

# SPED 5500 Transition and Secondary Methods in Special Education

Dr. Margarita Bianco

**University of Colorado Denver**  
**School of Education & Human Development**

**SPRING 2012**  
**SPED 5500**  
**TRANSITION AND SECONDARY METHODS in SPECIAL EDUCATION**

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**OFFICE HOURS:** By Appointment **Credit Hours:** 3  
**ONLINE**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course provides the practitioner with an understanding of the special education transition process as specified by federal and state guidelines, as well as effective teaching and learning strategies for secondary youth with disabilities. The content of this course focuses on effective secondary services and the design and implementation of transition planning that meets students' academic, physical, affective, cognitive, and communicative needs across the contexts of school, community, family life, career/vocation, and recreation/leisure environments.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

- Describe the components of the transition process for youth with disabilities
- Articulate the importance of culturally responsive transition planning
- Know the Colorado Model Content Standards and be able to incorporate them into unit and lesson planning for secondary learners
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills in transition assessment, planning, and implementation of instructional programs in (a) assessing the needs, preferences, and interests of secondary students with disabilities and their families for academic and transition service planning, and (b) practicing in a transdisciplinary team, including students and parents, to develop an IEP which addresses the needs of students and their families and which promotes successful transition for the students to participate into full range of natural and inclusive environments enjoyed by all adults
- Blend standards-based education with appropriate transition focused competencies to enhance student success
- Utilize principles of universal design, differentiated instruction, and learning strategy instruction for secondary learners
- Identify community resources and agencies that support young adults and their families in the post school years

- Identify, describe, and demonstrate knowledge of learning strategy instruction (e.g., academic, self-regulatory, study skills, and self-advocacy) for secondary youth with disabilities
- Articulate the importance of teaching students strategies for becoming strong self-advocates.

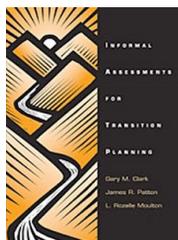
**PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN COURSE:**

<b>Colorado Department of Education Standard Elements</b>	<b>Colorado Department of Education Special Education Generalist Standards</b>	<b>Colorado Department of Education Special Education Teacher 1 K=knowledge P=performance</b>	<b>Council on Exceptional Children Standards</b>
5.5, 5.7,5.8 5.9, 6.1, 6.2 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 6.6, 6.7,7.3, 8.2, 8.3,	9.01 (1) 9.01 (2) (a,b,d,e) 9.01 (3) 9.01 (4) (b) 9.01 (5) 9.01 (6) (a,d,e,f,i,j) 9.01 (7) 9.01 (8) (b,d,e,i,k,l,m,n) 9.01 (10) (a,f,g,n) 9.01 (12) (e,f) 9.01 (13) 9.01 (14) (b,c,d,e,f)	9.02 (1K) 9.02 (1P) (a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,l) 9.02 (2K) 9.02 (2P) (a,b,c) 9.02 (3K) 9.02 (3P)(a,c,d,e,f) 9.02 (4K) (a,b) 9.02 (4P) (a,d) 9.02 (5K) 9.02 (5P) (a,c) 9.02 (6K) 9.02 (6P) (a,c,e) 9.02 (7K) 9.02 (7P) (a,b,c,d,e,f,i,j,k)	Standard 1: Foundations Standard 3: Individ. Lrng. Standard 4: Instr. Strategies Standard 5: Lrng. Environments and Social Interactions Standard 7: Instructional Planning Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice Standard 10: Collaboration

**LEARNING RESOURCES:**

**Required Texts**

Clark, G., Patton, J.R., & Moulton, L.R. (2000). *Informal assessments for transitions planning*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed, Inc.



**REQUIRED DOWNLOAD**

In order to make the online class more interactive and to increase your technology skills, you

will be required to use JING Pro, a software application which allows us to hear your voice and have you share your computer screen with us. You will need a microphone and a webcam for your computer- so please make sure you have one if you don't already. Microphones and webcams can be purchased inexpensively at any office supply store (usually for about \$20. or less). You can explore JING , how to use it, and setting up your account by going to <http://www.techsmith.com/jing/> and setting up an account.

### **Additional Resources**

**[Who Makes the Choices? Arizona Student-led IEP Teacher Toolkit](#)** (free - available on eCollege – See SPED 5500 Library tab)

The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for youth with Disabilities  
<http://publications.iowa.gov/4778/>

Self-Determination Resource Website  
[http://www.selfdeterminationak.org/resources\\_for\\_teachers.html](http://www.selfdeterminationak.org/resources_for_teachers.html)

***Taxonomy for Transition Programming*** available at  
<http://documents.cms.k12.nc.us/dsweb/Get/Version-21903/1002%20-%20Module01%20-%20Kohlers%20Taxonomy%20of%20Transition%20Planning.pdf>

**Charting a course for the future – A transition toolkit, Colorado Department of Education.**  
\*This toolkit is available for free and can be downloaded (by sections) at:  
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/TK.asp#t1>

**Many additional readings and resources will come from *National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center***  
<http://www.nsttac.org/>

### **Supplemental Readings:**

Although not “required” for this course, as a graduate student, the APA manual should be in your professional library. Here is a link to give you an idea of tips for writing in APA 6TH format

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/>

Additional readings will be provided throughout the course (doc sharing, weblinks, campus library, etc). **Please check your email and eCollege regularly.** Students are also encouraged to review resource materials provided on eCollege and print resources listed in the bibliography at the end of the syllabus.

If you are not familiar with obtaining library materials, please access the link below for a tutorial.

[Navigating Library Research](#) - eCourse AU

**School-based and Partner School Experiences That Support Course Learning:**

Whether you are a practicing teacher or teacher in training, several experiences can support and extend upon the information presented in this course. You could participate in a person-centered planning meeting, attend a Individualized Transition Planning meeting, interview students about their future goals and objectives, or adapt your lesson plans to incorporate knowledge and skills that support one or more of the transition domains.

**Other resources:**

Cooperating Teachers, Building Specialists, District Transition Specialists or Coordinators, Professional Organizations (e.g. Council for Exceptional Children, Transition Alliance, Council for Exceptional Children, Division of Career Development and Transitions (Division of CEC), Institute on Community Integration, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, Auraria Chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children,

Websites: (e.g. <http://ericec.org/>; <http://www.nichcy.org/> <http://www.ideapractices.org/>

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/transresources.asp>

<http://www.taalliance.org/>; Transition Alliance Institute

<http://www.arcjc.org/> - The ARC – Jefferson County

<http://ici.umn.edu/ncset> - National Center on Secondary Education and Transition

<http://ici.umn.edu> - Institute on Community Integration

<http://www.jfkpartners.org> Collaboration between CDE, South Westchester BOCES and JFK Child Development Center

Journals – i.e. Career Development for Exceptional Individuals

State and local Conferences (e.g. Inclusion Conference, Courage to Risk, Division of Career Development and Transition Conference)

