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C&I 495.02: Inclusion in Early Childhood

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C&I 495 for GPP students
Inclusion in Early Childhood
Spring Semester 2006

Course Description, Assignments, Calendar, and Grading Criteria

INSTRUCTORS   Office hours available by appointment.

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REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Core Texts:

Building Blocks for Teaching Preschoolers with Special Needs by S.R. Sandall and I.S. Schwartz (2002). Paul H. Brookes Publishing: Baltimore, MD.

Consultation in Early Childhood Settings by V. Buysse and P.W. Wesley (2005). Paul H. Brookes Publishing: Baltimore, MD.

Consultation Tools:

Child Care plus+ Curriculum on Inclusion: Practical Strategies for Early Childhood Programs by S.A. Mulligan, S.L. Morris, K. Miller Green, S. Harper-Whalen (1999). Child Care plus+: Missoula, MT.

What's My Attitude? A Survey of Personal Beliefs About Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs (1999). Child Care plus+: Missoula, MT

Inclusion Policies and Practices Self-Assessment for Early Childhood Programs (1999). Child Care plus+: Missoula, MT.

Inclusion Skills Self-Assessment for Early Childhood Professionals (1999). Child Care plus+: Missoula, MT.

Resource Library:

Adapting Early Childhood Curricula for Children in Inclusive Settings (Sixth Edition) by R.E. Cook, M.D. Klein, A. Tessier, in collaboration with S.E. Daley (2004). Pearson Education Inc.: Upper Saddle River, NJ.

DEC Recommended Practices Workbook: Improving Practices for Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families by M.L. Hemmeter, B.J. Smith, S. Sandall, and L. Askew (2005). DEC: Missoula, MT.

Other Readings as Assigned

Instructors may assign additional reading as student interests and needs emerge

throughout the semester.

ACCOMMODATIONS
Please contact the instructor by Friday of the second week of the semester to arrange the teaching/learning accommodations you require.

ACADEMIC HONESTY
All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The code is available for review online at http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321 .

OVERVIEW
Primary Learning Goal
 Through course assignments, application of practices in current early childhood settings, and consultation in the field, students will synthesize the broad base of knowledge and skills around inclusion into core principles that will serve as a guide in their roles directly with young children and as an advocate and leader in the field. This distance-based course has been specifically developed for students enrolled in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction's Graduate Preparation Project: Supporting personnel preparation in early childhood special education at The University of Montana.

Lab Requirements
An important component of this course is the application of core inclusion principles and strategies to current teaching practices as well as learning about and applying recommended consultation practices as leaders in the field. Students will participate in lab work in their early childhood program, participate in peer consultation, and plan and implement eight stages of consultation with an early childhood professional in the field.

Student Learning Responsibility
Students are expected to take responsibility for their individual learning. Course objectives and activities support students in developing appropriate knowledge, resources, dispositions, and skills that will encourage lifelong learning—an essential practice for successful education professionals.

COURSE FORMAT
Course Assignments
Course assignments will include reviewing and responding to material in course texts and other readings as assigned, writing professional papers, conducting field work in their early childhood program, creating and critiquing professional development materials on Blackboard (asynchronous), providing consultation in the field, and ongoing self-assessment and reflection.

Receiving and Submitting Assignments
Weekly packets of course assignments will be e-mailed to students on Fridays for completion the following week.

-Students will have one week to e-mail completed assignments back to the Instructor for review c/o sandra.morris@ruralinstitute.umt.edu.
-When assignments are in paper/pencil format, please mail to:

>Sandra Morris
>Child Care plus+
>634 Eddy Avenue
>The University of Montana
>Missoula, MT 59812-6696

-Prior to mailing the original, it is the student's responsibility to *make a copy* of their work to reference for related assignments as well as guard against loss due to postal error.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES, DOCUMENTATION, AND CRITERIA
Student learning in each outcome area will be demonstrated and evaluated as follows.

