

Advanced Early Childhood Educational Theory and Practice

HDF 609
Spring 2006

Instructor: Catherine Scott-Little, Ph.D.
150 Stone Building
(336) 256-0132
Office hours: Tuesday 9:30 – 12:30
Others by appointment
email: mcscottl@uncg.edu

Purpose

This course will examine current curriculum approaches and issues in early childhood programs as well as examine the theoretical and developmental foundations related to early childhood curriculum. Accepted practices in early childhood classrooms will be critiqued and research in curriculum and program effectiveness reviewed.

Teachers Academy Conceptual Framework Mission Statement: *The mission of professional education at UNCG is to prepare and support the professional development of caring, collaborative, and competent educators who work in diverse settings. This mission is carried out in an environment that nurtures the active engagement of all participants, values individual as well as cultural diversity and recognizes the importance of reflection and integration of theory and practice. UNCG's professional education programs are guided by shared commitments to: (a) equity and excellence in teaching, research, and service; (b) professional integrity and ethical deliberation in dealing with students and colleagues (university-based, school-based, and community-based); (c) the construction of a professional knowledge base through collaboration and collegiality; and (d) the dissemination of professional knowledge, skills and dispositions through the preparation and continuing professional development of teachers, principals and other school personnel.*

Course Objectives

1. To understand the major curriculum approaches and issues in early childhood programs (NAEYC 2.0).
2. To identify and examine underlying theoretical frameworks and ideologies in early childhood curriculum (Professional Competencies 2.0),
3. To compare and contrast various curriculum models and approaches.
4. To critically examine research in the area of early childhood curriculum (NCBK 3.0).
5. To critique curriculum with respect to its theoretical foundation and effectiveness (Professional Competencies 3.0, NAEYC 3.0).
6. To discuss and critique currently accepted best practices from both a developmental and inclusive perspective (NCBK 2.0, NAEYC 6.0),
7. To integrate information from class discussions and readings with personal perspectives on classroom practices (National Board 4.0).

8. To develop teaching and group presentation skills through leading class discussions of topics related to early childhood curriculum (National Board 2.0, Professional Competencies 6.0),
9. To further develop research synthesis and writing skills through preparation of a research paper (NCBK-6.0, NAEYC 11.0).

Class Format

The course follows a modified seminar format, emphasizing critical discussion of readings and issues as well as student responsibility for class leadership. Class sessions will take place in the traditional “in person” format as well as on-line (see the projected course schedule for details). The course focuses on theory, research, curriculum models, and various content areas (e.g., literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, movement), canvassing a wide range of conceptual frameworks and assumptions to examine various approaches to supporting children’s development and learning.

The course is intentionally provocative and challenges students to seek information beyond this setting, synthesize literature from a variety of sources, consider various epistemological stances, and continuously broaden their thinking. We will focus on accepted practices in early childhood education, but will critique them as well. We will engage in dialogues regarding early childhood theories, research, curricula, and practices.

Readings

Seefeldt, C. (1999). *The Early Childhood Curriculum: Current Findings in Theory and Practice (3rd Ed)*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Bredenkamp, S., (Ed.) (1997). *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8 (Revised Edition)*. Washington, D.C.: NAEYC.

E-Reserves and resources posted on Blackboard

Course Requirements

1. Students will be expected to attend and actively participate in class each week. Students who must be absent from class should notify the teacher ahead of time. Absence from class will be taken into consideration when assigning a final grade for the course.
2. Four classes during the semester will be conducted on-line rather than in a face-to-face format (January 31, February 14, March 14 and March 28). Students are expected to read the materials noted on the syllabus by the time that class would normally meet so they can fully participate in the on-line session. Students will also be responsible for reviewing materials posted on BlackBoard for the session. The on-line course format will involve postings and electronic communication throughout the week. A discussion question will be posted by 8:00 am on Monday. Students will participate in an on-line (but not real time) discussion throughout the week. Each student should

post at least one response to the initial discussion question by 8:00 pm on Tuesday. Additional discussion questions and/or assignments will be posted on Wednesday morning and students are expected to respond at least once before the 5:00 pm on Friday. Participation in the on-line session will be evaluated based on evidence of on-going, thoughtful participation throughout the week.

