

PROVOST'S GENERAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM GRANT

"Inquiry education is where structure meets fluidity, where we can create opportunities for students to be engaged in active learning based on their own questions."

Proposed Course Title:

Multicultural Inquiry in Psychology & Education

Submitted by:

Teresa Boyd Cowles, Instructor/Lecturer
Department of Educational Psychology Unit 3224 teresa.boyd@uconn.edu 860-486-2459

Goals

The purpose of this interdisciplinary course is to develop critical thinking and inquiry skills to aid students in becoming aware of, understanding, and being sensitive to the needs and interests of multicultural ethnic and other marginalized groups by examining classical and recent empirical research studies-generated by educators and psychologists-and their findings. Ultimately newly constructed knowledge and self-reflection will lead to the creation of an authentic research project.

Statement of Course Objective:

Students will be able to;

Understand the theoretical and empirical framework upon which classical and contemporary education and psychological research is based and comprehend an operational definition of "inquiry-based instruction" and its relation to the development of knowledge, scientific inquiry and thinking style.

Develop a multicultural and historical perspective of education and psychology and enhance cultural consciousness, awareness and intercultural competence through the study of diverse scholars and researchers. Examine how culture, difference and power influences educational and psychological research.

Define, describe, compare and contrast core concepts and research methodologies in the study of multicultural ethnic and other marginalized groups while using self-reflection, and self-analysis to examine myths and misconceptions.

Evaluate multicultural education and multicultural psychology as an instrument of change in educational systems and as an agent to promote human rights and initiate social action.

Investigate an authentic educational or psychological research question through inquiry techniques that relates to the study of multiculturalism, multicultural ethnic and/or other diverse groups.

Relation to the New General Education Requirements:

The 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* is an optimal and appropriate time to consider how far education has come in terms of its promise of educational equity. The impact on *Brown v. Board of Education* is one of the many monumental decisions that have been examined through the eyes of many educational researchers and psychologists. Over the years many published research studies, books and/or reports have influenced education for example, *Democracy and Education* (Dewey, 1916); *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (Woodson, 1933); *The Secret of Childhood* (Montessori, 1936); *Walden Two*, (Skinner, 1948); *The Nature of Prejudice* (Allport, 1954); *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (Bloom, 1956; 1965); The Coleman Report (1966); *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (1968); A Nation at Risk (1983); *Frames of Mind* (Gardner, 1983); *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure*

Inequality (Oakes, 1985); *Savage Inequalities* (Kozol, 1991); *The Bell Curve* (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994).

Psychology has had a tremendous impact on education and recently some of the most valuable research-based information on teaching and learning was created by the American Psychological Association's Presidential Task Force on Psychology in Education, titled *Learner-Centered Psychological Principles: Guidelines for School Redesign and Reform*. The course **Multicultural Inquiry in Psychology & Education**, will implement the "learner-centered psychological principles" of this report which will naturally expose students- using a critical lens- to the "ideas, history, values and creative expressions" of educational research before 1950 up until today.

In terms of the New General Education Curriculum this course will meet the requirements of:

- Group II Social Sciences
- Group IV – Diversity and Multiculturalism

More specifically this course will use new content and/or modes of instruction (inquiry) to address issues of diversity and multiculturalism in the context of education in the United States and how it relates to important social, ethical, economic, and scientific issues of the twenty-first century. The combination of education and psychology incorporates an interdisciplinary perspective. The study of research will be used to promote critical thinking and to analyze personal thinking style. In addition this class will use both in class instruction, interactive activities and Web CT asynchronous discussions to address the multiple learning styles of students and to enhance engagement in and out of class. Multiple methods of assessment will be used to assess student learning and outcomes including reaction papers, responses to on-line reflection questions, and an authentic research project.

Course Delivery:

This course will use a combination of in class instruction, in class interactive assignments and asynchronous responses using Web CT. Class will include exploratory activities, readings, weekly postings of on-line reflections and an authentic research project incorporating students personal interests in investigating a question related to education, psychology or a combination of both using inquiry techniques. **Availability; either Storrs or West Hartford**

Course Evaluation:

Quantitative: The goal of this course is to introduce a learner-centered approach using inquiry that will address multiculturalism, and several instruments are available to assess how students will personally benefit from this course and how this course will compare to others in terms of classroom environment (Moos & Trickett, 1974; 1995) changes in ethnic/racial identity (Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1992), thinking or inquiry styles (Harrison, Bramson, R., Bramson, S. & Paulette, 1997;1977) and cultural competency (Boyd, 2003; D'Andrea, Daniels, & Heck,1991; Ponterotto, Rieger, Barrett & Sparks,1994). These instruments will be distributed pre and post.

Qualitative: Students at the end of the course will be asked to comment on the strengths of the course, the major challenges of the course and will be asked for suggestions for improvement either by informal surveys or in focus group interviews.

Proposed Textbooks

Required reading *Culture, Difference, and Power*, Sleeter, C., Teachers College Press, 2001, ISBN 080774073X. **(electronic book on CD-ROM)**

Cross-Cultural Explorations, Activities in Culture & Psychology Goldstein, S. Allyn and Bacon/Longman, 2000, ISBN 0205285201.

Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society, Gollnick, D. M. & Chinn, P. C., Merrill Prentice Hall, 6th Edition 2002, ISBN: 0-13-019618-5

Additional journal articles are available on the Web CT class site

Recommended reading *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations About Race*, Tatum, B.D., Perseus Books Group, 2003, ISBN: 0-46508-3617

