



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
Department of Human Development and Family Studies
IFST 355 Professional Issues in Early Childhood Development and Education
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This course provides junior-level students in Early Childhood Education (required) and Human Services (elective) to research and analyze issues that will affect their work as professionals and the lives of the children and families they will serve. Students learn to apply tools of critical analysis; use the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct; engage in respectful, responsive, reciprocal relations in diverse communities; and develop advocacy skills. In a culminating project, teams of classmates research an issue affecting children and families and use that research as the basis for designing and carrying out a plan for advocacy.

Primary course text:

Feeney, S., Galper, A. & Seefeldt, C. (2008). *Continuing issues in early childhood education*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

RESEARCH CONNECTIONS MODULE	TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS	Chapters in <i>CONTINUING ISSUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION</i>
1.2	Analyzing issues: Identifying uses of Power	1. Governing American Early Care and Education: Shifting From Government to Governance and From Form to Function 2. The Role of Government in Early Childhood Education and Care
5.1a	Analyzing issues: Identifying Values and Assumptions	4. Quality in Programs for Young Children 16. Evaluating Programs for Young Children
5.3	Analyzing issues: Identifying Goals and Purposes	5. Children's Readiness for Success in School 15. Assessing Young Children
5.1b	Analyzing issues: Equity	14. Diversity and Early Childhood Education: Making Room for Everyone
5.4	Putting it all together Using all tools for analysis	6. The Early Childhood Education Workforce

Module 1 Welcome to Child Care and Early Education *Research Connections!*
Worksheet 1.2: Initial Exploration of the *Research Connections Web Site*

Please go to the home page of the *Research Connections* site, www.researchconnections.org. Preview the home page and begin by exploring freely, clicking on a number of links to see what you may find. Then complete the following items. Submit through SAKAI and bring completed worksheet to class.

1. Explore several of the "Topics of Interest" on the home page. Choose one that is particularly interesting to you. Would you describe it as a TREND? An ISSUE? A CONTROVERSY? A CHALLENGE? Why?	
2. Now click on several of the bars at the top of the home page (such as "Research Collection," "Our Publications," or "What's New." Please describe a few resources you found there that interested you.	
3. From the home page, try doing a few basic searches about ECE topics that interest you. On this worksheet, note what terms you used, and how easy or challenging you found the search process.	
4. How would you answer a colleague's question, "What IS <i>Research Connections</i> "?	

Module 5 *Research Connections: The Early Childhood Profession*
Worksheet 5.1a: Current Trends and Critical Issues

After completing Chapters 4 and 16 in *Continuing Issues in Early Childhood Education*, use the *Research Connections* web site (www.researchconnections.org) to learn more about trends and issues related to program quality. Submit through SAKAI and bring completed worksheet to class.

1. Begin by doing a search from the home page using as the search term an "exact phrase" for a trend or issue having to do with program quality. Use your reading in <i>Continuing Issues</i> to identify a trend or issue you would like to know more about.	How many resources did you find? Were many of them very relevant? (based on % relevance)
2. Refine your search from #1 above by focusing your search. For example, you might search only for very recent research; or only for "Fact Sheets and Briefs"; or you might use several search terms simultaneously.	What did you do to refine the search? What were the results? (describe briefly)
3. Under RESEARCH COLLECTION, click on GUIDE TO SEARCHING THE COLLECTION and review all of the WAYS TO SEARCH. Then, using instructions to LOCATE INFORMATION RELEVANT TO A PARTICULAR U.S. STATE, search to find out what is going on in your home state having to do with program quality.	What did you find?

Module 5 Research Connections and The Early Childhood Profession

Worksheet 5.3: Observing and Measuring School Readiness

This assignment will help you find "instruments" (observation tools, questionnaires, or other measures) used to assess young children's "readiness". Your main source of information will be the *Research Connections* web site, www.researchconnections.org.

<p>1. Search using "readiness" in "Exact Phrase" and limit your search to "Instruments" under "Search In." Check the box for "Full Text" so that you locate resources that can be accessed through the site.</p>	<p>List 3 that you reviewed.</p>
<p>2. Review one of the instruments more closely. Consider what was <u>assumed</u> by the instrument's designers about children and schools and learning. Consider what they <u>valued</u>.</p>	<p>Summarize the assumptions and values that shaped the instrument you reviewed.</p>
<p>3. Compare the assumptions and values you believe shaped your instrument with your own assumptions and values about children and schools and learning.</p>	<p>Identify one point on which you agree with the instrument's designers' assumptions or values about children, schools and/or learning. Identify one point on which you differ in your assumptions or values.</p>

Module 5 Research Connections: The Early Childhood Profession

Worksheet 5.1b: Current Trends and Critical Issues

After reading Chapters 14 in *Continuing Issues in Early Childhood Education*, use the *Research Connections* web site (www.researchconnections.org) to learn more about the demographics of diversity in one state of your choosing.

<p>1. Begin by clicking on DATA SETS then select STATE DATA TOOLS, then 50 STATE DATA BASES. Browse the following data bases: Childrens Defense Fund, Kids Count, and National Child Care Information Center (State Demographics). Choose two data bases to use in step 2.</p>	<p>What features or capabilities of these data bases led you to select them?</p>
<p>2. Identify one state to search on both data bases.</p>	<p>Using information you found on both data bases, summarize what you now know about the diverse conditions and experiences of young children and their families in your state.</p>
<p>3. What else would you like to know about the diverse conditions and experiences of young children and their families in your state? Return to the main search page, and using what you've learned so far about using RC, search for answers to your question.</p>	<p>What did you want to find out? What search terms and options did you use? What did your search yield?</p>

Module 5 *Research Connections* and The Early Childhood Profession
Worksheet 5.4: Beyond Higher Education—Training and Professional Development

While reading Chapter 6 "The Early Childhood Workforce" in *Continuing Issues in Early Childhood Education*, note what you believe to be the most important ISSUES. In this assignment you will learn more about the current composition of the early childhood workforce using the *Research Connections* web site, www.researchconnections.org.

<p>1. Describe the ISSUE you identified and list the search terms you will use to explore this issue. Some possible Search Terms: training, recruitment, retention, turnover, compensation; mentoring; professional development.</p>	
<p>2. Identify some "Fact Sheets and Briefs." Using your search term and limiting the results only to "Fact Sheets and Briefs" under "Search In," what are examples of things that you found?</p>	
<p>3. Narrow the scope if you wish. For example, if you are interested in Head Start, or kindergarten, do a search using "Other Search Options," with two search terms simultaneously—your original search term and "kindergarten" or "Head Start," etc. Again, review and summarize what you found.</p>	