**Related Websites:**

**Transition Resources:** <http://www.arcjc.org/resources/links.html>

<http://www.arcjc.org/resources/publications.html>

**Bibliography transition issues:** <http://www.transcen.org/biblioauthor.html>

- ❖ Colorado Department of Education – Personal learning profile resources:  
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/plp.asp>
- ❖ CDE Transition resources: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/TransResources.asp>
- ❖ Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) – Information Center links to the Laws (ADA, The Rehabilitation Act of 1973- Section 504, IDEA)  
<http://www.ericec.org/lawlink.html>
- ❖ ADA Home Page  
<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>
- ❖ Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)  
<http://www.ahead.org/>
- ❖ American Council on Education (ACE)  
<http://www.ACENET.edu>
- ❖ HEATH Resource Center, the National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities  
<http://www.heath.gwu.edu>
- ❖ National Center on Secondary Education and Transition <http://www.ncset.org/>

- ❖ National Clearinghouse on Careers and Professions Related to Early Intervention and Education for Children with Disabilities  
<http://www.specialedcareers.org>
- ❖ Peterson's  
<http://www.petersons.com/>
- ❖ Postsecondary Education Consortium  
<http://sunsite.utk.edu/cod/pec/>
- ❖ Postsecondary Education Programs Network  
<http://www.pepnet.org/>
- ❖ Teaching College Students with Disabilities from Center for Teaching Effectiveness  
<http://www.udel.edu/cte/disabilities.htm>
- ❖ EDLAW, Inc. (Education law)  
<http://www.edlaw.net>
- ❖ ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities Reading Minibib on Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities EB28  
<http://www.ericec.org/minibibs/eb28.html>

### **SEHD Incomplete Policy**

An incomplete is only awarded when special circumstances prevent a student's completing the course during the term. Special circumstances for the purposes of this course may generally be defined as tragic and/or severe medical problems. Incompletes will NOT be awarded if less than 75% of the course work has been completed. If less than 75% of the course work has been completed, the student will be asked to withdraw from the course. In the event that an incomplete is granted, the student will be expected to submit a written plan for completion, including timelines. **A withdrawal is preferable to an Incomplete or an F. The SEHD Incomplete Policy is below:**

*Incomplete grades (I) are not given to replace low grades. To be eligible for an incomplete grade, students must (1) have successfully completed 75% of the course requirements, (2) have special circumstances (verification required) that preclude the student from attending classes and/or completing graded assignments, and (3) make arrangements to complete missing assignments with the original instructor before more than one year has elapsed since the end of the semester in which the course was taken.*

### **Academic Honesty:**

Plagiarism is the use of another person's words or ideas without crediting that person. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated and may lead to failure on an assignment, in the class, and dismissal from the University. You are responsible for being attentive to or observant of campus policies about academic honesty as stated in the University's Student Conduct Code.

<http://thunder1.cudenver.edu/studentlife/studentlife/discipline.html>

### **Access, Disability, Communication:**

The University of Colorado Denver is committed to providing reasonable accommodation and access to programs and services to persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who want academic accommodations must register with Disability Resources and Services (DRS), North Classroom 2514, phone: 303 556-3450, TTY: 303 556-4766. I will be happy to provide approved accommodations once you provide me with a copy of DRS's letter.

## **EMAIL POLICY**

**I am *most* accessible by email.** You are welcome to email me at any point over the semester. I usually respond to emails within 24 hours.

**TIME COMMITMENT**

**The time demands of an online course are similar to that of a typical face-to-face course.** Many students inadvertently believe that an online course requires less time and effort. It is important that you keep up with the time requirement of this graduate level online course. Given that this is a three-credit course, the sessions have been designed to be equivalent to a typical 16 week semester course. In a typical face-to-face course, each class meets for approximately 2 hours and 50 minutes. This is usually time for lecture and large and small group class discussions and application activities. For each class meeting there is approximately another 2 to 3 hours of outside reading or class work. **This online course requirements are very similar** – the only difference is you have more flexibility as to when you “come to class”. **Be prepared to spend at least 2 hours a week on eCollege participating in various discussions, viewing notes and slides, and participating in class activities. Additionally, be prepared to spend another 2-3 hours a week reading or doing outside work related to the course.**

**ASSESSMENTS**

**See assignment packet for details – Each assignment is described in detail. Additionally, a link is provided which will direct you to a brief video in which I narrate the assignment description and expectations.**

Assignment	Point Values	Due Date
<b>Personal Learning Profile:</b>		
<b>Component I</b> [student background and informal assessment(s)]	30	Wk 8 3/9/12
<b>Component II</b> [8-10 lesson plans]	35	Wk 11 4/6/12
<b>Component III</b> [advocacy presentation and reflection of process]	35 [Total 100]	Wk 14 4/27/12
<b>APA 6<sup>th</sup> Format Quiz</b>	10	Week 6

Assignment	Point Values	Due Date
<p><b>Transition Coalition Modules:</b>Each module is worth 25 points</p> <p>Transition Best Practices Module</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Best Practices in Planning for Secondary Transition</li> <li>2. Transition Assessment: The Big Picture</li> <li>3. The Essentials of Self-Determination</li> <li>4. Secondary Transition and Cultural Diversity</li> </ol>	<p>[25 points each = Total 100]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wk 2 1/27/12</li> <li>2. Wk3 2/3/12</li> <li>3. Wk 5 2/17/12</li> <li>4. Wk 7 3/2/12</li> </ol>
<p><b>Differentiated Transition Assignment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Proposal</b></li> </ul>	<p>25</p>	<p>The final assignment is due on <i>or before</i> <b>Week13</b></p> <p><b>Your proposal for this assignment is due Week 8</b></p>
<p><b>Weekly in-class activities and Professional Responsibilities:</b></p> <p>Active participation in weekly activities, keeping up with readings and online modules, active participation in discussions, turning all work in on or before due date.</p>	<p>50</p> <p><i>*note – these points can only be earned if you participate in weekly activities</i></p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p><b>Total possible points</b></p>	<p><b>285</b></p>	

**Problems/Accommodations** -- If personal, work or family problems arise that interfere with your ability to complete or continue this course, see me immediately. We can work together to help you resolve the problems with the course. If you have special learning needs please schedule a time to talk with me so that we can help work together for your success.

It is expected that students are prepared for class each session by having read the assigned readings. Students are expected to contribute through in-class group work, asking questions, and supporting

discussions by elaborating on the points of discussion and demonstrating an ability to extend the discussions to their professional roles.

**FINAL COURSE GRADING SCALE:**

In order to receive a course grade as indicated relative to the point distribution, ***all required activities and projects must be completed and submitted by the due date.*** You may submit any assignment early (2 weeks) for feedback before the due date.

94-100	A	83-86	B
90-93	A-	80-82	B-
87-89	B+	79 – 75	C
		74 and below	F

A set of criterion has been provided for each performance assessment in this course. In some cases, the assessment is accompanied by a criterion sheet that provides details of the assignment components, criteria/standards for each component, points by component, and overall points. Projects will be judged on the basis of completeness, evidence of graduate level skills (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) applied and overall quality. Grading will be subjected to the following scale:

- A = Outstanding graduate work completed at the **mastery level**
- B = Above average graduate work completed at the proficient level
- C = Average graduate work completed at the apprentice level – classes at the C or lower level must be repeated

*Pluses and Minuses (i.e. B+, A-) will be awarded*

***LATE WORK*** – all assignments turned in after the due date will not be subject to rewrites and will result in a 10% point deduction for each day late.

