

Connecting to Children

Four Modules, 2 quarter credits each, 8 credits total

Course Description

In this course participants use their work setting with children (center, home, parent, or nanny) to do weekly investigations and meet weekly to share what they discover. The goal of the Modules is for each participant to come to understand and implement the essential elements of facilitating learning.

Course Objectives

Module D1 Expressing Warmth to Children

Discover how you want to respond to children, explore new ways to convey your positive regard, see how to communicate warmth to all the children, and find enhanced effectiveness in teaching young children.

Module D2 Playing Responsively

Define play, distinguish what it means to play responsively with children, see how you play differently with different children, and discover how to use your authentic playfulness to teach young children.

Module D3 Talking Informatively

Distinguish the types of talk that make demands upon children, practice cueing children instead of directing them, fill the children's world with information and complex vocabulary, and reflect upon your effectiveness in speaking to young children.

Module D4 Supporting Initiative, Cooperation, and Perseverance

Distinguish those aspects of children's actions that represent the ideals of taking initiative to act, working cooperatively with others, and persevering through times of difficulty to accomplish certain ends. Define your values for children and conduct a project to develop these values in your teaching of young children.

Course Requirements

1. **Portfolio of Progress** Each 2-credit module offers the opportunity to create an individual portfolio that traces the steps in creating a deep and durable understanding. We recommend that each participant create a folder or notebook that allows one to compile the work required in each task, step by step. This folder may contain observations, personal notes, answers to questions, photographs, children's work, etc. This will not be handed in or graded. It is only for your documentation of this experience.
2. **Project of Understanding** Each module requires the participant to demonstrate the ability to use new understanding to successfully influence the lives of young children. In order to get credit for the course, each must document how change occurs in children or oneself. This project communicates, to others that care, the story of applying the understanding, with a beginning, middle, and end. The display of this project is presented in a book or poster so that those who care (teachers, the parents of the children, and the school or center community) can see it.
3. **Expression of Understanding** At the end of each module, each participant conveys, in a form freely chosen, an expression of the deeper significance of the work done on the module. Each participant creates a work of personal expression that conveys his or her

understanding to an audience of this group and, if possible, for others to see. The challenge here is to find a way to convey the totality of one's understanding of what the Module means in a poem, dance, story, letter, chart, or song (or any way that can express the message).

Topic Outline

Each Module presents a series of tasks that have you investigate an aspect of the children's behavior or the teacher's behavior. To prepare for class you represent what you found out so you can share that with the others in this learning community.

Community

Respect for diversity is a core value of NSCC. Our college community fosters an optimal learning climate in an environment of mutual respect. We, the college community, recognize and celebrate individual differences. We invite all of us to add our voices to our collective wisdom with the explicit responsibility to monitor our contributions to ensure we are open, authentic, and caring of others.

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with your instructor, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with your instructor as soon as possible.

Course Materials

Each task is presented in a handout. No text. No packet. We study the children and ourselves.

Grades

If all work is completed successfully, participants receive a 4.0 grade for each 2 credit Module. With the agreement of the instructor, participants may arrange to complete tasks within an agreed upon time frame after the term ends. The instructor will then issue an **I** (incomplete) grade for the course, but an **I** grade will not be issued without a clear agreement and deadline. If the work is not completed within the next term the **I** grade remains on the transcript and cannot be changed. Participants with an **I** grade may attend the same Module in the succeeding term only without re-enrolling.

Participants will receive a **NC** (no credit) grade if any of the following are not completed (or arrangements for completion not made prior to the deadline each term). Participants with **NC** grades must re-register for the course in succeeding terms.

Completion constitutes ALL of the following:

1. Presenting evidence of the completion of each task.
2. Presenting the findings of each task to the community.
3. Demonstrating the application of the content SUCCESSFULLY with young children.
4. Presenting a performance of understanding to the community.