
University of Massachusetts Lowell

Graduate School of Education

*Syllabus**

Capstone Course: Advanced Masters

Project 04.650—Spring 2012

Instructor

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- Syllabus for this course originally developed and written by Dr. Judith Davidson, Ph.D.

Course Description

In this course students demonstrate how the knowledge and skills learned in their advanced masters program can be applied directly to improving student achievement.

Students will demonstrate this competence through preparation of a Teacher Work Sample (TWS) that will meet the seven standards outlined by The Renaissance Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality:

1. The teacher uses information about the teaching-learning context and student individual differences to set learning goals, plan instruction, and assessment.
2. The teacher sets significant, challenging, varied, and appropriate learning goals.
3. The teacher uses multiple assessment modes and approaches aligned with learning goals to assess student learning before, during and after instruction.
4. The teacher design instruction for specific learning goals, student characteristics and needs, and learning contexts.
5. The teacher uses ongoing analysis of student learning to make instructional decisions.
6. The teacher uses assessment data to profile student learning and communicate information about student progress and achievement.
7. The teacher reflects on his or her instruction and student learning in order to improve teaching practice.

The preparation of the TWS will require that each student design, implement, assess, and reflect upon a 1-3 week teaching unit through which they will demonstrate the ways in which they meet the above standards. The final Teacher Work Sample submission is a document 20 pages in length, not including references.

Course Objectives

The major goal of this course is for students to demonstrate their ability to improve student achievement through the design, implementation, and assessment of learning activities. This Capstone course is an opportunity to show the knowledge, skills, and experience you possess as an educator.

Course Overview

The assumption in this course is that students have the tools they need to design and implement effective learning, and that the focus of this course is to provide them with a forum where they can demonstrate this knowledge, skills, and expertise.

Students will use materials created by the Renaissance Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality as the basis for development of the TWS. Weekly assignments will provide students with the building blocks they need for creating the fully-developed TWS package. Feedback on weekly assignments will be provided by instructor and class colleagues. Chats or Discussions will offer students opportunities to review progress and check assumptions. The final product—the TWS—will be the culmination of this multi-week effort.

Course Assignments and Assessment

Course Assignments and due dates are described in the Week 1 Learning Module.

However, please note these two issues related to assignments:

Weekly Assignments: Almost every week of the semester, you will be submitting a weekly assignment, a portion of the TWS in draft form, or an update on your progress implementing your instructional plan. The Weekly Assignments will form the focus of the Response Assignment for the following week.

Response Assignments: Almost all assignments have an obligatory response component. You will be asked to provide careful and explicit feedback to one or more class colleagues on their draft materials and/or project updates. Response formats may vary from week to week. Response assignments that are not submitted by the completion of the week are considered late. Point penalties may apply for late assignments.

Submitting Assignments

PLEASE NOTE: All assignments are due in **the assignment drop box** by 9:00 am on the first day of our work week AND in the appropriate section of **your wiki area**.

In Spring 2012, the beginning of our work week is TUESDAY.

Class Wiki

In this class you will be using a Wiki, in addition to the Blackboard Class space. The Class Wiki can be accessed from each of the Learning Modules and from the Links section of the menu. When you click on the appropriate link, it will take you to the sign-in area for the wiki. To sign into the wiki, you must have an active UMass Lowell student email password. Please make sure that your email password is up to date and working.

Each class member will have an allocated space in the wiki. This is where you will compile your assignments (in addition to submitting them in the appropriate assignment drop box within Blackboard). There is more on the wiki and its use inside the wiki.

Course Grading Structure

<i>Grade</i>	<i>GPA</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Comment</i>
A+	4.0	99-100	Work of the highest professional standard demonstrating independent and exemplary performance
A	4.0	96-98	Excellent work demonstrating independent and high quality performance.
A-	3.7	91-95	Very good work, carefully executed, but requiring some areas of improvement.
B+	3.3	86-90	Good work, indicating careful thought and attention to the task, yet requiring several areas of improvement.
B	3.0	80-85	Work of graduate standard, but omissions exist or careful analysis is not in evidence.
Below Graduate Standard			
B-	2.7	76-79	Effort is evident, but work indicates lack of understanding of the demands of the task
C+	2.3	70-75	Poor quality work with little attention to detail and the demands of the task.
C	2.0	65-69	Work of very poor quality, indicating no understanding of the depth of analysis required.
F	0.0	Below 65	Serious neglect or evidence of cheating.

