In order to respond to the growing need for highly qualified caring and innovative special education teachers, Indiana University-Bloomington is piloting a redesigned and refocused graduate and certification program.

The Special Education for Indiana School’s Today (SPEDFIST) program offers a hybrid program where courses are taken online and complimented with face-to-face meetings.

In our first SPEDFIST newsletter, take time to read about the instructors teaching courses this fall and get to know two SPEDFIST students. Learn about the courses we are offering in the spring and take time to browse our website, brochure, and postcard.

We are excited for your involvement and/or interest in our program. Let us hear from you if you have feedback, ideas for our next newsletter, or just to say hi!

**Spreading the News About SPEDFIST**

We are spreading the word about SPEDFIST! Katy Pastel, a talented Art Director at IU’s School of Education has designed a SPEDFIST brochure and postcard for us to send near and far. Nate Powell, a doctoral student in the Instructional Systems Technology department at IU’s School of Education has been working hard on our webpage. Take some time to explore these resources and pass them on to others!

*SPEDFIST Postcard*  
*SPEDFIST Brochure*  
*SPEDFIST Website*
Welcome to the SPEDFIST Program and Our First Newsletter!

It has been an interesting beginning… (some would say challenging!)… as we pilot our redesigned graduate certification and master’s program at IU-Bloomington as a web based (Hybrid) program. We are fortunate to have obtained a grant from the U. S. Department of Education (Office of Special Education Programs) to support our development work as we work to meet our goals. We hope to be able to reach prospective special educators in communities far from one of the IU campuses by making the most of a web based delivery system. We also want to update our curriculum in order to better prepare special educators for schools of today! Part of this updating relates to the need for special educators to be “highly-qualified”- proficient in content as they provide access to students to the general education curriculum and are increasingly are called upon to co teach in general education settings. Updating also relates to the increasingly diverse population of students with disabilities in our school requiring culturally competent teachers. Finally, since research on teacher learning suggests teachers learn to teach by teaching, we aim to strengthen the connection of our curriculum directly to field based activities.

The SPEDFIST program is truly a work in progress. This is the third year of our five year grant. We appreciate your ongoing patience with us as we work out the “kinks”. It is our plan that this newsletter will help keep us all up to date on new developments in SPEDFIST as well as connect us to one another as a community of special educators committed to providing the best possible education to students with disabilities and their families. We plan to put the newsletter together at least once a semester. We want to hear from you! Let us know what’s happening at your school, in your classrooms. We’d also love to get to know you better!

-Dr. Gretchen Butera
Faculty, Special Education

SPEDFIST Student Orientation

To prepare for the launch of SPEDFIST, a student orientation was held at the School of Education on August 12, 2009. It was a great opportunity for students and SPEDFIST advisors/instructors to meet and to share information about the coming semester.

We want to thank the students who attend for making time in their busy schedules and we look forward to working with you all throughout your programs!
Angi Stone-MacDonald

Angi is currently teaching K548, Families, School, and Society.

Angi has worked with people with disabilities for the last 12 years and holds a Master's degree in Special Education from Indiana University. Her areas of interest include early intervention, assistive technology, international special education, and culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Angi has recently returned from Lushoto, Tanzania where she was collecting research for her dissertation.

Hannah Schertz

Hannah currently teaches K500, Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders, the first in a series of five for an autism certificate and a specialty strand for the Special Education master's program.

Hannah was recently funded to develop this as a fully online program. She has a broad interest in early childhood special education. Hannah has recently resettled in Bloomington from Colorado.

Rama Cousik

Rama is currently teaching K505, Introduction to Special Education.

Rama has worked with people with disabilities for the last 23 years as a teacher, researcher and consultant. Her areas of interest are use of creative arts in education and early intervention. Rama is a wonderful cook who enjoys running and spending time with her dog.

Gina Weir

Gina currently teaches K553 Classroom Management and K405/K500, a seminar for the SPEDFIST special education cohort.

Gina is a 2006 graduate of the Master’s degree in Special Education at Indiana University and is presently a Doctorate Candidate. Her research interests are inclusion, collaboration with families, and school reform. Gina can often be seen with her beautiful new baby named Silas.
Tips to Complete SPEDFIST Coursework

1) Be patient as you learn to use the technology in the courses…we are all learning together!

2) Ensure that finding a mentor and school are a high priority and strive to foster this relationship.

3) Find a way to keep assignments and expectations organized.

4) Plan ahead to attend and participate in face-to-face meetings.

5) Actively work to get to know and collaborate with your colleagues.

Spotlight on SPEDFIST Students

COREY LONDEREE

I chose the SPEDFIST Master’s and certification program because it offers flexibility in my busy life. It allows me to work on assignments at my own pace and on my own time. The reason I chose to study special education is because I love kids! Special education can be challenging at times, however, there’s nothing more rewarding then seeing your student accomplish the smallest task for the first time.

I am currently enrolled in K505 (Intro to Special Education), K553 (Classroom Management), and K500 (1cr Seminar). After I complete my program, I would like to teach and coach football at an inner city high school. After a couple of years teaching, I may return to Indiana University to work on a PhD, however, building relationships, challenging students, and being a positive role model in my school will be my main focus when I graduate.

The picture above is Rylan (my 3 year old son), Jenna and myself at the Indianapolis Zoo. The reason I chose this picture was because I love spending time with my family.

KATE SHIVELY

I am enrolled in the SPEDFIST Master’s Program. I decided to come back so I can be prepared for a career when my children are in school. I have always been interested in the Special Education field from a very young age. There are so many reasons I love this field, including individuals with special needs in my life that inspire me on a regular basis.

I have been earning a living as a photographer (http://ksphotography.biz) while raising two little girls, ages 5 and 3. My husband is also a full time student so the Shively Household is very busy! The online format of this program fits well with our lifestyle! However, I am never too busy to unwind on Thursday evenings by watching Grey’s Anatomy and Private Practice.

I look forward to all the possibilities the SPEDFIST Master’s Program has to offer. I know I will have many opportunities to consider!
Looking Ahead to SPEDFIST in Spring 2010

Before we know it, spring 2010 registration and the semester will be upon us! As you consider your courses and plan out your program of studies, take a moment to see what SPEDFIST is offering.

K500: Assessment and Planning for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (Autism Strand)
K505: Introduction to Special Education (Core Course)
K522: Teaching Social Skills (Behavior Strand)
K 535: Assessment and Remediation of Mildly Handicapped (Core Course)
K 541: Transitions Across Life Span (Transitions Strand)
K 545: Management of Severely Emotionally Disturbed (Behavior Strand)
K 565: Collaboration and Service Delivery (Core Course)

For More Information on SPEDFIST

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