Teachers are charged with the responsibility of teaching. Just exactly, what does it mean to teach? Is teaching simply a matter of following a script written by someone else? Or, is teaching more like playing a role in a serious drama? Maybe teaching is just doing what comes naturally. Then again, maybe it is simply a reconstruction of prior experiences with teachers.

Students who enter teacher education programs come with a long "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975)\(^1\), with strongly held judgments about education that may or may not have been reasonably derived or consciously determined. Thus, a fundamental goal of teacher education, in addition to guiding novices to acquire both the technical (how-to) and the practical (what to), must be to lead neophytes to temper their judgments, to replace their unsubstantiated opinion with what Dewey (1910) called "grounded belief."\(^2\)

Reflective Teaching offers those preparing to teach a community in which to reflect on the initial conceptions and experiences of teaching. Dewey (1910) described reflection as the "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends" (p. 6).\(^3\) By reflecting, preservice teachers can examine their commitment to children in classrooms, employing a "pedagogical thoughtfulness," according to van Manen (1991, p. 9).\(^4\) They can confront teaching as a problem to solve, as "a process of seeking and making meaning from personal, practical, and professional experiences" (Vacca, Vacca, & Bruneau, 1997, p. 446).\(^5\) They can become "conscious every day that they are coming to school to learn and not just to teach" (Paolo Freire cited in Burton, 1991, pp. 16-17).\(^6\)

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3 Ibid.


Reflective Teaching offers students in the teacher education program resources and guidance for gathering knowledge of and discussing the issues of teaching. Students select the issues, systematically gather data, assess the relevance of the data, evaluate data sources, and present informative seminars under the watchful guidance of two faculty members from the Department of Education, who offer frequent feedback as students examine their assumptions about teaching and develop professional judgment.

**Course Goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By the end of the course, students will show evidence that they can</th>
<th>...because they have</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. select, research, and collect authoritative information on issues that reflect on what it means to teach;</td>
<td>1. selected a single question or set of related questions to guide a serious examination of critical issues in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. collaboratively construct, deliver, and evaluate Socratic-style seminars on selected issues;</td>
<td>2. successfully planned and implemented Socratic-style seminars for an audience of educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. discuss current and future trends in education, demonstrating growth in teaching</td>
<td>4. contributed authoritative insight and judgment (from both research and experience) on current and future trends in education during seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. reach and defend reasonable positions on critical issues in education;</td>
<td>5. synthesized research and experience in weekly reflections on the seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. defend in a professional manner, reasonable solutions to open-ended problems</td>
<td>6. participated in professional dialogue during the seminars and wrote with perspective in weekly seminar reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. select and defend a quotation that expresses significant insight about teaching developed during the course (in writing)</td>
<td>7. written an insightful essay on a self-selected quotation that reveals developing insight and judgment within on issues in education related to the seminars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. develop and support with credible evidence gained from the experience of the class what it means to teach (in writing)</td>
<td>8. written a reflective essay that integrates insights gained from the seminar with both personal and professional experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Activities/Responsibilities**

Students are expected to attend A.I.R. (Authors, Readers, and Illustrators). Author Elaine Scott will discuss her books on Oct. 5, 2004 from 9:00-11:00 a.m. in the Gorman Faculty Lounge.

Students are expected to attend “An Evening of Conversation” featuring Dr. Frank Lazarus, President of the University of Dallas, on October 18, 2004 from 7-8:30 p.m. in the Gorman Faculty Lounge.

There is no textbook for this course; however, students are required to pay a $20.00 equipment use/printing fee.
Course Expectations:

1. Students will come to class regularly and on time.
2. Students will participate generously in class and online because they are serious in their commitment to inform reflective teaching practices.
3. Students will construct seminar topics seriously and reflectively.
4. Students will achieve course objectives
5. Students will work "Vygotsky style" and ASK*.

Student Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Tasks</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Seminar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear focus (objectives)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Seminar Assessment</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantial/Authoritative Information</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Organizer</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time / Pacing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation Strategy (includes environment setup and monitoring)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Seminar Assessment</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Evaluation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. ASK* (Assessment that informs Student Knowledge)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Midterm (Seminar Plan)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Final Exam (Quotation &amp; Reflection)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Points</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignments: See course website.

Course Resources:

There is no required text; however, the Department of Education maintains a reserved collection of texts and handouts for this class. Students will be free to use these resources during class times. In addition, they may be checked out overnight as well. Because of the nature of this course, materials must be returned regularly in order to be available as resources during class research/collaborative practice.

Many of the resources that students will need are online and connected to the course website. We have made every effort to provide up-to-date, working links; however, Internet features, protocols and resources change and grow by the minute. For this reason, students may discover that some of the resource links are outdated and/or no longer working. Students may need to search for alternative URL's or even new resources to satisfy course requirements. Please notify Mrs. Khirallah in the case of links that no longer work.

