Western Carolina University
Jamaican Program

Course Title: EDCI 404 -- Curricular Trends and Issues in Education

Instructor: Dr. Beth Tyson Lofquist, Adjunct Instructor
Retired faculty member and administrator from Western Carolina University

Contact Info: Email: btyson@email.wcu.edu
Address in JA: Liguanea Club, Kingston


Supplemental Text: 
- *Thinking About Schools: A Foundations of Education Reader* (edited by Eleanor Blair Hilty)
- *Black Ants and Buddhists* by Mary Cowhey

Conceptual Framework Statement
“The mission of the professional education programs at Western Carolina University is to prepare highly effective and ethical graduates that are inspired to be lifelong learners, engaged in the community, and empowered to become leaders who strive to transform the future.”

General Description
This course explores contemporary curricular methods, topics, and issues; and relates these to the work of Jamaican teachers. Jamaican Relevancy: This course focuses on curricular trends and issues in education applicable to all educational systems including Jamaica. Much of the class will be about applying concepts and processes learned to Jamaica.

Because few resource rooms exist in Jamaican schools to address the needs of students with mild disabilities (learning disabilities, ADHD, slow learners, poor readers, etc) general education teachers are faced with addressing the needs of a diverse group of students with multiple learning and emotional needs. This course focuses on students with mild-moderate disabilities and how their learning can be accommodated in a general classroom environment through effective teaching practices and differentiating instruction. Students will be expected implement strategies discussed in class and report to the class the benefits and/or difficulties encountered when implementing a particular strategy with their students. The final evaluation for the class will include a question related specifically to whether the information presented during the course was ‘relevant to Jamaican schools’.

General Course Objectives/Competencies:
- To understand factors influencing academic and nonacademic learning.
- To understand the special needs of specific groups of students.

Specific Competencies
At the end of this class, students will be able to:
- Explain the relationship between various curriculum and instructional initiatives and the current status of teaching and learning in Jamaica.
- Discuss the impact of political and organizational dynamics on curriculum and instruction.
- Understand modern trends and issues in curriculum development and instruction.
- Define and describe the relationship between the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum.
- Understand the issues surrounding curriculum development and instruction in Jamaica.
- Understand the curriculum evolution process in Jamaica.
- Discuss contemporary issues related to Jamaican educational policy and reform.

Diversity Statement: Diversity in our society and schools is an important part of our history and a significant variable in discussions regarding the aims and purposes of education and schooling. The content of this course reflects a commitment to social justice and an emphasis on the necessity of preparing educators who will effectively meet the individual needs of ALL students. As such, issues related to race, gender, religion, sexual orientation and social class will be considered in this class. Students in this class teach in Jamaican schools. Jamaica is a diverse nation (the motto: "Out of many, one people" exemplifies a commitment to and respect for our varied backgrounds, beliefs and values).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Western Carolina University is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for students with documented disabilities. Students who require disability services or reasonable accommodations must
identify themselves as having a disability and provide current diagnostic documentation to Disability Services. All information is confidential.

Academic Honesty Policy:
All work for this class should utilize APA Style for format and reference citations. Western Carolina University, a community of scholarship, is also a community of honor. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students work together to achieve the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense at WCU because it threatens the quality of scholarship and defrauds those who depend on knowledge and integrity. Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty in all classes. Any questions regarding the use of citations and references should be brought to the attention of the instructor of the course. Academic dishonesty includes the following: Cheating, Fabrication, Plagiarism, and Facilitation of Academic Dishonesty. These terms and procedures for cases involving allegations of academic dishonesty are described in the current WCU Student Handbook. Any student in this class found guilty of academic dishonesty will automatically receive a failing grade in the class.

Technology Requirements: Students are expected to take responsibility for becoming familiar with the technical skills and requirements necessary for researching and presenting their ideas and supporting a successful learning experience.

Clinical and/or Field Experience Component: No formal clinical component is required for this course. However, teachers will be constantly asked to apply concepts to relevant situations.

Class Attendance
In order for us to develop as a community of learners who will learn from each other and enjoy our time together, and in order for the time to speed by, it is important that everyone:

 attend each class, arriving on time and willing to move the furniture when necessary
 be an active and informed participant in class discussions
 read and think about the assigned materials prior to class
 prepare and hand in assignments on the date due
 understand that what you know when you come to class each week may change
 arrive with a mind open to the ideas of others

Points will be deducted for turning in late assignments.

Grading
10 POINTS: Attendance, Participation, Preparation, and Attitude
This class meets every day for two weeks. In order to receive credit for this short course it is important students arrive on time and attend all classes.

40 POINTS: Issue Presentations and Commentaries
You will be divided into groups and will choose/be assigned an issue topic from the text. The group will prepare a presentation, a) summarizing the most significant points on each side of the issue as it relates to the Jamaican educational system, b) provide relevant documentation of an action or initiative in Jamaica relating to the topic, c) get the whole class involved in some interactive way and d) connect the presentation topic to a class reading and a reading found through Hunter Library’s database(s) via Blackboard. You will have 30 minutes per presentation. We will develop the criteria for grading your presentations during one of our class meetings.

