

**COURSE TITLE:** CURIOSITY & WONDER: Cultivating Questions, Not Answers

**NO OF CREDITS:** 2 QUARTER CREDITS  
[Semester Cr Equivalent: 1.33]

**WA CLOCK HRS:** 20  
**OREGON PDUs:** 20  
**CEUs:** 2.0

**INSTRUCTOR:** PATRICIA NAN ANDERSON, ED. D.  
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**COMPLETION DATE:** 3 months after date of registration

**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:**

This course requires assignment responses to be posted in a password-secured ONLINE website hosted by The Heritage Institute.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Ever notice how we warn children against being too curious? And how the curious, creative child is not always welcome at school, where his/her insistence on doing things differently is usually seen as a problem, not a gift? But curiosity *is* a gift. Being interested and open to new ideas is the essence of great science, of great art, and of a lively social life. We want children to be curious; how do we support that?

This workshop will explore attitudes towards curiosity, the connection between curiosity and creativity and intelligence. Participants will refresh their own curiosity and wonder about the world and will be helped to value children's offbeat ideas and channel experimentation in socially acceptable ways. Our objective is to find fresh ways to see the world and new ways to support children's potential.

What is meant in this course by "curiosity" is *an openness to ideas and pursuit of intriguing ideas or phenomena*. It is more than mere interest. *To be curious is to be engaged*. At the same time, curiosity is different from competence, since competence is value-laden (seeking a correct or complete solution) and curiosity is value-neutral (seeking simply "what is"). *Where's Waldo* books may be engaging but they require competence not curiosity. In contrast, wondering how worms move through the soil can be neither well-wondered nor poorly-wondered – it has no extrinsic value or correctness. Wondering just *is*.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

1. An appreciation for the mixed feelings curiosity can generate in adults, especially (oddly) in school situations.
2. An understanding of the importance of curiosity in fueling creative work and intellectual problem solving.
3. An appreciation of the value of curiosity in their own lives.
4. Strategies for encouraging curiosity in learners and other folk.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Participants will complete assignments and post responses online to specific questions outlined for each assignment. Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

**HOURS EARNED:**

Completing the basic assignments (*Section A. Information Acquisition*) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of 20 Washington State Clock Hours, 20 Oregon PDUs or 2 CEUs (Continuing Education Units), which translates to 20 hours. The Heritage Institute is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and CEUs by IACET (International Association of Continuing Education and Training, an official national and international certifier of CEUs).

## UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION:

### • UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT OPTION 400 & 500 LEVEL

Teachers may opt to register for 2 (two) Antioch University, Seattle, 400 or 500 level quarter credits, instead of hours, and will be required to:

1. Complete all assignments for clock hours/CEUs (*Section A: Information Acquisition*)
2. Complete the extra reading/viewing, writing and classroom application assignments specified in the syllabus for the 400 or 500 level credit option (*Section B: Learning Application*)
3. Complete an Integration Paper by answering 5 questions (*Section C: Integration Paper*)

### • REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

Antioch University Seattle requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level (Upper Division) and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level (Post-Baccalaureate). These criteria refer both to the amount of work submitted as well as the quality of work as determined by each instructor

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| 1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments | 30% |
| 2. Completion of Learning Application assignments    | 40% |
| 3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment        | 30% |

### • CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)

Antioch University Seattle Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents will show on a transcript. At the 400 level credit granted is equal to a "C" or better, and at the 500 level credit granted is equal to a "B" or better. This information is stated on the back of the transcript.

## COURSE MATERIAL and/or TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

You will need high-speed (DSL) Internet access in order to easily view online resources. Some of the reading materials may be provided in the online course environment as PDF documents, a format readable by computers with Adobe Acrobat Reader. You may download a free copy of Acrobat Reader from our website, if it is not already on your computer.

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

You will need to obtain the text *Child of Wonder: Nurturing Creative and Naturally Curious Children*, by Ginger Carlson (2008), Common Ground Press. ISBN-13: 978-0979702709. Available on Amazon.com for approximately \$15.00 new or \$11.00 used, plus shipping.

