

EDUC 573 **Practicum in Early Childhood Education**

Semester Hours: 6 hours, graduate

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The practicum is a capstone class for the Early Childhood program. This course gives the student the opportunity to take knowledge and experience, gained through the graduate program, and to integrate it into the learning community. The demonstration of program goals and student competence will be seen in the student's written philosophy of education, through the completion of core standard four, and through the process of action research.

PLACE IN CURRICULUM

The Practicum is taken at the end of the student's program of study. Students may complete practicum prior to EDUC 595 and SOC 565, however, it is highly recommended that it be taken after all courses are completed.

GOALS

This course allows the student to use knowledge (learning) and experience gained in previous classes to identify an issue in his/her learning community that requires change. In the process of this course, the student will research the issue, design and complete action research as well as develop a plan for the dissemination of the information gained from the research. Teaching, leading and learning performance areas of Concordia University, Nebraska's teacher education knowledge base will be demonstrated in this capstone course of the Masters in Education with an Early Childhood emphasis.

OBJECTIVES

- A. Demonstrate a clear understanding of the development of young children (T6)
- B. Evaluate classroom environments to ensure children's safety and their healthy development. (T1, T4, T5, T6, T9, LD1)
- C. Evaluate curriculum activities to advance all areas of children's development and learning, including social, emotional, intellectual, physical, spiritual, and aesthetic competence. (T1, T2, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, LD1, LD3)
- D. Evaluate relationships with children and implement developmentally appropriate techniques of guidance and group management. (T4, T6, LD8, LD2)
- E. Evaluate relationships with families. (LD2, LD8, LD5, LD9, LR1, LR4)

- F. Support the uniqueness of each child, recognizing that children are best understood in the context of their family, culture, and society. (T5, LD8, LR4)
- G. Demonstrate an understanding of the early childhood profession and make a commitment to professionalism, including continuous personal professional growth. (T5, T9, LD2, LD4, LD8, LD9, LR7)
- H. Evaluate assessment of young children's learning. (T3, T6)
- I. Articulate the importance of developmentally appropriate program practices and communicate this to supervisors, peers and parents/guardians of young children. (T6, T9, LD2, LD4, LD6, LD8, LD9, LR7)
- J. Effect change in school policies and/or practices that professional knowledge and research deem inappropriate in programs for young children. (T5, T9, LD4, LD6, LD7, LR6)
- K. Make use of a team ministry with other professional workers and support staff in the program. (LD9, LD10)
- L. Design, defend and complete an action research study. (LR7, T5)

REQUIRED TEXTS

Sagor, Richard, (2011) The action research guidebook: A four-step process for educators and school teams. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press

Johnston, Terri Chiara, (2010) Data without tears: How to write measurable educational goals and collect meaningful data. Champaign, Illinois: Research Press

STUDENT ROLES

1. Attend class on-line, complete reading assignments, participate in discussions, and share progress with classmates and instructor.
2. Check on-line course, discussion boards, email, assignment postings and announcements on a daily basis (weekly for assignment postings).
3. Complete steps of action research, as identified in the course, in a timely manner.
4. Identify a person who will serve as your mentor. This should be someone who has a MA in education who can serve as a sounding board as you complete each step in the action research process. This person will be expected to complete evaluations on each step of the action research process.
5. Self-evaluate action research process after feedback from the instructor.
6. Assemble a plan for dissemination of the results of the action research.

COURSE CONTENT

The learning in this course centers around the development of an action research project. The nature and steps of action research are studied and subsequently applied to a project of the student's choosing. Action research is completed and analyzed, then prepared for dissemination to the student's learning community. Action research is not experimental or correlational research. It is, instead, a type of qualitative research that is pragmatic in philosophy and eminently practical to improve practice in a learning community.

METHOD

This course primarily utilizes a self-study methodology. Students are assigned readings, and a guideline for completion of the project is given. The instructor facilitates the process through discussion and encourages the students to problem solve with each other as they complete their projects. Additionally, students choose and work with a mentor to obtain more specific feedback on their projects.

ASSESSMENT

Students will be evaluated on their ability to demonstrate attainment of the objectives listed in this syllabus. Evaluations will be conducted through self-reflection, from the mentor, and by the instructor's evaluation of assignments. With exception to the final paper and discussion points, all points are awarded for successful completion of work rather than quality of work. If your work is unsatisfactory, the instructor will give feedback and the student will be expected to revise. This will assure that the final project will be of exemplary quality.

GRADING

A	95-100%
A-	91-94%
B+	88-90%
B	84-87%
B-	81-83%
C+	78-80%
C	73-77%
C-	70-72%
INC	