EDTE 811: Developing Integrated Curricula

I. Descriptive Information

A. Course Number and Title: EDTE 811: Developing Integrated Curricula
B. Catalog Description: Theoretical foundation of an integrated curriculum and its implications for current practice will be examined.
C. Course Credit: 3 hours
D. Co-requisite: None
E. Intended Audience: This course is intended for students in doctoral programs and education specialist degree programs.
F. Instructor: Dr. Heidi Mills
   Email address: Heidimills@sc.rr.com

II. Statement of Course Goals and Objectives:

A. Goals

   Students will:

   1. examine the relationship between sign systems and knowledge domains and analyze its implications for designing integrated curricula; and
   2. identify and contrast the theoretical assumptions behind different models of an integrated curriculum.

B. Objectives

   Students will:

   1. explore the differences between two perspectives of scientific knowledge: knowledge as content versus knowledge as an outcome of inquiry and its implications for an integrated curriculum;
   2. differentiate between a discovery and an inquiry perspective toward learning;
   3. develop a range of teaching strategies that foster an interdisciplinary approach to curriculum development;
   4. investigate the crucial role of the arts in an integrated curriculum;
   5. examine the role of language in making interdisciplinary connections, such as the use of conversation, story and metaphor;
   6. analyze the use of various technological tools, such as software, CD-ROM, and the Internet for their application to interdisciplinary studies; and
   7. develop a set of conditions for learning that supports an interdisciplinary perspective.

III. Required Texts and Readings
A. Required Texts:

*Cognition and Curriculum Reconsidered* by Eisner  
*The Schools Our Children Deserve* by Kohn  
*Children’s Inquiry* by Lindfors  
*Curriculum Integration: Designing the Core of Democratic Education* by Beane  
*Looking Closely and Listening Carefully: Learning Literacy Through Inquiry* by Mills, O’Keefe and Jennings  
*Choice Words* by Peter Johnston

B. Readings:

1. A variety of articles from an assortment of professional journals and texts will also be distributed. See attached bibliography for examples.

2. Recommended texts.

*Understanding by Design* by Wiggins  
*In Schools We Trust* by Meier

IV. Academic Course Requirements

A. Annotated Bibliography of Children's Books that Reflect an Inquiry Stance (15 pts)  
B. Conducting and Analyzing and Exploratory Conversation (30 pts)  
C. Analysis of Scientific Articles (20 pts)  
D. Interview of Expert in field (20 pts)  
E. Literature Response (15 pts)

V. Administrative Requirements

A. Students are expected to attend all class sessions in Wardlaw 110 on January 17, January 31, February 21, March 7, March 21, April 28 (Tuesday, Center for Inquiry classroom visits) and May 2 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Additionally, students are expected to actively participate in all engagements and conversations in response to the readings and demonstrations. Excessive absenteeism and/or lack of ongoing communication via email will result in the lowering of a student's grade, as outlined in the university catalog.

VI. Description of Assignments, Evaluation and Grading

A. Annotated Bibliography of Children’s Books About Inquiry: Inquiry Text Set  

Spend some time looking in the library and bookstores for at least five children’s books that demonstrate what an inquiry stance toward the world is like. You might want to read book reviews from *Language Arts*, *Reading Teacher*, *School Library Journal*, *Teaching Children Mathematics* and others as a way to become familiar with some of the more recent titles in children’s books. Look for characteristics of an inquiry stance that are derived from our readings and class discussions. Some of
these include: dealing with anomalies, confronting the unexpected, constructing and revising theories, acting like a detective, being skeptical of data or assumptions, entertaining multiple perspectives, demonstrating a willingness to tolerate ambiguity, a sense of wonder about the world and so on.

Cite each book using APA format and write a thorough and thoughtful paragraph for each that documents why you feel each book demonstrates an inquiry perspective. Bring each book to the class meeting on January 31. Make a copy of your entire bibliography and commentary for each member of the class. We will compile a class text set of books that demonstrate and promote inquiry within and across disciplines. You will also email a copy to me so I can send everyone an electronic version of the complete text set.

B. Conducting and Analyzing an Exploratory Conversation

Interdisciplinary connections grow out of exploratory conversations. For this engagement you will share a nonfiction book or involve children in an interdisciplinary experience that will encourage them to talk and learn together. By so doing, you will lead an exploratory conversation with a small group or whole class. You will tape record and transcribe the conversation and then analyze it for characteristics of an inquiry perspective. Look for characteristics from the readings and discussions that we have together. Some of these might include: valuing multiple theories, revising theories, building off of each other’s ideas, making personal connections, making intertextual ties with other concepts or ideas, expressing ideas in metaphorical terms, raising questions, challenging parts of the text, proposing alternate hypotheses and suggesting possible experiments to test out these hypotheses, requesting additional information, demonstrating a problem-posing stance (i.e. What if we thought about this in another way), and so on.

