

**EDEC 4010**  
**Orientation to Early Childhood Education**  
**Spring 2007**

**Tuesday 8:00 – 9:55**  
**409 Aderhold Hall**

**Instructor**

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**Overview**

This course examines the issues of understanding children and building meaningful learning environments. We will consider how teacher beliefs, teacher knowledge, and teacher practices support or fail to support student learning and well-being in the classroom. We will examine the relationship between teacher practices and student learning. Through this course we will reconstruct our vision of teaching by taking an inquiry stance.

The guiding questions we will use in this inquiry are as follows:

1. What have our experiences been as learners and teachers?
2. What is unique about the learners and teachers we admire?
3. What kind of learners and teachers do we want to be?

The course topics will be considered within the socio-cultural, psychological, and political issues of schooling, with consideration of diversity and learning. We will work towards articulating our beliefs about teaching and learning as we consider these issues through reading, discussions, field experiences, and class projects.

**Goals**

Through this course we will

1. Consider how the past shapes the present, investigate the beliefs we bring into our work with young children by examining our own stories as learners and teachers.
2. Formulate understandings of young children's learning and development by examining our past experiences, participating in field experiences, and engaging in class readings.
3. Learn the importance of students' perspectives and exploring ways in which the students' voices can be included in our thinking about teaching and learning.
4. Develop a community of learners and teachers, collaborating to expand meaningful understandings of what it means to be a learner and teacher. In addition, we will collaborate to support each other and refine our procedures and products.
5. Recognize the importance of diversity and work towards developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help ALL students.

## Required Texts

1. Nieto, S. (2005). *Why we teach*. New York: Teachers College Press.
2. Oldfather, P. & West, J. with White, J. & Wilmarth, J. (1999). *Learning through children's eyes*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
3. Bel-Jean Packet (163 E. Broad St., 706-548-3648)

## Texts for Book Club (Select any ONE)

1. Ashton-Warner, S. (1986). *Teacher*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
2. Ayers, W. (2001). *To teach: The journey of a teacher* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
3. Codell, E. R. (1999). *Educating Esme: Diary of a teacher's first year*. New York: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.
4. Intrator, S. & Scribner, M. (Ed) ( 2003) *Teaching with fire: Poetry that sustains the courage to teach*. WA: Jossey Bass
5. Ladson-Billings, G. (2001). *Crossing over to Canaan: The journey of new teachers in diverse classrooms*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
6. Paley, V. ( 1989). *White Teacher*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

## Course Expectations

- Notify me **BEFORE** class if you cannot attend a class. Be punctual for class.
- Remember to turn off your cell phone.
- Laptops can be used for taking class notes but not used for checking e-mails or doing other work during class time.
- Complete all readings and other preparations for each class in a timely manner.
- Participate thoughtfully and constructively in class discussions and activities. Active participation is essential to your learning in the course. Please be sensitive to turn-taking issues.
- "Take charge" of your own learning through pursuing projects which meet personal educational needs and interests.
- Be familiar with UGA Academic Honesty Policy and be consistently fair and honest in representing your work to others.

## Honor Code

Be familiar with UGA Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy and be consistently fair and honest in representing your work to others.

*All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.*

“Students at The University of Georgia are responsible for maintaining and adhering to the strictest standards of honesty and integrity in every aspect of their lives. Honesty in academic matters is a large part of this obligation. Specific regulations governing student academic conduct are contained in the Student Handbook and these should avoid misunderstanding.” – Undergraduate Bulletin

## Requirements for 4010

- **Attendance and punctuality:**

You are required to attend all sessions. Class begins promptly at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 9:55 a.m. Part of your final grade is determined by your attendance and classroom participation. Students who miss 4 or more classes with unexcused absences will receive a failing grade. Being tardy to class 2 times will equal 1 unexcused absence.
- **Establishing a respectful learning community:**

We are a community of learners where everyone is a teacher and a student. A meaningful learning community is built on trust, respect, care, appreciation, and support. Within a caring and ethical environment, we will engage in a collaborative exchange of ideas and understandings. We will work towards creating a psychologically safe space where members of the learning community can feel free to express their perspectives and at the same time feel safe to be challenged and stretched. There are no right or wrong perspectives; our goal will be to understand the perspectives and not to judge others based on their perspectives. Therefore, remember to be sensitive, appreciative, and respectful as we participate in shared conversations.
- **WebCT:**