Description of Requirements for Each Assessment

All projects will:

- Be word processed or typed
- Contain correct punctuation, grammar and spelling
- be submitted on or before the assigned due date
- Adhere to the standards of writing which acknowledge the use of the disability descriptor after the child or adult descriptor (Person First language)

**SCHEDULE OF CLASS SESSIONS AND PROPOSED CONTENT**

**\*Please note – Other readings may be assigned throughout the semester. These will be posted on eCollege (look in the course library tab).**

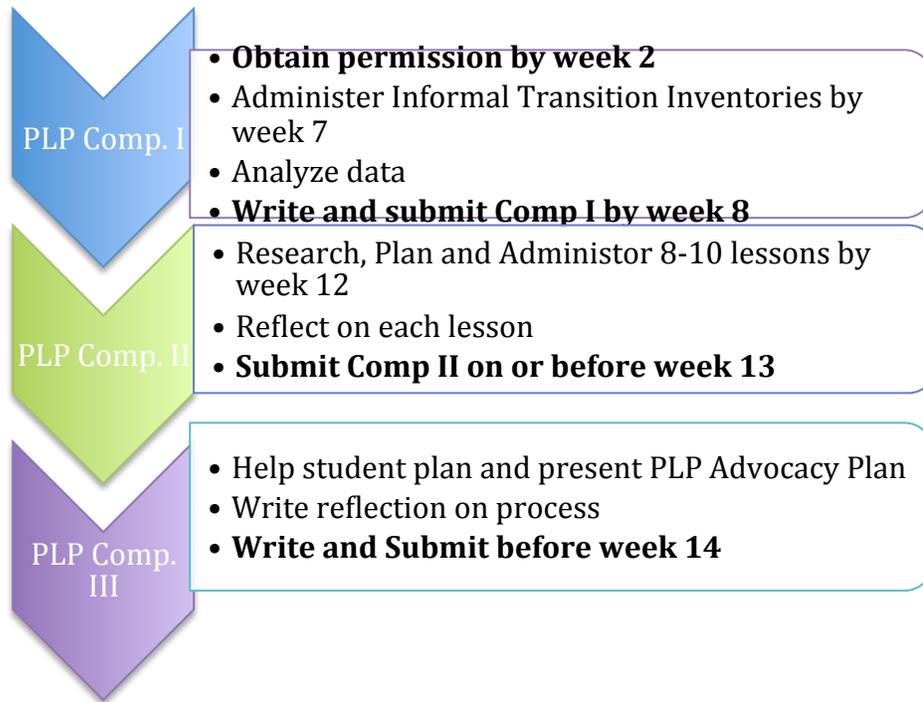
Week	Topic Focus	Articles, Chapters, Websites	Due Dates	Recommended PLP Timeline
<b>Week 1</b> 1/17	Course Overview, Introductions	Russell, C.L. (2008) <a href="#">How are your person first skills?</a> <i>Teaching Exceptional Children</i> , 40-43.	<i>Student Information Sheet</i> <i>Introduction</i> <i>Discussion Post</i>	<b>Identify Student and Obtain Permissions</b>
<b>Week 2</b> 1/23	<b><i>Historical perspective, adult outcomes, legislation and guidelines for secondary special education and transition services</i></b>		<b>Best practices Module Due</b>  <b>Discussion Best practices</b>  <i>Begin Transition Assessment</i>  <i>You should identify student with whom you will complete the PLP and obtain permission by next week</i>	
<b>Week 3</b> 1/30	<b><i>Assessment for Transition Education and Services</i></b>	<b><i>**In preparation for administering informal assessments for PLP Comp. I, read pages 1-45 in Clark, Patton, &amp; Moulton and survey assessments by transition domains</i></b>	<b>Transition Assessment module due</b>  Discussion of Transition Assessment  <i>Begin Self determination module</i>	<b>Administration of Informal Assessments and Analysis of Findings</b>
<b>Week 4</b> 2/6	<b><i>RtI at the Secondary Level</i></b>	Johnson and Smith (2008), <a href="#">Implementation of RTI at the middle school level: Challenges and benefits.</a> <i>Teaching Exceptional Children</i> , p. 46-52.  RTI in secondary schools: Is it on your	<b>Discussion of RTI in secondary settings</b>	

Week	Topic Focus	Articles, Chapters, Websites	Due Dates	Recommended PLP Timeline
		radar? RTI Action Network <a href="http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/why/rtiinsecondaryschools">http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/why/rtiinsecondaryschools</a>		
<b>Week 5</b> 2/13	<i>Self-Determination</i>		<b>Self determination module due</b>  Discussion of SD module  <i>Begin working Diversity Module</i>	
<b>Week 6</b> 2/20	<i>Students and Families: Key Participants</i>	Bianco, M., Garrison-Wade, D., & Lehman, J. (2009). <a href="#">Parents' Perceptions of Postschool Years for Young Adults With Developmental Disabilities</a> . <i>Intellectual Disabilities</i> 47 (3), pg. 186-196	<b>Discussion of students and families</b>  <b>APA 6<sup>th</sup> Format Quiz</b>	
<b>Week 7</b> 2/27	<i>Culturally Responsive Transition Planning</i>		<b>Diversity module due</b>  Discussion of Diversity Module	
<b>Week 8</b> 3/5	<i>Instructional Strategies</i>	Reid & Lienemann (2006). <b>Why use strategy instruction?</b> Ch 1  and Ch 2 <b>Building Background Knowledge in Strategy Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities</b> [eCollege Library]  Bassett, D.S. & Kochlar-Bryant (2006). <a href="#">Strategies for aligning standards-based education and transition</a> . <i>Focus on</i>	<b>COMP I OF PLP DUE</b>  <b>Discussion of Comp I and instructional strategies</b>  <b>Differentiated Assignment PROPOSAL Due</b>	<b>8-10 Lesson Plans</b>

Week	Topic Focus	Articles, Chapters, Websites	Due Dates	Recommended PLP Timeline
		<i>Exceptional Children</i> , 39 (2), p. 2-19.		
<b>Week 9</b> 3/11	<b><i>Learning Strategies</i></b>  <b><i>Accessing Content</i></b>  <b><i>Watering Up the Curriculum</i></b>	Ellis, E, Farmer, T, & Newman, J. (2005). <a href="#">Big ideas about teaching big ideas</a> . <i>Teaching Exceptional Children</i> , 34-40.  Ellis, E. (2002), Watering up the curriculum for adolescents with learning disabilities, Part I. <a href="http://www.ldonline.org/article/Watering_Up_the_Curriculum_for_Adolescents_with_Learning_Disabilities_Part_I_Goals_of_the_Knowledge_Dimension">http://www.ldonline.org/article/Watering_Up_the_Curriculum_for_Adolescents_with_Learning_Disabilities_Part_I_Goals_of_the_Knowledge_Dimension</a>  Ellis, E. <a href="#">Watering up the curriculum for adolescents with learning disabilities, Part II</a> : Goals of the Affective Dimension.	Learning Strategies Discussion / Activity	<b>8-10 Lesson Plans</b>
		SPRING BREAK		
<b>Week 10</b> 3/25	<b><i>Learning Strategies</i></b> <b><i>Student-led IEPs</i></b>	<a href="#">Who Makes the Choices? Arizona Student-led IEP Teacher Toolkit</a>	Student led IEP discussion/activity	<b>8-10 Lesson Plans/ Write Comp II</b>
<b>Week 11</b> 4/2	<b><i>Transition to Postsecondary Education</i></b>  <b><i>Learning study skills strategies</i></b>	Sitlington, P.L., Neubert, D.A., & Clark, G.M. (2010). <b>Ch. 9</b> ,Transition to postsecondary education in <i>Transition Education and Services for students with disabilities</i>  <i>Reid &amp; Lienemann (2006)</i> . Study Skills Strategies <i>Ch. 11 in Strategy Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities</i>	<b>Postsecondary discussion/activity</b>	

