

Cluster	Subject Title	Instructor	Credit	Semester
A-P	Children's Development in China	Academic team from Nanjing Normal University	2	Winter 2020
Subject Description				
<p>The course is designed to help students to study children's development in China. The optimal development of children is vital to the society. It is important to understand the social, cognitive, emotional, and educational development of children. Increased research and interest in this field has resulted in new theories and strategies, with specific regard to practice that promotes development within the school system. In addition, there are also some theories that seek to describe a sequence of states that compose child development. It includes six seminars provided by the academic team from Faculty of Education Science, Nanjing Normal University.</p>				
Objective				
<p>This course aims to explore the biological, psychological and emotional changes that occur in children from kindergarten to Grade 12. Students will examine theories and developmental milestones, discovering appropriate practices for childhood care, education, and services. Studies will provide a foundation for careers in working with children.</p>				
Learning Method				
Seminars and field observation				
Content				
<p>(1) The Musical Lives of Young Children The nurturing of children's musical interest is of great import to children's development and their emotional lives. Teachers and parents around the world observe children's joyful affinity for music. The seminar focuses on children's music learning and development. There are two parts in the seminar. One is about children's musical experiences in listening, singing, moving and creating, play instruments. The other is about how to understand children's musical behavior and promote children's development through music education. To achieve these two goals, students will watch the video of Chinese children's music activities and analyze children's musical behaviors. Students will also attend children's music activities themselves to understand children's musical behavior. Although the music activities are mainly come from preschools and kindergartens in China, students are hoped to share the music activities of children in their homeland.</p> <p>(2) Kindergarten Curriculum Reform in China: History and Reflection In the past 35 years, Ministry of Education has launched top-down kindergarten curriculum reform for three times. The reformers made much efforts to change the situation that the teaching content and methods used in kindergartens are similar to those in primary schools. Since different reform was launched in different political and academic background, the ideal about the aims, learning activity forms and the role of teacher changed a lot. Different reform leaders constructed different concepts and the reforms swung between early intelligent exploitation or comprehensive development, between teacher-centered or child-centered, between lesson-oriented or play-oriented, between open to the foreign theories and keep local value and practice. With the expansion of private sector in ECE field in the past decade, the diversified grass-root curriculum attempt sprung up and made the implementation of top-down reform more complicated. The participants in this seminar will discuss and co-reflect the evolution of some key concepts and current powers emerging in the reform process in China, and share some insights of ECE curriculum in their own country.</p>				

(3) Mathematics Education in China

In recent decades, students in East Asia countries or regions, e.g., Singapore, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, have achieved high scores in international exams, i.e., TIMSS and PISA. Researchers have tried to explain such phenomenon with Confucian culture. Then, how about the mathematics education in mainland China? What are the reasons or questions hidden behind the achievements?

It aims to provide the international students with an updated picture of the teaching and learning of mathematics in China, including the ways in which Chinese students learn mathematics in classrooms, the influence of the cultural and social environment on Chinese students' mathematics learning, the strengths and weaknesses of the ways in which Chinese learn mathematics, how Chinese mathematics teachers teach at both the macro- and micro-levels, and how they pursue the pre-service training and in-service professional development. Concrete examples, e.g., classroom observations, teaching videos, will be provided for discussion. Besides, the international students will be invited to share the situations in their countries or schools, or their experience of mathematics learning, etc.

(4) Understanding Early Childhood Education in China

This seminar aims to provide students with basic information about early childhood education in China. It begins with an introduction to a brief history of early childhood education in China, including its founding father, Mr. Chen Heqin. Then, it focuses on the current development of early childhood education in China, including an interpretation of China's Early Learning and Development Guidelines for Children 3 to 6 Years Old (2012). Students are also provided with cases to have a general understanding of young children's learning environment, daily routines and child-teacher interactions.

(5) Learning and Teaching Mathematics in the Chinese Kindergartens

It is well known that Chinese students have outstanding performance on mathematics learning. Even in early childhood, the younger Chinese learners develop ahead of the Western. It is controversial with regard to the reason behind the fact. The presenter will give his explanation from a socio-cultural perspective to introduce the teaching approaches in the Chinese kindergartens. Cross-cultural comparison will also be addressed.

Requirement

Active participation.

Evaluation

- 1) Class participation (20%)
- 2) A short essay related to the cluster with no less than 600 words (40%)
- 3) Group presentation (40%)

Textbook and reference

(please indicate which are to be provided by instructor and which students need to find by themselves)

This course does not need extra textbooks or references. Students are encouraged to learn the educational system, social economic context and policy related to children's development in China in advance.

Pre-course reading and preparation (if any)