

## Appendix C.3

### Southern Connecticut State University

Louise Spear Swerling, Ph.D.

Teacher Preparation Candidate Tutoring of Elementary Students in Course-Based Field Experience

SED 365 Basic Principles of Academic Assessment and Remediation (Math)

SED 435 Language Arts for Exceptional Individual (Reading)

	<b>SED 365 (Math)</b>	<b>SED 435 (Reading)</b>
<b>Content Training Focus</b>	Math content includes important components of math; role of automaticity/fluency in math achievement; general education expectations; common math difficulties; value of explicit, systematic instruction; value of manipulatives and visual representations especially for concepts	Reading content includes the five components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, including oral reading skills and reading comprehension strategies. Also included is training in language structure at the word, sentence and discourse level.
<b>Assessment Training</b>	Assessment content includes types and purposes of assessment; utility of CBM in screening/PM; ethical considerations in assessment	Assessment content formative assessment in techniques of reading. Based on reading profile, why is student having reading difficulties?
<b>Age Tutored</b>	Grades 3-5 students	Grades 1-2 students
<b>In-Class Training</b>	First 7-8 weeks of semester candidates receive training in pedagogical content knowledge and opportunity to practice assessments with a peer in-class	
<b>Frequency of Tutoring</b>	Fieldwork begins week 8 of semester for 8 weeks, Tues/Thurs class – 1 session per week at local school (K-8) , 1 session at university	
<b>Supervision</b>	All fieldwork sessions are supervised by the instructor	
<b>Focus of Tutoring Sessions</b>	Tutoring sessions 1-2 focus on administration of formative assessments with students, sessions 6-7 tutoring	
<b>Assignments</b>	Diagnostic report, lesson plans, goals and objectives, reflections, final summary report, portfolio	
<b>Examples of high leverage/evidence-based practices (HLP/EBP) learned</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing single lessons and sequences of lessons</li> <li>• Explaining/modeling content and strategies</li> <li>• Eliciting and interpreting children’s thinking</li> <li>• Diagnosing common patterns of thinking/errors</li> <li>• Building respectful relationships with students</li> <li>• Setting long-term and short-term goals/objectives</li> <li>• Checking student understanding / Interpreting results of student work</li> <li>• Adjusting instruction during a lesson</li> <li>• Providing oral feedback to students</li> <li>• Analyzing instruction for purpose of improving subsequent instruction</li> </ul>	
<b>Features of effective practice embedded</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Spaced learning:</b> Tutoring sessions are spaced across ~6 weeks and with opportunity to develop skills</li> <li>• <b>Modeling:</b> Course instructor provides modeling in class and also for individual candidates during tutoring sessions</li> <li>• <b>Explicit coaching and feedback:</b> Provided to candidates during and after tutoring sessions</li> <li>• <b>Scaffolding:</b> Occurs across the 6 tutoring sessions, most candidates becoming increasingly independent over time</li> <li>• <b>Analyzing and reflecting:</b> Candidates must address specific points in their lesson reflections, e.g., pacing of lesson; child’s engagement; most/least successful activities; objectives met/not met; specific improvements for next session</li> </ul>	
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High degree of coherence between course content knowledge and field application</li> <li>• Makes course content learning much more meaningful for candidates</li> <li>• Experience does facilitate development of important teaching competencies (e.g., explicit teaching and modeling, unambiguous feedback to student errors, use of scaffolding)</li> <li>• Provides course instructor with a much more complete picture of candidates’ skills</li> </ul>	
<b>Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping course sizes small enough for meaningful supervision (current max = 16)</li> <li>• Finding enough time for content coverage</li> <li>• Finding schools near campus with the space to accommodate us</li> <li>• Weak candidates who cannot be counseled out prior to start of tutoring</li> <li>• Achieving consistency across different course sections (e.g., evening courses or by adjuncts)</li> </ul>	

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#### **Description of SED 365 Basic Principles of Academic Assessment and Remediation -- Field Experience in Mathematics**

In SED 365, students spend the first 7 to 8 weeks of the semester learning basic content knowledge about assessment (e.g., formative assessment, diagnostic assessment, screening, CBM, norm-referenced testing, interpretation of standard scores and percentile ranks) and mathematics (e.g., important components of math such as fact recall, procedural knowledge, problem solving; common types of difficulties that children have in math; number strategies such as counting up/on in addition). The class meets 2x per week. About the 8<sup>th</sup> week of the semester, candidates start fieldwork in a local elementary magnet school one class session per week. (The other class session continues to be taught at Southern and covers topics such as developing lessons, monitoring progress, and intervention strategies for different components of math.) In fieldwork each candidate is paired with a child to tutor in math. Children are typically somewhere in the Grade 3 to 5 range. The course instructor is present to supervise all fieldwork sessions.

For the first two fieldwork sessions, candidates administer a set of formative assessments for math that include assessments of the child's fact recall, procedural knowledge, problem solving skills, understanding of place value, and functional math skills in time and money. All assessments are provided to the candidates except for the last two areas (place value and functional math); candidates develop their own informal assessments of these areas with the guidance of the course instructor. Candidates must then write up a diagnostic report that summarizes the child's performance in these different areas of math and that makes recommendations for skills to be targeted in tutoring, in the areas of fact recall, computational procedures (e.g., 3-digit subtraction with regrouping), word problems, and functional math. They then develop a series of lessons (6 in total in a typical semester, assuming a child is never absent) to address these areas. They write up lesson plans for each class session, with about half a dozen behavioral objectives to help monitor the child's progress in the lesson (e.g., "Given 6 two-step word problems, the child will solve them with at least 80% accuracy"). Candidates also write a reflection for each tutoring session. Reflections must address specific topics such as whether the pacing of the lesson was effective, the child's engagement in the lesson, whether most objectives were met, which parts of the lesson were most/least successful, and what the tutor would do differently next time. At the end of the semester candidates submit a portfolio with all of their lesson plans and reflections, as well as samples of the child's work and a brief final summary report (1-2 pages) on the child's progress in tutoring.

