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C&I 420.01: Assessment and Curriculum in Early Childhood Special Education

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**Curriculum & Instruction (C&I) 420:
Curriculum/Methods in Early Childhood Special Education**

Autumn Semester 2008

The University of Montana - Missoula

Instructor: Ms. Stacia Jepson

Course Syllabus

C&I 420 – 01: Curriculum/Methods in Early Childhood Special Education, 3 cr.

Early Childhood Setting Lab or practicum experience is required - Minimum 3 hrs/wk. Lab TBA.

Associated Term: Autumn Semester 2008

**UM-Msla Campus or participation via teleconference for students who live out of area
Seminar + Lab Schedule Type**

Offered autumn even-numbered years. Prerequisite: consent of instructor. Includes 45 hours of practicum work in early childhood setting. Instructor consent is required to attend class via teleconference.

Applicable to students from a variety of disciplines including, but not limited to: general and special education, human and family development, clinical and school psychology, social work, pre-nursing, physical therapy, etc.

The purpose of this course is for students to gain practical and theoretical knowledge and skills in: early childhood special education (children with disabilities birth through 8 years of age with an emphasis on children ages 3-5); research-based principles in selecting and adapting early childhood curriculum and assessment materials for young children with and without disabilities; development, implementation, and monitoring of individualized education programs (IEPs); appropriate teaching strategies for the early childhood special education classroom with an emphasis on positive behavior supports including strategies to prevent, reduce, and intervene with students engaged in challenging behavior; importance of safety, data collection and legal issues.

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|-------|----------------|------|------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Class | 4:10 - 6:00 pm | Tues | McG 031 | 8/26/08- 12/09/08 | Seminar + Lab | Stacia Jepson |
|-------|----------------|------|------------|----------------------|------------------|---------------|

Instructor and contact information:

Stacia Jepson, M.Ed. – Associate Director, Co-Teach Preschool Program and the Division of Educational Research & Service, The University of Montana; C&I 420 Instructor;
Stacia.Jepson@umontana.edu; 406-243-4280

Office Location: McGill 025; office hours weekly by appointment

“I’ve come to the conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In every situation, it is my response that determines whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or de-humanized.”

Hiam Ginott

Purpose of the Course

The overall goal of this course is to provide and equip participants with both educational and practical experience employing curricula and instructional methods/procedures in the field of early childhood special education. This goal will be addressed through the completion of activities that include assigned readings, group discussion, and an array of performance objectives. In addition to core experiences, it is expected that each participant will have opportunities to review, describe, and discuss a wide range of curriculum and assessment methods in the field of early childhood special education. The course requirement includes 45 field-based practicum hours in an early childhood setting. Instructor consent is required to attend class via teleconference/long distance.

Seminar will meet Tuesdays from 4:10 to 6:00 PM in McGill 031. We meet in seminar group to discuss issues, theory, readings and research-related assignments in detail. The third credit will be earned through the completion of a minimum of three contact hours per week with children birth through 8 years of age (total of 45 hours over the semester).

There are no required textbooks or Fac Pacs for this course. Reading assignments will be provided by the instructor in handout, email attachment, and internet search/view format or will be available on reserve in the Division of Educational Research and Service (DERS) Library, McGill 029.

Students requiring accommodations due to special needs must inform the instructor(s) on the first day of class. The University of Montana does not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, race, religion, age, sex, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability and will not tolerate such discrimination on campus or within its programs.

The basic components of most integrated Early Childhood sites address issues and topics related to, but not limited to, the following areas: school safety; inclusion; family and school partnerships; individualized child referral, curriculum, assessment, program planning and implementation (individualized education programs or IEPs); data collection and accountability; individual child strengths and needs; trans-disciplinary teaming; program evaluation; disability awareness; technology integration, early literacy and language skills; kindergarten transition; integrated staff and family training; social skill development; positive behavioral supports and instructional techniques; and strategies to reduce, prevent, and intervene with students engaged in challenging behavior. These components work together to form an effective model for teaching children and preparing them to successfully make the transition to the least restrictive educational kindergarten setting.

• **Semester duration: Tuesday, August 26, 2008 – Tuesday, December 9, 2008**

Attend seminar via teleconference using the InterCall system instructions provided via e-mail by instructor. This process will be implemented each Tuesday from 4:10 - 6:00 pm at the Division of Educational Research & Service (DERS). If you experience technical difficulties, please call 406-243-5344 and speak with the instructor's colleague - Leona Hastings, DERS Associate Director.

