

Bank Street College of Education  
610 West 112th Street  
New York, NY 10025

Spring 2016

**EDUC 510: CURRICULUM IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (N-3)**

Sal Vascellaro  
svascell@bankstreet.edu  
(212) 875-4655

This course assists students in setting a framework for planning and developing curriculum based on the principles of growth and development, areas of knowledge, and one's values.

Using this framework for decision-making, students examine questions and issues in creating the physical and social learning environment.

Opportunities offered by particular materials, activities, and disciplines are explored.

Emphasis is given to social studies, which is viewed as the core of an integrated curriculum; the catalyst for cultivation of democratic values and practices; and as the principal means by which the curriculum is connected to the diversity of children's worlds—

family,  
culture,  
neighborhood, and  
extended environment.

Curriculum as a primary means of motivation, communication, and classroom management is examined.

Theory and practice are interwoven as students plan, develop, and reflect on a variety of curriculum experiences that meet the diverse needs of children from nursery through third grade.



**Graduate Students with Disabilities**

Bank Street College has both a legal obligation and a philosophical commitment to making reasonable accommodations to meet the needs of students with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and are eligible for accommodations or if you have particular learning needs that we should know about, please make a point of speaking with us following the first or second class. You should also contact Valentine Burr, Coordinator of the Disability Services Office at 212-875-4468, Room 605, for information about policy and procedures.

**Standards Set by Professional Associations**

Bank Street College's graduate courses seek to address the standards established by the following Specialized Professional Associations:

Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)  
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

The specific Specialized Professional Association standards addressed by this course are indicated below by number. (*The definitions for each can be found on the Bank Street website.*)

NAEYC: 1a,b,c; 2a,b,c; 3a,b,c; 4a,b,c,d; 5a,b,c  
ACEI: 1.0, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.0

**New York City Department of Education Standards**

Although the course is not solely focused on social studies, it does form a major portion of the course and serves as the integrative organizer for curriculum development in general. The social studies portions have been designed to meet the New York City Department of Education standards.

See:

<http://schools.nycenet.edu/offices/teachlearn/ss/SocStudScopeSeq.pdf>

**Religious Observance**

The College respects individuals' religious observances. If you are unable to make any class session, including a Friday session, because of religious observance, please notify the course instructor by the first class session so that an alternative means can be identified for fulfilling missed class material and course assignments.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

- Session 1 Introduction and Basic Premises
- Session 2 Beginnings, The First Days of School
- Sessions 3- 5 Play in the Learning Process and Curriculum Implications
- Block Building Workshop
- Session 6-10 Social Studies: The Study of Environment as Core of the Early Childhood Curriculum, a Multicultural Perspective
- Family, School, Community, and Broader Environment as Content
- Sessions 11-12 Integrating the Curriculum
- Session 13 Modeling Materials  
Students Present Projects in Process
- Session 14 Setting the Stage: Using Time and Space
- Session 15 Conclusion

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS

### Attendance

Students are expected to be on time.

*Students are expected to attend every class.* Inform the instructor by email if you are unable to attend and arrange for a classmate to take notes for you.

***No more than two classes may be missed to receive credit for the course.***

### Readings

Your participation should refer to your knowledge of the readings.

### Assignments

Are all due on the dates specified. Assignments should integrate the course readings.

*Proofread assignments for grammar, spelling, punctuation; clarity of thought; and redundancy.*

Any reference to another person's work (including ideas, theories, or concepts) must be cited explicitly. See APA citation guidelines.

### Electronic Devices

Please turn off and put away all electronic devices (cell phones, ipads, personal computers) before class begins.



**Out of Class Instructional Time**

Thirty hours of the requisite 37.5 hours for this three-credit course will occur in 15 two-hour class sessions, including **Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>**. The remaining 7.5 hours of out-of-class instructional time will occur as delineated below and *detailed in the assignments section of this syllabus.*

**1. For the Dramatic Play Paper and the Dewey Paper:**

You will submit the dramatic play paper and the Dewey paper in a cumulative Google Doc file that will enable the instructor to provide instructional feedback.

