

EDEC 4040
Special Topics in Early Childhood Education
Spring 2005
3 credit hours

A forum for issues of professionalism connected to professional teaching experiences. Topics may vary depending on student-generated issues and concerns.

Office Hours by appointment

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Class Schedule: Wednesday, March 30, 2005 [5:15 – 8:00]
Monday, April 18 – Friday, April 22 [8:45 – 4:00 daily]

The Program for Early Childhood Education lists the following considerations for EDEC 4040:

Diversity

- Critical reflections of culture (race, ethnicity, culture, gender, and class)
- Laws and policies related to services for children with special needs
- Understanding legal issues (special needs, liability, due process, religion, confidentiality)
- Application of family and community issues
- Special needs placements
- Retention
- Family configurations
- Critical reflection of field experiences (e.g., examine power, justice, and equity with regard to professional responsibility)

Organization and Management

- Critical reflection of organizational and management practices

Planning

- Exploring and expanding resources for planning
- Ethical considerations for assessment

Class Description

The major focus of the course will be inquiry about professional growth and development in teaching. Legal and ethical issues in education will be considered as an important dimension of becoming a professional educator. Home-school relationships and community contexts for learning will be examined. Students will gain understanding of the multiple influences—such as family, peers, media, and the larger culture—that affect students' lives in a diverse world. Implications for teaching and learning – specifically in terms of planning for differentiating instruction and classroom organization and management strategies - will be explored.

Objectives

1. Students will utilize inquiry as a vehicle for professional reflection and development.
2. Students will articulate the importance of the home/school connection and the critical role teaching professionals play in developing and nurturing this connection.
3. Students will articulate what it means to be a professional educator and learn to develop resources to stimulate ongoing professional growth.
4. Students will consider the community beyond the school walls and its role in the lives of children and families.
5. Students will understand the relevance of specific legal cases to larger issues of school law encountered by teaching professionals.
6. Students will claim their potential to find joy, compassion, and power to be change agents through their work as professional educators.

Standards Addressed

The conceptual framework for educator 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://ncate.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 accomplished teaching as outlined in the Georgia Systemic Teacher Education Program (GSTEP) – standards attached.

Course Texts

Required:

1. MacKenzie, R. J. (2003). *Setting limits in the classroom : How to move beyond the dance of discipline in today's classrooms* (Revised ed.). Three Rivers, MI: Three Rivers Press.

Encouraged:

1. Campbell, D. M., Cignetti, P. B., Melenzyer, B. J., Nettles, D. H., & Wyman R. M. (2000). *How to develop a professional portfolio: A manual for teachers* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
2. Warner, J., Bryan, C., Warner, D. (2003). *Inside secrets of finding a teaching job: The most effective search methods for both new and experienced educators* (2nd ed.). Indianapolis, IN: JIST Works.
3. Falk, B. & Blumenreich. (2005). *The power of questions: A guide to teacher and student research*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Course Requirements

1. Participation/Attendance

This class will be taught through dialogue, with most of the time devoted to reaction and discussion of the topics. We all share responsibility to make the class sessions relevant and meaningful. In order for that to happen, you will need to attend class sessions, prepare the readings, and contribute equally to the work of the small group activities. Brief in-class quick writes will be assigned periodically, and you will be asked to present a summary of your report regarding your inquiry project to the class.

Regular, on time attendance is assumed. Absences will affect your grade (See “Evaluation” section for specifics). If you do miss class, you are responsible for getting information and materials covered in your absence. In the event of illness or accident, you will need a doctor’s note for an excused absence. Please communicate with instructors in a timely manner via phone or email regarding absences.

All written materials should be typed.

Participation in class discussions is expected, and therefore required reading should be done before you come to class.

All materials for presentation should be prepared in a professional manner.

