

**Salish Kootenai College**  
**Teaching Science in the Elementary Classroom**  
**EDUC 390 - Winter 2017**

**Course Information**

- A. Teaching Science in the Elementary Classroom: EDUC 390, 4 credits
- B. Corequisite for Elem. Majors: Teaching Science Practicum: EDUC 391, 1 credit
- C. Prerequisite: Admissions to the TEP program
- D. Course Location: Education Building Room 113
- E. Time: Tues. and Thurs. 9:00 – 10:50

**Instructor Information**

- A. Instructor: Charles Bertsch
- B. Cell Phone: 406-253-2998
- C. Email: charles\_bertsch@skc.edu

**EDUC 390**

Teaching Science in the Elementary Classroom focuses on topics related to the effective teaching of science in elementary classroom settings. Candidates will explore teaching methods that are aligned with state and national standards, and are oriented around inquiry-based, collaborative science learning. A special focus of this class will be the infusion of culturally responsive science teaching methods and issues, as well as the integration of science learning across various disciplines.

**Required Text**

- 1) Martin, David J. (2012). *Elementary School Science Methods: A Constructivist Approach*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Cengage/Wadsworth ISBN-13: 978-1-111-30543-7

**Course Description**

*This course supports candidates' growth as K-8 science educators by engaging them in a comprehensive set of activities which...*

- 1) allow candidates to experience, examine, and reflect upon teaching and learning strategies for the K-8 science classroom.
- 2) provide teaching opportunities in which candidates use the skills and knowledge that support effective science instruction.
- 3) require candidates to apply their knowledge of teaching in the development of science units designed for use in supporting the learning of diverse students.
- 4) facilitate the development of candidates' understanding of science literacy and how to develop it in students.
- 5) engage candidates in active inquiry of the relationships between teaching and learning and of other issues related to science education. Candidates will gain familiarity with instructional methods and materials that are aligned with state and national standards and are developmentally appropriate, with a particular emphasis on inquiry based learning and other forms of research-based pedagogy. Students will examine instructional models and curricular materials known to foster K-8 students' conceptual understanding of core science concepts, awareness of the nature of science, and proficiency in using science process skills. Infused topics include the effective use of instructional technology to support student learning, science safety, formative and summative assessment, and cultural competency.

## Course Objectives

*Through the successful completion of this course, the candidate will demonstrate that they are able to...*

- 1) describe and contrast the nature of Western science, Indigenous science, and elementary science education.
- 2) articulate the meaning and value of culturally competent science instruction in supporting students' science literacy, including that of American Indians students.
- 3) describe and apply reform based elementary science methods in developing students' science literacy.
- 4) develop elementary science lessons that, when appropriate,
  - a) effectively incorporate instructional technology,
  - b) incorporate culturally competent methods and content,
  - c) employ differentiated methods and content to support the learning of diverse learners,
  - d) utilize assessment for and of learning, and
  - e) provide opportunities for development of science process skills, content knowledge, and scientific attitudes and dispositions in students.
- 5) identify potential student science misconceptions, their effects on learning, and how to address them to support learning.
- 6) use science content standards in making effective instructional decisions.
- 7) develop meaningful conceptual sequences that will support students' understanding of core science content.
- 8) develop effective formative and summative assessments.
- 9) employ instructional inquiry and reflective practices to examine their teaching and students' learning.
- 10) articulate their understanding of educational theory and how learning is supported through effective science teaching.
- 11) utilize educational resources in supporting their growth as a professional educator, and
- 12) participate in and contribute to an effective learning community with their peers.

## Course Requirements

**Attendance/Participation: (100 points)** Students are expected to attend **all** class sessions and field work. Points will be awarded based on attendance, 5 points per class X 20 class meetings. Students arriving late to class or leaving early without notification will receive a deduction in attendance points. Students who appropriately notify the instructor prior to absences may receive partial points, if arrangements are made to catch up with course requirements. Students missing 30 minutes or more of a class receive zero points for that session. Always contact the instructor to notify them in the event of an absence or of late arrival. Refer to the "attendance" section below for more information.

