EGEN 3100 (4 & 5): Student as Learner
Fall 2010
University of Connecticut, Neag School of Education

Instructor: Rebecca Eckert, PhD
E-mail: rebecca.eckert@uconn.edu
Office: Gentry 401B

Phone Number: (860) 486-8909
Office Hours: Tues & Wed – 2:00-3:15, Friday – 11:30-12:30, by appointment

Everyone thinks of changing the world,
but no one thinks of changing himself.
~ Leo Tolstoy

As a new student in the School of Education, you are officially embarking on a journey of change and transformation that will hopefully continue throughout your professional career as a teacher. In fact, the one sure certainty in this profession you have chosen is change. The most successful teachers have learned to recognize and reflect on a multitude of changes—in their schools, in their students, and even in themselves—because they know that frequently change sparks learning and growth and the role of lifelong learner applies to teachers as well as to students. So, I would encourage you to be open this semester to all sorts of changes and adjustments that will transform your perspective and let you examine and reflect on learning from “the other side of the desk.”

The overarching objective during the first year of the IB/M program is to learn about students as learners and about schools as social institutions. This semester, the focus is primarily on the “student as learner.” Within this context, both your clinical placement and weekly seminar will focus on the observation of, interaction with, and discussion about students and their learning (including pedagogical practices and curriculum that affects student learning).

The purpose of the seminar is to help you identify and reflect upon the relationship between what you are learning in your core coursework (Learning Theory, Pedagogy, Curriculum and Technology) and what you are observing in your clinic placement. Although you do indeed have a vast set of experiences in schools already, I hope you will take this opportunity to look at students, teachers, course content, and the interaction among these three with new and reflective eyes.

Essential Questions Driving Our Experiences
1. What pressing questions do I have about students, schools, teaching, and education?
2. What are the important current issues in education and what do I need to know about them? How do these issues affect students and learning in schools?
3. How do professionals work and collaborate within the contexts of schools and schooling? What dispositions and skills do I need to develop and employ as a young professional?

What is Seminar and why do we have it?
Every semester, students enrolled in the Neag School of Education participate in a seminar course to help them bridge the “intellectual distance” between clinical experiences and educational theory. The format of the smaller class size provides an opportunity for active engagement and discussion of ideas, knowledge, and issues essential to the development of pre-service teachers. Although you will focus on different aspects of education each semester, the goal of developing and refining your ability to reflect upon classroom practices to further your own professional understanding remains the same. This semester, the seminar will include both topical investigations as well as sessions focusing on your experiences and observations in your clinical placements.
What is Clinic and what will I do there?
During the first clinical placement the focus is on teaching and learning. In this clinical assignment, you will spend one day per week in a Professional Development School (at least 6 hours). Your role this semester is to be a participant/observer. You will watch carefully, listen actively, and interact with the teachers and students in the setting you are placed. How much you learn will be, in part, of your own making—it will depend upon your willingness to be engaged, to ask questions, to take initiative, and to reflect on your learning.

It is important that you read your Handbook for all expectations during this clinic placement. You are expected to abide by all school rules and Connecticut’s Code of Professional Responsibility for Teachers while at your clinic placement. So, be on time, be prepared, behave thoughtfully and professionally, and focus your observations and efforts on supporting student learning.

Why is my placement different from what I want to teach?
Be prepared, during your first two semesters, to find yourself in an instructional setting outside of your intended area of certification. These “out of discipline” placements are intended to give you the necessary insight into education from a broad-based perspective. This is your opportunity to garner insights about classroom management techniques, instructional sequencing, cognitive development, and data-based decision making and to use this new knowledge to shape and broaden your own educational philosophy and perspective.

Course Objectives
- To engage in critical thinking and reflection about K-12 student learning and the role context and community play in education.
- To observe and interact with students and teachers in public schools in order to explore the various perspectives and issues connected to learning theory and educational pedagogy.
- To identify, investigate, and reflect upon instructional practices, classroom strategies, and teacher choices that enable and enhance student learning.
- To begin the conversation about the moral and professional obligations of teaching and to develop your own professional philosophy and perspective by reflecting upon the intersection of your learning in core coursework and clinical experiences.
- To take an active role in your own learning through preparation, discussion, and critical listening.

Policies
- Attendance is mandatory. You need to be present to reap the benefits of class discussions. Missed classes cannot be “made up”. Additionally, you are expected to be courteous and respectful of colleagues by being ready to begin discussions when class starts at 3:30.
- Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will be docked one letter grade per day and will only be accepted prior to the next scheduled class. If you are sick or having difficulty completing an assignment, contact the instructor in advance of the class in which the assignment is due to make arrangements for turning in your work.

