

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM – SPECIAL EDUCATION
Syllabus for EDSE 703 C01: Creating A Collaborative Culture (3 credits)

Semester and Year: Summer 2011

Course day/time: Tuesday and Thursday 7:00 – 10:00 pm and Saturday 9:00 – 12:00

Course location: Robinson B113

PROFESSOR:

Michael J. Romanelli, Ed.D

703-819-2200

Office location: Finley Hall

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Office hours: TBA

Mromanel@gmu.edu

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 refer to your Program of Studies 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 materials and resources using a variety of medium, 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 principal and 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:

Holcomb, E. L. (2009). *Asking the right questions: Tools for collaboration and school change* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual* (6th ed., 2nd printing). Washington, DC: Author.

Supplemental Readings (Available in Blackboard):

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:

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice

It is the mission of the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice to support and promote a

reoriented national preparedness to foster the development and the adjustment of children with or at risk of developing serious emotional disturbance. To achieve that goal, the Center is dedicated to a policy of collaboration at Federal, state, and local levels that contributes to and facilitates the production, exchange, and use of knowledge about effective practices.

The Power of 2 Website

Marilyn Friend's Power of 2 website (incredible array of resources for co-teaching teams)

CEC Resource Center Topics: Co-teaching

5 articles (available for download) from CEC journals: Understanding Coteaching Components; Building a Strong BASE of Support for All Students Through Coplanning; Co-Teaching: Are Two Heads Better Than One in an Inclusion Classroom?; We Need to Talk: Communication Strategies for Effective Collaboration; Collaborative Teaching to Support Students at Risk and Students With Severe Disabilities in General Education Classrooms.

Required Access to Course Blackboard Site: GSE Blackboard will be used to post important information for this course. Plan to access the Bb site several times per week; announcements and resources are posted on the Bb site in between class sessions (e.g., in response to queries or information requested by students). There will also be materials and web sites on the Bb site for supplemental resources (choices for these resources may vary from student to student, depending on interest and focus during the semester).

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

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.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

George Mason University Email: <http://mserver3.gmu.edu/>

From this link, follow the directions for activating an email account. Every student is required to establish a GMU email account. Course email correspondence and other important university emails will be sent to GMU email accounts.

TaskStream

Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is required to submit signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/taskstream/>. 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.

George Mason Blackboard: <http://blackboard.gmu.edu> GSE Blackboard will be used to post important information for this course (and others) and in completing some course assignments. Materials, resources, dialogues, notes, and other types of information will be housed on this course's Blackboard web site.

George Mason Patriot Web: <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>

This is a self-service website for students, faculty, and staff of George Mason University. There is a wealth of useful links, information, and online forms on this website including program of

studies details, application for graduation, request for transfer of credit, and internship application.

George Mason University Honor Code: <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html>

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. In an effort to maintain trust in the classroom as well as provide a prerequisite for deterring plagiarism, *Turnitin*, a plagiarism detection service, may be used to evaluate materials submitted by students for evaluation.

Advising:

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. You may wish to contact Amie Fulcher, GMU Special Education Advisor, at afulcher@gmu.edu or 703.993.2387. Please be prepared with your G number when you contact her.

Writing Resources and Support:

APA Formatting Guidelines are also available at <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, 5th edition for standard of procedures for applying APA style.* Additional APA help URLs are available on the GSE library URL and may be available on the course Blackboard site. Caution with using web sites or resources other than the APA manual because some may have erroneous information on them.

Another type of writing support during this course is available via the George Mason University Writing Center for support in writing (support needs will vary among students). The web site for the Writing Center is: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>. Many resources are available both on site and on the web, and students can now conveniently register online for appointments.

Absences:

Understanding you are individuals with full and active lives, who have made the intellectual and financial commitment to regularly attend class, there may be an instance when you are not able to attend. If this unlikely event should occur, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student (it is recommended that you have two colleagues in the course for this). Students who are absent are held responsible for the material covered and assignments due as if in attendance. Please be sure to notify the classmate(s) in sufficient time for them to be of assistance for you. Recommended, but not required, is that you notify the Instructor about absences in advance or within 24 hours after an absence. Be aware any points earned for participation in class activities, during a time of absence, will not be earned and cannot be made up.

Assignments and Readings and Due Dates:

For a satisfactory grade in the course, students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, be prepared for class, demonstrate professional behavior (see *Professional Disposition Criteria* at <http://www.gse.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions), and complete all assignments with

professional quality in a timely manner. To successfully complete this course, students need to adhere to the due dates for specific readings and assignments to be completed.

