

**AUBURN UNIVERSITY  
SYLLABUS**

**1. Course Number:** CTEC 3200  
**Course Title:** A Working Theory for the Constructivist Educator  
**Course Credit:** 3 semester hours  
**Prerequisites:** Admission to Early Childhood Teacher Education  
**Corequisites:** None  
**Instructor:** Dr. Carolyn L. Keasal  
**Office:** Haley Center 5040  
**Office Hours:** by appointment  
**Phone:** 334-826-6667 (home) 334-559-2824 (personal cell)  
**Email:** (work) [keasac1@auburn.edu](mailto:keasac1@auburn.edu); [dckeasal@charter.net](mailto:dckeasal@charter.net) (personal)

**2. Date Syllabus Prepared:** April 1998, Revised May 2011

**3. Texts:**

Bodrova, E. & Leong, D. J. (2007). *Tools of the mind: The Vygotskian approach to early childhood education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Labinowicz, E. (1980). *The Piaget primer: Thinking, learning and teaching*. Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley.

*Additional readings will be required.*

**4. Course Description:**

This course is designed for pre-service teachers preparing to teach at the preschool and primary school level. Students build knowledge of constructivist theory.

**5. Course Objectives:**

The student will:

1. Begin to build a personal knowledge of constructivist theory as a means for understanding principles of learning and how learning takes place, especially during the early years. [ECE 2.a.5] [ECE 2.a.6]
2. Develop techniques of the clinical interview method through which children's thinking is revealed. [ECE 2.a.5] [ECE 2.a.7] [NAEYC 4.1.2]
3. Demonstrate an initial understanding of the structure of natural learning as a basis for instruction and construct schemes for identifying primary realms of knowledge. [ECE 2 a 1]
4. Integrate realms of knowledge with the nature of the learner. [ECE 2.a.6]
5. Begin to apply realms of knowledge to specific content areas. [ECE 2.a.7]
6. Demonstrate an initial understanding of how autonomy and social interaction provide methods of motivating children to learn including interests and everyday experiences, setting realistic goals and fostering self-esteem.[NAEYC 1.1, 1.2]
7. Demonstrate an initial understanding of techniques and instruments for observing, recording and assessing behavior, development and learning. [ECE 2.a.4] [NAEYC 4.1.2]

**6. Course Content and Schedule:**

The course content is designed to permit students to construct knowledge of principles of learning and how learning takes place; techniques and instruments for observing, recording, and assessing behavior development and learning; motivating children to learn, including interests and everyday experiences; and setting realistic goals. Because the program subscribes to a model that holds that learning is integrated, arithmetic, science, language arts, health, and social studies content are incorporated throughout the class to provide examples around which discussion takes place. Thus, while development is the focus, the content relates to development of logico-mathematical, physical and social knowledge (the realms of knowledge).

- I. Factors influencing intellectual development
  - A. Maturation
  - B. Physical/concrete experiences
  - C. Social interaction
  - D. Equilibration
- II. Stages of intellectual development
  - A. Sensori-motor
  - B. Preoperational
  - C. Concrete operational
  - D. Formal
- III. Methods of investigation
  - A. Observation
  - B. Clinical method
- IV. Analysis of assessments
  - A. Demonstrate assessment techniques
  - B. Analyze children's responses to identify schemes
  - C. Discuss possible paths for instruction.
  - D. Discuss curriculum implications
  - E. Provide strategies for use in classrooms.
- V. Distinction between the realms of knowledge and the nature of knowing
  - A. Realms of knowledge
  - B. Nature of knowing
  - C. Knowing uses processes for internalization
- VI. Realms of knowledge and academic content.
  - A. Mathematics
  - B. Language Arts/Language Development
  - C. Science
  - D. Social Studies/Moral Development

**7. Course Requirements/Evaluation:**

Students are required to:

Develop and write research reports on each of 2 research questions:

- 1) Can you find errors in how children think? What do these errors mean? Did you have any indication that the children had altered their thinking during your experiment? What could have accounted for the change in thinking? Can you correct children's thinking errors? How? Should you correct the errors? Why? What alternatives do you have? [Given what you have found, what would be some "next steps" for these children if they were in your classroom?]
- 2) How does social interaction affect learning? Is there a difference in the way children think about a problem alone, with a peer, and with an adult? Explain how autonomy and heteronomy fit into social interaction. [Given what you have learned about social interaction, what are some things you would do in your classroom if these children (or others like them) were in it?]

