

# **EDUC 0221:**

## **STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

Westfield State College

Fall 2010 Instructor: Terri M. Griffin, Ed.D.

Online Course: PLATO

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### **Course Description**

Students with Special Needs is an online course that offers students an introduction to the field of Special Education. This course provides students with an opportunity to consider the ways in which our nation's schools identify and provide services to children with Exceptional Learning Needs (ELN). Historical and current approaches to the education of children with special needs will be examined, as well as issues such as identification, assessment, program development, and evidenced-based classroom teaching practices. Special attention will be given to legislation that protects the rights of students with special needs, issues of diversity, inclusionary practices and policies, and the role of the teacher in differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners. This course provides an introduction to Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and considers the UDL principles that serve as a framework for creating the type of learning environments and opportunities that support the success of every child, including children with disabilities, children from high risk environments, children from diverse language and/or cultural backgrounds, and children identified as 'gifted.' Please note that this course **REQUIRES** each student to complete 15 hours of documented observation in a public school setting. Students **CANNOT** pass this course without completing this requirement and submitting appropriate documentation to the instructor (and the WSC Ed Dept. Office).

### **Course Rationale**

An appropriate educational experience should be available to all children, including those with exceptional learning needs. Teachers play a critical role in supporting the success of children with disabilities, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children who live in poverty. It is essential, then, that teacher candidates understand the challenges faced by children with exceptional learning needs and the ways in which educators can provide all children with universal access to meaningful learning opportunities.

## Required Texts:

1. Gargiulo, R.M. & Metcalf, D. (2010). *Teaching in today's inclusive classrooms: A universal design for learning approach*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. ISBN: 0495097152

Textbook available at WSC Bookstore or as rental through:  
<http://www.cengagebrain.com/shop/en/US/storefront/US?cmd=CLHeaderSearch&fieldValue=0495097152>

\*Each student will also be required to read the following three fictional texts. Two are chapter books geared for upper elementary/middle schoolers (the Betancourt and Janover books) and one book is written for young adults (the Haddon book). Students will read and complete assignments for each book. These books can be either purchased from the WSC bookstore, an online vendor, or borrowed from a library for use in completing related assignments:

2. Betancourt, J. (1993). *My name is Brain Brian*. New York: Scholastic.

ISBN-10: 0-590-44922-2

3. Haddon, M. (2003). *The curious incident of the dog in the night-time*. NY: Vintage Books.

ISBN: 978-1-4000-3271-6

4. Janover, C. (1997). *Zipper the kid with ADHD*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

ISBN: 0-933149-95-6

Additional readings will be used for several course topics. These readings will be available online.

## Course Requirements and Assessment

1. Attendance/Participation: Students are expected to log onto the course and engage in course activities at least 3 times a week. The instructor can monitor online participation rates through PLATO, and for full attendance credit, students must 'enter' course at least 3 times per week. A student who does not log in for 5 consecutive days will be withdrawn from course. For full participation credit, students must complete ALL readings, multimedia activities, and related discussion assignments in a timely fashion and thoughtful manner (Rubric for Discussion Posts will be made available.).

2. Field experience and Observational Reports/Summary: Each student must observe for a total of 15 hours in a public school setting that serves children with and without disabilities. Students may find their own placement for 15 hours total (with instructor approval), or participate in two Westfield State College sponsored "Field Days" in schools located nearby the college. Students will keep an online journal in which they will describe and reflect upon their experience in their particular setting by completing an "Observational Report" after each visit. After completing all

15 hours of observation, students will submit a “Summary Report” that synthesizes their field learning with their course learning. Guidelines for these assignments will be provided. Students must include documentation for all hours (School personnel need to verify hours by signing document provided to students.). Student must complete field work and related assignments in order to pass this course. Please see more information regarding this component of the course in related course folder.

3. IRIS Modules: On several occasions, students will be asked to complete a learning module developed by Vanderbilt University’s School of Education. To complete these assignments, students will go to <http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/onlinemodules.html> and view assigned online modules. Students will type up and submit responses to sections entitled: Initial Thoughts, Assessment, and Wrap Up, for each module. More information regarding these assignments will be made available within relevant weekly folders.

4. Quizzes: There will be 3 multiple choice format quizzes that assess mastery of text and class content. Students will have a time frame within which to complete each quiz online.

5. UDL Book Project: Students will work in small groups and engage in a series of projects that offer an opportunity to closely examine learners with varied special needs and consider how to teach them in an inclusive setting using UDL principles. Students will read *My name is Brain Brian*, *Zipper the kid with ADHD*, and *The curious incident of the dog in the night-time* and work in small groups to create learning profiles for each of the main characters in each book (e.g. Brian, a learner with Dyslexia, “Zipper”, a learner with ADHD, and Christopher, a learner with Autism). Each group will then consider how to meet the needs of these learners within the content of a general education class by using principles of Universal Design for Learning. Each group will share their final project with class. More information about this assignment will be made available within the “UDL Book Project” folder.

## **Grading**

Attendance/ Discussion Postings: 10%

Field Experience/ Written Observational and Summary Reports: 10%

IRIS Modules: 20%

Quizzes: 40%

UDL Book Project: 20%

## **Policy Regarding Assignments**

The course “weeks” will run from Thursday at 10AM to the following Wednesday evening. This means that weekly folders will be “released” on Thursday mornings. All weekly assignments are due at midnight on the Wednesday of the assigned week, unless otherwise noted. Some assignments may have an earlier submission date to allow classmates time to view and respond.

Discussion postings, for example, will generally be due on the Tuesday of the week assigned to allow classmates time to read and respond to them. Work submitted late will receive a lower grade. All work must be completed with integrity and high standards.

### **Student Responsibilities**

- Students are responsible for maintaining academic integrity, meaning that all written work is to be original and are not assignments also being submitted (or have been submitted) in fulfillment of requirements for other courses.
- Each student is expected to take responsibility for his/her education. This means asking for help when needed. I am available to assist you in any way I can, including meeting with you individually. Please notify me of any documented learning needs so we can arrange for appropriate support/accommodations.
- Finally, each student is responsible for being respectful of his/her classmates. We want to create an online atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable sharing his or her thoughts, feelings, and experiences. This is desirable and an important part of your education but can only occur in an online environment where each individual shows appreciation and respect for differences.