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

Participate in class case study activities	10 points
Weekly chapter and reading activities	30 points
Class presentation of Collaboration Plan, discussion and Blackboard session	40 points
10-page Collaboration Plan paper	20 points
Total	100 points

- **Collaboration Plan Assignment** (60% total): Students will develop a system-wide Collaboration Plan their own school system. Students will begin plan development with a study of any program(s) currently implemented within their school district. They will review relevant literature/documentation/and data as it addresses any current plans as well as the model proposed for adoption. Students will conduct a literature review of current collaboration models. They should supplement the review with actual experiences and interviews with key appropriate personnel (teachers, administrators, community agency representative, parents, students and school staff). They will develop an action plan for implementing the new model. This action plan should include the process for introduction of collaborative teaching models, decision-making, system-wide change, problem-solving and dispute resolution. Students must provide a supported rationale for the process chosen. Then they will develop a class presentation, lead an in-class, and facilitate an online discussion. (MAJOR REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT—SEE RUBRIC BELOW)

 - Identify one primary article or chapter and a reference list of at least three other articles, books or chapters to be posted on Blackboard, which include topics of collaboration, team teaching and alternative dispute resolution.
 - Develop a one-hour presentation (30%) of implementation plan with follow-up discussion questions and Blackboard prompts. Discussion leader will post discussion points 24 hours prior to the assigned week of discussion.
 - Write a ten-page synthesis paper (30%) presenting the Collaboration Plan, justification for plan design, literature regarding the topic, summarizing the pros and cons of the choices, and reviewing implications for practice and policy.
- **Participation** (10 %): Before each class: Read the assigned readings to facilitate informed participation in discussions and case study activities. Students are expected to attend all class sessions on time. In case an emergency prevents a student from attending class, please call or e-mail the instructor in advance.
- **Weekly Chapter and Reading Assignments** (30%): Each student will present a chapter or reading to the class for 20 to 30 minutes as discussed at the beginning of the course.
- **Note:** The final Collaboration Plan is 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.
: Points will be deducted for work submitted late (up to 10% per day). This includes any items that are not submitted upon request due to class absence or tardiness. This includes items initiated or modified during class as well as those listed in the syllabus.

Tentative Class Schedule

Date	Topic	
July 5	Introduction, Discussion of Syllabus, Conceptual Framework of Course, Role of Special Education Administrator in Development of Collaborative Culture	Course Handouts; Begin weekly writing assignments and participation preparation
July 7	Collaboration Concepts, Historical Perspectives of Collaboration -- Inclusion NCLB	Holcomb Chapters 1
July 9	Interpersonal Communication, Communication Styles	Holcomb Chapter 2; The Power of 2 Website
July 12	Interpersonal Communication, Communication Styles	Holcomb Chapter 3; CEC Resource Center on Co-teaching Website
July 14	Creating a Collaborative Culture	Holcomb Chapter 4; Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice Website
July 16	Consultation and Team Building	Holcomb Chapter 5
July 19	Collaborative Instructional Models	Holcomb Chapters 6
July 21	Scheduling/Planning /Staff Development for Inclusive Practices	Holcomb Chapter 7
July 23	Establishing Family Partnerships	Blue-Banning, Brownell Article
July 26	Establishing Agency Partnerships	Johnson Article, Murray Article
July 28	Alternative Dispute Resolution	
July 30	Presentations	Collaboration Presentations
August 2	Presentations	Collaboration Presentations
August 4	Presentations, Collaboration Plans due	Collaboration Presentations

RUBRIC FOR THE MAJOR REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT

Implementation Plan (Total: 60 pts)

Class presentation, discussion in-class and online, 10-page paper

Evaluation	Exceeds	Meets	Does Not Meet
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Standards	Expectations 9-10	Expectations 7-8	Expectations 0-6
Paper	Synthesis goes beyond the obvious. Suggestions are creative and realistic. Minimal writing errors.	Conducts multiple and varied needs assessment. Analyzes existing program. Clearly articulates an action plan chronicling program development and change process. Identifies and presents insightful reasons for plan offered. Writes in an organized style using APA.	Fails to meet all elements of the stated expectations. Writing is mechanically unsound.
Presentation	Articulates novel implications for practitioners.	Presents a broad background and summarizes key points. Proposes thought-provoking questions or discussion points. Encourages dialogue and novel thinking. Presents in an organized style.	Presentation is disorganized or lacking key information.
Face-to-Face Discussion	Encourages dialogue and novel thinking.	Proposes thought-provoking questions or discussion points. Clearly communicates key ideas.	Minimal efforts to engage the audience are made.
Online Follow-up Discussion	Encourages dialogue and novel thinking.	Proposes thought-provoking questions or discussion points.	Minimal efforts to engage the audience are made.
Link to CEC Standards	Clear understanding of collaborative cultures. Clear reflection of professional and ethical desire to embrace ongoing learning and evidence-based practices.	Identifies some aspects of collaboration techniques. Efforts to engage in an active learning community. Offers reflective ideas showing a desire to learn.	Unclear connections to collaboration techniques. Minimal efforts to engage in learning demonstrated.
Overall Critical Issues Project	The project meets expectations and	The project clearly identifies a reasonable	This project fails to clearly identify a

	generates insightful suggestions for how special needs might be better met.	collaboration plan AND provides clear supports for establishing a collaborative culture.	reasonable collaboration plan OR fails to provide clear supports for establishing a collaborative culture.
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