SEMINAR ON EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION
EDUC 4410/5415

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Course Description
"Seminar on Experiential Education" will allow students to:

• explore various perspectives on what experiential education can be (There are many. We won’t get to them all.);

• develop lessons that are experiential;

• make connections between theoretical perspectives on experiential education and practical aspects of school and schooling;

• hear from students and practitioners who have been a part of various types of experiential learning communities;

• conduct an evaluation of some experiential education program that will be shared with the program.

Course Readings
Association for Experiential Education. (no date). "AEE Definition of Experiential Education."
Course Requirements

Class Participation (20% of final grade): This includes class attendance as well as being an active and substantive contributor to class. In this regard, students are expected to pose questions as well as to answer questions. Moreover, the quality of participation is important. That is, while students are encouraged to share their ideas and opinions in the class, not all contributions will be equally valued. Contributions that connect to course readings, that relate to previous course topics, and that are tied to specific and relevant experiences are encouraged and valued more than random statements with limited and tentative connections to course topics. For many lessons, students are given "ideas to keep in mind" when doing the reading. Addressing these ideas is likely to lead to quality participation. **If you are absent from a class, you will need to do a two-to-three page write-up of your reactions to the readings (much like a journal) assigned for that class.**

Lesson Plans (30% of final grade): Those taking the course for undergraduate credit must complete two lesson plans in the course of the semester. Those taking the course for graduate credit must complete all three.

**Lesson Plan #1--Develop an Academically-Oriented Experiential Lesson:** For each of these lessons you should draw on what you know about experiential learning to develop an experiential lesson. It can be for a specific discipline or a more integrated lesson. In developing each of these lessons you should include (1) your specific goals for the lesson; (2) the teaching and learning strategies you will employ;
(3) how you will assess student learning; that is, how you will know whether your goals have been realized; (4) what you will reflect on when de-briefing the experiential lesson and why; and (5) a statement that outlines how this lesson represents an experiential learning activity and which aspects of experiential learning are most central to the lesson. [This assignment is due 2/13]

Lesson Plan #2--Develop an Affectively-Oriented Experiential Lesson: This could be an activity or lesson, for instance, that seeks to get students engaged with their learning or which promotes team-building in some context. Make sure you address the five topics outlined for Lesson Plan #1. [This assignment is due on 4/3.]

Lesson Plan #3--Develop an Intrapersonal-Oriented Experiential Lesson: This lesson will focus on some aspect of personal development, although it could evolve from a larger, more group-oriented lesson. Make sure you address the five topics outlined for Lesson Plan #1. [This assignment is due on 4/24.]

Research Project: Experiential Education Program Evaluation (40% of final grade): Each student, as an individual or as part of a two- or three-person team, will conduct an evaluation of some experiential education-related program. The focus of your research will be determined jointly by the student(s) and relevant personnel from the program to be evaluated. [This evaluation paper will be due on May 8th.]

Social Action Assignment (10% of final grade): For this assignment you should identify one way in which you can personally make the world a better place over the course of the semester. This could take a variety of forms. It might have an environmental edge to it, such as: riding your bike instead of driving one day a week or getting your household’s recycling act together. It might be more of a personal challenge, such as quitting smoking or improving your relationship with someone in your life. It might be more socially-oriented, such as volunteering for a youth program. It might be political, such as, writing letters on behalf of Amnesty International’s Urgent Action Network. A description of what you are going to do is due on January 30th. An evaluation of the experience is due on May 1st (the last class meeting). This evaluation should include: (1) a description of what happened (Did you achieve the goal(s) you set for yourself?); (2) a description of the factors that led to the eventual outcome(s) (Why did things turn out as they did?); (3) an evaluation of the experience (What did you achieve/fail to achieve?); and (4) an assessment of the overall experience (What did you learn? What would you do differently? If you were to use this idea with a class of yours, how would you organize it?).
Course Calendar, Outline of Topics, & Assignments

January 16: Overview and introduction to course
Organizational meeting: Syllabus distributed; assignments and grading explained.

