

**University of British Columbia**  
**C&I / C&P in Elementary Teacher Education**  
**Integrative Course or ETE in Applied Skills / ICT**

3 May 2010

Business Education, Computing Studies, Home Economics, Technology Studies + other faculty members  
and Ph.D. students

The current CREATE proposal for the curriculum and pedagogy (C&P) scope of the elementary teacher education (ETE) program falls short of innovative change. In fact, the proposed scope of six separate required subjects (art, mathematics, music, physical education, science, and social studies) reproduces the curriculum offered to ETE students at UBC for the past 23 years. The current program was inaugurated in 1987 (1 year ETE program in 1991). A review of the *UBC Calendar* confirms a veteran teacher's comment on the CREATE proposal that the required C&I or C&P courses are the same as in her ETE program taken in the mid 1960s! Surely we can be more progressive.

For the C&P component of the ETE program, we recommend a large block of FTE (9-12 credits) as opposed to a discrete allocation of 1.5 or 2 credits for just six courses (Table 1). One way of understanding the problem of selecting (including & excluding) separate subjects for the ETE program is the challenge of environmental education or environmental learning. Environmental education is integrative by nature (Clark, 1989) and would be a superb thematic organizer if treated systematically with care. However, when scoping the curriculum for the ETE program, the CREATE curriculum committee proposes a reiteration of the past: 6 C&P courses at 1.5 or 2.0 credits per course. But in this separate subject ETE curriculum, one cannot justify the exclusion of other extremely important subject, such as environmental education, as important for ETE and elementary education in the schools. Nor can the exclusion of an Applied Skills and ICT course in ETE be justified.

Table 1. C&P component in the ETE program.

<b>Current: 12-Month Elementary BEd Program (September Start)</b>	<b>CREATE: 12-Month Elementary BEd Program (September Start)</b>	<b>Preferred: 12-Month Elementary BEd Program (September Start)</b>
<b>EDCP - Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy</b>	<b>EDCP - Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy</b>	<b>EDCP - Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy</b>
ARTE 320 (2) > <b>EDCP 301</b> (2)	<b>EDCP 301</b> (2) C&P in Art Ed	<b>EDCP 360</b> (9) Curriculum & Pedagogy in Elementary Schools
MAED 320 (2) > <b>EDCP 340</b> (2)	<b>EDCP 340</b> (2) C&P in Math Ed	
MUED 320 (2) > <b>EDCP 308</b> (2)	<b>EDCP 308</b> (2) C&P in Music Ed	
PETE 320 (2) > <b>EDCP 320</b> (2)	<b>EDCP 320</b> (2) C&P in Physical Ed	
SCED 320 (2) > <b>EDCP 349</b> (2)	<b>EDCP 349</b> (2) C&P in Science Ed	
SSED 320 (2) > <b>EDCP 331</b> (2)	<b>EDCP 331</b> (2) C&P in Social Studies Ed	

This problem in CUST / EDCP was provisionally resolved in 1998 when the Department approved a 7 credit block or course for the C&I (now C&P) component of the ETE program. This was indeed quite an achievement, as indicated in the correspondence from CUST Head David Robitaille at the time:

Date: Fri, 20 Nov 1998 08:14:32 -0800  
To: cust-all@unixg.ubc.ca, nsheehan@unixg.ubc.ca (Nancy Sheehan),  
ungerlei@unixg.ubc.ca (Charles Ungerleider)  
From: "David F. Robitaille" <david.robitaille@ubc.ca>  
Subject: CUST 3XX  
Sender: owner-cust-all@interchange.ubc.ca

At yesterday's department meeting, a motion to approve the new course, CUST 3XX for 7.0 credits, was approved unanimously. This is the course that will be the compulsory CUST component of the new 12-month elementary teacher education program. The process of developing and discussing this course has been going on for quite a long time, and I am delighted to see it brought to a successful conclusion. Quite a few people have worked particularly hard on this, especially the members of our Teacher Education Committee. Special thanks to Rita Irwin, Linda Peterat, Ann Anderson, Karen Meyer, and Ian Wright for the leadership roles they played.

