

SPEC 8999
Thesis
1-3 Semester Hours

Dewar College of Education
Valdosta State University
Department of Early Childhood and Special Education
Conceptual Framework: Guiding Principles

(adapted from the Georgia Systemic Teacher Education Program Accomplished Teacher Framework)

Dispositions Principle: Productive dispositions positively affect learners, professional growth, and the learning environment.

Equity Principle: All learners deserve high expectations and support.

Process Principle: Learning is a lifelong process of development and growth.

Ownership Principle: Professionals are committed to, and assume responsibility for, the future of their disciplines.

Support Principle: Successful engagement in the process of learning requires collaboration among multiple partners.

Impact Principle: Effective practice yields evidence of learning.

Technology Principle: Technology facilitates teaching, learning, community-building, and resource acquisition.

Standards Principle: Evidence-based standards systematically guide professional preparation and development.

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbooks

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

Valdosta State University (2002) Valdosta State University graduate school thesis and dissertation guide: Valdosta, GA: Author

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Development and defense of the thesis. Must be taken each semester until the thesis is completed. Number of hours taken per semester must be approved by a Thesis Chair. A minimum of six (6) hours must be taken to complete the course of study for this program.

COE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK STANDARDS (CFS)

Standards Addressed in this Course

- I. **CONTENT AND CURRICULUM:** Teachers demonstrate a strong content knowledge of content area(s) that are appropriate for their certification levels.
- II. **KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS AND THEIR LEARNING:** Teachers support the intellectual, social, physical, and personal development of all students.
- III. **LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS:** Teachers create learning environments that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- IV. **ASSESSMENT:** Teachers understand and use a range of formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous development of all learners.
- V. **PLANNING AND INSTRUCTION:** Teachers design and create instructional experiences based on their knowledge of content and curriculum, students, learning environments, and assessment.
- VI. **PROFESSIONALISM:** Teachers recognize, participate in, and contribute to teaching as a profession.

Course Objectives (CO):

Advanced candidates will:

1. articulate (both verbally and in writing) the scientific method and knowledge of research and statistical terminology, and critically evaluate research based on methodology used and conclusions drawn. (CFS I, IV, V)
2. use research, statistics, and evaluation methods to investigate a problem or issue related to the education and training of students with disabilities. (CFS II)
3. evaluate research, translate research into practice, and use research design and statistics to plan and conduct investigations and program evaluations for improvement of services for students with disabilities. (CFS I, II, III, IV, V)
4. follow appropriate professional and institutional guidelines regarding ethical standards and procedures. (CFS VI)
5. write, implement, and defend an approved research thesis related to the education and training of students with disabilities. (CFS I, II, III, IV, V)
6. present a power-point presentation of their thesis to fellow students and faculty available. (CFS VI)

COURSE ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS/REQUIREMENTS

Activities are used to assess application of skills targeted in course content. See the Tentative Course Schedule for due dates.

1. Basic Certification through the Grants and Contracts Office. Prior to submitting any protocol to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) all individuals conducting research using human research subjects, whether faculty, staff, or students, must complete the training provided on-line through the VSU Institutional Review Board (IRB). The required training modules are numbered 1 through 6. These are modest in size, usually four to six questions for each module, and may be completed relatively quickly. Modules may be retaken the modules until passed satisfactorily, with at least an 80% correct score. A certificate is issued, and the VSU Office of Grants and Contracts will be notified of successful completion of the training. No IRB review will be processed without this certificate of satisfactory completion. Contact the IRB Administrator at 333-7837 or the IRB Chair, with any questions. (CO 4)
Access the training program at: <http://www.citiprogram.org>
2. Learning Modules Units (LMU). Each LMU is self-contained and provides specific content needed to complete the thesis process. Each will provide for a specific assignment related to the topic of the LMU and one step in the process. (CO 1-6)
3. Thesis Proposal Approval. Submit a formal proposal, chapters one through three (problem statement, review of related literature and procedures) to committee for review. The advanced candidate is expected to respond to committee questions and comments during a formal meeting with committee. While not required, the advanced candidate may request a face-to-face meeting with committee or committee chair. Otherwise, this meeting can take place via phone or other electronic venue. (CO 1-3)
4. Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval. Thesis proposal must be submitted to and approved by the Institutional Review Board at Valdosta State University. Necessary IRB forms may be found at:
<http://www.valdosta.edu/grants/institutional.shtml> (CO 3)
5. Thesis. The thesis is an original piece of research completed under the direction of a department thesis committee. While the thesis chair need not be a special education faculty member, it is recommended that at least one special education faculty member be included on the thesis committee for special education major. Specific thesis guidelines and requirements are found in the VSU Thesis and Dissertation Guide. All other evaluation related issues are based on a candidate's departmental thesis committee and the Graduate School. (CO 5)
6. Thesis Defense. Submit a final thesis, chapters one through five (problem statement, review of related literature and procedures, findings, discussion) to committee for review. The advanced candidate is expected to respond to committee questions and comments during a formal meeting with committee. While not required, the advanced candidate may request a face-to-face meeting with committee or committee chair. Otherwise, this

meeting can take place via phone or other electronic avenue. Submission of a powerpoint presentation is recommended to guide committee through the defense. (CO 6)