Week	Topic Focus	Articles, Chapters, Websites	Due Dates	Recommended PLP Timeline
<b>Week 12</b> 4/8			<b>COMP II OF PLP DUE</b>	<b>COMP II OF PLP DUE</b>
<b>Week 13</b> 4/16	<b><i>Transition to Employment</i></b>  Job placement, training and supervision School-Based and Community-Based Resources – Linkages	Flexer, R.W.k, Baer, R.M., Luft, P., & Simmons, T.J. (2008). Transition to employment <b>Ch 10</b> in <i>Transition Planning for Secondary Students with Disabilities</i>	<a href="#">Website tour activity/ discussion</a>	<b>Write Reflection</b>
<b>Week 14</b> 4/23	Changing Paradigms of Independent Living	Sitlington, P.L., Neubert, D.A., & Clark, G.M. (2010). Transition to living in the community. <b>Ch 10</b> in <i>Transition Education and Services</i>	<b>COMP III OF PLP DUE</b> <b>Independent Living discussion / activity</b>	<b>COMP III OF PLP DUE</b>
<b>Week 15</b> 4/30	Sexuality Education and Curricula	Select and read 2 articles from the bibliography provided by the <i>National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center</i> . Prior to class post your articles (in pdf) on eCollege discussion board and be prepared to discuss your readings.  <a href="http://www.nsttac.org/ebp/SexualityIndividualswithDisabilitiesAnnotatedBibliography.aspx">http://www.nsttac.org/ebp/SexualityIndividualswithDisabilitiesAnnotatedBibliography.aspx</a>	<b>Sexuality discussion / activity</b>	

## PLP Timeline



## SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Bassett, D.S. & Lehmann, J. (2002) Student-focused conferencing and planning. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- Blalock, G., & Benz, M.R. (1999). Using community transition teams to improve transition services. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- Cozzens, G., Dowdy, C.A., & Smith, T.E.C (1999). Adult agencies: Linkages for adolescents in transition. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- Deshler, D.D., Ellis, E.S., and Lenz, B.K. (1996). Teaching adolescents with learning disabilities: Strategies and methods. Denver, CO: Love Publishing.
- Field, S., Hoffman, A., & Spezia, S. (1998). Self-determination strategies for adolescents in transition. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- Hoover, J.J., and Patton, J.R. (2005). *Curriculum adaptations (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.)*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed., Inc.

- Hughes, C., Schumaker, J., Deshler, D. & Mercer, C. (1988). *The test taking strategy*. Lawrence, KS: Edge Enterprises.
- Kochhar-Bryant, C.A., & Bassett, D.S. (Eds.). (2002) *Aligning transition and standards-based education: Issues and Strategies*. Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.
- Lenz, K. & Deshler, D. (2004). *Teaching content to all: Evidence-based inclusive practices in middle and secondary schools*. Boston: Pearson.
- Lenz, K., Schumaker, J., Deshler, D., & Beals, V. (1984). *The word identification strategy*. Lawrence, KS: The University of Kansas.
- Michaels, C.A. (1998). Transition to employment. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- Nagel, D., Schumaker, J., & Deshler, D. (1986). *The FIRST-letter mnemonic strategy*. Lawrence, KS: Excel Enterprises
- Patton, J.R., Cronin, M.E., & Wood, S.J. (1999). Infusing real-life topics into existing curricula. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- Patton, J.R., & Dunn, C. (1998). Transition from school to adulthood: Basic concepts and recommended practice. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- Schumaker, J., Denton, P., & Deshler, D. (1984). *The paraphrasing strategy*. Lawrence KS: The University of Kansas
- Schumaker, J., & Lyerla, K. (1991). *The paragraph writing strategy*. Lawrence KS: The University of Kansas
- Schumaker, J., & Sheldon, J. (1985). *The sentence writing strategy*. Lawrence KS: The University of Kansas
- Unrau, N. (2004). *Content Area Reading and Writing*. Columbus, OH: Pearson.

# SPED 5500 Transition and Secondary Methods in Special Education Assignment Packet

Assignment Packet  
SPRING 2012

Margarita Bianco, EdD



Assignment	Point Values	Due Date
<p><b>Personal Learning Profile:</b></p> <p><b>Component I</b> [student background and informal assessment(s)]</p> <p><b>Component II</b> [8-10 lesson plans]</p> <p><b>Component III</b> [advocacy presentation and reflection of process]</p>	<p>30</p> <p>35</p> <p>35 [Total 100]</p>	<p>Wk 8 3/9/12</p> <p>Wk 12 4/6/12</p> <p>Wk 14 4/27/12</p>
<p><b>Transition Coalition Modules:</b>Each module is worth 25 points</p> <p>Transition Best Practices Module</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best Practices in Planning for Secondary Transition</li> <li>Transition Assessment: The Big Picture</li> <li>The Essentials of Self-Determination</li> <li>Secondary Transition and Cultural Diversity</li> </ol>	<p>[25 points each = Total 100]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wk 2 1/27/12</li> <li>Wk3 2/3/12</li> <li>Wk 5 2/17/12</li> <li>Wk 7 3/2/12</li> </ol>
<b>APA 6<sup>th</sup> Format Quiz</b>	10	Week 6
<b>Differentiated Transition Assignment</b>	25	<i>On or before Week13</i>
<p><b>Weekly in-class activities and Professional Responsibilities:</b></p> <p>Active participation in weekly activities, keeping up with readings and online modules, active participation in discussions, turning all work in on or before due date.</p>	<p>Total = 50</p> <p><i>*note – these points can only be earned if you participate in weekly activities</i></p>	On-going
<b>Total possible points</b>	<b>285</b>	

**For each graded assignment or activity, your instructor will ask you to use a grading rubric to self-evaluate your performance and learning. Each grading rubric has two columns – One for your self-evaluation and one for the instructor's evaluation.**

## Personal Learning Profile

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to work with an individual student in a manner that directly affects his/her ability to formulate a learning profile / self-advocacy plan that communicates his/her learning needs, interests, and goals to their families, teachers, and other educational support personnel. For this assignment, you will work with a middle or high school student one-on-one over a portion of the semester.

**Your goal** is to prepare this student to begin to articulate and share personal information that should be considered and integrated into their school program and IEP. **THIS IS NOT A TIME TO "TUTOR" THIS STUDENT IN BASIC SKILLS. Please see the sample PLP papers completed by former students (see sample PLP paper tab) to get a complete picture of what this final product should look like.**

**In order to accomplish this you will conduct the following in three stages:**

### **Component I of the PLP**

The first component of the PLP consists of a written narrative introducing your student by providing background and rationale for selecting this student for the project (i.e., why was she a good fit?). Additionally, you will administer and analyze several informal assessments for transition planning. The information you gather during the assessment should inform how you will proceed in developing lessons for the PLP.

