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Educational Studies (EDST 401) & Social Studies Methods (EDCP 331):

Diversity and Complexity (EdSSt)

Education, School, Social Institutions, and Social Studies Education:
 A contextualized, school based, integrated, course

<http://www.educ.ubc.ca/courses/cite/socials>

We need to become, as it were, ecologically literate. Being ecologically literate, or "ecoliterate," means understanding the principles of organization of ecological communities (ecosystems) and using those principles creating sustainable human communities. We need to revitalize our communities – including our educational communities, business communities, and political communities – so that the principles of ecology become manifest in them as principles of education, management, and politics (Fritjof Capra, 1992).

This course provides students entering the teacher education program with opportunities to inquire into the context and nature of schooling as a key institution in a pluralist and democratic society. The aim is to illustrate how schooling is a site for competing politics and philosophies about the role of education in society and the work of teachers. As well, it examines the intersections between education and the social institution of media, where media encompass both transmission technologies and representational content. It evolves from the premise that media education is a reflexive process that starts with teachers thinking through how they come to their understanding of what constitutes a good student, a good teacher, and a good education.

The course will explore the following questions and others as they arise during our mutual inquiry:

- What are salient elements of content and instruction?
- What is Social Studies, and what should it be?
- How is Social Studies and other topics presented in the BC curriculum?
- How are instructional strategies designed and implemented to meet the goals and objectives of the elementary classroom?
- What are appropriate assessment and evaluation procedures that best meet the needs of elementary students?
- What instructional resources are available and how are they assessed?
- How do different curricular areas inform each other?
- What is the nature and purpose of educational politics?

We will explore these philosophical perspectives **within the context of a school**. You will enact your thinking through observing teaching, instructing children yourselves, and hearing the perspectives of practicing teachers. This leads us to another purpose of this course. You will have opportunity to develop and articulate your beliefs, understandings, and skills in order to plan, teach, and evaluate your own project-based, integrated program.

Complexity Thinking is offered as a practical and relevant way of thinking about the study of social systems and serves as an extension to current popular approaches to education. Emergent from the Complexity view is an **Enactive** approach to teaching. An enactive approach provides learning experiences through interacting with actual real life objects, events, and context. For example, if a class were to study recycling, they would engage in actually recycling within the school. Rather than only study a detached concept through reading, video, or worksheets, students interact directly with the actual concept in the real world or a strong representation of it. In this way, students create their own personalized understandings which are shared in a social forum.

From a complexity view, the world is already **naturally integrated**. We can discover the interconnections. Artificially contriving connections through mixing curriculum among subject areas with some predetermined intent, can result in a loss of relevance. We hope to address curriculum through students' own interpretation of real world experiences that teachers facilitate and classmates discuss. This may be seen by many as a paradigm shift for teachers education students immersed in PLOs and standard practices. We will have to negotiate a common ground as well as provide insights for teachers with regard to the new BC curriculum and a progressive way of practice.

The main product for this course is a functional project-based, naturally integrated **project plan overview** that is intended for actual use in a classroom and/or later teaching. The topics for these projects will be discussed with teachers and kids before, during, and after development. Activities from these project plans will be taught to children as they are created. A portion of class time will be allotted so that we can work on these projects **together**. The project plan approach is a perfect opportunity for beginning teachers, experienced teachers, and course instructors to explore the new BC curriculum draft.

[The] renewed provincial curriculum provides learning standards that can be combined and integrated in various ways, to create courses or learning experiences that go beyond the borders of traditional learning areas to focus on students needs, interests, and/or the local context. (The Province of British Columbia, 2013).

Professional Tasks

1. Weekly Readings

Students are responsible for at least two readings per week. "Readings", for the purpose of this course are defined as relevant articles, text chapters, TED Talks and other video, audio books, or podcasts.

Many of these resources are available from the Social Studies website, but students are welcome to explore sources beyond these recommendations. If such is the case, students should discuss these choices with instructors.

These readings can also be a source of discussion for their online responses which is another professional task of this course. (see below)

Required Texts:

- Collins & Ting (2013). The rEvolution: A Beginning. BC Teacher Newsmagazine. <http://bctf.ca/publications/NewsmagArticle.aspx?id=29355> (Please follow the link at the end)
- Collins & Clarke (2008). Activity Frames and Complexity Thinking: Honoring Both Public and Personal Agendas in an Emergent Curriculum. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. <http://courses.educ.ubc.ca/cite/socials/Articles/Activity%20Frames.pdf>
- BC Draft Social Studies Curriculum <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/Social%20Studies>
- Social Studies Curricular Competencies: https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/ss_learning_standards.pdf
- British Columbia Ministry of Education, Skills, and Training. (2006). *Social Studies K to 7 Integrated Resource Package*. http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/pdfs/social_studies/2006ssk7.pdf
- BC Performance Standards - Social Responsibility: A Framework http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/sintro.pdf
- Selected readings from the EDST 401 bibliography
- Other readings as assigned by instructors.