2. Inquiry Project or Professional Portfolio

Inquiry Project: Your inquiry project should start with questions you have about teaching and learning that connect to community, family, or professional development resources that support children’s learning. Students will formulate a “burning question” either from prior field experiences or related to a personal interest in an issue related to teaching and learning that will form the basis of an inquiry project. These questions should be framed within the course content regarding one or more of the following topics:

Developing as a Professional	-Reflection-Best practices -Action research strategies -Setting goals for continued professional growth
Beyond the School Walls	-Home-School connections -Social services -Community organizations-Courts -School health issues
Legal and Ethical Issues in Education	-Child abuse and neglect -Religious freedom -Children with special needs-Student discipline -Due process for teachers and students

Your 1-2 page plan for the inquiry project is due the first day of our course conference (April 18) and should include:

1. A paragraph explaining what you investigated and why.
2. A list of questions that guided and focused your inquiry project.
3. A list of activities (e.g. observations, interviews, discussions, participation in events, teaching of lessons) that you engaged with in your quest for informed understanding.
4. A list of resources—people, books, articles, documents, agencies, schools—that you used for your project.

Professional Portfolio: If you choose to do a professional portfolio instead of an inquiry project, your written plan (due April 18) should include:

1. The standards around which your portfolio was organized.
 2. A listing of specific artifacts included as evidence for each standard.
 3. An explanation of your rationale for including particular artifacts and what they say about what you have learned or achieved related to each standard.
 4. A proposal for how you see yourself using this portfolio.
3. **Register for participation on the GSTEP BRIDGE** (more will be explained about this process in class)

Inquiry Project Colloquium Presentations

You will prepare a ten-minute oral presentation of your inquiry project that will include a visual component in the form of a poster, chart, photograph, or other media. Friday, April 22nd will be reserved for each class member to present. We will organize in three groups (each group will have Dr. Oldfather, Dr. Bisplinghoff, or Mr. Ritchie as the facilitator) for this sharing process. The sequence for each presentation will include: ten minutes to present + five minutes for audience to ask questions + five minutes for audience to provide written feedback using the rubric provided.

You will also prepare a one-page handout summarizing your project and bring enough copies for all class members. You should include an introduction explaining the focus of your inquiry project, your inquiry questions, and why you chose the focus. In addition, you will explain the process of conducting your inquiry project, including how you gathered the information to answer your questions and how your plan of inquiry was modified as you went along. You should include a discussion of what you learned in relation to your questions and how you will apply what you learned as you begin your teaching career. Finally, you will consider what you learned about the inquiry process and what new questions you have that will guide your inquiry in the future.

Portfolio Presentations

The portfolio presentations will proceed in the same way as the inquiry project presentations. You will also prepare a ten-minute oral presentation of your professional portfolio. The portfolio will be the visual component of your presentation. The sequence for each presentation will include: ten minutes to present + five minutes for audience to ask questions + five minutes for audience to provide written feedback using the rubric provided.

You will also prepare a one-page handout summarizing your process and bring enough copies for all class members. You should include an introduction explaining your choice of standards and your decision making process for what to include in your portfolio. In addition, you will explain the process of creating your portfolio, including how you gathered artifacts and how you developed associations between artifacts and standards. You should include a discussion of what you learned about yourself and your preparation to be a teacher through the process of creating your portfolio as well as how you plan to use and further develop your portfolio.

In this course the University's academic honesty policy is in effect. It is the responsibility of each student to become familiar with this policy and follow it.

This syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

Evaluation Process

Based on a 100 point scale

Attendance: The course grade will be reduced by one letter grade per absence (Serious concerns regarding this standard will be considered if presented ahead of time and/or if appropriate documentation is received).

Participation: Informed and thoughtful participation is expected. Students are expected to perform as responsible professional educators during all meetings. Instructors will document any perceived lack of preparation and/or participation and report the issue to the student on the day of the incident/observation. If concerns are justified, 5 points will be deducted from the final grade per event.

Shared Inquiry Project:
A rubric will be used to help your instructors and your peers offer helpful feedback in response to each presentation. It is expected that any student who fully meets the outlined criteria will receive full credit for their work. If, however, criteria are not addressed or only partially addressed, 5 points will be deducted from the final grade per issue.