Each report will be graded according to the student's ability to clearly represent the research question and related sub-questions; describe the significance of question; describe the method for collecting data; analyze the data, merging knowledge of prior research with current data; draw logical conclusions based on the data, integrate resources used in this course and class discussions; and, **reflect on the research**. [Reflection – what did you notice about yourself as researcher? What would you do differently if you had it to do over again? What did you think you did well in this experience?] Each paper represents 20% of the student's grade.

*Research Reports:* You will be given 2 questions to investigate. For each question you will write a report. The report should detail how you went about answering the question. Your report should include: the question and related sub-questions, relevant information for the answers and method of answering the questions (this should include quotes and references to written material), techniques for answering the questions (including sources of information--this may involve transcripts, drawings, test results, etc.), your answers to the questions including why these answers are adequate (how they fit with the relevant information cited earlier), and your evaluation of what needs to be done next (what limitations did you perceive, what new questions were raised, what parts of the question remain unanswered). Include "next steps" for these children, merging what you have learned about the children with what you have learned from your assigned readings, in-class discussions and projects. If these children were in your classroom, what are some specific activities that you might provide to further their cognitive development, given where they are now in their development? These reports will be subjectively graded based on your ability to bring the resources available to you in attempting to answer the question. All students must collect data. The first paper will be graded on content, form, and supporting documents. The second paper will be a group paper and will be graded on content, form, supporting documents and individual contribution.

*Presentation of your learning:* You will each prepare a 5- 10 minute presentation of the learning that you have had during the semester related to the research you have done, discussion in class, and preparedness/participation in class. These will be presented to the class near the end of the semester. Grading of these presentations will be based on clear and compelling description of how your thinking has changed during the semester, what impacted your learning, and examples of research that supported this learning, based on your experiences this semester. This presentation will represent 10% of the student's grade.

*Mid-term Comprehensive Exam:* This exam will represent 15% of the student's grade.

*Final Comprehensive Exam:* This exam will represent 15% of the student's grade

*Class Participation/Preparedness:* Students will receive a class participation grade. This grade counts for 20% of your final grade. To receive full credit for class participation and preparedness, students must be prepared for class (reading all assignments prior to class, bringing notes and articles to class for discussion, as well as any other assignments), engage in class discussions (provide thoughtful insight that demonstrates effort in gaining understanding prior to class), and conduct oneself in a professional manner (actively listening to peer comments, respectfully engaging in discourse). If a student does not contribute to the class discussion, the student will not receive full credit for participation. If a student is absent, the student will not receive credit for participation for that day, however he/she may receive partial credit for preparedness if the notes, quizzes, assignments for that day are provided to the instructor **prior to the class meeting in which they are due.**

*Quizzes:* There may be announced quizzes on the assigned readings for each week. These quizzes will receive a percentage grade and will be used to inform the instructor as to how prepared the student is for class that day (Has the student read the assigned material carefully prior to class?). These quiz grades will not be averaged with the other grades for the course, however they will be used to inform the 20% participation/preparedness grade.

*Weekly Assignments:* There will be reading assignments almost every week. These are to be completed outside of class in preparation for class. Students may be asked to submit notes taken on these readings. These will receive a grade and will be used to inform the instructor as to how prepared the student is for class that day. These grades will be used to inform the 20% participation/preparedness grade.

