# Starting the Dialogue Early:
## Collaboration in Personnel Preparation

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# How do we get everyone in the same circle?



Collaborative Interagency Interdisciplinary Approach

Special Education

Adult Services

Students & Families

# Efforts at the Federal level

**- Recommended by GAO study, 2012**

- US Department of Education

- US Department of Health & Human Services

- US Department of Labor

- Social Security Administration

College of Education
School of Teacher Education

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF
SPECIAL EDUCATION

College of Education
Department of Child & Family Development

ARPE
Administration, Rehabilitation, and Postsecondary Education
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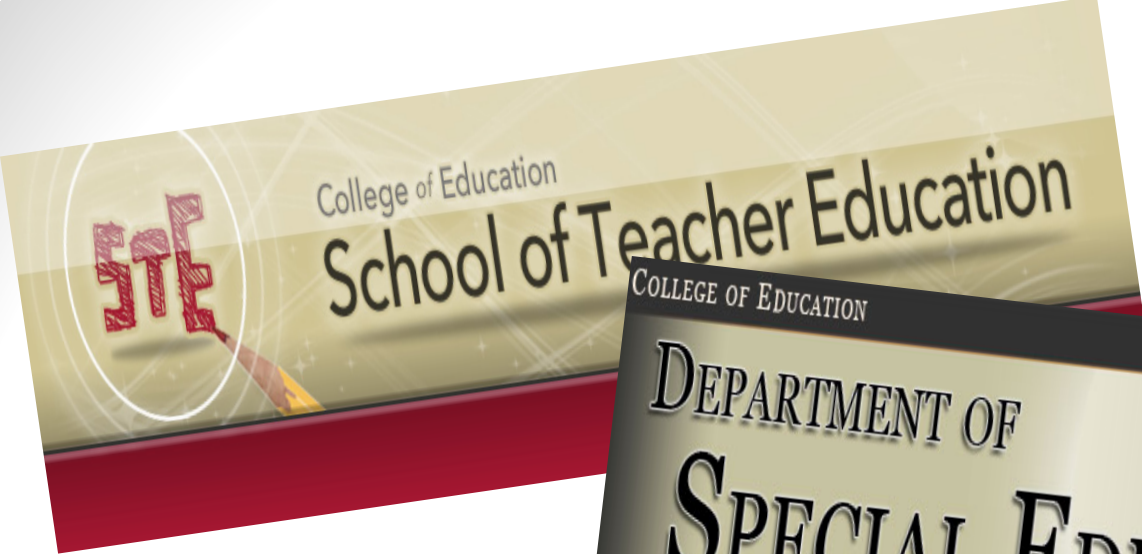
We educate and train professionals within an academic discipline.

# Emphasis on Collaboration & Transition in Pre-Service Personnel Preparation

**CCTC Program Standards for Education Specialist Teaching Credentials**

- Common Standards

- Program Standards

- Specific Credential Standards

# Standards for Transition Specialization Competencies in Pre-Service Personnel Preparation

Recommendations and Framework Employed for Transition Specialist Preparation Addressing Collaboration

DCDT Transition Specialist Competencies

- Transition-Related Planning, Instruction, and Service Responsibilities for Secondary Special Educators included in the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) 2009 publication, ***What Every Special Educator Must Know: Ethics, Standards, and Guidelines,*** also known as the ***Red Book 2009.***

    - Updated Fall 2012 by DCDT Validation Team

# Research Literature

Morningstar and Clark (2003) and Morningstar & Kleinhammer-Tramill (2005) described five areas critical to any program offering transition personnel development:

- Knowledge of principles and basic concepts of transition education and service
- Knowledge of models of transition education and services
- Skills in using strategies for developing, organizing, and implementing transition education and services
- *Knowledge and use of collaboration competencies*
- *Knowledge and skills to address systemic problems in transition services delivery*

# Personnel Preparation

- A national survey of special education personnel preparation programs revealed that fewer than half of the special education programs offered a stand-alone course in transition (Anderson et al., 2003).

- Perception seems to be that there is no need for transition specialist competencies

- CCTC program standards for a M/M teaching credential do not address transition competencies.

# Personnel Preparation

- Collaboration courses often do not address the mission, function, constraints, or interface between LEAs and non-educational agencies serving adults

- Teachers often are unaware of or have limited knowledge of how to access or use generic adult services (e.g., employment placement, job training programs, adult education programs)

- Generic adult service agencies frequently refer adults with disabilities to agencies serving only persons with disabilities based on disability alone rather than a need for and viable use of services.