OUTCOME *Through participation in this course, students will be able to:*	DOCUMENTATION	CRITERIA
Conduct self-evaluation of current knowledge and skills to develop goals and support ongoing learning.	Knowledge and Skills Inventory Summary and Goal Statement	Pre/post
		Two goals
	Two Individual Learning/Action Plans	Completion
Understand and consistently use person-first language and current professional terminology when speaking with or about individuals with disabilities.	Review of all written work and participation in Blackboard discussions	>95%
Know about and apply three methods for effectively including young children with disabilities in the early childhood classroom: curriculum modifications, embedded learning, and child-focused instructional strategies.	Weekly written reflection	six entries
		Described Below
	Weekly written assignments	100%
		Described Below
	Lab activities	six activities
		Described Below
Analyze and synthesize course content, experiences, and information from other courses to develop professional guiding principles.	Professional Guiding Principles	8-10 principles
		Described Below
Describe and utilize a systematic 8-stage process for providing effective consultation to educators and caregivers of children with disabilities from birth through age five.	Weekly written reflections	seven entries
		Described Below
	Weekly written assignments	100%

OUTCOME *Through participation in this course, students will be able to:*	DOCUMENTATION	CRITERIA
		Described Below
	Field-based Consultation	Completion
		Described Below
Develop and critique a professional inclusion philosophy statement.	Professional Inclusion Philosophy paper	Described Below

COURSE GUIDELINES
Criteria for grading in this class will be explained in each of the following core assignment descriptions. This information is provided to support student autonomy in completion of course requirements—diverse perspectives and response formats are encouraged within the framework of established criteria. Students are encouraged to ask for clarification of requirements as needed to take the lead in the learning process. Following review of core assignments (by peers, instructor, and/or self-evaluation), students are encouraged to rewrite and expand upon their written work and test responses to demonstrate ongoing learning and growth. Rewrites and corrections will be reviewed and points reassigned when indicated. Learning is not about perfection. Rather, it is about developing the disposition to *be* a learner!

Due Dates
Due to the sequential nature of course content, all written assignments are to be mailed in a timely manner. If a student is unable to meet a deadline, arrangements must be made with the instructor *prior to the actual due date*.

Format for Written Work
All written work must be typed, clearly and concisely written, and fully referenced. Person-first language should be used consistently.

CORE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA
Analysis and Summary of Inventory (10 points)
Upon completion of the Knowledge and Skills Inventory (Week One), you will write an analysis of your scores. Your analysis includes: 1) a summary paragraph that describes what you learned from the Inventory about your current knowledge and skills specifically related to *inclusion* in early childhood programs (2 points); 2) a clear description of 3-4 areas of strength that relate to items on the Inventory. Include your rationale and/or evidence for selecting each area of strength (i.e., what knowledge, skills, and personal values/attitudes make this an area of strength for you?); (2 points) and 3) a discussion of 2-3 learning needs you identified as a result of completing the inventory. Clearly describe your learning needs and provide rationale for your selection (3 points); and 4) establish two goals to focus your learning during course activities this semester (3 points).

<u>Weekly Reading/Lab Assignments</u> (75 points/5 points weekly)
Students will receive 15 weekly learning packets that outline reading assignments, a range of activities for demonstrating mastery of the material, and completion dates. Each completed packet will be submitted to the Instructor for review and feedback and/or posted on Blackboard for peer review. Required activities (reaction papers, lab assignments, checklists, chapter summaries, etc.) are assigned a total of <u>5 points </u>weekly and will be evaluated according to accurate reflection of the reading content and completion.

As a foundation for consultation, students will have periodic Lab assignments that focus on assessing and implementing core inclusion policies and practices in their own early childhood programs or assigned practicum setting. These Lab Activities will be clearly described on the weekly plan. Since it is imperative that professionals are able to "model what they teach," *all* Lab Activities must be completed to receive points in this area. Evidence of Lab Activities will be reviewed by the Instructor and returned for re-implementation if necessary.

A component of the activities each week is a Choice Assignment. The Choice Assignment will include a range of readings and response formats related to the weekly topic—you select and complete *one* activity from this list. You are advised to choose an activity that meets your individual learning needs and/or interests, that you will enjoy, and one that have application to your program or group.

Content knowledge is an essential precursor to effective practice. Therefore, ***all Reading Assignments (including one Choice Activity each week) must be accurately completed to be awarded any points in this area***. Submissions will be reviewed by the Instructor and returned for rewrites if necessary.

<u>Reflection Papers</u> (65 points/5 points each)
Students will complete thirteen reflection papers related to assigned readings and course activities as a tool for self-evaluation and learning—one focused on person-first language, five focused on *Building Blocks for Teaching Preschoolers with Special Needs,* and seven *Consultation in Early Childhood Settings.* Each Reflection Paper will include the following reflective elements:
    Description - review the knowledge or event(s) presented;
    Metacognition - describe your thoughts, feelings, assumptions, beliefs, values, and/or attitudes prior to and during the experience;
    Analysis - explain the reasoning and thinking behind the practices/information presented;
    Evaluation - identify the implications of the ideas/practices described as well as aspects of the information that were beneficial or confusing; and
    Reconstruction - describe the changes that might be made in your thinking and plans for future action (i.e., adjust prior attitudes/beliefs, learn more about a topic, try a new idea in practice, share information with another). Be sure to indicate the reading reviewed AND date of each reflection page.

