

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**EDSE 544:
Adaptive Instructional Methods and Transition for Secondary Learners**

**Spring 2010
4:30-7:10 PM/Wednesdays
Kellar Annex 1 Room 103**

PROFESSOR(S):

Name: Dr. Ben L. Walker

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Office location: Classroom

Office hours: By Appointment

Email address:

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Focuses on best practices in curriculum, assessment, and instructional methods for students with disabilities who access the general curriculum and adapted curriculum. Covers functional academics, social/life skills, accommodations, and transition to community, workplace, and post-secondary education.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY:

Course delivery will include the use of technology, media, cooperative and collaborative group activities, guest speakers, lecture, and site visits.

LEARNER OUTCOMES:

This course is designed to enable students to: a) design alternate assessments for secondary learners with disabilities to demonstrate learning outcomes and postsecondary interests and aptitudes; b) demonstrate an understanding of research-based strategies for facilitating transition into the community, workplace, and postsecondary environments; c) demonstrate how to implement cognitive strategies in self-regulation, study skills, attention, memory, motivation, and self-determination; and d) demonstrate knowledge of the federal and Virginia laws, Standards of Learning, and agencies that require and provide for transition, vocational, and rehabilitation services for students with disabilities at the secondary school level (middle & high school); e) Identify the role and responsibilities of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) teams as they strive to incorporate transition requirements into the IEP and principles of person-centered planning; and f) Identify organizations, services, networks, and the variety of state and local agencies that maximize the interagency effort involved in the transition process for students with disabilities.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS:

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of mild disabilities. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children, the major special education professional organization. As such, the learning objectives for this course cover the following competencies for curriculum and methods for teaching individuals with mild disabilities, kindergarten through grade 12:

Standard 2. Development and Characteristics of Learners

Special educators know and demonstrate respect for their students first as unique human beings. Special educators understand the similarities and differences in human development and the characteristics between and among individuals with and without exceptional learning needs (ELN). Moreover, special educators understand how exceptional conditions can interact with the domains of human development and they use this knowledge to respond to the varying abilities and behaviors of individual's with ELN. Special educators understand how the experiences of individuals with ELN can impact families, **as well as the individual's ability to learn, interact socially, and live as fulfilled contributing members of the community.**

Standard 3. Individual Learning Differences

Special educators understand the effects that an exceptional condition can have on an individual's learning in school and **throughout life**. Special educators understand that the beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures can affect relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community. Moreover, special educators are active and resourceful in seeking to understand how primary language, culture, and familial backgrounds interact with the individual's exceptional condition to impact the individual's academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, **and career options**. The understanding of these learning differences and their possible interactions provide the foundation upon which special educators individualize instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning for individuals with ELN.

Standard 5. Learning Environments and Social Interactions

Special educators actively create learning environments for individuals with ELN that foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional well being, positive social interactions, and active engagement of individuals with ELN. In addition, special educators foster environments in which diversity is valued and individuals are taught to live harmoniously **and productively in a culturally diverse world. Special educators shape environments to encourage the independence, self-motivation, self-direction, personal empowerment, and self-advocacy of individuals with ELN.** Special educators help their general education colleagues integrate individuals with ELN in regular environments and engage them in meaningful learning activities and interactions. Special educators use direct motivational and instructional interventions with individuals with ELN to teach them to respond effectively to current expectations. When necessary, special educators coordinate all these efforts and provide guidance and direction to paraeducators and others, such as classroom volunteers and tutors.

Standard 7. Instructional Planning

Individualized decision-making and instruction is at the center of special education practice. Special educators develop **long-range individualized instructional plans** anchored in both general and special curricula. In addition, special educators systematically translate these individualized plans into carefully selected shorter-range goals and objectives taking into consideration an individual's abilities and needs, the learning environment, and a myriad of cultural and linguistic factors. Individualized instructional plans emphasize explicit modeling and efficient guided practice to assure acquisition and fluency through maintenance and generalization. Understanding of these factors as well as the implications of an individual's exceptional condition, guides the special educator's selection, adaptation, and creation of materials, and the use of

powerful instructional variables. Instructional plans are modified based on ongoing analysis of the individual's learning progress. Moreover, **special educators facilitate this instructional planning in a collaborative context including the individuals with exceptionalities, families, professional colleagues, and personnel from other agencies as appropriate. Special educators also develop a variety of individualized transition plans, such as transitions from preschool to post secondary work learning contexts.** Special educators are comfortable using appropriate technologies to support instructional planning and individualized instruction.

