

Course Syllabus

TLL 1511/2511: Curriculum Development for Students with Low Incidence / Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Spring 2025

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Class Meeting Days (Times) Location: Tuesday & Thursday (2:30-3:45) 5602 WWPH

****Except on February 25 and April 15. Class will meet at 132 Chevron Science Center.***

Course Description: This course covers information regarding assessment, curriculum and instruction, and program design for students with IDD.

Course Objectives:

1. The student will acquire general knowledge about the background and current trends in the education of students with IDD.
2. The student will acquire general knowledge about parent, family, and team collaboration.
3. The student will acquire and demonstrate the knowledge and performance competencies needed to plan and conduct assessments of students with IDD.
4. The student will acquire and demonstrate the knowledge and performance competencies needed to develop and implement instructional plans for students with IDD.
5. The student will acquire and demonstrate the knowledge and performance competencies needed to monitor and evaluate student performance/progress.
6. The student will acquire general knowledge about the principles and current best practices in positive behavior support for students with IDD.
7. The student will acquire general knowledge about supporting the needs of students with sensory, physical, and health impairments.
8. The student will acquire and demonstrate the knowledge and performance competencies needed to develop and implement curricular and instructional strategies for teaching communication, language, social, motor, personal care, functional academic, community-living and recreational/leisure skills.
9. The student will acquire general knowledge about structuring learning opportunities in a variety of special and general education settings.
10. The student will acquire general knowledge about planning for and supporting students' transition to post-school community living and employment.

Required Text(s):

Abbreviation	Citation	Note
TSMSD (primary text)	Browder, D. M., Spooner, F., & Courtade, G. R. (2020). Teaching students with moderate and severe disabilities. Guilford Publications.	Available for free on PittCat. The citation is linked
HLP (supplemental text)	Pennington, R., Ault, M., Courtade, G., Jameson, J. M., & Rupp, A. (Eds.). (2022). High leverage practices and students with extensive support needs. Taylor & Francis Group.	Available for free on PittCat. The citation is linked

Required Websites to Bookmark :

Abbreviation	Citation	Note
DLM (website)	Dynamic Learning Maps https://dynamiclearningmaps.org/	Bookmark/save website link
DLM PD Modules	Dynamic Learning Maps Professional Development Package: Students with the Most Complex Disabilities Working at the Initial Precursor Linkage Level	Save this document for easy reference

Course Requirements & Evaluation:

Weekly Reading Guides (WRG) (5 points each x 13 Reading Guides) *Completed and uploaded before class	65 points
Progress Monitoring: Terminology Checks (3 points each x 10 checks) **Completed during class	30 points
DLM PD Modules (10 points each X 5 Modules) - You choose 5 out of 10 possible modules. Bonus Points for completed extra modules ***Due by the last class meeting	50 points
Midterm Exam	50 points
Group Activities and Participation (approximately 5 points per week)	60 points
Instructional Plan and Presentation (25 points each)	50 points
TOTAL	305 points

Course Requirements:

1. Class attendance.
2. Completion of text readings on schedule.
3. Class participation in group activities and assignments.
4. Completion of at least 5 DLM PD Modules.
5. Completion of one instructional plan.

Assignment Descriptions

Weekly Reading Guides (WRG) (5 points each)

Students will complete the readings **in preparation for class each week**. The reading guides highlight important aspects in the text and are provided to help you prepare for class. Students must upload these prior to the start of class.

Progress Monitoring: Terminology Checks (3 points each)

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Professional Development Modules (10 points each)

Students will access the Dynamic Learning Maps Professional Development Package: [Students with the Most Complex Disabilities Working at the Initial Precursor Linkage Level](#). The PD package contains 10 total PD Modules to support the teaching of students with low-incidence disabilities and complex needs. We will discuss topics that directly relate to these modules. The modules will provide students with an opportunity to deepen their learning on specific topics. Students will select at least 5 of the 10 modules to complete over the course of the semester. They can be completed at your convenience, but at least 5 Certificates of Completion must be uploaded by the last class meeting. Students may choose to complete additional modules for bonus points. (+5 points for each additional module).

