SPED 73995 / IEC 709 Doctoral Seminar
Ensuring Access and Progress of All Children within the General Curriculum

Syllabus
Fall 2007

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<th>University of Kentucky</th>
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What will I learn or gain by taking this class?

- Information regarding current trends and issues facing those who identify, implement, and evaluate curricula for young children and their families.
- Effective strategies for guiding programs through systems change and innovation.
- A rich “library” of resources related to curriculum for young children.
- A strong network of colleagues who are interested in improving early childhood systems.

When and where will we meet?

- F2f Meetings will be held at the University of Kentucky (Room 27 Dickey Hall), and Kent State University (Room 210 White Hall). from 4:30 until 7:00
  - September 10
  - September 17
  - September 24
  - October 1
  - October 8
  - November 5
  - November 12
  - November 26
  - December 10
- Online asynchronous meeting dates
  - August 27
  - September 3
  - October 15
  - October 29
  - November 19
  - December 3

How will participants in the course and the instructors communicate and interact with one another?

- During f2f meetings (videoconferencing)
- Through the use of WebCT/VISTA (e-mail, discussion board, chat rooms).
- F2f meetings with instructors can be made as needed.
What is WebCT/VISTA?

- WebCT/VISTA (often referred to as just VISTA) is a course management e-learning system. Features include grade books, discussion threads, e-mail, chat rooms, and learning modules.
- Class information including syllabus, description of assignments, weekly lectures/handouts, course policies, supplemental readings, tips, and related links are posted within VISTA. You can obtain desired course information using any Internet browser and going to http://vista.kent.edu (see screen shot with directions below):
  - Once you’ve arrived at the site, click on the Professional Development hyperlink, then on the Login button. When prompted, enter your user name and password (see e-mail from KPF). Our class for Fall 2007 should be visible. Click on the course and enter the site. You may be promoted to download javascript etc. To access files posted in VISTA you will need PowerPoint software, WORD, and Acrobat Reader (can download for free).
  - If you have trouble logging in to Vista or need help, please contact the Kent State Help Desk (330-672-HELP; helpdesk@kent.edu).

Are there required readings for class?

- Yes, weekly readings will be posted in VISTA.
- Students are also expected to seek additional resources.
- No textbook is required for the course.
- Students are not expected to read everything posted or available on a given topic, just enough to fully participate, complete assignments, and enhance knowledge of a given topic.
What are the required assignments and can any of them be modified to better meet my personal goals?

- Full descriptions of course assignments are posted in VISTA
- All assignments can be modified through conversations with the instructors.
- Multiple means of expression are encouraged (i.e., verbal and non-verbal expressions).

What should I expect in terms of workload?

- Time intensive in terms of reading new material and participating with others, particularly through VISTA.
- Assignments, while comprehensive, should not be as intensive if participants work to embedded them into existing or future roles and responsibilities.

What should I do if I have questions or concerns?

- Review course policies for answers to basic questions around participation, grading, and attendance (course policies are posted in VISTA).
- Talk to other students (e-mail other participants via VISTA or see copy of student passports for additional contact information).
- Post questions in appropriate online discussion thread in VISTA.
- E-mail the instructor (kpretti@kent.edu or kfrontczak@neo.rr.com).

What is expected of me as a participant in this class?

- Students will work together in learning and applying course content.
- Students will engage in self-reflection and evaluation activities to facilitate changes in their practice.
- Students will find creative ways to explore new ideas and problem solve with others.
- Students are expected to attend, be prepared for, and participate in all class sessions.
- Each class session will be composed of problem-based learning activities, cooperative learning group activities, demonstrations, lectures, panel discussions, time for group and individual reflection, and lectures supported by PowerPoint. Class sessions will also provide students with opportunities to apply new knowledge and receive feedback on assignments.
- Students are expected to complete all assignments according to all course policies. All products should be complete, professional, and on time.
- Lastly, students are expected to be information literate and effectively use technology in their search for information, communication with the instructors and other students, and in dissemination of products. All students must ensure they have weekly access to a computer to engage in word processing activities, e-mail communications, and Internet searches. Most students prefer to use the e-mail address/account automatically generated through the use of VISTA.
What is expected of the instructors for this class?
- Flexibility
- Supportive learning environment
- Ongoing critical feedback
- Stimulating learning activities

What is the instructors’ philosophy toward teaching and learning?
- Learning is co-constructed by the interactions of those involved in the learning activity.
- Much of the responsibility for learning falls to the participant, but a strong guide is needed to make learning effective and efficient.
- Improving leadership skills requires ongoing reflection, data collection, and revision.
- Learners should be engaged and critical thinkers – but the instructors needs to encourage multiple means of engagement and promote critical thinking.

Jones and colleagues (1995) describe engaged learning as follows:

In engaged learning settings, students are responsible for their own learning; they take charge and are self-regulated. They define learning goals and problems that are meaningful to them; have a big picture of how specific activities relate to those goals; develop standards of excellence; and evaluate how well they have achieved their goals. They have alternative routes or strategies for attaining goals—and some strategies for correcting errors and redirecting themselves when their plans do not work. They know their own strengths and weaknesses and know how to deal with them productively and constructively. Engaged learners are also able to shape and manage change (p. 8).

How can I be most successful?
- Identify strengths and emerging skills as a learner. You will need strong information literacy and writing skills. For emerging skills seek outside help from other students, other faculty, and resources on campus (e.g., Writing Center, Educational Librarian)
- Check your time management skills. This is not a class where you can allot a single day for participation. New information will be posted daily and you need to develop strategies for keeping up and moving forward.

References
Purpose – To encourage and support active participation in all course related activities. To give participants opportunities to promote critical thinking, enhance team collaboration skills, and improve communication skills.