Other readings are available on the web site: <http://courses.educ.ubc.ca/cite/socials/media.html>

2. Online Responses

You will respond to class discussion, readings, and investigations in order to clarify your beliefs, expand your understanding, and critically reflect on the topics and issues of the course. This will enable you to personalize your learning and help you build a foundation for your teaching. This response journal will take the form of e-mail messages to the instructors who may respond in kind to address your personal interests, questions, and issues.

3. Group or Individual Presentations

The course is designed to reflect the teaching philosophy of Complexity and Enactivism. Much of the instruction will come from students themselves with instructors taking a role of facilitation. It is model that we will promote for your own teaching philosophy. As such we will attempt to reduce lecture style teaching and we hope that students will emulate this practice in group and individual presentations on course themes.

We encourage students to motivate their peers to engage in topics that they have researched and have been guided on with instructors. This means a departure from the standard lecture format. We anticipate that students will use their creative talents to present or interact with their classmates through interactive activities, role play, art, music, digital media We hope students will make critical professional choices in how they will best motivate learning among their peers.

For CITE, this approach will be most applicable as we explore the Educational Studies issues of education, schools and social institutions. We will "jigsaw" into smaller groups to investigate, observe in school, and create an engaging presentation/activity on each of 8 topics. This will occupy the last few weeks of Term 1. Much more detail will be provided as that time nears.

4. Project Plan

It is intended that this Project Plan will incorporate method and strategies (not necessarily content) that it will be used by you in your practicum and/or subsequent teaching.

Begin your Project Plan with a description of the children that you will be teaching!

Think Big Picture! What is the big project that your students are enthusiastic about investigating? You will discover that elements of many subject areas will naturally emerge in a meaningfully integrated way. You can check with the social studies learning standards: https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/ss_learning_standards.pdf. Look at the "Big Ideas". How do these intersect with the ideas you get from the kids and their teachers? Once you get started, look at the "Curricular Competencies" and "Concepts and Content". These all help you think in different ways about what you are teaching. Let the specific classroom and individual kids be your main guide. This is real teaching. Government documents can help you focus but not dictate your teaching.

Plan a sequence of activities with evaluation strategies, which are intended to develop **one** concept.

You are encouraged to work with others who are working with a similar grade level or topic. These groups are not necessarily permanent nor are you expected to develop exactly the same project. There may be overlap. You will get feedback. You can share ideas. You may develop a common template with different content.

The overview will include a rationale, objectives, strategies, activities, resources, and assessment criteria with a variety of methods.

At least 3 learning activities should be fully developed and implemented in your practice teaching with children.

Include a Resource Critique:

- A brief, one sentence description
- Availability (i.e. where you can get it)
- Cautions and strengths

Create a hands-on kiosk display of the project (and resources) for the Project Expo on the last day of class.

The criteria for passing this course include:

- Completing all tasks, and
- Making positive contributions to class activities and discussions.

Integrated School-Based Coursework at Hamilton Elementary School

Tentative Events and Activities (Details Later)

- Classroom observations
- Practice teaching
- Interviews with teachers
- Debriefing and class discussions
- Classroom teacher presentations and activities
- Content, methods, and strategy sessions with instructors

Tentative¹ Schedule of Events

Introduction

- "Roll Call"
- Overview of the course
- The Dig
- Who Packed the Backpack...

Complexity

- 6 Perspectives
- Search for Complexity
- Presentation

Enactivism

Perspective

- Illusions, Stories, Exercises
- UN Committees

Social Responsibility

- Games and Videos

Respect (Care)

- Integration into Standard Curriculum

Democracy

- Search for Democracy
- A participatory democracy

Issues of Education, School, Social Institutions

- Jigsaw
- Observations in school
- Research
- Presentations

School based coursework at Hamilton

- Contextualized themes
- Planning lessons and project plan for Hamilton kids
- Practice teaching
- Teacher feedback
- Group sharing

Project Plan

- Overview
- Expo

¹ N.B. We use the word "tentative" because listed here are examples of typical topics, activities, and events. As the course unfolds, we will strive to respond to the needs and personality of the class within the framework of the course standards and expectations. We will also attempt to share emerging new understandings that are relevant to proactive methods of teaching in this content area (and others). We hope students will embrace this opportunity to co-create the course and to experiment with this teaching methodology in their own teaching.

Appendix A: Complexity and Social Systems--An Example

Growing a Community

For students to be able to understand and to participate in a community, they need to first develop a sense of community which provides the context in which learning can be enacted.

“Where is the Democracy Kit?”

Our society expects solutions, quick cures, concrete methods, formulas, ready-made techniques, and transferable programs. “...Something practical that I can use on Monday morning.”

Dynamic, “living” systems cannot be assembled, they must be grown. This means each system is different. What works in one may not work in another.

