Learner-Centered Curriculum and Assessment  
SED 371.001  

Fall 2011; M-W 1:00-2:15  
McKibben 469

Instructor: Dr. Kenneth R. Austin  
Office: Department of Secondary Education, McKibben 404C  
Phone: Office: 468-4473; 468-2908  
email: austinkr@sfasu.edu  
Office hours: M-W 9:00-1:00; T-Th 10:00-11:00

Course pre-requisite:

EPS 380/EPS 400 (Educational Psychology); SED 370 (Introduction to Pedagogy); Admission to Teacher Education.

I. Course Description:

Application of human development and learning theories in the design of learner-centered curriculum within a constructivist framework.

II. Intended Learning Outcomes/Rationale/Goals/Objectives

By the end of this semester students will have the ability to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the connection between various components of the Texas statewide assessment program, the state-mandated curricula, and instruction.
- Plan lessons and structures units so that activities progress in a logical sequence and support the state-mandated curricula.
- Provide age-appropriate instruction that encourages the use and refinement of higher-order thinking skills and that incorporates students’ different approaches to learning (e.g., auditory, visual, tactile, kinesthetic) into instructional practices.
- Design and apply various instructional strategies to promote active student engagement and learning.
- Write and use instructional objectives for effective teaching and learning.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics, uses, advantages, and limitations of various assessment methods and strategies, including technological methods and methods that reflect real-world applications.
- Creates assessments that are congruent with instructional goals and objectives and communicates assessment and standards to students based on high expectations.
- Define and illustrate the curricular role of a learner-centered educational setting.
- Articulate a personal educational philosophy.
- Understand some aspects of instructional and curriculum theories.
• Identify environmental factors that influence the learning process.
• Understand some causes, reasons, and effects of curriculum reform in the last century.

ELL Standards

a. I.001.2 Knows the functions and registers of language (e.g., social versus academic language) in English and uses this knowledge to develop and modify instructional materials, deliver instruction, and promote ESL students’ English language proficiency.

b. I.002.2 Uses knowledge of theories, concepts, and research related to LE and L2 acquisition to select effective, appropriate methods and strategies for promoting students’ English language development at various stages.

c. II.003.1 Knows applicable Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), especially the English Language Arts and Reading curriculum as it relates to ESL, and knows how to design and implement appropriate instruction to address the TEKS (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing/representing).

d. II.004.1 Know applicable Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), especially the English Language Arts and Reading curriculum as it relates to ESL, and knows how to design and implement appropriate instruction to address TEKS related to the listening and speaking strands.

e. II.004.7 Knows how to provide appropriate feedback in response to students’ developing English language skills.

f. II.006.1 Applies knowledge of effective practices, resources, and materials for providing content-based ESL instruction, engaging students in critical thinking, and developing students’ cognitive-academic language proficiency.

g. II.006.2 Knows instructional delivery practices that are effective in facilitating ESL students’ comprehension in content-area classes (e.g., pre-teaching key vocabulary, helping students apply familiar concepts from their cultural backgrounds and prior experiences to new learning, using hands-on and other experiential learning strategies, using media, and other visual supports to introduce and/or reinforce concepts).

h. II.007.1 Knows basic concepts, issues, and practices related to test design, development, and interpretation and uses this knowledge to select, adapt, and develop assessments for different purposes in the ESL program (e.g., diagnosis, program evaluation, proficiency).

i. II.007.6 Knows how to use ongoing assessment to plan and adjust instruction that addresses individual student needs and enables ESL students to achieve learning goals.
This course provides essential information toward an understanding of:

- competent planning as a key component for effective teaching, requiring a thorough understanding of basic structure, content, standards and resources of learner-centered curricula;

- the importance of working collaboratively, as well as promoting and contributing to an atmosphere of inquiry within a community of learners;

- the belief that in light of social, political, and economic changes in our cultures at large and in our school cultures in particular, students will better be prepared to work with these challenges possessing a variety of essential problem solving skills, and that they begin a journey of life-long learning committed to ongoing personal development. As part of that process, it is essential that students learn to incorporate the ability to be decisive, be articulate, have the ability to discuss multiple perspectives which characterizes scholarly work; and, be comfortable working outside the parameters of a typically structured classroom environment.

