Building Bridges Between Gen Ed and Special Ed with UDL Microcourse

10 hour self-directed micro course

Optional: 1 graduate level continuing education credit with additional 5-hr final project
(Gordon College or Teachers College of San Joaquin)

Course Designer	
Zach Smith @zsmithteach zachsmith@gse.harvard.edu	Zach Smith was born and raised in Fresno, California. Growing up with siblings with disabilities, Zach saw first hand the impact of exclusionary instructional practices. After graduating from Fresno State, he began his career as a special education teacher. He worked for eight years in a small rural district named Sanger Unified. In his last three years with Sanger, he moved outside the classroom to co-lead the implementation of UDL for all teachers in the district. Zach has extensive knowledge in UDL; presenting, coaching, planning, and building organizational capacity around this initiative. In the fall of 2019, Zach started a new chapter in his professional journey as a student in Harvard's Doctorate of Education Leadership program. Zach lives with his wife and best friend Dorothy, as well as their four daughters, Grace (10), Amy (8), Isabella (6), and Sydney(3). Zach is a passionate advocate for the power of inclusion to revolutionize the way teachers teach and as paramount for closing opportunity and achievement gaps in today's classrooms.

Course Description

This course is designed to give participants the needed mindset and skills for facilitating high quality inclusive instructional experiences that blend targeted Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) with rigorous standards based instruction that utilizes the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This course is meant to be a resource for special education teachers, general education teachers, service providers, paraprofessionals, and/or district and site leaders.

In this course we will be working to cross the unfortunate and often under discussed chasm that is general education and special education. The course design very much sees the two areas of educational thought,

practice, and specialization as complementary to each other and an integrated approach as the way forward to a more personalized, adaptive and yet rigorous experience of American public education. This course is built on a framework centered on ways to design systems and steer educational practice toward fully inclusive educational environments in efforts to reorganize schools as problem solving entities.

Thank you so much for joining us! Your thoughts and ideas are critical for moving this work forward. We welcome new perspectives, disagreement, and each other's best collective thinking to make schools a better place for all students, especially those needing specially designed instructional practices.

Legal Disclaimer

Any and all recommendations made by either Zach Smith or Novak Educational Consulting related to students' legally binding Individualized Education Plan (IEP) must be first subject to your Local Education Agency (LEA) or State Education Agency (SEA) legal counsel specializing in disability educational law. Any recommendations for educational practices related to a students' IEP are made as practitioners in the field and not as a legal advisor. It is up to each course participant to do their due diligence to seek legal counsel related to changes to the IEP practices.

Course Texts

There are **no required texts** for this course. Below you will find some recommended texts I use to help guide my thinking related to building inclusive settings and programming. All other course materials will be embedded within the module content.

Optional Texts:
- **Effective Inclusive Schools:** Designing Successful Schoolwide Programs, Dr. Thomas Hehir, Jossey-Bass Publishers (2012)
- **Building Inclusive Schools:** Tools and Strategies for Success, Dr. Ann Halvorsen and Dr. Thomas Neary, Pearson (2008)

Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

- **Global Objective:**
  - Educators will understand how to apply specially designed instruction for students with the most complex needs learning within universally designed learning environments.

- **Course Benchmarks:**
  - Educators will evaluate their own biases and assumptions about what different students within their learning contexts can learn.
  - Educators will discover/relearn the core foundations of Universal Design for Learning.
  - Educators will learn about Specially Designed Instruction and its role in supporting students with the most complex needs.
  - Educators will learn how UDL and SDI interact with each other.

Discussions

Discussions are a fun **optional** way to engage with the course content. As the course increases in the number of participants, so too does the opportunity to learn from one another.

Note: The discussion forum accepts all file types, so you can contribute in writing or scale your voice by starting a blog or a podcast or video blog, and then posting the link. You can also post infographics, PDFs, audio and video files, and/or multimedia presentations. The options below may support you in creating your discussion postings.

- Write a traditional discussion post.
- Record a video or audio clip (please keep it to 3 minutes or less).
- Post student work and reflect on the contribution
- Create a multimedia presentation or visual representation like a vision board or sketch notes or use Canva to create an infographic.

Module Quizzes

Every module will have short question quizzes to capture some of your learning from the materials. Do the best you can and feel free to comb back through the resources as an aide to finding the correct answers. Remember you should consume 3 to 4 resources per module to help you get a well rounded understanding of the concepts.

The Final Project

The Goal: Demonstrate your understanding of Specially Designed Instruction and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and how to implement them both by creating a learning experience and reflecting on the design process.

The Ask: At the end of this course you are invited to produce a final project. This course is worth 10 continuing education hours. The final project is worth an additional 5 continuing education hours and 1 graduate-level continuing education credit. You will receive feedback for your final project only if you register for graduate credit. Once you have completed your final project using the guidelines and rubric below,

Your final project will be an opportunity to reflect on what you've learned from all course modules. In your final project, you will describe what a classroom and/or school would look like if it employed UDL and SDI to fidelity. The goal here is to dream and design what could be in your learning community. Have fun with the assignment and embrace an option for expression that will stretch you beyond your comfort zone!

