

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course:	EDZU 9913	<u>Facilitating Seamless Transitions for Students and their Families from Pre-K to Adulthood</u>
Credit Hours:	3.0 credits / 45 hours	
Instructor:	Lauren Andersen	

Course Description

The transition to and from a new school or program may present feelings of nervousness, anxiety, excitement, and opportunity for students, their families, and school personnel. Both seamless transitions and poorly planned transitions may have long-lasting effects on students and their families. Whereas seamless transitions have resulted in continuous development and progression of academic and social skills, research has documented that poorly planned transitions from Pre-K to Elementary school, elementary to middle, middle to high school, and high school to adulthood may result in poor outcomes for students such as major declines in academic performance, increased likelihood of school drop-out, and the development of mental health issues such as depression. Teachers and schools must learn what is required to transition students seamlessly from one school/program to another in order to assist students in continuing their academic and personal development, and to prevent them from experiencing negative effects of poorly planned and inadequate transitions. This course will examine specific challenges that may arise during times of transition, and will equip school personnel with the knowledge that is necessary to prevent these adverse effects from happening. Course participants will also learn about the transition planning process and will develop transition plans using recommended frameworks that can be utilized in their own schools and school districts, in addition to learning about strategies to employ when working with students who are transitioning to/from a new school/program to ensure they will be as successful as possible.

Course Goals

To Know

1. the definition of transition
2. specific challenges that may arise from transitioning to a new school or program

To Understand

1. parent and professional collaboration is key for successful transitions to occur
2. transition planning is essential for a seamless transition
3. planning should begin well in advance of a school move or program change

and To Be Able To

1. support students while they enter or exit a school/program
2. make recommendations to ensure a seamless transition to/from a school/program
3. identify strategies to help students adjust to change appropriately

Course Outline**Unit 1: What is transition?****Personal introductions**

- Overview of the course: please take some time to read the syllabus thoroughly and read through the assignments.
- *Forum post:* please tell us your name, current position, what inspired you to enter the field of education and what the proudest moment of your career has been so far!

Perception of transition

- *Forum Post:* What does the term “transition” mean to you? Reflect on your personal life and a memorable transition that you, a family member, or friend experienced. What emotions did you or another individual feel? Why did you feel this way about the transition? When you have finished, comment on a classmate’s post.
- *Assignment:* Read the article “It’s the Transition that’s Troublesome.” Then, answer the questions for assignment 1 based on the reading.

Definition of transition

- *Assignment:* Watch/listen to Voice Thread on “Transition.” Please answer the questions posed in the Voice Thread on the direct link. You can leave comments or record your voice to answer the questions. You may have to listen to the Voicethread multiple times before you are able to comment and respond to questions posed. Be sure to read your classmates’ feedback to the questions as well.

Elements of good/bad transition

- *Assignment:* Transition timeline Open the "Transition Timeline" document below. Then, edit the template to reflect your own school transition experiences. Be sure to include information to support your thoughts on each transition. Was it a successful transition from elementary school to middle school? Did you encounter challenges that made it an overall unsuccessful transition? Include as much information as possible. Save your document and upload it below!

Unit 2: Challenges in Transition Across K-12 School Buildings

- *Forum Post:* Transitions happen throughout K-12 school buildings, in addition to preschool and college/adulthood transitions. Do you believe that transitions across a child’s academic career are equally important? In other words, is the transition from Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten, Elementary to Middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to college/adulthood equally important? Or do you believe one or more of these specific transition periods is more important than the others? Please support your answer and respond in 2 paragraphs. When you are finished, comment on one classmate’s post.

- *Assignments (2):* For the purposes of the next assignment, you will choose two different specific transition times to focus on. You will be asked to choose **one or more articles listed under each transition time that you selected** to learn more about it and complete the forms based on the information you learned. The following are expected transitions that you may choose from:
 - o Pre-K to Kindergarten
 - o Elementary to Middle School
 - o Middle School to HS
 - o HS to college
 - o HS to adulthood for students with significant disabilities

Unit 3: Transition Programs

- *Assignment:* Choose one of the programs below or find your own unique program, conduct more research on that program, and reflect on the strengths of the model, benefits of the model, and areas in need of improvement. You may use Google as a search engine for this assignment.
 - Upward Bound (Federal TRIO program)
 - Talent Search (Federal TRIO program)
 - GEAR UP
 - Career Beginnings
 - Project GRAD
 - AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) v Bridges to Adelphi
 - Vocational Independence Program (VIP) at NYIT v Link Crew
 - Ignite for Schools
 - Freshman Focus
- *Assignment:* Please write a transition reflection about your selected transition model and your beliefs about that model. Do you believe it is a worthy transition model? Do you see how students will benefit or currently benefit from it? What type of students are being targeted? Do you see any problems with the model? It is not necessary to upload a file submission for this assignment. Instead, please respond directly in the box below. Keep your response limited to 300 words or less.