# A national survey of special education personnel revealed that:

a) teachers of students with more severe disabilities were more likely to implement transition services than teachers of students with mild disabilities;

b) teachers were "somewhat unsatisfied" with pre-service preparation in transition;

c) *collaboration* was consistently ranked as the *second lowest* with respect to respondents' perception of their level of preparation, satisfaction with preparation, and frequency of engagement/implementation; and

d) "additional competencies" was rated lower than collaboration and included multicultural competencies and programmatic evaluation of transition programs.

**~ Benitez, Morningstar, & Frey (2008)**

# Trying a different way

### Via a Personnel Preparation Grant

- Existing SETS Certificate (Supported Employment & Transition Specialist)
  - Includes coursework from ARPE & SPED
- Personnel Prep grant to include SPED students in ARPE courses
  - Co-teaching a course with SPED and ARPE faculty
- Offering new opportunities for students to exchange information, resources, experience

# Walking the Talk

## Modeling Collaboration through Co-teaching

- **Welcome to ARP755: Governance and Policy Development in Postsecondary & Disability Systems**

**ARP 755: Governance and Policy Development in Postsecondary & Disability Systems**
Spring 2013 (3 units)

**Instructors**

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**Schedule**   Tuesdays, 4:00 – 6:40 pm

Office hours: Tues. 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm; Wed. 3:00 – 5:00; Thurs.,
3:00 pm - 4:30 pm or schedule appointments as necessary

**Course Description**

This course provides an overview of the primary service delivery systems utilized by rehabilitation counselors and transition specialists to coordinate and provide an effective and comprehensive combination of services for individuals with disabiilties. The purpose of investigating these disability systems is to provide students with the working knowledge needed to utilize these systems to strengthen the services accessed by adults and transitioning students as they develop and manage their own rehabilitation and/or transition plans. This issue-based learning course will require students to investigate contemporary public policy and service delivery issues in the transition/rehabilitation fields. Students will develop an understanding of existing perspectives of how disability systems work to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and develop collaborative strategies for accessing these systems. The students will also identify areas that can be strengthened in public policies to increase positive outcomes.

Topical materials and assigned readings will focus on the operation of and access to a variety of public, private-for-profit, and not-for-profit service systems that are designed to support individuals with disabilities, e.g., state rehabilitation agencies, local education agencies, community rehabilitation programs, developmental disabilities systems, mental health agencies, education, healthcare, Veteran's Administration, etc. The course activities and guest lecturers are designed to promote students' understanding of the social, economic, and environmental forces that support and/or present barriers to an individual's rehabilitation and community inclusion, and help students integrate this knowledge into their practice.
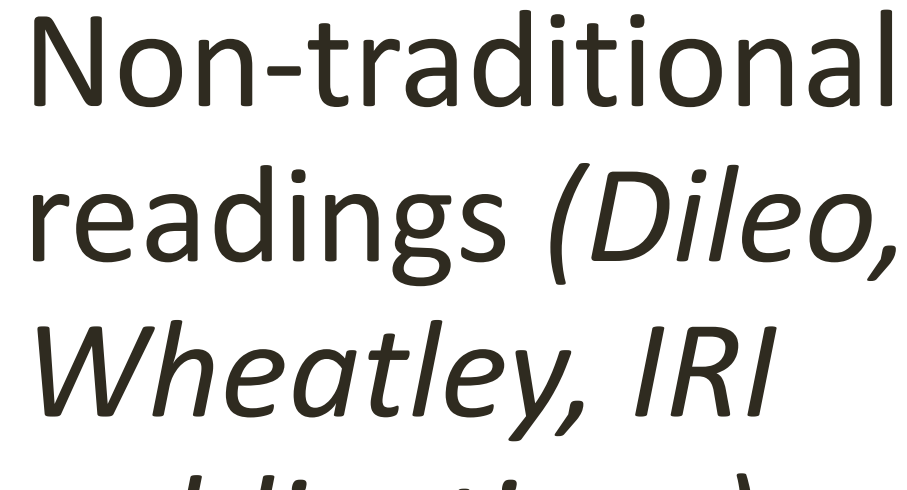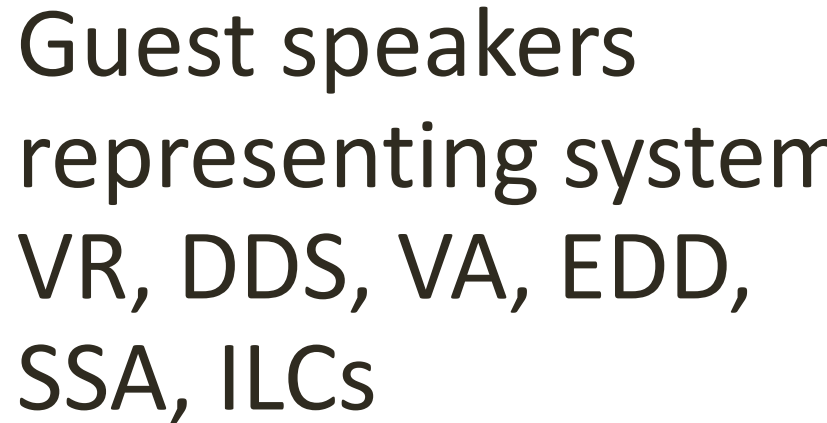
# Course structure & content

