

# COURSE SYLLABUS

**COURSE TITLE:** AIDING STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES  
**COURSE AUTHOR:** DONNA WALKER TILESTON  
**HOURS:** 45

## Course Overview

In this course, you will gain the knowledge and skills to work with students with special needs by learning both the current research and a hands-on practitioner's approach to improving classroom strategies. You will explore services schools are required to provide and Dr. Tileston's suggestions for what schools can do to best implement the standards set in federal and state laws. You will have the opportunity to consider systems of thinking and the roles they play in learning, as well as examples of mental models that students may learn to construct in order to increase their ability to recall and organize pieces of information. By the end of the course you will know a variety of tactics to better engage students with emotional, behavioral and attention disorders with the goal to ensure that all students receive a high quality education and become independent and empowered in their learning regardless of their disabilities.

## Author Biography

**Dr. Donna Walker Tileston** has been a leader in education, serving as a teacher, administrator, researcher, writer, software developer, and a national consultant. She is the author of 23 books on educational topics. She has been actively involved in brain research and has published her research under the titles *Strategies for Teaching Differently* (1998) and *Ten Best Teaching Practices: How Brain Research, Learning Styles and Standards Define Teaching Competencies* (2000, 2005). This research led Dr. Tileston to write a bestselling series titled *What Every Teacher Should Know* (2003, 2008). The series has been awarded the Distinguished Achievement Award for Excellence in Educational Publishing by the American Educational Publishers Association and is presently being developed into a series of comprehensive state-of-the-art interactive online courses. Additionally, she has made worldwide presentations on her research. Dr. Tileston received her BA from the University of North Texas, her MA from East Texas State University, and her Ed.D. from Texas A & M University-Commerce.

## Course Objectives

In this course, you will learn about:

- 1) how the brain works and its critical role in learning
- 2) how some cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and attentional disorders are attributed to malfunctions in the brain
- 3) that much of brain research has impacted the current discussions about nature versus nurture, neuroplasticity, and other topics that are related to educating all students

- 4) the importance of the IEP in defining the instruction and other modifications that are to be made for each identified special education student ☐
- 5) the importance of using scaffolding in designing learning activities, cognitive and social, then gradually taking it away so students will become empowered and more in control of their learning ☐
- 6) that meta-analysis available to teachers re-directs their instructional skills to help students learn and process information at a faster rate and also to retrieve information more efficiently ☐
- 7) that meta-analysis available to teachers improves their classroom management skills to help students to gain control over their behaviors, to help them focus ☐
- 8) the increased importance of the concepts of multiple intelligences, and preferred learning styles and modalities in designing learning activities for students with various disabilities ☐
- 9) the increased value in using visuals, mind maps, and other graphics to create order, find patterns, and make connections when teaching students with various disabilities ☐
- 10) setting high expectations for quality products, as well as for behavior, and articulating what is expected before students begin to work ☐

### Course Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- 1) create learning modules in 'small chunks' to better hold students' focus and attention ☐
- 2) vary the classroom learning activities frequently ☐
- 3) model the use of graphics, mind maps, and other visuals, to add organization and structure to the instruction ☐
- 4) plan scaffolding for each unit of study as well as for teaching social skills and include a plan for gradually reducing the scaffolding ☐
- 5) give constant positive and specific feedback for learning activities and their products, for classroom behavior and student's interaction with other students and the teacher ☐
- 6) develop consistency and apply it to all expectations for quality products and classroom behavior ☐
- 7) communicate to students your high expectations and your plan for working together with them toward their success ☐

## Academic Honesty

KDS recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense. Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as one's own, and includes failing to cite sources for others' ideas, copying material from books or the Internet (including lesson plans and rubrics), and handing in work written by someone other than the participant. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade and may have additional consequences. For more information about plagiarism and guidelines for appropriate citation, consult [plagiarism.org](http://plagiarism.org).

Grading Policy (using rubric 1-4 scale system)		Percentage of Course Credit	
Total grade for the course is a culmination of performance grades		Course grade is determined by the following	
<b>A:</b>	3.4 – 4.0	<b>Reflections</b>	40%
<b>B:</b>	2.7 – 3.3	<b>Checks for Understanding</b>	60%
<b>C:</b>	2.0 – 2.6		
<b>F:</b>	<2.0		

In order to complete the requirements of the course, you must complete all course work (e.g., reflections, checks for understanding), including watching all videos and participating in all discussion forums. We do not award partial credit.