#### **To complete Component I you will:**

1. Identify the student you would like to work with for this project and gain his/her permission AND parent or guardian's **permission**. See the permission forms (Spanish and English) and copy and paste into a Word document. Obtain signatures and append this to the Component 1 section of this paper.
2. Review the student's IEP including any transition related information, and if needed, get clarification on IEP contents from teachers, parents or guardian.
3. Write an **introduction about the student** providing information about his/her experiences in special education and **why you think** he/she is a good candidate for developing a personal learning profile.

3. **Administer informal assessment(s).** Read the introduction to the Clark et al. text, *Informal Assessments for Transition Planning* (pgs. 1-10). This introduction provides options and directions for how to proceed with informal assessments contained in the book.
  - a. After reading the introduction, examine the *Comprehensive Informal Inventory of Knowledge and Skills for Transition* (pgs. 10-42) and decide what section(s) of this you will administer. Based on what you already know (or don't know) about your student, decide on how to proceed and how you will gather information. Will you administer the entire inventory? Will you use the instrument as an initial screening in *selected* transition knowledge and skill areas? *Remember – this inventory is meant to be completed by students, parents, guardians, teachers – You will gather information from the student and those who know the student well.*
  - b. Next, select and administer one of the three informal inventories in the area **self-determination** [pgs 134-137]
  - c. And select and administer one informal inventory in any other area of your choice. Do you need more information about what the student knows in the area of employment? Communication? Interpersonal relations?
  
4. **Analyze your assessment data**
  - a. Once you administer the informal assessments, you will need to analyze them. That is, what does the assessment tell you about what your students knows about her/himself? Does she/he understand their strengths and weaknesses? Does your student know how to advocate for her/himself? Does she understand her disability and how to advocate for the supports she needs? Has she actively participated in her IEP? These are some of the questions you should be able to answer.
  - b. Based on your analysis, what does the student need to learn in order to become more self-determined and a better self-advocate? How can *you support* the student in becoming a more self-determined self-advocate?
  - c. Your data analysis should also **include reflection** on what you learned about the student and **where you want to focus your attention** for the PLP lessons based on what you now know about the student (based on file review, interviews, informal assessments, and SOP).

## Grading Rubric for Component I

*\*Attach grading rubric to your paper*

Component I	Possible Points	Self-Evaluation	Instructor Evaluation
<p><b><i>Part I: Historical overview of Student</i></b></p> <p>Provides enough of an overview for reader to get a sense of this student and their basic educational, social background, needs, strengths – <b>uses pseudonym for confidentiality</b> Include permission forms as appendix item</p> <p>File review completed and discussion of what was learned about the student from IEP review – including any transition related areas covered in the IEP.</p> <p>Provides a logical rationale as to why this student is a good fit for a personal learning profile.</p>	10		
<p><b><i>Part II: Informal Assessments with analysis of major areas that will require attention</i></b></p> <p>Completed informal assessments along with reflections of each At least one self-determination assessment was completed Assessments included in Appendix</p> <p>What impressions did you have of the students' reactions to the informal assessments?</p> <p>A brief reflection of what you learned as you interacted with the student as he/she completed the informal assessments. Any 'surprises,' 'big ah-has,' etc. <b>What areas will be most important to cover during your lessons with this student &amp; why? Include citations</b></p>	20		
<p><b>Writing conventions (professional presentation, person first, grammar, spelling)</b> <b>GRADING RUBRIC IS ATTACHED</b></p>			
<b>Total</b>	30		

### Component II of the PLP

The 2<sup>nd</sup> component of the PLP project consists of 8-10 lessons you develop and teach based on the information you obtained in the informal assessment process. **The primary focus of the lessons should be on having the student gain a better understanding of her strengths, needs, preferences and future goals and the supports she needs to meet her goals.** One or more lessons should **focus on teaching a learning strategy** to

meet the student's needs (e.g., if you learned the student has difficulty studying for exams, one or more lessons should teach a *study skills strategy*). In addition to class readings and outside research, you can use the following website to help you identify strategies to teach <http://www.unl.edu/csi/teachingstrategy.shtml>

**To complete Component II you will:**

1. Log your time and conduct a series of lessons on topics associated with the personal learning profile (template and *possible* lesson plans provided on eCollege and CDE website). Work with your student to have her articulate her profile as you go through the lesson plans and **document the student's reaction to the process** of building a personal learning profile. You are required to conduct a **minimum of 8 - 10 formal lesson plans** (which do not include taking the pre-test or putting together the final PLP) with your student. You should document that you spent **at least 20 hours** and try not to exceed about 30. Each lesson plan should be followed with a brief reflection (a few paragraphs) discussing the lesson and the student reaction along with what you learned and what you might do differently next time. Page length will vary depending on lesson plans, but *minimally* have 1 page per lesson plan plus a brief reflection on each lesson. You will also include a log of hours (in table form), which will be one more page.

## Grading Rubric for Component II

*\*Attach grading rubric to your paper – along with Component I*

Component II	Possible Points	Self-Evaluation	Instructor Evaluation
<p>Provides copies of (8-10) lesson plans.  Lessons include <i>measurable objectives, identified transition domains, content standards, and description of how lesson was carried out and how student learning was evaluated.</i>  Lessons focused on helping student identify her strengths, challenges, future goals, and self-advocacy. At least one lesson focused on a “learning strategy”  Log of hours</p>	20		
<p>Includes a brief reflection for each lesson. Describe what was learned during each session and how learning was evaluated.  Reflects on how the overall process of the PLP is proceeding - and includes copies of relevant student work as an appendix.</p>	15		
<p><b>Writing conventions (professional presentation, person first, grammar, spelling)</b>  <b>GRADING RUBRIC IS ATTACHED</b></p>			
<p><b>Total</b></p>	35		

## Component III of the PLP

The final component of the PLP consists of the student's presentation (slides) of her learning profile (see examples on eCollege) and your reflection on the process. ***Your reflection should be grounded in the literature and include citations in APA format. A bibliographic reference page should be included.***

### To complete Component III you will:

1. Assist the student in developing the powerpoint slides (or other means of communicating her PLP) for the personal learning profile presentation.
2. Support the student in sharing his/her profile (slides) with at least one other person (could be a family member, friend or teacher/other professional) and have that individual complete associated evaluation forms (samples provided on eCollege or develop your own)
3. Complete a 3-5 page reflection that discusses the PLP process and connects to your readings (i.e, include citations). You should minimally address the following
  - a. why is a personal learning profile is important?
  - b. the student's reactions to the process
  - c. the differences between the pre-test and the information provided in the completed profile
  - d. how the PLP addresses the student's ability to self-advocate **and why** this is important
  - e. the importance of learning strategy instruction for all students including those students with disabilities
  - f. your reaction to the PLP and describe how this process should or could be incorporated into your professional life.

