Master of Science in Early Childhood Education
Singapore, 2002 – 2004

Sponsored by Wheelock College’s Center for International Education, Leadership & Innovation and NTUC Childcare Co-Operative, Ltd.

Background Information

The Wheelock College/NTUC Childcare Co-Operative Master of Science Program in Early Childhood Education in Singapore applies current knowledge and theory in the fields of child development and education to teaching in the primary grades. This distinctive Master of Science program provides an excellent model to educate professionals for leadership, management, teacher education, and policy-making positions in the field of early childhood education in Asia. This program is recognized by the Commission of Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges as an International Master of Science program of study. The program is offered over a two-year period, and courses are delivered over one-week periods during the late afternoons and evenings and include an all-day Saturday commitment. Learners are assisted in developing plans to meet their individual needs. The program is designed so that learners develop a sense of community among one another and facilitate their working together as educators.

Distinctive Program Features

This program is designed to develop:

- An upgraded core of trainers, educators, and leaders in early childhood education.
- A cadre of educators and leaders who help others teach, care for, and continue to improve the quality of lives for children and families in the 21st century.
- Professionals who have the knowledge and competence to be effective in curriculum review and evaluation, and engage in critical thinking skills that are fundamental to life-long learning.
- Educators who respond to the challenges in education, other human services fields, and those who equip and empower others to be advocates for children and to be sensitive to the diverse needs of children and families in multicultural settings.
- Learners/educators with knowledge of a curriculum that offers current theory and who can practice and assess the applications and implications it has for the Asian culture.
Courses and Course Descriptions

CTA 520 Introduction to Inclusive Early Childhood Programs (3 graduate credits)
Examines historical, philosophical, and theoretical foundations for early childhood education for children and their families (from ages 3 to 9) and investigates the application of those principles to models of care and education. Issues of curriculum design and assessment are introduced as interrelated processes that include structuring learning environments and experiences that are responsive to children’s interests and abilities. Learners analyze and evaluate curricula that foster language, social/emotional, physical, cognitive and moral development through play, exploration, experimentation, and other developmentally appropriate models of learning for children. Strategies for developing learning opportunities that are appropriate for all children including children with special needs and children from diverse cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds are surveyed.

HDF 501 Life Span Development: Birth to Adulthood (3 graduate credits)
Examines models of development in individuals from conception to adulthood including physical, cognitive, social, moral, and emotional aspects. Special attention is given to the changes that take place during these periods of development in an Asian context, especially Singaporean. Theory and research from different psychological and philosophical approaches are discussed, including psychoanalytic, ecological, structuralist, and others.

CTA 615 Educational Environments for Children (3 graduate credits)
Assists the learner in designing, planning, implementing and evaluating developmentally appropriate environments that encourage the growth and active learning of children with a focus on infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and early elementary-aged children. Principles of environmental design and plans for implementation of early childhood settings are presented. Learners gain practical, hands-on experiences that aid them to select, organize, create, and evaluate various educational programs, products, and environments that allow children to grow and learn. Learners are also supported in redesigning spaces in their current centers as they address multiple issues. Attention is given to meeting the individual needs of children and the constraints of specific environments.

CTA 558 Multicultural Children’s Literature: Encountering & Understanding Diversity (3 graduate credits)
Considers the use of multicultural literature within the broader context of educating for diversity, and addresses the potential role of children’s literature as a vehicle for exploring literary theme and genre from diverse perspectives. Develops instructional strategies that promote literacy development, respect for cultural diversity in classroom settings, and discovery of multicultural literature resources within the community. By providing an inclusive instructional framework, the course enables learners to design experiences that foster an understanding of diversity and an appreciation for multicultural literature within their own classrooms and cultures.

RES 723 Teacher as Researcher (3 graduate credits)
Offers learners opportunities to design and implement a research project to answer questions they have about the teaching and learning process in their classrooms and schools. Learners review and compare a number of teacher research projects across the country, examine the concept and practice of teacher research as a strategy to build collaboration in schools, and strengthen the professional role of teachers particularly in program evaluation and assessment.

EDU 550 Issues in Early Childhood Literacy and Numeracy Development (3 graduate credits)
Introduces theoretical frameworks for how children begin to read, write, and reason mathematically. Each discipline emphasizes particular questions, organizing constructs of symbolization systems, and methods of inquiry that are examined in terms of their importance in selecting developmentally
appropriate curriculum materials and activities that maximize children’s growth. Explores language and mathematical thinking as tools of inquiry that are acquired gradually and integrated to understand and interpret the world. Analyzes connections between observation and the assessment of children’s emerging mathematical or language skills and various instructional strategies.

**LPA 706 Role of the Mentor Teacher (3 graduate credits)**
Addresses issues raised by mentor teachers as they move into a variety of new roles and structures. Topics include effective observation, communication, and supervising skills; adult development and learning; state-of-the-art knowledge about teaching, learning, and curriculum; and societal changes. Examines organizational issues such as selecting and assigning mentors, differentiating teacher roles, empowering teachers, working out evaluation responsibilities, providing time and other resources, and creating and coordinating the required new roles and structures for both mentor teachers and colleagues. The course also addresses the many aspects of creating healthy organizations such as schools and early child care centers for children and families in Asia.

**LPA 732 Policy Issues in Early Childhood Care and Education (3 graduate credits)**
Focuses on social policy formulation, analysis, and implementation. Learning includes understanding of the value of formulating policy, skills to formulate effective policy, skills of critical policy analysis, and the process of policy implementation and advocacy. The course focuses on policymaking in the United States and other countries, and the implications for Singapore childcare and family policies are highlighted throughout the course.

**HDF 754 Families and the Workplace (1 graduate credit)**
Provides an overview of major changes in the economy, labor force, and family life that dramatically affect both the workplace and families. This changing environment and its impact on families and the workplace is discussed with regard to the varying needs of families. Explores the issues and concerns of families as they try to balance work responsibilities and family needs. Special focus on the response of the workplace including family-supportive initiatives and policies.

**CFS 616 Schools and Families: Enriching the Partnership (2 graduate credits)**
Focuses on the ways in which parent-professional relationships (as individuals and groups) may be enhanced. Topics include: effects of contemporary family patterns on home-school communication; sources of stress and frustration for both parents and school personnel; individual communication and problem-solving skills; and structural approaches to promoting parent involvement and collaboration in school and early childhood settings.

**CFS 630 Helping Children Cope with Stress (2 graduate credits)**
Presents theory, research, and clinical evidence concerning the effects of stress on children’s coping patterns and development. Stressors range from normal family life cycle transitions to the threat of separation and loss through divorce, illness, or death, to the chronic stress of poverty. Explores concepts of vulnerability and resilience and practical methods for helping children increase their competence in mastering stress.

**CTA 900 Independent Study in Education (3 graduate credits)**
Provides opportunities for learners to work individually or in groups to pursue individual, collaborative research, or applied studies that relate to topics regarding Singaporean children, families, and/or educational environments. A few of the areas for exploration are topics such as: The Role and Meaning of Play, Curriculum Development, Designing Parent Programs, and other programs. Under the supervision of an advisor, learners engage in the identification of a project, outline objectives, and/or hypotheses generated and the means for achieving and assessing them.
In addition, a time management plan, initial bibliography, plan for evaluation, and plan for sharing the information with participants in the class must be completed.

**Total: 32 Graduate Credit Hours**