CREATING AND SUSTAINING POSITIVE SCHOOL-WIDE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

SPRING, 2015

3 Credit Hours (45 instructional hours)

Instructors:
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides an overview of evidenced-based strategies for assessing, planning, and implementing individual, classroom and school-wide positive behavior supports and provides the tools for teachers to develop key competencies in these areas. Building on their experiences, teachers learn how to design a learning environment that is safe and responsive for all students, including students with and without disabilities and those who are English language learners (ELL). At the individual student level, participants learn how to operationally define behaviors, as well as collect and analyze data to design and monitor interventions. Participants also become familiar with Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and how the results of an FBA are used to develop Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)/Behavior Support Plans (BSP). Alignment between the Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and effective School-Wide Positive Behavior Systems (SWPBS) area analyzed throughout the course with a focus on the interface among curriculum, instruction and behavior. Careful consideration is given to the ways in which cultural factors can impact both learning and behavior, and effective strategies for involving families and community partners. Federal and state legislation and regulations on discipline are examined with particular attention to their impact on the design and implementation of educational supports for students with disabilities. No prior course work required, however, participants must be currently working in a school and have online access.

If you plan on matriculating into a graduate program at Fitchburg State University, please be aware that twelve semester hours of Fitchburg State University credit taken within a year prior to the
student’s admission may be applied to the degree program with the approval of the program chairperson. Anything over 12 credits prior to matriculation will NOT be accepted towards the degree.

**TAKING AN ONLINE COURSE:**

We encourage everyone to become familiar with the general format of the class and its expectations. As the class is primarily online, it is essential to be self-motivated and manage your time. We strongly recommend that you stay active in the class and the discussions on a regular basis. Also, make use of the supports available to you. The class itself is a great resource. In addition, make sure to ask us any questions that you have. We are readily available via email or through the Discussion Forum. Also, remember that assistance is available by emailing IMSSupport@DOE.mass.edu or calling 781-338-3020.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**


Additional readings are listed under the topical outline section.
These course objectives listed below are organized according to the Conceptual Framework in the following way(s):

**Knowledge: As a result of the learning experiences in this course, you will become more cognizant of:**

- Addressing the academic and non-academic needs of all learners in the classroom;
- How school personnel create inclusive schools in which all learners are active participants in the total school community;
- How school personnel engage families and community partners;
- Basic assumptions of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Positive Behavior Supports (PBS);
- A functional perspective of behavior change in the school environment (principles of functional behavior assessment);
- The components of a positive classroom climate including interactions, routines and physical environments that facilitate student success;
- Evidence-based effective instructional, curricular and assessment practices for supporting students with challenging behaviors;
- Cultural factors that may impact or influence behavior;
- The continuum of individual, classroom and school-wide positive behavior supports; and the impact of the use of seclusion, restraints and other punishments on learning, performance, graduation and dropout rates, and community behaviors.

**Skill: As a result of the learning experiences in the course, you will become better able to:**

- Design a learning environment that is safe and responsive for all members of the classroom, including those with and without disabilities and those who are English language learners;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the interaction of classroom and school climate and student behavior(s).
- Reflect and self-evaluate behavioral strategies and procedures.
- Operationally define and observe behaviors and utilize functional assessments;
- Demonstrate an understanding of why challenging behavior occurs including the risk factors associated with specific disorders including but not limited to Asperger syndrome, conduct disorder, and trauma (including bullying);
Demonstrate an understanding of the components of an effective School-wide Positive Behavior Support System (SWPBS);

Demonstrate an understanding of Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP);

Collect and analyze data and use it to make instructional decisions;

Use data from functional assessment results to help develop, implement, revise and document a behavior support plan;

Articulate a rationale for the design of a particular behavior intervention strategy and/or behavior support plan;

Discuss strategies and approaches to facilitate self management, enhance social skills and increase independence;

Analyze and reflect on the efficacy and ethical aspects of a behavioral intervention;

Use a systems approach to collect data on patterns of problem behaviors to plan for classroom and whole-school change;

Examine and apply evidence-based best practices for designing effective classroom supports; and

Utilize prevention strategies to prevent problem behaviors.

