Master of Science in Early Childhood Education  
Singapore, 2005 – 2006  
Offered by RTRC Asia in Collaboration with Wheelock College’s Center for International Education, Leadership, and Innovation

Background Information

Wheelock College, located in Boston, Massachusetts, is one of the nation’s premier post-secondary institutions offering professional education in the fields of elementary education, human development, and family studies. For over fourteen years, Wheelock College has collaborated with RTRC Asia and other educational institutions in Singapore to offer state-of-the-art educational programs for professionals in the field of Early Childhood and Elementary Education. During 1991-1992, 2002-2003, and 2004-2005, Wheelock College has offered similar Master of Science programs in collaboration with RTRC Asia. Wheelock College and RTRC Asia have also collaborated to develop and deliver a two-year Diploma program in Early Childhood Care and Education, which is now educating its fourteenth cohort of learners. This Diploma program is validated by Wheelock College and is accredited by the MOE-MCDS Preschool Qualification Accreditation Committee. The Diploma in Preschool Education–Leadership has also been launched in conjunction with Wheelock College. The Master of Science program is recognized by the Commission of Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) as an international master of science program.

Distinctive Program Features

The Wheelock College/RTRC Asia Master of Science in Early Childhood Education in Singapore applies current knowledge and theory in the fields of child development and early education to teaching in early childhood and primary grades. This Master of Science program provides an excellent model to educate professionals for leadership, management, parent educators, teacher education, and policy-making positions in early childhood education in Asia and globally. The fourteen-month program offers courses held during the late afternoon and evening over a one-week period, including an all-day Saturday commitment. Learners are assisted in developing plans to meet their individual needs.

This program requires that learners compile an extensive Professional Teacher Portfolio as a requirement for graduation. Professional teacher portfolios encourage and reinforce the importance of lifelong learning and clearly articulate the importance of career development. Learners follow a plan to compile, build, and develop their portfolios throughout the entire program and they are submitted for review during the last phase. This comprehensive Professional Teacher Portfolio is the result of an ongoing process and reflection on learning. It is studied by the coordinator and/or a professor in the Wheelock College Center for International Education, Leadership, and Innovation, and is designed to demonstrate: where learners were in their development when the program began, where learners are in their development since completing the program, and what learners
plan to do over the next two years after completing the program with an action plan for implementation. Distinctive features include:

- Allows for a professional to develop an area of expertise related to short- and long-term career expectations
- Supports professional development in early childhood education and a commitment to build a cadre of educators, trainers, and leaders who can support others to teach, care for, and continue to improve the quality of lives for children and families in the 21st century
- Provides professionals with access to a network of peers who face similar challenges and experiences in order to collaborate and exchange ideas
- Offers knowledge and competence for professionals to be effective in curriculum development, review and evaluation, and family studies
- Engages participants in critical thinking skills and supports the development of leadership qualities as they learn how to manage change and integrate new knowledge
- Equips educators with the competence to respond to leadership challenges as they gain exposure to new developments in education and other human services fields
- Empowers learners to become advocates for children and sensitive to the diverse needs of children and families in multicultural and inclusive educational environments
- Supports learners in developing a Professional Teacher Portfolio
- Approved as an internationally recognized master degree program by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) as a United States degree – evaluated and approved for accreditation by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of NEASC and recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Information on other awards and accreditation is also available.

The program combines local and international faculty who are experienced in educating adult learners. The entire program grants a total of 30 credit-hours of graduate study to be offered in Singapore over the course of twelve to fourteen months. Required readings and assignments are provided prior to the beginning of each course and follow-up projects and assignments must be completed within a specific timeframe. The program is also designed so that learners develop a sense of community among other participants thus facilitating their working together as educators. Learners are required to complete every assignment, to attend every class session prepared, and to contribute actively in class discussions in order to become fully engaged in the learning process.

**Previous Graduate Students Report**

“The Master’s Programme was an enriching experience...I found the content and method of teaching good and relevant to my work, providing me with a good foundation in early childhood care and development.” – Nirmala Segaram (MS’04)

“The knowledge I gained through the Master’s Programme has allowed me to widen my score of work... The scope and depth of the course was not only rich, but applicable and relevant. The entire
“Master’s Programme experience has enriched me as a person and a professional in the field.” – Denise Chan (MS’04)

“This Masters programme has pushed me to think more critically and deeply...In addition, every assignment that I have done comes back to me with personal comments from the professors. This is so important to me as I felt that every assignment is treated with respect and the comments from the Professors help to bring my learning to greater heights.” – Coreen Soh (MS’04)