Documentation of Access for Participation on the GSTEP BRIDGE:

Once you have received your access information to the BRIDGE, provide instructors with a copy of the print out of the page confirming your registration. Five points will be deducted from your final grade if documentation is not provided.

- Each evaluation element will be elaborated using specific examples during class meetings.

Course Schedule – Learning in a Professional Context – A Conference Approach

Wed. Mar. 30 Monday April 18 – Friday April 22	Course Introduction: What do we know and what do we want to know: Teaching as Inquiry We will spend each day leaning together as if we were participating in a professional week-long conference. Our hours will be 8:45 – 4:00 daily. We will begin each day in a whole-group opening experience and then rotate through a series of small-group sessions on varied topics. We will close each day in another whole-group experience. You will have one hour for lunch each day (12:00 – 1:00) and a one hour block during the day for independent study.
Day #1	8:45 Opening Event: 10:00 Session 1 (Group A – Betty, Group B – Penny, Group C – Scott, Group D – Choice) 11:00 Session 2 (Group A – Penny, Group B – Scott, Group C- Choice, Group D – Betty) 12:00 Lunch 1:00 Session 3 (Group A – Scott, Group B – Choice, Group C – Betty, Group D – Penny) 2:00 Session 4 (Group A – Choice, Group B – Betty, Group C – Penny, Group D – Scott) 3:00 Closing Event:
Day #2	8:45 Opening Event: 10:00 Session 1 (Group A – Betty, Group B – Penny, Group C – Scott, Group D – Choice) 11:00 Session 2 (Group A – Penny, Group B – Scott, Group C- Choice, Group D – Betty) 12:00 Lunch 1:00 Session 3 (Group A – Scott, Group B – Choice, Group C – Betty, Group D – Penny) 2:00 Session 4 (Group A – Choice, Group B – Betty, Group C – Penny, Group D – Scott) 3:00 Closing Event:
Day #3	8:45 Opening Event: 10:00 Session 1 (Group A – Betty, Group B – Penny, Group C – Scott, Group D – Choice) 11:00 Session 2 (Group A – Penny, Group B – Scott, Group C- Choice, Group D – Betty) 12:00 Lunch 1:00 Session 3 (Group A – Scott, Group B – Choice, Group C – Betty, Group D – Penny) 2:00 Session 4 (Group A – Choice, Group B – Betty, Group C – Penny, Group D – Scott) 3:00 Closing Event:
Day #4	8:45 Opening Event: 10:00 Session 1 (Group A – Betty, Group B – Penny, Group C – Scott, Group D – Choice) 11:00 Session 2 (Group A – Penny, Group B – Scott, Group C- Choice, Group D – Betty) 12:00 Lunch 1:00 Session 3 (Group A – Scott, Group B – Choice, Group C – Betty, Group D – Penny) 2:00 Session 4 (Group A – Choice, Group B – Betty, Group C – Penny, Group D – Scott) 3:00 Closing Event:
Day #5	Project Sharing Day – Poster Sessions

GSTEP Framework

The GSTEP Framework is a replicable statewide induction tool that identifies the knowledge, skills, dispositions, understandings, and other attributes of accomplished teaching. It provides a structure through which novices and their mentors are able to assess and analyze teaching practice.

GSTEP Framework Guiding Principles

The following principles guided the development of the GSTEP Framework:

- **The Process Principle:** Learning to teach is a career-long process.
- **The Support Principle:** Successful engagement in the process of learning to teach requires support from multiple partners.
- **The Ownership Principle:** Professional teachers have ownership of their careers, which they create and design.
- **The Impact Principle:** Effective teaching yields evidence of student learning.
- **The Equity Principle:** All teachers deserve high expectations and support.
- **The Dispositions Principle:** Productive dispositions affect student learning, teacher growth, and school climate positively.
- **The Technology Principle:** Technology facilitates teaching, learning, community building, and resource acquisition.

1. Content & Curriculum

Teachers demonstrate a strong knowledge of content area(s) appropriate for their certification levels.

