GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM – SPECIAL EDUCATION
Syllabus for EDSE 703: Creating A Collaborative Culture (3 credits)
Semester and Year: Spring 2010
Course day/time: Wednesday 4:30-8:30
Course location: Hammond Middle School

Professor:
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Provides leaders in school settings with an opportunity to gain the skills needed to facilitate collaborative environments supportive of all learners. Topics of study include the impact of diversity on educational settings, developing a vision, effective communication teaming and co-teaching techniques, family professional partnerships, implementing school-wide change initiatives, alternative dispute resolution and maintaining a positive school climate.

Prerequisites: There are no *required* prerequisites for this course, but it is strongly recommended that students completing the Certificate in Special Education Leadership complete courses in a specific order. Please contact your advisor for the recommended sequence of courses if you are completing the Certificate in Special Education Leadership.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

Learning activities include the following:

- Discussion of material read in preparation for course sessions.
- Student participation (e.g., discussion, demonstration, inquiry) in small group and cooperative learning activities, including analysis of critical issues and readings as applied to case-based scenarios.
- Student self-assessment of progress throughout the course.
- Access and analyze resources using a variety of approaches, including Blackboard, web-based resources, and professional peer-reviewed journal articles.
- Instructor-student dialogue and interactions during and outside of class sessions that bring relevance and heightened skills, knowledge, and insights to the students and Instructor, with a focus on strengthening lifelong learning skills in the professional and ethical practice of special education.

LEARNER OUTCOMES

This course is designed to enable students to:
1) Define collaboration, consultation, and teamwork and explain the essential characteristics of each.
2) Demonstrate the ability to synthesize principle concepts from public policy, legislation, research data and literature in the context of collaboration among and between families, professional and interagency partnerships.
3) Identify variables that may facilitate or constrain participation in collaboration, consultation or teamwork settings.

4) Identify and apply collaboration and communication concepts, principles, and skills among families, professionals at the individual, building, district, and agency level.
5) Articulate and apply best practices in the development and implementation of collaborative instructional teams among and between professionals, families and agencies.
6) Demonstrate communication skills of listening, avoiding communication roadblocks, dealing with resistance, being appropriately assertive and resolving conflicts.
7) Demonstrate the ability to identify and effectively apply a variety of problem solving, alternative dispute resolution and decision making techniques at the individual, group, building district and interagency levels.
8) Identify and implement a variety of planning process models for integrating the family, school and community.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Course's Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organization

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Special Education Program. This program complies with the standards for special educators established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization.

The CEC Standards are listed on the following web site: http://www.cec.sped.org . Look in the second column on the left, and click on "Professional Standards." On this page, to the right, there is a red book PDF document titled "What Every Special Educator Must Know." The CEC Standards for all beginning special education administrators are located in this document. The primary CEC standards that will be addressed in this class are Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice and Standard 10: Collaboration. The standards are stated as follows:

Special Education Content Standard 9:   Professional and Ethical Practice

Special educators are guided by the profession's ethical and professional practice standards. Special educators practice in multiple roles and complex situations across wide age and developmental ranges. Their practice requires ongoing attention to legal matters along with serious professional and ethical considerations. Special educators engage in professional activities and participate in learning communities that benefit individuals with ELN, their families, colleagues, and their own professional growth. Special educators view themselves as lifelong learners and regularly reflect on and adjust their practice. Special educators are aware of how their own and others attitudes, behaviors, and ways of communicating can influence their practice. Special educators understand that culture and language can interact with exceptionalities, and are sensitive to the many aspects of diversity of individuals with ELN and their families. Special educators actively plan and engage in activities that foster their professional growth and keep them current with evidence-based best practices. Special educators know their own limits of practice and practice within them.

Special Education Content 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 role 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.

COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Required Texts:
Baruch Bush, R. A., & Folger, J. P. (2005). *The promise of mediation: The transformative*

approach to conflict (Revised ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Holcomb, E. L. (2001). *Asking the right questions: Techniques for collaboration and school*

change (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual (5ᵗʰ ed.).* Washington, DC:

Author.

Supplemental Readings (Available in Blackboard) will include but not be limited to:

Blue-Banning, M., Summers, J. A., Frankland, H. C., Nelson, L. L., Beegle, G. (2004). Dimensions of family and professional partnerships: Constructive guidelines for collaboration. *Exceptional Children, 70*(2), 167-184.

Brownell, M. T., Adams, A., Sindelar, P., Waldron, N., & Vanhover, S. (2006). Learning from collaboration: The role of teacher qualities. *Exceptional Children, 72*(2), 169-185.

Johnson, L. J., Zorn, D., Tam, B., LaMontagne, M., & Johnson, S. (2003). Stakeholders' views of factors that impact successful interagency collaboration. *Exceptional Children, 69*(2), 195-209.

Murray, C. (2004). Clarifying collaborative roles in urban high schools: General educators' perspectives. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 36*(5), 44-51.