25 POINTS: Reflective Journals
Throughout the course you will complete a reflective journal on each reading from the Hilty text, Thinking About Schools: A Foundations of Education Reader. A format for these journals will be provided, and you will receive feedback on one practice journal prior to being formally assessed and a grade recorded. Regardless of how many I asked you to turn in at the end of class keep all of them—they may be collected from you the next to last class meeting.

15 POINTS: Literature Responses
One strategy in teaching literature is Literature Circles. You will participate in Literature Circles and write Literature Responses based on the Cowhey text, Black Ants and Buddhists. This process will be demonstrated in class and your Literature Circle group members will be assigned for the course.

10 POINTS: Change of Mind/Moment of Truth Paper
You will choose one topic that most interests you in the course and reflect on how you “changed your mind” or experienced a “moment of truth” on the topic as a result of the exploration of the concept in class. You will be expected to include what concepts/opinions/facts were specifically changed and what caused you to change your mind or have that A-HA experience. Other information will be provided in class.
Grading Scale:

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NOTE 1: The topics will be discussed in-depth during our class meetings. Your pre-reading analysis of a topic is simply a way to get you to begin thinking about that topic. Your participation and presence is essential to your success in this course. As such, students who are absent from the class will only receive partial credit for attendance and/or written assignments that are done and due in class.

NOTE 2: My philosophy of teaching is to teach my courses utilizing methods that would be effective for you to use in your classrooms. Therefore, during class meetings we will be debriefing the methods utilized as well as reviewing content. Pay close attention to how each class is conducted as well as the content and concepts you will be exploring.

Bibliography/Additional Readings (other readings assigned for presentations)


**Tentative Schedule of Class Topics and Activities**

Please keep in mind 10 days (less if there is a holiday) of class will be very intensive with assignments due each class period. So…be kind to yourself and your family…read and keep up with the assignments. All the readings listed for that day’s class should be done prior to class.

### What are the aims and purposes of education?

| Day 1 Monday | Orientation to the course on Blackboard  
|--------------|------------------------------------------|
|              | Overview of EDCI 404: Curricular Trends and Issues in Education  
|              | Individual Data and Pre-Assessments (There are NO WRONG ANSWERS on the pre-assessment!)  
|              | Introduction to Response Journals (A journal is to be completed on each chapter of the Hilty book.)  
|              | Introduction of Literature Circles and Literature Responses  
|              | E. D. Hirsch, Jr. Intellectual Capital: A Civil Right  
|              | John I. Goodlad We Want It All  

**READING JOURNALS FROM CHAPTERS 1&2 (Hirsch & Goodlad) ARE DUE---BRING THE COMPLETED JOURNALS TO CLASS** (The Reading Journal Form is attached to the syllabus distributed to you from Dr. Iva Bailey.)

### What should be the content of the curriculum?

| Day 2 Tuesday | Gloria Ladson-Billings But That’s Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy  
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
|              | Paulo Freire The Banking Concept of Education  
|              | Lisa D. Delpit The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People’s Children  
|              | **3 Reading Journals are due---one from each chapter listed above**  
|              | Mary Cowhey Black Ants and Buddhists: Prologue; Chapters 1 & 2  
|              | **Literature Response #1 due**  
|              | Overview of Literature Circles (Lit Circle group assignments)  
|              | During class each group chooses 4 additional chapters from the Cowhey book  

| Day 3 Wednesday | Discussing Group Presentation expectations  
|----------------|------------------------------------------|
|                | Developing the Quality Indicator Gradesheet for the Group Presentation  
|                | Presentation Topic Assignments and Group Presentation Planning Time (This will be one of few times you will have for your group to get together during class time---use your time wisely.)  
|                | **Cowhey Literature Response #2 due**; Literature Circle  

| Day 4 Thursday | New Year’s Day---No Formal Class Meeting  
|---------------|------------------------------------------|

### What are the roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders?

| Day 5 Friday | Phillip C. Schlechty On the Frontier of School Reform with Trailblazers, Pioneers, and Settlers  
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
|              | Linda Lambert How to Build Leadership Capacity  
|              | Marilyn Cochran Smith Against the Grain  
|              | **3 Reading Journals are due---one from each chapter listed above**  
|              | Mary Cowhey **Literature Response #3 due**  
|              | Review of the First Week; Touching Base on the Course  
|              | Group Presentation Planning Time (Final clarifications from the instructor on group assignment)  

### What are the roles and responsibilities of students?

| Day 6 Monday | Harry F. Wilcott Adequate Schools and Inadequate Education: The Life History of a Sneaky Kid  
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
|              | James T. Sears Educators, Homosexuality, and Homosexual Students  

| Day 7 Tuesday | Eleanor Blair Hilty | The Professionally Challenged Teacher |
| | | Individual Choice Chapter from Part V of Hilty text |
| | | **2 Reading Journals are due---from the chapters listed above** |
| | Cowhey | **Literature Response #5 due; Literature Circle** |
| | | Group Presentation Planning Time |
| Day 8 Wednesday | Group Presentations | Developing Quality Indicator Gradesheet for Change of Mind Paper |
| Day 9 Thursday | Group Presentations | Debriefing instructional methods from class, readings, presentations |
| Day 10 Friday | Writing “Change of Mind” paper | Completing Course Evaluations |