

Course Syllabus

The Role of Paraeducators with Individuals Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

COURSE TITLE: The Role of Paraeducators with Individuals Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

COURSE NUMBER: ComD 3340/6540

CREDITS: 3 Credits

INSTRUCTOR: Debra L. Siegel

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Course Description

This course defines the role of paraeducators who work with students who are blind or visually impaired, including those with multiple disabilities in various settings. The course examines legal mandates for training paraeducators as well as basic principles of working with students who have visual disabilities. The units identify the various settings where students who are blind or visually impaired are educated, as well as the types of students and educational team members paraeducators may be working with. Strategies and materials appropriate for both academic and non-academic students are presented. A description of the specialized curriculum for students who are blind or visually impaired is presented.

Each unit identifies objectives and terms to know and includes a PowerPoint presentation, readings, a quiz, one or more assignments, and a discussion question. The midterm is Unit 9, and it covers Units 1–8. The final exam is Unit 16 and it covers Units 10–15. Graduate students have two additional projects. The Discussion Forum enables you to share your own experiences and information with your classmates in a threaded discussion format. Points and percentages of the total grade are listed below.

Required Texts

Miller, C., & Levack, N. (Eds.). (1997). *A paraprofessional's handbook for working with students who are Visually Impaired*. Texas: Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Russotti, J., and Shaw, R. (2004). *When you have a visually impaired student in your classroom; A guide for paraeducators*. New York: AFB Press.

Additional required readings

For specific topics and/or discussion forum topics, you will be assigned online readings. In addition, an Internet search on any unit topic will result in many links to articles on that topic.

Teaching Strategies/Philosophy

This course is offered online. Students work independently and are encouraged to login frequently, and to organize their time so learning can be accomplished at a comfortable pace. Interaction will occur through discussion forum topics and through communication with the instructor.

Course Objectives

After completing this course you will be able to:

- Describe the paraeducator occupation, including laws that pertain to paraeducators and professional organizations that assist them.
- List competencies for all paraeducators, and specialized competencies for paraeducators who work with students who are blind or visually impaired
- Discuss instruction for very young students who are blind or visually impaired
- Identify interactions with students who are blind or visually impaired that foster their participation in school and social activities
- Identify members of the educational team and their roles
- Explain aspects of behavior management, especially for students who are blind or visually impaired
- List placement options for students who are blind or visually impaired
- List and describe components of the Expanded Core Curriculum
- List some accommodations and modifications students who are visually impaired or blind use in the classroom.
- Describe how to help students with visual impairments learn academic and nonacademic skills
- Describe how to encourage appropriate social skills for students who are blind or visually impaired

- Describe techniques to help students travel safely in and out of school
- List and describe specialized technology for communication and computation

Student Requirements

- Sign into Blackboard frequently and meet scheduled assignment due dates.
- Participate in discussion forum topics, and complete assignments, quizzes, midterm and final exams.
- Contact the instructor and/or the Help Desk (435-797-4357) immediately if unable to sign into the course; such contact documents attendance.

Course Outline

The course “The Role of Paraeducators with Individuals Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired” covers the following topics by unit:

Unit 1	The Paraeducator’s Role
Unit 2	General Competencies for Paraeducators
Unit 3	Competencies for Paraeducators Working With Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired
Unit 4	Early Intervention and Preschool
Unit 5	Working with Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired
Unit 6	Members of the Educational Team
Unit 7	Student Behavior
Unit 8	Placement Options
Unit 9	Mid-Term
Unit 10	Expanded Core Curriculum
Unit 11	Accommodations and Modifications in the Classroom
Unit 12	Non-Academic Skills
Unit 13	Social Skills
Unit 14	Travel Skills
Unit 15	Assistive Devices and Technology
Unit 16	Final Exam

Course Evaluation

Course Points

The maximum points allowed for each assessment group is as follows:

Assessment Group	Maximum # Points	% of Total Points	
		Undergraduate	Graduate
Quizzes	210	29%	27%
Discussions	70	10%	9%
Assignments	240	33%	31%
Graduate Assignments	50	-	6%
Midterm	120	16%	15%
Final Exam	90	12%	12%
Total Undergraduate	730	100%	-
Total Graduate	780	-	100%

