Department: Early Childhood and Elementary Education

Course Number: ELE 607  Course Credit: 3 credit hours

I. TITLE: Research in Early Childhood Education

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Designed to give students greater depth in understanding the principles of ECE by exploring the development of process and research substantiating current practice.

III. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this course is to provide students with an in depth view of current research, trends and issues in the field of ECE.

IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The behaviors listed below are understood to be reflective of, but not limited to those behaviors advocated by the Kentucky Education Reform Act guidelines. Following each objective, and enclosed in parentheses, are roman numerals, which reference the Kentucky IECE Teacher Standards, Early Childhood Core Competencies (ECC).

As a result of participation in this course, the student will:

A. Demonstrate content knowledge within one’s own discipline in the filed of early childhood education. (KTS 1, IECE III, ECC 3).

B. Appreciate and value the contribution of early education to children, families and society at large. (IECE VIII, ECC 3).

C. Gain an historical perspective that will lead to understanding trends and issues in the field of ECE. (IECE V, ECC 3).

D. Articulate a philosophy of teaching that reflects an understanding of the history of the field of ECE (IECE V, ECC 3).
E. Explore traditional and contemporary roles of early childhood educators in providing quality programs. (IECE V, ECC 3).

F. Examine the features of authentic learning in developmentally appropriate (DAP) environment. (IECE I, ECC 3).

G. Consider the central role of play in a child’s learning. (IECE III, ECC 3).

H. Conduct action research in the classroom. Through action research, teachers/graduate students come to understand what is “happening” in their classrooms. This is the opportunity for authentic reflective decision-making. (KTS 6, 7, 10 & IECE II, V, ECC 3).

I. Critically review and apply research and recommended practices in their classrooms. (KTS 9 & IECE V, ECC 3).

J. Develop skills for observing, recording & analyzing information about children’s learning and development. (KTS 5 & IECE IV, ECC 3).

K. Understand children’s rights and needs and the way in which those rights and needs shape a child guidance philosophy. (KTS 2, 3, 4, 6 & IECE III, ECC 3).

L. Recognize the early childhood professional’s unique role in promoting home-school collaboration. (KTS 8 & IECE VI, ECC 3).

M. Collect and create documents and artifacts that constitute evidence of competency as defined by Kentucky Early Childhood Core Competencies (ECC) & Kentucky Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education Teacher Standards (IECE).

The COE Theme of Educator as Reflective Decision-Maker is reflected in this course as participants reflect on teaching and learning in their early childhood programs, determine needs, and decide on a research project to improve teaching and learning. The COE emphasis on constructivism is addressed when discussing children’s growth and development through active involvement in authentic learning experiences. The COE student dispositions are formally assessed during evaluation of students’ research project, reflective logs, and classroom participations.

The theme of Early Childhood Education is stressed throughout every course activity as students learn how to facilitate children’s growth and development. The theme of assessment is explored through identifying, using, and creating multiple methods of assessing and addressing children’s learning efforts. The themes of diversity and closing the achievement gap are addressed through reflections which include support for all learners, families, and communities.
V. COURSE CONTENT & COURSE ACTIVITIES:

Descriptive Research/Action Research

The focus of this course is the “Teacher as Researcher/Teacher as Reflective Decision-maker” Action Research Project. Students will conduct research in their classrooms. Those students who do not yet have their own classrooms will be able to make arrangements to use someone else’s classroom. In the past, that has not been a problem, thus I do not anticipate problems in making collaborative arrangements with others.

When you are assigned a research project, the goal is to decide on a topic that not only interest you, but provides an intellectual challenge. Within the scope of the course assignment, try to think of subjects or issues you are sincerely curious about. Once you have general idea what you want to study, think about stating it in words that will define the topic more clearly. The topic should not be so general that you become overwhelmed by the amount of information available, or so specific that relevant, quality information is too difficult to locate.

(IECE I, II, III, IV, V, VI & IX) (ECC 3)

Or (Option)

Complete a research paper (no more than 10 pages) dealing with a developmental topic of interest to you. Format: Title, introduction, objectives, review of related literature (dialog that relates to your topic and supports your question or objectives) at least 3 references to support your question or objectives including your interpretation of the literature review or use of direct quotes to support your research. Include a reflection about the assignment as it relates to the IECE Teacher Standards.

(KTS 1-10 & IECE I, II, III, IV, V, VI & IX)

Writing Title: A title should be consistent with the research purpose.
Writing Introduction: The significance of a topic should be explicitly stated in the introduction. State a research purpose instead of a hypothesis. A research purpose should be as specific as possible, yet stated concisely.
Related Literature: The literature review should emphasize findings of previous research.
Conclusions: Point out consistencies and inconsistencies of the previous findings. If you issue a call for further research, provide the reader with specific guidance.

Reflective Journal (Read any five chapters for responding to questions about your readings)

Keep notes while reading and you may use these notes when answering the following questions.

(IECE I, II, III, IV, V, VI & IX) (ECC 3)
Your reflective journal must be entirely in your own words and represent your own thinking; it should not include phrases, sentences or paragraphs copied from the text. Many educators find the more they write, the more they learn; therefore you are strongly encouraged to write as much as you can.

