

EDEC 4040
Special Topics in Early Childhood Education
Spring 2007
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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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)
- Special needs placements
- Retention
- Family configurations
- Critical reflection of field experiences

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 issues 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

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 text

There is no required text, but it is highly recommended that all students add Harry Wong’s *The first days of school* to their personal professional libraries.

Course requirements

1. Participation/Attendance

This class will mostly be taught through participation and discussion. We all share responsibility to make the seminar sessions relevant and meaningful. In order for this to happen, you will need to attend all seminars prepared and be willing to contribute to discussions. There will be guest speakers at some seminars. It is expected that you will be prepared with any questions you may have relating to the speaker’s expertise.

2. Professional Development Plan

All students will prepare a professional development plan to be implemented and assessed during student teaching (a planning template follows). The following list of standards for early childhood education with the specified criterion for each may serve as a guide in choosing areas of focus. You may choose to concentrate on one criteria within a standard. The objective is for you to choose an area in which you need to strengthen your teaching skills.

Georgia Professional Standards for Early Childhood Education Mastery Learning Checklist and Guide

1. STANDARD I: Child Development and Learning

The program shall prepare early childhood professionals who:

- (i) Use knowledge of how children develop and learn to provide opportunities that support the physical, social, emotional, language, cognitive, and aesthetic development of all children.
- (ii) Use knowledge of how children differ in their development and approaches to learning to support the development and learning of individual children.
- (iii) Demonstrate understanding of the conditions that affect children's development and learning, including risk factors, developmental variations, and developmental patterns of specific disabilities.
- (iv) Create and modify environments and experiences to meet the individual needs of all children, including children with disabilities, developmental delays, and special abilities.
- (v) Apply knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity and the significance of socio-cultural and political contexts for development and learning, and recognize that children are best understood in the contexts of family, culture, and society.
- (vi) Demonstrate understanding of the interrelationships among culture, language, and thought and the function of the home language in the development of children.
- (vii) Affirm and respect culturally and linguistically diverse children, support home language preservation, and promote anti-bias approaches through the creation of learning environments and experiences.

2. STANDARD II: Curriculum Development and Implementation

The program shall prepare early childhood professionals who:

- (i) Plan and implement developmentally appropriate curriculum and instructional practices based on knowledge of individual children, the community, and curriculum goals and content.
- (ii) Use and explain the rationale for developmentally appropriate methods that include play, small group projects, open-ended questioning, group discussion, problem solving, cooperative learning, and inquiry experiences to help children develop intellectual curiosity, solve problems, and make decisions.
- (iii) Use a variety of strategies to encourage children's physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, and cognitive development.
- (iv) Demonstrate a high level of competence in use of the English language areas and know, understand, and use concepts from reading, language, and child development, to teach reading, writing, speaking, viewing, listening, and thinking skills and to help students successfully apply their developing skills to many different situations, materials, and ideas.
- (v) Know, understand, and use fundamental concepts in the subject matter of science-including physical, life, and earth and space sciences-as well as concepts in science and technology, science in personal and social perspectives, the history and nature of science, the unifying concepts of science, and the inquiry processes scientists use in discovery of new knowledge to build a base for scientific and technological literacy.
- (vi) Know, understand, and use the major concepts, procedures, and reasoning processes of mathematics that define number systems and number sense, geometry, measurement, statistics and probability, and algebra in order to foster student understanding and use of patterns, quantities, and spatial relationships that can represent phenomena, solve problems, and manage data.

