

**Rhode Island College**  
**Department of Elementary Education**  
**Feinstein School of Education and Human Development**

**Spring, 2010**

**ELED 512: Theoretical Perspectives on How Students Learn**

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<b>Office Location</b>	HM 045	<b>Office Hours</b>	Tuesday 1-2 and by appointment		
<b>Class Location</b>	HBS 202	<b>Class Meeting Time:</b>	Tuesday 4 – 6:30		

## **I. COURSE INFORMATION**

### **Catalog Course Description**

This course is an overview of research on learning and theories about teaching and learning. Participants critically examine research on learning and theories that have informed teaching in the United States. The foundations of traditional and constructivist education are examined.

### **Extended Description**

Behaviorism, romanticism, constructivism, multiple intelligence theory, and brain research are discussed. Major theorists include Piaget, Vygotsky, and Gardner. As theory and research are examined, classroom applications are explored. Participants examine curriculum materials and consider the theories these materials are based on. Current issues in education are also discussed with an eye toward the theory or stance that informs each point of view.

### **Relationship to Professional Program**

ELED 512 is one of the five required courses in the core component of the M.Ed. Program. Participants develop understanding of the theoretical perspectives that have informed and currently inform teaching, and apply these perspectives. This course provides the necessary theoretical grounding for other core courses; participants will apply research and theoretical perspectives learned in this course to other core courses of the M.Ed. Program.

The course is aligned with the following FSEHD Advanced Competencies:

#### *Knowledge*

Metacognitive Knowledge (K 1)  
Domain-Specific Knowledge (K 2)  
Technology Knowledge (K3)

#### *Practice*

Communication and Expression (PRC 1)  
Professional Practice (PRC 3)  
Technology Use (PRC 4)

#### *Diversity*

Systems View of Human Development (D 1)  
Individual Differences and Cultural Diversity (D 2)

#### *Professionalism*

Professional Ethics (PRF 1)  
Professionalism Collaboration (PRF 2)  
Professional Development (PRF 4)

And, this course is aligned with the following NBPTS Middle Childhood Generalist Standards:

Standard 1: Knowledge of Students  
Standard 2: Knowledge of Content and Curriculum  
Standard 3: Learning Environment  
Standard 4: Respect for Diversity  
Standard 5: Instructional Resources  
Standard 7: Multiple Paths to Knowledge  
Standard 8: Assessment  
Standard 10: Reflection

## **2. COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS**

Bransford, J., Brown, A. L., Cocking, R. R. (2005). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience and school*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press. (This book can be read online at no cost [http://books.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=10126](http://books.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=10126))

Gardner, H. (1993). *The unschooled mind: How children think and how schools should teach*. NY: Basic Books.

Other readings will be provided by the instructor.

## **3. COURSE SCHEDULE, TOPICS, AND ASSIGNMENTS**

<b>SCHEDULE</b>	<b>TOPICS</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENTS</b>
Classes 1 - 2	The Philosophical Roots of Educational Theories	Written Response: What is your own philosophy of education?
Classes 3-4	A Look at Our Past: The History of American Public Schools PBS video clips  John Dewey	Our Group Project (to be constructed over the course of the semester): Create a timeline of the development of American education and events that have influenced education  <b>Reading for next class: The Technology of Teaching, B.F. Skinner</b>
Class 5	Behaviorism: its origins and impact	Reading for next class: <b>Development and Learning, Jean Piaget The Having of Wonderful Ideas, Eleanor Duckworth</b>
Class 6	Introduction to Constructivist Theory: Piaget's Theory and Constructivist Approaches to Education Video clips: Piagetian Tasks Video: Kamii "How Children Learn to Think"	Reading for next class: <b>Entering the Child's Mind, Herbert Ginsburg Interaction Between Learning and Development, Lev S. Vygotsky</b>
Classes 7 - 8	Piaget and Vygotsky  Constructivist Theory and Standards-Based Teaching and Learning	Constructivist-based lesson plan  Essay: Constructivism — What it is and isn't Reading: TBA
Class 9	Preparing and Conducting a Clinical Interview Video: Individual Interviews	Reading: from Frames of Mind, Howard Gardner
Classes 10-11	Gardner: Multiple Intelligence Theory	Reading: from Apprenticeship in Thinking, Barbara Rogoff
Classes 12-14	Culture and Cognition Video: Maths in the Streets and School	Final Assignment: Written Response: What is your own philosophy of education? Has it changed in any way from the beginning of the semester? If so, how?
Class 15	Student Presentations: Individual Interview with an elementary student	