The journal will be evaluated using the following criteria:
- Appropriateness of types of response
- Depth of thought
- Reflection addresses all questions
- Grammar and mechanics (Points may be deducted)

Chapter 1. Exploring your role as a reflective practitioner.

You have been an early childhood teacher for five years. Discuss your involvement in the four roles and behaviors of effective teachers.

Chapter 2. Exploring Your Role as a Child Advocate and Understanding History

List three historical figures whose ideas on early education are in evidence today. Explain which of their ideas we see now.

Chapter 3. Exploring Your Role in Respecting Diversity and Promoting Equity and Fairness

Describe how new early childhood teachers can put advocacy into action.

Chapter 4. Exploring Your Role in Promoting Children’s Development

Paula is a kindergarten teacher who applies Piaget’s cognitive development theory in her practice. If you were to observe in Paula’s classroom, what are three things that you would see?

Chapter 5. Exploring Your Role in Fostering Children’s Learning

Describe one or two learning theories that are predominant in the classroom you observed. Include in your description specific examples that illustrate the theories that are evident.

Chapter 6. Exploring Your Role in Creating High-Quality Early Childhood Environments

Isabella is a caregiver for infants and toddlers. She wants to ensure that she has created a high-quality environment for the children in her care. Describe the criteria she should use to evaluate her infant and toddler environment.
Chapter 7. Exploring Your Role as a Curriculum Developer

Describe your role as a curriculum developer as it relates to understanding and using curriculum for diverse populations.

Chapter 8. Exploring Your Role in Planning for Children's Learning

What are the questions teachers should ask themselves to help them plan meaningful integrated units?

Chapter 9. Exploring Your Role in Documenting and Assessing Children's Learning

Marsha is ordering supplies for the next school year. Because she relies on observation as a primary means for student assessment, what are six types of materials that she should include on her order?

Chapter 10. Exploring Your Role in Guiding Children's Behavior

Theresa observes two children in her preschool class arguing over a toy. Her coworker enters the room and also sees the argument. Her coworker asks Theresa why she isn't intervening. How should Theresa respond?

Chapter 11. Exploring Your Role in Supporting Families and Communities

What are six things that early childhood educators should strive to do when interacting with families?

Chapter 12. Exploring Your Role as a Professional in the Field of Early Childhood Education

Describe four strategies that can help contribute to teachers' personal and professional development.

V. INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Discussion, problem solving, collaborative group work, independent instructional methods will be mixture of field experiences, group readings, and both group and independent assignments. The model of the reflective decision-maker as the foundation of teacher development, including learning techniques for reflection and self-improvement will be emphasized in all aspects of the course and assignments.

Students will reflect on their situations primarily based on rational thinking regarding their definitions, feelings, and assumptions about early childhood education. That is, they participate in reflection-in-action as they define problems,
converse with themselves concerning those problems, and experiment with possible solutions to the problems.

**Acquisition, integration, extension, refinement of knowledge:**
- Blackboard site
- Continuous assessment through graded assignments and examinations
- On-demand tasks.

**VII. FIELD AND CLINICAL EXPERIENCES:**

No field or clinical experiences are required. However, students are required to apply ideas from the class to their teaching.

**VIII. RESOURCES:**

Blackboard

Resources may include sources such as the Curriculum Resource Center and MSU Waterfield Library. KERA Learning Goals and Academic Expectations, Kentucky Early Childhood Standards, KDE Websites, *Journal of the Association of Childhood Education International*, *Journal of Educational Research, Young Children, Dimensions*, *Journal of Early Intervention, Reading Research and Instruction*, and *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*.

**IX. GRADING PROCEDURES:**

Student progress through the program is continually assessed. Appropriate professional characteristics and dispositions, in addition to academic achievement, are assessed. Positive and negative flags are submitted by faculty to Teacher Education Services and then presented to the admissions committees for those IECE graduate students working on initial certification. Negative flags are reviewed to make a determination as to whether a student should be denied admission OR if a professional development plan will be designed for the student's progress toward program completion. Negative flags may be grounds for denial of admission to Teacher Education and/or practicum, or reversal of admitted status.

The student will be graded on performance events such as exams and assignments,
- **A= 90-100% of total points**
- **B= 80-89% of total points**
- **C= 70-79% of total points**
- **D= 60-69% of total points**
- **E= Below 59% of total points**
Assignments and points:

Research Paper.................. 75 Points
Reflective Journal............. 25 Points

Formative evaluation will be continuous for this project.

Total Points for the course = 100

X. ATTENDANCE POLICY:

This class adheres to the university policy on attendance published in the current Murray State University Graduate Bulletin.

XI. ACADEMIC HONESTY: This class adheres to the academic honesty policy found in the current Murray State Graduate Bulletin.

Note: Faculty reserve the right to invalidate any examination or other evaluative measures if substantial evidence exists that the integrity of the examination has been compromised.

XII. TEXT :


XIII. STATEMENT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:

Murray State University endorses the intent of all federal and state laws created to prohibit discrimination. Murray State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, or disability in employment or the provision of services and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in all programs and activities. For information regarding nondiscrimination policies contact the Office of Equal Opportunity, 270-809-3155.