



Supporting **Transition** Professionals!

KU CONTINUING EDUCATION TRANSITION SHORT COURSES

Providing Online, State-Specific, Research-Based, Ongoing Professional Development

The *KU Continuing Education Transition Short Courses* provide online professional development opportunities for novice and veteran education professionals. Each course includes four week-long sessions with research-based articles, websites, videos, and discussions. The courses include:

Introduction to Transition Education and Services

Transition Assessment

Family Involvement and Student Involvement in Transition

Preparing Students for Employment and Postsecondary Education

Interagency Collaboration during Transition Planning

Through this series of courses, educational professionals learn and apply the tools and collaboration necessary to improve transition planning and services for students with disabilities.

“Now we have the tools to make transition a grand experience!”

Award-Winning Ongoing Transition Professional Development

The *KU Continuing Education Transition Short Courses* are taught over the course of a school year to a cohort of individuals within a state. Participants not only assess their needs and learn research-based practices; they also apply their knowledge and reflect on the impact within their school environment. Each course builds on the previous course, and relationships are fostered through online discussions of strengths, needs, practices, and challenges. Together they prepare participants to become transition leaders in their school and to take an active role in transition across their state. The course series was awarded the 2008 Association of Continuing Higher Education Regional Program Award for outstanding online professional development. *“I find that this online course has benefited me immensely and each time I finish [a course] I think that I must have enough information to do a really good job on transition. The next [course] gives me more, and I discover that I have lots more to learn.”*

Based on Validated Content Standards

The series of *Transition Short Courses* address all of the *Transition Specialist Competencies* as outlined by the Council for Exceptional Children, Division on Career Development and Transition (2000). The competencies included in these courses were identified through an analysis of research regarding effective transition practices and then organized according to the CEC’s transition standards. A matrix of competencies and assignments was developed to ensure that all critical competencies were addressed through articles, book chapters, videos, online learning modules, discussions or a research project.

“Choosing the most useful information, resources, and/or activities is a difficult, if not an impossible, task. Knowledge of everything presented in this course is essential for me as a special education case manager. I have book marked every link and have made hard copies of all readings.”

Taught by Expert Instructors

The *Transition Short Courses* are taught by instructors who hold doctoral degrees with an emphasis in transition. Instructors have been trained in providing high-quality online professional development. It is expected that instructors stay up-to-date on research-based transition practices through collaboration with Transition Coalition colleagues, active participation in professional organizations, and attending

national conferences. The short courses are designed to be taught as a series, and therefore, the same instructor facilitates all courses in the series which allows them to get to know the participants over time. In addition, instructors work with individual state agencies to research state-level policies and guidance procedures, to provide instruction that is applicable to teachers within the state. *“Every part of this class has given me essential tools I can use in my practice...I also believe that it is easy to contact the instructor if necessary.”*

Provide a National Perspective Referencing State-Specific Practices

Each course includes an overview of the national perspective as well as discussion of state-specific legislation, procedures, and forms. The instructor collaborates closely with the State Department of Education to tailor the content, ensuring that state-level articles, videos, websites, and performance-measures are incorporated into each course. *“One of the most helpful parts of the class was accessing and reviewing transition resources put out by the Federal and State Government, as well as other public resources. I was also able to access the resources of my peers, learning what they found important in transition and being able to share my own knowledge with them. Overall, I have developed key resources and strategies to assist me in working on transition plans with my students.”*

Appropriate for an Array of Learners

The *Transition Short Courses* are appropriate for a range of learners because each course is specifically tailored to the learners in the course. To date, teachers, transition coordinators, administrators, vocational rehabilitation counselors, regional consultants, and state-level coordinators have participated in the courses, provided positive feedback, and shown gains in knowledge and improvements in practice. The courses have been taken for undergraduate and graduate credit, as well as continuing education credit. *“I thought this class was very informative and provided useful and practical resources that can easily be applied to the classroom or to professional development settings.”*

Accessible & Flexible Format

The courses are taught through accessible software and the instructors have been trained in website accessibility. The format of each course remains similar across course content, consisting of a research-based online learning module, two asynchronous discussions over evidence-based practices, a reflection on information learned and how it will change practice, and a project that applies the information within the school context. This standardized format has been shown to help learners quickly adjust to the online learning environment. The ample resources (articles, book chapters, videos, and websites) within each course enable each learner to prioritize content for his/her unique needs. *“I feel I will be writing better IEPs and working on better transition plans after this course. I can’t remember a time when the course work has matched my teaching experience more perfectly.”*

Increases Knowledge

Change in knowledge is assessed through pre/post content assessments in each course, a reflection on information learned in each course, and a pre/post assessment of competencies for the series as a whole. The courses have been shown to increase the transition knowledge of participants. *“I feel like I have a toolbox of resources now. I work with so many different students at varying levels and different disabilities, I now have choices.”*

Changes Practice

Change in practice is assessed through Goal Attainment Scaling, a reflection on how information from each course will be applied, an analysis of collaboration within the online discussions, and application of skills through project-based learning. The courses have been shown to improve the transition practices of participants. Furthermore, there is evidence that participants share the knowledge learned within the coursework with other secondary-level teachers and transition coordinators within their district and across their state. *“The Goal Attainment Scale was a challenge to develop and I know this will be pivotal in keeping me focused on improving my transition services for students.”*

For more information on the *KU Transition Short Courses*, please contact
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