Midterm Exam (50 points)

Students will complete the midterm examination on foundational content from Module 1: Foundations of Teaching Students with IDD. The midterm will consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions to be completed on Canvas, out of class.

Group Activities and Participation (60 pts):

Group activities are designed to accomplish two purposes:

- 1) to provide a framework to familiarize you with important characteristics, policies, and practices across placements, and
- 2) to provide a basis for classroom discussion and active learning focused on each area.

Group activities may require some degree of “homework,” e.g., viewing one of your placement student’s behavior support plans, talking to your mentor teacher about how they communicate with parents, watching a video, etc.

Instructional Plan (50 pts)/ Class Presentation (25 pts):

Students will develop, implement, and report the results of an instructional plan for one student and objective. The plan will be primarily functional or academic. There will be more details to follow. The instructional plan allows students to apply and connect many concepts, strategies, and skills learned throughout the course.

Assignment Submission and Grading Policies

Assignments should be completed and submitted on time by the due date. Assignments should be submitted electronically via Canvas. Special circumstances will be considered if communicated with the instructor prior to the assignment being late. APA style formatting should be used for papers, including citations and references where appropriate.

Point Distribution:

94-100%	A
90 - 93%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
74-79%	C
69-73%	D

G and I Grades – A student may be graduated without removing G and/or I grades from the record provided all degree requirements have been met and the student's department recommends graduation. The individual school's grading policy should be consulted for regulations dealing with the removal of I grades. Students assigned G grades are required to complete course requirements no later than one year after the term in which the course was taken. Once the deadline has passed, the G grade will remain on the record, and the student will be required to re-register for the course if it is needed to fulfill requirements for graduation.

General Class and University Policies

Students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior in all interactions. The faculty encourages you to approach this as a time to learn and practice using these professional behaviors. In this course, the expected professional behaviors are outlined below. Points may be deducted from your final grade due to unprofessional behavior.

- Academic Integrity
 - Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#).
 - Critical thinking skills are essential to the learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.
 - To learn more about Academic Integrity, visit the [Academic Integrity Guide](#) for an overview of the topic.
- Attendance
 - The teacher education faculty at the University of Pittsburgh view our courses as communities of practice. This means that we gather for collective critical inquiry and reflection focused on building shared knowledge over time. To be an active member of our community of practice, it is important to attend face-to-face courses prepared to engage with the course instructor, course colleagues, and course materials. While we believe course attendance adds value to the community of practice, we also know there may be times when students must miss class to attend to other needs. You are afforded up to one absence per course hour in these cases. This means since this course meets two times per week for one hour and fifteen minutes each session, you are permitted two absences without losing points. Attendance will be taken at the

start of each class and will be factored into the final grade. Students are responsible for all content covered in missed sessions. There are often low-stakes group activities. If these sessions are missed, students will not be eligible to earn the full 4 points for an activity and must reach out to the instructor to arrange alternate assignments. The maximum earned on these alternate assignments is 1 point each.