Paper #1 = 20%

Paper #2 = 20%

Mid-term Comprehensive Exam (short answer) = 15%

Final Comprehensive Exam (short answer) = 15%

Presentation of your learning = 10%

Preparedness, participation, etc. = 20%

Final grades will be totaled based on the activities described above. Each course objective must be achieved to receive a grade of C or better.

**Grade Ranges are:**

90-100	= A
80-89	= B
70-79	= C
60-69	= D
0-59	= F

## 8. Class Policy Statements:

Participation: Students are expected to participate in all class discussions and participate in all exercises. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor if assignment deadlines are not met. Students are responsible for initiating arrangements for missed work. Disturbing others with behavior and/or talk that is rude, off-topic, or distracting from the topic being discussed will result in a lower participation/preparedness grade.

Cell Phones: The use of cell phones and other electronic devices during class is strictly prohibited. Cell phones should be turned off or set to silent mode. Should you have an extenuating circumstance that merits receiving a phone call during class please notify the instructor prior to class and excuse yourself from class upon receiving the phone call. **Text messaging will result in no credit for attendance (3 point deduction from your final grade).**

Attendance/Absences: Attendance is required at each class meeting. Students are expected to be at all classes on time. Each unexcused absence will result in three points being deducted from the student's final grade. Excessive tardiness (more than 3 classes) will be counted as unexcused absences. Arriving more than 15 minutes late or leaving class before it ends may result in a point deduction for that class between 0 and 3 points (off the final percentage grade), depending on what percentage of the class was missed. For example, if  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the class was missed then 1.5 points would be deducted (half of the 3-point deduction for an unexcused absence). An excuse for an absence must be presented to the instructor at the next class meeting – **no later than 1 week after the last absence.** All excuses need to have a phone number so that they may be verified. Medical excuses need to have the time the student was at the doctor and the time/date the student was able to return to class. The instructor may verify the excuse with the party who issued it. Other unavoidable absences from campus must be documented and cleared with the instructor **in advance.**

**If the total number of absences exceeds two (excused or unexcused), you may be asked to withdraw from and retake the course.**

Absences will be excused for: illness of the student or serious illness of a member of the student's immediate family; the death of a member of the student's immediate family; trips for members of the student organizations sponsored by and academic unit, trips for University classes and participation in intercollegiate athletic events; authorized field trips by the college of Education; religious holidays with advance notice; and subpoena for court appearance. The instructor shall have the right to request appropriate verification of all absences. It is University Policy that all classes will meet as scheduled on the last day before and first day after holiday periods designated by the University.

The grade for late papers will be deducted 5 percentage points for each day the paper is late. Even if you are absent when a paper is due, the paper is considered late if not submitted on that date. If an exam is missed, a make-up exam will be given only for University-approved excuses as outlined in the Tiger Cub. Arrangement to take the make-up exam must be made in advance. Students who miss an exam because of illness need a doctor's statement for verification of sickness and should clear the absence with the instructor the day they return to class.

Unannounced quizzes: There will be no unannounced quizzes.

Accommodations: Students who need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternative time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail. Bring a copy of your Accommodation Memo and an Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. If you do not have an Accommodation Memo but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Program for Students with Disabilities at 1244 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

Honesty Code: The University Academic Honesty Code and the Tiger Cub Rules and Regulations pertaining to Cheating will apply to this class.

"In accordance with those virtues of Honesty and Truthfulness set forth in the Auburn Creed, I, as a student and fellow member of the Auburn family, do hereby pledge that all work is my own, achieved through personal merit and without any unauthorized aid. In the promotion of integrity, and for the betterment of Auburn, I give honor to this, my oath and obligation."

Professionalism: As faculty, staff, and students interact in professional settings, they are expected to demonstrate professional behaviors as defined in the College's conceptual framework. These professional commitments or dispositions are listed below:

- Engage in responsible and ethical professional practices
- Contribute to collaborative learning communities
- Demonstrate a commitment to diversity
- Model and nurture intellectual vitality