### Grading Rubric for Component III

***\*Attach grading rubric to your paper along with Component I & II***

Component III	Possible Points	Self-Evaluation	Instructor Evaluation
<b><i>Completed Student Learning Profile</i></b>	10		
All components are complete and included (slides)			
Provides a brief description of student reaction to the process and final product			
<b><i>Evaluation Forms</i></b>			
Brief explanation as to whom the student presented his/her work			
All sections of both evaluation forms completed and turned in			

Component III	Possible Points	Self-Evaluation	Instructor Evaluation
<b>Reflection of Process</b>	25		
Reflects on how this process affected both the student and self			
Addresses issues such as changes that took place over time, big ideas that were a surprise or disappointment, how this process challenged you as a professional			
<b>Discusses the <u>multiple aspects of transition curricular domains</u> and how this project can be applied in your professional role .</b> <b>Discusses the influence of student’s culture and how this affects student’s transition and / or family’s perspective</b>			
Uses sound arguments and critical thinking to make points			
Demonstrates evaluation & synthesis in thinking & conclusions			
<b>Writing conventions (professional presentation, person first, grammar, spelling)</b> <b>GRADING RUBRIC IS ATTACHED</b>			
<b>Includes citations to appropriate references</b>			
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS / YOUR POINTS</b>	35		

## Transition Coalition Modules

Complete the following Transition Coalition Online Modules:

Each module is worth possible 25 points

- Transition Best Practices Module
- Best Practices in Planning for Secondary Transition
- Transition Assessment: The Big Picture
- The Essentials of Self-Determination
- Secondary Transition and Cultural Diversity

Each module takes *several* hours to complete – These modules are being done in lieu of purchasing a textbook and reading several chapters a week.

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO SAVE YOUR WORK AS YOU MOVE THROUGH THE MODULE OR ALL WILL BE LOST WHICH WILL REQUIRE YOU TO START THE MODULE AGAIN.**

**IT IS RECOMMENDED TO COMPLETE THE MODULES IN TWO SITTINGS.**

**For each module you will need to:**

- a. Complete the Module Tasks
- b. Complete the Reflective Questions
- c. Complete the Pretest and Posttest
- d. Complete the Satisfaction Survey

Completion of these various items will result in on-line portfolio of your work. You will need to print a hard-copy of this portfolio, scan it to pdf format, and submit to eCollege for review and evaluation.

Please note: You must receive at least an 85% on the post-test in order to receive full credit for the module. Less than 85% will result in partial credit.

To begin this work, go to: <http://transitioncoalition.org/transition/index.php>

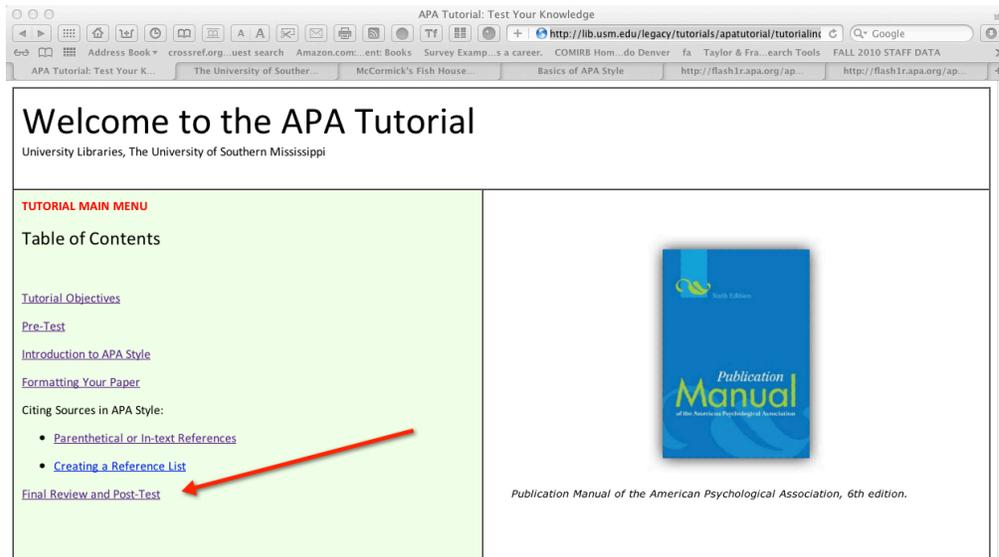
You will need to establish an account there using your email address and a password you provide.

## APA 6<sup>th</sup> Format Quiz

As a graduate student you should be familiar with the basics of APA 6<sup>th</sup> format for academic writing. As such, this quiz, and preparation for taking the quiz, is meant to familiarize you with APA 6<sup>th</sup> format – and make sure you understand how to use it in your writing.

Prior to taking the quiz, please review the APA tutorial and sample papers:

<http://lib.usm.edu/legacy/tutorials/apatutorial/tutorialindex.html>



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://lib.usm.edu/legacy/tutorials/apatutorial/tutorialindex.html>. The page title is "Welcome to the APA Tutorial" and the subtitle is "University Libraries, The University of Southern Mississippi". The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column, titled "TUTORIAL MAIN MENU", contains a "Table of Contents" with the following links: "Tutorial Objectives", "Pre-Test", "Introduction to APA Style", "Formatting Your Paper", "Citing Sources in APA Style:" (with a bulleted list containing "Parenthetical or In-text References" and "Creating a Reference List"), and "Final Review and Post-Test". A red arrow points to the "Final Review and Post-Test" link. The right column features a blue book cover for the "Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition". Below the cover, the text reads "Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition."

When you have completed the tutorial, take the Post-Test.

Please note: Do not enter my email address here. Instead, enter YOUR email address and the results will be sent directly to you. When you get your results, copy and paste the email into a Word document and submit to the Dropbox (APA Quiz).

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://lib.usm.edu/legacy/tutorials/apatutorial/quiz.php/>. The page title is "The University of Southern Mississippi Libraries' APA Tutorial". The form contains the following fields and instructions:

- Fill in the email boxes below to check your score and to have the quiz answers mailed to yourself and/or your instructor.
- Your Name (required):
- Your E-mail (required):  (A red arrow points to this field)
- Confirm Your E-mail (required):
- Your instructor's email (optional):  (A red circle highlights this field with the text "Do not put my email here.")
- The name of your college/university, school (required):

Below the form, it says "Enter the two generated words, separated by a space, in the box below." and shows a CAPTCHA with the word "repudiated" and a logo.

<http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>

Your APA quiz must be taken before Week 6. The quiz can be found on eCollege.

## Differentiated Transition Assignment

Because we know from years of research that students learn best when they are engaged in the learning process and have “ownership” over their learning, the *Differentiated Transition Assignment* is designed to do just that. **You** will determine which area of Transition and Secondary Teaching Methods you would like to learn more. **You must submit a proposal for your differentiated assignment and have this approved by your instructor before Week 8. Please see the proposal form at the end of the assignment packet.**

Below you will find a menu of options. These represent some examples of differentiated assignments that my students have completed (and learned a lot from) in the past.

- **Annotated Bibliography:** 8-10 articles on a specific topic of **your choice** related to transition education or secondary learning methods (e.g., strategy instruction for students)
- **Agency visit / interview and reflection paper** (about 5 pages plus bibliographic reference page)
- **Propose an assignment**

**OPTION # 1**  
**Transition Related Agency Visit**

Visit a transition related agency or an agency that provides services to students with disabilities and their families. This is not a Website review, so please call ahead and schedule a time to visit and interview an agency representative.

Once you have selected an agency of interest, use your module readings and other resources to ***guide you in developing your interview questions***.

Your written product should be approximately 5 pages (double spaced). See grading rubric below for more details on what to include.

Please access the Colorado Adult and Community Agency Fast Facts sheet for a possible list along with some sample questions.