#### 4. COURSE OUTCOMES

Alignment to Advanced Competencies, NBPTS Standards, and Evidence of Performance (Course Requirements)

<b>COURSE OUTCOMES</b>	<b>FSEHD CF-AC</b>	<b>NBPTS</b>	<b>RIPTS</b>	<b>EVIDENCE</b>
<i>1. Participants will develop understanding of the theoretical perspectives and research that have and continue to inform classroom practices and, therefore, children's learning.</i>	K 1, 2 PRC 1, 3 D 1, 2 PRF 2, 3, 4	1, 7	2, 5	Essays on Theory of Education, Class Discussion
<i>2. Participants will trace the historical origins of</i>	K 1, 2	2	1	Timeline,

<i>American public school education in order to understand political and social influences on education and perspectives on how students learn.</i>	PRC 4			Class Discussion
3. Participants will study the works of key theorists who contributed to the development of the following broad themes of education: traditional education, constructivism, multiple intelligences and brain-based research and reflective practice.	K 1, 2 PRC 3 D 1, 2 PRF 4	1, 2, 7, 10	2	Essay: Constructivism — what it is and isn't
4. Participants will recognize applications of theoretical perspectives in the classroom setting and in curriculum materials.	K 2 PRC 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 5	2, 5, 6, 10	Class Discussion, Essays
5. Participants will apply the constructivist theory of learning: 1) through conducting an individual interview to examine a child's thinking and 2) through the development of a constructivist-based lesson.	K 1, 2 PRC 1, 3 D 1, 2 PRF 1, 2, 4	1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10	3, 4, 9	Individual Interview; Constructivist- based lesson

## 5. COURSE REQUIREMENTS (Evidence of Performance)

### A. Portfolio Performance Assessments (e.g., Primary Course Assessment)

- Individual Interview
- Constructivist-based lesson

### B. Other Requirements (including Course Products)

- Curriculum Review
- Classroom Observations and Analyses 1 and 2
- Technology Review (software or website)
- Reflective Essays

## 6. COURSE EVALUATION

COURSE REQUIREMENT	POINTS (Weight - %)
<i>Portfolio Performance Assessments</i>	
• Individual Interview	40%
• Constructivist Based lesson plan	20%
<i>Other Course Requirements</i>	
• Participation	10%
• Technology Review	10%
• Essays	20%

### How grades are determined (grading scale)

A = 4.00 (3.85-4.17); A- = 3.67 (3.51-3.84); B+ = 3.33 (3.18-3.50); B = 3.00 (2.85-3.17); B- = 2.67 (2.51-2.84); C+ = 2.33 (2.18-2.50); C = 2.00 (1.85-2.17); C- = 1.67 (1.51-1.84); D+ = 1.33 (1.18-1.50); D = 1.00 (1.17-0.85); D- = 0.67 (0.51-0.84); F = 0.00

## 7. ADDITIONAL READINGS (e.g. suggested reading, internet sites, multi-media resources)

Donaldson, M. (1984). *Children's minds*. London: Fontana.

Duckworth, E. (2006) "*The having of wonderful ideas*" and other essays on teaching and learning, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition New York: Teachers College Press.

Feinburg, S. & Mindess, M. (1994). *Eliciting children's full potential: Designing and evaluating developmentally based programs for young children*. Pacific Grove, Ca.: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Gardner, H. (1993). *Frames of Mind*. New York: Basic Books.

Ginsburg, H. and Oppen, S. (1969), Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development. Englewood, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Grant, G. and Murry, C. (1999). *Teaching in America: The slow revolution*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Kamii, C. (2000). *Young children reinvent arithmetic: Implications of Piaget's theory, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Meier, D. (1995). *The power of their ideas: Lesson for America from a small school in Harlem*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Mondale, S and Patton, S (Eds). (2001). *School: The story of American public education*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Neill, A. S. (1960). *Summerhill: A radical approach to child rearing*. Hart Publishing Co.

Piaget, J. *To Understand is to Invent*

Rogoff, B. (1991). *Apprenticeship in Thinking*. Oxford University Press.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind and society: The development of higher mental processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. □