You are to submit a transcript of the conversation and an in-depth analysis of that conversation. Your analysis should include the inquiry features of the conversation. You will conclude the analysis with a section that illuminates lessons you learned about the role of talk in learning and implications for classroom instruction. Please bring your transcript and analysis to the class meeting at the Center for Inquiry on April 28.

C. Analysis of Scientific Article

Read an article from the field of science that demonstrates how scientists really think, work, solve problems, deal with anomalies, sift through contradictory evidence, make sense of unexpected results, converse with colleagues, revise and abandon theories, challenge the assumptions of others, deal with missing data, etc. Some good magazines to read include Nature, Natural History and the Smithsonian. You might also find some in Time (provided it is a feature-length article).

Write a focused analysis of your article by discussing the inquiry characteristics of a scientist’s work. Be specific. Cite specific language and events that support your case. Conclude your piece with a discussion of curricular implications, i.e. given that this is the way that scientists work and think, what does this say to us as educators about the kind of experiences we might plan for children in school? Please make a copy of your article and your analysis for each member of our class community. In so doing, we will compile a resource file to be used with students and/or colleagues who are interested in exploring and supporting scientific inquiry. Please bring these materials to class on March 7.
D. **Interview an Expert**

Find an expert in a field outside of education. Select a mentor who works in a field you find particular interesting (artist, musician, physicist, dancer, engineer, anthropologist, etc.) Make an appointment to conduct and tape record an interview with your expert. You will use the interview to develop an in-depth understanding of how your mentor thinks, works, and communicates in his/her field. Compose questions after I share insights from Ben Brabson, a physicist from Indiana University who articulated how physicists come to know and how an apprenticeship model works in his field. Bring your synthesis of your interview to class on **March 21.**

E. **Active Engagement as a Learner: Literature Response and Class Participation**

Research shows that reflection is essential for intellectual growth, learning is a social process and that writing is a tool for learning. Thoughts are often borne through writing and when engraved on paper, the author can return to these ideas to help build connections and as part of “outgrowing our former selves.” Indeed, when learners use writing to intentionally and systematically reflect upon reading experiences they:

- make new connections;
- articulate their beliefs about teaching, learning and curriculum;
- make solid predictions and pose new questions;
- theorize from descriptions of exemplary practice and
- imagine practices that reflect current theory.

In order to develop habits of intentional and consistent reflective reading, you will experiment with and develop a system to keep track of readings and to record and build on reactions to readings, e.g. note taking, underlining, responding in the margins etc. You will come to each class meeting with written reflections to be poised to make significant contributions to our professional literature conversations. Additionally, you will sign-up to serve as discussion leader for one class session. As discussion leader, you will engage your colleagues in a rich, thought provoking conversation.

I believe that learning is a social process. Therefore, you are responsible for making important contributions to class by actively participating and demonstrations and engagements as well as professional literature conversations. You will turn in copies of your written reflections with your collaborative evaluation form on **May 2.**

**Evaluation and Grading:** All assignments will be evaluated collaboratively using an evaluation instrument co-created during class. In so doing, your first hand experiences devising evaluation strategies will help you develop a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between teaching, learning and evaluation.

- **Inquiry Text Set** 15 points
- **Exploratory Conversations** 35 points
- **Analysis of Scientific Article** 20 points
- **Interview an Expert** 20 points
- **Lit. Response & Participation** 10 points

*100 points possible:
The grading scale used for this course will be:
VII. Major Topics of the Course

A. The authoring cycle model for curriculum development
B. Theoretical assumptions behind interdisciplinary studies
C. The nature of sign systems and knowledge domains
D. Living the life of scientists: inquiry in action
E. Learning as a social process
F. Curriculum as inquiry
G. Historical antecedents for integrated studies
H. The central role of the arts
I. The relationship between curriculum and evaluation
J. Curriculum as invitation, negotiation, and demonstration

VIII: Modes of Instruction

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Instruction</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading and literature discussion</td>
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<td>Demonstration of theory and practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement - first-hand experiences with the process and content information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working as a teacher apprentice in second grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written reflection and response</td>
<td>10%</td>
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IX. Bibliography