- (vii) Know, understand, and use the major concepts and modes of inquiry from the social studies integrated study of history, geography, the social sciences, and other related areas-to promote P-5 students' abilities to make informed decisions as citizens of a culturally diverse democratic society and interdependent world.
- (viii) Know, understand, and use-as appropriate to their own knowledge and skills-the content, functions, and achievements, of dance, music, theater, and the several visual arts as primary media for communication, inquiry, and insight among P-5 students.
- (ix) Know, understand, and use the major concepts in the subject matter of health education to create opportunities for student development and practice of skills that contribute to good health.
- (x) Know understand, and use-as appropriate to their own understanding and skills-human movement and physical activity as central elements to foster active, healthy life styles and enhanced quality of life for P-5 students.
- (xi) Develop and implement an integrated curriculum that focuses on children's needs and interests and takes into account culturally valued content and children's home experiences.
- (xii) Create, evaluate, and select developmentally appropriate materials, equipment, and environments.
- (xiii) Evaluate and demonstrate appropriate use of technology with children, including assistive technologies for children with disabilities.
- (xiv) Develop and evaluate topics of study in terms of conceptual soundness, significance, and intellectual integrity
- (xv) Adapt strategies and environments to meet the specific needs of all children, including those with disabilities, developmental delays, or special abilities.
- (xvi) Use individual and group guidance and problem-solving techniques to develop positive and supportive relationships with children, to encourage positive social interaction among children, to promote positive strategies of conflict resolution, and to develop personal self-control, self-motivation, and self esteem.
- (xvii) Incorporate knowledge and strategies from multiple disciplines (for example, health, social services) into the design of intervention strategies and integrate goals from IEP's and IFSPS's into daily activities and routines.
- (xviii) Establish and maintain physically and psychologically safe and healthy learning environments for children.
- (xix) Demonstrate understanding of the influence of the physical setting, schedule, routines, and transitions on children and use these experiences to promote children's development and learning.
- (xx) Demonstrate understanding of the developmental consequences of stress and trauma, protective factors and resilience, and the development of mental health, and the importance of supportive relationships.
- (xxi) Implement basic health, nutrition, and safety management practices for children, including those regarding childhood illness and communicable diseases.
- (xxii) Use appropriate health appraisal procedures and recommend referral to appropriate community health and social services when necessary.
- (xxiii) Recognize signs of emotional distress, child abuse, and neglect in children and know responsibility and procedures for reporting known or suspected abuse or neglect to appropriate authorities.

3. STANDARD III: Family and Community Relationships

The program shall prepare early childhood professionals who:

- (i) Establish and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with families.
- (ii) Respect parents' choices and goals for children and communicate effectively with parents about curriculum and children's progress.
- (iii) Involve families in assessing and planning for individual children, including children with disabilities, developmental delays, or special abilities.
- (iv) Support parents in making decisions related to their child's development and parenting.
- (v) Demonstrate sensitivity to differences in family structures and social and cultural backgrounds.
- (vi) Apply family systems theory, knowledge of the dynamics, roles, and relationships within families and communities.
- (vii) Link families with a range of family-oriented services based on identified resources, priorities, and concerns.
- (viii) Communicate effectively with other professionals concerned with children and with agencies in the larger community to support children's development, learning, and well-being.

4. STANDARD IV: Assessment and Evaluation

The program shall prepare early childhood professionals who:

- (i) Use informal and formal assessment strategies to plan and individualize curriculum and teaching practices.
- (ii) Observe, record, and assess children's development and learning and engage children in self assessment for the purpose of planning appropriate programs, environments, and interactions, and adapting for individual differences.
- (iii) Develop and use authentic, performance-based assessments of children's learning to assist in planning and to communicate with children and parents.
- (iv) Participate and assist other professionals in conducting family-centered assessments.
- (v) Select, evaluate, and interpret formal, standardized assessment instruments and information used in the assessment of children, and integrate authentic classroom assessment data with formal assessment information.
- (vi) Communicate assessment results and integrate assessment results from others as an active participant in the development and implementation of Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) goals for children with special developmental and learning needs.
- (vii) Develop and use formative and summative program evaluation to ensure comprehensive quality of the total environment for children, families, and the community.

5. STANDARD V: Professionalism

The program shall prepare early childhood professionals who:

- (i) Reflect on their practices, articulate a philosophy and rationale for decisions, continually self-assess and evaluate the effects of their choices and actions on others (children, parents, and other professionals) as a basis for program planning and modification, and continuing professional development.
- (ii) Demonstrate an understanding of conditions of children, families, and professionals; current issues and trends; legal issues; and legislation and other public policies affecting children, families, and programs for children and the early childhood profession.
- (iii) Demonstrate an understanding of the early childhood profession, its multiple historical, philosophical, and social foundations, and how these foundations influence current thought and practice.
- (iv) Demonstrate awareness of and commitment to the profession's code of ethical conduct.
- (v) Actively seek out opportunities to grow professionally by locating and using appropriate professional literature, organizations, resources, and experiences to inform and improve practice.
- (vi) Establish and maintain positive, collaborative relationships with colleagues, other professionals and families, and work effectively as a member of a professional team.
- (vii) Serve as advocates on behalf of children and their families, improved quality of programs and services for young children, and enhanced professional status and working conditions for early childhood educators.
- (viii) Demonstrate an understanding of basic principles of administration, organization, and operation of early childhood programs, including supervision of staff and volunteers and program evaluation.

