

EDUC 320: Social and Psychological Conditions of Learning: Awareness-Initiative Level

WHO: All education majors

PRE-JUNCTURE

Course Description:

A reflective exploration of the knower (the learner), knowing (learning), the known (knowledge), and the contexts in which knowledge is constructed through teaching/learning

The goal of this course is to help the teacher candidate acquire a critical introduction to the understanding of the learner, learning, and the nature of knowledge. Course content focuses on issues of mental, physical, and emotional development that include an investigation of cognition and the processes and conditions that appear to make positive contributions to empowering children with the knowledge to act effectively in our world. This course is required for all pre-service teachers.

The practicum associated with this course is designed to provide opportunities for the Teacher Candidate to achieve the level of awareness/initiative in the gradual process of making the elements of our program “habits of mind.” The class is so structured that starting about the seventh week of the semester the candidate should be spending at least two hours a week in the practicum site identified by the university. Alternating between campus and practicum for seven weeks, the teacher candidate is required to spend at least twenty (20) hours in the field classroom. The arrangement accommodates the Action-Reflection-Action Cycle. Teacher candidates are placed in classrooms commensurate with their specialization (Early Ed: PreK/K; Elementary: K to 6; Secondary: 6-8).

The teacher candidates in this practicum experience have several issues to account for while they are there:

- 1) **Observation.** Many of us believe that observation (“kid watching”) is a lost art of teaching. Observing takes time from other activities and concerns and is somewhat in conflict with our stereotypical image of what a teacher does as a teacher. We want our teacher candidates to understand the efficacy of deliberate observation of learners and learning. They will observe general activity, frames of activity, and the demonstrated learning behavior of learners. A frame in our class means a definable episode of classroom activity, e.g., opening a lesson, seat work, transition from one activity to another, dismissal, etc.
- 2) **Reflection.** The reflective pair of Teacher Candidates placed in the public school classroom are required to consistently reflect on their experience through an interactive journal or written analysis. We encourage Facilitating Teachers to participate in discussions with candidates to share insights. Such insights can make significant contribute to life at school.
- 3) **Working with students.** It is important that teacher candidates be given opportunities to work with students under the Facilitating Teacher’s direction. Individual tutoring and working with small groups are appropriate. Teacher Candidates can be of service in this regard. During their stay in the classroom, we hope that they will also assist in various tasks assigned to them.

University Supervisor Responsibilities:

- Develop and maintain a professional working relationship among facilitating teachers, school administrators, school staff, and teacher candidates.
- Observe the learning conditions present in the teacher candidates' placements.
- Confer with teacher candidates and facilitating teacher on pertinent observation and performance topics.
- Engage the teacher candidate in reflective dialog regarding the practicum experience.
- Ensure that the facilitating teacher has received appropriate literature and forms

Teacher Candidate Responsibilities:

- Attend required hours in the assigned classroom upholding Shepherd University and school system expectations for professional behavior and dress.
- Dialogue with the facilitating teacher and other professionals in the building.
- Work with individuals and small groups under the direction of the facilitating teacher.
- Notify the facilitating teacher prior to scheduled appearance if illness or other unavoidable circumstances make it impossible for him or her to go to the school.
- Be accountable to the university at all times.
- Fulfill additional responsibilities as indicated in the course syllabus.

Facilitating Teacher Responsibilities:

- Welcome the teacher candidate and orient her/him to the classroom.
- Dialogue with the candidate regarding observations.
- Assign and support candidate work with individuals and/or small groups and other teacher-related tasks.
- Answer questions that arise during work with students.
- Verify teacher candidate attendance/hours.