January 23: Beginning the exploration--What is experiential education?
Readings: (1) Association for Experiential Education, "AEE Definition of Experiential Education" (reading packet); (2) Stopol, "South Bronx Alumni Weekend" (reading packet); and (3) Herdman, "When the Wilderness Becomes a Classroom" (reading packet).
Ideas to keep in mind: What learning experiences have you had that could be considered experiential? In general, what do you think of such learning? Is it productive? Is it too time-consuming to be effective and useful? Are any of the experiences described by Stopol or Herdman applicable to classrooms you are familiar with?

January 30: Experiential education and academic learning
Readings: (1) Williamson, "Designing Experiential Curricula" (p. 26); (2) Herbert, "Experiential Learning: A Teacher’s Perspective" (p. 201); (3) Warren, "The Midwife Teacher: Engaging Students in the Experiential Education Process" (p. 212); and (4) Beidler, "English in the Treetops" (p. 347).
Ideas to keep in mind: Drawing on what these four authors say, what seem to be the central elements to effective experiential education? As you read, keep a record of your ideas regarding the answer to this question.
Guest Speakers: Rebecca Parker and Dan Hoefer, who work for Amigos, a Latin American-based community service agency, and Nate Abbott, a student participant from Amigos will discuss the work they do in class.
Note: Whenever we have guest speakers, you should use what you have read (theory) to inform the questions you ask regarding the work they do (practice).
Social action assignment description due today.

February 6: Role Play and Reflection
Readings: (1) Knapp, "Processing the Adventure Experience" (reading packet); and (2) Horwood, "Reflections on Reflection" (p. 227).
Ideas to keep in mind: What are the key features of a successful reflection experience? When do people internalize what a lesson hopes to promote?
Guest Speaker: Sophia Stoller, Director of Community Service, New Vista HS, Boulder, CO.

February 13: Research and Evaluation of Experiential Education
Readings: (1) Ewert, "Research in Experiential Education" (p. 376); (2) Flor, "An Introduction to Research and Evaluation in Practice" (p. 404); and (3) Kolb, "Meaningful Methods: Evaluation Without the Crunch" (p. 410).
Ideas to keep in mind: What about experiential education makes evaluating such experiences difficulty? What does a "useful" evaluation look like?
Guest Speakers: Bruce Rose, a guidance counselor at Boulder HS and the director of Student Leadership Boulder, and Joanna Pane and Stephen Wong, students in the
program, will discuss their work in the area of experiential learning, service learning, and community service.

Lesson plan #1 is due today.

February 20: Experiential Education and Personal Change

Readings: (1) Kraft, "Closed Classrooms, High Mountains, and Strange Lands: An Inquiry into Culture and Caring" (p. 152); (2) Burkhardt, "Integrating Work and Learning with Multicultural Inner City Youth" (p. 171); and (3) Nadler, "Therapeutic Process of Change" (reading packet).

Ideas to keep in mind: According to these authors, when do people change? What elements need to be in place for change to occur? How do these ideas linked to individual change relate to other aspects of experiential education that we’ve examined?

Guest Speaker: Robert Burkhardt, Head Master, Eagle Rock School, Estes Park, CO.

February 27: Experiential Education and Spirituality

Readings: (1) Miles, "Wilderness as Healing Place" (reading packet); (2) Stringer & McAvoy, "The Need for Something Different: Spirituality and Wilderness Adventure" (reading packet); and (3) Fox, "The Spiritual Core of Experiential Education" (reading packet).

Ideas to keep in mind: Are there elements of experiential education that are spiritual by nature, but often overlooked as such? What is the role of spirituality in education and learning? What is the link between spirituality and individual change, if any?

Guest Speaker: Kim Swanson, a teacher at New Vista HS who teaches "experiential writing" and runs a service-learning program that involves having NVHS students teach special education Boulder HS students how to ski.

March 6: Internships

Readings: (1) Stanton, "Internship Education: Past Achievements/Future Challenges" (p. 142); (2) Chandross, "Overview of the Youth/Adult Partnership Issue" (p. 147); and (3) Garvey & Vorsteg, "From Theory to Practice for College Interns: A Stage Theory Approach" (reading packet).