You will be expected to spend at least 45 minutes - 1 hour reflecting on the individual instructional feedback you receive, responding in writing to questions raised in that feedback (due by the following class session.)

The instructor will also give general written instructional feedback on each assignment to the class as a whole (*using group email*) to reflect on and incorporate into future written work.

**2. For the Analysis of the Sixth Floor Archival Photo Exhibit:**

You will meet in small groups outside of class time, visit the exhibit, analyze and do a one-page group write-up, post it on the Forum option of the mybankstreet class website. Read the entries posted by your peers and feel free to comment. (*An approximately two- and a half-hour process.*) The instructor will post a response.

**3. For the Context (part one of final assignment):**

You are asked to submit a hard copy of the Context paper. The instructor will offer written instructional feedback to the paper. You will be expected to spend at least 45 minutes - 1 hour reflecting on the individual instructional feedback you receive, responding in writing to questions raised in that feedback and resubmit the revised paper on the following class session.

**4. For the Draft (part two of final assignment):**

You are asked to submit a hard copy of the Draft. The instructor will offer extensive written instructional feedback to the paper. You will be expected to spend at the very least three hours reflecting on the individual

instructional feedback you receive, and use the feedback to revise and further develop the final paper.

## ASSIGNMENTS

### I. Written Observation and Analysis of a Dramatic Play Episode

DUE: Session 3, February 2<sup>nd</sup>

Observe, record, reflect on, and analyze a dramatic play episode of 3-8 year old children. *Support your statements by referring to the readings. (Post your paper in your Google Doc.)*

State the ages or approximate ages of the children you observe? In your description of the vignette, try to capture the affect of the play.

To help in recording your observation, consider the following, as appropriate:

- How does the play get started?
- What's the setting? For example, the block area, the clay table.
- What's the sequence of events?
- What comments do children make about the play? For example, "You drive the bus," "I'll collect the tickets," "This block is the bus."
- What roles do the children take?
- What feelings and attitudes do children display in relation to roles? For example, bossy, timid, shy, kind, forceful.
- What sounds do children make? For example, of trains, of animals.
- What's the intensity of these sounds or of the language in general?
- What are the children's facial expressions, body movements, and tone of voice?
- How does the play end?

In analyzing the observation, consider the following:



- Where might the content be coming from? (The real world, TV, stories?) What knowledge do the children demonstrate in their play? What misconceptions?
- How does the play reflect what we know of the developmental stages of children's dramatic play?
- What might be learned about the children, about the setting for their play, about the materials they make use of, and about the impact of teacher intervention (or lack of).
- What possible meanings might the play have for the children? What emotional needs may be played out? For example, to be powerful (superhero), to be nurtured (baby).

***Remember to support your statements  
by referring to the play readings.***

II. **An Analysis of Experience and education**

Written by John Dewey, NY: Collier Books. (*First published in 1938*)

DUE: Session 6, February 23<sup>rd</sup>

In *Experience and education*, Dewey clarifies what he meant by *progressive education* and what he meant by *learning from experience*. Following your reading, write a 5-6-page paper in which you examine critically Dewey's ideas on what it means to learn from experience, as reflected in this book. (*Post this paper on your Google Doc.*)

- A. Describe and discuss Dewey's concept of an **educative** experience,

the criteria for educative experience:  
continuity and interaction

what Dewey would consider non-educative  
experience

how his concept of educative experience might  
offer teachers a framework for making curriculum  
decisions.

Connect these ideas to your own experience as a  
teacher and student.

- B. Describe and discuss Dewey's ideas on **one** of the  
following:

social control (often referred to as classroom  
management),

freedom,

purpose, or

"progressive ordering of subject matter."

Connect these ideas to your own experience as a  
teacher and student.

### **III. Family Artifacts**

DUE: Session 6, February 23<sup>rd</sup>

To introduce the concept of social studies, we will be using ourselves as content. You are asked to bring to class an object that has been "handed down" to you, that holds meaning for you, and that you, in turn, also may "hand down."

