



Executive Function and Creating Effective Learning Assessments Site-based Participant Syllabus

Course Description

This course is designed to teach participants the importance of metacognition, provide background knowledge of the core executive function processes, and help apply their knowledge of executive function processes to help students better understand themselves as learners. Participants will learn how executive functioning skills are the cognitive powers that help develop good habits which leads to effective school and life management.

The course will also look at the process of how to create effective assessments. Assessments are essential to the learning process, as evidenced in that assessments inform the instructor on the effectiveness of their instruction, as well as they provide a way to measure students' mastery of the course's educational learning targets. The course will explore how to identify course goals for assessment, determine test structure and design, write effective questions, and apply a variety of testing methods to differentiate testing methods.

Course Prerequisites

This course is recommended for K-12 teachers and administrators looking to gain background information concerning executive function and creating effective assessments and application of these tenets in classroom and school community. Participants must hold a baccalaureate degree.

System Requirements

- Internet access connection
- Software capable of reading PDF files
- Software capable of viewing PowerPoint presentations

Text Books/Supplemental Reading

No textbook is required for this course. Critical reading of assigned articles and text is embedded throughout the course. Assigned and recommended readings are listed in each milestone.

Global Goals of the Course

1. To examine current research in the area of best practice of executive function skill development and developing quality assessments (NBPTS 3,4)
2. To develop an understanding of the need for effective differentiating strategies in today's classroom (NBPTS 1,3,4)

3. To analyze current executive function instructional practices in order to create engaged practices to better support student learning (NBPTS 1,3,4)
4. To explore possible applications of executive function models in the classroom (NBPTS 1,2,3,4)
5. To explore research-proven methods of quality assessment creation and classroom application (NBTS 1,2,3,4)
6. To synthesize best practice executive function instruction research and classroom applications (NBPTS 2,3,4)

Instructional Objectives

By the conclusion of this course, each participant should be able to do the following:

1. Examine facts and forms of executive function
 - 1.1 Reflect on the barriers that executive function students will have towards learning
 - 1.2 Explore useful practice to improve organizational skills, time management strategies, and the ability to optimize academic and behavioral success for the executive function student
 - 1.3 Examine current research on executive function skill development
2. Explore struggles students have with executive function
 - 2.1 Examine the struggles that often co-exist with executive functions from autism to depression, anxiety, and obsessive compulsive disorder
 - 2.2 Review research relating to active learning, problem-solving, goal setting, and in-depth strategic thinking
 - 2.3 Discuss common challenges of working with students who have low level executive function skills
 - 2.4 Examine classroom strategies that can improve and help students with low executive function skills cope
3. Generate an understanding of the social and emotional needs of students with executive function deficiencies
 - 3.1 Explore guides for developing social behaviors and relationships with peers
 - 3.2 Research social skill techniques to improve social skills for the low executive functioning students for both group and individualized instruction
 - 3.3 Design a mini lesson using executive function strategies and social emotions strategies to help develop these skills for students
4. Teach practices that improve executive function skills
 - 4.1 Explore teaching methods that can unmask the learning deficiencies of the low executive function students

- 4.2 Research accommodations, modifications, and variations in the development of material and skill development for the low executive functioning student
- 4.3 Observe executive function skill development lessons
- 4.4 Reflect on lesson planning for the low executive functioning student
5. Identify Instructor Goals for Assessments: Learning Targets
 - 5.1 Explore the development of learning targets
 - 5.2 Research effective learning target development at the daily instructional level, unit level, and course level
 - 5.3 Review cognitive processes of learning targets
 - 5.4 Design a mini lesson using learning targets that have measurable outcomes
6. Determine the right text structure and design
 - 6.1 Explore test structures and designs
 - 6.2 Research test structures and correct questioning applications
 - 6.3 Review advantages and disadvantages of various assessment designs
 - 6.4 Reflect on executive function skills and test design
7. Assess effective test question writing
 - 7.1 Explore test question writing methods and questioning techniques
 - 7.2 Examine different question types
 - 7.3 Identify correct questioning based on learning target goals
8. Develop differentiated assessment methods
 - 8.1 Review alternative assessment methods
 - 8.2 Identify assessment methods that would be beneficial to low executive functioning students
 - 8.3 Devise/plan assessment for several courses with/without the low executive function components

Teaching Methodology and Delivery Model

Teaching methodologies of this course are designed to support intensive, graduate-level course work in an interactive setting. Instructional plans support the content of this course, which focuses on the improvement of professional teaching expertise in any or all of the following categories: assessment, collaboration, communication, diverse learners, educational reform, instructional strategies, planning instruction, productivity, reflection of practice, student learning, subject matter, and/or technology.