... This course and the field of Education is to help students understand the concept that the scholarship of their work will help give a better appreciation of what provides further knowledge, truth, and reality for not only themselves, but of others, as well. As a sub-goal for the course, it is essential that students have an understanding of their limitations, to work initially within those limitations, but to eventually expand their knowledge of methodologies and conceptual thinking skills that are required to render work in a manner most appropriate and closely aligned with their own personal voice.

An ancillary goal of this course is for students to be able to analyze and interpret their own scholarship, as well as the scholarly work of others, no matter how old or how recently completed. It is of vital importance that students in the field of education be able to gain an understanding of learning and curriculum theory beyond that which is merely superficial. Students will accomplish this goal through general class discussions, individual inquiry with the instructor and with others in the class. It is recommended that students maintain a personal journal of daily ideas and reflections which relate to the topics of the class.

This course places an emphasis on academic excellence through critical, reflective, and creative thinking; life-long learning; collaboration and shared decision making; openness to new ideas, to culturally diverse people, and to innovation and change; integrity, responsibility, diligence, and ethical behavior; and, service that enriches the community.
The content of the course and its underlying philosophy are defined by the 13 TExES competencies and the 5 learner-centered teaching proficiencies. SED 371 will focus primarily on content found in Competencies 001, 002, 004, 007 and parts of 012 and 013.

The 5 Learner-Centered Teaching Proficiencies

Proficiency 1: Learner-Centered Knowledge:
The teacher possesses and draws on a rich knowledge base of content pedagogy, and technology to provide relevant and meaningful learning experiences for all students.

Proficiency 2: Learner-Centered Instruction:
To create a learner-centered community, the teacher collaboratively identifies needs; and plans, implements, and assesses instruction using technology and other resources.

Proficiency 3: Equity in Excellence for All Learners:
The teacher responds appropriately to diverse groups of learners.

Proficiency 4: Learner-Centered Communication:
While acting as an advocate for all students and the school, the teacher demonstrates effective professional and interpersonal communication skills.

Proficiency 5: Learner-Centered Professional Development:
The teacher, as a reflective practitioner dedicated to all students' success, demonstrates a commitment to learn, to improve the profession, and to maintain personal integrity.

III. Course framework and Assignments

Major topics to be addressed in the course:

- Curriculum at the state and local levels; the 13 competencies of the TExES
- Qualities of the effective teacher
- Philosophy and objectives of education
- Learning, Instructional, and Curriculum theory
- The purpose(s) of education
- Lesson design for the learner-centered classroom
- Formative and summative evaluation
- Microteaching and elements of effective presentations
- Interdisciplinary planning
- Processes of informal and formal assessment
- Structuring the learning environment
- Professionalism in the teaching field
- Importance of personal development and research contributions
- Models of Teaching and Universal Teaching Strategies
- Constructing instructional objectives across the learning domains
- Learning theories
- Culturally relevant teaching
- Philosophy of education
- Constructivist teaching Models
- Obstacles to Learning
- Diversity (race, ethnicity, culture, special populations, learning differences, etc).
- Application of growth and human development
- Introduction to the teaching profession
- Aspects of effective communication…including uses of Electronic Media
- Code of ethics
- Motivations to enter the teaching profession
- Purposes of education

Course assignments

Instructional Design Packet/Portfolio (recommended)

It is recommended that students in SED 371 maintain an Instructional Design Packet in a three ring hardback binder with sheet protectors, section pages, and divider tabs.

The contents of the Instructional Design Packet could include, but not be limited to:
- A personal philosophy of education.
- An original lesson plan.
- Samples lessons plans designed by other educators within your field(s) of study.
- Journal articles, essays, reflective statements concerning your field(s) of study.
- Documentation and reflective statements of field experiences.
- Essays, graphs, and articles which discuss learning theories; i.e., Bloom’s Taxonomy, Critical Thinking Theory, Post-Modernism, Constructivism, etc.
- A copy of the TEKS within your content area (grades 8-12)

SFA’s teacher education program recommends that all pre-service teachers maintain a portfolio. Its purpose is two-fold. First, it helps pre-service teachers document professional growth through the secondary education program. Secondly, it helps build a foundation for an “employer showcase” when seeking employment.

