

HDFS 3127 - Professional Development and Advocacy in Early Childhood

The University of Connecticut
Department of Human Development and Family Studies

We teach who we are. Parker Palmer

If a doctor, lawyer, or dentist had forty people in his office at one time, all of whom had different needs, and some of whom didn't want to be there and were causing trouble, and the doctor, lawyer, or dentist, without assistance, had to treat them all with professional excellence for nine months, then he might have some conception of the classroom teacher's job.

Donald D. Quinn

Instructor: Meg Galante-DeAngelis

Lectures: Tues/Thurs 11:00 - 12:20

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Catalog Description: Professional Development and Advocacy in Early Childhood Three credits. Prerequisite: HDFS 3120. Instructor permission required.

Examination of historical, philosophical, psychological, and contemporary influences on the field of Early Childhood Education. Issues discussed include comprehensive services, the workforce, quality, funding, and child outcomes. Topics are analyzed with a focus on each student's professional development and on advocacy for change.

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Texts: Under consideration

1. **Foundations and Best Practices in Early Childhood Education: History, Theories and Approaches to Learning** Lissanna Follari Pearson; 2nd edition (January 16, 2010)
2. **To Teach: The Journey** by William Ayers and Ryan Alexander- Tanner Teachers College Press; 3rd Edition (May 1, 2010)
3. **Informed Advocacy in Early Childhood Care and Education** by Judith E Kieff Prentice Hall, (2008)
4. **Professionalism in Early Childhood Education: Doing Our Best for Young Children** by Stephanie Feeney Pearson; 1 edition (September 18, 2011)

5. **Teaching Young Children in Violent Times: Building a Peaceable Classroom** by Diane E. Levin Educators for Social (June 10, 2003)

6. **Education for a Civil Society: How Guidance Teaches Young Children Democratic Life Skills** by Dan Gartrell NAEYC 2012

(For more from Dan Gartrell see <http://www.naeyc.org/yc/columns/guidance>)

7. Topic Specific Readings on HuskyCT

A. Curriculum from Unsmiling Faces (Handout)

B. Children Need Attentive Support in Wartime

C. When One Family Is Not Enough: The Lives of Young Children in Foster Care

D. Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Environments for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Families in Early Childhood settings

E. NAEYC Advocacy Tool Kit

F. Team Teaching and the Question of Philosophy

G. Others as assigned



Course Objectives

Our course objectives are varied but we begin a journey with a quote from Parker Palmer, “Technique is what teachers use until the real teacher arrives.” You have all had time to experience the uses of many techniques helpful to teachers. This course will help you to begin to engage with your inner self and to find yourself as a beginning professional, your place in teaching, develop your skills for identifying your future needs and goals and your skills for advocacy.

1. To build an historical perspective of early childhood education practices in the United States and their international roots by studying the various philosophical and theoretical paradigms upon which early learning programs are based.
2. To examine recent events in early education and childcare, and the place of early childhood education in society and to become part of the future through the development of advocacy skills.
3. To address the issues in developing and implementing high quality early childhood education including the importance of family, culture, and community, the needs of diverse learners, the role of assessment in early learning, and the support of children’s emotional and social well being as essential components of the learning process.
4. To examine the concept of developmentally appropriate practice, particularly authentic assessment, and its application to across a range of early childhood settings and different developmental levels through research, inquiry, and discussion the role of the teacher, the family, the community and other agencies in early childhood education.
5. To develop an individualized framework for critical analysis of and reflection on the information and theories covered in this course and to use them as a guide for identifying future areas of growth.
6. To explore and reflect upon the students individual learning and teaching styles and to examine these in the context of a goodness of fit with any particular theory or practice with the goal of developing the skills to be able to choose an appropriate professional setting.
7. To synthesize the information from other HDFS courses and to begin to apply this information in practical ways to beginning professional teaching career.

How will this course prepare me to teach Young Children?