Unit 4: Transition Planning

- *Forum Post:* What is your experience in writing a transition plan? If you work with students who are transitioning into or out of your school/program, how often do you come in contact with their written transition plans? After learning more about transition plans, do you see the importance of having a plan during times of transition?
- *Assignment:* Now you will have the opportunity to practice completing a transition plan. You may choose to visualize a child that you have worked with that has either transitioned into or out of your school/program and complete the transition plan using your knowledge of this student. You can even pretend that you are the student himself/herself. Please make sure you change the student's name and/or use the student's initials to maintain confidentiality.
- Watch/Listen to the Voicethread on “Transition Planning.” What does a transition plan look like? Why is it important? Requirements for a transition plan: participants, well in advance of the actual transition, IEP requirements.

Unit 5: What can teachers do to assist students in transition?

- *Forum Post:* Have you used any specific strategies to assist students with a seamless transition? What coping skills are necessary for students to be able to transition into a new school or program? How do you get parents involved in the transition? Please read and respond to two of your classmates' posts.
- Download and read slides about coping strategies.
- *Assignment:* Select one coping strategy that you believe would be useful to teach students to help them handle stressful situations. You may even select one from the articles that you have just read. Pretend that you are introducing this coping strategy to students for the first time. Write down what you would say to your students when introducing this new strategy. It may be helpful to touch upon how you use the strategy in your own life (when you use it, how often you use it).

Methods of Instruction

Students in this course will have the opportunity to read research articles and watch videos on transition elements. Students in this course will be able to enhance their own learning by pursuing their interests to guide their understanding of transition and how it applies to their current positions. The term “transition” can refer to many different aspects of changing from one school to another, one class to another, or one phase of life to another. Students in this course will gain deeper understanding by communicating with other classmates in the online forum. Additionally, students will be able to learn through various “voice threads,” which contain important information on the topic. Students will communicate with each other throughout the course in forum posts, discussions, Voicethread participation and through written reflections/papers.

Students will connect with each other throughout the course within forums and various other types of online feedback options built into each class.

Methods of Assessment

Students who are taking the course for in-service and CTLE credit must participate in all forum posts, readings, and assignments mentioned in the above syllabus.

Students who are taking this course for graduate credit and are working to attain a letter grade of “B” must complete all forum posts, readings, and assignments mentioned in the above syllabus in addition to the following assignment. *Final Reflection:* What have you learned in this class? How will you change your practice as a school professional? What do you believe the most important element in student success during academic transition? Please incorporate readings from throughout the course.

Students who are taking this course for graduate credit and are working to attain a letter grade of “A” must complete all forum posts, readings, and assignments mentioned in the above syllabus in addition to the following assignments: (1) *Final Reflection:* What have you learned in this class? How will you change your practice as a school professional? What do you believe the most important element in student success during academic transition? Please incorporate readings from throughout the course. (2) *Transition Planning Template:* In Unit 4, you completed a transition planning document that sought information about a student’s strengths and needs in planning for his/her future. For this assignment,

please research another example of a transition planning document that could be used in your school. You may even create your own template.

Instructors are online each day of the course and correspond with students through the course itself, feedback on assignments, and e-mail.

Time Validation

Assignment	Time (in hours)
Students will thoroughly read the syllabus and all course information.	0.50
Students will post introductions.	0.50
Students will read and respond to classmates' introductions.	0.50
Students will reflect on what "transition" means to them and how transitions in their personal lives made them feel and will read and respond to classmates' reflections.	1.50
Students will learn how to access and use all Voicethread features.	1.00
Students will read an article on transition and think critically about questions posed.	1.00
Students will watch and listen to a Voicethread on transition and will respond to questions posed.	4.50
Students will read a case study and identify elements of successful and unsuccessful transition.	2.00
Students will read and understand the difference between expected and unexpected transitions.	0.50
Students will reflect on transitions across K-12 schooling and consider various perspectives from different stakeholders.	3.00
Students will select one specific transition time in a student's educational career to focus on and further research.	1.00
Students will write a one page reflection on the importance of seamless transition at their point of focus and will cite multiple sources of information to support their claims.	5.00
Students will learn about various transition programs that were created to facilitate successful transitions, will conduct research on one of these programs, and will relay that information to classmates.	6.00
Students will read and respond to classmates' research on transition programs and models.	2.00
Students will watch and listen to a Voicethread on Transition Planning.	1.00
Students will create a transition plan.	3.00
Students will share experiences in writing transition plans.	1.50
Students will review slides on coping strategies for students to use.	1.00
Students will share their experiences in utilizing coping skills.	2.50
Students will write a final reflection on their learning in the course and will cite evidence from the course.	7.00
Total Time	45.00