



# University of Houston Clear Lake

## Excellence, Innovation and Leadership in a Learner-Centered Community

### ECED 6739.01 Practicum in Early Childhood Education Summer 2015

#### UHCL Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Motto Applied Critical Thinking (ACT) for Lifelong Learning and Adaptability



Applied Critical Thinking Statement: This course has been authorized by UHCL as an Applied Critical Thinking (ACT) Course which means that in addition to learning about the specified course content, students will be engaged with some or all of the Elements of Thought and Universal Intellectual Standards of critical thinking. The objective of an ACT course is to develop the student's ability to become skilled at analysis and evaluation by applying a set of intellectual tools that may be effectively used across all disciplines (as well as to the student's personal life). Based on the Foundation for Critical Thinking model (<http://www.criticalthinking.org/>), critical thinking involves thinking for a *purpose*, asking *questions*, using *information*, applying *concepts*, drawing *inferences and conclusions*, identifying *assumptions*, anticipating *implications and consequences*, and recognizing *points of view*. The Universal Intellectual Standards that are applied to these Elements of Thought of critical thinking in order to develop Intellectual Traits include *clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness*.



CAEP: UHCL is one of only 14 universities in Texas accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). [CAEP](#) is a non-profit, non-governmental alliance of 33 national professional organizations recognized by the U. S. Department of Education as an accrediting body of schools, colleges, and departments of education. Meeting CAEP accreditation standards helps to ensure high quality teacher, specialist, and administrator preparation. Through the process of accreditation, CAEP works to make a difference in the quality of P-12 education.

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Huss-Keeler  
Office: Bayou 1119-9  
Phone: (281) 283-3535 (work)  
(281) 732-7094 (cell)  
(281) 286-6271 (home)  
E-Mail: huss@ uhcl.edu  
Secretary: (281)283-3540 Sharon Klein  
Office Hours: Hours by appointment

### Course Description:

The Early Childhood Practicum is designed to give master's level students an opportunity to synthesize, integrate and apply their knowledge of early childhood education through practical, hands-on experiences in a community-based setting, such as museums, early education settings, community colleges, etc. working alongside an experienced mentor. Practicum gives students the opportunity to make inferences from the information that they observe and examine their assumptions. Candidates will be able to take the knowledge gained from the community-based practicum experience and apply critical thinking to their current and future careers in a wide range of roles. Critical thinking in this course helps to answer the following questions:

### Central Questions:

1. How does the Practicum help me integrate and apply the knowledge from my Early Childhood coursework to my Practicum setting?
2. How can I relate the NAEYC standards to my Practicum setting to further my understanding of Early Childhood Education?
3. How can Practicum help me to further my future career goals?

### Course Goals:

1. Students will be able to *clearly* state their course **goals** for the Practicum and how they met these goals
2. Students will be able to *clearly* reflect on their weekly experiences in Practicum *relevant points of view* through journal response. **(Student Learning Outcome 1)**
3. Students will be able to *clearly* identify and describe *in depth* how the NAEYC standards **(concepts)** relate to their experiences in Practicum. **(Student Learning Outcome 2)**
4. Students will be able to examine an area of the Practicum *in depth* using *relevant information* resources and qualitative research methods to **interpret and infer** information about the topic as it *relates* to the Practicum setting. **(Student Learning Outcome 3)**
5. Students will be able to *clearly* describe the educational background preparation and career roles of individual in the Practicum setting
6. Students will be able *relate* their Practicum experiences to their own future career goals.

**Vocabulary of Critical Thinking:** In this course, students will learn and use the vocabulary of critical thinking which will include an understanding and use of both the Elements of Thought and the Universal Intellectual Standards.

