



**College of Education and Human Development
Division of Special Education and disAbility Research**

Summer 2016

EDSE 703 619: Creating a Collaborative Culture

CRN: 42768, 3 - Credits

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| Instructor: Pamela Baker & Deborah Dupree | Meeting Dates: 06/02/16 - 07/28/16 |
| Phone: 703-993-1787 | Meeting Day(s): Thursdays |
| E-Mail: pbaker5@gmu.edu/ddupree@gmu.edu | Meeting Time(s): 4:30 pm - 9:00 pm |
| Office Hours: By appointment | Meeting Location: Off-campus/Other |

Note: This syllabus may change according to class needs. Students will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason e-mail and/or through Blackboard.

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 coteaching techniques, family and professional partnerships, implementing schoolwide change initiatives, alternative dispute resolution, and maintaining a positive school climate.

Schedule Type: LEC

Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week: 3

Hours of Lab or Studio per week: 0

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-requisite(s): None

Advising Contact Information

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. Mason M.Ed. and Certificate students should contact the Special

Education Advising Office at (703) 993-3670 for assistance. All other students should refer to their faculty advisor.

Nature of Course Delivery

Learning activities include the following:

1. Class lecture and discussion
2. Preparation of readings in advance of class
3. Interactive activities in class and in Blackboard
4. Small group activities and assignments
5. Individual activities and assignments
6. Video and other media supports
7. Research and presentation activities
8. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard

Learner Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able 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. Use demographic information as a foundation to identify needs, desired outcomes, and a framework for implementation.
4. Identify variables that may facilitate or constrain participation in collaboration, consultation or teamwork settings.
5. Identify and apply collaboration strategies and communication concepts, principles, and skills among families, professionals at the individual, building, district, and agency level.
6. Articulate and apply best practices in the development and implementation of collaborative instructional teams among and between professionals, families and agencies.
7. Demonstrate communication skills of listening avoiding communication roadblocks, dealing with resistance, being appropriately assertive and resolving conflicts.
8. 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.
9. Identify and implement a variety of planning process models for integrating the family, school and community.

Required Textbooks

Holcomb, E. L. (2009). *Asking the right questions: Tools for collaboration and school change*

(3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Recommended Textbooks

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual* (6th ed.). Washington, DC:

Author.

Additional Readings and Required Resources

Each week students are expected to access and complete all readings and activities provided in the applicable folder in the course content section of the course Blackboard site available at <http://courses.gmu.edu>

Course Relationships to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Special Education Program for Special Education Leadership Graduate Certificate. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization. The CEC standards that will be addressed in this class include Standard 6: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice & Standard 7: Collaboration (Updated Fall 2014 to align with the revised CEC Standards). In addition, this course aligns with a parallel course in the Education Leadership program (EDLE 616) and includes signature assignments directly reflective of a variety of Education Leadership Program Recognition Standards (ELCC).

GMU Policies and Resources for Students:

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- c. 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.
- d. 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/>].
- e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services and inform their instructor, in writing, as soon as possible. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor. [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].

f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

g. 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/>].

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. [See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>]

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>]

Course Policies & Expectations

Attendance.

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) from another class member prior to the class meeting that follows the absence. Be aware that points earned for participation in class activities during a time of absence will not be earned and typically cannot be reclaimed.

Late Work.

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.

APA Style

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

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 use either exact words or paraphrased 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 and Dean's office. 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 plagiarism detection services for an integrity assessment as needed.

Electronic Media.

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. Routine access (daily) to e-mail and Blackboard for communication and assignments is crucial to participation in this class. Retain electronic copies of all course products for use during the portfolio phases of the M.Ed. or Ph.D. programs.

Workload Expectation.

For each in-class hour devoted to this course content, students are expected to spend at least 3 hours outside of class on course-related assignments, which is a typical in-class to out-of-class ratio for graduate level coursework. Exemplary work should be considered for presentation or publication opportunities.

Tk20 Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit the required assignments (e.g., *Demographic Analysis and Curriculum Framework*) to Tk20 through Blackboard (regardless of whether the student is taking the course as an elective, a onetime course or as part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in Tk20 through Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to Tk20 (through Blackboard) will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required Tk20 submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Grading Scale

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|----|---|------------------|----|---|-----------------|
| A | = | 95 – 100 percent | A- | = | 90 – 94 percent |
| B+ | = | 85 – 89 percent | B | = | 80 – 84 percent |

C = 70 – 79 percent F = Below 70

Note: Traditional rounding principles apply

Assignments

Performance-based Assessments (Tk20 submission required).