1. Methodologies include instructor presentations, specific skill practice, discussions, audio-visual presentations, self-evaluation, project development, course readings, research/inquiry exercises, and the synthesis of new knowledge and skills with previously acquired skills/expertise in relation to transition knowledge and content.
2. The course is taught with instructor-participant and participant-participant feedback. Course content, activities, and assessments are organized into 8 modules totaling 45 seat hours. Assessments are due two-weeks following the end of the course.

3. Research-based content, presentations, educator resources in print and on the Internet, notes from instructor presentations, class activity work pages, references, and assessments are supported by content designed specifically for educators.
4. Daily activities include a variety of research-based instructional approaches appropriate for adult learners. Class participants actively construct their own learning and make it personally relevant by acquiring and applying course knowledge/skills during hands-on practice and problem-solving activities, personal reflection, in-class presentations, whole-class and small group discussions and activities, assigned readings, research/inquiry, projects, and collaborative work in various group formats. All are designed to make it possible for educators and other school-related personnel to learn the same basic content and skills with an emphasis on application to their own specific content area or grade level.

Learning Assessment

Formative assessment of learning objectives for this course is conducted informally throughout the course via discussion, critiques, peer- and self-evaluations, journal entries, instructor feedback, small-group sharing and activities requiring participants to make sense of new knowledge and/or skills within their realm of teaching. Additionally, three formative assessments are embedded within the course. Summative assessment for the course occurs in the form of a final project which requires each participant to synthesize class content and apply it within the teacher's specific teaching environment. Copies of the course performance assessment rubrics are included in Appendices A-C.

Compliance with National Board of Professional Teaching Standards

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards represents the highest level of professional achievement in the continuum of teacher professional development. There are five core principles (standards) which cover five aspects of professional educational practice: (1) commitment to students and their learning, (2) knowledge of subject matter and instructional strategies, (3) management and monitoring of student learning, (4) systematic reflection about the teaching profession to learn and grow from experience, and (5) collaborative participation in the educational learning community.

Topics Agenda

Milestone One: Overview of Executive Function

In this milestone, participants will learn to examine the many forms of executive function disorders. The obstacles that executive functioning students have towards learning and why they fail to achieve at their instructional potential will be examined. Upon completion of this milestone, participants will also examine best practices of organizational skills and time management strategies. Emphasis focuses on participants gaining the ability to optimize academic and behavioral success demonstrated through a lesson plan outline.

Milestone Two: Students Struggle with Executive Function

In this milestone, participants will explore the struggles that often co-exist with executive functions from the autism spectrum, depression, anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Upon conclusion of this milestone, participants will continue to examine the research relating to active learning, problem-solving, goal setting, and in-depth strategic thinking related to the low executive functioning student.

Milestone Three: Understanding the Social-Emotional Needs of Students with Executive Function Deficiencies

In this milestone, participants will learn about organizing a successful guide for executive functioning students with thoughts about using proper social behaviors and relationships with peers. Upon conclusion of this milestone, participants look into developing social skills for the executive functioning student within the classroom, small group, and individualized instruction. Participants will reflect on how to help students better understand their executive function needs and help self-evaluate.

Milestone Four: Teaching Practices that Improve Executive Function Skills

In this milestone, participants will review the concern for educators to understand the learning strengths and deficiencies of the executive functioning student. Upon conclusion of this milestone, participants will research best practices on developing accommodations (physical, environmental), modifications (fundamental, cognitive) and continuous variations in the material and curriculum for the executive functioning student.

Milestone Five: Identifying Instructor Goals for Assessments: Learning Targets

In this milestone, participants will learn how to develop learning targets (measurable objectives). The use of action verbs (Bloom's Taxonomy) to describe what participants want their students to perform will be analyzed and developed in this milestone. Sample learning targets, course level outcomes, and unit level outcomes will be explained and developed. Upon completion of this milestone, participants will leave this milestone with the creation of student-centered learning targets tied to cognitive processes with measurable objectives for a lesson they are developing.

Milestone Six: Determining the Right Test Structure and Design

In this milestone, participants will build on the learning targets they developed in the previous milestone and decide on an appropriate test structure. A variety of different test structures will be reviewed and explored. The advantages and disadvantages of these various designs will be evaluated and used to help develop an appropriate assessment for the formative project.