Standard 8. Assessment

Assessment is integral to the decision-making and teaching of special educators and special educators use **multiple types of assessment information for a variety of educational decisions.** Special educators use the results of assessments to help identify exceptional learning needs and to develop and implement individualized instructional programs, as well as to adjust instruction in response to ongoing learning progress. Special educators understand the legal policies and ethical principles of measurement and assessment related to referral, eligibility, program planning, instruction, and placement for individuals with ELN, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Special educators understand measurement theory and practices for addressing issues of validity, reliability, norms, bias, and interpretation of assessment results. In addition, **special educators understand the appropriate use and limitations of various types of assessments. Special educators conduct formal and informal assessments of behavior, learning, achievement, and environments to design learning experiences that support the growth and development of individuals with ELN. Special educators use assessment information to identify supports and adaptations required for individuals with ELN to access the general curriculum and to participate in school, system, and statewide assessment programs.** Special educators regularly monitor the progress of individuals with ELN in general and special curricula. Special educators use appropriate technologies to support their assessments.

Standard 10. Collaboration

Special educators routinely and effectively collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways. This collaboration assures that the needs of individuals with ELN are addressed throughout schooling. Moreover, special educators embrace their special roles as advocate for individuals with ELN. **Special educators promote and advocate the learning and well being of individuals with ELN across a wide range of settings and a range of different learning experiences.** Special educators are viewed as specialists by a myriad of people who actively seek their collaboration to effectively include and teach individuals with ELN. **Special educators are a resource to their colleagues in understanding the laws and policies relevant to individuals with ELN. Special educators use collaboration to facilitate the successful transitions of individuals with ELN across settings and services.**

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Sitlington, P. L., and Clark, G. M. (2006). *Transition Education and Services for Students with Disabilities* (4th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
2. Steere, D.E., Rose, E., & Cavaiuolo, D. (2007). *Growing up: Transition to Adult Life for Students with Disabilities*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- All assignments are due on the dates indicated. Consult with me *in advance* if there is a problem. In fairness to students who make the effort to submit papers on time, points per day will be deducted from your grade for late papers unless I have agreed to an extension. Please retain a copy of your assignments in addition to the one you submit.
- All assignments should reflect graduate-level spelling, syntax, and grammar. If you experience difficulties with the writing process you will be required to document your work with the GMU Writing Center during this course to improve your skills.
- Course participants wishing to suggest other learning activities may, with my approval, substitute these for a required activity.
- The major portion of your learning in this course will be the result of your personal involvement in the content provided and in your willingness to incorporate in-class content and the readings into your repertoire of knowledge and skills. My role in your learning is to be a facilitator and to provide a favorable environment in which learning can take place; however, the major responsibility must necessarily remain with you.

Grading Scale:

95-100% = A

90-94% = A-

87-89% = B+

80-86% = B

70-79% = C

< 70% = F

Expectations:

- Students are expected to (a) attend all classes during the course, (b) arrive on time, (c) stay for the duration of the class time and (d) complete all assignments. Attendance, timeliness, and professionally relevant, active participation are expected for a grade of B or better. Attendance at all sessions is very important because many of the activities in class are planned in such a way that they cannot necessarily be recreated outside of the class session. Please notify me *in advance* by phone or email if you will not be able to attend class. **Class participation and attendance will account for 5 points of your grade. If you do not attend classes you can't participate.**
- In-depth reading, study, and work on course requirements require outside class time. Students are expected to allot approximately three hours for class study and preparation for *each* credit hour weekly in addition to papers and assignments.
- Use APA guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines. <http://www.apastyle.apa.org>
We will use person-first language in our class discussions and written assignments (and ideally in our professional practice). Please refer to “Guidelines for Non-Handicapping Language in APA Journals”

<http://www.apastyle.org/disabilities.html>. We will also strive to replace the term “Mental Retardation” with “Intellectual Disabilities” in our oral and written communication in accordance with terminology choices in the disability community.

- **Email:** Please note that your GMU email will be used exclusively for this course: Please activate and forward your gmU email to your most-checked account. Go to <http://mail.gmu.edu>. Click on Options tab at the top of the page. Click on Settings link on the left of the page. Type in your most-checked email account in the box labeled Mail Forwarding.
- Be an Informed Student!
Negotiating all the requirements for your Master’s and/or VA Licensure is extremely complex. It is imperative that you schedule a phone or in-person appointment with the Special Education Advisor, (Jancy Templeton (jtemple1@gmu.edu), 703/993-2387). This will ensure that you rectify any outstanding issues, are timely with all necessary paperwork, and are ultimately in good standing to graduate on time.

Using Blackboard:

GMU’s Blackboard will be used to post important information and some presentations for this course and for you to check grades and communicate with your classmates.

