

## Naturalistic Observations in Early Learning Settings

Education 332

Section: E200

Term: 2010 Fall

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Location, Day & Time: Monday 4:30-7:20 pm EDB 7500F

Discussion Topics: This course will investigate the use of naturalistic observation and photo documentation as a method of formative assessment within a generative curriculum model. The traditional assumptions that filter our assessment, evaluation and planning methods in early childhood education will be critically analyzed and naturalistic observation and photo documentation will be explored as an alternate discourse leading to responsive early childhood curriculum planning.

Objectives:

The objectives of the course are as follows:

- 1)\x09To engage students in the content and process of naturalistic observation and photo documentation
- 2)\x09To analyze the ways in which these processes can be used to create a disposition toward listening to children and interpreting their ideas, theories, and interests in the pursuit of curriculum that is generative
- 3)\x09To critically examine traditional assessment methods and early childhood curriculum

Topics will include:

- 1)\x09Traditional early childhood assessment and evaluation practices
- 2)\x09The theoretical contributions of naturalistic observation and photo documentation to self-efficacy
- 3)\x09The use of naturalistic observation for the purposes of planning, listening, capturing images of student interactions/learning moments, students theories/intent, peer/adult scaffolding, and
- 4)\x09Linking learning moments to responsive curriculum development

Readings from text:

Week 1\x09\x09Overview and Assignments [Review of Ethics Procedures]

Week 2\x09\x09What is Naturalistic Observation?\x09[Contagious Experimentsp.10]

Week 3\x09\x09Assessment/Evaluation and Curriculum Planning [The Right Handp.34]

Week 4\x09\x09Critique of Traditional Practices [The Right Pricep.48]

Week 5 \x09Our Image of Young Learners [Theatricalityp.90]

Week 6\x09\x09Planning for Active Learning [Parents and Roboticsp.142]

Week 7\x09\x09Protagonists in Curriculum Development [The Curiosityp.158]

Week 8\x09\x09Boundaries Barriers Access [The Faxp.214]

Week 9\x09\x09Mediating Social Interactions/Provocations [Form Functionp.246]

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Week 10 Image and Self-Efficacy [A Group Messagep.272]

Week 11 Using Documentation to Scaffold Memory [The Wheelp. 296]

Week 12 Students Theories /Intent [Childrens Comments on Learningp. 322]

Week 13 Wrap up Discussion: Further Issues

### EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

1) To be awarded a grade in the course all assignments must be handed in, in person during class on or before the due date indicated in the course outline. Students are responsible for making back-up copies of each of the assignments submitted

2) Requests for extensions without penalty may be granted in cases of extreme circumstances if the situation is discussed with the instructor prior to the due date. In all other cases late assignments will be penalized by 10% per week or any portion thereof

3) Given the emphasis on classroom participation and discussion, regular attendance is mandatory

4) Due to issues of confidentiality all assignments must be picked up in person and grades will not be reported over the telephone

### Grading: Evaluation:

Five evaluation items will be used to assess student understandings of the course content. These items are as follows:

### Class attendance and participation: 10%

This will be calculated on student preparation for class discussions, participation in activities, presentations and discussions as well as attendance

### Paper Proposal:10%

Students will be asked to submit a one page proposal plus bibliography of sources for their final paper on a topic related to formative assessment and documentation. Due in week 7

### Final Paper: 30%

A final paper will be due in week 13. Topics will be based on proposals submitted in Week 7

### Group Documentation of Student Learning:25%

A Documentation Panel of student learning outlining the elements of a Childrens Story, Learning Story and Teachers Story (varying due dates depending on presentation sign-up)

### Group Presentation of Documentation Panel:25%

Groups will present their Documentation Panel Accompanied by Individual Reflections on the documentation process (to be handed in at the time of the presentation. Due dates will vary depending on sign-up)

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Grading Criteria will be based on American Psychological Association writing standards (5th edition)

### Assignments:

Paper Proposal: (10% of course grade)

The intent of the proposal is to share your topic area, thesis statement and references so that you can obtain initial feedback prior to writing your final paper. The proposal must include the following elements:

- 1) a brief introduction about the topic area that will be covered in the paper
- 2) a thesis statement that should include the main ideas of your paper in answer to a question or questions posed .
- 3) a brief definition of key terms
- 4) a brief outline of how the statement/topic/question will be addressed
- 5) References

Final Paper (25% of course grade)

The final paper will be an opportunity to deeply explore an area related to the content of the course. Using an analytic or expository writing style the paper should explore issues that have been touched on or have been provoked from the readings. The paper is expected to be fairly concise (no more than 10-12 pages including references) and should follow from your paper proposal and instructor feedback.