General Requirements:

1. Each class member is responsible for all assigned readings, LM materials, videos, discussion board POSTs and group and individual assignments.
2. Discussion boards (DBs). Respond to discussion board POSTs made by the course instructor and course colleagues for each learning module. You will be assigned to a group for all assignments. Points are earned based on quality of individual participation.
3. Tentative Course Schedule. Course instructor reserves the right to change tentative course assignment schedule of due dates based on the individual needs of the class. Changes and updates will be POSTed on the General Course DB.
4. Computer malfunction or loss of internet service in not grounds for failure to meet course requirements. It is required that class members will have a back up for technology issues.
5. Each class member is responsible for all information on the course syllabus.
6. Each class member is responsible for all information on the tentative course schedule.
7. Assignments are NOT accepted late.

COURSE EVALUATION

*Assignments to be submitted to LiveText portfolio.

Assignment	Point Value	Assignment
1.	P/F	Basic certification through the Grants and Contracts Office
2.	P/F	Learning Modules Units
3.	P/F	Thesis Proposal Approval
4.	P/F	IRB Approval
5.	P/F	*Thesis
6.	P/F	Thesis Defense
	P/F	Total Points

Grading Scale

To successfully complete course requirements a P (pass) must be achieved in all assignments above.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Participation/preparation in LMs is required—think of this as coming to class. Being prepared is a professional responsibility. Class members are responsible for participating in all LM assignments and discussions. Therefore, expectation is to come to this virtual class thoroughly prepared. This means having all materials submitted in the required format and due date and all required selections read. Class members are responsible for discussion board (DB) ideas, concepts and issues in the required format and due date. Class members are required to check the general class discussion board at least weekly for updates. It is the place where you ask and respond to course content, requirements and questions (think of it as “raising your hand in class”).

PROFESSIONALISM

Advanced candidates are expected to abide by the [Code of Ethics](#) developed by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission while engaged in all aspects of their teacher training experiences.

DEWAR COLLEGE OF EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

Below is information directly quoted from the Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures:

Academic integrity is the responsibility of all VSU faculty and students. Faculty members should promote academic integrity by including clear instruction on the components of academic integrity and clearly defining the penalties for cheating and plagiarism in their course syllabi. Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the Academic Integrity Policy as set forth in the Student Code of Conduct and the faculty members' syllabi. All students are expected to do their own work and to uphold a high standard of academic ethics.

The full text of Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures is available in the on the Academic Affairs website (<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyatVSU.shtml>).

The consequences for acts of academic dishonesty in the Dewar College of Education are:

FIRST OFFENSE:

1. The faculty member will administer an academic response (e.g. resubmit / retake assignment, failure of the assignment, failure of the course).
2. The faculty member will complete a Level Two Dewar College of Education Concern form (<http://www.valdosta.edu/coe/studentsinfo.shtml>).

3. The faculty member will complete a Valdosta State University Report of Academic Dishonesty (<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyatVSU.shtml>).

SECOND OFFENSE:

1. The faculty member will administer an academic response (e.g. resubmit / retake assignment, failure of the assignment, failure of the course).
2. The faculty member will complete a Level Two Dewar College of Education Concern form (<http://www.valdosta.edu/coe/studentsinfo.shtml>). According to the Dewar College of Education Concern Form Policy, “a second level two concern form will result in the student being dismissed from his/her program of study. This dismissal will result in an automatic review by the COE Undergraduate Policies Committee.”
3. The faculty member will complete a Valdosta State University Report of Academic Dishonesty (<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyatVSU.shtml>). According to the Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures document, “after a second Conduct Office in the Dean of Students Office, official charges will be drawn up and the disciplinary matter will be referred to the Valdosta State University Judicial Committee.”

ACCESS CENTER

Class members requesting classroom accommodations or modifications due to a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in the Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 245-2498 (V/VP) and 219-1348 (TTY).

STUDENT OPINION OF INSTRUCTION (SOI)

At the end of the term, all class members are expected to complete an online Student Opinion of Instruction survey (SOI) that will be available on BANNER. Email notification through their VSU email address when the SOI is available (generally at least one week before the end of the term) is sent from the College of Education. SOI responses are anonymous, and instructors will view only a summary of all responses two weeks after they have submitted final grades. While instructors cannot view individual responses or access any of the responses until after final grade submission, they can see which students have or have not completed their SOIs, and student compliance may be considered in the determination of the final course grade. These compliance and non-compliance reports will not be available once instructors are access the results. Complete information about the SOIs, including how to access the survey and a timetable for this term is available at

<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/OnlineSOIPilotProject.shtml>.

Office Address

Telephone

Office Hours