General Description – A critical aspect of any learning experience is the active and sustained participation by the learner.

- Participation will be evaluated in terms of how actively members participate in class sessions (online and f-2-f). Examples of active participation include listening, commenting, asking follow-up questions, working collaboratively, sharing resources/ideas, providing solutions, and engaging in discussion.

- Participation will be evaluated in terms of readiness to discuss issues related to class topics. Participants demonstrate readiness by conducting Internet searches, reading supplemental or recommended readings, and/or talking to community experts. Evidence of being ready for class will come in the form or ability to answer questions, provide brief summaries and solutions during discussions, and/or provide examples and resources to share with other class members.

- Participation will be evaluated in terms of following through with requests from the instructor designed to develop, sustain, and improve the learning experience.

- Participation in online learning activities is also expected.
  - Online learning activities will consist of asynchronous threaded discussions and asynchronous cooperative group activities. Students are expected to follow all instructions provided in VISTA and to contact the instructor immediately if they experience difficulties accessing the directions, utilizing technology, or completing assigned tasks.
  - The online experiences are asynchronous in nature and do not require students to participate at the same time or everyday. Rather, students should plan on distinct times during which they will work on assigned activities. For example, students should check the required tasks assigned and determine what they need to accomplish the tasks (read, talk with others etc.). Students should then engage in the task (e.g., post comments to a discussion board, work with asynchronous collaborative groups etc.). Lastly, students should plan time to check in on the progress of their group or of an activity towards the end of the online experience period to revise, reflect, and share additional comments.
Assignment Two – Quality Curriculum Frameworks

**Points – 30**

**Due Date – October 31st**

**Purpose** – An opportunity for students to explore one or more of the elements of a curriculum framework in greater detail and to disseminate a product that has utility beyond a class assignment.

**General Description** – A curriculum framework as defined by the Division for Early Childhood and as described in class includes four elements: assessment, scope and sequence, activities and instruction, and progress monitoring. While continuing to evolve, a definition of each can be provided; however, what can or should be considered as a quality feature of each element is still open for discussion.

- Students will work independently to learn about the quality features of one or more of the curriculum framework elements.
- After selecting one or more elements students will brainstorm and begin to explore the literature in an effort to determine what is or should be meant by “quality” as it relates to their selected element or elements. Students can utilize one another in brainstorming and for support during their beginning searches.
- The end result of student inquiry will be a product that at a minimum includes a supported observable/measurable statement or definition regarding the quality features of a particular element(s).
  - Students will have week 8 (beginning October 15th) to brainstorm, explore, and discuss issues related to quality.
  - Students will be expected to disseminate their products electronically through VISTA or a more sophisticated and/or user-friendly electronic venue.
  - Products should be posted/disseminated by October 31st.
  - The length and type of product is determined by the student through conversations with the instructor. The only requirements are that the product be in an electronic format and be usable beyond as a class assignment (i.e., has utility in practice).
Purpose:
Students will be asked to demonstrate critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills as they reach consensus on a “real life” challenge faced by many leaders in the field.

General Description:
Casequest Defined: A Casequest is an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information used to guide the activity is located by the learner or group of learners. The Casequest is designed to allow the learner to analyze a body of knowledge deeply, transform it in some way, and demonstrate an understanding of the material by creating something that others can respond to. A final product is developed that demonstrates the group’s understanding regarding the task, process, evaluation process, conclusions, and resources used.

Teams will engage in a Casequest with the challenge of creating a single set of recommendations for either an early intervention/child care center director or a preschool program supervisor.

- **Process**
  - Select a case (i.e., select ABC community preschool or Mason Early Intervention and Childcare Center) – see descriptions in VISTA
  - Select a leadership (see VISTA sign up sheet). For each leadership role a description of the role’s perspective/identity that is to be assumed is provided.
  - Embrace the biases and perspective of the selected role and review resources provided to help you get started (see VISTA)
  - Understand the challenge the director or supervisor faces (see VISTA)
  - Work asynchronously and/or synchronously to develop a set of recommendations for the director/ supervisor. Each role/perspective is expected to generate their own set of recommendations but after reviewing all recommendations, students will work together to develop single, agreed upon plan or set of recommendations to propose to the director/supervisor. All individual and group recommendations must be supported from the literature (e.g., evidence-based practices literature, systems change and organizational development literature etc.).

- **Products/Suggested Timelines**
  - Students are encouraged to work and share findings as well as their individual recommendations within VISTA throughout the semester. It is fine to discuss and work with the other Casequest members as well as members of your assigned case.
  - Individual recommendations should be posted in VISTA by **November 26th**.
  - Casequest teams will share their final set of recommendations (verbally and/or non-verbally) as well as their journey during the culminating activity on **December 10th**.
Registration Policy

It is the student's responsibility to ensure proper enrollment in classes. You are advised to review your official class schedule during the first week of the semester to ensure proper enrollment. Should you determine an error in your class schedule, you need to correct it with the advising office. If registration errors are not corrected and you continue to attend this class although you are not officially enrolled, you will not receive a grade at the conclusion of the semester. Further, in order to avoid the $100.00 late registration fee or a re-registration fee due to nonpayment, all fees must be paid in accordance with KSU policies. See the following websites for additional information.

http://www.kent.edu/bursar/Tuition-FeeSchedules/index.cfm
http://www.registrars.kent.edu/home/info/AboutReg.htm

Students with Disabilities Policy

University policy 3342-3-18 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Accessibility Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit www.kent.edu/sas for more information on registration procedures).

Please review KSU's policy on cheating and plagiarism
http://imagine.kent.edu/policyreg/print_view.asp?ID=505&Table=Archive
For a copy of KSU's digest of rules see the following
http://www.kent.edu/CurrentStudents/upload/0311252RulesandRegs.pdf