

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**  
**Instructional Technology**

EDIT642 – The Online Academy (1 graduate credit hour)  
Offered in the Fall, Spring, and Summer Semesters Yearly  
Offered Online

**PROFESSOR(S)**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

- A. Successful completion of EDIT 641 or instructor permission
- B. This one credit hour course is designed to develop students' knowledge about GMU's virtual high school program, *The Online Academy*. The course will focus on the design model that structures online courses with particular attention to the role of representative problems, performances of understanding, communities/fields of practice, and online mentors. Students will role play a virtual high school students and complete one learning module as well as role play a virtual high school student supporting an adolescent online learner. From these role playing experiences, students will come to understand the structure and interactions embedded in the design model.

**NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY**

This course is an online course. Students participate in an ongoing process where the learner takes responsibility for structuring his or her time and decides, within a broader time frame, when it is appropriate to complete assignments. Each student registered for a course is a learner of one and is assigned an Online Mentor. The Online Mentor reviews all the assignments submitted, makes suggestions if the assignment is incomplete, responds to ideas, and/or makes suggestions for ways that students can refine their work to construct a more convincing argument or create more powerful learning opportunities. The online mentor asks questions about what students are thinking or learning about. The online mentor is the student's online ally and is the contact point when an assignment does not make sense, when there are difficulties with technology, or if students are stuck for a good teaching idea. The course is web-based and uses a cluster of organized web pages. In addition, students will use phone, email, and synchronous chat functions to communicate with their mentor.

**STUDENT OUTCOMES**

1. The student will understand the Community of Practice Learning System design model used by *The Online Academy*;
2. The student will investigate through readings the literature and research related to problem-based learning and performances of understanding;
3. The student will develop an appreciation of and an understanding about the role of the mentor, the phases of the mentoring processes, and the implications for teaching in *The Online Academy*;
4. The student will appreciate the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of being a virtual secondary education student by role playing a student completing a representative content module; and

5. The student will appreciate the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of being a virtual mentor by “teaching” an online content module to their mentor.

## **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

This course is designed to meet the standards established by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). The NBPTS Standards for every field and developmental level are centered on five core propositions that express the effectiveness, knowledge, skills, dispositions, and commitments of the accomplished teacher:

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
- Teachers are members of learning communities.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

There is no required text for this course. Instead, there are a number of web references to appropriate articles. Links to these articles are provided throughout the web pages that guide the course.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA**

### **A. Requirements**

1. Students will complete readings as assigned.
2. Students will complete activities related to readings. These include:
  - a. An analysis of three content modules developed for virtual learners to identify and reflect on the role of the design model inherent in the examples;
  - b. An analysis of three content modules developed for virtual learners to identify and reflect on the role of problem-based learning strategies and performances of understanding in the module designs; and
  - c. Using Robert Fulghum’s *Everything I Ever Needed to Know about Life, I Learned in Kindergarten*, students will construct their own list for *Everything I Learned About Mentoring Virtual Secondary Education Students*.
3. The student will practice their new knowledge related to the design model, the nature of problem-based learning, and the concept of performances of understanding by role playing a virtual secondary education student completing a representative content module. Upon completion of the module, students will write a reflection on their experience as a “virtual secondary student” in response to a given set of prompts; and
4. The student will practice their new knowledge by “teaching” an online content module to their mentor. Upon completion of the module, students will write a reflection on their experience as a “virtual online mentor” in response to a given set of prompts.

### **B. Performance-Based Assessments**

This course includes one, synthesizing performance-based assessments. Students will use a provided template (see end of syllabus) that serves as an application for a position teaching in a virtual high school program.

### C. Criteria for Evaluation

Assessment of the application is guided by a rubric. The rubric follows:

#### *Knowing Your Application Has Succeeded*

	Masterful and Compelling (5)	Appropriate and Articulate (3)	Weak and Not Complete (1)
1. Demonstrates a clear understanding of the components and interactions inherent in the COPLS design model			
2. Presents a clear description of the role of representative problems and performances of understanding and the rationale for their place in instruction			
3. Presents a clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and processes associated with online mentoring			
4. Includes a personal reflection on what has been learned, how it will be applied, and challenges to face			
5. Adheres to the 200 - 250 word limitation for each section			
6. Has been carefully edited for spelling and grammar			

### D. Grading Scale

Requirements	Possible Points
Analysis of Representative Modules – The Design Model	10
Analysis of Representative Modules – Problem-Based Learning Strategies and Performances of Understanding	10
Everything I Learned About Mentoring Virtual Secondary Education Students	10
Reflective Writing: The Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations of a Virtual High School Learner	20
Reflective Writing: The Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations of a Virtual Online Mentor	20
Application to Teach in a Virtual High School	30

Grade	Point Range
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	86-89
B	80-85
C	70-79
F	69-below

## **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS**

All students must abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See [gse.gmu.edu](http://gse.gmu.edu) for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See [http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC\\_H12](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12) for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See [www.gmu.edu/student/drc](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc) or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

## PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE

This 1 graduate credit hour course is designed to be completed in five weeks. Given the online nature of the course, assignments are clustered in weekly modules. Students, in conjunction with their online mentor, are responsible for dividing the assignments accordingly.