### **IV. Small Group Analysis of Sixth Floor Photo Exhibit**

DUE: Session 10, March 22<sup>nd</sup>

In groups of four (*which will be organized in class during Session 8, March 8<sup>th</sup>*), visit the sixth floor photo exhibit, which is opposite the elevators and next to the stairwell door.

Spend a block of time viewing the photos and reading the accompanying captions of this exhibit that spans from the 1930s to the present and depicts a curriculum in which children and adults explore their immediate and extended environment.

As a group, discuss and then write a one-page paper in which you address the following:

How the exhibit relates to what we have been discussing in class.

Select a group of related photos and accompanying captions that stand out for your group. Describe significant curriculum implications for your work with children. Be as specific as possible.

Post this paper on-line on the Forum option of the *mybankstreet* class website (*by Session 10, March 26<sup>th</sup>*).

Read the entries posted by your peers and feel free to comment. I will post my response.

**V. Final Assignment**

For this assignment you are offered a choice of two options:

1. Option A

The development of a major unit within a larger social studies curriculum.

2. Option B

The script for a curriculum presentation to your students' parents.

***You may work with a partner on this assignment. If you choose to work with a partner, specify clearly how you divided the work.***

Both Option A and Option B are assigned in three parts:

Part 1: Description of the context

Part 2: A draft

Part 3: The final paper

***All three parts of the final assignment should be submitted in hard copies.***

**PART 1: The Context**      **Due Session 8, March 8<sup>th</sup>**

For both Option A and Option B

Curriculum is realized within a specific context. Set the stage for your curriculum by describing your school and class.

Describe the following:

- Type of school (Day care, public, private); its philosophy; atmosphere in the school in general.
- Characteristics of school neighborhood.
- Socio-economic backgrounds of students; racial and ethnic background of students.
- Age/grade of your students.
- Length of school day.
- Number of students and number of adults.
- Characteristics of this of this age in general, and you are planning for a particular group, state their strengths, interests, and areas of difficulty.

State whether you are selecting the social studies curriculum unit or the curriculum presentation.

If you are doing the social studies unit, give the topic of the larger social studies curriculum and the context of your unit, what comes before and what will follow. **Explain why you chose this topic for this age and, and if for specific children, explain why you chose this topic for them.** What are your goals for the study?

If you are doing the curriculum presentation, give a general statement of how you plan to organize your presentation. (See Part 2 for clarification.)

Part 1 of this assignment will be revised if necessary and attached to Part 2 and Part 3 when they are submitted.

***As soon as your topic is approved and you have completed the context, begin researching and developing the topic for the draft.***

**PART 2: Draft of the Curriculum Unit or Draft of the Curriculum Presentation**

**Due Session 11, April 5<sup>th</sup>**

Part 2 of this assignment is a working draft of the final paper.

***Developing the draft is the most demanding part of the final assignment. Be sure give it the time it requires to bring it as close as you can to the finished paper. In most cases, this draft will be heavily critiqued.***

**Option A - The Social Studies Unit**

Develop a series of related learning opportunities that form a major unit within a larger social studies curriculum. Examples are:

- If you plan to study the school with five year olds, a unit might be on the people who work in the school and sustain the children's experience there.
- If the year's study with six and seven year olds is a study of NYC, a unit might be the school neighborhood or how the city gets its food.
- If the year's study with eight year olds is on the Eastern Woodland Indians, a unit might be on how they sheltered themselves or how they obtained and preserved their food.

For each unit, you are asked to:

- Identify concepts, ideas, and skills that will form the underpinnings for this unit. For example, for a school study with five year olds one concept might be interdependence; one organizing idea might be that each worker performs an important function; one skill might be to observe with focus.