However, throughout the development of the new TE program in the late 1990s, this allocation resolved progressively once again into discrete separate subject interests.

When the BC College of Teachers (2000) reviewed the new teacher education program proposal, which was in fact challenged by the BCCT, they zeroed in on this problem with CUST's / EDCP's disciplinary structure for elementary teacher education. "A question remains," the BCCT wrote, "as to what constitutes the 'core,' that which is most important to know, and that which should be left to choice."

There is clearly debate about this both within the faculty and in the field... The concerns of those who see students as ill-prepared if they do not have a methods course in every subject area are juxtaposed with those who believe that the time within teacher education programs is limited and that other, more pertinent areas need to be addressed, may be alleviated if the concept of methods work in isolated subject areas was dropped. The Team supports the integration of methods courses to allow the students to have access to the various disciplines in a more unified manner. Integrating subject area methods courses within the complement of CUST courses would give the proposed program an opportunity to teach curriculum in a holistic way.... Integrated methods courses [offer] an opportunity to provide for students a wide variety of basic knowledge in different curriculum areas as well as model the ways in which interdisciplinary teaching can translate into classrooms.

Recommendation: that the Faculty of Education ensure that the elementary students have an introduction to a wide variety of subject areas by developing integrated methods courses where the underlying principles of delivery are complementary and that these courses be included in the academic year 2001-2002. (pp. 30-31)

[And again]: The Team suggests that the proposed program would benefit from developing a more integrated approach to subject area methods courses in the elementary program. (p. 63)

For whatever reasons, CUST / EDCP failed to act on this critique and advice of the BCCT. We now have an opportunity to revisit this recommendation

Remember, the Ministry does not dictate how prescribed learning outcomes are addressed:

Schools have the responsibility to ensure that all prescribed learning outcomes in each IRP are met; however, schools have flexibility in determining how delivery of the prescribed learning outcomes can best take place. It is expected that student achievement will vary in relation to the prescribed learning outcomes. Evaluation, reporting, and student placement with respect to these outcomes are dependent on the professional judgment and experience of teachers, guided by provincial policy. (<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/lo.htm>)

The implication here is that elementary schools can and do design effective schedules that provide for an integration of knowledge rather than a separate subject approach to curriculum. Music education is a good example of how differently schools attend to Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs). Many districts have a few itinerant music education teachers traveling from elementary school to elementary school for classes scheduled one or two days per week. The challenge in ETE is not one of a dichotomous “generalist versus specialist” debate. Rather, the challenge in teacher education is to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills to both integrate and specialize.

To reiterate, we recommend a 9-12 credit C&P course for the ETE program that emphasizes integrative approaches to teaching at the elementary level— one theme could be the arts and culture; environmental learning and sustainability; numeracy and science; place based education; health and wellness; histories of BC; home economics (so few realize how integrative the subject is mostly because of the compartmentalized way subjects are organized in high schools); appropriate technology; etc.— where teacher candidates would be challenged to see how to use these themes to meet the PLOs in Applied Skills & ICT, Art, Mathematics, Music, Physical Education, Science, and Social Studies. This would draw from the theoretical perspectives of problem based learning, productive pedagogies, complexity theory, etc. and could take into account cross curricular outlines in every IRP:

- Applied Focus in Curriculum
- Career Development
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Environment and Sustainability
- First Nations Studies
- Gender Equity
- Information Technology
- Media Education
- Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism
- Science-Technology-Society
- Special Needs

Various options would open for configuring emphases within a 9-12 credit C&P course. One configuration could entail an allocation of 12 credits, with about half the time given to integration and the balance given to specialist work within each of the 7 C&P subjects where content knowledge as well as pedagogy could be addressed within the ETE program. Another configuration could allocate 9 credits to a C&P integration course and 3 credits to EDCP 340 C&P in Mathematics Education, recognizing the longstanding importance of preparing elementary teachers for depth in literacy and numeracy. This would facilitate and encourage many creative ways of handling our C&P responsibilities in the program.