## Checks for Understanding and Reflection Rubric

Assessment	Underdeveloped (1)	Basic (2)	Proficient (3)	Distinguished (4)
<b>Checks for Understanding</b>	65% or below	66-79%	80-89%	90-100%
<b>Reflection Question</b>	<p>Participant has included little to no content indicating consideration and comprehension of course content.</p> <p>Participant has not addressed the questions posed. Participant has copied from the course transcript without synthesis or analysis.</p>	<p>Participant has included little that indicates consideration and comprehension of course content.</p> <p>Participant has answered most questions directly but some too briefly.</p>	<p>Participant has included appropriate content from the course content and made connections to practice.</p> <p>Participant has made thoughtful comments in direct response to the prompts.</p>	<p>Participant has provided rich detail and supporting examples from the course content and made specific connections to his/her practice.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Participant has made thoughtful comments in direct response to the prompts and created next steps to support his/her learning.</p>

## KDS Learning Design

KDS online courses are based on 50 hours of sustained engagement on a given topic, with opportunities for ongoing training and support.

Instruction (40%) ~20 hours	Coaching (20%) ~10 hours	Practice (40%) ~20 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modeling effective practice through video</li> <li>Interactive activities</li> <li>Readings and Reflections</li> <li>Expert and educator interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expert feedback from online coaches on various components of instruction</li> <li>Facilitation Guide &amp; resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capstone application project</li> <li>Mid-course application project</li> <li>Scenario-based activities and checks for understanding</li> <li>Application Toolkit</li> </ul>

## Course Outline

<p><b>Unit 1</b></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> In this unit, you will explore the comprehensive overview of the laws that govern special education and suggestions for implementing special education programs that meet the standards established by federal and state laws.</p> <p><b>Outcomes:</b> By the end of this unit, you will be able to assess your school’s or district’s compliance with state and federal laws in administering their special education program and strengthen classroom instruction so that it provides both an equitable and a quality education as it targets the needs of special education students.☒</p> <p><b>Assessments:</b> Key Reflection Question, Check for Understanding</p> <p><b>Reading 1</b></p> <p><b>Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schumm, J. S., &amp; Vaughn, S. (1995). Responsible inclusion for students with learning disabilities. <i>Journal of Learning Disabilities, Vol. 28</i> (5), pp. 264-270. Retrieved from <a href="http://digilib.bc.edu/reserves/ed587/moon/ed58745.pdf">http://digilib.bc.edu/reserves/ed587/moon/ed58745.pdf</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Assessments:</b> Key Reflection Question</p> <p><b>Unit 2</b></p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> In this unit, you will examine how the brain works and how understanding its functioning can help you understand how your students learn, as well as what brain research</p>
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has taught us about learning and some strategies that you can use to adapt the findings of that research to their classrooms.

**Outcomes:** By the end of this unit, you will be able to understand and explain learning problems in terms of the brain’s functioning and apply current brain research to your portfolio of teaching skills to better help students retain and retrieve information.

**Assessments:** Key Reflection Question, Check for Understanding

### Unit 3

**Objectives:** In this unit, you will explore how the cognitive system of the brain impacts learning, the distinction between declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge, and how to use a variety of organizers, tools that can successfully help students increase their ability to organize and recall information.

**Outcomes:** By the end of this unit, you will be able tap into the self-system of the brain and build scaffolding, give meaning to learning, create personal relevance, use a variety of organizers to divide lesson plans into declarative and procedural information.

**Assessments:** Key Reflection Question, Check for Understanding

### Reading 2

**Reading:**

- Graham, S., Harris, K. R, & Larsen, L. (2001). Prevention and intervention of writing difficulties for students with learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, Vol. 16* (2), pp. 74-84. Retrieved from <http://www.ldonline.org/article/6213/>

**Assessments:** Key Reflection Question

### Unit 4

**Objectives:** In this unit, you will consider the characteristics of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder [ADHD] and Attention Deficit Disorder [ADD], the ways in which educators may contribute to students’ inability to attend to learning, and how to increase students’ ability to stay appropriately focused on learning and the activities of the classroom.