Milestone Seven: Effective Question Writing

In this milestone, participants will learn how to write challenging task-oriented questions that can effectively measure their learning targets. A review of multiple choice, essay, short answer, and true/false questions will be reviewed and analyzed for strengths and

weaknesses. Participants will continue to build on their learning targets and develop several different assessment questions.

Milestone Eight: Differentiating Assessment Methods

In this milestone, a focus on alternative assessment methods such as performance-based assessments, portfolios, presentations and other options for students will be explored to create other avenues of assessments other than the traditional pen and paper assessments. Participants will leave the course with a better understanding of how to craft an assessment and a wealth of resources to support effective assessment development for future lessons.

Final Projects

Assignments/ assessments should reflect that each participant is accountable for a high degree of learning appropriate for graduate level credit. Therefore, instructors will assign 3 formative assignments which can be completed throughout the course. These assignments will correlate to the instructional learning objectives. All courses will also include a final summative project which requires critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, evaluation or application. Assessment of the assignments should not be limited to the quantity of work submitted but should carefully consider the quality and intellectual value of the work.

Final projects are due within two weeks of the end of class. Projects submitted during the third week "grace period" will have their grade reduced one full letter grade. No papers will be accepted past the grace period, and participants will, consequently, forfeit credit for the course. Papers are expected to be properly formatted and submitted to the instructor either in person or via mail or an email attachment.

Participants taking professional development unit (not-for-credit) courses must attend all scheduled class sessions and complete all formative assignments. However, they will be exempt from completing the final summative project unless otherwise noted. Proof of seat hours will be presented to the participants after completing course reflection via the student portal and all hours are met.

Grading

Throughout the course, participants will engage in both formal and informal formative and summative assessments. Points are assigned based on a four-point criterion rubric specifically delineated for each assessment that can be further defined as follows:

Distinguished: The assessment is highly imaginative; demonstrates critical thought; is unique; shows substantial application to one's own teaching or professional position; *goes above and beyond requirements*; is creative; demonstrates both breadth and depth of knowledge of transition-related subject matter; shows individual's personality; is

professional in presentation and appearance; and demonstrates considerable effort. The assessment is exceptionally completed and demonstrates clear understanding of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Distinguished" on the course rubric.

Proficient: The assessment is well-organized and complete; is effectively and clearly presented; demonstrates clear understandings; applies what has been learned to the author's own classroom situation; clearly shows connections; is detailed; and is thoughtful and supported with ideas. A thoroughly completed assessment demonstrates that the participant shows awareness of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Proficient" on the course rubric.

Basic: This is the lowest passing grade. The assessment meets minimum requirements; includes general information but lacks descriptive detail; shows limited application to teaching/learning; and lacks originality. This denotes work that does not meet **all** aspects of standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Basic" on the course rubric.

Unsatisfactory: The assessment is missing evidence or information; is sloppy and poorly organized; demonstrates only surface understandings; shows no evidence of application to the author's own teaching situation; is poorly written; and does not meet minimum standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Unsatisfactory" on the course rubric.

The assessments for this course are weighted as follows:

Participation and Reflection	30%
Formative Assessments	30%
Summative Assessments	40%

Academic Honesty and Integrity

All participants are expected to maintain academic honesty and integrity by doing their own work to the best of their ability. Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, etc.) will result in the participant receiving a zero for that assignment or paper.

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and The Americans with Disabilities Act, participants who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class, are encouraged to inform the

instructor at the beginning of the first session. Reasonable academic accommodations, aids, and adjustments may be made as needed to provide for equitable participation.

Attendance

Participants are required to attend all classes as well as participate in class discussions, small group activities, and projects. Absence from any part of the class will require that you withdraw from the class. You will need to contact The Connecting Link at (888) 550-5465 in the event this occurs.

Late Work and Make-Up Policy

Participants are expected to keep pace with assignments and expectations. If a situation arises in which an assignment cannot be completed, the participant is expected to make arrangements with the instructor for the timely submission of such work. Failure to complete all work in this time frame will result in an **incomplete** or a grade of **F** for the work, depending on the reason for the delay.

University Compliance

Course content and instruction are bound by policies associated with the university granting academic credit for the course. Such policies include, but are not limited to: academic integrity and honor codes, institutional objectives and grade grievance procedures. These policies are located within the official academic catalogs which can be accessed through the university's official website.