This course is designed to meet the following NAEYC Standards for Preparing Teachers specific to Foundations of Early Childhood Education (Found in Appendix 1

Course Design

This course will expand upon principles and information presented in other HDFS courses, most especially HDFS 3120. The course will be divided into six sections:

1. The History of Early Childhood Education in America (Lecture and Discussion)

In this section of the course we will examine the long, interesting and somewhat checkered history of childhood and Early Childhood Education in the United States. Selected readings will be provided to enhance class discussions. We will:

- a. define early childhood education
- b. provide a chronological historical overview of the changing concept of childhood and education throughout history.
- c. examine the ideas of the theorists whose work and writings helped to shape the early developments in early childhood education
- d. introduce major historical developments in early childhood programs from the early 19th century, including the establishment of the common schools, public elementary schools and early childhood programs including kindergarten, nursery school, day care centers and family based care.
- e. explore the work of several important pioneers in the field of kindergarten education and describe the first kindergarten programs in America.
- f. examine the development of a new focus for the kindergarten away from the original Froebelian model, particularly with regard to the influence of the new field of child study.
- g. discuss the evolution of child study and the impact that developmental theories have had on research and practice in the field of early childhood education.
- h. review the development of the nursery school from its beginnings in England to its development as a unique early childhood education program in North America.
- i. review the contributions of these European programs to early childhood education in North America.
- j. examine the role played by the U.S. government in the development of child care and early childhood education programs and the influence this involvement has had on the entire field.
- k. survey the history of the day care movement and discusses recent development in day care
- l. analyze how the early childhood curriculum developed and changed from the days of the Froebelian kindergarten to post modern views of curriculum.
- m. discuss significant recent developments and contemporary issues in the field of early childhood.

2. Comparative Educational Programs Models and Evaluation of Models (Student Lead Discussions)

In this section of the course we will examine the various programs available for the education of young children. You will use the Follari book as your base for the discussion you will lead. Chapters 3 - 11 of Follari will be assigned to frame our discussions in Section II – Comparative Educational Programs Models and Evaluation of Models. You will also choose a book about your topic of choice which you will review as part of your discussion. We will:

- a. examine the diversity of settings, teacher qualifications, types of employment, locations, etc. in the early childhood field.
- b. learn the basic components of quality in an early childhood program setting.
- c. define developmentally appropriate practice in relation to age, individual, and social and cultural contexts.
- d. identify the goals and basic components of several prominent, theoretical curriculum models (i.e. Montessori, High Scope, Reggio Emilia, Project Approach, Constructivism, Creative Curriculum, Waldorf, Head Start, PITC etc.)
- e. explain developmentally appropriate practices in relation to the major theoretical and practical curriculum models.
- f. examine some of the theories of learning and development and explain the influence of these beliefs on early childhood programs today.

3. Early Childhood Development and Family Interactions in Popular Culture (Student Lead Discussions)

In this section of the course we will examine how early childhood development and family interactions are portrayed in popular media and culture. This will include our presentations on **Children in the News**. We will pose the following questions:

- a. What is the level of understanding of early childhood development and family interactions in popular culture and media?
- b. What effect does this level of understanding or misunderstanding have on our work, parent's interactions with us, and with their children and on the educational system in general.

4. Tough Topics: Making It Better (Roundtable)

In this section of the course we will examine difficult topics that teachers deal with in their professional life. The topics will include but not be limited to: **Prescriptive Curriculum, Children in Wartime, Children and Foster Care, Diverse Family Constellations**. Other topics will be generated from class interest and experience.

5. Becoming a Professional: Philosophy of Education and Reflective Practice in Teaching (Roundtable)

We will spend the last weeks of the course in discussion of philosophy of education and the use of reflective practice in teaching. How do we sustain ourselves in teaching and how do we balance the many roles and demands that are part of a teacher's life? How do we keep ourselves engaged and ready to take on the daily challenges? How do we do the most important and most difficult of all careers in the present climate of education in America?

We will:

- a. examine and use the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct to resolve basic ethical dilemmas in early education.
- b. explore the importance of reflective thinking and practice in becoming an effective early childhood teacher.
- c. explore methods to enjoy and enhance your own wellness using contemplation, reflection, relaxation, mindfulness and other meditative and self-acknowledging processes of being and growth.

