

EDDS 601: Advocacy Issues within Special Education
Eastern Mennonite University Lancaster
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Course Schedule: On-site: June 13, August 6-7, 2012 @ 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. This blended format course includes online hours.

Total class hours: 42

Credit Hours: 3 graduate credits

Course Description: This course is designed to assist the teacher practitioner in recognizing the impact and importance of decision-making and the dynamics of advocacy. This course includes, but is not limited to, current topics in special education, self-determination by and for students, development of the essential professional advocacy competencies, advocating for students with special needs, the rights of children, and the inclusive setting. Students will participate in an exploration of advocacy websites, develop a wiki or brochure to use in their professional practice when working with families and colleagues, and develop a personal position on advocacy.

This course is required in the Master of Arts in Education program in the Special Education concentration and in the Master of Science in Nursing School Nurse Certification Program.

Course Rationale: Effective advocacy seeks to inform and challenge both school organizations and individuals to actively monitor and respond to the specific individualized needs of students with disabilities. The purpose of advocacy is not to alienate or antagonize institutions and individuals who may come under the scrutiny of an advocate. This course addresses specific issues special education professionals must be aware of in effectively collaborating, supporting, and empowering families of students with disabilities. Knowing we are in an era that requires sustained and committed advocacy to maintain the rights and services of students, this course is equipped to provide a philosophical and practical framework, as well as, the appropriate level of knowledge in order to appropriately and effectively advocate for students (Fiedler & Clark, 2009).

Conceptual Framework: “Preparing Caring, Reflective Teachers for a Changing World” The EMU Teacher Education Program has chosen the theme *Preparing Caring, Reflective Teachers for a Changing World* as the conceptual framework from which its beliefs and outcomes are based. The Teacher Education Program envisions preparing informed lifelong leaders and learners who value the dignity of all persons and are ready and willing to share a pilgrimage of openness and continuous growth as they invite others to join them.

These caring, reflective educators will offer healing and hope in a diverse world. Six performance outcomes focus all course and candidate outcomes.

MA in Education Program Outcomes:

Scholarship (S): to acquire advanced knowledge through core curriculum and specialty area courses and to organize and integrate that knowledge into professional practice.

Inquiry (I): to generate questions and to use critical thinking to self-assess, to view problems from multiple perspectives, to make informed decisions and to engage in action research for educational change.

Professional Knowledge (PK): to acquire advanced pedagogical and specialty area knowledge in order to create cultures of change and manage environments conducive to learning, setting high expectations and implementing appropriate instructional and assessment practices.

Communication (C): to develop communication strategies (verbal, nonverbal, and technological) which support collaboration and resourcefulness to empower self and others.

Caring (Ca): to develop a nurturing spirit that advocates for students, encourages social and ethical responsibility, and promotes peace building in diverse settings.

Leadership (L): to act as social change agents by working collaboratively to bring about fair and just systemic change within educational contexts.

Course Outcomes/Objectives: Upon successful completion of the course, the student will have:

1. Examined current issues in the field of special education and the ecological contexts that focus on the individual's environment. (S, I, PK)
2. Recognized differences among exceptional children and the adaptations available to teachers, (S, I, PK, Ca)
3. Examined inclusion and advocacy practices in educating students with special needs. (S, I, PK, Ca, L)
4. Discussed and defined special education students with health problems and physical disabilities. (S, I, PK, C, Ca)
5. Discussed policies and practices of agencies which lead to advocacy for students with disabilities. (S, I, PK, C, Ca, L)
6. Explored professional advocacy, the law, and ethics involved in advocating for students, as well as, pertinent advocacy skills and strategies, (S, PK, L)

Textbook Information: There is no required textbook for this course. Participants will be expected to access EMU library resources online.

Course Format: This class will be taught using a blended on-site and online format. The online component will be taught through Moodle. Methodology used in this course will include classroom discussions, forum interactions, email interactions with the instructor, independent projects, small-group project work online, research using web-based resourced and online learning logs based on instructor's questions.

Course Requirements and Due Dates: Submission of all required projects, papers, discussion boards/forums, and learning logs by established deadlines (additional explanation will be provided). Late assignments will result in a point drop per day.

- Pre-Class Writing Assignment
- Participation in Forums
- Weekly Learning Logs
- Advocacy Focus Area
- Wiki or Brochure

Pre-Class Writing Assignment: Prior to starting the course, all students are asked to upload a 2 page typed paper. The initial paper should describe your current understanding of advocacy. Provide examples of what advocacy means to you as an educator, what you believe the role of the special education teacher is in advocacy, and any concerns you have with the special education teacher being an advocate for students with special needs.

- **Due:**

Forums: There will be discussion boards/forums every week unless otherwise indicated. The discussions will be your opportunity to connect with other students in this course and to provide insight and responses to key questions prompted by the instruction and each other. Expected participation includes one posting of topic and at least two responses to posting of other students (unless no response is required per the instructor). There is no substitute for the forum experience. If you are unable to participate, please inform the instructor in advance. However, the forum should be open for sufficient duration to allow all members of the class to “weigh in.”

