

Topics in Urban Education II
GEDUC-494-20
Urban Masters Program
Simmons College
Spring 2008

Daren Graves 617-521-2519 / 617-216-8297
daren.graves@simmons.edu

Goals: This course is intended to provide teachers in the urban masters program with curricular and pedagogical theories and strategies to provide high quality education to their students. More specifically, the theme of the class will be: *Multicultural Education: Affirming Diverse Identities and Challenging Oppression in Education*. Urban schools and classrooms are fraught with challenges and opportunities by virtue of the multicultural nature of the students' cultural backgrounds and the communities they come from. To best navigate our urban classrooms, teachers need to be able to effectively tackle the associated challenges while taking advantage of the associated opportunities. This course will continually ask teachers to take the curricular and pedagogical lessons learned and reflect on their daily practice. Furthermore, it is an expectation in this course that teachers' practice will be refined and transformed as a result of the lessons learned. In order to foster a practical and effective learning environment, this course will use a variety of instructional strategies as well as incorporate the voices and experiences of the teachers. The course will also incorporate an innovative Science professional development component that will occur in each class meeting throughout the year. This science component is intended to keep teachers ahead of the curve as academic achievement in science will soon begin to be a crucial portion of the equation when looking at students and schools annual yearly progress. With regard to the multicultural theme of the seminar, the professional development in science is very important as too many students from the racial/ethnic/class backgrounds represented in our classrooms are underrepresented in the academic and professional science fields.

Course Objectives and Outcomes

Objective:

To provide teachers curricular support in content-specific areas (math, literacy, social studies, etc.) that will advance their classroom practice.

Outcome:

Teachers will incorporate new lesson plans in these content-specific areas into their curricula.

Objective:

To provide teachers the pedagogical and curricular tools to create a classroom culture that affirm and allow students to explore their racial/ethnic identities .

Outcome:

Teachers will be able to identify the racial/ethnic culture that the student and/or their families most identify with. Teachers will incorporate new lesson plans that employ culturally responsive pedagogy.

Objective:

To help teachers see themselves as agents of social justice in their classrooms, schools, communities and society-at-large.

Outcome:

Teachers will be able to identify and develop aspects of their own pedagogy and practice that actively challenge oppressive structures in the realm of education.

Required Texts: Will all be found on the course website via Simmons eLearning.

Class Attendance and Participation: Your success in this class will depend highly on your participation and reflection on your practice. The classroom activities will be designed with the expectation that you will be frequently speaking and/or write about the ideas presented in the class and their connection to your practice.

Given the sometimes difficult nature of sharing classroom practice, we will co-construct a safe classroom community where all participants feel comfortable sharing their successes and challenges as urban teachers and students of urban education. Your attendance in class is required.

Journal Reflections:

You will be required to keep a journal in which you reflect on the pedagogical and curricular issues covered in the course. Of course we would like you to reflect on the issues as they pertain to your everyday classroom experiences. Generally we would like you to think about issues of culture as they manifest themselves in your students learning, your teaching, and perhaps even in your own identity. You are expected to write in your journal at least 4 times in a month. There will also be a journal prompt regarding the additional events that will be meeting outside of our normal class time. The journal will be handed in at the end of the course to be graded. The journal will be graded on the level of introspection about the issues covered in the course and their relation to your classroom practice.

Service Learning Project - In addition to the reading and writing we will be doing in the class, there will also be a service learning component to enhance our understanding around the issues pertaining to multicultural education. The service learning experience will give students in this course the opportunity to better understand issues central to the goals of the class. Service learners will have built-in class time to formally share their service learning experiences with each other. Service learners will also write a 3-5 pg. paper outlining the process and results of their Service Learning Project. More details will be given on the first day of class

Best practices presentation – During this semester each student will deliver a presentation about one of their best practices in the classroom. The presentation is intended to give each of you the opportunity to share a practice or strategy that has been helpful to the improvement of your overall practice with your colleagues. The possibilities for the topics of the presentations can vary greatly. The presentations, can range from content-specific workshops/lesson plans, pedagogical strategies, discipline policies/strategies, organizational techniques, among other things. In the past people have given presentations on issues such as how they used technology to assess or analyze student achievement, strategies to better organize their classroom to enhance their teaching and/or students' learning, effective discipline strategies developed by oneself or by the staff/administrators at one's school, and effective community-building strategies. Other possible topics include how to create culturally-affirming classroom cultures, strategies/workshops/lessons that were inclusive and beneficial to students with differing learning abilities, and strategies/workshops/lessons that facilitated the literacy development of non-native English speakers. Your coaches are also good resources to help you develop a topic and the actual presentations.