- d. identify professional journals, websites, organizations, and community agencies that support the early childhood professional.
- e. enhance the skills necessary to begin to build support systems within the teaching profession that will help to guide and sustain you in your career.
- f. craft a personal teaching philosophy that reflects your individuality, personality and your beliefs about your future as a teacher and the future you hope to help build for your students.
- g. develop a plan for future professional development based on areas of talent, interest and need.

6. Becoming an Advocate for Children (Roundtable)

We will spend time throughout the semester reading about and discussing the teacher’s role as an advocate. To this end, we will be using the text: **Informed Advocacy in Early Childhood Care and Education** by Judith E Kieff as a guide to the development of skills and plans for effective, successful advocacy campaigns. Each student will, with a partner, develop and carry out an advocacy campaign of their teams own design and that targets on an issue in Early Childhood Education that is a passion for the team members.

This semester long project will align with one of the Key Experiences for the completion of the Early Childhood Teaching Credential. A rubric for this assignment is on out Husky CT site.



Participation

Because this course is based on discussions and presentations, participation is an integral part of the course. A daily record of participation will be taken. Participation will be counted as one fifth of your final grade.

Excused Absences: Please understand that simply notifying me that you are ill, have an appointment, have overslept, have had car trouble, have to attend a funeral or other reasons for missing class does not count as an excused absence. I understand that absences are sometimes unavoidable, but no credit will be given for participation in a missed class.



Assignments

1. Class Discussions of the Comparative Educational Programs Models and Evaluation of Models

Reading Reflections – As you read each of the chapters of the Follari book, reflect upon how you resonate to each philosophy of education. You will develop your opinions by making a personal pros and cons list for each of the philosophies. How does this particular philosophy mesh with your own feelings and beliefs about how education should be structured for young children? These reflections will be brought to class to guide our class discussions of the philosophies and then be put into a portfolio to become the foundation of your own Teaching Philosophy which you will work on throughout the course and will finalize at the culmination of this course. These reflections will all be submitted along with the final draft of your Teaching Philosophy at semester’s end.

2. Children/Education in the News - Each week, the landscape of knowledge that supports our work with children expands. To stay abreast of new research; local, national and international news; medical, legal and pedagogical developments etc. we must be connected to the latest writings – whether

academic or news and popular culture. Exploring/readings from clearinghouse websites American Federation of Teachers and the NAEYC, Children's Defense Fund websites is a great beginning but many other news sources are also important to explore. We will use local and national electronic and print media and any other appropriate sources. We must demonstrate awareness of the broader contexts and challenges within which early childhood professionals work. Your job is to begin your immersion in this complex and interesting world by finding or reading the articles that your classmates have found. **You will bring the article and your written work to the class where you will lead a short discussion with your classmates on the topic.**

* Table of Dates removed for brevity but will be included for students

3. Discussion Questions/Discussion Leader -Each student will be in charge of preparing to lead a class discussion and will prepare to be part of a formal group discussion.

Discussion Leader: You will be assigned an Early Childhood Practice Model. You will make a short PowerPoint presentation that will answer the following questions:

1. What is the Theoretical Base of this Model?
2. What is the Historical Context in which this Model was designed?
3. Was this model designed to support a particular societal, and/or pedagogical issue?
4. How is this model expressed in the United States? Are there schools in the area that use this model?

Reflection and analysis: Share with your classmates the connection between this model and your growing understanding of your own philosophy of education. Ask if any of them is willing to share some thoughts from their prepared reflections.

Group Discussion: Students will work in groups to watch and analyze the movies **Nursery University and Waiting for Superman**. **The group should watch the movie together to develop discussion about the movie.** Movies will be available to stream on HuskyCT or can be watched together in HDB 105 by appointment. Groups will be assigned a set of guiding questions and will watch their movie with that set of questions in mind. Each group will present their ideas to the group and lead a discussion from their assigned perspective.

4. Developing Curriculum to Support Children:

A. Take notes on **Teaching Young Children in Violent Times: Building a Peaceable Classroom** by Diane E. Levin and design a classroom experience that addresses one of the central ideas that you have gleaned from the book. Bring the experience to class so that it can be part of our discussion.