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
Week 1	<p>Every virtual high school course exemplifies an underlying design or pedagogical model. Many courses are created using a traditional model that depends on a class, on discussions, on attendance at virtual lectures, on a grading program, and on a teacher. Recent experts are beginning to suggest that this design model of education might need to be revised especially for online learning environments. <i>The Online Academy</i> uses an alternative design model named COPLS. In this module, students will learn about that design model and examine how it is reflected in courses offered by <i>The Online Academy</i>.</p>	<p>Activity 1: Read All About It!</p> <p>The COPLS Design Model (Web version) The COPLS Design Model (Word version)</p> <p>Activity 2: Finding the COPLS Model in The Online Academy</p> <p>Activity 3: Complete Application (Part 1): How The Online Academy Works</p>
Week 2	<p>In this module, students will explore two aspects of the instructional resources associated with The Online Academy. This intense look at the instructional resources around representative problems and performances of understanding will help students understand how the web-based resources are organized, what their purpose is, and how various types of other resources are structured to support the learning process.</p>	<p>Activity 1: Read All About It!</p> <p>Representative Problems A Performance Criterion Performances of Understanding</p> <p>Activity 2: Designing with Representative Problems and Performances of Understanding</p> <p>Activity 3: Complete Application (Part 2): Introducing The Online Academy to a Potential Student</p>
Week 3	<p>Instead of a definition of teacher as director, deliverer of information, and manager, The Online Academy relies on a mentor. While some functions of the mentor resemble those of the more traditional teacher, the mentor collaborates with learners as they solve the problem at the center of each content module. The mentor acts as support system, provocateur, content expert, and stand-in for the expertise embedded in the community of practice articulated by the representative problem. In this module, students will more completely explore the role of the mentor within the pedagogical model of The Online Academy.</p>	<p>Activity 1: Read All About It!</p> <p>Mentors - Part 1 Activity 2: The Mentor's Persona</p> <p>Activity 3: Read More About It!</p> <p>Mentors - Part 2 Mentors - Part 3</p> <p>Activity 4: Testing Your Mentoring Knowledge</p> <p>Activity 5: Complete Application (Part 3): Describing the Mentor</p>
Week 4	<p>Students will experience what it would be like to be a virtual high school student. In this module, students will role play a virtual learner who is beginning virtual learning for</p>	<p>Activity 1: Discovering the Role of the Learner</p> <p>Activity 2: Reflecting on the Role of the Learner</p>

	<p>the first time. They will be asked by their online mentor to complete a module in The Online Academy. When they have completed the module, they will be asked to reflect on the process. What insights about being a virtual high school learner were they able to glean from the experience?</p>	
<p>Week 5</p>	<p>In this module, students will be challenged to do a little more role playing only this time they will be the online mentor guiding a virtual high school student through a sample module. Their online mentor will play the role of a virtual high school student. Upon completion of the module, students to reflect on the experience. What did they learn about virtual high school mentoring? Finally, students will be asked to complete the last section of their application by writing a 200 - 250 word essay on the challenges and joys they think they might experience as an online mentor in The Online Academy.</p>	<p>Activity 1: Discovering the Role of the Mentor</p> <p>Activity 2: Reflecting on the Role of the Mentor</p> <p>Activity 3: Submitting Your Completed Virtual Teaching Application</p>

# Application Template for Performance of Understanding

The Online Academy for Teachers

A George Mason University Certificate Program

## *Application for Employment*

Please complete this application in its entirety and submit for consideration.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address (GMU) \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Email address (home, school, etc) \_\_\_\_\_