Elements of Thought:\*

In this course, we will consider and use eight (8) elements of thought:

1. **Purpose:** Goals and objectives
2. **Question at Issue:** Problem, issue, and misconception
3. **Information:** Facts, data, evidence, observations, reasons, and experiences
4. **Interpretation and Inference:** Solutions and conclusions

5. **Concepts:** Definitions, models, laws, theories and principles
6. **Assumptions:** Axioms, presuppositions, and a-priori facts or knowledge
7. **Implications and Consequences:** Inferences, effects, and outcomes
8. **Point of View:** Perspectives, frames of reference, and orientations

#### Universal Intellectual Standards:\*

In this course, we will consider and use nine (9) universal intellectual standards including **clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness.**

\*Paul, R., & Elder, L. (2009). *Critical thinking: Concepts and Tools* (6th ed.). Tomales, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking Press.

#### 4Cs of Critical Thinking Process

There are four major aspects of the Applied Critical Thinking Process: Curiosity, Connections, Creativity, and Communication. The predominant C in the Student Learning Objectives is **Connection**

### NAEYC Standards

The UHCL Early Childhood master's program is designed around several sets of professional standards. The Practicum will be based on the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Advanced Standards. The degree that individual standards are applied to the Practicum setting will vary depending on the setting and the nature of the experience. Candidates will be expected to document within their portfolios how they have met the relevant standards during Practicum.

#### I. **Core Standards**

1. **Promoting Child Development and Learning-** Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs are grounded in a child development knowledge base. They use their understanding of young children's characteristics and needs, and of multiple interacting influences on children's development and learning, to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive and challenging for each child.
2. **Building Family and Community Relationships-** Candidates prepared in early childhood Degree programs understand that successful early childhood education depends upon partnerships with children's families and community. They know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of children's families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families and to involve all families in their children's development and learning.
3. **Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families-** Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that child observation, documentation, and other forms of assessment are central to the practice of all early childhood professionals. They know about and understand the goals, benefits and uses of assessment. They know about and use systematic observations, documentations, and other effective assessment strategies in a responsible way, in partnership with families and professionals, to positively influence the development of every child.
4. **Using Developmentally Effective Approaches to Connect with Children and Families**  
Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs understand that teaching and learning with young children is a complex enterprise, and its details vary depending on children's ages, characteristics, and the settings within which teaching and learning occur. They understand and use positive relationships and supportive interactions as the foundations of their work with young children and families. Candidates know, understand, and use a wide

array of developmentally appropriate approaches, instructional strategies, and tools to connect with children and families and positively influence each child's development and learning.

## 5. Using Content Knowledge to Build Meaningful Curriculum

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs use their knowledge of academic disciplines to design, implement and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for each and every young child. Candidates understand the importance of developmental domains and academic (or content) disciplines in early childhood curriculum. They know the essential concepts, inquiry tools, and structure of content areas, including academic subject, and can identify resources to deepen their understanding. Candidates use their own knowledge and other resources to design, implement and to evaluate meaningful, challenging curriculum that promotes comprehensive developmental and learning outcomes for every young child.

## 6. Becoming/Growing as a Professional

Candidates prepared in early childhood degree programs identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other Professional standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective and critical perspectives on their work making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are informed advocates for sound educational policies and practices.

### Attendance Requirements

Candidates can negotiate the days they do Practicum with their mentors as long as they complete approximately 160 hours. Candidates are to keep a time and date log of the Practicum to document the time spent. Any absences during the Practicum must be made up. Candidates are to notify their mentors and Dr. Huss-Keeler if they must be absent. This is part of your Professional Responsibility disposition and mentor evaluation.

### Portfolio Requirements

Practicum candidates will compile a reflective portfolio notebook of their Practicum experiences. The portfolios should be in a regular three ring notebook form. The portfolios should include:

- Candidate Resume- Practicum candidates will include a resume of their professional qualifications. Candidates will attend a career workshop on campus on resume writing and interview skills in which they will learn about effective resume writing formats. They will do a two page write up of their future career goals and how their experiences in Practicum and M.S. in ECE program have contributed to these goals.
- \*Information about the position- Qualifications, special training and knowledge, work hours, responsibilities, ways the person in this position has to work with others and other relevant information. Candidates are also to interview their mentors and other relevant people in the setting regarding information about the position.
- \*Write-up of Practicum goals –Candidates identify goals they would like to accomplish during the Practicum and how they plan to meet these goals. The write up should include both the relevant goals and how they were met during the Practicum. These goals should be planned together with the mentor.
- \*Write-up of main area of focus- Candidates select a main area of focus for the Practicum that especially interests them related to the setting and that they want to find more information about. The candidate will research the literature on the topic, interview people in the setting, observe and participate as much as possible in this area in order to learn as much about it as possible during the Practicum. This topic will be written up in a paper format with a minimum of 5 double spaced pages using APA style and using at least five research-based references. The paper will include information about the topic taken from the literature, as well as a description of how the topic relates to the current Practicum setting. The paper is

