

RATIONALE

FOR THE PRESENTATION AND ORGANIZATION OF EXHIBITS

Foundations of American Education
FDN 3800

Foundations of American Education is an undergraduate course for which the content of the class is intimately connected to the manner in which it is taught. This exhibit of candidate work reflects the organizing conceptual structure of the course, that is, the guiding questions for the course in three conceptual fields (1):

Curriculum

Power and Justice

Knowledge, Emotion, and Identity

“Each section of Foundations of American Education strives to open up the academic disciplines, the educational program areas, and the lives and prior knowledge of each candidate so they are better able to make intentional choices about their interactions with their own students, their colleagues, and the communities in which they will work.”

(1) Please see the documents entitled “Curriculum”, “Knowledge, Emotion, and Identity”, and “Power and Justice” for a more detailed explanation regarding the ways in which Foundations of American Education, FDN 3800, addresses the learning needs of pre-service teachers, and aligns with NCATE and DPI standards.

(2) Please see the FDN 3800 “Disposition” document.



Each section of Foundations of American Education includes students from all program areas(2). . .

This fact illustrates how important it is that the organization of the FDN 3800 artifacts gathered for the NCATE and DPI accreditation visit attempt to represent this intimate connection between the manner in which the course is taught, the cross section of candidates enrolled, and the reflective and cognitive opportunities experienced by students as a result of these unique factors.

For example, within a single course section, History Secondary Education majors evaluate, analyze, and synthesize the content of this course with other courses they have taken in education, humanities, and the sciences, combining this prior knowledge with reflection on their own experiences, and in concert with Birth to Kindergarten majors and Elementary Edu-

cation majors. Candidates explore together the many complex issue facing them because of the impact on educational outcomes of factors such as race, sexuality, gender, and social class.

Each issue and situation more fully reveals its structural and inter-personal dimensions under the scrutiny of the various candidates’ personal and disciplinary perspectives. This interaction among students provides them with the kind of cross-disciplinary experience which is inherent to Foundations of American Education, and we believe it to be critical to future successful classroom teaching.

Foundations study requires that educators draw on the methodologies of the hu-

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Foundations of American Education FDN 3800

“Foundations of education courses aim to develop in teachers and other school professionals such as administrators, counselors, and psychologists the ability to interpret knowledge within its historical, philosophical, cultural, and social contexts. The aim of interpretation is to produce clear normative and critical perspectives on education both within, and outside of, schools.”

Curriculum

How do we as human beings decide how we should live, and what it is worthwhile to know? Where does curriculum come from? What is the difference between the hidden and the overt curriculum? What is it most important for us to know? What is most worthy of our deepest and fullest attention, as having most bearing not only on what we are and do, but also on what we might become? Why do we teach only certain things, and not others? What should education be in the service of? What is the difference between education and schooling? How is education as a process different from education as an outcome?

“To be the kinds of teachers we want to be, we must understand and be able to act on our analysis of ways in which gender, class, homophobia, and racism all conspire to undermine positive educational outcomes for children.”

manities, particularly history and philosophy, and the social sciences, such as sociology and political science. Inherent in this cross-disciplinary activity is the fundamental awareness that the issues which educators face in the classroom necessarily cut across disciplinary and methodological boundaries. The fact that various majors are represented in each section enhances in many ways the impact of the cross-disciplinary nature of work in foundations.

Whether the future teacher seeks to unlock the secrets of successful reading for his or her struggling student, or seeks to diffuse a behavioral issue in the classroom, the candidate must have access to, and draw upon, the sum total of his or her previous knowledge and experience if she hopes to truly enhance the educational experiences and outcomes for all learners. The intimate connection between the cross-disciplinary origin of the students in each section, and the materials with which the course requires they engage all serve to forcefully intensify the students’ awareness of and ability to respond to the complex nature of life in school.

Each section of Foundations of American Education strives to open up the academic disciplines, the educational program areas, and the lives and prior knowledge of each candidate so they are better able to make intentional choices about their interactions with their own students, their colleagues, and the communities in which they will work.

We look forward to your comments and questions regarding the artifacts which accompany the Foundations of American Education, FDN 3800 exhibit.

Power and Justice

What characterizes a just society, and what role, if any, must schools play in the pursuit of justice? What is the purpose of schooling in a democratic society? Why do we have public schools? How should we view the children, adolescents, teachers, and other school personnel whose lives come together in this place we call “school”? How might we make sense of conflict in society, and in educational institutions? How does social class impact educational outcomes? How do race and ethnicity impact educational outcomes? What connections are there between race and social class? What is “sexual identity”? How does schooling affect identity in general, and sexual identity in particular? What is the teacher’s responsibility for ethical behavior and the creation of meaning? What does it mean to behave ethically? How does the organization and administration of schools, and government policy, influence power and justice in schools?

Knowledge, Emotion, and Identity

How is the individual defined? How should one live? What characterizes a caring relationship? How do we know how to treat each other? What does it mean to claim that teachers should care for students? Is caring the same in the classroom as it is elsewhere in one’s life? How does one release the imagination? How should we think about the kind of education and the kinds of relationships that occur in schools and in society? How should we understand the emotional lives of children, adolescents, and adults both in schools and in their lives outside of schools? How should we understand the relationship between reason and emotion, the “head and the heart”? What are the relationships among “love,” “desire,” “imagination,” and teaching and learning? What were the high and low points of your own schooling?