School Division \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

School phone \_\_\_\_\_

Grade Level(s) Taught \_\_\_\_\_

Subjects Taught \_\_\_\_\_

Current Teaching License(s) \_\_\_\_\_

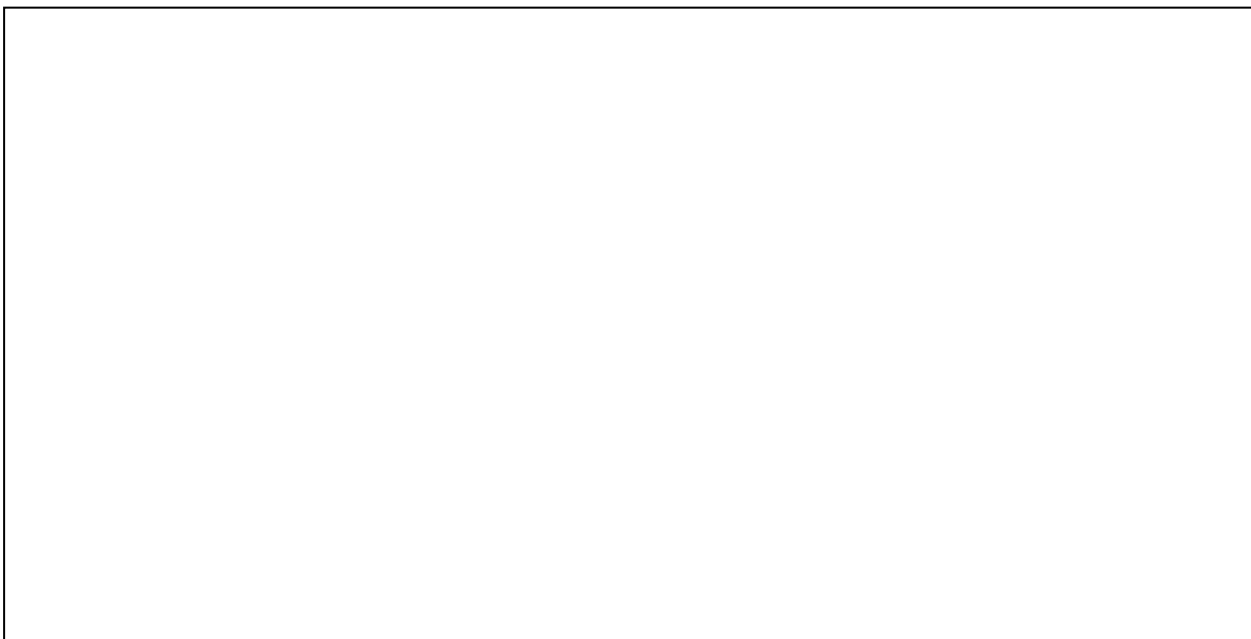
### Essay 1

Please read the materials provided at <http://itdev.gmu.edu/vhs/toat/courses/course3red/mod1.htm> After you have reviewed the material, please write a short essay of no more than 200 – 250 words describing your understanding of the model used to create *The Online Academy*.



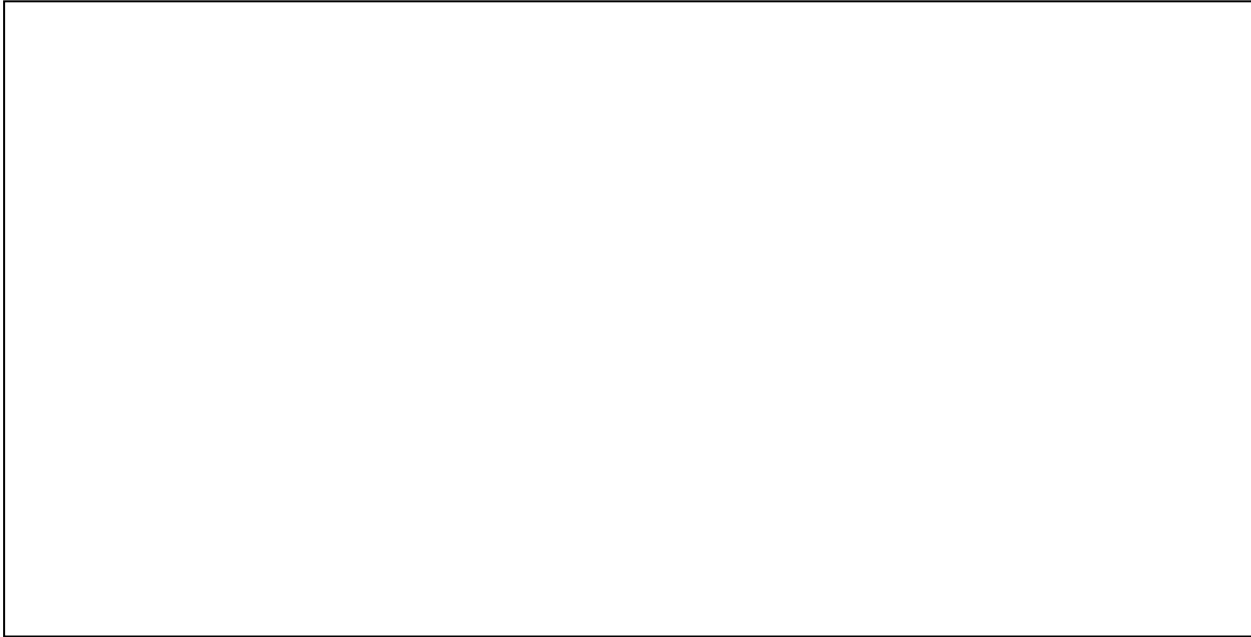
### Essay 2

Please read the materials provided at <http://itdev.gmu.edu/vhs/toat/courses/course3red/mod2.htm> After you have reviewed the material, please write a short introduction of no more than 200 – 250 words that you might send to a potential virtual learner in *The Online Academy* explaining the role of representative problems and performances of understanding in their learning.



**Essay 3**

Please read the materials provided at <http://itdev.gmu.edu/vhs/toat/courses/course3red/mod3.htm> After you have reviewed the material, please write a short description of no more than 200 – 250 words that presents your understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and processes associated with mentoring in *The Online Academy*.

**Essay 4**

Please read the materials provided at <http://itdev.gmu.edu/vhs/toat/courses/course3red/mod5.htm> After you have reviewed the material, please write a short reflection of no more than 200 – 250 words about your experiences of role playing a virtual high school learner and an online mentor in *The Online Academy*. What do you think the joys and challenges will be should you be hired as an online mentor?