### GRADING

The grade definitions described below will be used to mark all assignments

#### Letter Grade Definitions

##### Grade

A+, A, A- Excellent: Shows superior understanding of the subject matter; strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; ability to analyze and synthesize; sound critical evaluations; superior understanding of issues and familiarity with the literature. All requirements complete.

B+, B, B- Good: Shows good understanding of the subject matter; some evidence of original thinking, critical capacity and ability to analyze; shows reasonable understanding of issues and familiarity with the literature. All requirements complete.

C+, C, C- Adequate: Fair comprehension of the subject matter; few original insights; little or no evidence of critical capacity and ability to analyze; some deficits in understanding of issues and familiarity with the literature. Incomplete; some requirements not met.

D Marginal: Some evidence of understanding subject matter; little or no evidence of critical capacity and ability to analyze; serious deficits in understanding of issues and familiarity with the literature. Incomplete; several requirements not met.

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Fail: Little evidence of even superficial understanding subject matter; serious weaknesses in critical capacity, ability to analyze, understanding of issues, and familiarity with the literature. Incomplete; many requirements not met.

Required Texts: Giudici, C., Rinaldi, C. & Krechevsky, M. (Eds), (2001). Making learning visible:

Children as individual and group learners. Reggio Emilia, Italy: Reggio Children S.r.l. ISBN: 88-87960-25-9

Recommended Texts: Recommended Readings:

Bredenkamp, S. (Ed.). (1987). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Bredenkamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.). (1997). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth to age 8. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Cleveland, G., Colley, S., Friendly, M., Lero, D. S., & Shillington, R. (2003). The state of data in early childhood education and care in Canada: National data project. Final Report. (pp. 1-90). Toronto: University of Toronto.

Collier, J. (1967). Visual Anthropology: Photography as a research method (Vol. 2). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Dahlberg, G., & Moss, P. (2005). Ethics and politics in early childhood education. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Dahlberg, G., Moss, P., & Pence, A. (1999). Beyond quality in early childhood education and care: Postmodern perspectives. London: Falmer Press.

Doherty, G., Beach, J., & Friendly, M. (2003). OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care: Canadian background report: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada.

Giacopini, E. (2007). Observation, documentation and interpretation as strategies for knowledge. Innovations in early education: The international Reggio exchange, 14(3), 1-8.

Jones, L., & McNamara, O. (2004). The possibilities and constraints of multimedia as a basis for critical reflection. Cambridge Journal of Education, 34(3), 279-295.

Keifer-Boyd, K., Ambuby, P. M., & Knight, W. B. (2007). Unpacking memory, culture, gender, race, and power in visual culture. Art Education, 60(3), 19-24.

Lenz-Taguchi, H. (2006). Reconceptualizing early childhood education: Challenging taken for

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granted ideas. In J. Einarsdottir & J. T. Wagner (Eds.), *Nordic Childhoods and Early Education: Information Age Publishing*.

Lewin-Benham, A. (2006). *Possible schools: The Reggio approach to urban education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Mayfield, M. (2001). *Early childhood education and care in Canada: Contexts, dimensions, and ideas*. Toronto: Prentice Hall.

McCain, M. N., & Mustard, J. F. (1999). *Reversing the real brain drain: The early years study*. Toronto: Government of Ontario.

McHoul, A., & Grace, W. (1993). *A Foucault primer: Discourse, power and the subject*. New York: New York University Press.

Moss, P. (1994). *Defining quality: Values, stakeholders, and processes*. In P. Moss & A. Pence (Eds.), *Valuing quality in early childhood services: New approaches to defining quality* (pp. 1-9). London: Paul Chapman.

Pedersen, C. H. (2008). *Anchors of meaning helpers of dialogue: The use of images in production of relations and meaning*. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 21(1), 35-47.

Pink, S., Kürti, L., & Afonso, A. I. (Eds.). (2004). *Working images: Visual research and representation in ethnography*. London: Routledge.

Simco, N., & Warin, J. (1997). *Validity in image-based research: An elaborated illustration of the issues*. *British Educational Research Journal*, 23(5), 661-672.

Stewart, A. (1998). *The ethnographer&squots method* (Vol. 46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Wien, C. A. (2004). *Negotiating standards in the primary classroom: The teacher&squots dilemma*. New York: Teachers College Press

Materials/Supplies:

Prerequisite/Corequisite: PSYC 250 and 45 credit hours

Notes: Students in all Faculty of Education courses are encouraged to review policies pertaining to academic integrity available on the Undergraduate Programs website: [http://www.educ.sfu.ca/ugradprogs/student\\_resources/index.html](http://www.educ.sfu.ca/ugradprogs/student_resources/index.html)

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