## GETTING STARTED:

- Once you have registered for the course, you will be sent an email that contains the website address, password and course key that you need to access your online course, along with instructions on how to log into the online system.
- The assignments listed in this syllabus are also listed at the bottom of each online course document. Access each assignment and enter your responses online. We suggest that you write your responses in a WORD document and then do a copy/paste function into the Responses box.
- When you have completed all assignments for the course, CLICK the 'ALL ASSIGNMENTS COMPLETED' option. The instructor will be notified that you have completed all assignments.
- The instructor will review your work and enter her responses online. You will be notified by email when the instructor has marked the course completed, and you will be instructed to log in and view the instructor's comments. At that time, you can also SAVE a complete copy of the course assignments and responses.

## NOTES TO ALL PARTICIPANTS:

- Unlike a live workshop, you are not required to be present (i.e. online) at specific days or times, participants will work at their own pace.
- All responses will be posted online. Large documents or files may be attached as part of your response by using the "Share A File" option.

## **ASSIGNMENTS for CLOCK HRS/PDUs, CEUs, 400 or 500 LEVEL UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

### **A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION**

#### **Assignment #1:**

Read the text, *Child of Wonder: Nurturing Creative and Naturally Curious Children*.

For chapters in Part 1 and Part 2, write a short (50 to 150 word) comment. Please be sure to make it clear what chapter you're commenting on. Feel free to write more if you feel inspired. There are 13 chapters in these first two sections of the book so you will have 13 comments.

For chapters in Part 3, which deal with specific discipline areas, comment extensively on one chapter only (2 pages or so). Relate what you read to children you know or work with (which is to say the age group you know most about, not the ages the author concentrates on). You will have one comment on one discipline area for this section. Again, please make sure to clearly indicate which chapter you're commenting on.

For the final section, Part 4, make a single commentary inclusive of all three chapters in this section. This response should be 1-2 pages.

You may post your responses directly in the online response box (using the copy/paste suggestion), or create a WORD document and use the "Share A File" option.

#### **Assignment #2:**

- a) What is meant by curiosity?
- b) How can curiosity be both good and bad?
- c) Can a child have too much curiosity? Explain your answer.
- d) Are there subjects a child should not be curious about, and if so what are those subjects?
- e) Is curiosity more appropriate for children or adults? Or both? Provide evidence to support your answer.
- f) Would you describe yourself as curious or not very curious? Are there things you are more curious about than others? Describe your level of curiosity using examples.

First, answer these questions yourself. Then, survey at least 20 adults, asking the same questions.

Write a response summarizing what you think and what you found that others think. Formulate a conclusion.

#### **Assignment #3:**

Find at least 20 books, stories, or folk tales appropriate for young children that either support curiosity and wonder or warn against them.

Create an annotated bibliography, describing each of your selections, then summarize the implied attitudes toward curiosity and wonder in children. What messages seem to be sent?

#### **Assignment #4:**

Over the course of this class, watch people of different ages (children and adults) interact with the same situation that provides opportunities for curiosity and wonder. For example, you might watch different people interact with a particular exhibit at a local children's museum or with specific art materials or some other activity that might elicit wonder. Make the situation the same for everyone and choose a situation that "children of all ages" can interact with.

Write up what you did and what you saw. Describe what you noticed about people's reactions to this situation and their openness to engage. Use details, direct quotes (if appropriate), and clearly explain what occurred.

#### **Assignment #5:**

Interview two parents of different children (children aged three to ten) about what seems to interest their kids most. Ask these questions:

- Do you encourage your child to be curious about things? If you do, why do you do that? If you don't, why not?

- Tell me about a time your child was especially curious. What happened?
- Do you think that schools should encourage curiosity or not? Why or why not?

Write a 1 page paper about each interview. Identify the parents and their children by “Parent 1” and “Child Age 5”, do not use names. Provide direct quotes and other details that will make what happened clear.

**Assignment #6:**

Choose an elementary grade classroom and observe for an entire morning. What role does curiosity (disguised perhaps as inquiry) play in children’s school lives? How are children’s spontaneous expressions of curiosity or wonder met by adults in the room? Are expressions of curiosity and wonder limited or restricted in any way?

Describe your observation in a 1-2 page paper. What are the implications for practice that come to mind?

***This completes the assignments required for Washington Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or CEUs.***

***Continue to the next section for additional assignments required for University Quarter Credit***

**ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED for 400 or 500 LEVEL UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

***B. LEARNING APPLICATION***

**Assignment # 7:**

**(Required for 400 and 500 Level)**

Plan a Curious Adventure for a child or group or class of children. The Adventure should take at least 30 minutes to play out (your best estimate) and be within your abilities to actually implement (see Assignment 8).