included in the portfolio. Candidates in settings where they produce a major curriculum product that will be used in this setting can use this product as their area of focus. They must include relevant research on the topic from the literature, explain how the product was produced and how it will be used and include a copy of the actual product in the portfolio in lieu of a research paper. Students will use *relevant information* resources and qualitative research methods to **interpret and infer** information about the topic as it *relates* to the Practicum setting. **(SLO 3)**

- **\*Write-up of how standards are met** Candidates document how they (candidates, not the placement) specifically met the NAEYC Standards during the Practicum. Candidates should list each standard and describe how it was met giving specific examples. Not all of the standards may be experienced. It will depend on the nature of the Practicum experience. If a standard cannot be met, the candidate should indicate “Not applicable”. **(SL02)**
- **Reflective journal of the Practicum-** All candidates are to keep an *in depth* daily journal of their reflections of their experiences during each day of the internship. These entries should document what they did, what they have learned, how they felt about it and how it relates to prior UHCL coursework, if applicable and any questions and comments they might have concerning what they have experienced. These journal entries should be posted weekly on the Practicum Blackboard site with each day designated by 11:59 each Sunday evening. These journal entries will be read and responded to by Dr. Huss-Keeler. They do not have to be included in hard copy in the portfolio. **(SLO1)**
- **Professional Resources-** Candidates should include any other relevant information that demonstrates what they have learned during the Practicum including pictures, brochures, handouts, and other professional resources. It can also include work candidates have done as part of the Practicum.
- **\*Overall reflective write-up-** Candidates are to write about what they have learned overall from the Practicum experience.

**\* Assignment is required to be uploaded into the unit assessment system. Each of these sections should be in one file. The journal and resume will NOT be uploaded because of their confidential nature. You will however, put a section marker saying “Practicum journal-not uploaded” to show it was done, but it is not a part of the electronic system. Professional Resources are done in the same way. Please upload as soon as you complete your portfolio. The scoring data from your portfolio is**

#### Course Evaluation

Professional Portfolio	70%
Professionalism	10%
Evaluation of Performance	20%
by Mentor	

Professionalism includes showing up for the Practicum at the appropriate time, maintaining confidences, interacting in a positive manner with colleagues at the internship site, turning in materials on time, notifying the mentor if you have to miss or will be late.

Performance will be evaluated by observations and conferences with candidates by university faculty and mentors. Mentors will be asked to do a written evaluation of the candidate’s overall performance during the Practicum using the Practicum Candidate Evaluation Form. A portfolio rubric will be used to score the portfolio.

**Dispositions:** Violation of Course Policies may result in unfavorable disposition assessment.

#### **Dispositions Statement**

Each student must read and follow [Statement on Professional Dispositions](#), which is provided to define the standard of behavior SOE expects of candidates.

As a CAEP accredited institution, UHCL only recommends for certification those persons who have demonstrated the necessary dispositions associated with the professional educator. Regardless of academic record, a student may be withdrawn from a UHCL program if judged to lack the required professional dispositions.

The Statement on Professional Dispositions contains the definition for professional dispositions. At the end of the course and at other times, instructors assess compliance with the standards. These assessments are invaluable for professional development.

### **Important Dates**

**Career Workshop-** Includes resume writing and interview skills and is a required part of this Practicum. The hours will count toward your 160 hours. Chuck Crocker of the Career and Counseling Services will be meeting with our ECE Practicum students. If you have a copy of an existing resume, bring it along with you to the meeting to be analyzed. You will be writing your own resume and putting it in your Practicum portfolio. Chuck's office is in Career Services on third floor of the Student Services Classroom Building (SSCB), which is the large building next to the Bayou Building. We will have a required group session with him on **June 29 from 1-3 PM in the Career Services conference room**. His office phone is (281)283-2590 and his e-mail is [crocker@uhcl.edu](mailto:crocker@uhcl.edu).