**Science Learning Center: (50 points)** Candidates are required to develop an original science learning center designed to enable students to engage in the exploration of a major science concept with minimal adult supervision. The center should be developmentally appropriate for a specific age group and should be a self contained experiential and investigative activity. The center should be designed to support students' learning of the concept, either as an introductory exploration or an elaboration of ideas already learned. Its use should result in a student generated product that allows the teacher to assess the students' understanding of the concept addressed. Candidates will provide a write up of the activity that includes full instructions for the preparation and use of the activity and the learning rationale behind it, and will distribute copies to all course participants including the instructor. Candidates may work individually or in pairs on this assignment. In the last week of the quarter, all

candidates will set up their centers in our classroom and will engage as students in using multiple centers. An instrument for assessing the science center will be distributed to candidates.

**In-Class Teaching: (50 points)** During the last three weeks of class each candidate will be required to present their science unit plan and to teach a short section of it to the class. The class will then discuss the effectiveness of the instruction, noting its strengths and areas for improvement. In class teaching should be limited to 20 minutes from the beginning to the end of instruction. This assignment can be done individually or in pairs. Candidates who are teaching are expected to be prepared and to supply needed materials for completion of the lesson by all class members as appropriate. A rubric for assessing the quality of the instruction will be distributed to candidates prior to their teaching.

**Quizzes: 3 quizzes: (30 + 30 + 40 = 100 points total)** Three announced quizzes will be given during the course. Quizzes may vary in format and will cover assigned readings and information covered during the course. Quiz 1-Week 4, Quiz 2-Week 7, and Quiz 3-Week 10

**In-Class Activities: (100 points)** Throughout the course there will be numerous activities associated with class meetings, including hands-on demonstrations and experiments, group discussions, reading analyses, and other happenings that students will participate and take part in.

**Culture/Community Science Unit Plan: (100 points)** The development of a science unit instructional plan is a major component of this course. It is aligned with course objectives and requires the candidate to apply much of the skills and knowledge this course aims to teach. A format for writing up the unit will be distributed to students along with a rubric that will be used for assessing the unit plan. Candidates are required to generate an **original** science unit plan. This assignment can be done individually or in pairs and should follow the template provided by the instructor. The required elements of the unit are that it:

- 1) consists of a minimum of three lessons that fully addresses a core science concept that is aligned with the Montana Science Education Standards and Benchmarks, as well as OPI's Essential Understandings.
- 2) is culturally competent, in terms of content and pedagogy, and is connected in some meaningful way to the local community.
- 3) incorporates the effective use of instructional technology to enhance student learning.
- 4) utilizes regular formative and summative assessment and includes the assessment tools.
- 5) utilizes effective strategies for developing student literacy in reading and writing and includes the integral use of at least one relevant and age appropriate book.

## Grading

Points will be awarded as follows:

Attendance/Participation	100 points	20%
In-Class Activities	100 points	20%
Science Learning Center	50 points	10%
In-Class Teaching	50 points	10%
Quizzes: (30, 30 and 40 points)	100 points	20%
<u>Science Unit Plan</u>	<u>100 points</u>	<u>20%</u>
Total Points Possible	500 points	100%

Grades will be assigned according to the following points breakdown:

450 - 500 = A    350 - 399 = C    400 - 449 = B    300 - 349 = D    Below 300 = F

## **Course Responsibilities**

Knowledge of the course content, class lectures, assignments, and syllabus content are the responsibility of the student regardless of absenteeism. If the syllabus is changed in any way you will be notified.

## **Relation to Conceptual Framework**

The opportunities provided in this course, by placing candidates in the position of both student and teacher, support the teacher candidate in developing perspectives, knowledge and skills as teachers in a social constructivist learning environment, and in developing expertise in experiential and inquiry based teaching and learning, accountability to student learning, reflective practice, and instructional leadership skills.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory due to the nature of this course. As an adult learner in this class, you are a co-creator in the content of the course. To bring meaning to the course content you will be asked to participate in discussion, group work, presentations and other class activities. A variety of class activities, discussions and presentations will be conducted throughout the course. These cannot be made up, therefore your absence forfeits the opportunity to learn from the activities. Additionally, your absence represents a limitation in the ability of others to learn from you.

Students are expected to be on time for class and to stay until the designated time set for dismissal. If a student must leave early she/he must inform the instructor at the beginning of class. Communication with the instructor is very important in this class; if students know that they will have to miss a class, they must contact the instructor ahead of time. Students missing more than 3 class meetings may need to drop the course.

## **In-completes**

In-completes will not be given except in the case of serious emergencies such as a death in the family or extreme medical illness. In-completes will not be used in cases where students have not completed assignments and are requesting more time to finish the course requirements. In the event of medical or other emergencies where in-completes are necessary, arrangements including a signed contract for completed work and its timeline will be made with instructor prior to the end of the quarter.

