







Tara Mason, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Inclusive Education & Assistive Technology Specialist

Curriculum Vitae

Universal Design for Learning and Neuroplasticity guru, an advocate of student & teacher growth mindset, 20+ years teaching background in low and high incidence disabilities, teacher of students with visual impairments, assistive technology specialist, passionate to innovate public education in high-need under-served communities. Always driving special education innovation in the classroom and district setting as an assistant professor, partnering with teams, schools, districts, universities, and research.

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SKILLS

Instructional Coach

Assistive Technology

Teacher Education

Grants & Contracts

Program Evaluation

Literacy Instruction

Visual Impairment

Low and High Incidence Disabilities

Research Methodology

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Special Education Texas Tech University

09/2008 – 05/2014

Doctoral level coursework in Visual Impairment (TVI), Multiple Disabilities and Educational Technology

Dissertation, Transformative Teaching: Implementing Mobile Technology Teaching Strategies in serving Students with Visual Impairments

M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction University of Nebraska-Lincoln

08/2003 – 08/2005

Masters level coursework in diversity in education, curriculum, and instruction

Thesis, Confines, and Collaborations: Where Arts Education Meets the Discipline

BA in Studio Art
The University of Texas at Austin
08/1995 – 05/1999

CERTIFICATES

Colorado State Teaching Certifications in Early Childhood Special Education (0-8), Elementary Education (K-6), Special Education Generalist (5-21), Special Education Specialist- Visual Impairment (0-21), Visual Arts (K-12), License #113657

Texas State Teaching Certifications in Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (K-12), Middle School Generalist (4-8), English Language Learners (K-12).

Assistive Technology Specialist, AT Program at California State University (2016)

WORK EXPERIENCE

Assistant Professor of Inclusive Education, Western Colorado University

07/2019- Currently

Achievements/Tasks

Special Education Licensure & Inclusive Programs Program Coordinator, Co-Director of Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), Special Education Graduate course development (EDUC 611, 632, 631, 633, 615, 630, 612, 614, 326, 428, 628, 429, 629, 616, 617, 618), Co-Founder & Director of Disability Film Festival, participate on Department Curriculum Committee, Board Member of Teacher Institute, Instructional Technology Committee, & Western Canvas PowerUser.

Special Education Teacher, Boulder Valley School District

08/2016 – 07/2019

Achievements/Tasks

Develop IEPs, Provide intensive, multisensory reading intervention, provide math interventions, co-teach with general education, eight funded grants written to support special education student learning and classroom

Lead Special Education Coach, Assistive Technology Specialist, and Written Language Specialist, St. Vrain Valley School District

08/2014 – 06/2016

Achievements/Tasks

Worked in 57+ schools as SpEd Coach and AT Specialist, 150+ AT Referral Intervention Caseload, Led Team of 4 Special Education Coaches

Graduate Assistant & Teaching Assistant, Texas Tech University

08/2012 – 05/2014

Achievements/Tasks

Teaching assistant for five graduate-level courses, university supervisor to TVI teaching candidates, and research assistant on grant-funded projects

Field Supervisor and Instructional Coach, The New Teacher Project

07/2007 – 05/2012

Achievements/Tasks

Consultant with The New Teacher Project coaching and evaluating teacher candidates. Participant researcher for ACE Observer of Teacher Effectiveness Research Study. Interviewed TNTP candidates at all-day interview events in order to be accepted into alternative certification program

Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI), The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

08/2008 – 05/2012

Achievements/Tasks

Self-contained special education teacher/TVI for students in multi-intensive classrooms and transition programs at a residential state school

General Education Teacher, The Khabele School

07/2006 – 05/2008

Achievements/Tasks

6th-8th grade ELA Teacher, 6-12 Fine Arts Teacher and Director of Fine Arts Programs, Coordinated events for 100+

Curriculum Coordinator and Instructional Coach, American Youthworks Charter School

08/2005 – 07/2006

Achievements/Tasks

Curriculum coordinator and Co-Nect Grant Standards and Quality Student Work Coordinator, Led professional development for 35+ Teachers

Graduate Assistant and Instructor, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

08/2003 – 05/2005

Achievements/Tasks

Graduate Assistantships at Lied Center for Performing Arts and Student Involvement, TRiO Teacher in English Language Arts for 6th-8th grade students

