

EDEC 4010 Laboratory

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Hours: Variable

This 2-credit laboratory is a companion to the EDEC 4010 course and is intended to help beginning teachers develop a toolkit for getting to know the communities in which they will teach. The lab experiences are designed to develop habits of mind that will allow beginning teachers to see children, families and communities with empathy and curiosity, rather than assumption and judgment. In addition, students will practice finding resources (rather than problems and deficits) in children's lives, which can then be drawn on in the classroom.

As part of the laboratory, students will practice general strategies that could be applied in nearly any community to learn about the lives of the people there. In addition, as a class, we will pool information to learn about local communities, which will support students' work in placement schools during future field experiences. Finally, the lab work will inform one of the major projects for the EDEC 4010 course.

Unlike Early Childhood laboratories for future courses, this course does not require you to be in a particular place at a particular time each week. Instead, you will devote a few hours each week to the assignments. The assignments are broken into three major aspects of this course:

- Mini-Ethnographies
- Community Study
- CLASE Tutoring

The first includes several mini-ethnographies, which are designed to help you practice your observational skills and your empathetic imagination as you recognize the literacies and skills that community members use each day. The second is a community study, where you will work with a small group to learn about a community surrounding a school and imagine place-based curriculum that integrates family/community/school and connects with state standards. The third assignment for this course includes weekly tutoring sessions through the Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education. These assignments are described in more detail below. The grade for the 4010 Laboratory is Pass-Fail. To pass, all assignments must be completed.

Mini-Ethnographies

The goal for each of these observations is for you to see what you can learn both about others and yourself. Each assignment will raise particular issues and questions; however,

here are some broad questions you might consider as you embark on each of these adventures:

- Where do you see connections between what you observe and your own life? Where do you see disconnections?
- Who seems to be comfortable in this place or situation? What is taken as normal? What is taken as not normal or out of place?
- What resources/skills/literacies do you notice in these situations that might be drawn on in the classroom?
- What challenges do you observe?
- How does something you observe reframe a belief you had previously about children, families or schools?
- What new understandings or epiphanies have you had related to children, families, and communities?

For each laboratory assignment, you will email the lab instructor with a 500-word memo reflecting on your observations and experiences. Do not try to answer all of the above questions. Focus on what is most meaningful to you. **During weeks 2-7, you will do one observation each week. The 500-word ethnographic memo on the observation is due by midnight the night before the following week's class and should be emailed to the 4010L instructor listed above.** Late memos will receive partial credit. Each memo (as well as your participation in a one-time discussion group) will be graded: full credit/partial credit/no credit.

Week 2: Virtual Community Reflection

As a warm-up, you will begin by listening to an audio-story. The audio file can be downloaded (or just listened to) from the online portal for this course. As you listen *to the entire audio file*, think about the above questions. Practice curiosity and see what resources both these young women have that teachers could draw on. You might also think about the ways these young women's lives challenge any previously held assumptions. As you listen to the second part of the audio-story, consider issues of race, gender, ethnicity, power, and advertising and what these mean in your everyday world. Additionally, what does it mean for the children who you will teach in the future? How can you help them become critical consumers of such media?

Week 3: City Bus

Even if you are a regular bus rider, this week you should ride a city bus as an ethnographer. In particular, I'd like you to check out routes 5 or 7. (See www.athenstransit.com for more detailed information.) As you ride, notice who is riding the bus. Where are they going? What kinds of literacies do people have to use to ride the Athens Transit System (print literacies, such as "reading," visual literacies, social literacies, directionality/spatial literacies)? Who is not riding the bus? What challenges do you see? What benefits are there? If this were your primary mode of transportation, how would your daily life be enriched? Challenged? What language practices are used in riding Athens Transit? How might children's experiences on this bus be drawn on in school?

Week 4: Grocery Store

The purpose of this observation is to visit a store where you do not typically shop. How do children and adults interact in this setting? How do adults interact with one another? What kinds of literacies, or literacy practices, do people regularly use in this grocery store? Notice the products available for purchase, prices of various products, and how shoppers seem to decide on purchases. As you walk around, notice how you feel about being in this particular place. What about the building or the other people make you feel welcome or unwelcome? In what ways might this experience help you think about parents coming into a school? How could experiences in a grocery store such as this inform curricula and projects in your teaching?

Some possible stores (please be resourceful in finding others as well!):

Carniceria Potosina, 186 W. May St., Winder

El Arcoiris Mexican Store #2, 232 N. Broad St., Winder

Guerrero Supermarket, 3077 Danielsville Road, Athens

Los Amigos, 109 Rowe Rd, Athens

Fooks Foods, Baxter and Rocksprings streets, Athens

Week 5: Library

Visit the children's section of the Athens Library after school hours. Take careful notes on the children and families you see there. Where are children physically located and how do they move about the space of the library? What kinds of literacies do people use here? What library resources are they using? How are the children talking to each other? How are different adults talking to children? If you feel comfortable, strike up a conversation with a parent. What can you learn about a community by looking at printed and digital material available in the library? Based on your field work so far, what do you perceive as "missing" from the library that would better serve the community?