“The course content of the Master's program is really solid and delivered by one of the best faculty in this field. The reflective nature of the assignments has really made me question and think about my beliefs and philosophy of teaching. However, the greatest strength of this program is the attention paid to individual needs and goals and the quick resolution of any problems…” – Gita Sachdeva (MS’04)

Courses and Course Descriptions

**EDU 900  Introduction to Independent Study in Education (6 graduate credits)**
This course provides an opportunity for learners to work individually or in teams to pursue individual or collaborative research or applied studies. Topics regarding Singaporean children, families, and/or educational environments are to be studied. The study must reflect the understanding and appreciation of the local educational and cultural settings in Singapore. Areas of exploration include topics such as: The Role and Meaning of Play, Stages of Character Development, Inclusive Education, Designing After-School Programs, Innovative Supports for Parents at the Workplace, Selection of Appropriate Software for Children, Children and the Media, and Stress in Children's Lives. Learners pursue an area of keen interest. Each learner or team of learners must complete and submit the Contract Form that details the project, outlines objectives, generates a hypothesis, and outlines the means for achieving and assessing outcomes. In addition, each learner or team of learners must create a time management plan, an initial bibliography, and a plan for evaluation. Each learner or team of learners may be expected to share their findings with others in the future. Every effort to conduct and implement a study is highly recommended.

**EDU 520  Introduction to Inclusive Early Childhood Education in Multicultural/Multiracial/Multilingual Society (3 graduate credits)**
Examines historical, philosophical, and theoretical foundations for early childhood education for children (from ages 3 to 9) and their families 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.

**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 colleague. 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.

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 and 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.

HDF 501 Lifespan 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.

EDU 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.

RDG 558 Multicultural Children’s Literature: Encountering and 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 multiple perspectives. Learners focus on selection criteria, explore literary theme and genre from diverse perspectives, develop instructional strategies that promote literacy development and respect cultural diversity in classroom settings, and discover 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. (Fulfills core requirement in multiculturalism.)

EDU 535 Developing Numeracy for Diverse Learners (3 graduate credits)
Builds on the learner's prior knowledge on numeracy development to examine current issues that influence pedagogy, curricular choices, and materials. Addresses the teacher’s role in creating an environment that effectively responds to a range of learning styles, contexts, and attitudes regarding numeracy. Emphasizes strategies for maximizing each child’s intellectual growth in mathematics. The language of mathematics including writing, reading, and discourse is presented as a strand throughout the course. Assessment of mathematical thinking and practice is also a focus as it relates to the Singapore context.

SPE 656 Special Education Assessment (3 graduate credits)
Provides a repertoire of tools of assessing children’s progress in social, behavioral, adaptive-physical and academic domains by emphasizing the rigorous collection and analysis of both formal and informal data. Develops skill in administering, analyzing and interpreting diagnostic testing in
reading, mathematics, and language. Teaches methods of interpreting and translating data to form meaningful curricula, effective pedagogies and useful individualized instruction. Explores strategies of communicating assessment outcomes with parents as related to an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process. Examines current issues of gender, and racial and cultural bias in assessment.

**EDU 680  Presentation of Portfolios**

Learners submit an extensive Professional Teacher Portfolio to Dr. Joan Bergstrom at Wheelock College in Boston during the final phase as a requirement for graduation. Professional teacher portfolios encourage and reinforce the importance of lifelong learning and clearly articulate the importance of career development. Learners follow a plan to compile, build, and develop a Professional Teacher Portfolio throughout the entire program. The key features of a Professional Teacher Portfolio include:

- Resume
- List of one’s competencies (papers, projects, workshops, list of skills, and achievements)
- Brief summary of one’s professional growth and development (career goals and objectives, professional affiliations, resources, and contacts)
- Statement of one’s personal teaching philosophy
- Formal classroom observations
- Videotapes, audiotapes, and photos of the classroom and pictures of classroom activities, bulletin boards, room arrangements, and field trips
- Records of strategies and challenges mastered from experience
- Clippings, reports, newsletters, and articles
- Notes and comments received from students, parents, colleagues, and administrators
- Selections from a teaching journal that highlight the growth of a learner
- Self-evaluation and reflection on feedback (includes self-reflection and documentation of improvement towards one’s stated goals)
- Samples of students’ creative and exemplary work and projects
- Well articulated lesson plans
- Student test results and awards
- Writing samples (best recent paper)
- Visual works of the students
- Evidence of participation in school and after-school community events and activities
- Pre- and post-test scores as it relates to teaching a unit of study
- Assessment instruments used to date
- Other documents related to professional development and/or education (publications, grants, honors, awards, and/or certificates).

**Total: 30 Graduate Credit Hours**