

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

EDUCATION 407-5

**THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF IMPLEMENTATION:
MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE**

A course for educators working with primary learners

Fall Semester, 1991

Seminar Dates and Locations:

4:00 – 7:00 p.m. unless otherwise announced

Sept. 10, 17, 24 Vancouver Teachers' Centre

Oct. 1, 8, 22 Vancouver Teachers' Centre

Nov. 5 Carnarvon School

Nov. 19 Vancouver Teachers' Centre

Dec. 3 Vancouver Teachers' Centre

Instructors and Facilitators:

Darlene Forrest, Patricia Holborn, S.F.U.

Pam George, Vi Hughes,

Pat Montgomery, Bev Price

Malanie Zola, Vancouver S.D.

PURPOSES

Education 407-5 is a five-credit course that provides teachers with the opportunity to use their own classrooms as laboratories for exploring, analyzing and evaluating the processes of implementation. Theory and practice are linked through workshops, seminars and classroom implementation projects. The course is operated on a pass/withdraw basis. No grades will be assigned.

This specific course focuses on the implementation of new directions in primary education arising from the Sullivan Royal Commission in British Columbia. The purposes of the course are to help practising teachers and administrators:

- a. Understand the base of theory and research in curriculum, child development, language learning and other fields on which the recommendations of the Royal Commission are based;
- b. Examine the beliefs, values and intentions reflected in the Commission's recommendations;
- c. Explore the practical implications of new program and curriculum directions by becoming familiar with a variety of instructional and evaluation strategies that support a developmental approach to learning and teaching;
- d. Clarify personal beliefs about the teacher's role in a program that assumes a developmental approach;
- e. Be able to articulate a rationale for using a developmental approach in the classroom, supported with examples from current educational literature and classroom practices in such areas as whole language, cooperative learning and teaching for thinking.

COURSE COMPONENTS

Workshops

The workshop component of the course will model a student-centred approach to instruction. Activities will include examination of:

- * the Royal Commission recommendations and other materials which support their implementation;
- * a developmental approach to teaching and learning based on current theory and research;
- * learning as a constructive, generative and collaborative process;
- * principles and criteria for educational decision-making based on a coherent educational philosophy;
- * strategies for creating developmental learning environments;
- * strategies for selecting, organizing and implementing appropriate instructional approaches for Primary students;
- * strategies for assessing and evaluating pupils, teachers and educational programs.

Seminars

The seminar component of the course will provide a forum in which participants can support and learn from one another as they compare their implementation experiences. Seminars will provide opportunities for participants to reflect on their personal knowledge of children, teaching and learning, and how these change through the processes of implementation.

Implementation Project

The classroom component of this course will involve the design and implementation of developmental learning approaches in participants' own classroom or school settings. Ongoing support, coaching and consultation will be provided jointly by the course instructor and district personnel. Participants will be asked to keep a reflective journal in which they document and assess changes in understanding and teaching practices throughout the semester, and to develop a portfolio which represents what they have learned during the course.

IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT GUIDELINES

Professional growth is an ongoing, developmental process. Like their students, teachers are always learning, developing their understanding through trying on new ideas, experimenting in the classroom, and discussing and evaluating their experiences.

The implementation project provides an opportunity for you to focus on one aspect of your professional growth, and to consciously and deliberately develop your classroom practices in that area. The process of designing, implementing and evaluating the project is your major assignment for Education 407.

Each participant will develop an individualized project plan with support from colleagues and the instructor. The choice of focus area, goal and level of challenge is

expected to vary from individual to individual depending on background, previous experience and current situations.

Choosing a focus area and a goal for the project

Perhaps the most difficult part of this assignment will be selecting the particular aspect of your classroom program that you would most like to develop during the course. Some questions to keep in mind when selecting your project focus are:

- a. Will I learn something new and worthwhile from this project?
- b. Will the project help me become a better facilitator of students' development in the focus area?
- c. Is my focus area worth of a significant investment of time and energy?
- d. Is my goal clear enough that I can identify specific practices I want to try?
- e. Is my project manageable within the time frame of the inservice course?
- f. Have I tried to anticipate problems that might arise during implementation and how I might deal with them?

Developing a project plan

The project plan should include a list of the activities you will undertake and, where appropriate, a timeline. Your plan may include background reading or research into instructional strategies as well as a classroom implementation overview. It should also indicate what signs you will look for to indicate that you have moved toward your goal. A format for your project plan will be provided by the course instructors.

Setting up a support system

Although each teacher will engage in an individualized project, colleagues can provide invaluable support in the form of encouragement, specific suggestions, empathy during times of challenge, problem-solving ideas, and constructive feedback. As part of your plan you will be asked to identify a small support group with whom you will regularly discuss the planning, implementation and evaluation process.

Implementing the project

Your project plan provides a guide to direct your implementation efforts during the course. However, you may find that as you try new practices, you need to make modifications in the plan in response to unanticipated events along the way. It is expected that your plan may change during implementation. Your reflective journal should document what actually happens during the implementation phase, as well as your analysis of what you are learning from the experiences. Your instructor will be available during class sessions to discuss your experiences, and your support group will also help you deal with challenges you may encounter.

Monitoring the project

At the end of the course you will be asked to summarize what you have learned from the implementation project. You should be prepared to discuss its effects on your classroom practices and your students as well as on your own learning. A well-kept reflective journal should provide much of the data for your self-evaluation of the project.

Preparing the portfolio

Your summary at the end of the course will take the form of a portfolio which represents what the course experiences have meant for you in terms of learning and growth. The portfolio may consist of a variety of carefully-selected items which represent your journey through the implementation project or illustrate some important aspects of your activities. The portfolio should also include a letter or other document for the instructors which explains what the portfolio items represent and why you have chosen them, and which summarizes your learning and growth.