

EDEC 4020
Decision Making for Planning, Teaching, and Organizing Early Childhood Classrooms:
The Early Years

Class Schedule: Fall 2009

430 Aderhold Hall

Wednesday

1:00-3:45 PM

University Facilitator: Joeun Oh (ohjune@gmail.com)**Instructor: Dr. Kyunghwa Lee**

Office: 422C Aderhold Hall

Phone: 706-542-4278

E-mail: kyunghwa@uga.edu

Office hours: by appointment

“Most teachers are eager to understand children better, to teach from a solid base of knowing their students. This requires a vision of teaching as intellectual and ethical work, an enterprise that requires a thinking and caring person at the center....Every child is a multidimensional human being, a person with a heart, a mind, and a soul, with hopes, dreams, aspirations, and capacities that must be embraced if productive growth and learning is to take place. This is the intellectual and ethical heart of our work with children, a standard to rally around and to extend.”

(William Ayers, *To Teach*, 2001)

Course Description:

Welcome to EDEC 4020! This course explores how young children in grades P-2 make sense of the world and what instructional strategies help these children’s learning. The course particularly focuses on two central questions: Why do so many children who start schooling with eagerness begin to lose their confidence and interest in learning when they reach upper elementary grade levels? What can we learn from children’s early years to help them continue to develop as active learners throughout and even beyond their schooling?

Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Program Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for teacher preparation programs in the College of Education states that the college “aspires to prepare exemplary, reflective professionals to serve a diverse global community” (see <http://coe.uga.edu/framework/>). The early childhood program shares that aspiration and seeks to prepare exemplary and reflective teachers of young children by committing itself to the standards for early childhood education of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. The early childhood standards addressed in EDEC 4020 and the EDEC 4020L field experience include the following:

Standard I: Child Development and Learning – Sections i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii

Standard II: Curriculum Development and Implementation – Sections i, ii, iii, viii, xi, xii, xiv, xv, xvi, xviii, xix

Standard III: Family and Community Relationships – Sections i, v

Standard IV: Assessment and Evaluation – Sections i, ii, iii, v

Standard V: Professionalism – Sections i, ii, iv, v, vi, vii

Standard VI: Field Experiences – Sections i, ii, iii

Academic Honesty:

This course abides by the UGA's academic honesty policy, and all students are required to conform to the policy stating, "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others" (See http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/student_honor_code.html).

Required Texts:

Required readings will be either posted on WebCT or purchased at Bel-Jean.

Expectations:

I am looking forward to a very productive course in which we will all learn a great deal about principles and issues related to early schooling. I expect you to be an active participant in class activities by doing the followings:

- Always bring all related materials (textbooks, notes, etc.) to each class session.
- Demonstrate professionalism and respect when sharing your own perspectives and discussing other people's opinions and experiences.
- Use pseudonyms when discussing individual children, families, or teachers inside or outside of class.
- Put as much into this course as you expect to get out of it.

Note. This course contains both university and field components. Students must pass both EDEC 4020 and EDEC 4020L in order to pass the course and progress to student teaching.

Course Requirements:***Attendance, Preparedness, & Participation (15%)***

Your attendance is required for each class meeting. Class begins promptly at 1:00 PM. If you do not attend class, you are unable to participate in the important discussions and activities that will be undertaken during class time. Attendance is also a reflection of your professionalism and commitment. It is your responsibility to communicate with instructors, the mentor teacher, and the university facilitator regarding any absence. You should provide a documented account (e.g., a note from a physician's office or from the university health center) of any illness for an excusable absence. One unexcused absence will deduct 2 points from your total attendance and participation score; two or more absences will result in a letter grade deduction. Absences in the field must be made up. In addition, promptness is expected both in class and in the field.

Equally important is your advanced preparation for each class. Please read assigned readings *before* class. Your careful preparation and your enthusiastic and respectful participation will contribute to your and your peers' learning. Also, please contribute to creating an earnest learning environment by turning off cellular phones and by putting away any unrelated materials (e.g., newspapers, other course materials). Lap tops can be used only for taking class notes, not for checking e-mails, navigating websites unrelated to class activities, or doing other work during class time. Violating these expectations will affect your grade.

Assignments (85%)

This course has class assignments and field assignments. All assignments except for the in-class response to readings should be typed (double-spaced, 1 inch margin, Times New Roman, font size 12). *No cover page* is necessary. Type your name in the upper left-hand corner and the assignment title in the upper right-hand corner of the first page. Late submissions will not be accepted unless discussed with the instructor in advance.

Class Assignments

1. In-class Response to Readings (20%)

Each week you will be asked to respond to 1-2 questions related to assigned readings in class. These responses will be used for cumulative assessments of your preparedness for each class and your understanding of some key ideas about the required readings. These responses will sometimes be done individually and sometimes in small groups.