University students are encouraged and expected to discuss their early childhood settings, curriculum and assessment practices, and the families they serve. The class will discuss individual children's strengths and challenges during seminar. Child, family, colleague, and program confidentiality must be strictly maintained. During practicum site teaching time, please do not talk about children in front of children, do not use last names, and do not use personal identifying information when discussing schools settings and particular students/families.

• **Tuesday, August 26, 2008 (participate in class weekly from 4:10 – 6:00 PM either in person or via teleconference using the instructions for teleconferencing provided in email from instructor sent Sunday, August 24th at 3:30 PM mountain standard time)**

- Welcome and Introductions (All);
- Read and discuss the syllabus and UM student course requirements (Stacia);
- Off-site C&I 420 students provide e-mail, phone, & mailing addresses (Stacia);
- Description of Satellite EC settings (GPP students).

C&I 420 students will meet a minimum of 10 expectations and performance objectives over the course of Autumn semester 2008. UM students will:

1. UM students will communicate with instructor both in person and via e-mail. To do this, UM students must each have an active UM assigned e-mail account and address that is checked daily to retrieve any messages from the instructor.
2. UM students will send a digital photograph and written professional biography to the instructor via e-mail attachment at Stacia.Jepson@umontana.edu. Students must complete this assignment by September 9, 2008.

3. UM students will participate in and complete 45 hours of practicum work in an early childhood setting (instructor approval is required to determine the setting) over the course of the semester.
4. UM students will interview a colleague or staff member in an early childhood setting and ask questions and record answers regarding curriculum methods in the field of providing early intervention services to children and families.
5. During seminar discussion, UM students will review and describe a variety of early childhood issues and topics and exchange information about their practicum teaching site's demographics. In addition, they will identify, review and discuss curriculum models which characterize early intervention for young children with diverse abilities.
6. UM students will spend 3 hours observing one early childhood setting other than the one they work in or are assigned to as a practicum site over the course of the semester. The setting must be approved in advance by the instructor. Subsequent to the observation, UM students will write a 2 page double-spaced summary of their observations. The summary should focus on: program philosophy, class demographics, physical environment, curriculum model, assessment tools utilized, schedule of the day (routine), classroom rules, activity descriptions, etc.
7. UM students will describe and follow the process of implementing a naturalistic curriculum model in an early childhood setting.
8. Under the supervision of the instructor as well as a practicum site cooperating special education teacher, UM students will conduct individual and small group instructional activities and assist with data collection to monitor student progress per an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as scheduled, with preschool children, using procedures described in assigned readings and discussed during weekly seminar.
9. Students will complete an array of assigned readings pertaining to early childhood special education.
10. UM students will maintain confidentiality of all class discussions; no child or family's identity shall be revealed or discussed outside of class; no information will be shared with parents about children in the program other than their own; no photographs shall be taken or shown without prior instructor permission and subsequent parental approval.

Evaluation

University student performance is assessed in order to ensure that we are satisfying departmental requirements, meeting course objectives, and grading equitably.

• Conduct Code

Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. Students are expected to know, understand and comply with the academic honesty policies as described in the University of Montana *Student Conduct Code*. A copy of this code is available at: <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>.

- **Weekly Seminars Tuesdays 4:10-6:00 PM, McGill 031**

Students are responsible for attending and participating in all seminars and for taking notes as necessary. The seminars provide a valuable opportunity to reflect the needs of children, issues and topics in early intervention, and the learning objectives of university students. Seminars are one of the occasions when adults can speak about a child's or family's needs without being overheard by children. Attendance is required and attendance records are maintained by the instructor for all seminars. Seminar attendance and participation is a large portion of UM students' grades. If you are unable to attend seminar due to illness or an emergency, please contact Stacia at 406-243-4280. There will be guest speakers in this course. These volunteer speakers may be people from the University or the community with expertise in a particular area. Whenever there are guest speakers, students are expected to be attentive, courteous, and polite. Failure to behave accordingly will affect the student's class participation grade.

- **Class Participation and Performance**

All students must demonstrate the ability to perform successfully in every aspect of the class including attitude, energy, and effort given to all assignments and discussions, as well as the ability and willingness to follow the instructions of the instructor. Furthermore, students are graded based on their ability to demonstrate professionalism, and respect to their peers, their instructor, and the children and families whom they serve.

- **Successful completion of 45 practicum hours in an early childhood special education setting**

All students must demonstrate the ability to perform as a team member in an early childhood special education setting. Before beginning those hours, students must receive individual instructor approval.