Non-traditional readings *(Dileo, Wheatley, IRI publications)*

Guest speakers representing systems: VR, DDS, VA, EDD, SSA, ILCs

Individual & Collaborative projects

# Non-traditional readings *(Dileo, Wheatley, IRI publications)*

Guest speakers representing systems: VR, DDS, VA, EDD, SSA, ILCs

& international perspectives

# Individual & Collaborative projects

> Core beliefs & values (individual)

*A critical disability that goes with expanding competence is the inability or unwillingness to examine the assumptions by which one operates.*

~ Robert Greenleaf, Founder of the MIT Center of Applied Ethics & Greenleaf Center on Servant-Leadership

# Individual & Collaborative projects

> Collaborative Systems Issue Paper (includes group paper, individual reflection, poster for presentation)

# Collaborative Projects

- Exploring State Employment (transition-aged students)

- Veterans Village & Social Security Administration (homeless veterans)

- Partnership: Veterans Affairs and Access to Independence

- High school student transition to vocational rehabilitation

- Workability III (community colleges) and Voc Rehab

- Transition from 2-year to 4-year colleges (disability services)

- Partnership: DOR and Job Corps

# What did the students learn about collaboration?



- Learning about two different collaborative systems brought me deeper knowledge about the help and services that can be given to individuals with or without disabilities.

- *I think that it was interesting as we did research that you had to let go of protecting your field and see the negatives and the barriers as well as what you bring to the table. I think that it took a lot to be able to say "ok yes, I do this job, but am I doing all that I can at this job?"*

- **I feel after this whole collaboration experience, I learned that collaboration is just like playing a puzzle game where every single member in this game holds a piece of the final answer. We have to patiently present our pieces to others while looking at what they have at hand to be able to finish the big map.**

# What did the students learn about transition?



- *Working with the transition teachers I was able to learn more of the education side of the transition process and where some disconnect is occurring between the two systems. One thing I found out is a large number of teachers do not know what the DOR is and what services it can provide for students moving on into post high school life. By educating teachers about services, using universal language, and establishing a set of guidelines to follow students with disabilities can be of great benefit.  On the other hand, DOR counselors need to understand what the role of the transition teacher is, when to begin the process to get students thinking about their future, and learn about the IEP and how it affects the student in high school and postsecondary education. I think with the two systems working together, more students will be prepared to move on to the "real world" and obtain employment or follow an education path to lead them to employment.*

# What about challenges?



- The term collaboration, like many other terms used in education, appears and sounds easily implemented in theory; however in reality, is very challenging in practice.

- *I think that our team problem is just a microcosm of the situation between the education system and the vocational rehabilitation system's lack of communication and set standards. To be fair, teachers are totally unappreciated, overwhelmed and underpaid, as are vocational rehabilitation counselors.*

- Ironically, our collaborative group effort suffered from many of the same issues faced by industry professionals in facilitating a collaborative dynamic. Due to our respective impacted schedules, and various technical difficulties, it was difficult to convene group meetings in person, and throughout our project, we ran into communication obstacles.

# How can we improve?



- *Helpful to have a team building activity*

- It would have been helpful and interesting to have more small group discussions early in the semester. This way, people could get to know one another a bit better at the beginning, bringing down the level of tension, giving us better insight into the programs, jobs and roles classmates from the various programs are involved in.

- We each focused on our core areas of competency, rather than structuring our efforts to learn more about the systems that we were unfamiliar with. In doing so, I believe we missed an invaluable opportunity.

- As a suggestion for future presentations and group work I suggest to have team members attend a mandatory meeting in both organizations.

# Recommendations for Professional Development

- Interdisciplinary, interagency sessions

- Structure around shared values, using real scenarios

- Increase emphasis on collaborative strategies in pre-service preparation

- Increased understanding of potential for serving underserved or unserved populations

- Evaluation of relationship between

  - ✓ levels of collaboration and post-school outcomes

  - ✓ effects on resource development, allocation and deployment

- Increased understanding, access and use of "generic" employment and adult education services

- OTHERS???

**Let's hear your ideas!!**

# References

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Morningstar, M. E., & Kleinhammer-Tramill, P. J.(2005). Professional development for transition personnel: Current issues and strategies for success. *National Center on Secondary Education and Transition Information Brief,4*(3), 1–5.

# For More Information:

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