PROJECTS & GRANTS

Western Assistive Technology (AT) Paraprofessional Cohort (applied, Fall 2021)

This project focuses on alternative special education teacher candidates coming from both rural and urban districts working as paraprofessionals in CO school districts completing graduate level coursework for their special education teacher licensure.. We aim to create an assistive technology (AT) cohort where each paraprofessional resident will

receive an iPad and Apple Pencil with the explicit purpose of promoting high leverage practices (HLP) and evidence-based multimodal literacy instruction practices. This is an extension of the AT Cohort Project from 2020-2021 with a focus on the mentor and paraprofessional relationship including strategic training to cultivate the success of the paraprofessional. This project is a collaboration with Dr. Melissa Brydon, a special education faculty member at Regis University in Denver.

NCII Literacy Focus Course Materials for IHE (Fall 2021)

Invited to create course materials to share with IHEs nationwide that utilized the intensive intervention framework from the National Center for Intensive Intervention. Submitted course materials, syllabi, and assignment activities related to the NCII Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity as well as the Research-based Intervention Matrix.

SRSD & WriQ Quasi-Experimental Study, in collaboration with Dr. Amber Ray, (Spring 2021- Present)

Researchers will work with 4-6 special education secondary classroom sites to recruit teachers to participate in the study. Each classroom site will be composed of a caseload of students who may work with their special education teacher periodically throughout the day in their special education programs. Each participating special education program will complete a writing unit using the SRSD instructional model and WriQ for approximately 8 weeks.

Western Alternative Special Education Assistive Technology (AT) Cohort, (Fall 2020-Present)

This project focuses on alternative special education teacher candidates coming from both rural and urban districts. We aim to create an assistive technology (AT) cohort where each resident will receive an iPad and program eTextbooks which will be accessible on their iPad with the explicit purpose of promoting high leverage practices (HLP) and evidence based multimodal literacy instruction practices. The cohort will be instructed in how to use assistive technology (AT) tools for their own learning with an emphasis on: (1) multimodal literacy AT tools; (2) utilizing technology to enhance K-12 hybrid instruction; and (3) data-driven progress monitoring utilizing technology tools. In addition, the project will provide a training shared with Colorado IHE's to utilize in their special education teacher preparation programs.

Statewide Special Education Mentor Network, (Fall 2020-Present)

The Statewide Special Education Mentor Program will be a collaborative research project facilitated by faculty committee members of Colorado's Teacher Education Division (CO TED) of the Council of Exceptional Children (CEC). Our group will implement a two-phase study related to special education teacher mentoring.

Project SITE (Sample IEPs for Teacher Education): Developing an OER Resource for Colorado, in collaboration with Dr. Marla Lohmann & Dr. Jennifer Fox (Spring 2021- Fall 2021)

The project team will develop an Open Educational Resource (OER) ebook that includes examples and non-examples of high-quality IEPs that are aligned with Colorado Academic Standards or Extended Evidence Outcomes and utilize best practices in IEP development as identified through IDEA and current research in the field of special education. The ebook will include 20 sample IEPs that utilize mock students from kindergarten through age 21 and cover the thirteen school-aged disability categories outlined in Colorado law.

Steelcase Active Learning Center Grant: Personalized Learning Pathways for Special Education Students (03/2018 – Present)

Grant-funded Active Learning Center (ALC) promotes personalized learning paths for my special education students. In a technology-rich classroom, our curriculum focuses on literacy, growth mindset and strategic instruction across

core subjects using a Universal for Design framework where students are empowered to learn. The classroom is valued at \$67,000 and requires a two-year research project. University collaborative partner, Dr. John Hoover at CU School of Education.

Accessing Our Literacy & Oracy Through Creative Story Retells Using MultiMedia (11/2017 – 05/2018)

Impact Education Grant valued at \$1,200 to purchase multimedia story retell materials (iOS devices and makerspace materials) to promote reading and oracy growth in our middle school special education students.

Using Google Expeditions to Facilitate Intensive Learning Center Adventures (11/2016 – 05/2017)

In order to participate in our communities, we need to be able to critically think and reason about information in the world around us. Students served in intensive learning needs classroom will be able to make critical connections by embarking on Google Expeditions tied to our social studies instructional units (Critical Thinking and Reasoning, Social Studies 21st Century Skills) using virtual reality kits composed of immersive audio virtual reality goggles and facilitated Google Expedition lessons.