You should check Blackboard at least once a week and right before class to make sure you are informed about class/GMU issues.

Your GMU email address will be entered in the Blackboard system.

The following is how you will access the Blackboard-GSE Login Page:

Enter the URL <http://courses.gmu.edu> into your browser location field.

Click on the Login button.

Enter your email Username & Password

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 <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> 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 in this course are expected to exhibit academic integrity at all times. Be aware that plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as your own. **Whether the act is deliberate or unintentional is irrelevant.** You must take great care to give credit to an author when you borrow either exact words or ideas. Generally, if you use 4 or more words in a row you should use quotation marks and a proper APA citation. Remember that plagiarism is a very serious offense and can result in dismissal from the University. Evidence of plagiarism or any other form of

cheating in this class will result in a zero on that assignment and a report of the incident to the Dean's Office.

- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/1301gen.html>.
- Click on responsible Use of Computing Policy at the bottom of the screen.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://ods.gmu.edu/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.

PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA:

There are 4 Major Assignments for EDSE 544. The signature assignment, which MUST be submitted electronically for inclusion in Taskstream, is marked with an asterisk *.

This course will incorporate the evidence-based practices (EBPs) relevant to self-determination, facilitating transition, alternative assessments, and social skills. These EBPs are indicated with an asterisk (*) in this syllabus. Evidence for the selected research-based practices is informed by meta-analysis, literature reviews/synthesis, the technical assistance networks which provide web-based resources, and the national organizations whose mission is to support students with disabilities. We address both promising and emerging practices in the field of special education. This course will provide opportunities for students to take an active, decision-making role to thoughtfully select, modify, apply, and evaluate EBPs in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Every student registered for any EDSE course including this semester is required to submit signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one-time course or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed, upon completion of the required submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.*

MAJOR ASSIGNMENT 1:

Blackboard Discussions or Other Assignments (2 @ 5 points each = 10 points total)

2 Blackboard or other topics will be posted or assigned concerning transition issues for students with disabilities, and students are responsible for responding to topics. Responses should thoroughly address the prompt and reflect readings, class discussions and personal insights.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENT 2:

Site Visit to a Community Resource/Agency or School Service That Facilitates Transition Skills (25 Points Total)

Visit a transition resource either in the community or within a school system and describe the services available to youth with mild disabilities. Your write-up should include services, accommodations, description of the agency/office, and your questions for staff. Your “lens” for this visit should be “what opportunities exist for youth with mild disabilities through this avenue during and/or after high school?” Include copies of materials available at center, agency, or office. You will need to make an appointment. Acceptable options for this assignment include a school career center, One-Stop Center, vocational evaluation site, Virginia Department of Rehabilitation Services office, local Community Services Board, Job Placement/Training program, and other suggestions from your professor. Your write up **MUST** include a synthesis section that integrates the information from your site visit with professional literature on transition and career education.

***MAJOR ASSIGNMENT 3: (SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENT FOR CEC Standard 7 in TaskStream)**

Unit Plan for Secondary Learners with Mild Disabilities: Integration of Career/Transition Education into the General Curriculum: (30% of final grade)

The career/life skill integration unit should cover approximately 5 block-scheduled class periods and use the appropriate *SECONDARY (middle or high school)* grade level Standards of Learning (SOLs) to teach in a content area (English, math, science, social studies or other secondary academic area of your choice) at an identified secondary level. Make this something you or another secondary teacher could actually use.

These lessons are to include a variety of activities, teaching strategies, and assessment tools to match the needs of the learners, the topic being taught, and the resources available. In your lesson plans, the students should be actively engaged in activities at least half of the time. The goal of your lessons should be to infuse career education or critical life skills into content area instruction as described in a course of study and the SOL(s) for that grade level and subject. You are to find and/or create each activity to be completed by the students. If you select a published activity you must cite the reference.

The following will help you to develop this project:

Step 1. Standards of Learning.

Obtain a curriculum (often referred to as a program of study or curriculum frameworks) from general education at the *secondary* level. Locate and clearly identify the related Standards of Learning (SOLs). Curriculum Frameworks for major content areas can be found at:

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/sol.html>

SOLs can be found on the Virginia Department of Education website:
<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Superintendent/Sols/home.shtml> and
<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/sol.html>

Be sure to specify the teaching situation and the students: What kind of class?
What kind of students? What kind of instructors? What kind of resources?

Step 2. Integration of Career Development/Life Skills within an Academic Lesson.

Using the *secondary* general education curriculum (or program of study) and the Standard(s) of Learning (SOL), develop 5 (or more) well-designed lessons (a mini-unit, if you will) which will cover five (or more) block sessions of content and will reflect the integration of career development/life skills activities. These lessons must relate to one another at the thematic level. A calendar must be developed to show when and how these lessons will be incorporated into the students' class.

