Disabilities and the Adult Learner

Course Description and Overview:

Disabilities and the Adult Learner is a six-week, asynchronous online course. The course has been designed to help you discover the keys to strengthening your work with adults who have disabilities. The course is taught through the [Virginia Commonwealth University's Blackboard learning management system](). Completion of the course is designed to require a minimum of **24 hours** of your time - approximately four hours per week. However, you may find that you want to spend longer with some topics. In order to receive a certificate for participating in the *Disabilities and the Adult Learner* training; you must complete all assignments, respond to each discussion question, respond at least once to one of your classmates in any of the week's discussion/assignment forums, and complete the case study that is due in the final week of class. The course week runs Thursday through Wednesday and all assignments are due by midnight on Wednesday. There are no required textbooks.

Note: There will be a lot of additional links and resources posted. Explore these to inform your practice as you have time.

This course was developed through a collaborative partnership between the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC).

Weekly Format:

Each week will follow a similar format. Included in each week are:

- a welcome video that outlines the week's activities,
- a written outline of the weekly activities and resources,
- a feature article or a feature website,
- YouTube videos,
- an interactive quiz or poll,
- a disability-simulation activity focused on a specific learning disability,
- a discussion question about the main content,
- a featured learning disability,
- a reflection question on the simulation activity, and
- **starting in week 2**, participants will locate and share at least 1 new resource (Assistive Technologies (A.T.), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), or local disabilities service and/or resource).
  - Submissions must be related to the current week's designated learning disability.
  - Submissions will be housed in a shared *Google Workbook* so that all participants will have access to the resources.

Final Project:

Case Study (Due the third day of the last week of class.)

Each week during this course, you will participate in a simulation activity focused on a specific disability. The purpose of these simulations is to help you better understand the world from the perspective of someone with a disability. We understand that these assignments may make some of you uncomfortable, but the intent is to further strengthen and develop this understanding.

Please pick one of the topics below for your case study:

- Call a local organization asking for help as a person with a disability or for someone you know. For example: call the DMV and say that you or someone you know is dyslexic and would like to get a driver's license – document your experience going through that process.

- Interview an adult with a disability to get their life story. Focus on the disability, daily living, struggles, triumphs, education, employment, etc.

Present your reflections on the experience in your preferred format: write a paper or create a video/digital story. Other ideas... let us know.

Learning Outcomes:

What you will be learning.	How you will express and demonstrate that learning.
- Learn how to plan and adapt appropriate instruction for adults with both learning and other physical disabilities. - Develop a toolbox of assistive technology and behavior management strategies for immediate use in the classroom. - Learn about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and legal responsibilities and services.	- Ongoing reflections of your learning by posting in the *Discussion Board*. - Reflecting on weekly articles and videos. - Providing weekly peer feedback.
Identify and begin to collaborate with local organizations and state agencies that offer supportive services and resources for adults with disabilities.	- Each week, participants will locate and share at least 1 new resource (A.T., UDL, or local disabilities service and/or resource) - Submissions must be related to the week's designated learning disability. - Submissions will be housed in a shared *Google Workbook* so that all participants will have access to the resources.
Understand the world from the perspective of someone with a disability.	- Reflecting on simulation activities by posting in the *Discussion Board*. - Sharing Case Study with peers.

Course Schedule:

Each lesson addresses a different aspect of working with adult learners who have disabilities. Course activities include readings, assignments, and discussions. The lessons are developmental and sequential. The schedule below lists the dates that assignments are due. Posts to discussions may be made at any time within the week in which the topic is being presented. Please be sure to adhere to the schedule. Lessons are self-paced within the week. Return as often as you wish to the activities and discussions.

Week #	Lessons	Assignments	Due Date:
Week 1:	Introduction to Learning Disabilities	• Watch posted videos • Read posted articles • Three Discussion Board posts • Try simulation activity • Respond to at least one peer post	**Wed:**
Week 2:	Introduction to Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Assistive Technology (AT)	• Watch posted videos • Read posted articles • Three Discussion Board posts • Try simulation activity • Add at least one resource • Respond to at least one peer post	**Wed:**
Week 3:	Etiquette, Classroom Management, and Print Disabilities	• Watch posted videos • Read posted articles • Two Discussion Board posts • Try simulation activity • Add at least one resource • Respond to at least one peer post	**Wed:**
Week 4:	Self-disclosure, Disability Services, Screening Tools, and Dyscalculia	• Watch posted videos • Read posted articles • Three Discussion Board posts • Try simulation activity • Add at least one resource • Respond to at least one peer post	**Wed:**

Week #	Lessons	Assignments	Due Date:
Week 5:	Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Legal Responsibilities, and Dysgraphia	- Watch posted videos - Read posted articles - Two Discussion Board posts - Try simulation activity - Add at least one resource - Respond to at least - one peer post	**Wed:**
Week 6:	Autism, Case Study Review, and Wrap-up	- Case Study - Watch posted videos - Read posted articles - Discussion Board post - Try simulation activity - Add at least one resource Respond to at least one peer post	**Wed:**

Student Expectations:

In order to receive a certificate of completion, you must submit all assignments on time. Remember that although you will benefit from doing the activities, you will learn most from discussions with your online colleagues and facilitator(s). To keep discussions as productive as possible, please post and respond within the assigned week. You may refer to the *Course Schedule*, *Course Syllabus*, or *Course Calendar* for specific dates. In order to stay on track, be sure to check your weekly progress in *My Grades* under the *Tools* tab.

Discussion Board Posts:

Write a one- to two-paragraph response for each *Discussion Board* question.

In order to receive full credit for your peer response post, your writing should include some details or depth. (Cursory responses such as "I agree with your answer." or "That is a good point." will not receive full credit.)

Please do not create your own thread when responding to *Discussion Board* questions. All that is needed is to click the *reply* button.

Participants who do not post to the *Discussion Board* within the first week will be removed from the course. This will then place you on "waiting list only" status for future online courses and trainings.

If you do not post for more than one week at any time during the course or if you fall more than one week behind in your assignments, you may be removed from the course and will be placed on "waiting list only" status for future online courses. If you find that you cannot post for more than two weeks, please contact your technical facilitator at valrccourses@vcu.edu or 1-800-237-0178 as soon as possible to discuss the situation and your further participation in the course.