Week 6: Social Service Agencies in the Athens Area

The purpose of this week is for you to locate services available to local families who need help with food, healthcare, job services, cash assistance, shelter, etc. Once you have developed a list of available services and their contact information, select one place to contact as an ethnographer. Once you have made contact, very politely ask if it is possible to visit the agency and/or interview someone (even by phone) who works there. Remember – social service agencies are not "zoos" where it is appropriate to treat people who work or receive services there as objects to be studied. Rather, these are real people living real lives who do not want to feel objectified in any way. Be as sensitive as you will be when you are a teacher seeking information and trying to learn about your students, families, and the community where you work. Who uses this service? How do they know it's available? How do people interact in this place? Who seems comfortable? Who seems uncomfortable? What can you learn about the broader community of Athens by being here? What are the interactions between service providers and service recipients? Notice how you feel in this particular place. What kinds of literacies do people use? How could you make sure your students' families know about community resources such as these? How could these resources be drawn on for curricula and projects in your classroom?

Week 7: Historical Society, museums, Botanical Gardens, Sandy Creek Park, political headquarters, Classic Center, Morton Theatre, or other local institutions meant for providing information, education, and entertainment

The purpose of this week is for you to locate institutions available to local families who are seeking information about local history, local ecology, and local venues for family entertainment/recreation. Once you have developed a list of institutions and contact information, select one place to visit as an ethnographer. Who uses this institution? How do they know it's available? How do people interact in this place? How is it rooted in what it means to be "Athens, Georgia"? Who seems comfortable? Uncomfortable? What kinds of literacies do people use in this place? What kinds of resources could be drawn on for curricula and projects in your classroom?

Week 8:

During week 8 your laboratory instructor will schedule several small-group discussion times for you to have a conversation about what you have observed and learned during the mini-ethnographies. You must attend one of these conversations. *You will also select a school where you will conduct your community study.*

Week 9:

Begin your community study. Contact your Laboratory Instructor to assist you in any part of the project.

Community Study

During the second half of the course, you will work with a small group to study a school and the community surrounding it. Groups should have 4-5 people and you may choose your groups yourselves. We will spend some time in the 4010 course doing this.

The goal of this activity is to practice learning about a school community so you can develop tools you will use later, but also to learn about local school communities so you can use what you learn in your future field placements. **Your final laboratory product for this portion of the course will be a 10-minute multimedia presentation where you introduce the rest of the class to the community you studied. This presentation should include statistical information, pictures, and quotes from people you spoke to. It may also include audio or video clips, but this is not required.**

For the school & community you study, you should plan to speak to 2-3 people at the school *who are not teachers*. ****Your Laboratory Instructor will let you know during which week(s) you will be allowed to approach the school.** Your visit, even though informal, will need to be scheduled with the school ahead of time. Ideally, the people you talk to might also be parents or might live in the community. You might think about talking to a paraprofessional, a cafeteria worker, a bus driver, or a custodian. Introducing yourself to the school secretary might be a good way to find out who might be willing to talk to you. (Assign 1 or 2 people in your group to do this; don't do a mob interview ☺).

You do not have to do all of the following things, but do as many as seems reasonable for your group. **Each person in your group should speak live and in person to at least two human beings for this project.** In general, the more people you speak to, the better. The goal is to get a rich picture of the community around the school. To do this, you might:

- Take pictures of the school and surrounding neighborhood.
- Interview a parent at the school.
- Ask to observe an after-school program at the school (or visit a nearby one where children are bused: Girls/Boys Clubs, YMCA, OASIS, etc.)
- Walk a neighborhood where children who attend the school live.
- Talk with owners and workers of businesses in the neighborhood of the school.
- Visit local industries/factories/workplaces.
- Follow one of the school busses to see where it goes as it drops off kids.
- Spend some time in a neighborhood park.
- Research the area on the Internet.
- Locate nearby social service agencies available to families.
- Locate nearby institutions for information/education/recreation available to families.
- Talk to people at community organizations about the neighborhood.
- Ride a public bus route in the area.
- Speak to a UGA student who had a field placement at the school.
- Visit an area store and talk to someone who works there.
- Decide what place, social/ecological issue, or concept from your study can be used for your mini-inquiry unit?

You will present your community study as a group on the last day of class. You will also create a multi-disciplinary unit that explicitly draws on what you have learned about the community. This part of the assignment will be graded as part of the 4010 course.

CLASE Tutoring

You will be tutoring a child through the CLASE (Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education) tutoring program at a local Athens-Clarke County school. Tutoring sessions are once a week for 2 hours and last approximately 10 weeks. This is a unique opportunity for you to build a relationship with one or two children, to practice learning about and integrating experiences from a child's life into academic learning, and to experience one approach to meeting the needs of an individual student in an after-school environment created by a school.

The child or children you are tutoring will be very excited about having a "UGA" student working with them and they will look forward to your tutoring session each week. **PLEASE DO NOT DISAPPOINT THEM.** While missing tutoring sessions will negatively impact your grade in EDEC 4010/L, it is far more significant that missing

tutoring sessions will disrupt the trust-building and relationship-building necessary to have any positive influence on a child.

CLASE representatives will visit EDEC 4010 for an orientation during the first 2-3 weeks of the semester.