

**Oswego State University**  
**Course Outline for Project SMART 2004**

I. COURSE NUMBER AND CREDIT: EDU 505 - 3 SH

II. COURSE TITLE: Topics in Education: Generating Expectations for Student Achievement (GESA), and Beyond

III. COURSE DESCRIPTION: Participants will examine the principles, models, and activities of GESA, a professional development program focused on equity-based teaching. They will consider the role of this professional development program 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. PREREQUISITES: Acceptance in Project SMART for 2004.

V. JUSTIFICATION FOR COURSE:

GESA focuses on teacher instructional behaviors, uses the 'professional' language of schools, and results in substantial conversations about equity issues around race, ethnicity, social class, gender, ability and sexuality. Grayson and Martin (1997) compiled findings of 60 years of research relevant to education and social justice and from the existing program TESA (Teacher Expectations for Student Achievement) they jointly developed GESA. They identified the following five areas of disparity in classroom practice that reveal how teachers' responses to student characteristics such as race and gender affect achievement:

**1. Instructional contact**

Increased contact with the teacher leads to greater student achievement. Males, whites, high ability, and higher social class students are likely to have more contact with teachers during lessons (Campbell & Steinbrueck, 1996; Good & Brophy, 1987; Grayson and Martin, 1984; Gunter, Shores and Susan, 1995).

**2. Grouping and organization**

Teachers have been found to group students according to race, class, gender, and ability, and to treat groups differently. Teachers tend to hold higher expectations for some of the more privileged groups (Gill & Reynolds, 1999; Rist, 2000).

**3. Classroom management and discipline**

Teachers have been found to treat some groups of people preferentially when acknowledging their contributions, or disciplining them (Rennie & Parker, 1987).

**4. Self-esteem**

Teachers have been found to interact differently with students from certain groups based on race, class, gender, and ability, thus unconsciously promoting the self-esteem of some students while undercutting the self-esteem of others (Cummins, 1986; Franklin & Wong, 1987; Mavi & Sharpe, 2000).

**5. Evaluation of student performance**

When teachers evaluate students on the basis of preconceived ideas about race, class, gender, and ability, the performance of marginalized students demonstrate the results of lower expectations and bias (Padilla & Wyatt, 1983).

Grayson makes the link between teacher behavior and differences in student achievement explicit when she says, “The areas of disparity have proven to be generic and are applicable to parallel equity concerns related to gender, race, national origin, language dominance, sexuality, developmental or physical disability, socioeconomic class, perceived ability or any of the other labels or categories which *tend to deal people out or permit them to deal themselves in or out of the educational system*” (1997, p. 4, our emphasis).

To avoid this marginalization of students by teachers’ instructional behaviors, GESA training involves three stages. First, participants study the five areas of disparity that identify unfair differences in how students are treated. They read research about each area, share stories of how the disparities play out in their own lives and classrooms, and identify strategies they may have used to reduce the disparities. Second, they collect and analyze data from each other’s teaching observations to assess needed changes in practice corresponding to the identified areas of disparity. Third, with this information, they examine the impact of changes on student learning. GESA has been implemented in a wide variety of contexts and evaluated both quantitatively and qualitatively. Grayson and Martin (1997) report three major outcomes of the program:

1. GESA teachers reduce disparity in frequency distribution patterns and increase the quality of interactions with students, as documented by peer observations.
2. Students in classrooms of GESA teachers achieve significantly higher average gains in reading and mathematics in pre- and post achievement test scores.
3. GESA teachers increase the use of non-stereotypical interactions, materials, and activities. Chiefly, GESA creates opportunities for meaningful professional conversations that lead to documented changes in teaching practice.

Teachers will become GESA facilitators through the course, and will be trained to apply GESA in their schools, and to conduct study groups of peers to implement GESA in the region.

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 16 years, Project SMART has employed professional development principles in order to develop a culture of inquiry in which all learners are actively engaged. 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 research relating to the five areas of disparity in the GESA professional development models.
2. Apply GESA observation and data analysis strategies with peers for each of the five areas of disparity.
3. Apply current research on professional development and plan GESA related activities for the following academic year.
4. Develop plans for implementing GESA in their own teaching context.
5. Use GESA to support achievement of New York State Learning Standards by reducing disparities among learners.
6. Further their development of facilitation skills, in particular, to effectively support deep conversations about issues of diversity and equity among educators and with K-12 learners.

VII. COURSE OUTLINE:

1. Study group teams share models of academic year professional development work.
2. GESA facilitator training – research, observation, facilitation skills around the five areas of disparity. For those already GESA facilitators—focus is on deepening facilitation skills, increasing repertoire of awareness activities about anti-bias teaching, and increasing knowledge about the research base for GESA.
3. GESA for Parents or GESA for Higher Education training.
4. Action planning for implementing GESA during the next academic year.

VIII. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION: Readings, discussion, laboratory, lecture, and simulations.

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

X. MEANS OF EVALUATION: 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. RESOURCES: 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. FACULTY REQUIREMENTS: The course will be instructed by an interdisciplinary team of teacher educators, Project SMART teachers, and GESA consultants involved in Project SMART.

XII. BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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#### Websites:

Teaching Tolerance. [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

INTASC: <http://www.ccsso.org/intascst.html>

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>

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