#### **Description of SED 435 Language Arts for Exceptional Individual – Field Experience in Reading**

This field experience is analogous to the one for 365, but focuses on reading rather than math. The first half of the semester covers content on language structure, important components of reading, typical development in reading, and common profiles of reading difficulties. The fieldwork children for this class are a bit younger than those for 365, usually in Grades 1-2. The only other significant difference between the two courses is that in 435 students purchase or are given copies of all of the assessments used; they are not responsible for developing any of the assessments themselves. As in 365, 435 requires students to write diagnostic reports, lesson plans, and reflections, as well as to submit a fieldwork portfolio and final summary report at the end of the semester.

Candidates begin tutoring by using formative assessments to gauge specific phonics skills and overall text reading level. They then select several books, usually decodables, which seem appropriate for the student's reading based on the formative assessment data. Once student attempts to read, and based on observational data, the candidate decides which book is most appropriate (or looks for another book if none of the original choices seems appropriate). At the end of each tutoring session, the candidate also reads aloud to the student to promote listening comprehension, using a more difficult level book (usually grade-appropriate children's literature or informational text, depending on the student's interests). This serves the purpose of increasing vocabulary and language comprehension skills that should eventually transfer to the child's own reading once his or her decoding improves.

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#### **SED 365/435 Fieldwork Candidate Competencies:**

1. Demonstrates professional commitment through consistent attendance and careful preparation
2. Demonstrates command of academic skills and course content
3. Effectively organizes instructional materials and lessons
4. Interacts warmly and positively with child
5. Interacts in a respectful and professional manner with school staff and parents
6. Maintains behavior by appropriate means, such as effective lesson design, setting clear and appropriate limits, redirecting attention, etc.
7. Makes use of feedback from course instructor to improve lessons

#### **FEEDBACK to Candidates:**

- Based on the above competencies and related rubric.
- Feedback provided to candidate as a group at the end of each tutoring session...supervising instructor debriefs 5-10 min with candidates about what was observed.
- During tutoring sessions, the supervising instructor observes individual candidates (time permitting) and records notes; notes are given to the candidate immediately after observation. Candidates also are prepared for on demand modeling; when supervising instructor finds it necessary, she models explicit instruction for the benefit of the candidate and/or student performance.

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#### **TO: Participating Fieldwork School-Based Educators/Teachers**

##### **ABOUT THE FIELDWORK PROGRAM IN READING:**

SED 435 is a special-education course at SCSU that is taken by both elementary education (collaborative) and special education teacher candidates. The content of the course involves teaching language arts to individuals with special needs, but much of the course focuses on teaching phonics and word identification skills, with application to reading text orally and building fluency. (Candidates receive more information about teaching comprehension in other courses, although there is some coverage of vocabulary and comprehension in SED 435 as well.) On average, about two-thirds of the candidates taking the course are undergraduates who have no prior experience or preparation for teaching reading; during the first half of the semester, before the onset of fieldwork, they learn background information about reading, typical reading development, phonics, basic assessment techniques, etc.

**Children who are best suited** for the reading tutoring program are:

- Those who have difficulties in phonics and word decoding.
- Those who are likely to have consistent attendance.
- Those with fairly typical behavior and social-emotional functioning. (SCSU teacher candidates are expected to be able to manage behaviors such as distractibility, inattention, and low frustration tolerance; and in the context of one-to-one tutoring, these behaviors are rarely a problem. However, children with more significant emotional or behavioral difficulties generally are not best suited for this tutoring program.)
- Those whose learning difficulties are not severe. (Because the fieldwork program lasts only about 8 weeks, it is not generally a good vehicle for trying to address severe or complex learning problems.)

##### **ABOUT THE FIELDWORK PROGRAM IN MATH:**

SED 365 is the special-education course at SCSU that is associated with the math fieldwork. Again, teacher candidates taking this course often have little prior preparation or experience for teaching math, so the first half of the semester is spent learning content information about typical development in math, important component skills in math like fact fluency and problem solving, math assessment techniques, etc. Sometimes candidates take both courses (SED 365 and 435) at the same time. The math fieldwork program focuses on a variety of math-related skills, including basic facts, calculation skills and procedures, word problems, time, money, and fraction skills. Children who are best suited for this program are those experiencing difficulties in any aspect of basic math, who meet the other criteria (consistent attendance, etc.) noted above.

**Children who are best suited** for the math tutoring program are:

- Those who have difficulties in basic math skills such as automatic recall of facts, calculation procedures (e.g., regrouping), and/or solving word problems.
- Those who are likely to have consistent attendance.
- Those with fairly typical behavior and social-emotional functioning. (SCSU teacher candidates are expected to be able to manage behaviors such as distractibility, inattention, and low frustration tolerance; and in the context of one-to-one tutoring, these behaviors are rarely a problem. However, children with more significant emotional or behavioral difficulties generally are not best suited for this tutoring program.)
- Those whose learning difficulties are not severe. (Because the fieldwork program lasts only about 8 weeks, it is not generally a good vehicle for trying to address severe or complex learning problems.)

**Thanks so much for your willingness to collaborate in the fieldwork program!** SCSU students are incredibly enthusiastic and positive about the value of the program to their preparation as teachers. In fact, in well over 15 years of doing fieldwork, I have never heard a negative comment from a teacher candidate about the fieldwork tutoring experience, except that candidates wish they had more of it! If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 203-392-5949 or [SPEARSWERLL1@southernct.edu](mailto:SPEARSWERLL1@southernct.edu).