We will often use electronic methods for communication. We will use WebCT to post messages, extend conversations outside of class, write reflections, and inform each other of important events in the field of education. You will also use WebCT to post certain assignments. Be sure to check WebCT regularly.
- **Preparation and Participation:**

We will be actively participating in all class discussions and activities. Come to each class prepared to participate thoughtfully and critically. Be sure you have read all assigned texts prior to class.
- **Assessment**

The primary purpose of the assessment system is to support the quality of your work as you strive to become the best teacher you can be. I strongly believe that an education student's primary goal should not focus on grades but on professional and personal growth. My purpose of assessment is to enable you to demonstrate what you know and inspire you to continue being a learner. I hope you will value the process of learning and carry this disposition in your own classroom with children. You will also receive feedback from your classmates in class and I encourage you to share and seek feedback outside of class.

## **Assignments for 4010**

### **(January 23) Learner’s Autobiography:**

Write a learner’s autobiography (5-10 pages, double-spaced). What kind of learner were you in your earliest memories (you may want to ask your family what they remember about you as a learner)? How have you evolved as a learner throughout your life? What kind of learner are you now? Consider your own cultural life history as an important aspect of this. Be sure to include in your reflection any “themes” that emerge from your exploration of your learning history? How does your learning history influence the kind of teacher you want to be?

### **(February 20, 27) Metaphor of a Future Teacher:**

Using artistic representations like clay / construction paper / collage / drawing / poem or other media create an artifact to describe your metaphor of yourself as a future teacher. Write a 2-3 paged (double-spaced) description explaining your metaphor. Also include a critical reflection to explain how your educational and cultural history has influenced your current thinking.

### **(March 6, 20) Vision of a Future Classroom:**

Using artistic representations like clay / construction paper / collage / drawing / poem or any other media create an artifact to describe your vision of your future classroom. Write a 2-3 paged (double-spaced) description of your vision of your future classroom. How has your metaphor of a future teacher come alive in this classroom?

### **(February 6 – April 3) Book Club**

Select one book from the book list. We will form six groups of five students each who will be reading the same book. We will begin discussing the readings on WebCT by Week 5. In Week 12, we will come together as a class to share our WebCT discussions.

### **(April 17) “My Vision” Project:**

For your class presentation, bring your artifacts that you have prepared to express your metaphor of a future teacher and your vision of a future classroom. Each student will have 20 minutes. In the first 15 minutes you will share your artifacts, your reflections, and learnings from doing this project. In the next 5 minutes your group members will have some time to ask questions, tell you what was great, and how you could improve your project.

### **(January 30, March 6, April 10) Dual Entry Diary on WebCT:**

Select quotes (a sentence or a short paragraph) from your readings that you feel connected to. For each diary entry type the quote with page number first and then write your response to it, explaining your connection. What did this quote stir in you? How did it influence your thinking? What memory or experience did it evoke? You could make a text-text connection, a text-self connection, and/or text-society connection. How can you connect this quote to your past, present and future as a learner and teacher?

### **(April 24) Self-Assessment:**

Looking at the course goals assess your growth over the semester. This is a requirement but will not be graded.

**(December 11) Final Project: “My Vision Project”**

You will turn in a class project with self assessment. Include the following artifacts and papers:

- Learner’s autobiography
- Artifact + paper on metaphor of a future teacher
- Artifact + paper on vision of a future classroom
- Rough Drafts and peer reviews
- Reflection (How has your vision of yourself as a teacher and your classroom grown in this semester? By giving specific examples from the field, readings, and class discussions articulate the growth you have experienced.)
- Self assessment (How would you assess the quality of ideas represented in your paper? How would you assess the quality of your writing? Think about style as well as organization and mechanics. What have you learned in the process of writing this project?)

At the end of the semester you will receive the following Grade Sheet.

### Grade Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

* ASSIGNMENTS	* POSSIBLE POINTS	* ACTUAL POINTS
Honoring the learning community, class participation and attendance	<b>150</b> (10 points per class)	
Dual Entry Diaries	<b>30</b> (10 points per diary set)	
Book Club (Discussion on web CT)	<b>35</b> (5 points per discussion)	
My Vision Project	<b>65</b>	
Learner’s Autobiography	20	
Metaphor of a Future Teacher	20	
Vision of a Future Classroom	20	
Reflections and self assessment	5	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>Final Grade: _____</b>

COMMENTS:

\*\* The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

**Week One: January 9**

**Topic:** Introductions, Syllabus,

**Week Two: January 16**

**Topic:** Why we Teach?

**Readings:** Nieto, S. (2005). *Why we teach* (Preface, pp 1-57)

**Week Three: January 23**

**Topic:** Why we Teach?

**Readings:** Nieto, S. (2005). *Why we teach* (pp 58-114)

**Due:** Learner's Autobiography

**Week Four: January 30**

**Topic:** Why we Teach?

**Readings:** Nieto, S. (2005). *Why we teach* (pp. 115- 200)

**Due:** Dual entry diary #1

**Week Five: February 6**

**Topic:** Social constructivism and classroom culture

**Readings:** Oldfather, P. & West, J. with White, J. & Wilmarth, J. (1999). *Learning through children's eye* (Preface & Goal 1 pp. vii - 23)

Oldfather, P. (2002). Students' experiences when not initially motivated for literacy learning. *Reading and Writing Quarterly* (18), 231-256.

Visiting our educational histories

**Due:** Field Assignment #1: Knowing Your Mentor Teacher

**Week Six: February 13**

**Topic:** Role of perspective taking and social imagination in creating a classroom culture

**Readings:** Oldfather, P. & West, J. with White, J. & Wilmarth, J. (1999). *Learning through children's eye* (Goals 3 & 4 pp. 57 – 87)

Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the imagination* (Introduction & ch.3 pp. 1-8, 32-43).

**Week Seven: February 20**

**Topic:** Children from different cultures

**Readings:** Lake, R. (1990, September). An Indian father's plea. *Teacher Magazine*, 48-53.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.

**Due:** Bring a completed draft of "Metaphor of a future teacher" for peer review

**Week Eight: February 27**

**Topic:** Listening to children

**Readings:** Paley, V. (1986). On listening to what the children say. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(2), 122- 131.

Commeyras, M. (1995). What can we learn from students' questions? *Theory into*

*Practice*, 34(2), 101-106.

**Due:** Final Draft “Metaphor of a future teacher”  
Field Assignment # 2: Observing a classroom from a student’s perspective

**Week Nine: March 6**

**Topic:** Seeing children  
**Readings:** Balaban, N. (1995). Seeing the child, Knowing the person. In W. Ayers (Ed.). *To become a teacher: Making a difference in children’s lives*. (Ch. 4, pp. 49 – 57)  
**Due:** Dual Entry Diary #2  
Bring a completed draft of “Vision of a future classroom” for peer review

**Spring Break March 12-16**

**Week Ten: March 20**

**Topic:** Children in poverty and fast track children  
**Readings:** Brooks, A. A. (1990, April). Educating the children of fast-track parents. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 71, 612-615.  
Elkind, D. (1988). *The hurried child: Growing up too fast too soon*. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley. (Chapter 7)  
Kozol, J. (1990, Winter/Spring). The new untouchables. *Newsweek Special Issue*, 48-53.  
**Due:** Final Draft “Vision of a future classroom”

**Week Eleven: March 27**

**Topic:** Caring Teacher  
**Reading:** Haberman, M. (1991, December). The pedagogy of poverty versus good teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 290-294.  
Nieto, S.(2005). *Why we teach* (Ch. 23, pp. 201-220)  
**Due:** Field Assignment # 3: Learning from students’ questions

**Week Twelve: April 3**

**Topic:** Book club  
**Readings:** Selected book  
**Due:** Field Assignment # 4: Knowing a student

**Week Thirteen: April 10**

**Topic:** Student Presentations (Story of the Field Project)  
**Due:** Dual Entry Diary #3

**Week Fourteen: April 17**

**Topic:** Student Presentations (My Vision Project)

**Week Fifteen: April 24**

**Topic:** Gallery Walk  
**Due:** Self-Assessment

**May 8 (No later than Noon)**

**Due:** Final Projects (My Vision Project and Story of the Field Project)  
A completed field experience log sheet Spiral note book (field observations)

### Reviewer's Summary

Reviewer Name \_\_\_\_\_

What were the main strengths of this paper?

What questions were raised for you as you read the paper?

What specific recommendations do you have for improving the paper? (Please include any items from the checklist, as well as issues regarding specific content ideas, clarity of writing, spelling, grammar, and organization)

## 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.

### ■ 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.

### ■ 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 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.

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

## ■ 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.

## ■ Planning & Instruction

Teachers design and create instructional experiences based on their knowledge of content and curriculum, students, learning environments, and assessment.

### 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.

### ■ 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.