Supplemental Links from Blackboard:
Mason's Blackboard site will be used to post important information for this course. Plan to access the BB site several times per week; announcements and resources will be posted on the BB site in between class sessions (e.g., in response to queries or information requested by students). Materials and websites will be provided on the BB site that will be used for supplemental readings/resources. Students should check Blackboard regularly for additional course materials at http://blackboard.gmu.edu.

TaskStream
The signature assignment required for this course must be submitted electronically to Mason′s NCATE management system, TaskStream via https://www.taskstream.com. Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is required to begin submitting signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream may result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). See http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/taskstream/ for detailed steps.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS
The College of Education and Human Development expects all students to abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See http://www.gse.gmu.edu/ for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must know and follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full Honor Code.
- Students are expected to use APA Guidelines for written work and provide credit when using the work of others. GMU currently subscribes to www.turnitin.com and the instructor may submit student work to that site to determine originality of work.
- 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 to seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Office of Disability Service and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.

Keep Products from This Course for Future Use in Your Professional Portfolio!
Retain electronic copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE Special Education program. Products from this class can become part of your individual professional portfolio used in your portfolio classes that document your satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance based standards. As the program moves towards electronic portfolios, it will be even more important to have artifacts (i.e., scored assignments) saved electronically.

Student Responsibilities

George Mason University Email: https://mserver3.gmu.edu/ From this link, follow the directions for activating an email account. GMU makes such accounts available at no cost to students. Every student is encouraged to establish a GMU email account as important university correspondence will be sent to GMU email accounts only. Once an email account has been established, it is possible to forward email sent to the GMU account to another email account. Students are responsible for any information shared electronically and should check e-mail regularly.

George Mason Blackboard: http://blackboard.gmu.edu From this link, you will find a variety of materials related to this course. The site will be updated as the course progresses. **Students are responsible** for any information shared via Blackboard and should check the site regularly

George Mason Patriot Web: https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/ A self-service website for students, faculty, and staff of George Mason University. A wealth of useful links, information, and online forms are available on this website including program of studies details, application for graduation, request for transfer of credit, and internship application.

Advising Contact Information: Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through the special education program. You may wish to contact Jancy Templeton, GMU Special Education Advisor, at jtemple1@gmu.edu or 703-993-2387. When contacting her, always provide your G number to her.

APA Style: The standard format for **ANY** written work in the College of Education. If you are unfamiliar with APA, it would benefit you to purchase the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 6th ed., (second printing) or to access one of the internet sites that provides a summary of this information. All work produced outside of class must be typed and APA unless otherwise noted.

APA Formatting Guidelines: http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm . This website is offered as a companion to the APA style manual. However, it should not be considered a substitute for directly consulting the APA manual, 6th edition (second printing) for standard of procedures for applying APA style.

*Academic Integrity***:** 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 citation. 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 registrar. Remember that plagiarism is a very serious offense and can result in dismissal from the University. The instructor reserves the right to submit your work to **turnitin.com**, a plagiarism detection service**,** for an integrity assessment as needed.

Graduate School of Education Dispositions Criteria: Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See http://www.gse.gmu.edu/ for a listing of these dispositions.

G*eorge Mason University Honor Code*: http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 This URL defines student and faculty conduct to promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community. The honor code deals specifically with cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing.

Students with Disabilities: www.gmu.edu/student/drc 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 the website or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.

Responsible Use of Computing: http://mail.gmu.edu Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. From the link above, click on the Responsible Use of Computing link found at the bottom of the screen.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- For a satisfactory grade in the course, students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom (see Professional Disposition Criteria), and complete all assignments with professional quality and in a timely manner.
- When absence from class is unavoidable, students are responsible for getting all class information (e.g., handouts, announcements, notes, syllabus revisions, etc.) from another class member prior to the class meeting that follows the absence. Be aware that any points earned for participation in class activities during a time of absence will not be earned and cannot be reclaimed.
- The use of electronic devices that produce sound or otherwise interfere with the learning of others (i.e., cell phones, pagers, etc.) is prohibited during class. Please turn these devices off or to vibrate before the start of class.
- The use of electronic devices that record class or photograph individuals or materials may not be used without instructor permission.
- Computers may be used to take notes during class, but they may not be used for internet exploration or other non-class activities during class time.
- Exemplary work may be kept and shared in the future (with your consent, of course!).
- Routine access (daily) to electronic mail and Blackboard for communication and assignments is crucial to participation in this class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Grades: A = 94-100, A- = 90-93, B+ = 86-89, B = 80-85, C = 79-70, F = <70 (traditional rounding applies)

Participation during in-class activities	16 points
Application Activities	24 points
Exploration of Current Setting	20 points
Collaboration Plan for Creating School Change	25 points
Presentation of Collaboration Plan	15 points
Total	100 points

Overview of Assignments

Participation Activities
Students are expected to attend class and actively participate in all assignments, group activities, class discussions, and online activities. Active participation includes the asking of questions and the presentation of one's own understanding with regard to the readings and lectures as well as interactive discussion and participation in activities with other class members. Active participation also includes listening and respectful consideration of the comments of others. This will require all students to complete the required readings, activities, and assignments for that specific class meeting in advance. Additionally, during each class meeting there will be the opportunity to earn point(s) for successful completion of graded in-class activities (e.g. case analysis, reflection activities, small group activities, etc.). If students are not in attendance, thus not able to participate and contribute to class when these activities occur, assigned points can not be earned. Additional materials (e.g. supplemental readings, cases for review, external websites, directions for application activities, etc.) can be found on Blackboard.

