TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

COURSE SYLLABUS

EDFD 610
(Distance Learning Format)

CURRENT AND INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES IN EDUCATION
(TEACHER LICENSURE STUDENTS)

DISTANCE LEARNING FORMAT

Spring, 2003, 8W2
(October 27 - December 21, 2003)
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Dates</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required Reading</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading Policies/Standards</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bases for Evaluation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 1: Legal Issues in Education</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 2: Review of Literature #1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 3: Field Assignments</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 4: Review of Literature #2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Regis University students pursuing the Master of Education degree plus Teacher Licensure are required to successfully complete the core course, "Current and Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Education" (EDFD 610), under the direct supervision of program faculty. While students in the Denver metro area sometimes attend regularly scheduled classes to complete this requirement, students from outside the metro area complete the course under a distance learning format. This course syllabus is designed to provide the information the distance student needs to complete the course objectives.

I will be your instructor (course consultant) for this course. If you have questions about the work described in this syllabus, please contact me using one of the numbers listed below. If you reach my voice mail system, please record your question or concern as precisely as you can in the 60 seconds available. If I am unable to reach you directly when I return your call, I may then be able to resolve the issue in a message and avoid phone tag.

Please keep in mind that I work on a variety of projects that may make it difficult for you to reach me immediately. You will feel less rushed if you call me as soon as questions arise rather than waiting until the deadline for an assignment.

Please call me for a brief orientation as soon as you have completed registration and read through this syllabus and the support materials.

Good luck with your work!

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General Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday (7:00 am - 6:00 pm)
DUE DATES

October 31, 2003
Activity #1: Legal Issues in Education

November 14, 2003
Activity #2: Review of Literature #1

November 28, 2003
Activity #3: Field Assignments

December 12, 2003
Activity #4: Review of Literature #2

See the policies/standards section on pages 3-4 for a discussion of specific policies on late papers.

REQUIRED READING

Texts:


Supplemental / Reference:


GRADING POLICIES/STANDARDS

This degree program uses letter grades from A to F to represent the evaluation of student work. Grades of A and B are used for outstanding and very good work. As is common in graduate programs, a grade of C or lower indicates unsatisfactory work. Plus and minus grades are used, except there is no grade of A+.

The following is a description of the grading standards for work submitted in this course:

"A" grade: An "A" paper shows appropriate choice of topic and sources, clearly defines the topic to be covered, explains how it will be covered, and then meets the goal it sets. Fact and opinion are clearly differentiated. Reasoned arguments are supported by appropriate evidence. The paper flows smoothly and uses a minimum of professional jargon. Standard English grammar, spelling, and punctuation are used throughout. The style and format of the paper follow the standards set forth in the TEP Guidelines for Academic Papers and Research Projects.

"B" grade: A "B" paper also shows appropriate choice of topic, clearly defines the topic to be covered, and explains how it will be covered. It differs from the "A" paper by showing less in-depth research and is less closely reasoned. The paper may flow less smoothly, and there may be minor errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, style, or format.

"C" grade: A "C" paper indicates difficulties in one or more of the following areas: structuring the topic and researching it appropriately, constructing reasoned arguments, difficulty in writing clearly, problems with using standard English, and/or serious problems with style and format.

"D" grade: A "D" paper shows a predominance of the problems associated with a "C" paper.

"F" grade: An 'F" paper lacks quality and falls short of graduate level work in all areas above. Also, any paper not turned in will carry this grade.

POLICY ON DUE DATES

One of the greatest temptations in this program is procrastination. It is very easy to let deadlines slip by. This causes academic problems for you because you lose the benefit of regular feedback on your work. It also causes scheduling problems for me because I set aside time to read papers, and I prefer to read all the papers for a particular assignment at one sitting. Therefore, I will hold you to the due dates in this syllabus.
All papers must be **postmarked** by the date indicated for each activity. Do not waste your money on priority mail or Fed Ex. Regular mail service will suffice. Papers postmarked from 1 day to 1 week late will be penalized a third of a grade (e.g., a B+ will become a B). Papers postmarked more than a week late will be penalized a full grade. Students may submit papers via email attachment provided the formatting does not become distorted during transmission. If you have an emergency that makes it impossible to complete an assignment on time, you may request an extension of the due date. Extensions will normally be granted for a period of 1 week. **All extensions must be requested no later than the due date.** Requests may be faxed, emailed, or left on my voice mail.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Academic honesty is at the very foundation of teaching and learning. Since trust is so important, the sanctions for presenting the work of others as your own are severe. At the same time, we know that beginning students are sometimes uncertain about what constitutes appropriate citation of work by others. If you are unsure how to document work written or presented by others, please ask for help.