**Caring: As a result of the learning experiences in the course, you will become more competent in your ability to:**

Analyze and articulate the individual needs of students with challenging behaviors;

Foster independence in students with disabilities without compromising necessary supports;

Enhance ways to partner with families and better appreciate their cultural orientations, unique perspectives and challenges they face; and

Understand patterns of problem behavior and work as a team during the problem-solving and decision-making process.
Ethical: As a result of the learning experiences in the course, you will become more competent in your ability to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of seclusion, restraints and other punishments on learning performance, graduation and dropout rates, and community behaviors;
- Analyze and articulate the ethical aspects of various approaches to behavior support and specific behavioral interventions, including the use of aversive interventions;
- Analyze and articulate the ethical aspects of implementing various behavioral interventions from the perspectives of students, staff, and family members;
- Develop a more positive approach in working with students with challenging behaviors; and
- Focus on the importance of designing and implementing classroom supports rather than specific problem behavior of individual students.

Reflective Leader: As a result of this learning experience, you will become a more reflective leader by:

- Examining and reflecting on your past experiences with students with behavioral challenges and identifying current beliefs and attitudes;
- Reflecting on how your experiences in this class affect your previously held beliefs and attitudes concerning students with behavioral challenges;
- Reflecting on your experiences and observations in various types of classrooms, and considering how these experiences may influence your growth into a reflective leader who delivers and supports effective learning experiences for all children.

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY ON-LINE

Fitchburg State University encourages all students to take advantage of our online student services. We have created a virtual student center just for you. Here you will find access to Counseling Services, Career Services, Student Activity Center, the university bookstore and many other helpful links. You can access our student center by going to the college homepage at [http://www.fitchburgstate.edu](http://www.fitchburgstate.edu) and clicking on Offices and Services. Scroll down and click on Extended Campus Center. You will find links to Library Services, our Virtual Student Center and other important information.

**LIBRARY SERVICES**

The Gallucci-Cirio Library at Fitchburg State University provides a full range of library services including borrowing privileges, document delivery (books and articles mailed to your home), Interlibrary Loans, online and toll-free phone reference assistance, access to subscription databases, library instruction, and more. Any questions relating to library services should be directed to the Access Services Librarian at 978-665-3062 or dllibrary@fitchburgstate.edu. There is also a special section for Distributed Learning Library Services at [http://fitchburgstate.libguides.com/dlservices](http://fitchburgstate.libguides.com/dlservices) outlining the wide range of services available to you and how to access them.
Students who are currently registered with the university may access any of the library’s subscription databases, including an increasing number with full-text, by visiting the Gallucci-Cirio Library’s homepage at http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/library and clicking on the All Research Databases link. Select the resource you want to access from the alphabetical listing or from the subject listing. Once you click on the database title you will be prompted for your Falcon Key logon information. If you do not know your Falcon Key username and password or if you have any problems logging in, contact Fitchburg State’s Information Technology Help Desk at 978-665-4500. The Library can issue you a temporary guest Falcon Key to use while the Information Technology Department is setting up your account: contact us at 978-665-3062 or dllibrary@fitchburgstate.edu.

All registered Fitchburg State University students are eligible for a Fitchburg State University One Card ID which also serves as his/her library card. If you have not received your One Card yet, you can still access all of our online services as long as you have activated your library account. Activate your library account online at http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/librarycf/cardrequest.cfm or in person at the Circulation Desk. After activation by the Gallucci-Cirio Library and receipt of your One Card, students may also use any Massachusetts University Library and participating libraries in the Academic and Research Collaborative (ARC) during the current semester. ID cards are available on campus all year round. Students wishing ID cards must either complete the online Photo-less One Card request form (http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/onecard/photoless/index.cfm) or present a course registration confirmation at One Card Office in the Anthony Building of the main campus. Please call 978-665-3039 for available times or if you have any questions about your One Card.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES:

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<td>Reflective Response</td>
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

General Expectations

Class Preparation & Participation - You are a valued member of this class, and the learning experience of all class members is influenced by your level of preparation and class participation. In addition to general participation on-line throughout the semester, you will be expected to build on your readings and experiences in your original Discussion Forum postings, and in your responses to other participants. You will also be expected to be prepared for the **two** face-to-face class sessions and to participate actively in a variety of active learning experiences (e.g., role playing, case study analysis).
Professional Behavior - You are expected to behave in a respectful and professional manner. This includes both respectful on-line behavior and in-class behavior (e.g., listening quietly to the individual speaking; not engaging in non-related activities during class, having all cell phones and PDAs out of sight, and providing responses and feedback as requested).

