ELED 545
Issues in the Development of the Elementary Curriculum
Texas A&M University-Commerce ~ Spring, 2015

Instructor: Martha M. Foote, Ed.D
Office: 903.886.5413
E-mail: Martha.Foote@tamuc.edu

Office Hours: At Rockwall, either by appointment and on Wednesday before class

Catalog Course Description: The purpose of this course is to note how various philosophies have influenced the development of the elementary curriculum in order to meet the changing social and economic trends. Research articles will be studied in order to evaluate selection of procedures and materials. Practical experiences will be provided in the construction of course of study units for the elementary grades.

Textbooks:

Best Practice,, Fourth Edition: *Bringing Standards to Life in America's Classrooms. Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., & Hyde, A. (ISBN No. 978-0325043548*).

The Hundred Languages of Children—Advanced Reflections, 3rd edition (2012) edited by Carolyn Edwards, Lella Gandini, and George Forman and published by Praeger in Santa Barbara, California. {Make sure you order the new 3rd edition; previous editions are dramatically different}

Additional Resources:
TEKS documents for your grade level– Please bring to class each evening.

Schlechty, P. (2011) Engaging Students: The Next Level of *Working on the Work.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

A journal article of your choice from a peer reviewed professional journal. (guidelines on page 3)

Class Dates and Times: **Selected Mondays, 5: 00 – 9:00 p.m.**
- January 28
- February 11
- March 4
- April 8
- April 29

Face-to-face Instruction. Educators enrolled in this course will spend approximately 30 clock hours in face-to-face Instruction with the instructor.

Web-Enhanced Instruction. This course is web-enhanced. Thus email and internet connections are required in order to 1) prepare assignments to be submitted via email and/or e-college, the online course system of Texas A&M-Commerce; 2) communicate regularly with the course instructor and those enrolled in the course; (2) retrieve course materials and documents from the

instructor; and 3) submit assignments for feedback and evaluation. It is expected that those enrolled spend a minimum of 10 hours of time during the semester with the web-enhanced components of the course. Among the components that are web-enhanced are reflection papers, group collaborative discussions, and reflective discussion/documentation of your classroom application through your teaching project.

Course Objective and Competencies. The primary objective of this class is for students to 1) become fully aware of best practices in teaching the primary subject areas in elementary schools; 2) employ best practices in their classrooms not previously used; 3) document results of employing best practices; 4) develop an in-depth awareness of one curriculum area in support of the primary curriculum; 5) contrast currently used teaching practices with those recognized as best practices; and 6) adjust instructional practices accordingly.

By the conclusion of the term, the student is expected to

1) Have knowledge of the TEKS/curriculum in all major subjects taught in elementary schools, and how they align with state and national curriculum initiatives.
2) Employ best practices not previously used
3) Document the results of employing best practices.
4) Develop competency in planning, analyzing, and reflecting upon results of instructional design as evidenced by the presentation of your teaching/learning project.
5) Develop an in-depth awareness of one curriculum area
6) Implement teaching and learning strategies based on the learning acquired in this course.

Course Requirements. Those enrolled in this course are expected to

1. Attend classes and online live discussions (2). Report on time, participate in all class activities, and stay until the class is dismissed. Monitor the engagement level during class activities.
2. Participate in a collaboratively-designed Best Practices Presentations to share the latest research and best practices in one of the key curriculum areas taught in elementary classrooms. Included in this assignment is exploring a content specific professional organization's web site to determine current critical issues, mission and goals.
3. Complete a teaching and learning project exploring one or more innovative practices. Share the results of those experiences with curriculum design and/or instructional strategies not previously used in a *documentation*/*poster session* during the last class session this semester. Recent research on your topic will be included through reading and writing a summary on one research article about your project / topic. Collaboration and/or involvement with parents of your elementary students may be a part of this project.
4. Reaction Papers and Threaded Discussions. Reading assignments for each session are followed by one of two types of response assignments: 1) reaction papers which are completed and submitted to eCollege and 2) threaded discussions which require you to interact online with your colleagues.
5. Complete a 1-2 page final reflection based on readings, class activities, discussion and your teaching learning project due the last class day with your project documentation.

Evaluation Procedures:

1. Participation. Self-Assessment of 1) Attendance and Participation, 2) Preparedness, 3) Leadership, 4) Enthusiasm, and 5) Thoughtfulness will be done at the completion of each class session. Productivity during group activities will be assessed to determine 1) engagement, 2) strategic compliance, 3) ritual compliance, 4) retreatism, or 5) rebellion.

2. Curriculum Area Best Practice Presentation. A collaborative assessment conference protocol will be used to assess the Best Practice Presentations ***demonstrating*** *best practices* and

sharing findings of the latest research about teaching the subject areas common to elementary schools. The teacher will participate in the evaluation as a peer.

3. On-line Reflection as part of a Professional Learning Community. Reflections that connect the course readings with the course activities, classroom experiences, individual research and the reflections of class members will be submitted on a web discussion board; a final integrated reflection will be completed about your Teaching / Learning Project.

4. Teaching / Learning Project. Clear and compelling standards for this project will be developed together and represented through a rubric designed during the course to determine the quality of the projects and documentation or posters about the projects. Individually designed evaluation forms will be used as well during the *gallery walk* with the documentation/poster session.