Step 3. SOL Goals and Objectives.

Identify the Standards of Learning (SOL) upon which the lessons are based.

List general education goals for each lesson. These are to be based on the Standards of Learning (SOL) that you identified. Please indicate which one(s) and for which grade level and subject that you select.

Then, identify what career concepts/life skills will be infused into the lesson, and write specific, measurable objectives for each lesson.

Properly written instructional objectives have four components. They:

1. *Identify what students will be able to do once they have acquired the knowledge, skills or values related to the overall goal of the lesson(s).*
2. *Specify an anticipated measurable performance that will demonstrate the student has acquired the knowledge, skills or values related to the overall goal of the lesson. It allows the teacher to be able to see, hear, or examine a student- developed project.*
3. *Describe the setting in which the performance is to be demonstrated and observed, as well as the conditions under which the students will perform.*
4. *Establish a degree or level of expected performance (criterion) to measure the successful completion of the objective. These may be measured by rubrics, the percentage of correct items on a text/quiz, check sheets, etc.*

Step 4. Lesson Format

Provide a detailed format for each lesson including Grade Level, Theme, SOL(s) addressed, Objectives, Introduction, Presentation, Guided and Individualized Practice, and Assessment.

Step 5. Adaptations & Accommodations.

For the lesson(s), specify (in general) how you would adapt the content and/or methods of presentation to meet the needs of students with disabilities, especially

those with learning disabilities, mild mental retardation, and /or emotional disabilities. What will be done differently??

Step 6: Assessment Plan for the Lessons.

Summarize the multiple forms of assessment (formal and informal) that will be embedded in the lesson(s). Construct actual portfolio assessment examples for each lesson and for the unit as a whole.

Include a discussion of how the results of each assessment will be used in instructional decision-making.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENT # 4:

Group Presentation on Standards-Based Assessments in Virginia (30% of final grade). The presentation grade will be equally shared with the group. Hopefully, this will encourage total group participation.

Your group will be assigned to present on one of the following Virginia Assessment options/issues for students with disabilities: The presentation should provide a detailed overview of the option/issue as well as examples of assessment artifacts. Your presentation should require approximately one hour of presentation time.

1. Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program (VSEP)
2. Virginia Grade Level Alternative (VGLA)
3. Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)
4. Standard and Non-Standard Accommodation Issues (description of, and decision factors) for the SOL Assessments

PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE

Class Session	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
1 1/20	Course Introduction Enduring Understandings Foundations of Transition Planning: A historical perspective The NLTS 1 and 2	Sitlington: 1 Steere: 1
2 1.27	Characteristics and Needs of Secondary Learners with Disabilities	TOPIC 1 ASSIGNED Steere: 2, 3 & 4
3 2/3	From Entitlement to Eligibility: IDEA, ADA, 504, WIA and beyond	Sitlington: 2 Steere: 5 and 7
4 2/10	Community Resources and Transition Planning Considerations: Employment	Sitlington: 11 Topic 1 Responses Due & Topic 2 Assigned
5 2/17	Community Resources and Transition Planning Considerations: Independent Living	Sitlington: 8 Steere: 8
6 2/24	Community Resources and Transition Planning Considerations: Postsecondary Education	Sitlington: 7 Steere: 9 Topic 2 Responses Due & Discuss Assignment 2
7 3/3	Secondary IEP Planning and Delivery Graduation Requirements	Sitlington: 9
8 3/17	Infusion of Life and Career Skills into the curriculum	Steere: 6 and 10 MAJOR ASSIGNMENT 2 IS DUE (Discuss assignment 3)
9 3/24	Assessment: Academic and Transition	Sitlington: 5
10 3/31	Assessment Group Work	Open
11 4/7	Student Motivation/Self Regulation Self-Determination for Students and families	Sitlington: 3 MAJOR ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE TO INSTRUCTOR (Group selection for Major assignment 4)
12 4/14	Accommodating, Modifying and Adapting Instruction at the secondary level	Sitlington: 10
13 4/21	Career Education across the spectrum	Sitlington: 4 and 12 (Group time for major assignment 4)
14 4/28	Group Presentations	MAJOR ASSIGNMENT 4-GROUPS 1 & 2
15 5/5	Group Presentations	MAJOR ASSIGNMENT 4-GROUPS 3 & 4

***3/10 NO CLASS-SPRING BREAK**

**** 5/12 USED AS A MAKEUP SESSION IF NECESSARY**

*****MAJOR ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE TO TASK STREAM ON OR BEFORE 5/12/10**