Westminster College
EDU 663-Honors Research Capstone

Instructor: Alison DuBois, Ph. D. Phone: 724-946-6039
Office: 301A OM email: duboisal@icloud.com

Course Description: This honors research capstone is an experienced designed to incorporate the ECE capstone requirements of student teaching and the additional research project and thesis required for Honors graduation designation. During this experience, the student, working collaboratively with his/her advisor and Honors Committee, is responsible for designing a research study, conducting the study, and writing the proposal and thesis. The research is expected to examine some aspect in education and contribute to the body of literature in that curricular area.

In addition to the course objectives outlined in the Student Teaching Syllabus below, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an ability to apply educational concepts, instructional methods, and behavior management techniques effectively.
2. Use observational, investigational, and critical-thinking skills; which includes, but is not limited to the ability to evaluate, interpret, and assess information and data with minimal guidance from the Honors faculty advisor.
3. Demonstrate initiative, responsibility, and accountability.
4. Demonstrate a capacity for decision-making.
5. Demonstrate effective communication skills through formal presentations and the Honors defense.

Course Assignments:

Honors Proposal and Thesis: Following the guidelines provided by the Honors Program the student will develop and write a proposal describing their research question, background information, methods and potential outcomes.

Honors Committee Meeting: The student is expected to meet at least once during the semester with their Honors committee during which they will provide a formal presentation of their progress, this meeting can include additional faculty members whose expertise may be consulted. Organization of the time and place of these meetings are the responsibility of the student.

Status Meetings with Honors Advisor: The student will meet with their Honors advisor on a weekly or bi-monthly basis as needed. The student is expected to come prepared with organized information and/or relevant documentation/data/materials to discuss at the meeting.

Course Grade:

Honors Proposal and Thesis: Quality of content, writing and research, incorporation of advisor and committee feedback into finished product.

Honors Advisor and Committee Meetings: Preparation, quality of presentation style & content
WESTMINSTER COLLEGE
Education 601/602
Student Teaching

Dr. DuBois
724-946-6039 office
724-510-1929 cell

“Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.”
-Margaret Mead

1. Communication/Professionalism

A vital component of your student teaching experience relies on your ability to communicate with your cooperating teacher. It is important for you to ask questions, be flexible, offer your assistance, and share concerns. Establish a time during the school day (before school, planning time, lunch, or after school) that is convenient for you and your cooperating teacher to meet and review your upcoming lessons, the schedule of the week, or questions/concerns from your journal. If you are uncertain of something, make sure to ask your cooperating teacher. He or she will assume you know the information if you don’t inquire about it.

Give your address and phone number to the teacher, college supervisor, school, and any other teachers (e.g., team members). Request the same information from your teacher and college supervisor.

Dress should be neat and in line with the rest of the faculty. Male student teachers wear a shirt and tie.

Respect confidentiality of student’s “stories.” Do not repeat personal conversations heard in the faculty room. Also, it is imperative that you use discretions when sharing your own personal stories. Your cooperating teacher should be viewed as a professional colleague, not a confidante.

2. Attendance

You are expected to be at school every day. If there is an emergency, illness or extenuating circumstances, you will need to notify your cooperating teacher as soon as possible. Check with your cooperating teacher to see how she/he would prefer to be notified. Make sure you have his or her phone number at your home. You will also need to notify your college supervisor when you will not be at school. Make-up days may be necessary in extenuating circumstances. Completed lesson plans and materials must be ready and available for your cooperating teacher if you are absent.

Student teachers are expected to follow the elementary or middle school calendar, not the college calendar. Student teachers should be present at all school functions (i.e., Open House, faculty meetings, and in-services).
3. Weekly Schedule and Daily Lesson Plans

**Weekly** – Outline your classroom’s learning experiences for each day, Monday through Friday on a weekly schedule.

**Daily** – You will write a detailed lesson plan for every lesson you teach for the first three instructional weeks of your placement. (See the Handbook for a lesson plan example). After this period, you may adopt your lesson planning to the school’s format upon the approval of your cooperating teacher and supervisor. You will need to consult with your cooperating teacher about the components needed in the school district’s block lesson plans.

The daily lesson plans help you to think through your teaching and provide a window for your cooperating teacher and your supervisor to see how you prepare for your teaching. Give your cooperating teacher a copy of your daily lesson plans at least one/two days in advance of teaching the lesson and email a copy to your supervisor. Your cooperating teacher will discuss the lesson with you then initial and date the lesson plan. Your supervisor will also discuss lesson plans with you.

*Give your college-based supervisor a general schedule of times for weekly lessons and special classes as soon as possible.*

4. Observations, Reflections and Evaluations

**Observations** – You will be observed by your cooperating teacher and your supervisor three times during each student teaching placement. Pre-conferences may be held about lessons to be observed, and post-conferences will be conducted. After each lesson, you will write a reflection that relates, (a) how you felt about the successfulness of the lesson, (b) strengths and weaknesses, (c) and what you will do to improve.

**Evaluations** – A formal evaluation will be completed by the student teacher, cooperating teacher, and college supervisor at the end of each eight week placement. At each evaluation, the cooperating teacher, supervisor and student teacher will meet to discuss growth in each of the four domains of evaluation; planning and preparation, classroom environment, instructional delivery and professionalism. A final grade will be suggested by your cooperating teacher and is fully determined by your supervisor.

