curriculum activities that are respectful of family identified outcomes, preferences, interaction styles, and cultural norms.
5. Develop and reflect on various behavior management strategies for culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families.
6. Apply current research on effective developmentally appropriate practices to teaching young children from diverse backgrounds and varying abilities.
7. Analyze and design appropriate environments and materials to include addressing developmentally appropriate practices, anti-bias curriculum, and inclusion settings.
8. Utilize problem-solving strategies to address dilemmas encountered in diverse educational and community settings.

9. Analyze and describe the varied theoretical frameworks guiding early childhood curriculum approaches and practices.
10. Describe how ongoing data collection and management of classroom plans can be used to monitor child progress in the context of daily activities.
11. Analyze one's own teaching practices and set appropriate goals for teaching change.
12. Delineate indicators of potential child abuse and recommended steps for appropriate intervention process.

### **Professional standards**

This course complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The course content has been designed to address the following standards and competencies.

#### ***Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)***

- Standard 7 Instructional Planning

#### ***National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)***

- Standard 4 Teaching and Learning (Planning)

#### ***Virginia Professional Endorsement Competencies***

- Curriculum and instructional procedures

#### ***Virginia Early Childhood Special Education Endorsement Competencies***

- Understanding of the methods for providing **instructional programs for early intervention**
- Understanding of **behavior management** and the application of principles of learning and child development to individual and group management using a variety of techniques that is appropriate to the age of that child

#### ***Virginia Early Childhood Education Endorsement Competencies***

- Methods
- Understanding of **behavior management** and the application of principles of learning and child development to individual and group management using a variety of techniques that is appropriate to the age of that child

### **Required Texts**

- Gartrell, D. (2004). *The power of guidance: Teaching social-emotional skills in early childhood classrooms*. Washington, D.C.: NAEYC.
- Hull, K., Goldhaber, J., & Capone, A. (2002). *Opening doors: An introduction to inclusive early childhood education*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Hyson, M. (2008). *Enthusiastic and Engaged Learners: Approaches to Learning in the Early childhood Classroom*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.
- Schickendanz, J. A. (2008). *Increasing the power of instruction: Integration of language, literacy and math across the preschool day*. Washington, D.C.: NAEYC.

### **Recommended Texts**

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

Sandall, S. & Schwartz, I. (2008). *Building Blocks for Teaching Preschoolers with Special Needs*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

## **Course Requirements**

### **General Requirements**

1. The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities, it is imperative that students keep up with the readings and participate in class.
2. Class attendance is important. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must call the instructor and leave a message.
3. The university requires that all pagers and cell phones be turned off before class begins. Laptops and other electronic devices are to be used for educational and learning purposes only and should not be used during class time to check email, surf the web, or communicate with people outside of the class unless part of the class activity.
4. It is expected that assignments will be turned in on time at the beginning of the class in which they are due. Points may be deducted for late assignments. It is recognized that graduate students occasionally have serious problems that prevent work completion. If such a dilemma arises, students should speak to the instructor in a timely fashion.

### **Attendance**

Attendance in class is important to students' learning; therefore, students are expected to make every effort to attend class sessions. Absences, tardiness, and leaving early may negatively affect course grades. The following policy is from the university course catalog:

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

### **Written Assignments**

All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation as graduate-level writing. The American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition (APA) style will be followed for all written work. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. (Use spell check!) If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work. When in doubt, they should check the APA manual. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the Mason library web guide at <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/>.

Students will

1. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
2. Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.

3. Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. (Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.)
4. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

### Grading Criteria

|              |              |              |             |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| A = 95 – 100 | A- = 90 – 94 | B+ = 87 – 89 | B = 83 – 86 |
| B- = 80 – 82 | C = 70 – 79  | F = < 70     |             |

A+ is possible if work is of exceptional high quality and includes work above and beyond that required for the course.

### Grading Policy

All CEHD undergraduate and graduate students are held to the university grading policies as described in the Academic Policies section of the current catalog, which can be accessed at <http://catalog.gmu.edu/>. Those students enrolled in a CEHD Licensure Graduate Certificate program, however, must earn a B- or better in all licensure coursework. A degree-seeking graduate student will be dismissed after accumulating grades of F in two courses or 9 credits of unsatisfactory grades (C or F) in graduate courses. A 3.0 grade point average is required for completion of the graduate degree.

### Submission of Performance-Based Assessment

This course has a Program Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) that **MUST** be uploaded and submitted to Task Stream for evaluation when the assignment is due. **Only PBAs posted to TaskStream will be graded.** This means that **NO** final grades will be posted until all materials are on Task Stream.