Applying Complexity Thinking to Community:

If community is regarded as a living system, we cannot “build” communities from parts or programs (the kids, teacher, classroom, methods, curriculum, administration). Rather than *building* communities, we must *grow* communities from small beginnings:

- takes time (and patience)
- unpredictable
- continuous growth, rather than a final product
- each community is unique, elements are not necessarily transferable

We cannot answer the “How to” question in specific terms but, by using complexity as a metaphor, general principles can be offered as guidance:

<i>Disequilibrium</i>	- process, dynamic, continual change, reflection
<i>Order and chaos</i>	- edge of chaos - the changing ‘space’ where responsibility and autonomy intertwine
<i>Self-organization</i>	- each community creates itself based on its unique strengths and styles through interaction among its members and its environment
<i>Emergent properties</i>	- characteristics, activities, repeating themes unique to that group which are features of the community as a whole but not present in its individual members.
<i>Ecology</i>	- a concern for the interconnectedness of all community members with each other and with its environment
<i>Evolution</i>	- continuous growth, change - not endings, resolutions - community members and the environment co-evolve
<i>Consciousness</i>	- shared consciousness, shared values

Appendix B: Lesson Preparation

An inclusive curriculum is “constructed” on the basis of required content and student needs, rather than simply “delivered” in a standard way. From this perspective the notion of “lesson planning,” which either ignores or presupposes learner response, is replaced by “lesson preparation,” which provides a clear framework of intents but assumes that actual classroom activities must be adapted or even initiated on the fly according to student responses, both individual and collective. (Beirsto, J.A.B. (2001). A Framework for Learning in the Richmond School District. Publication of the Richmond School District. Richmond, British Columbia, Canada., p. 6)

Possible headings:

Topic	Vocabulary	Materials
Date	Introduction	Lesson Closure (Summary, Review, Celebration, What comes next?)
Learning Objective (IRP, Student Needs/Interests, Personal/Professional Choice)	Development of Lesson (What does the teacher do? What do the students do? What are potential problems?)	Assessment
Rationale		Adaptations/Extensions
		Reflections

Appendix C: Professional Practice: Requirements for Success

The Teacher Education program at UBC is a professional program. It is expected that students conduct themselves in a manner that meets that meets professional workplace expectations.

All expectations regarding attendance, professional conduct, and quality of work in a pass/fail course explained in the *Bachelor of Education Student Handbook and Calendar* are to be followed. It is your responsibility to know these overall expectations.

Coursework requirements:

- A standard of academic English expression appropriate to a senior-year academic course is required in all written work.
- Assignments are to be presented in good-quality print or electronic format as specified by the instructor.
- Students are expected to produce work that is of high quality in all assignments.
- Students who do not meet the expected standard in course work may be required to revise, or do supplemental work, or to repeat the course in order to meet expected standards.
- Students may resubmit an assignment that does not meet criteria once. Late assignments are not accepted except in circumstances described in the *Bachelor of Education Student Handbook and Calendar*.

Interim Reports for continued problems will be written in circumstances where students have more than one less-than-satisfactory assignment, or there are attendance or participation problems.

Attendance and Participation

Participation is **essential to success**. If you are not in class, you cannot participate. Your active participation is integral both as a contribution to your own learning and also to the learning of others. We expect students to engage actively in the learning experiences in the university classroom, in course readings and assignments, and in making connections with the related school experience. You must be aware of the consequences of a lack of regular attendance (see Handbook).

- A guideline for interpreting "regular attendance" is that a 15% absentee rate should accommodate most common illnesses (e.g., colds, flu, etc.) and personal problems (e.g., bereavement, childcare, transport). Therefore, 85% attendance or better (of total class hours) is the **minimum** expectation.
- Please let your instructor know if you have personal circumstances that may have an impact on your attendance and/or participation in some way. This may occur at the beginning of the term or at any time during the course.
- *If you are going to be absent or unavoidably late, please inform your instructor by e-mail, phone, or in writing. Please note that a doctor's note should be provided for absences of more than a couple of days. Please schedule personal appointments so that you will not have to miss classes.*
- Your school advisors (practica teachers) should not expect you to miss UBC classes to attend workshops, conferences, etc. Please remind them of this expectation, if necessary.

Participation Criteria

- Attendance (see above)
- Arriving on time for class and staying throughout
- Preparedness (required readings, required materials)
- Politeness, respect and consideration for the learning of others
- Active engagement with learning experiences, e.g.:
 - Participation in discussions (whole class, small group and electronic discussions)
 - Attentive listening (regardless of who is speaking or presenting)
 - Participation in hands on/experiential activities (including workshops)
 - Participation in collaborative activities
 - Participation in micro-teaching experiences (including presentations)
 - Providing class handouts, where applicable
 - Reflective writing (e.g., in response to readings and in-class activities)
 - Self and group evaluations
 - Peer feedback

Teaching is built on principles of respect, cooperation, and collaborative professional practice. Although your previous university experience may have involved mainly individual or independent work, the collaborative aspect of the Teacher Education Program will prepare you for your role as an integral member of a school staff, and will provide a constructive model for building classroom communities. The ability to work cooperatively, collaboratively, and collegially with others is an expectation for participation:

- **Cooperatively:** working together agreeably to make sure a class, project, or workshop goes well;
- **Collaboratively:** showing initiative as a group member, sharing the work load, actively doing your part to contribute to the success of a project and the health of partnerships;
- **Collegially:** adopting the professional conduct of respect and helpfulness towards your classmates and instructors.