6. STANDARD VI: Field Experiences

The program shall prepare early childhood professionals who:

- (i) Observe and participate under supervision of qualified professionals in a variety of settings in which children are served (such as public and private; centers, schools, and community agencies).
- (ii) Work effectively over time with children of diverse ages (pre-schoolers, or school-age), with children with diverse abilities, with children reflecting culturally and linguistically diverse family systems.
- (iii) Demonstrate ability to work effectively during full-time (totally at least 300 clock hours) supervised student teaching and/or practical experiences in at least two different settings, serving children of three different age groups (PK-K, 1-3, and 4-5) and with varying abilities.
- (iv) Analyze and evaluate field experience, including supervised experience in working with parents, and supervised experience in working with interdisciplinary teams of professionals.

7. STANDARD VII: Teaching of Reading

The program shall prepare the Early Childhood classroom teacher to meet the standards for an endorsement for Classroom Teacher of Reading as specified in [Rule 505-3-.52](#).

(i) The program shall conform to the IRA Standards for Reading Professionals, Classroom Teacher Candidate, 2003.

<http://www.reading.org/advocacy/standards/>

(ii) The program shall prepare candidates to provide instructional practices grounded in scientifically based reading research (SBRR).

<http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/>

During the first half of student teaching one area of focus should be identified. Strategies for improvement should be planned and implemented. Documentation for assessment should include a video taping of a lesson which should be viewed and assessed by you. Other documentation can include reflections, student work, evaluations, etc. During the second half of student teaching, the second area of focus is determined with implementation and assessment to follow. If you prefer to work on both areas at once, this is acceptable. Do what works best for you. **The following is the timeline for PDP requirements:**

01/24/07	Identify area(s) of focus; complete template
01/24/07-02/09/07	Implement plan and gather documentation (1 st video taping completed)
02/12/07	Identify 2 nd area of focus and complete PDP template
02/12/07-03/09/07	Implement plan and gather documentation (2 nd video taping completed)
02/22/07	Completed PDP for 1 st area of focus due (turn in at 4040 seminar) Planning template and all documented evidence, including video tape analysis should be included (you do not need to turn in the actual video tape) The seminar activity on this date will be a peer review of your plan
03/20/07	Completed PDP for 2 nd area of focus due (turn in at 4040 seminar at my house) Planning template and all documented evidence, including video tape analysis should be included.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Name:		Date: From: To:
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List 2 aspects of teaching that you will work to strengthen during student teaching. Include a rationale for selecting each.

1.

2.

List a minimum of two methods/strategies for dealing with each aspect

Methods/Strategies	Time Line	Resources/Support	Indicators of Progress	Types of Documentation
				1. Video taping of a lesson w/analysis
				1. Video taping of a lesson w/analysis

3. **Professional Portfolio**

All students will prepare a professional portfolio for use in interviews. Most of you have prepared portfolios for your work in previous block courses. Those can simply be added to. Through selected artifacts your portfolio should demonstrate your understanding of young children, how they learn, and your recognition of and regard for their diversity of culture and learning styles. Your portfolio should contain (but is not limited to) the following:

- A cover page with name, major, etc. information
- A brief description of your teaching philosophy
- Student work samples from your teaching
- Photographs (with 1-2 sentence explanations) of your classroom, bulletin boards, learning centers, etc.
- Evaluations
- Lesson plans (only a select few to demonstrate your planning ability)
- Evidence of working with families
- Evidence of continued professional development (copy of PDP)

Evaluation

Attendance	20%
Professional Development Plan	50%
Portfolio	<u>30%</u>
Total	100%

Class Schedule:

Date	Time	Place	Activities
01/09/07	3:30-5:30	River's Crossing (following Tech. Bridges class)	Introductions; course overview; PDP outline; scheduling of meeting dates
01/29/07	4:30-6:30	River's Crossing—Break Room	Continued discussion of PDP; peer review of PDP
02/05/07	5:00-7:30	Aderhold Hall—TBD	Group discussion; small group feedback regarding unit plans for teaching
02/22/07	4:30-6:30	River's Crossing—Break Room	Discussion of student teaching issues; PDP's due; peer reviews of PDP's
03/08/07	4:30-6:30	River's Crossing—Break Room	Discussion of student teaching issues
03/20/07	5:00-7:30	Dr. Tolley's house	Celebration of successful student teaching!
04/02/07	10:00-2:00	Aderhold Hall—TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of certification applications (Kate Character) • Job applications • School law speaker • Inclusion speaker • Perfect final portfolios • PDP discussions with class • Mock interviews • Other issues that arise during student teaching
04/04/07			
04/05/07			
04/06/07			