3. Reflection Papers: Students will submit reflection papers three times during the semester. The reflection papers are an opportunity for students respond to the readings and class discussion from the previous week. The prompt/questions to guide the reflection papers will be provided on the day of class and reflection papers will be due the following week. The reflection papers are due on February 14, February 28 and March 28.
4. Curriculum Critique – Students will complete a critique of a curriculum or curriculum approach. Students are free to select from any number of curricula but should select a curriculum that is of interest to them and that has sufficient information available to facilitate a thorough review in accordance with the guidelines for the project.

Some possibilities for curricula to investigate include:

1. The Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education by Carolyn Edwards, Lella Gandini, & George Forman
2. The Project Approach by Sylvia Chard and Lillian Katz
3. Creative Curriculum by Diane Trister Dodge and Laura J. Colker
4. Educating Young Children (High Scope) by Mary Hohmann and David Weikart
5. Tools of the Mind: The Vygotskian Approach to Early Childhood Education by Elena Bodrova and Deborah J. Leong.
6. Opening the World of Learning (OWL) by Judy Schickedanz and David Dickenson

These are but a few of the many, many curricula and curriculum approaches available. Detailed guidelines for the content of the critique paper will be provided and discussed in class. Your critique should be 12-15 pages (double-spaced) and in APA format, with a standard font size of 12. A two- to three- page summary of what you intend to cover is due March 14. The final paper is due April 25. You will also be required to present an overview and critique of the curriculum in class. Criteria for evaluating the curriculum critique and the presentation will be provided early in the semester.

Evaluation of Performance

Weekly participation in class discussion	50 points
Reflection Papers (3 at 15 points each)	45 points
Summary/Prospectus for Curriculum Critique	30 points
Curriculum Critique	100 points
Curriculum Critique Presentation	40 points

Total Possible Points **265**

Grading Scale:

246 - 265	A
239 – 245	A-
231 – 238	B +
220 - 230	B
212 – 219	B-
204 – 211	C +
193 - 203	C
185 – 192	C-

Assigning Points and Grades

Detailed instructions and criteria for grading assignments will be provided for each type of assignment. In general, points will be assigned based on the following criteria:

A level work (90 – 100% of possible points):

- Demonstrated comprehension of relevant conceptual knowledge about early childhood theory and curricula/appropriate practices, and the ability to critically analyze and synthesize relevant information; strong ability to communicate knowledge (either in written or oral format); demonstrated ability to organize and apply knowledge to new areas or to expand the information to make new connections within or between theory, research and practice.

B level work (80 – 89% of possible points):

- Demonstrated comprehension of relevant conceptual knowledge about early childhood theory and curricula/appropriate practices, and the ability to critically analyze and synthesize relevant information; strong ability to communicate knowledge (either in written or oral format)

C level work (70 – 79% of possible points):

- Demonstrated comprehension of basic conceptual knowledge about early childhood theory and curricula/appropriate practices but a failure to show the ability to critically analyze and synthesize relevant information; ability to communicate knowledge is adequate but not strong (either in written or oral format)

Projected Course Schedule and Readings

January 10: Introductions and course overview

January 17: Determining the early childhood curriculum and the role of play

Seefeldt, Chapter 1 & 2.

Bowman, B., Donovan, M.S., & Burns, M.S. (2001). *Eager to Learn*, Chapter 5.

Zigler, E. & Bishop-Josef, S. J. (2004). Play under siege: A historical overview. In E. Zigler, D. G. Singer, & S. J. Bishop-Josef (Eds.). *Children's play: The roots of reading*. Washington, DC: Zero to Three Press.

Log on to Blackboard and send a message to confirm that you can use the group discussion feature.

January 24 & 31 Current Best Practice Overview and Critique; Criteria for evaluating early childhood curricula and guidelines for Curriculum Critique project.

NOTE: January 31 will be an on-line class

Bredenkamp, S., (Ed.) (1997). *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8 (Revised Edition)*. Washington, D.C.: NAEYC.

Cannella, G.S. (1997). *Deconstructing Early Childhood Education*. Chapters 1, 5 & 6.

Hart, Burts, & Charlesworth (1997). *Integrated curriculum and developmentally appropriate practice* Chapter 14.

Lubeck, S. (1998) Is developmentally appropriate practice for everyone? *Childhood Education*, 74, 283-292.

Charlesworth, R. (1998) Response to Sally Lubeck's "Is developmentally appropriate practice for everyone? *Childhood Education*, 74, 293-298.

Charlesworth, R. (1998) Developmentally appropriate practice is for everyone. *Childhood Education*, 74, 274-282.

Lubeck, S. (1998). Is DAP for everyone? A response. *Childhood Education*, 74, 299-301.