- Describe an *experience* that will introduce the unit, such as a trip, a film, a book, etc. Explain why you choose this experience?
- Integrate a trip (if appropriate), including preparation and following up, such as trip booklets.
- Integrate class discussion topics.
- Integrate writing assignments.
- Integrate, as appropriate, other areas of the curriculum, such as science, art, math, etc. **Be as specific as possible.**
- Describe culminating and synthesizing experiences, such as murals, models, relief maps, etc.
- Describe how the curriculum will accommodate a variety of learning styles.
- Describe how you use observing and recording and other methods to assess children's knowledge, engagement, and progress.
- Integrate an annotated bibliography of children's literature (minimum of 5 books, fiction and nonfiction), explaining why, when, and how you would be using the books you select.
- List Web resources and describe what each resource offers.

**When planning activities and discussions, for at least 5 lessons use the Lesson Plan Format attached to this syllabus (pages 21-23). Adapt the lesson plan format as needed.**

Present the study in ***chronological order***, integrating all of the above as you envision them surfacing in the study.

Remember that a curriculum study is designed to be ***USED***, not solely read. Therefore choose a format that is clear and readily usable to you and other teachers.

***The course bibliography identifies student theses that can be used as models for formatting, content, and process. The instructor will also make model student papers available to you.***

*(Option B on next page)*

**Option B - The Curriculum Presentation**

As teachers we are frequently asked to justify our curriculum decisions, whether it be to parents, school administrators, or other teachers. Often it is through the need to articulate our programs that we clarify our aims for ourselves, and in some cases, become aware of program areas we need to work on. It is through these experiences that teachers are viewed as credible professionals by parents and administrators.

This assignment asks that you prepare a written **script** for a curriculum night presentation to your students' parents. It should be 45 minutes to 1 hour long. (You are asked to **NOT** include slides.)

**Important:**

*This paper should NOT be a recounting of what is done in your current setting.*

**It is your conceptualization of what is important for children at a specific age and why.** *The use of an actual setting is for you in conceiving the presentation to consider the reality of a specific school, neighborhood, and child-population.*

You may wish to organize this presentation around:

the schedule,

the areas of the room,



areas of knowledge, or  
a combination of these.

A simple, clear organization works best. Most students find using the schedule to organize the presentation helpful.

***(continued on next page)***

In your discussion, integrate:

- A brief developmental overview. How the program is grounded in the nature and needs of children of this age level.
- An overview of the major curriculum areas, stating the learning potential of your primary materials (blocks, paint, etc.) and major activities (dramatic play, cooking, sewing, etc).
- The importance of outdoor time.
- Your long-range goals.
- Your strategies, the ways you carry out your goals.
- The rationales for what you do. For example, why have four year olds spend one hour every day outdoors; why have first graders invent their own spelling.
- How the various aspects of the curriculum accommodates a variety of learning styles.
- How the schedule and classroom design and materials facilitate the curriculum.
- How you use observing and recording and other methods to assess the growth and development of the children.
- The role of parents in your program.

Anticipate possible parent concerns and questions and address these within the body of your presentation.

***The instructor will make model student papers available to you.***

**Part 3: The Final Paper Due Session 15, May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

*The final paper will address the reader's comments and suggestions on the draft.*

*Remember to attach Parts 1 and 2.*

**Required Books:**

- Balaban, N. (2006). *Everyday goodbyes*. NY: Teachers College Press.
- Dewey, J. (1997). *Experience and education*. NY: Touchstone.
- Hirsch, E. S. (Ed.). (1996). *The block book* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: NAEYC.
- Mitchell, L. S. (1991). *Young geographers: How they explore the world and how they map the world*. NY: Bank Street.
- Paley, V. (2004). *A child's work: The importance of fantasy play*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Vascellaro, S. (2011). *Out of the classroom and into the world: Learning from fieldtrips, educating from experience, and unlocking the potential of our students and teachers*. NY: The New Press.
- Winston, L. (1997). *Keepsakes: Using family stories in elementary classrooms*. NH: Heinemann.