Accomplished teachers:

- demonstrate knowledge of content, major concepts, assumptions, debates, processes of inquiry, and ways of knowing that are central to the subject(s) they teach.
- understand and use subject-specific content and pedagogical content knowledge (how to teach their subjects) that is appropriate for diverse learners they teach.
- stay current in their subject areas as engaged learners and/or performers in their fields.
- relate content area(s) to other subject areas and see connections to everyday life.
- carefully select and use a wide variety of resources, including available technology, to deepen their own knowledge in the content area(s).
- interpret and construct school curriculum that reflects state and national content area standards.

2. Knowledge of Students & Their Learning

Teachers support the intellectual, social, physical, and personal development of all students.

Accomplished teachers:

- believe that all children can learn at high levels and hold high expectations for all.
- understand how learning occurs in general and in the content areas (e.g., how diverse learners

construct knowledge, acquire skills, and develop habits of mind).

- are sensitive, alert, and responsive to all aspects of a child's well-being.
- understand how factors in environments inside and outside of school may influence students' lives

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and learning.

- are informed about and adapt their work based on students' stages of development, multiple

intelligences, learning styles, and areas of exceptionality.

- establish respectful and productive relationships with families and seek to develop cooperative partnerships in support of student learning and well-being.

3. Learning Environments

Teachers create learning environments that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Accomplished teachers:

- create a learning community in which students assume responsibility, participate in decision making, and work both collaboratively and independently.

- organize, allocate, and manage time, space, activities, technology and other resources to provide

active and equitable engagement of diverse students in productive tasks.

- understand and implement effective classroom management.
- recognize the value of and use knowledge about human motivation and behavior to develop strategies for organizing and supporting student learning.

- are sensitive to and use knowledge of students' unique cultures, experiences, and communities to sustain a culturally responsive classroom.

- access school, district, and community resources in order to foster students' learning and well being.

- use effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

4. Assessment

Teachers understand and use a range of formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous development of all learners.

Accomplished teachers:

- understand measurement theory and the characteristics, uses, and issues of different types of assessment.
- use pre-assessment data to select or design clear, significant, varied and appropriate student learning goals.
- choose, develop, and use classroom-based assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions.
- involve learners in self-assessment, helping them become aware of their strengths and needs and encouraging them to set personal goals for learning.
- develop and use valid, equitable grading procedures based on student learning.
- use assessment data to communicate student progress knowledgeably and responsibly to students, parents, and other school personnel.
- use resources, including available technology, to keep accurate and up-to-date records of student work, behavior, and accomplishments.
- are committed to using assessment to identify student strengths and needs and promote student growth.

5. Planning & Instruction

Teachers design and create instructional experiences based on their knowledge of content and

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Accomplished teachers:

- articulate clear and defensible rationales for their choices of curriculum materials and instructional strategies.
- plan and carry out instruction based upon knowledge of content standards, curriculum, students, learning environments, and assessment.
- understand and use a variety of instructional strategies appropriately to maintain student engagement and support the learning of all students.
- monitor and adjust strategies in response to learner feedback.
- vary their roles in the instructional process (e.g. instructor, facilitator, coach, audience) in relation

to the content and purposes of instruction and the needs of students.

- use appropriate resources, materials, and technology to enhance instruction for diverse learners.
- value and engage in planning as a collegial activity.

6. Professionalism

Teachers recognize, participate in, and contribute to teaching as a profession.

Accomplished teachers:

- continually examine and extend their knowledge of the history, ethics, politics, knowledge of the history, ethics, politics, organization, and practices of education.
- understand and implement laws related to rights and responsibilities of students, educators, and families.
- follow established codes of professional conduct, including school and district policies.
- systematically reflect on teaching and learning to improve their own practice.
- seek opportunities to learn based upon reflection, input from others, and career goals.
- advocate for curriculum, instruction, learning environments, and opportunities that support the diverse needs of and high expectations for all students.
- assume leadership and support roles as part of a school team.