Syllabus Review

Essays responding to a discussion prompt in myCourses regarding the purpose and understanding of this syllabus. Grades will be determined by how well students articulate reasonable assumptions regarding this course and the subsequent relationships to individual perceptions concerning (among others) the teacher education program, pre-service teaching, the teaching profession, learning theories, the field education in general, etc. Due date Sep 6th.
Field experience activity

Field experiences comprise an essential part of the pre-service teacher preparation program. They are intended to provide authentic experiences to help increase an understanding of the teaching/learning environment. Students will write an essay which discusses information gathered from an interview with a high school student, certified teacher, or public school administrator regarding any topic of special interest. The essay will include a summary of the interview including revelatory information which may support or, perhaps, discourage entering the teaching profession. The field experience project is due Dec 6th.

Educational Philosophy Essay

2000 word philosophical essay which discusses educational rationale with objectives, goals, and the importance of concept to practice. Also, the essay may contain assignments and a variety of assessment strategies, but must include a narrative which addresses individual beliefs concerning education, evidence of those beliefs, what individual and cultural reforms are needed, strategies for exposing flaws in the educational system, and strategies for promoting and sharing learner-centered educational concepts. This essay is due Dec 6th and must follow the following format:
- Section I: Introduction, subtitled, “This I believe”. This section discusses individual beliefs concerning education.
- Section II: Evidence. This section discusses individual experiences and outward confirmation of previously stated individual educational beliefs.
- Section III: Needs. This section addresses and proposes individual and cultural needs for educational reform, and exposes curricular design and assessment flaws which inhibit optimum and equitable learning.
- Section IV: Plans. This section addresses individual plans for sharing, promoting, encouraging, endorsing, etc. educational reform.

Individual Philosophy Presentation

This presentation addresses the individual educational philosophy essay and must incorporate curricular relevancy to the portion of the TEKS within the presenter’s content area. This presentation (30-45 minutes in length) will be organized like the essay and will be followed by a required question and answer session. Guidelines and further information will be discussed later. Dates of presentations TBD.

Reflective Essays

At the discretion of the instructor, each student will complete a number of written reflective essays which will be submitted in response to discussion prompts in myCourses. The reflections should be subjectively focused from a personal and scholarly point of view, not merely a review. Prompts for the reflective essays will be provided. The essays should include any related information which may be discussed in class, personal research, and personal reflections and interpretations. Poorly written essays, especially those with little or no content and subjective elucidation will be graded accordingly. Also, students must participate in a discussion by replying to at least two
others’ initial responses and subsequent replies. On-line essays and discussions will be chosen from but not limited to the following:

- Howard Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed*.
- Syllabus review.
- Pedro Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
- *The Differentiated Classroom*, chapters 2, 3,& 4.
- Reflective essay on *Finding Forester*.

(On-line discussion threads should be completed by December 6th.)

Class Attendance

This class places an emphasis on active learner-centered instruction. Class discussions are not only a vital portion of this course, but, perhaps represent its most valuable element. In that light, each student, as preparation for the teaching profession, must be engaged in class discussions, must attend class regularly, be on time, and be prepared for optimum learning. Moreover, during the distinctively human activity of scholarly class discussions, individuals should always face the individual speaking, and do so without the interference and use of personal electronic devices. Each class attended is awarded approximately 3 points toward the final Class Attendance grade.

Quality of assignments

All written assignments are to be submitted in a timely, professional manner. This includes use of correct grammar and spelling, proper style and format, and appropriate presentation. These elements will be considered as part of your grade on each written assignment.

Unless otherwise directed, all assignments are submitted as Word Document myCourses email attachments.