Instructional Individualized Education Plans & SVVSD Comprehensive Coaching Model for Special Education Teachers (03/2015 – 05/2016)

We developed a coaching model for developing effective novice and veteran special education teachers through coaching across St. Vrain Valley School District. The primary modes of outcome evaluation were: Increased student proficiency on IEP goal mastery and District-wide assessment of Math and Reading through I-Ready and a 25% rise in special education teacher retention and satisfaction in our school district.

Gates Foundation: Common Core State Standards Math Educational Resource Consultant for Perkins School for the Blind (09/2013 – 05/2014)

The Perkins School for the Blind was awarded \$249,113 from the Gates Foundation to create a resource for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVIs) to implement learning activities related to the math and ELA Common Core State Standards. The project included consultation from content experts (ELA and math) in the field of visual impairment and dissemination of lesson plan resources and activities via Perkins.org website.

RIDE Rubric for TVIs: Rubric of Instructional Development and Effectiveness for TVIs (08/2013 – 07/2014)

There are numerous rubrics being used to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching for certification candidates and for in-service teachers focusing on general education classrooms such as Assessment of Classroom Effectiveness (ACE) (The New Teacher Project, 2011), Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument (Danielson, 2011), and TAPTM: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement (TAP, 2011). None of these rubrics are designed for TVIs, and particularly not itinerant TVIs, and often evaluate items that are not relevant to this teaching position but yet are used by administrators for evaluation purposes. This project created a validated evaluation rubric for observing TVI itinerant teacher performance.

Orientation and Mobility Learning Modules, Parts I-III (08/2011 – 03/2012)

Co-Authored and presented learning modules exploring best practices in Orientation and Mobility for TVIs and COMS.

Arts Afterschool Toolkit, Southwest Educational Developmental Laboratory (08/2005 – 10/2005)

Afterschool toolkit project related to the six promising practices of art-making. Each practice is built on youth development principles and research on effective arts instruction. At their core, the Afterschool Training Toolkit materials are designed to illustrate techniques and activities that leverage student curiosity to make the arts in afterschool both enjoyable and academically relevant. This guide provides professional development ideas for each art-making practice.

Co-Nect Grant for Quality Student Work and State Standards Implementation (08/2005 – 07/2006)

Analyzed quality student work with content-based teaching teams to determine student work rubrics, mapped Texas State Standards and developed curriculum maps for 9-12th grade content areas at a dropout recovery charter school serving at-risk students.

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Grants: Stacy Fox Soundscapes with Umo^oHo^o Nation, Partnership to Create Umo^oHo^o Nation Teaching Artists in Schools & Watts Prophets and Lincoln Public Schools (08/2003 – 06/2004)

Umo^oHo^o Nation Indian Reservation in Nebraska partnered with University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Lied Center for Performing Arts to develop teaching artists to work within Umo^oHo^o Nation Public Schools, K-12, in addition to collaborative project with teaching artist Stacy Fox to develop American Indian soundscapes; additional project with NEA, Watts Prophets, Hip Hop Spoken Word performance trio partnered with Lincoln Public Schools in order to create a student-centered performance from 10-day artist residency.

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, Foster Youth Initiative (07/2004 – 06/2005)

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation would reunite foster children who were separated into various foster care homes in up to four activities each year in Lincoln, NE and a "Camp Catch Up" over the summer each year where siblings would attend summer camp together.

PRESENTATIONS

2022

Assistive Technology (AT) Alternative Special Education Teacher Cohort: Hands-On Workshop (Virtual Presentation Workshop) Council of Exceptional Children Virtual Conference, February 2022

Trauma-informed Instruction Must be Collaborative Emphasizing Neurodiversity (Presentation), Courage to Risk, Statewide Division of Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Conference, Colorado Springs, January 2022

2021

Supporting Teacher Candidates in Writing High-Quality IEPs (Presentation), Teacher Educator Division (TED), Council of Exceptional Children Conference, Fort Worth, TX, November 2021

Assistive Technology (AT) Alternative Special Education Teacher Cohort (Presentation), Teacher Educator Division (TED), Council of Exceptional Children Conference, Fort Worth, TX, November 2021

