Oswego State University
Course Outline for Project SMART 2003

I. <u>COURSE NUMBER AND CREDIT</u>: EDU 505 - 3 SH

II. <u>COURSE TITLE</u>: Topics in Education: Weaving a Transformative School Fabric

III. <u>COURSE DESCRIPTION</u>: Participants will examine the principles, models, and activities of Professional Development as a transformative process. They will consider the role of professional development in light of their own professional experiences, in relation to the experiences of their colleagues, and within the scope of the School of Education's Conceptual Framework, the NYS Learning Standards, and national professional development guidelines.

IV. <u>PREREQUISITES</u>: Graduate standing and acceptance in Project SMART for 2003.

V. <u>JUSTIFICATION FOR COURSE</u>:

Often teachers participate in professional development activities designed by someone else. For example, they learn about pedagogical strategies, action research strategies, computer technology strategies, or they are guided through curriculum development activities. This view of professional development (which used to be called teacher training, in-service training, or staff development) positions teachers as receivers of knowledge or at best, consumers of knowledge.

But what happens when teachers are empowered to be the creators of the knowledge of teachers? In this course, we will discuss the role of teachers as weavers of knowledge. Teachers regularly weave knowledge of content and pedagogy into classroom activity. They weave past professional experiences with new experiences to develop pedagogical practice that helps their students learn and grow. They weave their own expertise and the expertise of their colleagues into the development of dynamic school communities and professional organizations. Rather than viewing teachers as simply consumers of the knowledge of teaching we will discuss the ways in which teachers act as the producers of the knowledge of teaching.

What happens when teachers are encouraged to recognize their power as weavers of the knowledge of teaching, and nurture that power to change school structure, pedagogy, and curriculum. When teachers work collaboratively to identify questions of interest to them, design research that is geared at finding answers to those questions, and examine the results from their teaching perspectives, they become change agents transforming their classrooms and schools. This change in the role and responsibility of teachers can also result in tensions between teachers, and between teachers and administrators. In the course, we will discuss this changing role of the professional development of teachers and examine how teachers have negotiated the tensions and opportunities that have resulted.

The course will focus on professional development models that help teachers recognize and develop in their roles as catalysts for school change. Teachers will learn about characteristics of effective professional development and assess this information by comparing it to their professional development experiences. They will also apply this information to develop plans for their own professional development activities during the academic year.

This course is part of Project SMART, a year-round professional development initiative that

provides on-going, sustained, collaborative, inquiry-oriented, standards-based experiences for teachers, pre-teachers, and college faculty. During the past 15 years, Project SMART has employed professional development principles in order to develop a culture of inquiry in which all learners are actively engaged. This summer, K-12 teachers will work on collaborative teams with university faculty and business and industry representatives to consider the role of professional development experiences in their work as weavers of a transformative school fabric.

This course will also involve teacher teams in designing professional development activities on some aspect(s) of their teaching that relates to student achievement, inquiry, diversity, reflection, authentic learning, and social justice. Participants will include K-12 teachers (and pre-teachers) from Oswego County schools, the Syracuse City schools, and New York City schools.

VI.   COURSE OBJECTIVES: As a result of taking this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the characteristics of effective professional development models.
2. Articulate the value of professional development as an integral component of the career path of teachers.
3. Apply current research on professional development and plan activities for the following academic year.
4. Develop plans for addressing the teacher-teacher or teacher-administrator that may arise when teachers become creators of professional knowledge.
5. Implement methods of integrating the curriculum to authentic (real world) settings based on New York State Learning Standards.
6. Develop a design for a future study in their own classrooms to consider effects of collaborative, inquiry-based curricular materials, with an aim of including all children in learning.
7. Apply the Project SMART design in curriculum projects that they are developing in collaborative professional development groups.

VII.   COURSE OUTLINE:

A. Research Based Kids at Work Curriculum Materials
    1. Survey of available validated instructional units that can be incorporated into existing and planned curriculum projects.
    2. Networking with educators and parents in business and industry to feature expeditionary learning opportunities.
    3. Survey of Internet resources, software, and student discussion groups/listserves/research projects that reflect Project SMART principles.
B. Collaborative Inquiry Projects/Strategies Using the Kids at Work Model
    1. Involving segments of the community, especially parent organizations and industry, in school programs.
    2. Web based collaborative projects, listservs, classroom connections.
    3. Meeting and Assessing Needs of Diverse Learners.
    4. Creating a Culture of Inquiry.
C. Professional Development
    1. Characteristics of effective professional development models
    2. Using professional development to weave new ideas into familiar pedagogical strategies and curriculum projects
    3. Collaborative professional development strategies to transform school curriculum

4. Addressing teacher-teacher and teacher-administrator tensions in professional development
   D. Action research study design.
   1. Approaches to conducting action research
   2. Using teacher work samples to document student learning
   3. Design an action research study to examine one's teaching in a computer supported, collaborative inquiry-based, Kids at Work environment.

VIII.   <u>METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:</u> Readings, discussion, laboratory, lecture, field excursions.

IX.   <u>COURSE REQUIREMENTS:</u> Each student will work on a team to (1) review, reflect on, and share the past year's professional development activities; (2) learn about professional development models and activities; (3) develop a plan for conducting effective professional development activities during the upcoming academic year.

X.   <u>MEANS OF EVALUATION:</u> 33% review, reflect upon, and share past professional development activities in light of new information; 33% planning for upcoming professional development activities; 33% attendance and participation.

XI.   <u>RESOURCES:</u> This course will place no additional demands upon the Department or the College. All costs for personnel and materials will be defrayed through a Project SMART T/LQP grant to the Center for Interdisciplinary Educational Studies at SUNY Oswego.

XI.   <u>FACULTY REQUIREMENTS:</u> The course will be instructed by an interdisciplinary team of teacher educators, Project SMART teachers, and local business representatives involved in Project SMART.

XII.   <u>BIBLIOGRAPHY:</u>

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National Association of Multicultural Education: http://www.nameorg.org/
Rethinking Schools Group: http://www.rethinkingschools.org/
Educational Resources Information Clearinghouse: http://www.askeric.org/
NCATE: http://www.ncate.org/
Project SMART: http://www.oswego.edu/~prosmart