We expect that all work will be your own and that all sources for that work will be appropriately cited. Plagiarism is a serious offense that may result in the assignment of a failing grade or suspension from Regis University. See your Teacher Education Handbook and the Regis University Bulletin for details on policy in this area.
BASES FOR EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated on the extent to which their work shows evidence of fulfilling the stated course objectives. Accuracy of information, coherence, clarity of written presentation, utilization of readings, critical thinking, comprehensiveness, attention to style and format issues, and creativity will be considered when evaluating superior performance in the written work submitted for this course.

Contribution of each activity to the total evaluation:

Activity 1: Legal Issues in Education 20%
Activity 2 Review of Literature #1 20%
Activity 3: Field Assignments 30%
Activity 4: Review of Literature #2 30%

Refer to the policies/standards section on page 3 for a discussion of grading standards for these assignments.
ACTIVITY #1: LEGAL ISSUES IN EDUCATION

Due Date: October 31, 2003
   (Reminder: Have you returned the completed Getting Started Checklist and Stipend Form to the Instructor in the envelope that was sent to you?)

Requirement:

The purpose of this activity is to help you explore the legal issues related to education. From child abuse to contracts to teacher liability, legal issues permeate the field of education. While some of this material may seem dry and abstract, it will impact your life as a teacher in many ways. State standards for teacher education require that you are familiar with these issues and that you develop competencies in this area.

1. Read the following questions and write up your answers in 3-4 pages (total).
   a. What is the purpose of a teacher contract and what consequences occur when either party breaches a contract?
   b. Discuss teacher (and student) rights under due process. Specifically, what are the six basic fair procedures constituting procedural due process, and what circumstances determine the extent to which full process must be applied?
   c. What four factors determine a teacher's liability for a student's injury? Discuss the concept of "contributory negligence."
   d. What defines child abuse? What are the teacher's reporting requirements in Colorado? (or Wyoming, if applicable)
   e. Briefly summarize aspects of civil defamation law that are important for you to remember in your role as a professional educator.

2. Choose one of the legal issues related to teachers' and students' rights from Part Two of your text. You might consider choosing a topic currently receiving media attention in your community or one with which you have some personal experience or awareness. This may be an issue on which you have strong feelings, but your job here is to try to understand all the differing points of view, not to write a position paper. Read the related case law in Teachers and the Law. Write up your results (2-3 pages) by providing a clear description of the issue; then discuss the different perspectives on the issue; and finally, summarize what you see as the legal implications of the issue and how it might possibly fare if the issue were taken to court. Be sure to mention relevant cases from Teachers and the Law as appropriate.

Please Note: No APA source citations are required for this activity. It is understood that all of your information is coming from Fischer, Schimmel, and Stellman (2003). However, with this first assignment, please do attempt to comply with margin and pagination rules as described in your Guidelines for Academic Papers and Research Projects.
ACTIVITY #2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE #1

Due Date: November 14, 2003

Requirement:

Prepare a review of literature (6-8 pages) on a topic of interest to you and germane to your endorsement area. Cite a minimum of eight professional sources in your review and submit a properly formatted reference list at the end of your paper. You do not need to send copies of the articles included in your reference list.

This assignment presents you with an opportunity to follow-up in greater depth on a specific topic. This is also an opportunity to exercise your academic writing skills in a more extended fashion. See your TEP Guidelines for Academic Papers and Research Projects (pp.9-10) for a full description of this type of assignment.

In addition to utilizing these resources, some students have found it helpful to model the presentation style used by published research authors (see their research reports in journals which use APA format). Look specifically at the way they express themselves in the literature review that is usually embedded in the introduction or background section of the report. Modeling is an excellent way to develop your writing skills. We do not expect many students to come into the program with polished academic writing skills. We do expect that during the time you are with us, you will make a concerted effort to advance those skills.

Your review of literature will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1. objective treatment of the major issues related to the topic;
2. organization, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of content;
3. quality of writing related to "style" issues (pp.31-40 in APA manual);
4. quality of writing related to "grammatical" issues (pp.40-61 in APA manual); and
5. compliance with TEP style and format requirements (pp.1-7 in your TEP Guidelines).

As this first course for licensure students is essentially a current trends and issues course, you may choose from a broad array of topics within the field of education. Most students will naturally gravitate toward topics related to their specific endorsement areas (e.g., elementary, secondary, special education, etc.); however, that is not a requirement. The emphasis here is not so much upon your choice of topic, but that you begin the process of learning how to prepare a strong literature review and a written presentation that conforms to the standards set forth in your Guidelines. Use the Sample Review of Literature Paper in your Support Materials as a model for this expectation.
ACTIVITY #3: FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

Due Date: November 28, 2003

Requirement:

For this assignment, you will begin going into schools to observe and experience public education in real terms. Schools are places that are often so familiar to us that it is difficult to step back and look at them with a fresh perspective. The difficulty with observing while you are a preservice student is that it is very easy to assume that certain practices are inevitable just because they are familiar to you or they have been in practice for many years. Despite this difficulty, it is especially important that you be able to look beyond the way things have always been done to consider how things might be. As a student in the teacher education program, you will have a unique opportunity to observe in a variety of schools in different communities. Once you are a full-time teacher, this will become more difficult. One of the truisms about teachers is that they are often isolated in their own classrooms (as in egg crates) with few opportunities to see how others work.

