

**SPED 638:**  
**The Role of the Special Educator in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**  
*Fall 2011*

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*Please do NOT call the Department to report anticipated absences or late arrivals to class.*

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### **Course Description:**

**SPED 638: The Role of the Special Educator in the Twenty-First Century (3).** *Prerequisites:* SPED 628 in the Clear Educational Specialist program and/or acceptance into the Masters program in Special Education or the Resource Specialist program; *Pre-Co/requisites:* 6 units of Clear Credential courses from the menu of options or acceptance into the Masters program in Special Education.

This course is designed for special education teachers to develop advanced knowledge and skills of processes for effective collaboration, consultation and communication in educational settings. The course focuses on the changing role of the special educator, the effective management of caseloads and paraprofessionals, the development of effective communication skills for problem solving, advocacy and leadership, and the challenges inherent in collaborative relationships. Candidates will learn how to build partnerships with other professionals in order to design instruction that is universally accessible to all learners, and how to use technology and assistive technology to provide universal access for learners with special needs. Emphasis will be made on the unique skills each specialization candidate brings to any collaborative or instructional interaction, and to the value added of the special educator as an education specialist. Current research and theoretical positions in the field will be analyzed, while emphasis will be placed on concrete skills for implementation. As the final course in the Clear Educational Specialist program, students will be expected to reflect upon their professional development and instructional competencies and complete their Individualized Instructional Program.

**Conceptual Framework:** The faculty of the Michael D. Eisner College of Education, regionally focused and nationally recognized, is committed to **Excellence through Innovation**. We believe excellence includes the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions and is demonstrated by the growth and renewal of ethical and caring professionals - faculty, staff, candidates - and those they serve. Innovation occurs through collaborative partnerships among communities of diverse learners who engage in creative and reflective thinking. To this end we continually strive to achieve the following competencies and values that form the foundation of the Conceptual Framework.

- We value academic **excellence** in the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills.
- We value the use of **evidence** for the purposes of monitoring candidate growth, determining the impact of our programs, and informing ongoing program and unit renewal. To this end we foster a culture of evidence.
- We value ethical practice and what it means to become **ethical and caring professionals**.
- We value **collaborative partnerships** within the College of Education as well as across disciplines with other CSUN faculty, P-12 faculty, and other members of regional and national educational and service communities.
- We value diversity in styles of practice and are united in a dedication to acknowledging, learning about, and addressing the varied strengths, interests, and needs of **communities of diverse learners**.
- We value **creative and reflective thinking** and practice.



## READINGS

### **Required Texts:**

Murawski, W.W. (2009/2010). *Collaborative teaching in elementary/ secondary schools: Making the co-teaching marriage work!* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Rath, T. (2007). *Strengths Finder 2.0*. Gallup Press.

Gerlach, K. (2010). *Let's team up! A checklist for paraeducators, teachers, and principals (7<sup>th</sup> ed)*. Washington, DC: NEA Checklist Series.

**Additional Readings required as assigned and will be available for download from class website. These may change with prior notification. Example readings may include:**

Childre, A., Sands, J.R., & Pope, S.T. (2009). Backwards design. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 41(5), 6-14.

Friend, M. (2000). Myths and misunderstandings about professional collaboration. *Remedial and Special Education*, 21(3), 130-160.

Lake, J.F. & Billingsley, B.S. (2000). An analysis of factors that contribute to parent-school conflict in special education. *Remedial and Special Education*, 21(4), 240-251.

Murawski, W.W. & Hughes, C.E. (2009). Response to intervention, collaboration, and co-teaching: A logical combination for successful systemic change. *Preventing School Failure*, 53(4), 267-277.

Spencer, S. (2005). An interview with Lynne Cook and June Downing: The practicalities of collaboration in special education service delivery. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 40, 296-300.

Trumbull, E., Greenfield, P.M., Rothstein-Fisch, C., & Quiroz, B. (2007). *Bridging cultures in parent conferences: Implications for school psychology*. Chapter 28 of Trumbull, et al., pp. 615-636.

Trumbull, E., & Rothstein-Fisch, C. (2008). Cultures in harmony. *Educational Leadership*, 63-66.

*Additional readings on instructional strategies, positive behavior support, social integration of students with special needs, Universal Design, and content strategies may be added.*

Pick your appropriate text –  
Elementary or Secondary. You  
don't need both!