The final course grade will be based upon the following:

Undergraduate Point Calculation

PERCENT	GRADE	POINTS
93-100%	A	730 – 679
90-92%	A-	678 – 657
87-89%	B+	656 – 634
83-86%	B	633 – 608
80-82%	B-	607 – 584
77-79%	C+	583 – 560
73-76%	C	559 – 535
70-72%	C-	534 – 511
60-69%	D	510 – 438
BELOW 60%	F	437 - BELOW

Graduate Point Calculation

PERCENT	GRADE	POINTS
93-100%	A	780 – 726
90-92%	A-	725 – 702
87-89%	B+	701 – 675
83-86%	B	674 – 648
80-82%	B-	647 – 624
77-79%	C+	623 – 597
73-76%	C	596 – 570
70-72%	C-	569 – 546
60-69%	D	545 – 468
BELOW 60%	F	467 - BELOW

Grading Rubric for Assignments

Unit Assignments 10 points possible

Content – 8 total points possible

Range	Criteria
7-8	<u>Excellent to Very Good</u> - logical application to the content area; all elements appropriately addressed; clear organization; sufficient examples drawn from the unit's materials and activities
6-7	<u>Good to Average</u> – most elements appropriately addressed, adequately explored topic with acceptable detail and examples; minor problems with organization
5-6	<u>Fair</u> – limited exploration of topic with minimal detail and examples; obscure logic and application to the content area; some elements unanswered
<5	<u>Poor</u> – disorganized presentation of ideas; several elements unanswered; minimal exploration of topic and lack of supporting examples and detail.

Mechanics - 2 total points possible

Score	Range	Criteria	Comments
	1.5-2	<u>Excellent to Very Good</u> – well-written English with few errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.	
	1-1.5	<u>Good to Fair</u> – occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar; meaning not obscured	
	<1	<u>Poor</u> – frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar; meaning obscured	

Grading Rubric for Discussion Forums

- 5 points: POST at least once as directed in assignment plus RESPOND at least once with a thought to another student's post using complete sentences and correct spelling and grammar.
- 4 points: POST at least once as directed in assignment plus RESPOND at least once with a thought to another student's post using incorrect spelling and/or grammar.
- 3 points: POST once as directed in assignment using complete sentences and correct spelling and grammar.
- 2 point: POST once as directed in assignment using incomplete sentences and incorrect spelling and/or grammar.
- 1 point: Only RESPOND with a thought to another student's post at least once.
- 0 points: No posting

Graduate Assignments Grading Rubric

Content – 20 total points possible

Range	Criteria
20-17.5	<u>Excellent to Very Good</u> – Topic fully and appropriately addressed; clear organization; sufficient examples drawn from the sources; properly formatted bibliography included
17.5-15	<u>Good to Average</u> – Topic adequately explored with acceptable detail and examples; minor problems with organization; bibliography included
12.5-15	<u>Fair</u> – Limited exploration of topic with minimal detail and examples; obscure logic and application to the content area; some elements unanswered; incomplete bibliography
<12.5	<u>Poor</u> – Minimal exploration of topic; disorganized presentation of ideas; and lack of supporting examples and bibliography.

Mechanics - 5 total points possible

Range	Criteria
3.75-5	<u>Excellent to Very Good</u> – well-written English with few errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
2.5-3.75	<u>Good to Fair</u> – occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar; meaning not obscured
<2.5	<u>Poor</u> – frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar; meaning obscured

Student Code of Conduct

Refer to the Utah State University General College Catalog for information on the student code of conduct as well as student rights and responsibilities, authority and responsibility, and academic honesty.

Disability Statement

Students with physical, sensory, emotional, or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Room 101 of the University Inn, 797-2444 voice, 797-0740 TTY, or toll free at 1-800-259-2966. Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible. Alternate format materials (Braille, large print, or digital) are available with advance notice.