### **Applied Skills and ICT in the ETE Program**

Short of re-establishing a block or course of 9-12 credits of C&P for the ETE program, we in Applied Skills and ICT request an inclusion of an Applied Skills / ICT course, which would increase the discrete separate subject requirement for ETE students from six to seven C&P courses:

Table 2. Inclusion of Applied Skills / ICT C&P course

<b>CREATE: 12-Month Elementary BEd Program (September Start)</b>
<b>EDCP - Curriculum &amp; Pedagogy</b>
<b>EDCP 368</b> (1.5 or 2) C&P in Applied Skills / ICT
<b>EDCP 301</b> (1.5 or 2) C&P in Art Ed
<b>EDCP 340</b> (1.5 or 2) C&P in Math Ed
<b>EDCP 308</b> (1.5 or 2) C&P in Music Ed
<b>EDCP 320</b> (1.5 or 2) C&P in Physical Ed
<b>EDCP 349</b> (1.5 or 2) C&P in Science Ed
<b>EDCP 331</b> (1.5 or 2) C&P in Social Studies Ed

There are IRPs for Applied Skills / ICT in the K to 7 curriculum:

1. *Applied Skills K to 7: Business Education and Home Economics Components* Integrated Resource Package (1995)
2. *Applied skills K to 7: Technology Education Component* Integrated Resource Package (1996)
3. *Health and Career Education K to 7* Integrated Resource Package (2006)
4. *Information Technology K to 7* Integrated Resource Package (1996)

And there are various acknowledgements of the Ministry for the inclusion of Applied Skills / ICT in a number of forms. For example, in *The Primary Program*, the Ministry notes:

In the primary years, students:

- study all required areas of learning including language arts, social studies, science, math, personal planning, physical education, fine arts, and applied skills. (2000, p. 55)

Stated a bit differently, the Ministry indicates in the *Curriculum Handbook for Parents*:

## APPLIED SKILLS

The Applied Skills subjects have been integrated across all required areas of study in Grades 4 through 7. This means that outcomes from subject areas such as technology education, information technology, home economics, and business education will be included in all of the required areas of study at this level.

Separate IRPs for subjects such as Information Technology have been produced to assist teachers and schools with these important areas, but they are not required to be taught or reported on as separate subjects. (1998, p. 49)

Either way, as separate subjects or as integrated, we believe that teacher education merits an informed curriculum that neither directly follows and maps the Ministry's dictates nor ignores these dictates. Indeed, a teacher education program is free to design a curriculum that best serves its students / pre-service teachers. Surely, a teacher education program cannot expect to provide courses for all 83 IRPs in British Columbia. Nor can it afford to make arbitrary decisions on what to include or exclude based on an IRP justification. In a troubling way, this is the logic used in the current justification of six C&I or C&P course requirements in the ETE program. Indeed, new subjects (e.g., environmental learning) challenge this logic to its core. Another way to state this is that there are nine official "curriculum subject areas" identified by the BC Ministry of Education and two subjects are conspicuously missing from UBC's ETE program: Applied Skills and Health & Career Education. We have presented two options for redressing this longstanding oversight.

## References

- British Columbia College of Teachers. (2000). *Report and recommendations from the Program Approval Team concerning the application of the University of British Columbia for its proposed teachers education program*. Vancouver: BC College of Teachers.
- British Columbia Ministry of Education. (1998). *Curriculum handbook for parents: Grades 4 to 7*. Victoria, BC: British Columbia Ministry of Education.
- British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2000). *The primary program: A framework for teaching*. Victoria, BC: British Columbia Ministry of Education.
- Clark, E. (1989). Environmental education as an integrative study. *Holistic Education Review*, 2(3), 54-62.