IV. Evaluations and Assessment

Assessment in SED 371 is cumulative and is based on both your knowledge of the course content and your performance on a variety of academic and practical tasks. The semester grade will be established from the following: Attendance and Class Participation, Philosophy Essays, Class Presentations, Field Experiences, syllabus review, and Reflective Essays.
Grading

Superior grades are reflective of superior work, such as providing scholarly critical analysis and personal reflection of reading assignments and/or with any subsequently required written responses or writing assignments; intellectual reasoning and active participation during class discussions; a passion for learning; and, a commitment to developing excellence in teaching. Average or merely adequate work will receive an average grade. Late work will be penalized or not accepted unless a deadline extension is negotiated before the work is due, or as soon as possible after any event that prevents a timely submission. Poorly written work will be penalized or not accepted for credit. Late assignments will not be accepted unless a deadline extension is negotiated before the work is due, or as soon as possible after any event that prevents a timely submission.

Writing assignments not submitted in a timely, professional manner containing inappropriate format, style, grammar, and or spelling errors will not be accepted and must be resubmitted with appropriate corrections before full credit is earned.

A portion of each student’s grade will be determined by their active participation in inquiry-based class discussions, group activities, and personal analyses of class discussions and activities. Efficient and well organized note-taking is highly recommended.

Each written assignment/presentation submitted and an overall class participation/activity score will receive an alphanumeric grade based on the following scale:

Written assignments gradingrubric –

-Well written and grammatically correct essays/narratives turned in on schedule which feature (1) clearly expressed relevant personal ideas and reflections; with (2) supporting details and/or examples in regards to prompts and topics; (3) contain insightful, critical, and reflective analysis; and, (4) clearly exhibited and well organized information and ideas within well constructed and grammatically correct paragraphs with correct spelling and appropriate word usage will receive an A.

-Written assignments which contain clearly stated relevant ideas, supporting details and/or examples, contain evidence of critical and reflective analysis, but contain some apparent mistakes in grammar, spelling, and word usage; or, essays/narratives which otherwise would receive an A but are turned in late without prior arrangement will receive a B.

-Written assignments which do not contain clearly stated ideas, with few details or no examples, with little evidence of critical and reflective analysis, are poorly written with clearly apparent and numerous grammatical mistakes, misspellings, and improper word usage; and/or turned in extremely late without prior approval will receive a grade no higher than a C.

-Written assignments with irrelevant information which contain mere opinion or conjecture without supporting evidence, contain little or no evidence critical and
reflective analysis, with multiple grammatical errors, and/or turned in extremely late will a grade no higher than a D.

-Written assignments not attempted, plagiarized, and/or clearly disregard instructions or questions embedded within prompts will receive an F.

Class presentations, participation, and discussions (on-line or in class) –

-Class presentations and discussions which are well articulated, analyze ideas and relevant information, construct convincing arguments, fairly evaluate diverse points of view, and distinguish that which is verifiable from mere conjecture will receive an A.

-Class presentations and discussions which are moderately articulated, with some analysis of ideas and relevant information, moderately well constructed arguments, moderate evaluation of diverse points of view, and poorly distinguish verifiable information from opinion will receive a B.

-Poorly articulated presentations and discussions which are poorly articulated, with no evidence of analysis regarding relevant ideas or information, and poorly constructed arguments with little consideration to diverse points of view will receive a grade no higher than a C.

-Presentations and discussions which are poorly articulated and constructed, with no analysis of relevant ideas or information, with no consideration of diverse points of view will receive a grade no higher than a D.

-Lack of participation in class presentations or discussions, and/or clearly apparent unwavering biased opinions with a disregard and disrespect to diverse points of view with no evidence of critical or reflective analysis will receive an F.

**Final semester grade is determined by the average of all grades.**

**V. Tentative Course Outline/Calendar**

Weeks 1-3
- Introductions.
- Identifying the educational box and the purposes of a pre-service teacher education program.
- Discussions of diversity and equity in learning.
- Being “Present to the Activity.”
- Identifying the Purposes of Education.
- Identifying the status of present day education. Identifying and reviewing conditions for learning.
- Begin viewing *Finding Forrester*; discuss intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning/teaching.
- Review formative and summative assessments processes
- Begin identifying Learner-Centered and Teacher-Centered Curricula. Review philosophy paper/presentation processes; field experience possibilities; developing a Portfolio/Instructional Design Packet.
- Review and discuss the Plato, Republic, Book VII, *Allegory of the Cave*.
- SED 371 Syllabus review.