Self-Reflection - For all assignments you will receive a grading rubric which outlines our expectations for the assignment. You should use this sheet to engage in self-evaluation and reflection on both the process of doing the assignment and the final product being submitted. You will receive a completed grading rubric for each assignment submitted.

Timely Submission of Assignments - All participants are responsible for meeting required deadlines on projects and assignments; your ability to complete tasks in a timely fashion demonstrates professional maturity and an ability to organize and manage time. You are expected to submit all assignments on the dates listed on the topical outline. The only exceptions to this policy occur when: (1) a revised due date has been given to the entire class, OR (2) you request IN ADVANCE, and have received approval for a change in the due date. When an assignment is submitted late, and you have not received approval for a late submission, your grade for the assignment will be reduced by one point (out of 4) for each week it is late. Grades for assignments submitted within one week of the due date will be reduced proportionately.

To receive a passing grade or PDPs for this course, all required assignments must be submitted.

Specific Assignments

1. Discussion Board.
   You are expected to check the Blackboard site very frequently! Use the schedule to keep track of when Discussion postings and responses are due, as well as when papers must be submitted.

   Each week there will be at least one assignment/activity/discussion item. Some of these are already included in the overall COURSE SCHEDULE. Others will be added as we get to know your strengths and areas of need. Whenever we add anything new, it will be noted in the ANNOUNCEMENT section of Blackboard and we will distribute the announcement as an email. Unless you are away, you should plan to check your email on a daily basis.

   Describe the process (in 4-6 pages) for how your school/program provides services for students with challenging behaviors. At the school level, are there policies and procedures in place for promoting a safe and responsive environment for all learners and responding to challenging behaviors (e.g., office referrals) or is this left up to individual teachers to implement? Who is responsible for conducting FBAs and designing and implementing behavior support plans? How do you specifically respond to challenging behavior in your classroom/program? What strategies/interventions do you use to promote a positive learning environment? Please provide as much detail as possible in your response. If you are unsure of the process in your school, you will need to speak with a knowledgeable person (or two). Remember to begin with a brief overview (demographic information/context) of your school/program. A grading rubric that outlines all specific requirements will be provided.
3. **Data Collection and Analysis.**
Participants are required to utilize a minimum of two data collection systems to gather and analyze data on individual students. A grading rubric that outlines all specific requirements will be provided.

4. **Design a Behavior Support Plan for an Individual Student and Plan for Implementation.**
Using information obtained from the data collected, participants are to identify a specific student to work with and clearly define the targeted behavior. Information identifying ways to address the academic and non-academic needs of this student must be included. In describing your student, highlight specific demographic and/or relevant data such as age, disability, family information, strengths and weaknesses, schooling, and placement information. **(Remember: We will know absolutely nothing about your student)** Participants are required to design and create an implementation plan that is geared to making the problem behavior irrelevant, inefficient and ineffective and to address quality of life issues. This plan will also incorporate appropriate and functional replacement behaviors. A rubric that outlines all specific requirements will be provided.

5. **Final Project.**
Using the information and new knowledge obtained from previous assignments participants will create a classroom plan that focuses on a learning environment that is safe and responsive for all members of the classroom, including those with and without disabilities and those who are English language learners. Participants will also address primary, secondary, and tertiary preventions and interventions. Participants will also reflect and self-evaluate the strategies and procedures used in the implementation of their plan and indicate possible next steps to help the student generalize learned skills into the school community. Participants will also indicate how they might engage families in understanding the plan implemented and the student’s success. Participants will share their findings on-line. A grading rubric that outlines all specific requirements will be provided.