Ideas to keep in mind: What aspects of a successful internship experience seem to stem from the experiential nature of that experience? What is the value of looking at change from a "stages-oriented" point of view? What are the potential drawbacks?

Guest Speaker: Howard Rosenberg, Associate Director of Career Services for Internships at CU will speak to class today.

March 13: Youth Empowerment

Readings: (1) Sarason, "Case in Point: Power Relationships in the Classroom" (in packet); and (2) McQuillan, "Knowing and Empowerment: Or, Student Empowerment Gone Good" (in packet).

Ideas to keep in mind: What problems are likely to arise when students are given increased power over their educational experience? Who gets to define when students are effectively empowered?

Guest Speaker: Juliet Biagi, Executive Director of Project YES (Youth Envisioning Social change)
March 20: Service Learning

Readings: (1) Nathan & Kielsmeir, "The Sleeping Giant of School Reform" (p. 67); (2) Conrad & Hedin, "School-Based Community Service: What We Know from Research and Theory" (p. 73); and (3) Maybach, "Investigating Urban Community Needs: Service Learning from a Social Justice Perspective" (reading packet).

Ideas to keep in mind: In a time of school accountability, will schools accept this new approach to teaching and learning? How often do service endeavors keep in mind the issue of social justice?

Guest Speaker: Kate Cumbo, Director, Learn & Serve Colorado and an organizer for the National Service Learning Conference.

March 27: Spring Break--No Class

April 3: Service Learning (cont'd)

Readings: (1) Richards, "Developing a Service Ethic" (p. 85); and (2) Kraft, "The Social, Psychological, Moral, and Cognitive Effects of Service Learning" (p. 91).

Ideas to keep in mind: Do the possible benefits associated with service learning seem realistic and accurate? How would one document such positive outcomes? Is it likely that any student involved in a service activity will perceive the experience positively simply because the student has committed to the experience (i.e., cognitive dissonance research)?

Lesson plan #2 is due today.

April 4-7: National Service Learning Conference, Denver

April 10: No Class Meeting

April 17: Multiple Intelligences

Readings: (1) No author, "Multiple Intelligences Framework" (in packet); (2) Rainey, "Multiple Intelligences Profile Indicator" (packet); and (3) Armstrong, "Multiple Intelligences Checklist" (packet).

Ideas to keep in mind: For all the self-analyses in the reading, do them for your self. Do experiential lessons lend themselves more readily to drawing on students' multiple intelligences? How can multiple intelligences be incorporated into experiential lessons?

Guest Speaker: Dick Kraft a professor from the School of Education, the director of the Chancellor's Leadership Program, and someone who has been involved with experiential education for nearly 40 years will speak to class today.
April 24: Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB)
Readings: (1) Outward Bound USA, "Expeditionary Learning: A Design for New American Schools" (reading packet); (2) Rocky Mountain School for Expeditionary Learning, "A Framework for Planning a Learning Expedition" (reading packet); and (3) Brady, "'The World Is Mine. Soon. I Hope.' The Struggle to Raise Standards" (reading packet).

Ideas to keep in mind: What aspects of the ideas presented by ELOB can be understood as experiential? What features of this philosophy suggest that these strategies will be effective with students? What drawbacks can you envision in the work they undertake?

Guest Speaker: Bill Fulton, a school reform agent who works for Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound and Facing History and Ourselves, will talk about the work he does with schools and individual teachers.

Lesson plan #3 is due today.

May 1: Research Project Presentations
For this class each evaluation group will present a preliminary analysis of its findings. The session will be aimed at providing the class with an overview of various experiential programs as well as offering the evaluation teams feedback on their work.

Social action assignment due.

Two final notes: (1) If any student has a condition that may influence her/his performance in this course, please feel free to make this information known to me (if you are comfortable doing so). All disclosures will be kept confidential. (2) In the event of inclement weather, I will decide whether to hold class by 2:30 p.m. that day. You can call me at that time to find out what has been decided.