These two assignments will be completed in tandem, one informing the other. You, as a course participant, will contribute to the creation of a model approach for creating change across an entire school district so that every student has a better opportunity to learn. As you know, change initiatives are not generated individually but rather as part of a collaborative process. There is pain and ambiguity in such an approach so you will not have a clear sense of control as you approach this course. You will be uncomfortable at times. Please keep the lines of communication open as we grow as a team through this process. In real life, there are no rubrics to guide our progress so we will be operating beyond that framework even though we will revisit such a structure at the conclusion of our work together. Thank you in advance for your willingness to engage in this process.

1. Demographic Analysis Project.

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate the ability to analyze demographic and test data across sub-groups and academic areas as it relates to creating a favorable learning environment for all students. Course participants will be provided data sets from a diverse school district to analyze as the foundation for action planning based upon current performance, systemic needs, goals, and current research. From the lens of a Director of Special Education, you will generate recommendations to guide change and engage multiple stakeholders.

2. Curriculum Framework Project.

The purpose of this assignment is to explicitly operationalize the recommendations made in the demographic analysis project from the lens of a Director of Special Education. You will start by honing a vision for your district and by articulating outcome measures you desire (apply the concept of Backwards Design).

Subsequently, you will create a model division-level curriculum that is grounded in best practice, standards, and research that will move your district toward program improvement for all learners. In addition, you will address how to move your leadership team towards the outcome measures you desire.

Note: Scaffolded application activities and rubrics will be available in Blackboard.

Other Assignments.

Participatory Application Activities

Collaboration requires engagement. Students are expected to actively participate in all application activities. Active participation includes the asking of questions and the presentation of one's own understanding with regard to the readings and class sessions 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. Required application materials and activities (e.g., supplemental readings, data for review, external websites, discussion forums, blog entries, topical reflections, and other application activities) can be found in Blackboard.

Additionally, during each class meeting there will be the opportunity to earn point(s) for the successful completion of in-class application activities (e.g., case analysis, reflection activities, small group activities, project development, and discussion of readings). If students are not in attendance, thus not able to participate and contribute to class when these activities occur, assigned points cannot be earned. One cannot earn full points for active participation while texting, tweeting, surfing the internet, or engaging in other forms of multi-tasking behaviors.

Interactive Research and Policy Blog.

Numerous changes in legislation and evidence-based practices drive the field of special education. Regular postings of information and discussion of evolving content will be done via Blackboard.

Assignment Summary

Below are the basic weights of the various kinds of work required for the course, but students should always bear in mind that grading is primarily a judgment about your performance on a particular assignment. Grades are designed to indicate your success in completing assignments, not the level of effort you put into them.

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| Participatory Application Activities (face-to-face and online) | 100 |
| Interactive Research and Policy Blog | 100 |
| Demographic Awareness Project | 100 |
| Curriculum Framework Project | 100 |
| Total | 400 |

Schedule

Tentative Course Organization and Schedule

| Meeting | Topic | Assignments Due/Readings Due |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Week 1 6/2/16 | Introduction to Creating Collaborative Cultures: An Overview of Collaborative Concepts | Overview of course materials, text, and website (MyMason) |
| Week 2 6/9/16 | What is your Collaboration Style? How do you deal with different styles? | BB Introduction and Application Activities |
| Week 3 6/16/16 | Assessing the Situation; Data Analysis Introduction | Holcomb 1-2, Blog Post 1 |
| Week 4 6/23/16 | Finding the Vision with End in Sight; Curriculum Framework Introduction | Holcomb Ch. 3 and 5, Blog Post 2 |

| Meeting | Topic | Assignments Due/Readings Due |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Week 5 6/30/16 | Taking Action from an Informed Place; Understanding Best Practice as the Foundation for an Action Plan | Holcomb Ch. 4, Blog Post 3 |
| Week 6 7/7/16 ONLINE | ** Why Can't Everyone Just Get Along: Conflict, Resistance, and Dispute Resolution Techniques | BB Folder and Discussion Board Entries |
| Week 7 7/14/16 | Finalizing the Plans: Using the Toolbox to Gain Consensus, Build Capacity, and Sustain Momentum | Holcomb 6, Drafts of Demographic Analysis and Curriculum Framework |
| Week 8 7/21/16 | Powerful Questions to Shape Practice: Instructional Collaboration Methods Specific to Special Education: Co- teaching, UDL, differentiated evaluation, and more | Holcomb 7, Blog Post 4 |
| Week 9 7/28/15 | The Role of Special Education Leaders in Creating a Collaborative Culture | Post Final Version of Demographic Analysis and Curriculum Framework |

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 does not excuse students from completion of requirements.

****Online Session**