Required Textbook
EGEN 3100 Coursepack available at the UCONN Co-Op
Academic Integrity
Student behavior shall be consistent with conduct delineated in the University of Connecticut statement on *Academic Integrity in Graduate Education and Research* contained in the May 2001 edition of the University of Connecticut *Responsibilities for Community Life: The Student Code*. Students are responsible for the understanding: (a) forms of academic and scholarly misconduct described in the statement, and (b) procedures to be followed by an instructor, the Graduate School, and a student in the event of alleged misconduct.

Observance of Religious Holidays
After reviewing the syllabus carefully, please contact the instructor if you foresee a conflict between the due date for a major assignment and your religious observations.

Notice of Revisions to Course Outline
In response to students’ needs, prior experiences, and learning styles, the course outline will serve as a “living document” throughout the semester. Although major assignments, roles, and responsibilities will remain constant, other aspects of the course (particularly discussion topics, reading assignments and/or supplemental readings) will be tailored to our needs and may be revised during the semester. Students will be notified of all revisions in a timely manner.

Reasonable Accommodations
The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities. Qualified individuals who require reasonable accommodation are invited to make their needs and preferences known as soon as possible. Please contact the course instructor, your clinic teacher, or the appropriate University office (Center for Students with Disabilities, University Program for Students with Learning Disabilities) to discuss your needs, including modifications to support your growth in clinic placement as well as seminar.

Expectations
In seminar, students are expected to . . .
• Have a positive outlook and a willingness to examine issues from multiple perspectives,
• Participate actively and thoughtfully in class discussions,
• Come prepared for all activities,
• Complete assignments on time and to the best of your ability,
• Demonstrate professionalism through punctuality, attendance, respect for diverse viewpoints, and confidentiality regarding students, teachers, peers, and professors.

In clinic, students are expected to . . .
• Attend clinic a **minimum of six hours per week** and maintain regular schedules and contact throughout the semester,
• Take **initiative** and seek out ways in which to actively participate in clinic classrooms,
• Ask thoughtful **questions** to elucidate instructional decisions and student learning,
• Conduct **guided observations** and record detailed field notes on site,
• Write **thoughtful reflections** on the guided observations **at home**, drawing connections to education coursework and other learning experiences,
• Demonstrate **professionalism** and common **courtesy** through communication with clinic teachers and adherence to all school rules (including standards of dress, punctuality, attendance, cell phone usage, and behavior).
Assignments

A. Guided Observations
Over the course of your clinic placement this semester, you will be responsible for completing three guided observation protocols (i.e., School Environment, Lesson Structure, and Promising Practices) with corresponding brief written reflections. While individual observations and reflections will not be assigned a specific letter grade, feedback will be provided as to the level and nature of reflection, analysis, and completion. Additionally, your observations and thoughts will serve as a springboard for seminar discussions, and may also broaden your understanding of the teacher’s role in student learning.

Observation protocols and reflections will be discussed and practiced in greater detail in the opening sessions of this seminar; due dates for submitting the assignments are located on the course calendar. The Promising Practices Observation Protocol will be collected on three occasions (10/5-6; 11/2-3; 12/7-8), and for each submission you should complete both the observations and reflection portions of the protocol. Submissions may be made in hard copy or sent via email.

I encourage you to share the observation tools with the teacher at the start of your clinic experience as he or she is likely to make suggestions about the best time or way to observe specific aspects of teaching and learning. Please note: Each observation protocol includes a place in which you should write out questions that arise while you are observing. Your clinic placement teacher can be an excellent resource for helping you learn about students and classrooms which is why it is so important for you to take initiative, ask questions, and make the most of this opportunity. The only silly question is the unasked question!

B. Investigating Instructional Planning
This assignment will afford us the opportunity to investigate varied methods, strategies, and resources used by teachers to plan instruction, activities, and evaluation that enables and enhances student learning. This multi-faceted project will be ongoing throughout the semester and much of the work will be accomplished during seminar. However, you will also have several opportunities to draw upon experiences and expertise from your clinical placement as well as current tools in education. Additional details and project deadlines will be provided in class.

Due Date: November 9 & 10

C. Discussion Planning and Participation
To further support the course goal of connecting practical clinic experiences with educational theory and coursework, we will engage in discussions about assigned readings on a regular basis. To help you prepare for these discussions and to reflect on important aspects of the readings, you will prepare a discussion guide for each session before you arrive in class each week. Discussion guides will be provided by the instructor and collected in class. Further details about expectations, reading comprehension strategies, and discussion protocols will also be provided in class.

D. School Profile Podcast
The purpose of this assignment is twofold: to provide you with an opportunity to expand your understanding of the school community in which you will be working this semester while at the same time also giving you a chance to develop a technology skill and/or instructional technique that you could use as a teacher. Your task will be to create a short recorded narrative that showcases the school community and demonstrates your understanding of its needs. As
creativity and ingenuity are often enhanced through collaborative efforts, I encourage you to consider working with your fellow classmates also placed in your school for this assignment. Additional details about the planning, preparation, and resources needed for this assignment will be discussed in class. **Due Date: November 30 & December 1**

**E. Electronic Portfolio**
All students in the IB/M program are required to assemble and maintain an electronic portfolio to document personal and professional growth and change during participation in the program. You will learn more about this process in your technology course, but we will also discuss and submit the beginning pieces of your portfolio as part of this seminar.