## Course Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the evolving roles of special educators in a variety of placements and service delivery options;
2. Articulate the skills needed to be effective within the variety of roles;
3. Define collaborative and consultative processes, and the special educator's unique role in collaborative interactions in schools;
4. Use effective communications skills to create collaborative partnerships, articulate best practices, advocate for students with special needs including English learners, resolve conflict, and work effectively in teams;
5. Organize, schedule and manage large caseloads of students with special needs in a variety of service delivery models, including facilitating IEPs, conducting assessments, consulting and co-teaching with general educators, and collaborating with a variety of individuals;
6. Effectively manage paraprofessionals, utilizing their time and skills to the greatest educational benefit;
7. Use a variety of technologies and assistive technologies to provide universal access to general education curriculum for students across the spectrum of disabilities;
8. Critically analyze educational and assistive technology and identify when it does and does not effectively meet the needs of students;
9. Use co-teaching models to create universal access to general education curriculum for students across the spectrum of disabilities, including English learners;
10. Critically analyze a variety of special education service delivery models and decide when they meet or do not meet the needs of students;
11. Identify variables that may facilitate or constrain participation in collaborative relationships in order to create a positive inclusive climate for students with special needs;
12. Discuss the "value-added" of special educators who are able to facilitate the individualized, specialized instruction needed for effective inclusion of students with special needs and students who are English learners and gifted;
13. Apply communication skills to present-day situations with students, colleagues, administrators, paraprofessionals, parents, and/or other service personnel;
14. Analyze typical lesson plans to determine if they provide universal access to learning, and use communication and collaboration skills to provide feedback for improvement;
15. Analyze the specific challenges inherent to collaborative educational programs (e.g., scheduling, planning, content knowledge, accommodation) from a special education frame of reference and discuss techniques for addressing those challenges;
16. Recognize manifestations of resistance and conflict and apply problem-solving strategies for managing them;
17. Collaborate with community members to create transition plans that meet the needs of learners with disabilities;
18. Reflect on one's own practice to support student learning and continued professional development.

## General Requirements:

- Papers with an undue amount of errors in grammar, spelling, or sentence mechanics will not be graded. They will be given back to students to edit and resubmit, and will be graded as late.
- All assignments must be word processed and submitted on or before the due date. Assignments may be e-mailed to the instructor in case of illness or other absence, but it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are received by the due date. If assignments are emailed, a response will be sent when received. If you do not receive a response within 3 days, please send again.
- Students will be responsible for downloading their own class notes from the website. They will not be provided in class. Class notes will be posted on the website no later than the evening before class. ***Materials provided in class will only be available on the first day they are given out. It is up to you to make sure you have a buddy collect them for you in case of an absence***
- **10% of the points will be deducted each week (or part thereof) for late assignments.**

**Participation:** Education is a social endeavor and we learn from one another. If students are not present in class, we cannot benefit from their ideas, experiences, or observations. Due to the interactive nature of this course, attendance and participation are critical. Students are asked to notify the instructor in advance of missed classes whenever possible, and are responsible for obtaining any missed notes or handouts from a classmate. *Missing multiple classes will result in a lowered class grade.* Students will be expected to participate in weekly collaborative group interactions, and will be graded on that participation. In addition, students are asked to be aware of their communication style, and to use appropriate communication skills in all class activities.



## **Department Writing Standards:**

Writing requirements within the graduate program: **This is a graduate course and students are expected to turn in papers and assignments of graduate quality.** All work should represent your reflections upon and integration of information covered in class in an organized way. Additionally, written assignments are to be clear in sentence construction and are to be proof read before they are handed in. Please discuss individual concerns with your professor. Writers in the fields of psychology, other behavioral and social sciences and special education express their ideas in a form and style developed by the American Psychological Association, commonly referred to as "APA". This writing form and style is familiar to a wide audience and allows the reader to concentrate on the content of the writing. **It is expected that students will follow the requirements of APA style rules in all formal written course assignments.** Such requirements are detailed in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th Edition, 2009. Students will find the manual to be an invaluable resource as a professional educator and it is recommended they purchase the text.

**Person-First Language:** The CSUN Department of Special Education believes that a person is more important than a disability. Accordingly, we expect our students to use Person-First Language at all times, in both speaking and writing. For example, students would refer to ‘children with autism’ as opposed to ‘autistic children.’ Papers not using Person-First Language will be returned for editing, and must be resubmitted. For more information on Person-First Language, please see the class Moodle page.