## **Academic Honor Code**

All course work shall follow the guidelines of the Academic Honor Code as set forth by the SKC Student Handbook. Do your own work, allow other students to do their own work. Plagiarism involves the taking of someone else's words, ideas, or writings and presenting them as your own. Avoid plagiarism, and always acknowledge the ideas of others and site your sources of information. Violation of the Academic Honor Code may result in failure of the assignment, the course, or possible expulsion from the school.

## **Credit Hours**

Following the SKC credit hour policy, to meet the identified objectives of this course, this 4 credit course, delivered over a 10 week term will approximate about 4 hours a week classroom time for about total of 40 hours of instructional time. In addition out-of-class student work will approximate a minimum of 6 hours each week.

## **Instructional Methodologies**

The instructor will utilize a variety of instructional strategies including, but not limited to, discovery learning, cooperative learning, group projects, presentations and discussions, case study analysis, web related learning, Smart-boards, guest speakers, and other resources.

## **Cell Phones**

Cell phone use is a distraction to the instructor and other students. By SKC policy, students must keep cell phones off during class.

## **Disabilities Statement**

Reasonable accommodations are provided for eligible students with identified disabilities. SKC complies with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students may contact the College's Disability Officer, Stanley Fleming (stanley\_fleming@skc.edu, 406.275.4968) or consult the SKC web pages for Students with Disabilities for more information.

## **EDUC 390 Course Outline**

*This outline is subject to modification depending on class needs.*

### **Week 1: Rationales for Science Education**

Introductions, syllabus, requirements. Practicum overview. Defining and understanding the need for science in elementary school, cultivating a Sense of Wonder. Basic differences in the Native-Euro science paradigms. NSTA / MT Stds / Themes. *For Wed: Read Martin Chapter 1*

### **Weeks 2-3: The Nature of Science and Elementary Schools Today**

An exploration of the major characteristics of science as a discipline and as a way of thinking and living. We will also have an overview of the systems within public elementary education which support and/or hinder science education. *Martin Chapter 2, Science Learning Centers Assigned*

### **Week 4: The Cognitive Engines that Drive Science**

Understanding and applying the major processes of science learning (observation, measuring, predicting, etc.) in classroom contexts. *Martin Chapter 3 part 1*

### **Week 4 (cont.): Science teaching on the Flathead and in Montana**

An exploration of the methods and materials used in local schools and throughout the state in elementary science education. *Martin Chapter 3 part 2 Quiz 1*

### **Week 5: Elementary Science Curriculum, Planning, and Assessment**

Learning about the architecture of science curriculum, how to sequence instruction both short and long term, designing instructional units, and assessing science learning. *Martin Chapter 8 Learning Centers Presented*

### **Week 6: Inquiry, H.O.T.S., and Minds-On Learning**

Introductions, syllabus, requirements. Practicum overview. Defining and understanding the need for science in elementary school, cultivating a Sense of Wonder. Basic differences in the Native-Euro science paradigms. NSTA / MT Stds / Themes. *Martin Chapter 5*

### **Literacy and Children's Books in Science Instruction**

Investigating reading levels and the use of trade books and literature in science instruction. *Martin Chapter 10 Science Unit Plans Assigned*

**Week 7: Science and Diverse Learners: Perspectives**

Investigating the nature of science teaching with respect to differing perspectives. We will explore ways of differentiating learning to accommodate the needs of diverse students.

**Indigenous Science, & Teaching in Native Communities**

Considerations for teaching science in Indian communities; also an exploration into ways of bringing Indian and western science together. *Martin Chapter 6 Quiz 2*

**Week 8: Science and Diverse Learners: Abilities**

Investigating the nature of science teaching with respect to differing abilities. Included will be an exploration of gender bias and giftedness in science education. *Martin Chapter 7*

**Week 9: Building a Science-Friendly Classroom**

Safety, materials, and room arrangement to promote high interest and high level learning in science. Also included will be information about field study, environmental education, and family involvement. *Martin Chapter 9*

**Week 10: Other topics in Elementary Science Education**

Investigations into technology's role in science learning, systems thinking, professional development, and other topics. Presentations of Unit Plans. *Selected readings in Martin-Part 2 Quiz 3 Unit Plans Presented*