**Grading**

- 25% Clinic Grade (done by placement teacher)
- 25% Investigating Instructional Planning
- 20% School Profile Podcast
- 15% Seminar Participation & Discussion Planning
- 15% Guided Observations and Reflection

Letter grades at the end of the semester will be calculated as follows:

- \( A = 94 - 100 \)
- \( B+ = 89 - 87 \)
- \( C = < 80 - 70 \)
- \( A- = 93 - 90 \)
- \( B = 86 - 84 \)
- \( \odot = \text{Below 70} \)
- \( B- = 83 - 80 \)
Important Deadlines
- 9/13 - 17 – Begin Clinic Placements
- 10/26 or 10/27 – Clinic Midterm Check-up due
- 11/16 or 11/17 – Final submission of Investigating Instructional Planning assignment
- 11/30 or 12/1 – School Profile Podcasts completed and shared with class
- **Ongoing Clinic Assignment** – ‘Promising Practices’ Observational Protocol
- 12/10 (Fri.) – Last day of clinic placement / Last day of classes
- 12/14 (Tues.) – Last day to turn in final clinic evaluation form and hour log

Seminar Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Topic/Activity</th>
<th>Assignments &amp; Readings Due on This Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/31 &amp; 9/1</td>
<td>Introductions and Syllabus</td>
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<td>9/7 &amp; 8</td>
<td>Being a considerate classroom guest</td>
<td>• Readings #3 (The Hard-boiled Egg Fad) &amp; #12 (His Name Is Michael)</td>
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<td>Classroom observation techniques</td>
<td>• Draft of “Introduction Sheet”</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/14 &amp; 15</td>
<td>Welcome to teaching! Everybody is responsible for literacy</td>
<td>• Reading #1 (Teacher Man)</td>
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<td>9/21 &amp; 22</td>
<td>Importance of “Academic Language”</td>
<td>• Readings #11 (Teacher Speeches) &amp; #13 (Enhancing the Development)</td>
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<td>Clear communication and classroom management</td>
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<td>9/28 &amp; 29</td>
<td>What role do diversity and inequality play in schools today?</td>
<td>• Readings #4 (Roll of Thunder) &amp; #14 (Conversations About Race)</td>
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<td>Brown vs. Board of Education’s legacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>Library Orientation</td>
<td>• Turn in at least 7 observations and reflections from the “Promising Practices” Observation Protocol</td>
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<td>Identifying instructional resources for teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/12 &amp; 13</td>
<td>Planning for Effective Instruction</td>
<td>• Readings #19 (Tough Love) &amp; #2 (Knowing Students Well)</td>
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<td>• Bring Lesson Plans to Class</td>
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<td>10/19 &amp; 20</td>
<td>Exploring the importance of Constructivism in today’s classroom</td>
<td>• Reading #6 (Three Cups of Tea)</td>
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<td>Investigating instructional planning</td>
<td>• Bring your computer to class</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/26 &amp; 27</td>
<td>Recognizing and respecting individual differences</td>
<td>• Readings #15 (A Student Guide to IDEA) &amp; #16 (Delving Deep)</td>
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<td>Defining differentiation</td>
<td>• Clinic Midterm Check-up due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Class Topic/Activity</td>
<td>Assignments &amp; Readings Due on This Date</td>
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| 11/2 & 3     | Schools as learning communities           | •  Readings #17 (Culture Clash) & #18 (Welcoming Families)  
               |                                            | •  Turn in at least 15 observations and reflections from the “Promising Practices” Observation Protocol |
| 11/9 & 10    | Discussion of clinical experiences        | •  Final submission of Investigating Instructional Planning  
               | Podcast practice and planning             | •  Bring your computer to class  
               |                                            | •  Reading #10 (“Snap”) |
| 11/16 & 17   | Looking “behind the scenes” at students   | •  Readings #5 (When to Stop Teaching)   
               | and learning                              | & #8 (Amy’s Brain)  
               |                                            | •  Bring your computer to class |
| 11/23 & 24   | Thanksgiving Break!                       | •  School Profiles due                   |
| 11/30 & 12/1 | School Profile Podcast Show and Tell      | •  Final submission of all “Promising Practices” Observation Protocol  
               |                                            | •  Turn in Clinic Evaluation and other important paperwork |
| 12/7 & 8     | Last day of Class                         | •  Final submission of all “Promising Practices” Observation Protocol  
               | Celebration of Learning                   | •  Turn in Clinic Evaluation and other important paperwork |
               | Writing thank you notes                  |                                          |