Assessment:

Classroom and Participation – **40%**

Journal –**15%**

Service learning project -**20%**

Best Practices Presentation -**25%**

Class Meetings: Class will meet on the following Saturdays from 8:30-4:30 in W206

January 26th -Teaching Immigrant Students and Service Learning

Norton, N.E.L., Smith, K., Kander, F., Short, K.G. (2005). Permitame Hablar: Allow Me to Speak. *Language Arts*, 83(2), 118-127

Joshi, A., Eberly, J., Konzal, J. (2005). Dialogue across cultures: Teachers's Perceptions about communicating with diverse families. *Multicultural Education*, 13(2), 11-15.

Ramirez, A.Y. (2005). Esperanza's Lessons: Learning about Education through the Eyes of the Innocent. *Multicultural Education*, 13(2), 47-51

February 9th - Special Education in the Urban Classroom

Access to the Core Curriculum. By: Fisher, Douglas; Frey, Nancy. Remedial & Special Education, May/Jun2001, Vol. 22 Issue 3, p148

The Diagnosis of LD in English Learners: Is It Nondiscriminatory? By: Figueroa, Richard A.; Newsome, Patricia. Journal of Learning Disabilities, May/Jun2006, Vol. 39 Issue 3, p206-214, 9p; (AN 20725164)

What Do the Experts Say about Urban Special Education Issues? . By: Nevin, Ann. Online Submission. 2005 44 pp. (ED491410)

March 8th - Best Literacy Practices in the Urban Classroom

Improving the Reading Skills of Urban Elementary Students Through Total Class Peer Tutoring. By: Kourea, Lefki; Cartledge, Gwendolyn; Musti-Rao, Shobana. Remedial & Special Education, Mar/Apr2007, Vol. 28 Issue 2, p95-107

Acquisition of Literate Discourse: Bowing before the Master? . By: Delpit, Lisa D.. Theory into Practice, v31 n4 p296-302 Fall 1992.

"Why can't she remember that?" The importance of storybook reading in multilingual, multicultural classrooms. By: Meier, Terry. Reading Teacher, Nov2003, Vol. 57 Issue 3, p242-252

April 12th - How to build Motivation and Self-Efficacy in Urban Students

"You Can't Get There From Here: The Need for a New Logic in Education Reform"
Jeff Howard. 1995. Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences

Confronting Culture with Culture: Creating Optimum Learning Environments for Students of Diverse Sociocultural Backgrounds. . By: Maehr, Martin L.. 1998 17 pp

What Knowledge Is of Most Worth? Student Perspectives. . By: Nicholls, John G.. 1993 15 pp.

May 3rd – Urban Teachers as Researchers

"Who Am I Becoming?" Identity Development in Becoming a Teacher-Researcher. . By: Girod, Mark; Pardales, Michael. 2002 11 pp.

Learning to conduct teacher research: exploring the development of mediated understandings. By: Brock, Cynthia; Helman, Lori; Patchen, Chitlada. Teachers & Teaching, Feb2005, Vol. 11 Issue 1, p73-94

What Counts As Teacher Research? Investigating the Scientific and Mathematical Ideas of Children From Culturally Diverse Backgrounds. By: Ballenger, C.; Rosebery, A.S.. Teachers College Record, Mar2003, Vol. 105 Issue 2, p297-314

Additional Meetings: In addition to the class meetings listed above we are requiring you to attend four other outside lectures/presentations (throughout the whole school year) that are relevant to the topic covered in class. Listed below is the website for the 2007-2008 Race, Culture, Identity and Achievement Seminar Series. Please sign up for the seminars immediately if you plan to attend.

www.achievementseminars.com