GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
Instructional Technology

EDIT642 – The Online Academy (1 graduate credit hour)
Offered in the Fall, Spring, and Summer Semesters Yearly
Offered Online

PROFESSOR(S)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

A. Successful completion of EDIT 641 or instructor permission
B. This one credit hour course is designed to develop students’ knowledge about GMU’s virtual high
school program, The Online Academy. The course will focus on the design model that structures
online courses with particular attention to the role of representative problems, performances of
understanding, communities/fields of practice, and online mentors. Students will role play a virtual
high school students and complete one learning module as well as role play a virtual high school
student supporting an adolescent online learner. From these role playing experiences, students will
come to understand the structure and interactions embedded in the design model.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

This course is an online course. Students participate in an ongoing process where the learner takes
responsibility for structuring his or her time and decides, within a broader time frame, when it is
appropriate to complete assignments. Each student registered for a course is a learner of one and is
assigned an Online Mentor. The Online Mentor reviews all the assignments submitted, makes suggestions
if the assignment is incomplete, responds to ideas, and/or makes suggestions for ways that students can
refine their work to construct a more convincing argument or create more powerful learning opportunities.
The online mentor asks questions about what students are thinking or learning about. The online mentor
is the student’s online ally and is the contact point when an assignment does not make sense, when there
are difficulties with technology, or if students are stuck for a good teaching idea. The course is web-based
and uses a cluster of organized web pages. In addition, students will use phone, email, and synchronous
chat functions to communicate with their mentor.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

1. The student will understand the Community of Practice Learning System design model used by
   The Online Academy;
2. The student will investigate through readings the literature and research related to problem-based
   learning and performances of understanding;
3. The student will develop an appreciation of and an understanding about the role of the mentor, the
   phases of the mentoring processes, and the implications for teaching in The Online Academy;
4. The student will appreciate the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of being a virtual
   secondary education student by role playing a student completing a representative content module; and
5. The student will appreciate the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of being a virtual mentor by “teaching” an online content module to their mentor.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

This course is designed to meet the standards established by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). The NBPTS Standards for every field and developmental level are centered on five core propositions that express the effectiveness, knowledge, skills, dispositions, and commitments of the accomplished teacher:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There is no required text for this course. Instead, there are a number of web references to appropriate articles. Links to these articles are provided throughout the web pages that guide the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

A. Requirements

1. Students will complete readings as assigned.
2. Students will complete activities related to readings. These include:
   a. An analysis of three content modules developed for virtual learners to identify and reflect on the role of the design model inherent in the examples;
   b. An analysis of three content modules developed for virtual learners to identify and reflect on the role of problem-based learning strategies and performances of understanding in the module designs; and
   c. Using Robert Fulghum’s *Everything I Ever Needed to Know about Life, I Learned in Kindergarten*, students will construct their own list for *Everything I Learned About Mentoring Virtual Secondary Education Students*.
3. The student will practice their new knowledge related to the design model, the nature of problem-based learning, and the concept of performances of understanding by role playing a virtual secondary education student completing a representative content module. Upon completion of the module, students will write a reflection on their experience as a “virtual secondary student” in response to a given set of prompts; and
4. The student will practice their new knowledge by “teaching” an online content module to their mentor. Upon completion of the module, students will write a reflection on their experience as a “virtual online mentor” in response to a given set of prompts.

B. Performance-Based Assessments

This course includes one, synthesizing performance-based assessments. Students will use a provided template (see end of syllabus) that serves as an application for a position teaching in a virtual high school program.
C. **Criteria for Evaluation**  
Assessment of the application is guided by a rubric. The rubric follows:

### Knowing Your Application Has Succeeded

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Masterful and Compelling (5)</th>
<th>Appropriate and Articulate (3)</th>
<th>Weak and Not Complete (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Demonstrates a clear understanding of the components and interactions inherent in the COPLS design model</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Presents a clear description of the role of representative problems and performances of understanding and the rationale for their place in instruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Presents a clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and processes associated with online mentoring</td>
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<td>4. Includes a personal reflection on what has been learned, how it will be applied, and challenges to face</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Adheres to the 200 - 250 word limitation for each section</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Has been carefully edited for spelling and grammar</td>
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</table>

D. **Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Possible Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Representative Modules – The Design Model</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Representative Modules – Problem-Based Learning Strategies and Performances of Understanding</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything I Learned About Mentoring Virtual Secondary Education Students</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Writing: The Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations of a Virtual High School Learner</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Writing: The Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations of a Virtual Online Mentor</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application to Teach in a Virtual High School</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Point Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>69-below</td>
</tr>
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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