Write up your plan for this Adventure, including a description of the target child or group, the materials and equipment you expect to need (if any), what you will do to inspire curiosity, and what you imagine might happen next. Is there any suggested format for this?

Please be sure that your plan is age-appropriate, requires minimal adult assistance or explanation, arises from the child’s authentic experience, and is open-ended, not convergent in outcome.

**Assignment #8:**

**For 400 Level – Complete Part A only**

**For 500 Level – Complete Part A and Part B**

**Part A: (400 & 500 Level)**

Implement your Curious Adventure.

Write up what happened and how that compares to what you expected. If you got different results than you expected, speculate about why that happened. If you had trouble getting things going, or if things got out of hand, tell about that too. Response should be 1-2 pages in length.

**Part B: (500 Level only)**

Read the following 2 articles:

- “Some perspectives on interest in learning and classroom interaction”  
<http://www.aare.edu.au/98pap/ain98054.htm>
- “Motivating active learning: A design framework for interest-driven learning”  
<http://www.designbasedresearch.org/reppubs/edelson-joseph.pdf>

Write a short synopsis of what you've learned from these two articles and then present how this information can be applied to your teaching practice. Your finished paper should be 5-6 pages in length and include sufficient detail and specificity to indicate your thoughtful consideration of these papers and of your teaching

## **ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED for 400 or 500 LEVEL UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

### ***C. INTEGRATION PAPER***

#### **Assignment #9: Integration Paper (Required for 400 and 500 Level Credit)**

Complete the requirements for university quarter credit by submitting a final Integration paper (2-3 pages). A heading is required; please use the following format.

Your Name:	Date:
Course Name:	Course Number:
# of Credits:	Level: (400 or 500)
Advisor Name:	

Respond to each of the 5 questions below. (First list the question and then write your answer)

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

#### **INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:**

**Be sure to mark the "All Assignments Completed" section in the online course environment as this will notify the instructor that you have completed the course.**

Upon receiving notification of your completion of all course assignments, your instructor will provide written comments online.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:**

**Patricia Nan Anderson, Ed. D.** is an Educational Psychologist specializing in human development and learning. She has extensive experience as a professor of Early Childhood Education and has taught educational foundations, human development, and research courses to graduate teacher education candidates at all certification levels, including special education. Dr. Anderson is a consultant on early development, working directly with parents and with social service agencies, as well as with teachers of children from birth to age eight.

## CURIOSITY & WONDER: Cultivating Questions, Not Answers BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barell, J. (2007). *Why are school buses always yellow? Teaching for inquiry, PreK-5*. Thousand Oaks CA: Corwin Press. ISBN-13: 978-1412957328.

Start wondering about things you never considered much before and learn ways to inspire and excite young students.

Curtis, D. & Carter, M. (2003). *Designs for living and learning: Transforming early childhood environments*. St. Paul MN: Redleaf Press. ISBN-13: 978-1929610297.

You know that how your room is set up makes a difference but what is the best way to arrange your classroom to facilitate active learning through authentic experiences? Northwest teacher and author Margie Carter and her colleague Diane Curtis show you how.

Egan, K. (1999). *Children's minds, talking rabbits & clockwork oranges: Essays on education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. ISBN 978-0807738085.

Not easy reading by any means, Egan's book is nonetheless required reading for anyone serious about championing imagination over mechanization in children's lives.

Luov, R. (2005). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature-deficit disorder*. Chapel Hill NC: Algonquin Books. ISBN 978-1565126053.

This is the book that got us all thinking about getting kids outdoors again. Luov makes the case for integrating the natural world into kids' lives as an essential part of the human experience.

Soule, A. B. (2008) *The creative family: How to encourage imagination and nurture family connections*. Boston MA: Trumpeter. ISBN 978-1590304716

Although this book is designed for parents, teachers will also find a wealth of ideas here to encourage curiosity and creativity across a range of domains.

Ward, J. (2008) *I love dirt!: 52 Activities to help you and your kids discover the wonders of nature*. Boston MA: Trumpeter. ISBN-13: 978-1590305355.

Tired of just taking a "nature walk" around the school yard? Here are ideas for every week of the year, to get your creative juices going and get your students into the great wide world.