Hart, Burts, & Charlesworth, *Integrated curriculum and developmentally appropriate practice*. Chapter 1 (pages 1 – 13).

February 7 Developmentally Appropriate Practice for Children with Disabilities

Seefeldt, Chapter 11

Hart, Burts, & Charlesworth (1997). *Integrated curriculum and developmentally appropriate practice* Chapter 13.

Belkin, L. (September 12, 2004). The Lessons of Classroom 506. *New York Times Magazine*.

REFLECTION PAPER 1 DUE ON FEBRUARY 14 AT 5:00

February 14 (ON-LINE CLASS) Relationship Between Theory and Practice

Hart, Burts, & Charlesworth, *Integrated curriculum and developmentally appropriate practice* Chapter 2.

Schoonmaker, F. & Ryan, S. (1996). Does theory lead practice? Teachers' constructs about teaching: Top-down perspectives. *Advances in Early Education and Day Care*, 8, 117-151.

Williams, L. R. (1996). Does practice lead theory? Teachers' constructs about teaching: Bottom-up perspectives. *Advances in Early Education and Day Care*, 8, 153-184.

Morgan, H. (1999). *The Imagination of Early Childhood Education*. Chapter 3

February 21 Early Learning Standards and their implications for early childhood curricula/Language and Literacy

Wien, C. A. (2004). *Negotiating Standards in the Primary Classroom: The Teacher's Dilemma*, Forward, Preface, and Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 & 9.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2004). *Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers and Strategies for Guiding Their Success*. (available at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/success/downloads/foundations.pdf>)

Seefeldt, Chapters 3 & 4

Whitehurst, G. J. & Lonigan, C. J. (1998). Child development and emergent literacy. *Child Development*, 69, 848-872.

Pickett, L. (1998). Literacy learning during block play. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 12 (2), 225-230.

National Early Literacy Panel: A Synthesis of Scientific Research on Young Children's Early Literacy Development. Power point presentation presented at the Ohio Department of Education Early Childhood Conference. Columbus, Ohio. October 23, 2005.

REFLECTION PAPER 2 DUE FEBRUARY 28 IN CLASS

February 28 Language and Literacy (continued); Art, Music & Movement

Seefeldt, Chapters 8 & 9

March 7 Spring Break

March 14 (ON-LINE CLASS) Math and Science

SUMMARY OF CURRICULUM CRITIQUE PAPER DUE MARCH 14 at 5:00

Seefeldt, Chapters 5 & 6

French, L. (2004). Science as the center of a coherent, integrated early childhood curriculum. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 19*, 138-149.

Gelman, R. & Brenneman, K. (2004). Science learning pathways for young children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 19*, 150-158.

Sophian, C. (2004). Mathematics for the future: Developing a Head Start curriculum to support mathematics learning. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 19*, 59-81.

March 21 Alternative Perspectives in Early Childhood Curriculum: Montessori

Morgan, H. (1999) *Imagination of early childhood education* Chapter 5.

Montessori, M. (1964). *The Montessori Method* (A.E. George Translator). New York: Schocken. (Original work published in English in 1912). Pp.72-106.

Humphryes, J. (1998). The developmental appropriateness of high-quality Montessori programs. *Young Children, 53*, 4-16.

REFLECTION PAPER 3 DUE MARCH 28 AT 5:00

March 28 (ON-LINE CLASS) Alternative Perspectives: Overview of Other Models

Morgan, H. *Imagination of early childhood education* Chapter 4.

Seefeldt, Chapter 12

April 4 & April 18 Curriculum Comparison Research

NOTE: Class will not meet on April 11

Bowman, B., Donovan, M.S., & Burns, M.S. (2001). *Eager to Learn*, Chapter 4.

Stipek, D.R., Feiler, R., Daniels, D., & Milburn, S. (1995). Effects of different instructional approaches on young children's achievement and motivation. *Child Development*, 66, 209-223.

Marcon, R.A. (1999). Differential impact of preschool models on development and early learning of inner-city children: A three-cohort study. *Developmental Psychology*, 35, 358-375.

Schweinhart, L.J., & Weikart, D.P., Larner, M.B. (1997). The High/Scope preschool curriculum comparison study through age 23. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 12, 117-143.

Dunn, L. & Kontos, S. (1997). Developmentally Appropriate Practices: What does research tell us? *Young Children*, 52 (5), 4 -13.

April 25 Student Curriculum Presentations
CURRICULUM CRITIQUE PAPERS DUE

May 2 Student Curriculum Presentations