<u>Professional Leadership Activity: Blackboard Posting and Participation:</u> (40 points)
Students will develop a one-page newsletter or "tip sheet" on a selected inclusion strategy or practice introduced in the *Building Blocks* text.   The first draft of these professional

development materials will be posted on Blackboard for peer review and revised accordingly. Once a second draft has been developed using peer feedback, students will share the information with their consultee in the field for a final review. Final works will then be posted on Blackboard so all students will have access to use these products in their ongoing work with early childhood caregivers/teachers.

The audience for the tip sheets will be early childhood providers/teachers (child care, Head Start, preschool, primary grade teachers) who have limited experience working with young children with disabilities. Peer and Instructor review will focus on: 1) use of person-first language and current terminology; 2) accuracy of the information presented; 3) tone and appropriateness of the content for the intended audience (information is free from jargon and has high readability without "talking down" to professionals who are new to inclusion); 4) content includes support for "know-be-do" learning (Know - knowledge, what is the strategy? Be - what values and beliefs are reflected in the strategy? Do - a focus on how to use the strategy in the context of the early childhood program); and 5) quality of the product (free from spelling/grammatical errors and professional style and formatting). First draft posted (5 points); student review of peer postings (10 points); second draft posted (5 points); consultee review (5 points); final product (10 points).

Professional Inclusion Philosophy (30 points)
Students will develop an early childhood philosophy statement that summarizes their knowledge and beliefs about inclusion for children under the age of five. All aspects of the statement must be consistent with current legislation, research, evidence-based practices in the early childhood field, and developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) principles. The paper will include: 1) the definition of inclusion (5 points); 2) the goal(s) of inclusion (5 points); 3) a description of placement options that should be available for young children with disabilities that meet your definition (i.e., Does a school district preschool that enrolls 10 children with disabilities and five peers without disabilities meet your definition? How about a child care program that is visited weekly by an early childhood/special education consultant? How should a child's placement be determined? (5 points); 4) the role of parents (5 points); 5) the role of community-based teacher/caregivers, early interventionists, early childhood special education teachers, therapists, and other specialists (5 points); and 6) the responsibility of the community at large (society) in supporting the inclusion of young children with disabilities and their families (5 points).

Professional Guiding Principles (30 points)
As a component of this capstone course, students will be required to pull together their knowledge and experiences related to inclusion to develop 5-8 guiding principles that define their inclusion beliefs and practices. These principles should be broad statements that reflect current best practice and that will serve as guides in all future work in the field—guides for describing inclusive practices, developing IEP's/IFSP's, consulting in programs, developing professional presentations, evaluating program/school inclusion policies, or implementing inclusive practices in their own programs. Each principle will include a statement based on best practice (20 points) and 3-5 references that support each statement (Use APA format for your complete reference list) (10 points).

As an example, several Child Care plus+ guiding principles for professional development

follow: 1) *A collaborative, problem-solving approach is essential to maximize resources and address the complexities of implementing inclusion practices in natural settings. 2) Effective technical assistance, training, and consultation to support inclusion addresses "one child at a time" and is responsive to the context of the child care setting, rather than using a "disability"- focused framework. 3) Professional development to support inclusion must be designed to promote self-efficacy, that is, to invest individuals with the information, skills, and resources they need—and want—to address children's needs in their program in the present and as situations change, in the future and allows the learner to drive the learning process.*

Field-based Consultation (50 points)
Students will implement the principles presented in the *Consultation* text to provide support for an early childhood provider/teacher in the field. Students will keep a log of their consultation activities (15 points) and write a 1-2 page summary of their experience (25 points). The consultee will also complete and submit an evaluation of the process (10 points).

Each student is responsible for identifying a consultee—so begin thinking immediately about where you might complete this activity. The program must be an early childhood setting (a public or private program/school that serves children from birth to age 8), and the targeted consultee must have an interest in learning more about inclusion. Please give preference to programs that currently include a child with disabilities, but this is not a requirement. Students can provide consultation for a colleague in their own early childhood program, but the individual *cannot be a current GPP student*.

GRADING SCALE (300 total points)
The chart below summarizes activity point values and established the final grading criteria. Please note that while the grading scale is rigorous, all assignments will be reviewed by the Instructors and returned to the student for rewrites if indicated. All students desiring competency in course content are capable of earning an "A."