All students must abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See http://mail.gmu.edu and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.
This 1 graduate credit hour course is designed to be completed in five weeks. Given the online nature of the course, assignments are clustered in weekly modules. Students, in conjunction with their online mentor, are responsible for dividing the assignments accordingly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/Learning Experiences</th>
<th>Readings and Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Week 1 | Every virtual high school course exemplifies an underlying design or pedagogical model. Many courses are created using a traditional model that depends on a class, on discussions, on attendance at virtual lectures, on a grading program, and on a teacher. Recent experts are beginning to suggest that this design model of education might need to be revised especially for online learning environments. *The Online Academy* uses an alternative design model named COPLS. In this module, students will learn about that design model and examine how it is reflected in courses offered by *The Online Academy*. | Activity 1: Read All About It!  
The COPLS Design Model (Web version)  
The COPLS Design Model (Word version)  
Activity 2: Finding the COPLS Model in The Online Academy  
Activity 3: Complete Application (Part 1): How The Online Academy Works |
| Week 2 | In this module, students will explore two aspects of the instructional resources associated with The Online Academy. This intense look at the instructional resources around representative problems and performances of understanding will help students understand how the web-based resources are organized, what their purpose is, and how various types of other resources are structured to support the learning process. | Activity 1: Read All About It!  
Representative Problems  
A Performance Criterion  
Performances of Understanding  
Activity 2: Designing with Representative Problems and Performances of Understanding  
Activity 3: Complete Application (Part 2): Introducing The Online Academy to a Potential Student |
| Week 3 | Instead of a definition of teacher as director, deliverer of information, and manager, The Online Academy relies on a mentor. While some functions of the mentor resemble those of the more traditional teacher, the mentor collaborates with learners as they solve the problem at the center of each content module. The mentor acts as support system, provocateur, content expert, and stand-in for the expertise embedded in the community of practice articulated by the representative problem. In this module, students will more completely explore the role of the mentor within the pedagogical model of The Online Academy. | Activity 1: Read All About It!  
Mentors - Part 1  
Activity 2: The Mentor's Persona  
Activity 3: Read More About It!  
Mentors - Part 2  
Mentors - Part 3  
Activity 4: Testing Your Mentoring Knowledge  
Activity 5: Complete Application (Part 3): Describing the Mentor |
| Week 4 | Students will experience what it would be like to be a virtual high school student. In this module, students will role play a virtual learner who is beginning virtual learning for | Activity 1: Discovering the Role of the Learner  
Activity 2: Reflecting on the Role of the Learner |
the first time. They will be asked by their online mentor to complete a module in The Online Academy. When they have completed the module, they will be asked to reflect on the process. What insights about being a virtual high school learner were they able to glean from the experience?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>In this module, students will be challenged to do a little more role playing only this time they will be the online mentor guiding a virtual high school student through a sample module. Their online mentor will play the role of a virtual high school student. Upon completion of the module, students to reflect on the experience. What did they learn about virtual high school mentoring? Finally, students will be asked to complete the last section of their application by writing a 200 - 250 word essay on the challenges and joys they think they might experience as an online mentor in The Online Academy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| | Activity 1: Discovering the Role of the Mentor  
Activity 2: Reflecting on the Role of the Mentor  
Activity 3: Submitting Your Completed Virtual Teaching Application |
Application Template for Performance of Understanding

The Online Academy for Teachers
A George Mason University Certificate Program

Application for Employment

Please complete this application in its entirety and submit for consideration.

Name_______________________________________________ ____________________

Date of Birth______________________________________ _______________________

Address____________________________________________ _____________________

Home phone ______________________     Email Address (GMU)__________________

Alternate Email address (home, school, etc)______________________________

School Division ___________________________________________________________________

School ______________________________________________________________________

School Address_____________________________________ ______________________

__________________________ _________________________________

School phone ______________________________________ ______________________

Grade Level(s) Taught _____________________________ ________________________

Subjects Taught ___________________________________ _______________________

Current Teaching License(s) ____________________________________________
Essay 1
Please read the materials provided at [http://itdev.gmu.edu/vhs/toat/courses/course3red/mod1.htm](http://itdev.gmu.edu/vhs/toat/courses/course3red/mod1.htm) After you have reviewed the material, please write a short essay of no more than 200 – 250 words describing your understanding of the model used to create *The Online Academy*.

Essay 2
Please read the materials provided at [http://itdev.gmu.edu/vhs/toat/courses/course3red/mod2.htm](http://itdev.gmu.edu/vhs/toat/courses/course3red/mod2.htm) After you have reviewed the material, please write a short introduction of no more than 200 – 250 words that you might send to a potential virtual learner in *The Online Academy* explaining the role of representative problems and performances of understanding in their learning.
Essay 3
Please read the materials provided at http://itdev.gmu.edu/vhs/toat/courses/course3red/mod3.htm. After you have reviewed the material, please write a short description of no more than 200 – 250 words that presents your understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and processes associated with mentoring in The Online Academy.

Essay 4
Please read the materials provided at http://itdev.gmu.edu/vhs/toat/courses/course3red/mod5.htm. After you have reviewed the material, please write a short reflection of no more than 200 – 250 words about your experiences of role playing a virtual high school learner and an online mentor in The Online Academy. What do you think the joys and challenges will be should you be hired as an online mentor?