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/artemis/ed14\\_16/ed14402c732001internet.pdf](http://www.cde.state.co.us/artemis/ed14_16/ed14402c732001internet.pdf)

Or resources provided by Peak to Peak

<http://www.rioblancoboces.org/descriptions/Where%20Do%20I%20Start.pdf>

Some examples include:

Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, Social Security Administration, Disability Resource Services at Post Secondary Education

College Living Experience

1391 Speer Blvd, Suite 400

Denver, CO 80204

(800) 486-5058

Email: [sroth@esa-education.com](mailto:sroth@esa-education.com)

Web: <http://www.cleinc.net>

College Living Experience is a post-secondary academic program that provides intensive assistance with academic, independent living and social skills to college students with special needs as they transition to become independent responsible adults.

**Colorado Advocacy Website**

Website: [www.coloroadvisory.org](http://www.coloroadvisory.org)

**Colorado Alliance for the Mentally Ill**

1100 Fillmore St.

Denver, CO 80206-3334

(303) 321-3104

Email: [coloami@sprynet.com](mailto:coloami@sprynet.com)

**The Arc of Arapahoe and Douglas, Inc.**

Cg La Scala

The Compass Bank Building

8100 E. Arapahoe Road, Suite 208

Centennial, CO 80112

(303) 220-9228

Email: [cg@arc-ad.org](mailto:cg@arc-ad.org)

Web: <http://www.arc-ad.org>

Work with individuals and families where developmental disabilities impact their lives in education, independence, health, productivity, and other aspects of pursuit of a happy life.

**The Arc of Colorado**

8000 E. Prentice, Suite D-1  
Greenwood Village, CO 80111  
(303) 864-9334; (800) 333-7690

Email: <http://www.thearcofco.org/>

We provide advocacy services for people with developmental disabilities.

**Autism Society of Colorado**

Jeff Konrade-Helm  
550 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Suite 100  
Lakewood, CO 80226-3116  
(720) 214-0794; (877) COLO-ASD; (720) 274-2744 (fax)

Email: [jeff@autismcolorado.org](mailto:jeff@autismcolorado.org)

Web: <http://www.autismcolorado.org>

**(Please attach with your paper)**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Concepts		
The name and description of the agency (what services do they provide) you visited along with a rationale for selecting this agency to visit for this assignment. What resources did you consult for <i>developing your questions</i> ?		
Summary of the actual information you gathered -(i.e., brochures for documentation, if appropriate)- and who you spoke with? A discussion of the challenges and benefits of this agency visit, including your feelings about any logistical dilemmas that were encountered by you may also affect how families experience these challenges – or cultural / linguistic barriers families may experience at this agency.		
Reflection: A discussion of what you learned from this agency visit and how this information will help you, your students, and their families. Discuss how these resources could be useful to other teachers, parents, students and schools – Tie this to your class readings & outside readings –		
Writing Conventions and Professional Presentation		

Reference page and Appendix (with script of questions)		
Total Points		

**Option # 2**  
**Annotated Bibliography / Transition Education**

The purpose of this assignment is for you to review the literature related to a **specific topic of interest to you** under the broad category of *transition education and secondary teaching methods* and create an annotated bibliography of your sources. You can use chapter headings and subheadings from your text or topics from the course syllabus as a way to help narrow your search.

You should **read and evaluate 8-10 current (2005-2011) journal articles<sup>1</sup>** related to your selected topic. The reference list at the end of the learning modules may be of help to get you started. **For each article you will provide a 1- 2 paragraph annotation including:**

- the bibliographic information in APA 6<sup>th</sup> format
- A brief summary (3-5 sentences) of the article in your own words in (do not cut and paste from the article abstract)
- A brief evaluation of the article ( 3-5 sentences) briefly stating how this article can help you as a teacher
- Each annotation should be approximately 1 (or 2) paragraphs in length
- Your annotated bibliography should be **submitted to Drop Box so it can be graded.**
  - **Introduce your topic by sharing why this topic was important to you and what you learned from your readings.**

See samples provided in the websites below

- <http://library.osu.edu/sites/education/annotated.php>
- <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/AnnotatedBibliography.html>
- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/>

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<sup>1</sup> Use professional journals for this assignment. Many articles can be obtained electronically by accessing the campus library. Possible journals include: *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*; *Journal of Special Education*; *Exceptional Children*; *Teaching Exceptional Children*; *Journal of Learning Disabilities*; *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities*, etc

**Annotated Bibliography / Transition Education**  
(Please attach with paper)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria	Points	Points
	Possible	Earned
8-10 articles are briefly summarized and referenced using correct APA 5 <sup>th</sup> format	<b>7</b>	
Brief evaluation provided for each article (how can the information help teachers, families, students, etc.)	<b>4</b>	
Professional presentation & writing conventions	<b>3</b>	
Posted on eCollege: Discussion tab and drop box with introduction	<b>1</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	

**Option # 3**  
**Propose an Assignment**

If the annotated bibliography or agency visit does not meet your learning needs, you may **propose another assignment**.

**Weekly Activities & Professional Responsibilities**

Similar to face-to-face format classes, online classes require your **active** participation on a weekly basis to maximize your learning. Further, in order to get the most out of the class, you will need to keep up with readings and assignments and communicate with your instructor when something is unclear.

Weekly activities and Professional Responsibilities are worth a **significant** portion of your grade (50 points). Near the end of the semester, you will be asked to self-evaluate your performance in this area and suggest the points you should receive. Ultimately it is the instructor's responsibility, however your input will be factored into the equation.

**Appendix**

**[Copy and paste this into a Word document and submit to Dropbox before Week 8]**  
**Differentiated Assignment Proposal Form**

**Name:**

1. Please identify which differentiated assignment option you would like to pursue. Please be specific – If you are selecting the annotated bibliography, indicate your topic (narrowed down as much as possible). If you are going to an agency, please identify which agency. If you are proposing something else, please let me know what that is.
2. What do you hope to learn from your assignment?
3. What resources (readings, websites, etc.) will you use to support your learning?



# Student Letter

## SPED 5500

A student enrolled in SPED 5500 in the fall 2011 semester wrote the following letter in support of my nomination for the Teaching Excellence Award.



5321 E. 136<sup>th</sup> Ave. Thornton, CO 80602-7714

Nicole Winowiecki

Office: (720) 972-4583 • Email: Nicole.C.Winowiecki@adams12.org

SLD/Transition Specialist

February 18, 2012

Dear Members of the Selection Committee for the University of Colorado's Campus Award for Excellence in Teaching:

I am writing on behalf of Professor Margarita Bianco, candidate for the University of Colorado's Campus Award for Excellence in Teaching. I was a student of Professor Bianco in the Fall Semester of 2011. At the time I started her class in August, I was unaware of the lasting impression she would have on me and how much the class would impact my teaching on a daily basis.

Entering into my final semester of graduate school, I was less than excited about the elective classes available to me on the C U Boulder campus. Although I had signed up for classes, I expanded my research to the Denver campus and came across SPED 5500 Transition and Secondary Methods in Special Education. After making some calls and talking with my advisor I learned that the professor, Margarita Bianco, had an excellent reputation as an educator and the topics being covered had me excited. I emailed Professor Bianco mere days before the class started, nervous I was going to miss out on this great opportunity and willing to do anything I could to join her class. I emailed expressing my excitement upon finding her class and explained that I currently teach a transition class for students with disabilities. I was surprised when she responded so quickly and offered me a warm welcome with a syllabus attached.