**Weeks 4-7**
- Continuation of earlier topics
- Identifying Constructivist and Critical-thinking learning theory.
- Discuss lesson presentations, designs, and presenting…the art of delivering successful lessons.
- What is assessment and why is it necessary. *The Differentiated Classroom* discussion.

**Weeks 8-11**
- Discuss conceptual ideologies of Truth-Seeking, gaining Knowledge, and genuine applications of our beliefs in learning processes and our culture (Aristotle and Dewey).
- Identifying the tendencies of an educated person
- Discuss future internship expectations.
- Practice PPR test.
- Pedagogical ethics and legal issues.

**Weeks 12-15**
- Planning engaging constructivist instruction and lessons. Understanding/applying organized and productive strategies.
- Instructional alternatives. Adaptation and effective personal attributes, as illustrated in *Finding Forrester*.
- Finalize philosophy presentations.
- Philosophy presentations begin.

**VI. Required resources**

- *The Case for Constructivist Classrooms*, Brooks & Brooks; or, *The Differentiated Classroom*, Carol Ann Tomlinson
- Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for your classroom-teaching field; available on the Texas Education Agency website: [www.tea.state.tx.us/teks/](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/teks/)

**VII. Course Evaluations**

Near the conclusion of each semester, students in the College of Education evaluate courses taken within the COE. Evaluation data is used for a variety of important purposes including: (1) Course and program improvement, planning, and accreditation; (2) Instruction evaluation purposes; and (3) Learner evaluation, responsiveness, and assessment purposes. As you evaluate this course, please be thoughtful, thorough, and
The COE faculty is committed to excellence in teaching and continued improvement. Your response is critical.

In the COE, the course evaluation process has been modified and is completed electronically through MySFA. Although the instructor will be able to view the names of students who complete the survey, all ratings and comments are confidential and anonymous, and will not be available to the instructor until after the final grades are posted.

VIII. Student Ethics/Disposition

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is submitting someone else’s work as one’s own without giving proper credit. It may involve copying a whole, or part, of a published source such as a book, journal, magazine, Internet document, etc., or submitting another student’s work, including current course assignments or essays circulating in fraternities and sororities. Any sources that you use in your work must be properly acknowledged. A plagiarized assignment will receive a zero grade. All parties involved in any instance of plagiarism will receive no credit for that work even if one was the original author (this, of course, does not include team assignments). Plagiarism may result in failure of the course.

Attendance policy

The SFASU COE secondary teacher education program is preparation for a profession that requires strict adherence to professional conduct and performance. With that understanding, it is implicit that students begin making the transition into the teaching profession as an active scholar practitioner. Accordingly, students’ attendance must be consistently reliable. After unexcused 2 absences at least a full letter grade will be deducted from the final course average. Additionally, with the exception of electronic note-taking, electronic devices must be turned off…texting is not only disrespectful to others in the class, it is a deterrent to attentiveness and meaningful learning and is not allowed.

You are expected to attend all sessions, arrive on time, and actively participate in class. University policy lists the following reasons for excusing student absences:

- Health-related issues
- Family emergencies
- Student participation in university-related activities

It is understandable that you may encounter any of these during the semester; however, absences require appropriate documentation so that any missed work may be completed without penalty. Students will incur a letter grade deduction from the final semester grade after 2nd un-excused absence. The students will sign an attendance list at the beginning of each class.

Students with Disabilities

To obtain disability related accommodations and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Wisely Hall, Room
104, 468-3004/468-1004 (TDD) as soon as possible. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided.

**Undergraduate Teacher Certification**—The “Undergraduate Initial Teacher Certification Handbook” contains all policies and procedures related to undergraduate teacher certification. Teacher education candidates are responsible to know and understand the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook. ([http://www.sfasu.edu/education/departments/educatorcertification/docs/edcert-undergrad_handbook.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/education/departments/educatorcertification/docs/edcert-undergrad_handbook.pdf))

Portions of this syllabus are not only subject to, but will almost certainly incur changes during the semester.