The Project: regardless of format choice, your project should have three main sections:

1. **Introduction:** Give a quick explanation of your position within education, how you would usually develop and deliver a lesson or professional learning experience, and why you chose this specific learning experience for your final project.

2. **Learning Experience Design:** This will be the actual "product" for this final, so it will be something tangible that you are/will/can use in your role. Choose to create a lesson plan, or professional learning experience for your learners, including any supporting rubrics, scaffolds, assignments, etc. We will be looking for explicit connections to the course elements of UDL and SDI as you express your understanding. The lesson plan doesn't have to be in a traditional format. Feel free to create it in audio/video/text/or graphics format.

   ○ Questions to Ponder: *Describe the elements of a classroom or school that employs UDL and SDI in tandem with each other? What would the school do? How would it look? What would you hear?*

   ○ Options for Expression:

      ■ *A sample of IEP language (with no identifying descriptors) that draws from new ways of thinking from the module content*
      ■ *A sample lesson plan with embedded SDI connections and UDL connections*
      ■ *A completed IEP Matrix and a description of how a GE and SPED teacher partnership might use it*
      ■ *An infographic showing the connection between UDL and SDI*
      ■ *A vlog or stand alone video describing your dream school*
      ■ *A written reflection or blog post showcasing what you hope for schools moving forward*
      ■ *Or dream up another way!*

3. **Reflection:** In this last section, you should take some time to reflect on your time in this course, the final product you created, and what's next for you and your work with UDL and SDI. Within your reflection, be sure to cite at least **5 resources** from the course that impacted your thinking when you were creating your final project. You may use any citation format to cite your work (APA, MLA, etc.)

Final Project Rubric

We will provide feedback on a holistic rubric. Learn more about <u>universally designed rubrics here.</u> The rubric below highlights project requirements. All projects need to "meet expectations" in all sections. Worry not - you are welcome to resubmit as many times as it takes to be successful.

Not there yet!	Met Expectations. Hooray!	Nailed It
	Introduction: Your quick explanation of your position within education,, how you usually develop and deliver a lesson or PD, and why you chose your final project, and how it integrates SDI and UDL appropriately for your use. (1 point)	
	Learning Experience Design: Your "product" is something tangible that you are/will/can use in your role.	

	You have created a lesson plan, or professional learning experience for your learners and included any supporting rubrics, scaffolds, assignments, etc. (2 points)	
	Reflection - You have reflected on your time in this course, the final product you created, and what's next for you and your work with SDI and UDL. You have included/used at least 5 citations/resources from the course. (2 points)	

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5 Points

Meeting the standard, or going above and beyond, will earn you the full point value for the assignments.

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Course Modules

MODULE	Topics
1	**Module 1: Looking at Ourselves** **Objective** - Educators will evaluate their own biases and assumptions about what different students within their learning contexts can learn. **Essential Question** - Describe a time you were surprised with what a student or staff member was able to accomplish. What do you learn about yourself from this experience? **Activities** - Do a screencast and share your story - Create a poem of your learning - Record a captivating conversation - Create a blog post or written reflection - Record a video or vlog post - Or dream up another way!
2	**Module 2: Universal Design for Learning** **Objective** - Educators will discover/relearn the core foundations of Universal Design for Learning. **Essential Question** - In what ways might a classroom grounded in Universal Design for Learning create access points for students with disabilities? **Activities** - Do a screencast of a digital classroom built on UDL and describe the ways it promotes access - Provide a model universally designed lesson that highlights where accessibility is built into the experience - Record a captivating conversation - Create a blog post or written reflection - Record a video or vlog post - Or dream up another way!

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Module 3: Specially Designed Instruction
Objective
- Educators will learn about Specially Designed Instruction and its role in supporting students with the most complex needs.

Essential Question
- What is Specially Designed Instruction? How does it fit within a school employing Universal Design for Learning?

Activities
- Do a screencast teaching the core components of SDI to a group of peers
- Record a captivating conversation
- Create a poem that defines SDI
- Create a blog post or written reflection
- Record a video or vlog post
- Self-Assessment
- Or dream up another way!

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Module 4: UDL & SDI Together

Objective
- Educators will describe how they see SDI and UDL fitting together.

Essential Question
- Describe the elements of a classroom or school that employs UDL and SDI in tandem with each other?
  - What would the school do?
  - How would it look?
  - What would you hear?

Options for Expression:
- A sample of IEP language (with no identifying descriptors) that draws from new ways of thinking from the module content
- A sample lesson plan with embedded SDI connections and UDL connections
- A completed IEP Matrix and a description of how a GE and SPED teacher partnership might use it
- An infographic showing the connection between UDL and SDI
- A vlog or stand alone video describing your dream school
- A written reflection or blog post showcasing what you hope for schools moving forward
- Or dream up another way!