CORE ASSIGNMENTS		GRADING SCALE	
Assignment	**Point Value**	**Range of Points**	**Letter Grade**
Analysis and Summary of Inventory	10 points	290 - 300	A
Weekly Reading/Lab Assignments	75 points (5 each week)	280 - 289	B
Reflection Papers (13)	65 points (5 each)	270 - 279	C
Professional Leadership Activity	40 points	260 - 269	D
Professional Inclusion Philosophy	30 points	250 or below	F
Professional Guiding Principles	30 points		
Field-based Consultation	50 points		
TOTAL POINTS	**300 points**		

COURSE CALENDAR
Each week, you will have assigned reading and related activities to complete and submit weekly. In addition, you will be working on several long term learning projects as described on pages 4-9. This calendar will help you anticipate topics and track your work. However, *please carefully review the weekly assignments you receive by e-mail*—these weekly plans

include essential details about learning activities related to the readings and additional information about the long-term core assignments.

Dates	Reading Assignment (Resources/Texts)	Learning Activities Due	Core Assignments Due (As Described Above)
1/23-1/27	Text Lists Student List Knowledge and Skills Inventory CC+ Attitude Survey	-Week 1	- Knowledge and Skills Inventory Analysis
1/30-2/3	Syllabus CC+ web site - vision/mission Disabilityisnatural.com (Kathie Snow article)	-Week 2	-Reflection Paper
2/6-2/10	**Building Blocks** Foreword ,etc. Chapter 1 Introduction Chapter 2 The BB Model Chapter 3 Keys to Collaboration	-Week 3	-Reflection Paper
2/13-2/17	**Building Blocks** Chapter 4 Getting Started	-Week 4	-Reflection Paper
2/20-2/24	**Building Blocks** Chapter 5 Curriculum Modifications	-Week 5	-Reflection Paper
2/27-3/3	**Building Blocks** Chapter 6 Embedded Learning Opportunities	-Week 6	-Reflection Paper
3/6-3/10	**Building Blocks** Chapter 7 Child-Focused Instructional Strategies	-Week 7	-Reflection Paper
3/13-3/17	**Building Blocks** Chapter 8 Independent Behavior Chapter 9 DAP Behavior Chapter 10 Emergent Literacy Chapter 11 Friendships/Social Relationships Chapter 12 Concluding Thoughts	-Week 8	-Reflection Paper - Individual Learning/Action Plan -Professional Leadership Activity (Draft #1 posted on Blackboard)
3/20-3/24	**Consultation in EC** Foreword, etc. Chapter 1 Why Consultation? Chapter 2 Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions	-Week 9	-Reflection Paper -Professional Leadership Activity: Peer review Comments -Select Consultation Site
3/27-3/31	Spring Break		
4/3-4/7	**Consultation in EC** Chapter 3 Gaining Entry: Stage 1 Chapter 4 Building the Relationship: Stage 2	-Week 10	-Reflection Paper -Professional Inclusion Philosophy

4/10-4/14	**Consultation in EC** Chapter 5 Assessment: Stage 3	-Week 11	-Reflection Paper
4/17-4/21	**Consultation in EC** Chapter 6 Setting Goals: Stage 4 Chapter 7 Selecting Strategies: Stage 5	-Week 12	-Reflection Paper -Professional Leadership Activity (Draft #2 posted on Blackboard)
4/24-4/28	**Consultation in EC** Chapter 8 Implementing the Plan: Stage 6 Chapter 9 Evaluating the Plan: Stage 7	-Week 13	-Reflection Paper
5/1-5/5	**Consultation in EC** Chapter 10 Summary Conference: Stage 8 Chapter 11 Evaluating consultation Processes and Outcomes	-Week 14	-Reflection Paper -Professional Guiding Principles
5/8-5/12	**Consultation in EC** Chapter 12 Contexts and Settings Chapter 13 Future Directions	-Week 15	-Knowledge and Skills Inventory -Consultation Log and Log Summary -Professional Leadership Activity: Final Product Posted on Blackboard

Please note that this document serves as a guide for course content and student evaluation. Course Instructors welcome student input and reserve the right to be learners as well as facilitators. Thus, the content this guide may be revised as the session proceeds. Any changes will be written and forwarded to participating students in a timely manner.

Certainty after all is antithetical to learning -
put another way -
for learning to be possible we need to have a healthy openness
about our own practice and the thinking on which it is based -
we need to be critics of our own practice and thinking.
This is fundamental to improvement
and the essence of a profession.

Judy Radich - National President of the Australian Early Childhood Association