

**Course Title:** Aiding Students with Learning Disabilities

**Instructors:** Donna Walker Tileston, Marilee Sprenger, Carol Mowen

**Length:** 15 hours

**Dates:** Rolling admissions

**Prerequisites:** Bachelor Degree

**Number of credits:** 1

**Course Description:**

This course, founded on a systems approach, offers teachers access and understanding of key components of the multi-memory system, self-system, metacognitive system, and cognitive system to develop declarative and procedural knowledge. Innovative instructional strategies include advanced use of graphic organizers and methods for exploring/attacking problems that students can integrate into their daily classroom and homework experience. The concept of “automaticity” is explored or tapping into *prior knowledge*, which uses the classroom as a well of knowledge rather than a dry purveyor of facts and figures.

Presented by leaders in the field of brain-based education, the course addresses individuals with diverse learning needs. The special needs of students with reading disorders, emotional and behavioral disorders, attention disorders, and autism are addressed.

Participants gain an understanding of the neurobiological differences that present themselves in a regular classroom and their impact on learning. The course is based on an assumption that students can gain the knowledge and the skills necessary to perform in today’s world through access to a learning menu of teaching strategies and systems that promote learning in all areas of instruction. Finally, this course is a distillation of “best practices” currently available for a truly inclusive, brain-based learning environment.

**Objectives:**

1. Knowledge –at the end of this course, the student will be able to understand:
  - a. How the cognitive system of the brain affects student learning,
  - b. The variety of learning disabilities that exist,
  - c. The difference between declarative and procedural knowledge, and
  - d. How behavioral problems affect learning.
2. Skills –after this course, a student will be able to develop:
  - a. Strategies to deal with students with emotional disorders and autism,
  - b. Effective strategies for helping students construct their knowledge,
  - c. Knowledge and strategies for creating patterns in the brain, and
  - d. Ideas that can help students complete tasks at high complexity levels.
3. Dispositions – after this course, a student will appreciate:

- a. The effect of the emotions on the brain,
- b. What it means for students to achieve automaticity, and
- c. Windows of opportunity and when they open and close.

### Topic Sessions (8):

- Brain Structure and Development            Marilee Sprenger
- Brain-Compatible Teaching Principles    Marilee Sprenger
- Wiring the Brain for Literacy            Marilee Sprenger
- Special Education and the Brain: Part 1   Donna Walker Tileston
- Special Education and the Brain: Part 2   Donna Walker Tileston
- Emotional and Behavior Disorders        Donna Walker Tileston
- Autism                                        Donna Walker Tileston
- Learning Disabilities and Literacy        Carol Mowan

### Instructor Overview:

**Marilee Sprenger** is a creative and compassionate educator who interprets and applies current brain research for classroom teacher at the elementary, middle school, high school, and university levels. As an independent consultant, her passion is brain-based teaching and best practices using brain research and differentiation. She also consults in the areas of learning styles, using music in the classroom, teaming, multiple intelligences, emotional intelligence, and memory. She is affiliated with the American Academy of Neurology and is constantly updated on current research.

**Donna Walker Tileston** is the author of eighteen books published by Corwin Press. Her series of ten books, *What Every Teacher Should Know*, won the distinguished National Publishers Award in 2005. That series, as well as her book, *Ten Best Teaching Practices*, have been on Corwin's best-seller list since they were introduced. As a teacher and administrator, Donna first used her research on the brain and learning to restructure a "failing school" and to help lead it to win statewide acclaim for high test scores and a low drop-out rate. That experience led to her first book and much of her work on helping struggling students. Donna is an international speaker who has delivered more than 600 workshops on a variety of topics including differentiation, diversity, technology, and brain research. She resides in Dallas, Texas where she writes full time and works with schools throughout the world to help all kids to be successful.

**Dr. Carol Mowen** is a summa cum laude graduate of The University of Michigan, Spring Arbor University, and Capella University. Since 1985, she has been a teacher in rural, suburban, and urban public schools. She is a national speaker with many published works in education. Currently, she designs and instructs university courses in literacy and educational leadership.

### **Methods of Instruction:**

Methods of instruction will include

- Individual sections (8) (15 hours)
- Pre assessments (8)
- Graded post assessments (8)
- Video lectures (8) Polling questions - included in videos
- Study guides (8) (60 to 100 pages)
- Handouts
- Final Project

**All steps listed under each topic must be completed to receive credit for the course. No partial credit will be given.**

**Students must earn a minimum of 70% to pass the course.**

### **Texts (included in program)**

- Study guide provided in the program (200 pages)

### **Assignments**

- Pre assignments (40)
- Post assignments (64)
- Final project (1)

### **Percentage of Course Credit**

- Graded post assessments      70%
- Final Project                      30%

**Due dates of major assignments, projects, and examinations:** Online self-running programs can be started and completed at participants' own leisure within two months from the day they begin the course. Participants must complete and turn in the final within two weeks of completing the course.

### **Grading criteria/system and evaluation activities:**

A course administrator will be reviewing students' answers and providing feedback. Students will be evaluated on their creativity and ability to incorporate techniques from the lectures into examples, lesson plans, and the final project.