**Course Handout Package:** (at Village Copier, now located on Amsterdam Ave. and 118<sup>th</sup> Street)

**Recommended Books:**

- Casper, V. & Theilheimer, R. (Eds.). (2010). *Early childhood education*. NY: McGraw Hill. (Students have found this a helpful resource in writing the developmental portrait that is asked for in Part 1 of the final assignment.)
- Ramsey, P. G. (2004). *Teaching and learning in a diverse world: Multicultural education for young children*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. NY: Teachers College Press.

**READINGS:**

**Session 2, Jan. 26: Beginnings**

Balaban. *Everyday goodbyes*

E. Shapiro and A. Mitchell. "Principles of the Bank Street approach" (Handout packet)

**Session 3: Feb. 2: Play in the Learning Process**

B. Biber. "Play as a growth process" (pages 187-194) (Handout Packet)

V. Paley, *A child's work: The importance of fantasy play*

S. Smilansky. "Sociodramatic play: Its relevance to behavior and achievement in school" (Handout Packet)

***Dramatic Play paper due***

**Session 4, Feb. 9: Block Building Workshop**

E. Hirsch (Ed.). *The block book*.

Chapter 8: E. Hirsch. "Block building: Practical consideration for the classroom teacher" (pages 117-132)

Chapter 6: H. Cuffaro. "Dramatic play: The experience of block building"

Recommend:

H. Cuffaro. "Reassessing basic premises: Curricula free of sexism" (Handout packet)

**Session 5, Feb. 16: Play continued**

L. Katz. "Distinctions between academic versus intellectual goals for young children"

P. Tullis. "The death of preschool"

Recommend:

"The serious need for play" by Melinda Wenner Moyer  
<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=the-serious->

[need-for-play&page=2](#)

"Creative play makes for kids in control" by Alix Spiegel  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=76838288>

"Executive function: A new lens through which to view your child"  
<http://www.greatschools.net/LD/identifying/executive-function-lens-to-view-your-child.gs?content=1017>

"Crisis in the kindergarten: Why children need to play in school" by Edward Miller and Joan Almon. Foreword by David Elkind. Afterword by Vivian Gussin Paley  
[http://www.allianceforchildhood.org/sites/allianceforchildhood.org/files/file/kindergarten\\_report.pdf](http://www.allianceforchildhood.org/sites/allianceforchildhood.org/files/file/kindergarten_report.pdf)

"The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds" by Kenneth R. Ginsburg, MD, MEd, and the Committee on Communications and the Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health  
Guidance for the Clinician in Rendering Pediatric Care  
<http://www.aap.org/pressroom/playFINAL.pdf>

### **Session 6, Feb.23 Social Studies, An Introduction**

Y. DeGaetano and L. Williams. *Kaleidoscope*. "Culture: The way to begin" (pages 1-44) (Handout Packet)

***Dewey paper due***

***Artifacts assignment due***

### **Session 7, Mar. 1: Study of Family**

V. Casper and S. Schultz. *Gay parents / Straight schools*. Section: "Thinking about curriculum" (pages 155- 165). (Although this book focuses specifically on issues of gay families and schooling for their children, the section on curriculum speaks to ways to think about family issues in general. (Handout Packet)

S. Vascellaro. *Out of the Classroom...: Chapter 1, "Slavery was a business"* (pages 19-27)



**Session 8, Mar. 8: Study of Family, School, and Community**

L. Winston. *Keepsakes* (pages 1-69 and 93-103) \*Read sections you see as most relevant to your practice.

S. Vascellaro. *Out of the Classroom...: Preface*, "Everyone should know how to sew a button" (pages xv-xviii)

***Part I: Context due***

***Schedule visit to photo exhibit***

**Session 9, Mar. 15: Study of Community**

L. Mitchell. *Young geographers*, Part 1: "How they explore the world" (pages 1-22)

S. Vascellaro. *Out of the Classroom...: Chapter 2*, "Could we build a poem like a bridge?", (pages 28-46)

Recommended:

E. Borden. "The community connection: It works"

***Begin research for draft***

**Session 10, Mar. 22: Study of the City and Beyond**

S. Vascellaro. *Out of the Classroom...: Chapter 3*, "I didn't even know there was a river" (pages 47-60)

Recommended:

L. Winston. *Keepsakes*.

Chapter 6: "Coming to America" (pages 70-79)

Chapter 7: "Elders share their lives" (pages 80-92)

***Work on finalizing draft, giving it as much detail as possible***

***Post analyses of photo exhibit on mybankstreet Forum***



**Session 11, Apr. 5: Integrating the Curriculum**

L. S. Mitchell. *Young geographers* (mapping, pages 23-34, see photos on pages 61-97)

For students choosing the social studies unit option:  
H. Taba, M. Durkin, J. Fraenkel, and A. McNaughton. *A teacher's handbook to elementary social studies*. (Handout packet)

Chapter 2: "Educational objectives and their nature"  
(pages 8-18)

Chapter 3: "Selection and organization of content" (pages  
19-37)

***Part II: Draft due***

**Session 12, Apr. 12: Integrating the Curriculum**

S. Vascellaro. *Out of the classroom and into the world:*

Chapter 4, "Three teachers honoring children's environment"  
(pages 61-82)

Chapter 5, "We went on trips morning, noon, and night"  
(pages 89-114) *\*What implications do Lucy Sprague  
Mitchell's content and process have for your practice?*

**Session 13, Apr. 19: Modeling Materials**

D. Hill. *Mud, sand, and water*

E. Gwathmey & A.M. Mott. "Visualizing experience" (pages 139-  
160) (Handout Packet)

N. Pile. *Art experiences for young children*. "Clay as a  
responsive medium" (pages 45-53) (Handout Packet)

**Session 14, Apr. 26: Using Time and Space**

S. Vascellaro. *Out of the Classroom: Conclusion*, "This going off together, there's something to it" (pages 196-214)

**Important:** *Continue working on final assignment*

**Session 15, May 3: Conclusion**

*Part III: Final Due*

Sal Vascellaro

## LESSON PLAN FORMAT

### PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

#### *PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE*

Why are you teaching this lesson?  
What do you hope the children will get from it?

#### *CONTINUITY*

How does the lesson connect with previous learning?  
How might it connect to what will follow?

#### *PREPARATION*

What knowledge do you need to do the lesson well?  
How will you acquire it?  
What do you need to know about the children?  
How will you find out?

What materials will be needed?  
How will you organize these to facilitate your purpose, given your knowledge of the children?

#### *LOGISTICS*

Logistical considerations are directly related to the purpose of the lesson, to the ways in which you will best fulfill your purpose.

Time duration? Why?

Where sit? Meeting area? Rug? At a table? Why?

How sit? Facing each other, in a circle, semi-circle, etc.? Why?

Where will you be? Why? If it is a class activity, will you circulate, will you spend time at each table?

**THE LESSON**

How will you begin the lesson? Why?

What questions will you ask? Why?

What responses are you hoping for?

What responses do you anticipate given your knowledge of the children?

What might children have difficulty with? How will you address this?

Will you record the responses on a chart?

Why?

If you plan to record responses on a chart, what will you have to keep in mind to do this effectively while maintaining close contact with the group?

What activity will be part of the lesson?

Writing?

Drawing?

Can you state the instructions for the activity simply and clearly?

Who are the children who might have difficulty with the activity?

How might you help them?

How will you end the lesson? Why?

*(Continued on next page)*

## EVALUATION

*Revisit your original purpose for the lesson.*

Describe how children responded.

Be specific. Body language. Eager? Excited? Tired? Listless? Restless?

Did the children respond to your questions and instructions as you had anticipated? How do you account for this?

With what did children have difficulty? Why?

What responses added interesting dimensions to the topic?

How might this knowledge influence future planning?

What children had difficulty?

How do you account for this?

How might this influence future planning?

Were there things that happened that you didn't anticipate?

Describe them.

How do you account for them?

What lesson or activity will follow-up or continue the topic addressed in the lesson?

Did you fulfill your purpose for this lesson?

To what extent?  
How do you account for this?