- Communication
 - Please communicate openly regarding your understanding of course material, assignments, and course format. Do not hesitate to ask if you need assistance or wish to discuss any aspect of the course. Communicate with me about special circumstances as soon as possible and always before the related class session and/or assignment due date.
- Confidentiality
 - You are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all the students you work with in field placements related to your coursework at the University of Pittsburgh. When writing or completing course assignments or speaking about your field experience and the students you work with, use pseudonyms (not initials) for student, teacher, and school names. In public, it is your responsibility to keep written assignments and any other materials bearing the names of students, teachers, or staff secure from the view of others.
- Courtesy
 - Students are expected to interact professionally. Additionally, you are expected to use professional language in class and in written communication. Papers and emails that are written in an unprofessional manner (i.e., grammatically incorrect, typos, misspellings, or overly informal) are considered unacceptable. Courteous behavior also includes staying on-task during class, being open to learning with classmates, engaging in open dialogue with classmates and myself, and coming to class prepared.
- Disability Services
 - If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both myself (the instructor) and [Disability Resources and Services](#) (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu, (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. I am committed to supporting your access to all learning and assessment in this course.
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
 - The University of Pittsburgh does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity or other factors as stated in the University's Title IX policy. The University is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment that interferes with the University's mission. For more information about policies, procedures, and practices, visit the [Civil Rights & Title IX Compliance web page](#).
 - I ask that everyone in the class strive to help ensure that other members of this class can learn in a supportive and respectful environment. If there are instances of the

aforementioned issues, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, by calling 412-648-7860, or e-mailing titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu. Reports can also be [filed online](#). You may also choose to report this to a faculty/staff member; they are required to communicate this to the University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. If you wish to maintain complete confidentiality, you may also contact the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930).

- Email Communication
 - Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. The University may use this e-mail address for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mails sent to this account regularly. Failure to read and react to University communications promptly does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Gmail, Yahoo). Students who forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost due to forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.
- Participation
 - Students are expected to actively participate in all course discussions and activities with civility and openness to learning from others. This helps you better learn the material and helps me gain better insight into your learning. You are expected to complete all required readings according to the timeline delineated in the course syllabus. If you do not understand something, please ask!
- Plagiarism Resources and Information
 - <https://www.english.pitt.edu/undergraduate/plagiarism>
- Religious Observances
 - The observance of religious holidays (activities observed by a religious group of which a student is a member) and cultural practices are an important reflection of diversity. As your instructor, I am committed to providing equivalent educational opportunities to students of all belief systems. At the beginning of the semester, you should review the course requirements to identify foreseeable conflicts with assignments, exams, or other required attendance. If at all possible, please contact me within the first two weeks of the first class meeting to allow time for us to discuss and make fair and reasonable adjustments to the schedule and/or tasks.
- Statement on Classroom Recording
 - To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

DIL Student Grievance Procedures

The rights and responsibilities of faculty and students are described in the University's Academic Integrity Guidelines at:

<http://www.education.pitt.edu/portals/0/current%20students/Policies%20and%20Forms/graduate%20policies/academic%20integrity%20guidelines.pdf>

The purpose of grievance procedures is to ensure the rights and responsibilities of faculty and students in their relationships with each other. When a student in DIL believes that a faculty member has not met his or her obligations (as an instructor or in another capacity) as described in the Academic Integrity Guidelines, the student should follow this procedure:

1. The student should talk directly to the faculty member to attempt to resolve the matter.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the student should talk to the relevant program coordinator.
3. If the matter remains unresolved, the student should talk to the associate chair of TLL (currently Dr. Tinukwa Boulder).
4. If needed, the student should next talk to the SOE associate dean of students (currently Dr. Andrea Zito).
5. If the matter still remains unresolved, the student should file a written statement of charges with the dean's designated Academic Integrity Administrative Officer (currently Dr. Andrea Zito).