Using the constructs we have provided for this exercise, you will have an opportunity to observe practicing professional teachers in action, and you will enter into conversations with them, as well as a school principal, about their views on students, teaching methods, classroom management, the future of education, and a number of other topics. This field experience will not only provide you with an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the schools, school districts, teachers, and administrators in your local area, but it will also permit you to network and market yourself for future employment. At the same time, you are representing our University. Therefore, we will emphasize that you dress and act professionally at all times. Please review Student Behavioral Expectations During All Field Experiences in your Support Materials.

Summary of Specific Requirements

We suggest you first read the Meier (1995) book. This popular book describes the experiences of a lifelong educator and the successful schools with which she was associated in East Harlem. You will also view a related video, “Music of the Heart,” which should be available through your local video store. (If possible, rent the DVD Collectors Series version that includes a documentary on the real-life characters portrayed in the Hollywood version.) You may find it helpful to record your ideas/reflections from the reading and the video in a notebook for later reference. Having completed these background activities, you are then asked to complete the following five parts of this activity. You may use the Sample Field Assignments Paper in your Support Materials as a model for Parts 1 – 3. Also, if necessary, you may obtain a letter of introduction from your faculty advisor before visiting a school.
Part 1. Make arrangements to go into at least two public school classrooms (at the level and/or content area of the endorsement you are seeking) and spend a minimum of 2 hours observing in each setting. Using the questions from the Classroom Observation Worksheet as a guide, compare, contrast, and summarize your field observations in a 3-5 page paper. Be sure to include appropriate comparisons with the schools described in the Meier book and the video as you prepare this paper.

Part 2. Interview at least one teacher about his/her views on the following: (2-3 pages)
- The school’s role in developing productive citizens.
- The teacher’s views on effective classroom management.
- How the teacher is utilizing technology in his/her classroom.
- How the school promotes social responsibility for students.
- What the teacher believes to be the future of education.

Part 3. Interview one principal about his/her views on the following: (2-3 pages)
- The district’s funding situation. Does the district experience funding shortfalls?
- In what ways does the district attempt to cut costs and increase revenues?
- The school’s safety plan.
- How medication is distributed (see nurse if needed).
- Does the staff make use of a school (or district-wide) website? How?
- What the principal believes to be the future of education.

Part 4. Meier cites 10 recommendations for forming a successful school. Select one recommendation and argue both for it (1 page) and against it (1 page).

Part 5. Roberta is the featured teacher in the movie. She is held up as an excellent teacher. In this section, contrast her qualities with those of the other music teacher at her school, one who characterizes a somewhat mediocre educator. What qualities make Roberta a good teacher? (2 pages)

The following items in your Support Materials provide essential information:

Student Behavioral Expectations During All Field Experiences
Sample Field Assignments Paper (for Parts 1, 2, & 3 above)
Classroom Observation Worksheet
Build Your Own Budget (review prior to the principal interview / no need to complete the worksheet)
ACTIVITY #4: REVIEW OF LITERATURE #2

Due Date: December 12, 2003

Requirement:

Prepare a second review of literature (8-10 pages) reporting the results of your research bearing upon another current issue in education that has captured your interest. The topic need only be one that is relevant to your goals and interests and pertinent to the course objectives outlined on the learning contract. Since this course is about current and interdisciplinary perspectives in education, you have a broad range of topics from which to choose.

OK, this is the second time around, so you should be getting better at this. It is critical that you master this type of research and writing assignment, as it will reappear as a requirement in your other core course contracts and, later, as an integral part of the Research Methods course and your Research Project. Further, the review of literature is an excellent learning tool.

Choose your topic and begin your search for what seem to be the key sources of relevant information. Retracing the steps you took for the first literature review, you may need to sift through 20-30 sources to find 10 that are most central to your topic. Your final reference list (which is attached to your paper) should include a minimum of 8-10 sources, all of which have been properly cited in the text of your paper.

Review the evaluation criteria described for Activity #2, the Sample Review of Literature Paper in your Support Materials, and the comments and corrections the instructor made on your first review of literature paper. It is important you show improvement from the first review of literature assignment to the second; therefore, the instructor’s evaluation of this second review will take improvement into consideration in determining a grade.