- **Due Weekly – Check exact due date next to each forum.**

Learning Log Format: In addition to weekly assignments, students will reflect on and incorporate the concepts learned in this course into their current lives and work practices using a weekly Learning Log. Students are asked to give thoughtful reflection and complete answers to the following questions (or other questions that may be posted) each week. Students may respond to classmate’s postings if they would like to respond.

Learning Log Format (Unless other format provided):

- What aspect of the week’s learning tasks were most meaningful?
- What is something you gained that might be helpful to you in your work or personal life?
- What suggestions, if any, do you have for the instructor and/or class participants to enhance the class?
- **Due Weekly – Check exact due date next to each Learning Log Format**

Advocacy Focus Area: Students will choose an advocacy topic relevant to the class AND relevant to their daily professional life. They will research the topic and develop a 2-3 page paper discussing the topic including but not limited to, a clear understanding of the topic, why it is important for class members to know about the topic, resources available

for class members to access to develop their understanding of the topic, how these resources can be used to support special education advocacy with families, students, colleagues, and community members.

- **Due**

Wiki or Brochure: Students will develop a wiki or brochure to support their professional lives. The wiki or brochure should be an example of student learning throughout the course and serve as a resources to families, students, colleagues, and/or community members the student comes into contact with in their professional lives. The topic of the wiki or brochure can be the advocacy focus area discussed above or another advocacy area of interest to the student.

- **Due**

Evaluation:

Pre-class Writing Assignment	10 points
Forums	80 points
Learning Logs	80 points
Advocacy Focus Area	40 points
Wiki or Brochure	<u>40 Points</u>
TOTAL	250 points

Grading Scale:

A	225-250 points
B	200-224 points
C	175-223 points
D	150–175 points
F	Below 150 points

Academic Integrity: The responsibility to foster and guard academic integrity rests with all members of the academic community. A foundation of mutual trust is essential to the learning community. Any incidents of academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade for the work submitted and a “Record of Academic Dishonesty” filed in the graduate dean’s office. Students are asked to meet with the professor (and other affected persons, where appropriate) to examine the effects of the dishonesty on others and to develop an accountability plan.

Special Accommodations Statement: If a student needs course adaptations of accommodations because of a documented disability of has emergency medical information to share, please inform the instructor of your needs.

Use of Graduate Level Writing Standards and American Psychological Association (APA) Writing Style

Candidates are expected to use *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 6th Edition* for written assignments including annotated bibliographies and references. Candidates citing references in Power Point references are also expected to use

APA style. Instructors may exclude short personal narratives, essays, lesson plans, or some project work if APA writing style is inappropriate.

All instructors teaching in the Master of Arts in Education program are asked to apply the EMU Graduate Writing Standards to any written work submitted. The instructors may use their discretion of the assignment does not lend itself to the EMU Graduate Writing Standards rubric. (See Appendix A). Use of APA and the Graduate Writing Standards rubric ensures uniformity of writing standards and serves to prepare enrolled program candidates for writing their action research projects.

Course Time Line:

Week 1	Introduction: Syllabus and Pre-Class assignments Partners in Time Self-Study Course Partners in Time Professional Advocacy Scenarios Assignments: - Professional Advocacy Scenario Question Due: - Learning Log Due:
Week 2	Focus: The Need for Professional Advocacy in Special Education Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), Section 504 Plans, & Health Care Plans Collaborative School Communities that Support Teaching & Learning Teaching in Urban Schools: Mentoring Pre-Services Teachers to Apply Advocacy Strategies McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Wrights Law Center Assignments: - Reflection on Developing an Advocacy Disposition Due: - Learning Log Due:
Week 3	Focus: Four Dispositions of Advocacy Ethics for Special Education Professionals What Every Special Educator Should Know Council for Exceptional Children Healing With Humor Mental Help Assignments: - Learning Log Due: - Initial Post and Response Forum Due:
Week 4	Focus: Family Support & Empowerment Strength-Based Child Portfolios: A Professional Development Activity to Alter Perspectives of Children With Special Needs Sustaining the Family: Meeting the Needs of Families of Children with Disabilities Peak Parent Center The Arc

	Yellow Pages for Kids Assignments: • Pick Your Topic Post and Response Due: • Learning Log Due:
Week 5 & 6	Focus: Essential Knowledge Base of Special Education Law (IDEA & Chapter 14) Parent Advocacy Center for Educational Rights Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (Section 504 & Health Care Plans) National Disability Rights Network The National Dissemination Center for Children and Disabilities National Center for Learning Disabilities Assignments: • Initial Post and Response Forum Due: • Learning Log Due:
Week 7	Focus: Dispute Resolution Mechanisms Available to Professionals, Families and Students Beyond Mediation: Strategies for Appropriate Early Dispute Resolution in Special Education Resolution Meeting Guide for Parents The Special Edge Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education Assignments: • Pick Two Forum Due • Learning Log Due:
Week 8	Focus: Knowledge of School Change Issues and Strategies Knowledge of Community Services and Organizations That Support Individual With Disabilities and Their Families Innovative Models of Collaboration to Serve Children, Youths, Families and Communities Full Service Community Schools: Creating New Institutions Building Upon the Theory of Change for Systems of Care Team-Based Service Delivery for Students with Disabilities Practice and Process in Wraparound Teamwork Coalition for Community Schools DisabilityInfo.Gov Assignments: • Article Abstracts Due: • Learning Log Due:
Week 9	Focus: Essential Skills: Interpersonal Communication Listening to the Voices of Families Mind Tools Assignments: • Initial Post & Response Forum Due: • Learning Log Due:
Week 10	Focus: Essential Skills: Collaboration Working Together: Lessons Learned from School, Family, and Community