**Technology Requirements:** Students are required to have access to the internet and to a working CSUN email account. *Instructor must be updated if email account changes.*

The course website can be accessed at: <http://moodle.csun.edu/>. Your user name and password to access the website are the same as those you use for access to the SOLAR system. ***Most information will be provided via Moodle so please check frequently!***



**On-Line Quizzes:** Students are required to log on to the course website and respond to the assigned readings the week before class (4 times). **Quizzes are due by Sunday midnight before the designated class meetings.** A percentage score will be generated for all 4 quizzes, and will then be calculated for the points allocated on the syllabus. The purpose of the on-line quizzes is to demonstrate your understanding of the assigned readings, podcasts, lectures, etc.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities must be registered with the Center on Disabilities (COD) in order to receive accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be honored in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The intent of the ADA is not to give a particular student an advantage over another, but simply to allow students with disabilities equal access to the course content, and to provide them an equal opportunity for success. Students may receive information about registering with COD at the following website: <http://www.csun.edu/cod/sdr/general/registering.htm>. The COD is located at Bayramian Hall, Rm. 110. Their phone number is 818-677-2684.

**Grading:** Grading is based on a total of 200 points. Participation in class is expected. A plus and minus system will be used. Grades will be assigned according to departmental standards as follows:

<b>A</b>	=	185-200 points
<b>A-</b>	=	179-184 points
<b>B+</b>	=	175-178 points
<b>B</b>	=	165-174 points
<b>B-</b>	=	159-164 points
<b>C+</b>	=	155-158 points
<b>C</b>	=	145-154 points
<b>C-</b>	=	139-144 points
<b>D+</b>	=	135-138 points
<b>D</b>	=	125-134 points
<b>D-</b>	=	119-124 points
<b>F</b>	=	below 118 points



**A - Outstanding.** A's are reserved for those students whose performance is *truly* outstanding. Performance reflects an outstanding level of competency attainment -- including critical analyses, information syntheses, and application of theory and research to practice. Projects and presentations are comprehensive, thoughtful, well organized, clearly written and effectively presented.

**B - Very Good.** Performance surpasses a basic level of competency attainment, understanding, and skill, and indicates an ability to integrate and apply information.

**C - Satisfactory.** Performance reflects basic level of competency attainment, understanding, and skill.

**D - Unsatisfactory.** Performance meets expectations for basic level of attainment for some competencies and understanding of some content.

**F - Failing.** Performance does not meet expectations for basic level of competency attainment and understanding.

**Incomplete.** Assigned only when at least 51% of required coursework has been completed *with a passing grade and with instructor approval.* See the current University catalog, page 56, for details.

**NOTE CSUN POLICIES:**

- Students are responsible for following all published CSUN policies and procedures.
- Adding/dropping classes is not normally permitted after the first 3 weeks of instruction.
- On individual assignments, students are expected to do their own work. The penalties for plagiarism and cheating are outlined in the University catalog, and can include failing the course.

## Course Assignments

All assignments will be thoroughly discussed in class, and supplemental written guidelines will be provided as noted below. *If in-class assignments are missed, they may not be made up.*

### 1. SPECIAL EDUCATOR BASICS: (20%)

Special educators in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have a variety of requirements. These activities will demonstrate that the student can master these varied requirements.

<b>Creation of schedule of caseload, classes, IEPs, mods</b>	<b>20 points</b>
<b>Creation of Teacher's Toolkit</b>	<b>10 points</b>
<b>Strengths finder- Pre &amp; Post-test activities</b>	<b>10 points</b>

### 2. REFLECTION & INTERACTION EXERCISES: (30%)

Structured exercises to be completed in and between class sessions. These activities require application, reflection and self-analysis of skills taught in class and covered in readings. *If quizzes are not taken by the time they are closed, they may not be made up. If interaction exercises are missed in class, points cannot be made up.*

<b>Four on-line mini-quizzes</b>	<b>20 points</b>
<b>Self-reflection &amp; evaluation on IIP</b>	<b>20 points</b>
<b>Participation and in-class activities</b>	<b>20 points</b>

### 3. COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS: (20%)

Collaborating with other professionals is key to the success of a special educator in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Communication, problem-solving, co-planning, co-teaching and differentiation are all key skills assessed in this project. This assignment will require partners to coplan, Skype, & create Googledocs as they communicate about the needs of a group of students in an inclusive classroom.

<b>Co-Planned, UDL Lesson plan</b>	<b>40 points</b>
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### 4. PERSONALIZED ACTIVITY: (30%)

This differentiated activity enables special educators to work on their own particular areas of need. Students will be allowed to choose their area of need, the way in which they will present their knowledge, and the manner in which they will learn their new content (individualized, with a partner, with a small group). A choice board and additional instructions will be provided.

<b>Individualized Learning Project</b>	<b>60 points</b>
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**TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = (100%)**

**200**