Texts for the Course

There is no required textbook for the course. The Teacher Work Sample material you will need for the course will be made available on-line.

APA (6th ed.) format is required for the final (MS Word) assignment. If you already have this edition, and/or are able to effectively execute the style without a textbook, you do not need to purchase the book. If you do not have a copy of the APA 6th ed., or are unable to properly execute the style, please purchase and follow the style guidelines in the APA Manual.

Working in the Online Environment

This course officially starts on Tuesday. This is the day of the week that I dedicate to this course.

Chat

Tuesdays from 1:30-3:00 pm is the official time designated for Chat.

In this class Chat is **not** required. It is considered a kind of online office hours.

In this class there are people from many different time zones and work schedules. This is why you have chosen to use pursue learning in an asynchronous learning environment. These Chat hours are required by the university. DO NOT feel that you have to appear online for Chat. Chat is not considered part of any participation grade in this class. It is available to you if this would be helpful to your learning.

Please feel free to call or email within Blackboard, if you have questions.

Nuts and Bolts

Acceptable online behavior.

Respect for your classmates is of utmost importance. While there will be many instances of casual interaction, any use of inappropriate language, derogatory remarks or attempts to monopolize the conversation will not be accepted. You will receive a personal email from me and at my discretion you may be dismissed from the online course with no refund of tuition and fees paid. However, it is perfectly acceptable to use humor and icons to designate a joke.

Late Assignments

Timely submission of assignments is a necessity in a course like this where each class member relies upon others for feedback and suggestions. Failure to submit materials in a timely manner may lead to a grade penalty.

Withdrawal from Course and Incomplete Policy

If you do not participate regularly in the required on-line discussion board, and do not turn your assignments in on time, you may be advised to **WITHDRAW** from the course prior to the Registrar's deadline. You will lose the money you paid for the course, but a W rather than an F will be recorded on your transcript. PLEASE do not ask for an incomplete grade unless you have a very good rationale. Requests for incompletes must be put in writing and approved by me.

DATES FOR WITHDRAWAL are posted on the UML Graduate School website <http://uml.edu/grad>

Plagiarism

If your work shows evidence of plagiarism, the instructor will invoke the Graduate School Policy that can be found at:

<http://www.uml.edu/catalog/graduate/discipline/default.htm>

The following is the definition used in the Graduate Catalog:

"Plagiarism is defined as:

1. Direct quotation or word-for-word copying of all or part of the work of another without identification or acknowledgment of the quoted work;
2. Extensive use of acknowledged quotation from the work of others which is joined together by a few words or lines of one's own text;
3. An unacknowledged abbreviated restatement of someone else's analysis or conclusion, however skillfully paraphrased."

Conceptual Framework of the Graduate School of Education, University of Massachusetts-Lowell

*The central tenets of our conceptual framework are: **Excellence, Equity, Inquiry and Collaboration***

In this class I interpret the framework in this way:

Excellence: The nature of this class—an inquiry into an issue of personal/professional interest—means that our strengths are engaged and we are deeply committed. The class is structured so that this excellence is a shared commodity, that is, we seek to bring everyone up to the highest level of achievement.

Equity: The projects students undertake in this class seek to ensure better learning for all, and thus are always concerned with the nature of equity in our schools. Throughout the duration of the course, I am on the look-out for ways to provide all students with the attention they need to do their best work. I also seek to insure that no student is excluded, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

Inquiry: Inquiry is at the heart of this course. This course is dedicated to developing students' skills and inclinations in the arena of educational inquiry. I hope you will leave with a strong appreciation for the value that inquiry has to the educational endeavor.

Collaboration: There are many opportunities for meaningful collaboration in this class. You will be working with class colleagues to improve your work and develop interpretation of your collected materials. The comments and suggestions you receive from fellow students will prove invaluable to your work, and likewise, your comments and suggestions will help your class colleagues to improve their work, clarify their meaning, and better communicate their results.

Thank you for joining me this semester. I look forward to the journey with you.