Lab facilities will be available for students to practice procedures covered in class. Such "extra" lab work will be necessary. The University is perpetually in the process of installing, experimenting with, and field-testing new network tools and procedures. Some of the tools described in this syllabus may or may not be available for on-line demonstration during the semester. Use of the printers in general University labs is available at a minimal charge. Students may purchase printing cards in the library. In addition, there is a printer in the Media Center, which student may use without charge for up to 50 pages of printing.
Assessment in this class refers to a “whole” process of obtaining information that will be used to satisfy multiple purposes:

- to assist student learning
- to identify students’ strengths and weaknesses
- to determine the effectiveness of a particular instructional strategy
- to assess and improve teaching effectiveness
- to assess and improve the effectiveness of the course
- to collect data to assist in making decisions about student progress, understanding, grades, etc.

To achieve multiple purposes, I will use multiple forms of assessment: diagnostic, formative, and summative.

Diagnostic assessment is used prior to instruction to determine students’ strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills. The course begins with a series of diagnostic assessments based on *The Nurture Assumption* by Judith Rich Harris. The large group discussion, small group discussion, matrix, and position paper are all assessments. The large group and small group discussions along with the matrix are informal assessments that provide early indications of your a) knowledge of theories of development and b) skill in constructing and/or defending a position. All three of these assessments serve as tools in support of a more formal assessment – the position paper – that becomes part of the collection of artifacts (evidence of achievement) that together become your course portfolio.

Formative assessment is distinct from diagnostic assessment in that it is used “during instruction” to inform and guide teachers as they make instructional decisions throughout the course. According to the *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* published by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics in 2000, assessment should be more than merely a test at the end of instruction to see how students perform under special conditions. It should not merely be done to students; rather, it should also be done for students, to guide and enhance their learning (The Assessment Principle). Throughout the course, students will be expected to participate in a series of formative assessments designed to support their understanding of critical issues in child growth and development. Your participation and completion of such assessments are far more significant as evidence of your serious attempt to develop understanding than they are for their “rightness” or “wrongness.” Thus, taking the online quizzes and struggling to find the “right” answer among the choices offered is far more significant to your progress in the course than is the answer itself. It is the struggle of the search...the trial and error...the fight itself...that contains the learning. The "right" answer, when achieved too easily without the struggle/pain offers little in the way of learning. So...I guess I am telling you in advance that I want you to "suffer" with this course. Therefore, the function of the ASK data is to collect evidence of your thinking and your progress during the “formation” of skills and concepts.

What will I collect, and when will I collect it? For this class, there is a “preliminary” list of possible formative assessments (ASK data) detailed on the course syllabus. ASK data is authored by you, the student, as you participate in this course. Sometimes you will be able to complete an ASK assignment independently. More often, I hope that you require the assistance of colleagues to complete the task....for the purpose of the ASK assignments is to offer opportunity to examine concepts associated with child growth and development as they emerge from not only course reading but more importantly from the “instructional conversation” of the course. According to Tharp and Gallimore (1988), the "instructional conversation is the medium, the occasion, the instrument for rousing the mind to life....The concept itself contains a paradox: 'Instruction' and 'conversation' appear contrary, the one implying authority and planning, the other equality and responsiveness. The task of teaching is to resolve this
paradox. To most truly teach, one must converse; to truly converse is to teach" (p. 109). 

ASK will emerge naturally from the flow of the course. It needs to be accomplished in the sequence of the course...not at the end....if you hope to achieve the greatest benefit from it. Each time an ASK assignment is offered, it will have value with respect to your grade. Thus, there are several course expectations related to the participation in and completion of ASK assignments:

1. Students are expected to engage in "instructional conversation" while tackling ASK assignments.

The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Vygotsky (1978) states: "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals" (p. 57).iii.

2. Students are expected to engage in social interaction within the classroom as a fundamental tool in the development of understanding.

Research in education reveals the promise of intertwined active and collaborative learning approaches. “Collaborative learning … emphasizes the virtues of active involvement. It requires students to take the initiative in the classroom, to become active creators rather than passive recipients of knowledge, and to rely on each other as much or more than on the teacher’s authority” (Hansen & Stephens, 2000).iv

3. Students are expected to show evidence that they learn from each other as well as from the teacher.

Education studies show that “the difficult abilities of decision-making and problem-solving are best taught through learning groups” (Michaelson, Fink & Knight, 1997).v “Drawing analogies from everyday learning, researchers argue that knowledge is contextualized; that is, learners construct knowledge by solving complex problems in situations in which they use cognitive tools, multiple sources of information, and other individuals as resources (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989).vi Moreover, because learning occurs in a social context, learners interact with and internalize models of knowing and thinking represented and practiced in a community” (Toulmin, 1972).vii

4. Students are expected to show evidence that they are “constructing” knowledge and solving problems both in class and out of class as they propose, implement, collect, interpret and present a research study that examines significant questions in child growth and development.

Students are expected to take seriously the value of the “social context” of the classroom. Thus, they will be present to contribute to and benefit from the interaction in the classroom and, when appropriate, submit data, which will provide evidence of progress.

The Education Department complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please present your written accommodation request to me, or the ADA Coordinator, before the 4th class day.

N.B. Because the use of technology and computer networks has become commonplace for competitive professional work in education/psychology, this course will utilize the World Wide Web (“WWW” or “the Web”) for research, guidance and presentation of selected materials. Students should regard Web exploration as part of the research that supports the course. In addition to reading from the Web, more traditional reading will also be used to frame course work and discussion.