**Note:** All writing assignments should be double-spaced with 12-point font unless otherwise noted. Please be sure to **carefully proof read** your work before submitting assignments on Blackboard.

**COURSE EVALUATION**

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<td>1. Discussion Board</td>
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<td>2. Classroom/School Environment Behavior Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Data Collection and Analysis</td>
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<td>4. Design and Implement a Behavior Support Plan</td>
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<td>5. Final Project – classroom and whole-school PBS</td>
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<td>6. Quizzes</td>
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<td>7. Face to face attendance and timeliness of assignment submission</td>
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GRADUATE GRADING SYSTEM

4.0    95 – 100    A
3.7    92 – 94    A-
3.5    89 – 91    A-/B+
3.3    86 - 88    B+
3.0    83 - 85    B
2.7    80 – 82    B-
2.5    77 – 79    B-/C+
2.3    74 – 76    C+
2.0    71 – 73    C
0.0    0 – 70    F
W    Withdrawn
IN    Incomplete
IP    In-Progress

Grades that fall between intervals will be rounded to the higher number.

COURSE POLICIES

Policy on Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is an essential component of the educational experience. Individual or group work submitted to fulfill course requirements should be solely that of the individual student or collaborative group seeking credit for that work. The University Academic Integrity Policy outlined in the University Catalogue will be followed in cases where students do not conform to this expectation.

Grade Appeal
If you disagree with the evaluation of your work or believe an improper grade has been assigned, an appeal may be followed. Please discuss the matter with the instructor and refer to the Fitchburg State Grade Appeal Policy in your Student Handbook.

Policy on Disability
Disability Services is the primary support system for students with disabilities taking classes in the day and evening divisions. The office is located on the third floor of the Hammond Building and can be reached at 978-665-3427 or 978-665-3575 TTY. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medication information or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with the instructor at the beginning of the course. It is important that the issues relating to disabilities be discussed with the instructor as soon as possible.

Policy on Writing
Students preparing to be teachers must serve as role models of good oral and written communication. The grade will reflect the quality of the written material.
**Computer Literacy Requirement**
All assignments must be typed, doubled-spaced and formatted in APA style when appropriate, using computer word processing for all assignments (unless otherwise instructed). Candidates are encouraged to use email as a method of communication. Use of the Internet to obtain information, ideas, and resources is also encouraged. Participants are also strongly encouraged to access the Blackboard system, as course documents will be posted on the site for your convenience.

**Copyright Policy**
You are reminded that, in preparing materials for peers or the instructor, reproduction of copyrighted material without permission of the copyright owner is illegal. Such unauthorized copying may violate the rights of the author or publisher. Fitchburg State University adheres to federal laws regarding use of copyrighted materials. See “Student Handbook” for more details.

**Contacting the Professor**
Email is the preferred method of communication. Contacting the professor via email allows you to maintain a written record of correspondence. Please remember to refer to the Topical Outline to determine which instructor is responsible for the specific module in which you have questions. For general questions you can contact Dr. Dina Traniello, dtraniello@verizon.net. Please allow 24 hours for the professor to respond to your email. If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, please resend your original email. As this is an online course, the instructors will be checking the course and email on a regular basis.

**Office Hours**
Once again as this is an online class, the easiest solution is to use email to contact the professor and set up time to connect as needed.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Journal Articles & Books


**Websites & Organizations for information and technical assistance**

Association for Positive Behavior Support: [www.apbsinternational.org](http://www.apbsinternational.org)

Beach Center on Disability: [www.beachcenter.org](http://www.beachcenter.org)

Behavior Doctor Seminars: [http://www.behaviordoctor.org/index.html](http://www.behaviordoctor.org/index.html)
California Department of Education Positive Environments, Network of Trainers (PENT)  
http://www.pent.ca.gov/index.htm

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice: http://cecp.air.org

The Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior:  
www.challengingbehavior.org

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning:  
http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/

National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice: www.edjj.org

National Center on Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention:  
http://www.promoteprevent.org/about-national-center

New Hampshire Center for Effective Behavioral Interventions and Supports:  
http://nhcebis.seresc.net


The Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports:  
http://www.pbis.org

University of Missouri http://kidtools.org/index.php