**Outcomes:** By the end of this unit, you will be able to recognize the behaviors and characteristics of students with ADHD and ADD, and modify conditions in the classroom and teaching strategies so that it provides a more structured and nurturing environment where students with attention disorders will become more engaged.

**Assessments:** Key Reflection Question, Check for Understanding

### Unit 5

**Objectives:** In this unit, you will learn how to help students stay on task and finish work at a high level, the distinctions between convergent and divergent thinking, practical ways to manage the classroom, and how to set up structures that help students increase their ability to focus and to attend to learning.

**Outcomes:** By the end of this unit, you will be able to create connections and personal relevance for students, set goals to maximize learning, provide consistent structures to control

behavioral disorders, use matrixes, rubrics, and other tools to evaluate student progress in learning social skills, and create benchmarks to measure student progress in reaching their learning goals.

**Assessments:** Key Reflection Question, Check for Understanding

### Reading 3

**Reading:**

- Bausch, M. E., & Hasselbring, T. S. (2005). Assistive technologies for reading. *Educational Leadership*. Vol. 63 (4), pp. 72-75. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec05/vol63/num04/Assistive-Technologies-for-Reading.aspx>

**Assessments:** Key Reflection Question

### Unit 6

**Objectives:** In this unit, you will examine how the brain controls emotions and the importance of emotions on attention and learning, explore a list of emotional disorders including the symptoms of a range of anxiety and depressive disorders, and how a classroom teacher can help students gain more control over their negative behaviors by creating a positive environment, being consistent, teaching social skills, and involving the parent/caretaker .

**Outcomes:** By the end of this unit, you will be able to create a physically and emotionally safe environment where students are comfortable taking risks, establish early interventions when behavior disorders are first observed, as well as set high expectations for every student.

**Assessments:** Key Reflection Question, Check for Understanding

### Unit 7

**Objectives:** In this unit, you will consider the characteristics of autism, review the possible causes of autism and the ongoing research on possible treatments, and explore instructional strategies and classroom management strategies that will help students with autism and/or Asperger's succeed in their learning.

**Outcomes:** By the end of this unit, you will be able to recognize the behaviors and characteristics of students with autism and Asperger's Syndrome, and modify teaching strategies and the classroom environment so that students will become more focused on their learning, more socially engaged with other students, and experience a nurturing environment for learning and more controlled behavior.

**Assessments:** Key Reflection Question, Check for Understanding

### Reading 4

**Reading:**

- Dunlap, G., & Fox, L. (1999). *Teaching students with Autism* (ERIC Digest No. E582). Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED435148). <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED435148>

**Assessments:** Key Reflection Question

### Unit 8

**Objectives:** In this unit, you will examine the normal stages of children’s speech and language development from birth through adolescence, what the symptoms of specific language disorders are, and specific interventions that will help children with speech and language disorders.

**Outcomes:** By the end of this unit, you will be able to evaluate students’ language development to measure it against expected benchmarks for their ages and provide appropriate intervention for any children who are presenting language deficits, delays, or other disorders.

**Assessments:** Key Reflection Question, Check for Understanding

### Unit 9

**Objectives:** In this unit, you will explore why learning to read is more difficult for children than learning to speak, the systematic steps that must be taught to develop phonological awareness and reading comprehension, and best practices in reading instruction: phonological awareness and reading comprehension.

**Outcomes:** By the end of this unit, you will be able to evaluate which children require intervention to correct their reading disorders, and use strategies to provide best reading instruction, model best practices, scaffold lessons, ask good questions, and add rigor to classroom instruction.

**Assessments:** Key Reflection Question, Check for Understanding

### Unit 10

**Objectives:** In this unit, you will learn what parts of the brain are responsible for math learning, how to diagnose students with problems that affect their mathematical ability, and how to define levels of mastery in mathematics learning with new classroom strategies to strengthen mathematics instruction.

**Outcomes:** By the end of this unit, you will be able to diagnose the nature of mathematics disabilities in the classroom, as well as strengthen mathematics instruction in the classroom by applying such teaching strategies as focusing on vocabulary, using manipulatives, creating patterns, identifying qualitative versus quantitative learners, and teaching to student’ dominant learning modalities.

**Assessments:** Key Reflection Question, Check for Understanding