To say this experience was a blessing doesn't seem to be a strong enough statement to express how this single semester affected me. Of all the classes I have taken in my graduate and undergraduate degree, this class has had the most direct impact on my teaching and on me personally. The content was extremely relevant to working with high school students with disabilities, but above that, I found Professor Bianco to be a source of support and inspiration. Throughout the course of the semester, I was having a growing personal struggle with my current teaching position. I can honestly say it was the first time since I became a teacher that I started to feel entirely hopeless, and even worse I began to feel that the passion I once had was starting to fade as I felt like no matter what I did or said no one was listening to what I had to say. I know I am not the only person in this profession to feel this way and I know I am not the only one who feels like the needs of kids get lost in a system where funding and paperwork seem to be all people want to talk about, but only being 6 years into my career I was worried and discouraged. This was never how I planned on feeling in a career I love so much.

After the first class where I met Professor Bianco, I left with a small spark reignited as I felt like I had met someone who got as excited about educating and advocating for students with special needs as I am, and even better she loved talking about transition education. I instantly admired her because she was years into her career and still had the passion I felt I was losing. Listening to her talk about her work and how she was involved in the schools and what she has accomplished and is still accomplishing to improve the lives of students was, in itself, enough to provide encouragement. She went above and beyond that though. Professor Bianco recognized my passion for transition education and helped me focus on the students and what was important. She reminded me that I was knowledgeable about what the needs of my students are and taught me the skills I needed to be a stronger teacher and advocate for them. She

always listened to me as I was nearly in tears and offered strong and thoughtful advice. She encouraged me to push myself above and beyond what I was currently doing, and gave me the tools to be successful at it. She is someone who actually cared what I had to say, and to me that was invaluable. Most importantly, she reminded me why I went into education and gave me back my confidence in myself and my ability to have an impact beyond the classroom. I looked forward to class every week because I felt like it was my time to “refuel” and put me back in a positive mindset.

Part of the reason I was so eager to attend class every week is because I knew that Professor Bianco was not only an expert in the area of transitions for students with disabilities, but as a teacher, she is exceptional. I knew that every week I was going to a class that would be engaging and thought provoking, and I would leave with more ideas and information to bring to my classroom. Margarita is not a teacher who assigns readings and questions and essays. She is not a teacher who stands at the front of the class with a PowerPoint to lecture. She is a teacher who creates a learning experience which is constantly changing to challenge you. She immerses you and exposes you to the relevant world surrounding the content you are being taught. Her delivery of information varied between readings from resources such as a selection from a book, articles in journals, engaging in online modules through the Transition Coalition and documents provided through the Colorado Department of Education. It was evident that each assigned reading or activity was well thought out and chosen carefully to ensure a comprehensive and rousing learning experience.

Every class involved in-depth conversations among classmates, and each activity we did as an application of the content we were being taught also doubled as an introduction to a new teaching strategy we could use with students. For example, we were taught about mind maps and asked to use the strategy to summarize readings we did before sharing out with our classmates. In addition, a strong focus was placed on technology and integrating it into our teaching through the use of programs such as JING. This is a computer program that can be used to create a video clip of a computer screen paired with a voice recording. One of our assignments was to create a clip where we made a selection from a website Professor Bianco provided, and explained to our classmates what information we found helpful and how we could use it in our classroom as a resource. As a student, I was pushed out of my comfort zone and encouraged to bring my teaching strategies to a new level. Professor Bianco led by example in this area, as she offered video clips to accompany written descriptions of assignments. She didn't just tell us how technology could be helpful and beneficial in the classroom, she showed us, and used as many opportunities as possible to push us in this direction.

Another powerful way that Professor Bianco immersed us in the world of transitions was through guest speakers and field trips. She brought professionals and advocates in the field to the classroom as well as young adults to talk to us about their experiences. Visitors included CDE representatives to talk about I-13 and relevant laws and programs, a parent of a student with a disability and author of a book, and an educator working in an exciting and unique transition program, just to name a few. These visits were highly engaging and every one of the presentations provided a different prospective on the complexity of the transition processes. She arranged for us to attend the ARC of Jefferson, Clear Creek and Gilpin Counties Annual Meeting and SPARC Awards where she introduced us to the executive director of the

organization. We also had the honor of hearing the keynote speaker, Shea Tanis, talk about the sibling relationship between brothers and/or sisters with disabilities. While all these interactions were great sources of information, it also provided an invaluable networking experience to be in an intimate setting with so many respected professionals who share a common passion.

As I mentioned earlier, I was able to instantly apply what I was learning in Professor Bianco's class to my own teaching because it was so entirely relevant to the present-day issues in transition education. She educated on how to write I-13 compliant IEP's, a current focus of audits from CDE. As a member of my district's I-13 team, and auditing numerous amounts of poorly written IEP's, this thrilled me. Another key focus that has drastically improved my ability to be an effective teacher and a strong advocate for my students was the exposure to different programs and services available to students transitioning. I moved to Colorado from another state with little knowledge of the system in this state and have spent hours on my own researching in this area. I also have a much stronger understanding of the laws which apply to students with disabilities and how they change with the transition to adulthood. This allows me to teach my students how to advocate for their needs, get the supports they require, and plan and prepare for the steps necessary to reach their goals.

The last thing Professor Bianco taught me was how to plan and provide more meaningful transition lessons for my students. The final project for this class was the creation of a personal learning plan for a student and it provided an opportunity to pull together all of what we were learning in class and create a comprehensive transition plan for a student. The requirements were to assess the student and plan a course of study to meet specific transition needs. The PLP's focused applying research on self-determination, disability disclosure, advocating, celebrating strengths, and overcoming weaknesses. It was an empowering experience for a student to go through the process and create a presentation to share with teachers and adults. Over the course of the semester we had a lot of discussion on student-directed IEP's and as I worked on my project for school, I realized I could replicate the process and help all of my students create a document to guide them through running their own IEP. This project gave me the foundation to create a meaningful curriculum on a grander scale and my students are all the better for it. For the first time, all of my students in my transition class are knowledgeable about their IEP and accommodations. They know what IDEA and ADA law are, and they know they are responsible for disclosing their disability after graduation. This would not be possible if I had not built a strong foundation to build on in Professor Bianco's class. This project made me dissect the curriculum I was teaching in a completely different way than I ever had before and my students are benefiting from the professional growth I experienced completing this final project, and taking this course, every day.

I feel like Professor Bianco has provided me with the knowledge, encouragement, and professional feedback I was so desperately lacking at this point in my career. I have continued to use the numerous resources provided by Professor Bianco to enhance my current curriculum and plan in a way that best meets my students' needs. Her expertise and example has reignited my desire to go above and beyond for my students and has made it seem manageable rather than overwhelming because she has provided me with the guidance I needed to raise the bar for my students and myself. She demanded nothing less than excellence from myself and the other students in this class, and I know that I am not the only educator

and student who is better for it. Most importantly, I feel that Professor Bianco, through her encouragement and support, restored my confidence in myself and my skills as a teacher.

While I am still struggling with the current position I am in, I no longer feel hopeless. It is not very often that someone is able to make such lasting impression on the life of someone else but Margarita Bianco is has definitely left one in mine. The passion she brings for bettering the lives of individuals with disabilities is contagious. I know the future holds great things for me in my career and I know, largely because of her, I have the knowledge and skills to make it happen.

It is with complete appreciation for her dedication as an educator and admiration for her as an accomplished professional that I highly recommend Professor Margarita Bianco for the University of Colorado's Campus Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



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