Application Activities
These are self-assessment and reflective activities to be completed outside of class that apply the readings and/or extend class discussions. Some will be handed out in hardcopy while others will be posted to BB.

Exploratory of Current Setting
Submit a brief paper describing your current context, your role within that context, and your goals for leadership in the future. Identify a specific area to target as in need of improved collaboration. Select at least 3 techniques to help you identify the current level of collaboration and what progress toward a more collaborative culture might be desirable (i.e. address the *Where are we now?* and *Where do we want to go?* questions). At least 2 of the 3 techniques selected must from the Holcomb text. Utilize the formats described in the text as appendix entries. Summarize what you learned in the narrative. This information will contribute to your subsequent collaboration plan.

Collaboration Plan for Creating School Change: Students will develop a system-wide Collaboration Plan to enhance the education of exceptional learners in their own educational environment. The plan will address each of the 5 primary questions established in the course readings (i.e. Where are we now?, Where do we want to go?, How will we get there?, How will we know we are there?, and How will we sustain focus and momentum?). This plan should identify the specific tools used to address each of the questions and include the information produced by each (e.g. results of the Exploratory of Current Setting assignment would be included). Students should explore relevant literature/documentation/data as they plan how to address the situation. They should supplement these reviews with actual experiences and interviews with key appropriate personnel (teachers, administrators, community agency representatives, parents, students and school staff) as needed to build an effective plan for change. Students must provide a supported rationale for the processes they used to build the plan and for the changes they now propose. Once the initial 5 primary questions are addressed, the bonus questions should be tackled. Finally, a plan for transformative mediation should be included in order to plan for any disputes that may arise from the change initiative you proposed. Develop a written document synthesizing your ideas and presenting the Collaboration Plan.

Include key points addressing the questions and mediation, justification for plan design, literature regarding the topic, and anticipated implications for practice and/or policy.

Presentation of Collaboration Plan
Develop a brief overview of your plan that can be shared on BB for others to read. When printed, this summary should not exceed 2 pages (e.g. bulleted narrative, up to 12 PowerPoint slides, brochure, etc.). Develop prompts for an in-class discussion of your ideas so you can glean feedback from others. Be prepared to facilitate additional online discussion as needed. Reflect upon the feedback given and post a brief summary of any changes you will make and the timeline with which you now intend to proceed.

Note: When combined, the Collaboration Plan and its subsequent presentation build the required Signature Assignment for this course. Therefore, a rubric detailing how this assignment will be evaluated for the course and in TaskStream will be posted in BB.

Tentative Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings and *Assignments*
Week 1 3/17	Introduction & Discussion of Syllabus	**Holcomb Ch. 1-2**
Week 2 3/27	Overview of Collaboration Finding the Vision: Where are we and where do we want to be?	**Holcomb Ch. 2-3** *Application Activity 1*
Week 3 3/31	Identifying Different Collaboration Styles Spring Break	**No Class/Assignment**
Week 4 4/7	Where do we want to be?	**Halcomb Chapter 3-4**
Week 5 4/14	Identify Different Collaboration Styles Taking Action: How will we get there and how will we know we've arrived?	**Holcomb Ch. 5-6** *Application Activity 2*
Week 6 4/21	Strategies for Dealing with Different Collaboration Styles Sustaining Change: What next?	**Holcomb Ch. 7-9**
Week 7 4/28	Application to your setting and beyond Collaborative Techniques Specific to Special Education: Co-teaching, UDL, and more	***Exploratory of Current Setting Materials in Folder on BB*** *Application Activity 3*
Week 8 May 5	The Transformative Approach to Mediation	**Baruch Bush & Folger Text**
Week 9 May 12	Applying Dispute Resolution Techniques to Special Education	**Materials in Folder on BB** *Application Activity 3*
Week 10 May 19	The Role of Special Education Leaders in the Development of Collaborative Culture	**Materials in Folder on BB** *Application Activity 4 due 5/15* *Post Summary of Collaboration Plans by Saturday 5/17 midnight*
Week 11 5/26	Presentations	**Project Postings from Peers** *Collaboration Plan Due with Presentations* *Follow-up posting due by Saturday 5/24 by midnight*

Note: Syllabus is subject to change as needed. Common sense and instructor discretion will be the governing forces in dealing with any circumstances that may arise that are not explicitly addressed in this syllabus. Inclement weather cancellations will shift content to online delivery format and do not excuse students from completion of requirements.