	Culturally Sensitive Collaboration Within Person-Centered Planning Center for Collaborative Practice National Center of Secondary Education and Transition Assignments: • Turning Point Collaboration Leadership Self-Assessment Due: • Learning Log Due:
Week 11	Focus: Essential Skills: Conflict Resolution William Ury: Negotiating for Sustainable Agreements Conflict Resolution: Preparing Special Educators to Work in Collaborative Settings Mary Kinney Scenario Assignments: • Initial Post and Response Forum Due: • Learning Log Due:
Week 12	Focus: Essential Skills: Advocacy Skills & Strategies & Ethical Analysis Voicing One's Dreams Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund Ethical Competencies for School Professionals American Society for Ethics in Education Assignments: • Advocacy and You Forum Due: • Evaluating Where You Are in Your Ethical Skills Due: • Learning Log Due:
Week 13	Focus: Closure and Final Assignments Assignments: • Final Writing Assignment Due: • Final Learning Log Due:

Resources: (Additional resources will be added as the course develops)

Fiedler, C. R., Clark, D. (2009). *Making a Difference: Advocacy Competencies for Special Education Professionals* (2nd Ed.). Pro-Ed, Inc.

Partners in Time: <http://www.partnersinpolicymaking.com/history/>

Pennsylvania Training & Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN): A Professional Development Network. www.pattan.net

Pennsylvania Department of Education: <http://www.pde.state.pa.us/>

Additional Resources for School Nurse Certification Program

The following professional journals are recommended for further study

The Journal of School Nursing

Journal of School Health

Exceptional Children

The following websites are recommended for further study:

www.pasnap.org

www.nasn.org

www.cec.sped.org

Appendix A

Writing Standards – Graduate Level (Grid Version)

Criteria	A excellent	B good	C minimal expectations	Comments
Content (quality of the information, ideas and supporting details.)	- shows clarity of purpose - offers depth of content - applies insight and represents original thinking	- shows clarity of purpose - offers substantial information and sufficient support - represents some original thinking	- shows clarity of purpose - lacks depth of content and may depend on generalities or the commonplace - represents little original thinking	
Structure (logical order or sequence of the writing)	- is coherent and logically developed - uses very effective transitions	- is coherent and logically developed - uses smooth transitions	- is coherent and logically (but not fully) developed - has some awkward transitions	
Rhetoric and Style (appropriate attention to audience)	- is concise, eloquent and rhetorically effective - uses varied sentence structure - is engaging throughout and enjoyable to read	- displays concern for careful expression - uses some variation in sentence structure - may be wordy in places	- displays some originality but lacks imagination and may be stilted - uses little varied sentence structure - frequently uses jargon and clichés - uses generally clear but frequently wordy prose	
Information Literacy (locating, evaluating, and using effectively the needed information as appropriate to assignment)	- uses high-quality and reliable sources - chooses sources from many types of resources - chooses timely resources for the topic - integrates references and quotations to support ideas fully	- uses mostly high-quality and reliable sources - chooses sources from a moderate variety of types of resources - chooses resources with mostly appropriate dates - integrates references and quotations to provide some support for ideas	- uses a few poor-quality or unreliable sources - chooses sources from a few types of resources - chooses a few resources with inappropriate dates - integrates references or quotations that are loosely linked to the ideas of the paper	
Source Integrity (appropriate acknowledgment of sources used in research)	- cites sources for all quotations - cites credible paraphrases correctly - includes reference page - makes virtually no errors in documentation style	- cites sources for all quotations - usually cites credible paraphrases correctly - includes reference page - makes minimal errors in documentation style	- has sources for all quotations - has mostly credible paraphrases, sometimes cited correctly - includes reference page with several errors - makes several errors in documentation style.	
Conventions (adherence to grammar rules: usage, mechanics)	- uses well-constructed sentences - makes virtually no errors in grammar and spelling - makes accurate word choices	- almost always uses well-constructed sentences - makes minimal errors in grammar and spelling - makes accurate word choices	- usually uses well-constructed sentences - makes several errors - makes word choices that distract the reader	
The weighting of each of the six areas is dependent on the specific written assignment and the teacher's preference. Plagiarism occurs when one presents as one's own "someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source" (adapted from Council of Writing Program Administrators).				Grade