Field Assignments

During the field experience this semester, you will work with a teaching partner in a classroom (grades PK-1) in one of the Clarke County Elementary Schools. You will spend two full days (Thursday & Friday; teacher hours) in the assigned classroom each week. You will complete most of the assignments listed below with your teaching partner. For the pair assignments you and your partner will submit one report and receive the same score for each of these assignments.

1. Upper Elementary Grade Observation and Reflection (10%)

For your certification, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission requires that you have experience in three different grade levels: P-K, 1-3, and 4-5. This semester you will be working with younger children in grades P-1. Plan to visit upper elementary grade classrooms where you have no or little experience 4 times across the field experience period (approximately 14 weeks). Spend 1 hour per visit to observe teaching and learning in these classrooms. Write an individual reflection (2 double-spaced pages) comparing and contrasting what you observed in these upper grade classrooms with what you experienced in your assigned classroom. You may use the following guiding questions when observing the upper grade classrooms:

- How is the classroom set-up similar and different between the two classrooms?
- How are children's engagement, responses, and behavior similar and different?
- How are curriculum and instructional activities similar and different?
- How are teacher-student interactions similar and different?
- What did I learn about similarities and differences between teaching and learning in early years and upper elementary grades?

The comparative reflection is due on *December 2nd*.

2. Ethnographic Study on a Small Group of Children (25%)

Consult with your mentor teacher to select a small group of 4-6 children for this assignment. With your teaching partner carefully study the lives of these children in the classroom, other areas (e.g., playground, cafeteria, hallway, other classes) in the school, and in the community by observing, listening to, and informally interviewing these children. Use the following guiding questions to learn about the children:

- Who is each of these children and why were they selected (or suggested)?
- What do these children say about their families? What do they enjoy doing away from the school?
- Who are these children's friends in the school and what do they like talking about and doing together?
- What do these children say about their learning in school? What are each child's areas of strengths and weaknesses? What is each child's favorite activity (or subject area)?
- What does each child care, hope, and/or fear in his/her life?
- What are some common interests among these children? How do these children learn and express their thoughts, understandings, and feelings most effectively?
- How has this study helped your instructional planning?

Based on the observations, write a pair report (7-10 double-spaced pages) about the small group of children by using pseudonyms. The report is due on *October 7*.

3. 5-day Mini Project Plan and Implementation (30%)

With your teaching partner and in consultation with your mentor teacher, design a 5-day mini project that draws on your child study. Ideally, this mini project can be done with the same small group of children who participated in your child study. The project, however, can also be done with the large group, if your mentor teacher desires. The project plan should have the following components:

1. 5 day (30-60 minutes per day) classroom activities that investigate a particular topic that interests and is meaning to your students. Each pair may spend Day 1 for the introduction of a topic, Days 2-3 (or Days 2-4) for investigation about the topic, and Days 4-5 (or Day 5) for culmination.
2. Explicit integration of at least two academic content areas across the project period. It is highly recommended that each pair integrate other content course field assignments into the design of the mini project.

Share your pair mini project plan (no more than 5 double-spaced pages) with your mentor teacher and field supervisor *at least 1 week prior to the implementation* of the project by including the following information:

- Project title
- Grade level
- Time (e.g., calendar) and group format (e.g., a small group) to be used for the project
- Rationale for the project (i.e., how the project was designed based on the child study)
- Georgia performance standards to be met through the project
- Brief descriptions of each day's activities and procedures
- Instructional materials to be used
- Assessment methods to be utilized during and at the end of the project

By using the feedback you've received about the project plan, implement the project with your teaching partner. Add individual reflections (2 double-spaced pages per person) to your

revised project plan. Consider the following questions when writing the individual reflection: What did you learn from the process of designing and implementing the mini project which drew on your child study? How did the child study influence your decision making about the selection of a topic and activities? How would you like to modify the process or any part of the project? What were challenges that you and your partner had to overcome? What were rewards for these efforts? How did this experience influence your views of teaching and learning?

The written report, which includes the revised plan and individual reflections, is due on *December 8* (submit it by noon via email on WebCT).

Grading:

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| • Attendance, Preparedness, & Participation | 15% |
| • In-class Response to Readings | 20% |
| • Upper Elementary Grade Observation Reflection | 10% |
| • Ethnographic Study on a Small Group of Children | 25% |
| • 5-day Mini Project Plan and Implementation | 30% |

A:	95-100
A-:	90-94
B+:	87-89
B:	84-86
B-:	80-83
C+:	77-79
C:	74-76
C-:	70-73
D:	60-69
F:	59 or Below

Tentative Schedule:

DATE	TOPICS & READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1: August 19	Introduction	
<i>August 21</i>	<i>Meet Your Mentor Teacher Day</i>	<i>1:00 PM at the assigned school</i>
	SEGMENT I CHILDREN & SCHOOLING EXPERIENCE	
Week 2: August 26	Why children find school learning difficult Donaldson, M. (1978). <i>Children's minds</i> (pp. 3-25, 87-97). New York: W.W. Norton & Company	
Week 3: September 2	What the school can do Donaldson, M. (1978). <i>Children's minds</i> (pp. 98-135). New York: W.W. Norton & Company	The first week of child study in the field
Week 4: September 9	Principles of practice in the early years Katz, L., & Chard, S. C. (2000). <i>Engaging children's minds: The project approach</i> (2 nd ed., pp. 21-54). Stamford, CT: Ablex.	
	SEGMENT II EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM MODELS	
Week 5: September 16	Maria Montessori & Montessori Methods Wolfe, J. (2000). Maria Montessori. In Author, <i>Learning from the past: Historical voices in early childhood education</i> (pp. 225-247). Mayerthorpe, Alberta: Piney Branch Press.	
Week 6: September 23	Lucy Sprague Mitchell & Bank Street Model Wolfe, J. (2000). Lucy Sprague Mitchell. In Author, <i>Learning from the past: Historical voices in early childhood education</i> (pp. 351-390). Mayerthorpe, Alberta: Piney Branch Press.	
Week 7: September 30	High Scope & Creative Curriculum *Weikart, D. P., & Schweinhart, L. J. (2005). In J. L. Roopnarine & J. E. Johnson (Eds.), <i>Approaches to early childhood education</i> (4 th ed., pp. 235-250). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. Dodge, D. T., & Colker, L. J. (1992). <i>The creative curriculum for early childhood</i> (3 rd ed., pp. x-2, 5-10, 14-23, 35-41, 64-69). Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies.	The last week of child study in the field
Week 8: October 7	The Reggio Emilia Approach *New, R. S. (2005). The Reggio Emilia Approach: Provocations and partnerships with US early childhood educators. In J. L. Roopnarine & J. E. Johnson (Eds.), <i>Approaches to early childhood education</i> (4 th ed., pp. 313-335). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. New, R. S. (2003). Reggio Emilia: New ways to think about schooling. <i>Educational Leadership</i> , 60, 34-38.	<u>Due:</u> Child Study Report
Week 9: October 14	The Project Approach *Katz, L. G., & Chard, S. C. (2005). The project approach: An overview. In J. L. Roopnarine & J. E. Johnson (Eds.), <i>Approaches to early childhood education</i> (4 th ed., pp. 296-310). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. Helm, J. H., & Beneke, S. (Eds.). (2003). <i>The power of projects:</i>	

	Meeting contemporary challenges in early childhood classrooms— Strategies & solutions (pp. 1-7). New York: Teachers College.	
Week 10: October 21	Anti-Bias Curriculum Derman-Sparks, L., & the ABC Task Force (1989). <i>Anti-bias curriculum: Tools for empowering young children</i> (pp. ix-x; 1-19). Washington, DC: NAEYC. Bigelow, B., Harvey, B., Karp, S., & Miller, L. (2001). <i>Rethinking our classrooms: Teaching for equity and justice</i> , Vol. 2 (pp. 84-88; 101-104; 107-111). Williston, VT: Rethinking Schools.	
	SEGMENT III CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION	
Week 11: October 28	Access to Prekindergarten Programs: Georgia’s Pre-K Raden, A. (2003). Universal access to prekindergarten: A Georgia case study. In A. J. Reynolds, M. C. Wang, & H. J. Walberg (Eds.), <i>Early childhood programs for a new century</i> (pp. 71-113). Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America, Inc.	Share the mini project plan with your mentor teacher and field supervisor no later than this week
Week 12: November 4	Standardized Tests & Early Schooling Shepard, L. A. (1999). The influence of standardized tests on the early childhood curriculum, teachers, and children. In B. Spodek & O. N. Saracho (Eds.), <i>Issues in early childhood curriculum</i> (pp. 166-189). Troy, NY: Educator’s International Press. Stipek, D. (2006). No Child Left Behind comes to preschool. <i>The Elementary School Journal</i> , 106, 455-465.	Begin implementing a 5-day mini project no later than this week
Week 13: November 11	Children’s Play in Today’s School Alliance for Childhood. (2009). <i>Crisis in the kindergarten: Why children need to play in school</i> . College Park, MD: Alliance for Childhood.	
Week 14: November 18	Developmentally Appropriate Practice Copple, C., & Bredekamp, S. (Eds.). (2009). <i>Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs</i> (3 rd ed.), Washington, DC: NAEYC.	
November 25	No Class: Thanksgiving Break	
Week 15: December 2	Conclusion of EDEC 4020	<u>Due:</u> Upper grade observation paper
December 4	Last Day in the Field	
December 8	Pair-report on the mini project	<u>Due:</u> Post on WebCT by Noon