WILLIAM PATERNSON UNIVERSITY
College of Education
Department of Special Education and Counseling

COURSE OF STUDY

Theme: Preparing Inquiring Educators: Knowledge, Understanding and Application

A. Course Title: SPED 621, Learning Theory and Applications
   Credits: 3

B. Course Description: A study of the nature of learning: the major theories of learning and language development and how these theories may be applied to an understanding of the various approaches to educating students with disabilities. Motivational techniques are explored, with emphasis upon the use of incentives, classroom climates that promote learning, and the incorporation of student interests into learning activities. Assessments and techniques are presented that address the needs of students exhibiting challenging behaviors within the classroom. Students learn to conduct Functional Behavioral Assessment and develop Behavioral Intervention Plans.

C. Prerequisites, Co-Requisites and Restrictions:
   • SPED 542 Foundations of Learning Disabilities

D. Course Objectives: LDT-C candidates will . . .
   1. develop an understanding of the major theories of learning
   2. develop an understanding of language development from infancy through preschool
   3. develop an understanding of how learning theories form the foundation for the methods and strategies for teaching academic skills to students with disabilities
   4. develop an understanding of how learning theories form the foundation for promoting positive behavior and social skills among students with disabilities
   5. develop an understanding of the implications of various learning theories for teaching students with disabilities
   6. explore theories of human nature, such as humanism and behaviorism
   7. develop a knowledge and understanding of various types of motivation
   8. apply knowledge and understanding of motivation to case studies of students who exhibit under-achievement or challenging behaviors
   9. analyze the interaction between culture, language, and family background and learning
   10. explore various types of interventions for addressing challenging behaviors
11. develop the ability to conduct Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavioral Intervention Plans

E. **LDT-C Candidate Learning Outcomes:** The LDT-C candidate will . . .
   1. demonstrate the ability to apply their understanding of learning theory through an analysis of a student’s learning problems and recommendations for remediation in the context of a selected learning theory.
   2. demonstrate the ability to address challenging behavior through the completion of a Functional Behavioral Assessment and the development of a Behavioral Implementation Plan.
   3. demonstrate the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of classroom environment in terms of its capacity to promote learning and prosocial behaviors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LDT-C Candidate Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>CEC</th>
<th>NJ PTS</th>
<th>NJ CCCS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Study - remediation &amp; learning theory</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>2, 4, 6, 7</td>
<td>All Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan</td>
<td>4, 5, 8</td>
<td>5, 6, 7</td>
<td>9.1, 9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of a classroom Environment</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 6, 7</td>
<td>All Standards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. **Course Content:**
   1. Learning disabilities as developmental variations
   2. Piaget’s maturational stages of development
   3. Behavioral Learning theories
   4. Cognitive Learning Theories – types of knowledge, memory, constructivism, metacognition and zone of proximal development
   5. Conceptual learning – discovery learning, problem solving
   6. Social learning theory – Vygotsky & Bandura
   7. Psychological processing disorders – learning as information processing
   8. Learning Strategies – maintenance and generalization
   9. Views of human nature – behaviorism and humanism
   10. Theories of motivation

G. **Teaching/Learning Methods:**
   - Lecture and discussion
   - Assigned readings
   - Small group projects
   - Case studies
   - Audio-visual materials
Guest lecturers
Reflective writing and sharing

H. **Performance-Based Assessment:**
1. An analysis of a student’s learning difficulties and recommendations for remediation in the context of a specific learning theory(ies) as assessed by a rubric
2. A Functional Behavioral Assessment and a Behavior Intervention Plan for a student exhibiting challenging behavior, as assessed by a rubric.
3. An analysis of a classroom setting in terms of its capacity to promote learning and prosocial behavior, as assessed on a rubric
4. Other assessments as designated by the instructor


J. **Preparer’s Name:** Peter Griswold, Ed. D.

K. **Department Approval Date:**

L. **Current Revision:** Susan Kuveke, Ph. D.

M. **Current Department Approval Date:** 7/00

N. **Selected Bibliography:**