Course Schedule

Module 1: Foundations of Teaching Students with IDD				
Week	Dates	Topic	Chapter(s) / Website / Video	Assignment Due
1	1/9	Background/Current Trends <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who are individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)? What is important about the history of education for these students? What does quality instruction for students with IDD look like? 	TSMDS: 1 HLP: Intro SBSK Video	Weekly Reading Guide (WRG) 1
2	1/14 & 1/16* *Guest Speaker	Culture, Family, and Professional Partnerships <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What role does culture play in developing partnerships with families of students with IDD? Why are home-school partnerships particularly important for students with IDD? How can we foster strong home-school partnerships? 	TSMDS: 2 HLP: 1, 2, & 3 Jeremiah Video	WRG 2
3	1/21 & 1/23	Communication <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Why is communication important for students with IDD? What and how can students with IDD communicate? What strategies can we use to teach students with IDD how to communicate? 	TSMDS: 3 HLP: 9 Communication Videos	WRG 3 *DLM PD Modules topics!
4	1/28 & 1/30	Alternate Instruction and Assessment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is the alternate assessment, Essential Elements / Linkage Levels? How do we develop standards-based IEPs? 	TSMDS: 4 HLP: 4 & 5 DLM Video	WRG 4
5	2/4 & 2/6	Monitoring and Enhancing Progress <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How can we assess learning in students with IDD? What are task analyses? How do you use visual analysis to monitor and make decisions on student learning? 	TSMDS: 5 HLP: 6 Data Collection Video (That Special Ed Teacher)	WRG 5

6	2/11 & 2/13	Evidence-Based Instruction <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why are evidence-based practices (EBP) particularly important for students with IDD? 2. What evidence-based practices (EBP) have been established for students with IDD? 3. How can EBP be adapted to fit unique contexts and learners with IDD? 	TSMDS: 6 HLP: 11 & 12	WRG 6
7	2/18 & 2/20	Positive Behavior Support <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the importance of social relationships/friendships for students with IDD? 2. How can teachers promote them? 3. Why do many students with IDD engage in aggressive or self-injurious behavior? 4. What is a function-based approach to supporting positive student behavior? 	TSMDS: 14 HLP: 7, 8, 10	WRG 7
8	2/25 & 2/27 Meet at 132 Chevron Science Center	Sensory, Physical, Health Challenges <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are common sensory, physical, and health/medical impairments in students with IDD? 2. What therapies assist students in improving these conditions? 3. What related service providers are available to help teachers implement these therapies? 	TSMDS: 15	WRG 8
MIDTERM EXAM DUE Sunday, March 16th @ 11:59 PM				
Spring Break - March 2 - March 9				
Module 2: Teaching Academic Skills				
9	3/11 & 3/13	Literacy <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is literacy important for students with IDD? 2. What does literacy look like for students with IDD? 3. What strategies can teachers use to help students with IDD make progress in literacy? 	TSMDS: 7, 8, 9 DLM ELA Webpage HLP: 13 & 16	WRG 9 *DLM PD Modules topics!

10	3/18 & 3/20	Mathematics <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is mathematics important for students with IDD? 2. What does mathematics look like for students with IDD? 3. What strategies can teachers use to help students with IDD make progress in mathematics? 	TSMDS: 10, 11 DLM Math Webpage HLP: 15 & 17	WRG 10 *DLM PD Modules topics!
11	3/25 & 3/27	Science <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is science important for students with IDD? 2. What does science content look like for students with IDD? 3. What strategies can teachers use to help students with IDD make progress in science? 	TSMDS: 12 DLM Science Webpage HLP: 18 & 21	WRG 11
Module 3: Teaching Daily Living Skills and Transition to Adulthood				
12	4/1 & 4/3	Personal and Daily Living Skills <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What barriers are produced by a lack of self-care skills in individuals with IDD? 2. What role does self-determination play in self-care and daily living skill goals? 3. What methods are most effective in teaching these skills to students with IDD? 	TSMDS: 16 HLP: 14	WRG 12
13	4/8 & 4/10	Transition/Adulthood <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the transition planning and person-centered planning processes? 2. What research-based frameworks exist for transition planning and instruction for students with IDD? 3. What legally mandated supports can students with IDD expect to have in postsecondary education, employment, and community-based activities? 	TSMDS: 17 HLP: 19 & 20	WRG 13
14	4/15* & 4/17	Work on Instructional Plans and Meet with KW *Zoom		Turn In Plan
15	4/22	Instructional Plan Presentations *At least 5 DLM PD Module Certificates Due		5+ DLM PD Module Certificates