B. Take notes on **Education for a Civil Society: How Guidance Teaches Young Children Democratic Life Skills** by Dan Gartrell and design a classroom experience that addresses one of the central ideas that you have gleaned from the book. Bring the experience to class so that it can be part of our discussion.

5. Post-Section Meta-Reflections:

Reflections and responses come to us in many ways and it takes some practice to become skilled at making full, deep reflections. We will be reflecting in several ways in this class, including Post-Section Meta-Reflections. The course is divided into the following six sections: Historical Overview of ECE, Comparative Educational Programs Models and Evaluation of Models, Early Childhood and Families in Popular Culture, Tough Topics: Making It Better, Finding Ourselves. Within each section we will be reflecting on readings. At the end of each section, we will reflect to synthesize the work in the section. The topic of the Meta-Reflection for each section is to reflect on how the experiences of each section will inform, change, and/or support your development as a teacher. Reflections should be **no more than 500 words**. Each reflection is worth up to 20 points. These are to be handed in in hard copy in class due dates to follow:

Part I - Historical Overview of ECE	Due
Part II - Comparative Educational Programs Models and Evaluation of Models	Due
Part III - Supporting Children and Families	Due
Part IV - Becoming A Professional	Due
Part V - Becoming An Advocate	Due
Part VI - Children In the News	Due

6. Advocacy Project - You will develop and complete an advocacy project focusing on the welfare of children or the promotion of the early childhood professions in our community. You will design these projects to support your own advocacy and leadership interests.

7. Creating an "I Make a Difference Box" - As the years pass, teachers accumulate 'stuff'. Much of this stuff is saved because you plan to use it to make materials for the classroom. But we rarely think of making plans for ourselves. Over our years of teaching, we collect memories and these memories will help to nurture our souls as teachers. Over the years, we will collect the stories of our children - incidents that delight, surprise or teach us - but we rarely write these down. Sometimes children give us things - pictures, a rock, gift of any kind. Sometimes you receive letters, cards or photos from families and students thanking you for teaching and influencing them. You might even get recognized by colleagues, administration, or professional organizations. Instead of filing all of this recognition away or worst yet, throwing it away, create a treasure box that you can go back to time and again. This will be particularly useful when you are feeling down or when teacher burnout is raging full force. This project will assure that you will be able to rekindle why you became a teacher in the first place. You are special and you do indeed make a difference! Make sure to add a journal for your yearly reflections (See The Value of Self-Reflection - Any Time Of Year, It's Important To Self-Reflect on HuskyCT)

8. Participation: This class relies on active participation of all the class members. Participation requires preparation and involvement in all aspects of the class.

9. Exams - Midterm and Final Exams - Essays - Date Supplied by the University

Grades:

Class Participation (based on 25 of 28 classes)	Up to 8 points available for each class	Up to 200 points
Reading Reflections	Up to 10 points each	Up to 80 points
PowerPoint Presentations on program model	Up to 50 points	Up to 50 points
Reflection and Analysis of Assigned Movie	Up to 20 points	Up to 20 points

Plan for Professional Development	Up to 100 points	Up to 100 points
Classroom Experience for Teaching Young Children in Violent Times: Building a Peaceable Classroom by Diane E. Levin	Up to 20 points	Up to 20 points
Classroom Experience for Education for a Civil Society: How Guidance Teaches Young Children Democratic Life Skills by Dan Gartrell NAEYC	Up to 20 points	Up to 20 points
Post-Section Meta-Reflections:	Up to 10 points each	Up to 60 points
Children/Education in the News	Up to 25 points each	Up to 50 points
Advocacy/Leadership Project	Up to 100 points	Up to 100 points
I Make a Difference Box	Up to 50 points	Up to 50 points
Philosophy of Teaching	Up to 50 points	Up to 50 points
Exams	Up to 50 points each	Up to 100 points
	Total Points Available	Up to 900 points

Religious Observations - This section will include a list of all observations that fall on class days and includes the University's "Statement on Class Activities During Religious Holidays."

BUNCHED FINALS: Bunched finals may be rescheduled at the Information Desk in Wilbur Cross.