**Graduation Applications for are due for August Graduation into Admissions June 18-July 2 ..**

Applications may be obtained in the Admissions Office or Student Assistance Center or on line. You will not graduate unless you fill out an application by the deadline!

**Drop Date:** Last day to drop is **June 29, 2015**.

**Portfolio Due Date: Friday July 10.** A 10% late grade penalty will be assigned to any portfolio coming in after the deadline. Graded Portfolios will be available **after noon** when grades are due into Enrollment Services. Please stop by and pick up your Portfolio!

### **Academic Honesty**

The [Academic Honesty Policy](#) (pdf) in the [Student Life Policies Handbook](#), is the university community's standard of honesty and is endorsed by all members of the UHCL academic community. It is an essential element of the University's academic credibility. It states:

**I will be honest in all my academic activities and will not tolerate dishonesty.**

### **DISABILITY STATEMENT**

#### **Disability Services**

If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, contact [Disability Services](#) at 281-283-2648 or [disability@uhcl.edu](mailto:disability@uhcl.edu) as soon as possible and complete their registration process.

The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, each University within the System strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them.

#### **English Language Proficiency (ELPS)**

Pursuant to Texas Education Agency policy and based on the fact that Texas has so many English language learners in the public school classrooms, there is the expectation to be familiar with the English Language Proficiency Standards. Those standards will be assessed on the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities TExES (the PPR). After reading the [ELPS standards](#), please raise any questions in class.

## **Student Life Policies**

The Student Life Policies can be found by going to <http://www.uhcl.edu/studentervices> and selecting “Student Life Policies”.

**Unit Assessment System Policy** – See explanation above for specifics for Practicum.

### UAS Statement

Every student in a course with a designated Course Assessment must complete and submit the assignment to the School of Education (SOE) Unit Assessment System (UAS) following the [Student UAS instructions](#) (pdf).

Instructors assign each Course Assessment assignment to one of three UAS categories:

- Excellent
- Acceptable
- Unacceptable

Course Assessment assignment scores do not contribute to a student’s grade and are only used to determine how well the program supports SOE candidates, meets State Standards, and fulfills national accreditation requirements.

**Criminal Background Check Policy** - Depending on your setting and its requirements, you may be asked to undergo a Criminal Background check. You will need to comply with the Background Check requirements of your placement, which may differ from the school-based background checks.

### **Field Experience Statement**

#### **1. Required Formal Approval of School District**

No candidate may begin any field experience prior to the formal approval of the school district.

#### **2. Required Criminal Background Check**

In accordance with Senate Bill 9, it is required that school districts, charter schools, or private schools conduct criminal background checks on all district employees, any person that is volunteering, or completing any kind of field experience. Each person to whom this applies must provide the school district with driver’s license information and any other information necessary to conduct the criminal background check.

For assignments that require either class wide, group participation or activities in which candidates are necessarily interacting with minor students, each candidate must complete the appropriate criminal background check form and submit it to the instructor by the stated due date on the syllabus. In most cases this applies even if the candidate is an employee of the district.

For assignments that require candidates to visit schools (e.g., interviews, etc.), it is the responsibility of the candidate to provide the school district, charter school, or private school with any information necessary to conduct a criminal background check. The School of Education accepts no responsibility for candidates who do not follow established school district, charter school, or private school procedures or state legislation.

#### **3. Failure to Complete Field Experiences**

If a candidate is unable to complete all required field experiences (regardless of the reason, including failing to have a formally approved criminal background check), then the candidate will not receive credit for the course; i.e., the candidate must drop the course or will receive an F in the course.

[Academic Calendar](#)

[2014-2015 Academic Affairs Administration Calendar](#) (pdf) is a more comprehensive calendar.

**Syllabus Disclaimer**

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus at any time.