

Social and Cultural Context of Teaching and Learning

EDS 500

The Teacher Education Program of the Division of Educational Studies educates reflective teacher-leaders who are committed to transforming urban schools into what they can become rather than preserving them as they presently exist.

Course Description

The purpose of this seminar is to explore the meaning of culture, its influence on the “self” and “the other,” as well as the influence of culture on issues of teaching and learning. This course centers on readings that explore sociopolitical, historical, structural, and cultural factors that influence the school achievement of students who come from diverse groups. This course is intended to give students a broad understanding of issues related to culture, social class, ethnicity and race, gender, and language.

Objectives

Regarding cultural diversity and global awareness, the preservice teacher will:

- a. Demonstrate knowledge of and sensitivity to diverse cultural groups within the United States and globally, and knowledge of how ethnicity, class, gender and other sociocultural factors influence students' learning and classroom climate.
- b. Demonstrate an understanding of teaching as situated in schools and communities.
- c. Demonstrate an understanding of the influence of the social, cultural, historical, legal and cultural context of schooling on teaching, learning, schools and educational policy.

Resources

Primary Textbooks:

Bennett, C.I. (1999). Comprehensive multicultural education: Theory and practice (4th edition). Boston: Allyn and Bacon

Irvine, J.J. & Armento, B. J. (Eds). (2000). Culturally responsive lesson planning. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Course Requirements

	Points
1. Course participation	25

2. My Culture's Quilt	5
3. Essay Examination	30
4. Team Book Reaction Paper and Team Presentation	15
5. Process Journal and "Meta Comment" Paper (Final)	25

Evaluation Criteria

A =	100 - 96
A- =	95 - 91
B =	90 - 86
B- =	85 - 81
C =	80 - 76

1. Course participation

This course is a readings/discussion course; hence attendance and participation in every scheduled session are very important.

2. My Culture's Quilt

Each student will present his/her "quilt" to the class. See Attachment A for details.

3. Examination

The degree to which students have mastered the required readings and other assignments will be determined by an examination on Feb 26. This essay exam will cover the readings and material discussed in class.

4. Book Review and Presentation

I will divide the class into teams (2 per team) and assign a book (or books) to the team for presentation on the date indicated in the schedule. The book choices include the following:

Ayers, W. (1993). To teach. (Recommended for middle grades teachers)

Delpit, L. (1995). Other people's children.

Howard, G. (1999). You can't teach what you don't know: White teachers in multicultural education

Kozol, J. (1992). Savage inequalities.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). The dreamkeepers.

Meier, D. (1995). The power of their ideas.

Paley, V. G. (1995). Kwanzaa and me: A teacher's story. (Recommended for middle grades teachers)

Rose, M. (1995). Possible lives.

Sadker, M and Sadker, D. (1994). Failing at fairness: How America's schools cheat girls.

Weiner, L. (1999) Urban Teaching: The Essentials

The group's presentation and written reaction paper will:

present the author's major points (by chapter or section)

present the personal reactions of each team member

describe how the book might affect each team member as a prospective teacher

To assist you with your project, I will schedule meetings with the teams to answer questions and resolve any difficulties. Teams will receive a joint grade for their work.

5. Process Journal and “Meta Comment” Paper

The process journal is a vehicle for you to record your thoughts and feelings about the readings, videos, class discussions, small group exercises, and field experiences. On the last day of class you will submit an overarching, synthesizing essay (10 double-spaced pages) that identifies themes and concerns that were significant to you over the semester. The final paper focuses on you as a learner in this course and uses the process journal writings throughout the course as data. Specifically, consider these questions:

What issues/themes in this course held you attention and elicited a strong intellectual and emotional response?

Have any of your views/attitudes about ethnic groups changed as a result of this course?

What ideas/topics do you want to continue to explore? Why? What is your plan for continued professional growth and development in these areas? (courses, readings, cultural immersion experiences, travel, etc.)

What readings in this course were particularly helpful? Why?

What did you learn from your field experiences? How did your readings inform these experiences in the classroom?

How did your perceptions of yourself as a teacher and your beliefs about teaching change as a result of this course?

Schedule of Class Activities

Date	Topic and Assignments
Jan 16	MAT Orientation Session at 4:00
Jan 22 -29	Course expectations, requirements, assignments Topic: Clarifying the Key Concepts and Terms Aspects of Ethnicity by Longstreet My Culture’s Quilt Assignment: Bennett - Chapters 1, 2
Feb 5	Topic: Racism and the Nature of Prejudice Videos on the nature of racism Assignment: Bennett- Chapter 3
Feb 12	Topic: Understanding the Historical Perspectives: European Americans, Jewish Americans, and African Americans Video: Road to Brown Assignment: Bennett - Chapter 4
Feb 19	Topic: Understanding the Historical Perspectives: American Indians, Hispanics, Asians, Muslims, and Arab Americans Video: American Indian Boarding Schools Assignment: Bennett – Chapter 5

Feb 26	Examination (last hour and half) Continuation of Discussion of Feb 12 and 19
Mar 5	Topic: Interactions Between Culture and the Individual Learning Preferences and Multiple Intelligences Activity: What's your Learning Style? Assignment: Bennett – Chapter 5
Mar 12	Spring Break
Mar 19 and 26	Topic: Culturally Responsive Teaching Assignment: Irvine and Armento book
Apr 2	AERA no class
Apr 9	Book Presentations
Apr 16	Issues related to Gender and Sex Role Orientation (special emphasis for middle grades) Video: It's Elementary
April 23	Meta Comment Papers due Involving Culturally Diverse Parents in the Education of their Children Panel discussion with experienced teachers and culturally diverse parents. Read: Debunking the Myths about Minority Parents by Chavkin.

Attachment A

My Culture's Quilt (5 points)

Understanding the cultural self is an important and essential pre-requisite to understanding and accepting the cultural other.

“Whoever our students may be, whatever subject we teach, ultimately we teach who we are.”

Parker J. Palmer¹

Each student will make a “quilt” that reflects his culture and use the quilt in class introductions on the first day. Create your quilt by dividing a poster board into 16 “squares.” There will be 4 rows and 4 columns. Column 1 is your family history column; Column 2 is the cultural other; Column 3 is the cultural self--personal; Column 4 is the cultural self—professional. Use symbols, words, phrases, pictures from magazines, photos, etc. Put your name in the top right corner and “head shot” picture in the top left..

Family History	Cultural Other	Cultural Self--Personal	Cultural Self-Professional
Country other than America your family identifies with	Culture other than your own that you are most familiar with	Preferred learning style	Reason I want to be a teacher
Family slogan/saying that has been passed down from one generation to the next	Culture other than your own that you are least familiar with	My life as a middle/high school student	K- 12 teacher I want to model
Important holiday celebration and/or religious observance in your family	A cross-cultural experience that was anxiety provoking	Finest personal quality	Greatest challenge I face as a future teacher
Value/belief you associate with your ancestors	A gender or ethnic stereotype you have heard recently	Having fun and relaxing	Role as teacher

¹ Parker, P.J. (1999). Evoking the spirit in public education. *Educational Leadership*, 56 (4), 6 -11