- **People-first language**

The field of special education has adopted the use of "people-first language" and has identified it as a best practice when referring to people with identified disabilities. This means that the emphasis is the person before the disability. For example, we say, "child with autism" as opposed to, "autistic child". It is expected that students participating in C&I 420 adopt people-first language when participating in class discussion and in written assignments.

- **Readings**

No textbook is required. The reading assignments will be handouts provided by the instructor via email and/or materials located on the internet or in the DERS Special Education Library in McGill 029. UM students are responsible for completing assigned readings. The instructor will snail-mail or e-mail the reading assignment at

least 3 days before class each week. There may be quizzes over the assigned readings and previous week's discussion at the beginning of class on Tuesdays, so please keep up on readings and take notes during seminar if necessary.

- **Additional Learning Opportunity/Observation in an alternate early childhood setting and 2-pg summary**

UM Students are required to observe another early childhood setting and electronically write and submit a 2-pg summary (12 pt font, double-spaced, 1 inch margins) of the observation. UM students will spend 3 hours observing one early childhood setting other than the one they work in over the course of the semester. These 3 hours of observation may count toward the total 45 practicum hours required for the semester. The setting must be approved in advance by the instructor.

UM students are responsible for being professional, well-mannered guests and for abiding by the classroom rules where and when they visit. They are to be respectful of all classroom participants and observe only. Subsequent to the observation, UM students will write a 2 page double-spaced summary of their observations. The summary should focus on: class demographics, program philosophy, physical environment, curriculum, assessment tools utilized, schedule of the day (routine), classroom rules, activity descriptions, etc. This assignment must be completed and submitted to Instructor by Tuesday, December 2, 2008.

- **Grades**

- **Students who breach Confidentiality or who use Corporal Punishment will be immediately dismissed and receive a failing grade.**
- **Incompletes are issued at the discretion of the instructor and only in situations where a UM student is performing satisfactorily in all aspects of the practicum.**
- **Late assignments are accepted only when arrangements have been made in advance and at the discretion of the instructor.**

Passing grades (grades ranging from C- to B+) are based on the participation and completion of the following minimum requirements and essential functions of the position/practicum that are non-negotiable. University students must:

- **Maintain confidentiality of all class discussions** and protect child/student/family identity. Students who breach confidentiality will receive a failing grade.
- **Attend and participate in weekly seminars** (listen politely when someone else is speaking, participate in group discussion, ask questions, and save unrelated conversations until after class). Students are expected to attend each class session. Two or more absences constitute a reduction in grade.

- Demonstrate the ability to be **prompt and efficient and attend and participate during seminar** and to follow instructions and call the instructor each Tuesday at 4:10 to teleconference/participate in class.
- **Complete all class assignments on time over the course of the semester and send them to Stacia.jepson@umontana.edu.**
- **Demonstrate professionalism and show respect to all** peers, children, families, team members, employees, and the course instructor.
- **When applicable, recognize unsafe classroom situations and child interactions and intervene appropriately** as discussed in seminar.
- **Communicate professionally**, politely, and sensitively with families, co-workers, supervisors, and instructor (includes both verbal and written communication).

Exceptional performance (grade of A- or A) at Co-Teach includes, but is not limited to, the passing grade criteria above as well as university students who:

- **Demonstrate the ability to be flexible** when the opportunity or need arises in class, or when asked to do something unexpected.
- **Demonstrate a willingness to collaborate** with other team members.
- **Contribute to the discussion at seminar in a thoughtful and meaningful way** (i.e., refer to the readings, previous discussions, personal teaching experiences, reflections based on classroom observations, prior knowledge, etc.)
- **Participate in one “Additional Learning Opportunity”** by observing another early childhood setting other than the one you work in for a minimum of 3 hours and writing/submitting electronically a 2 page summary of the observation.
- **Demonstrate ability to perform successfully in every aspect of the course including attitude, energy, and effort** given to all assignments and classroom tasks as well as the ability to follow the instructor’s instructions.

Thank you for your participation in C&I 420. If you have any questions throughout the semester, please feel free to contact me by phone at 406-243-4280 to schedule an appointment or reach me via e-mail at the following address: Stacia.jepson@umontana.edu.

Assign due September 2, 2008:

1. Review syllabus.
2. E-mail Stacia to confirm correct address

Assign due September 9, 2008:

3. Write bio and send to Stacia via e-mail
4. Take digital photo and send to Stacia via email