**Final Evaluation**

**Student Teachers**

- Using the Final Evaluation 430 Checklist, reflect on your achievements for each criteria listed.
- Write a one page reflective paper (typed- in which you explore your strengths, risks you have taken, and how you have worked to grow. Use your mid-term reflection as a benchmark of growth.
- Complete the 430 attachment.
- A day prior to the three-way meeting, share your checklist and a copy of your reflective
Final Evaluation

Cooperating Teachers

After receiving the student teacher's self-evaluation (checklist and reflective paper), please complete a triplicate Final Evaluation Checklist form, grading the student teacher on her/his efforts throughout the placement.

At our final conference, the cooperating teacher, supervisor and student teacher will discuss the student teacher's growth and grade at a 25-30 minute conference scheduled mutually.

A letter of reference is appreciated at the end of the student teacher’s placement.

5. Journal & Video-tape

Journal – An important part of your student teaching experience will be your journal. Your journal will serve as a communication tool and a reflective record of your growth as a teacher. You are required to submit a weekly entry. Your cooperating teacher and your supervisor will respond to your journal on a regular basis. During student teacher seminars you will be asked to share your reflections.

For your weekly reflection, please follow this format:

• Discuss what you believe went well this week
• Discuss a challenge from this week
• Within the above discussion points, reflect on how those situations, events, feelings, etc. have changed or impacted you as a professional
• Each week, choose one of the following statements derived from the Common Core State Standards expectations for student learning and the teacher preparation standards from the Council for Exceptional Children and discuss your implementation of or success in meeting those expectations:

1. Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences: How did you provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for all students?

2. Learning Environments: How did you provide a safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environment so that all students were active and effective learners? How were emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and self-determination developed and supported?

3. Instructional Planning and Strategies: How did you select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence-based instructional and developmentally appropriate strategies to advance learning of all students?

4. Higher Order Thinking Skills: How did you encourage critical thinking skills from all students? What types of questioning/activities did you utilize and why did you select these?
5. Communication: How did you encourage communication of ideas and explanations among your students? What modes of communication did you promote-verbal, written, etc. and why?

6. Assessment: How did you use multiple methods of assessment and data-sources in making educational decisions? Did you the same types of assessment for all students, why or why not?

7. Collaboration: How did you collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways to address the needs of students across a range of learning experiences?

8. Curricular Content Knowledge: How did you use knowledge of the CCSS and specialized curricula to individualized learning for all students?

9. Math- How did you use knowledge of the CCSS 8 Standards of Mathematical Practice (SMP) during your lesson planning and Instruction? Which SMP did you emphasize, and why? How did you facilitate instruction that supported that (those) specific SMP? How did the students respond during the lesson?
   The 8 SMP are:
   1) Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them;
   2) Reason abstractly and quantitatively;
   3) Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others;
   4) Model with math;
   5) Use appropriate tools strategically;
   6) Attend to precision;
   7) Look for and make use of structure;
   8) Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

10. Literacy (Reading, Social Studies, Science)- How did you incorporate teaching reading of informational text into your lesson? What supports did you provide for your students during this activity and why?

11. Literacy (Reading, Social Studies, Science) - How did you emphasize a steady increase in students ability to understand more complex text over time? What supports, questions, activities did you use and why?

12. Literacy (Reading, Social Studies, Science) - How did you integrate research skills across standards and disciplines? What supports did you use to make research accessible for all students and why?

13. Literacy (Reading, Social Studies, Science)- How did you emphasize writing to argue, inform, and/or explain? What supports did you use to make this assignment accessible for all students and why?

**Video-Recording** – You will be recorded during a lesson of your choosing. (Please check with your
school district’s policy about video-taping for self-evaluation purposes). Watch the video-recording with your supervisor and then write a reflective self-evaluation. The recording can be done with your iPhone or iPad at your discretion or by the supervisor.

6. Teaching Full-time and Integrated Unit

Each week during your student teaching experience, you will assume additional teaching responsibilities and ultimately teach full-time for a minimum of two weeks. Your responsibilities will include planning, organizing, and teaching the entire school day. Any co-teaching that normally occurs in your classroom will be maintained.

You will create, organize, and carry out one integrated unit of one topic/issue (this will probably be done in the general education placement). Make sure you collaborate with your cooperating teacher on the topic/issue selected.

Observe other teachers in other grade levels, as well as your students’ gym, art, computer, music, library, and learning support experiences. Sitting in on and participating in parent-teacher conferences or IEP meetings is up to the discretion of the school-based supervisor.

7. Student Teaching Binder, Filing System, and Portfolio

Binder – Organize a large 2-3 inch, 3 ring binder in which you keep the following sections:

a. School information
b. Weekly and daily lesson plans
c. Observations and evaluations
d. Journal and video-tape reflections
e. Integrated thematic unit plans
f. Portfolio materials (pictures, letters, etc.)
g. Outstanding lesson plans/student work samples
h. Photographs of learning experiences, bulletin boards, students, etc.

Keep this binder on your desk so it can be easily reviewed by your cooperating teacher and your college supervisor.

8. Reflective Meetings/Seminars

At a mutually convenient time, your supervisor will meet with you to reflect on your growth process. Individual post-conference meetings and/or collective seminar meetings with all of the Westminster student teachers will be held on designated days and will require your attendance. Plan to share journals responses, issues of concern and/or successful lessons in order to receive feedback from others. Seminars will also be held to review resume writing guideline, e-portfolio suggestions and interview tips.

9. Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards
The professional education program provides evidence that PreK-4 and Special Education certification candidates complete a program of Early Childhood and Special Education studies the same as academic content area courses and required electives of a major in a bachelor’s degree. The program shall require the candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of the fundamental concepts of Early Childhood and Special Education and competence in applying developmentally appropriate practices to meet the diverse needs of all elementary students (K-4). (P.D.E., 1/01)

We reserve the right to make changes in the syllabus should it become necessary.