### CEHD Syllabus Statements of Expectations

All students must abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> for the full honor code.
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/1301gen.html>. Click on responsible Use of Computing Policy at the bottom of the screen.
- 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 <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

## **Assignments**

### **Attendance and Participation (15 points)**

Because active participation and engagement are imperative for optimal learning, preparation for and participation in in-class activities will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Students attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period.
- Students complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class as is evidenced by their ability to discuss and write about the concepts presented and examined in the texts as well as participate fully in related activities.
- Students are actively involved in in-class learning experiences as is evidenced by (1) participating in all activities, (2) engaging in small and large group discussions, (3) completing written work related to the activities, and (4) supporting the participation and learning of classmates.
- Students show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-class discussions, activities, and written reflections.

### **Curriculum Content Area: Exploration and Resources (20 points-small group project)**

Students will select and research curriculum content areas and resources to share with classmates, in small groups. Each group will prepare an interactive/play/center-based presentation to help communicate the importance of this curriculum content area, the key outcomes for children from culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse backgrounds and their families connected to this area, and examples of activities that would support learning in this area. It is important to consider the student ability levels and developmental and cultural appropriateness for preschool-aged children, especially children with special needs. The in-class presentation should include an interactive activity to enable classmates to explore the curriculum content area.

The handout for this project should include the following:

- a brief statement of the significance of this area and the associated learning outcomes for children from culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse backgrounds;
- an annotated list of at least five key resources that contribute to understanding this area; and
- an annotated list of activity resources that could be used when implementing developmentally and culturally appropriate curriculum or provided to families to support this area of learning.

Annotations must be written in student's words, providing a brief description of the source, the strengths of the resource as well as concerns about the resource.

The topics will include the following: 1) science, 2) music and dance, 3) story telling/language and literacy, 4) social studies, 5) math, or 6) physical/large motor activity/movement.

### **Environmental Analysis and Optimal Design Plan (20 points)**

***This assignment will be completed as part of the field experience requirement.***

This assignment is completed in two segments (due on different dates).

Part I – Classroom Map / Representation (Due: October 12)

- After completing assigned readings from Hull and Gartrell, students will look closely at the environment in their own classroom. They will draw a representation/map of the classroom environment to share with the class as part of an in-class activity.
- Students will describe their environment from the point of view of the children in the classroom: What messages are conveyed to children? What works well for children? What is difficult for children?
- Students will prepare a brief reflection (less than a page) to be used during the in-class discussion that addresses the social and affective elements of the classroom environment.
- Students will discuss their current environment in small groups. Discussions should focus on the affective environment, the physical environment, and the temporal environment. Discussion points and ideas should be included in the student's final paper and optimal design.

### Part 2 – Written Analysis (Due: November 1)

Students will write a 4-6 page paper that

- provides an overall analysis of their current classroom environment including the affective environment, the physical environment, and the temporal environment;
- addresses issues of access and cultural responsiveness, as discussed in readings;
- discusses aspects that indicate the classroom is an encouraging environment;
- summarizes discussions and potential changes for environment from the in-class activity; and
- includes a plan for adaptations to the environment based on their analysis, the readings and the in-class discussion.

Students will complete the analysis with a sketch of their plan for an optimal room arrangement and discussion of how they think this arrangement addresses the issues raised in class, the readings, and their analysis of the current environment. Students will briefly describe how they will move toward creating and maintaining this optimal environment.

### **Integrated Curriculum Unit (30 points)**

***This is the NCATE 3 Instructional Planning Performance-Based Assessment that shows evidence of meeting CEC Standard 7 Instructional Planning and NCATE Standard 4 Teaching and Learning (Planning).***

Students will plan an integrated curriculum unit that can be implemented in their field experience or internship classroom. They will design a two-week curriculum unit appropriate for culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse children. The field experience time should be spent getting to know the interests of the children and families. From these interactions, students will plan a child-centered, culturally responsive, inclusive unit. The following components will serve as a base for the curriculum design:

- Developmentally appropriate practice, including all developmental domains;
- Reflections of the cultural, linguistic, and ability diversity in the classroom;
- Reflections of children's interests and preferences, integrating observations of culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children ; and
- Strategies for including families and community members

Students will include the following elements:

- a. Instructional web
- b. A minimum of 3-4 detailed/individualized lesson plans
- c. Description of individual learning centers and the materials to be incorporated in each in order to support the topic
- d. Evidence of assessment of children's learning during the unit (i.e., anecdotal notes, running records)
- e. Different types of activities/learning (child-initiated, teacher-directed, exploration and discovery, small group, large group etc.)
- f. All curriculum areas (to be discussed in class)
- g. Plans to address behaviors in the class
- h. How a sense of community will be created in order to address various behavior management issues
- i. How standards will be addressed
- j. Daily lessons plans for the centers created (formats will be discussed in class and may be adapted)
- k. Children's literature to support the topic, with annotations and plans for use
- l. Discussion of how families/community members were or will be involved
- m. Adaptations or accommodations, as appropriate, for selected individual learners
- n. Plan for working collaboratively and effectively with a teaching assistant, partner, related service personnel, and/or volunteer to plan and implement this unit

### **Dilemmas (5 points each for 15 points total)**

In keeping with the philosophical emphasis on reflective practice, this course will emphasize the difference between *problems* (with clear, if difficult, solutions) and dilemmas (which put values in conflict and have no single best response or answer). Some think of dilemmas as situations demanding a choice between undesirable outcomes. Others might say they arise when competing needs or values of those involved are in play. In an absolute sense, these differing views cannot be regarded as right or wrong. These ideas simply represent different, but legitimate, perspectives on an issue.

For each dilemma that students write for this assignment, they will select a situation from their classroom that has perplexed them, caused anxiety for them, or made them wonder. Dilemmas should describe a single situation that the students observed or in which they participated. Dilemmas should not be a listing of things that have gone wrong over time or describe a pattern of challenges. Students will describe the situation using the form provided. This will be used in class for discussion, for analyzing philosophical perspectives, reflecting on current practice and possible adaptations, practicing problem solving strategies, and for reflection toward making principled choices. (Dates due: October 4, November 8, November 22)

**Note:** To determine whether the campus is closed due to inclement weather, call 703-993-1000 or go to [www.gmu.edu](http://www.gmu.edu).

### Course Schedule

| Date                  | Topics   | Readings & Assignments Due   |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Aug 30                | Syllabus review and introduction to curriculum   | Developmentally Appropriate Practice Position Statement (online)   |
| Sept 6                | HOLIDAY  |  |
| Sept 13               | Investigating curriculum designs and integration across content  | Hyson – Chapter 6<br>Schickedanz - Intro   |
| Sept 20               | Becoming a reflective practitioner<br>Beyond discipline  | Hull, et.al. – Ch 3<br>Gartrell – Chs. 1-3   |
| Sept 27               | The centrality of culture in early childhood classrooms, including early childhood special education; classroom profile; planning for cultural diversity | Hull, et.al. – Ch 1<br><b>Content Area #1 presentation</b>   |
| Oct 4                 | Developmentally Appropriate Practice<br>Teacher-Child Interactions   | Hyson – Ch 5<br>Gartrell – Ch. 11 and appendix<br><b>Dilemma #1 due</b><br><b>Content Area #2 presentation</b>                   |
| Oct 12<br><b>TUES</b> | Classroom environment and learning centers<br>Plan/design/refine   | Hull, et.al. – Ch 7, Hyson – Ch. 7<br>Gartrell – Chs. 4-7<br><b>Bring sketch of room arrangement and reflection</b>              |
| Oct 18                | Curriculum planning, integrated curriculum, developmentally appropriate practice   | Schickedanz – Chs. 1-4<br>Hull, et.al. – Ch 5<br><b>Content Area #3 presentation</b>   |
| Oct 25                | Guidance toward an encouraging classroom   | Gartrell – Chs. 5-10<br><b>Content Area #4 presentation</b>  |
| Nov 1                 | Planning formats<br>Reflecting child-interest and standards<br>The role of observation, data collection, and assessment                                  | Hull, et.al. – Chs. 2 & 4<br>Hyson – Ch. 8<br><b>Environment analysis final paper due</b><br><b>Content Area #5 presentation</b> |
| Nov 8                 | Integrated planning and curriculum development<br>Individualization for all children   | Hull, et.al. - Chs. 4 & 8<br>Schickedanz – Chs. 5-7, appendices<br><b>Dilemma #2 due</b><br><b>Content Area #6 presentation</b>  |
| Nov 15                | Play and Learning  | Hull, et.al. – Ch 6<br>Hyson – Chs. 1-4  |
| Nov 22                | Inclusive practices and modifications  | Hull, et.al. – Chs. 1- 2<br><b>Dilemma # 3 due</b>   |
| Nov 29                | Anti-bias education approach/cultural identities/coalition building/advocacy/social justice  | Bring in a children's story book that integrates diversity   |
| Dec 6                 | Role of families and communities in informing curriculum   | Gartrell – Ch. 4<br>Hyson: Ch. 9   |
| Dec 13                | Integrated curriculum presentations  | <b>Integrated Curriculum Units and Presentation due</b>  |

*\*Course schedule subject to change based on class needs at the discretion of the professor.*