Journal Articles. You will include at least one journal article as part of the research for your Teaching / Learning project. You will need to select one article from the appropriate peer reviewed journal groups listed below:

Early Childhood Education/Elementary Education

- Childhood Education
- *Young Children*
- *The Elementary School Journal*
- *Teaching K-8*
- *Instructor*

Curriculum

- *Curriculum Journal*
- *Educational Leadership*

Reading/Literacy

- *Language Arts*
- *Journal of Literacy Research*
- *Journal of Reading*
- *Reading Teacher*

Mathematics

- *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*
- *Mathematics Teacher*
- *Teaching Children Mathematics*

Science

- *Journal of Elementary Science Education*
- *Science and Children*

Social Studies

- *Social Education*
- *Social Studies and the Young Learner*
- *Theory and Research in Social Education*

After selecting and reading the article, you are to compose a one-page narrative summary of the article. In your summary, you will highlight important points/findings from the article. Your summary should include appropriate citation formatting (see APA) and a complete article reference (see APA – and sample below):

Author, A.A., & Author B. B. (Year). Title of article. Title of Journal / Periodical, *volume number* (issue number), pages.

Grading Considerations

Individual assignments are evaluated on the following factors:

1) Thoroughness in the understanding of concepts
2) Appropriateness of the content presented (Did you do what the assignment asked you to do?)
3) Depth of thought behind the writing
4) Sentence structure and the quality of word choice (Is it particularly striking, vivid, or creative?)
5) Number of errors

6)

A = 90 – 100 % B = 80 - 89 % C = 70 - 79 % D = 60 - 69 % F = 59 % or below

Product	Points You Can Earn	Percentage of Your Grade
Class work: Attendance, Preparedness, Leadership, Enthusiasm, Thoughtfulness	20 Points	20 %
Curriculum Area Best Practices Presentation • Groups' Assessment • Instructor's Assessment	 10 Points 10 Points	 10 % 10 %
On-Line Reading Reflections: Reaction Papers or Threaded Discussions	30 Points (6 points for each of 5 entries)	30 %
Teaching / Learning Project which includes your Journal Article Summary and Final Reflection	30 points	30 %

A&M University-Commerce Policies

1) Requests from students with disabilities for reasonable accommodations must go through the Academic Support Committee. For more information, please contact the office of Advisement Services, BA 314, 903-886-5133.

2) All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.

3) Academic Integrity/Honesty. This course demands a high level of scholarly behavior and academic honesty on the part of students. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: (1) turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or instructor without obtaining permission from this instructor in advance; (2) turning in another person's work, in part or in whole, as your own; (3) copying from professional works

without citing them; and (4) any form of cheating on exams. Violations of academic integrity/honesty while carrying out academic assignments may, at the discretion of the instructor, receive a zero on the particular work in question, receive an "F" in the course, or be brought before a higher level of governance for possible dismissal from the university.

Class Dates, Proposed Topics, and Text Readings

The Schlechty Center asserts that the core business of schools is:
To produce work that engages students—
work so compelling that students persist when they experience difficulties,
and that is so challenging that students have a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction
--indeed, of delight--
when they successfully accomplish the tasks assigned.

--Phillip Schlechty (Working on Our Work Conference Notebook, Adolphus Hotel, Dallas, TX, January 10-13, 2006, p. 11)

**Suggestion for note taking during reading: SMART Chart or coding text:

I encourage you to take notes in your texts. SMART Chart is a margin note strategy that may help – especially when you're ready to post your response on the web discussion board. It works like this:

Check mark = agree with this statement / idea
** = important info*
! = surprising info
Heart = I LOVE this! or this touched me emotionally
? = confusing, "huh?", I need to think more about this.
☺ or ☹ = happy / sad emotional response

You may make up any symbols that work for you, these are just examples / suggestions.

1st Class Session, January 28, 2015:
Introductions ~ Focus on Historical Perspective, Possibilities for the Future, Looking for Genius
Best Practices*:* Chapter 1 *What Do We Mean By Best Practice; Chpt. 2 – 7 Structures for Best Practice*
Hundred Languages text**:** *Forward (*by Howard Gardner*), Preface (*by Jerome Bruner*), & Part I: Starting Points;* Chapter. 1, *Introduction: Background and Starting Points*

2nd Class Session, February 11, 2015:
Focus on Unpacking Standards, Unpacking Learners, Fine Arts
Best Practices*:* Chapter 6; Best Practices in Science; and Visual Art, Music, Dance, and Theater
Also: *The Museum Project* article
Hundred Languages: Chapter 2, *History, Ideas, and Basic Philosophy:*

An Interview with Lella Gandini
Also: *Looking in the Mirror: A Reflection of Reggio Practice in Winnetka*

3rd Class Session, March 4, 2015:
Focus on Language Arts, Social Studies and Inclusion of Parents and Families
Best Practice*:* Chapters 3 & 4 Reading and Writing
Hundred Languages of Children:
Chapter Seven, Parent Participation in the Governance of the Schools: An Interview with Sergio Spaggiari by *Lella Gandini;* Chapter Nine, *Teacher and Learner, Partner and Guide: The Role of the Teacher by Carolyn Edwards; &* Chapter 10: *The Observant Teacher: Observation as a Reciprocal Tool of Professional Development: An Interview with Amelia Gambettti*

4th Class Session, April 8, 2015:
Focus on Mathematics and Science
Best Practice: Chapter 5 Mathematics, & Chapter 7 : Social Studies
Hundred Languages of Children: Chapter 12, The Pedagogy of Listening: The Listening Perspective of Reggio Emilia; and Chapter 13, *Negotiated Learning Through Design, Documentation, and Discourse*.

5th Class Session, April 29, 2015
Implications / Responsibilities of Best Practices/Accountability
Best Practice: Chapter 8 ~ How to Achieve Best Practices Schoolwide
Showing That We Know: A documentation/poster session--*gallery walk*--featuring our teaching projects sharing our experiences with innovative practices this semester.