Using Technology Tools to Implement HLPs, Courage to Risk, February 2021, Presentation

Using Technology Tools in order to Implement High Leverage Teaching Practices for K-12 (Virtual Demonstration Interactive Lecture), Council of Exceptional Children, March 2021, Presentation

2020

Growth Mindset: Can Students Make Progress Without It? Courage to Risk, January 2020, Presentation

Year 2: Data-Driven Growth Mindset Classroom Using Personalized Learning Pathways to Improve Literacy and Student Mindset Outcomes, Teacher2Teacher Presentation, Council of Exceptional Children, February 2020

2019

Transition: Starting the Process Early, Minnesota State-wide Conference for Vision Educational Professionals, October 24th & 25th, 2019

Grant-funded Steelcase Active Learning Center (ALC) Year #1: Personalized Pathways in Special Education Using a Technology-rich ALC, (Lecture Research Panel) International Society of Technology in Education, June 2019

Data-Driven Growth Mindset Classroom Using Personalized Learning Pathways to Improve Literacy and Student Mindset Outcomes, (Teacher2Teacher Presentation) Council of Exceptional Children, January 2019

Multimedia story retells using free iOS apps to increase reading comprehension and writing success, (poster) International Society of Technology in Education, June 2019

2018

Google Tool Crash Course, BVSD Instructional Technology 2-hour course, Summer 2018

Literacy Assistive Technology Solutions, Courage to Risk, January 2018

2017

iOS and Chrome Literacy Differentiation, International Society of Technology in Education, June 2017 Literacy Differentiation Using IOS and Chrome, Courage to Risk (CO CEC), January 2017

2016

Using iOS devices as Assistive Technology with an Instructional Model for Implementation, Council of Exceptional Children, St. Louis, Spring 2016

Secondary Literacy Interventions Utilizing Technology Tools: The How, Why, and When..., Colorado Council International Reading Association, Spring 2016

Using Google Apps And Chrome Extensions To Promote Literacy, International Society of Technology in Education, Denver, CO, Summer 2016

Using iOS devices as Universal Design for Learning Assistive Technology, International Society of Technology in Education, Denver, CO, Summer 2016

2015

Literacy Differentiation, K-12, St. Vrain Valley Office of Professional Development (OPD), Fall 2015

Emergent Literacy, St. Vrain Valley OPD, Fall 2015

iPads and Differentiation, Summer 2015, Camp iPad, St. Vrain, Longmont, CO

iPads and Accessibility, Summer 2015, Camp iPad, St. Vrain, Longmont, CO

iPads and Differentiation for Leadership, Summer 2015, Camp iPad, St. Vrain, Longmont, CO

Read & Write for Google, Summer 2015, Camp iPad, St. Vrain, Longmont, CO

iPads and Effective Instructional Cycle, Denver, CO, Summer 2015, SWAAAC Conference

Differentiation and Authentic Learning Experiences with Mobile Devices, St. Vrain Valley School District, Longmont, CO, May 2, 2015

Literacy Differentiation and Strategic Instruction for Special Education Students in Secondary grades, St. Vrain Valley School District, Longmont, CO, February 28, 2015

Literacy Differentiation and Strategic Instruction for Special Education Students in K-5, St. Vrain Valley School District, Longmont, CO, February 21, 2015

2014

Transformative Use of iPads for Students with Visual Impairments and/or Multiple Impairments including deafblindness, Lincoln, NE, February 6th, 2014

Following the Laws of Universal Design at The Saint Louis Zoo, workshop, St. Louis, MO, September, 2014

Implementing iPads with Students with Visual Impairments, poster accepted, International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE), Atlanta, GA, June 2014

Implementing iPads with Students with Visual Impairments, poster, Association of Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), San Antonio, TX, August 2014

Implementing iPads with Students with Visual and Multiple Impairments, presentation, Association of Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), San Antonio, TX, August 2014

Strategies for Using iPads with Students who are Visually and/or Multiply Impaired, TVI workshop, Region 13, Educational Service Center, Austin, TX, February 2014

Implementing iPads with Students with Visual Impairments, Including Blindness, State of Colorado, Department of Special Education, TVI Workshop, Denver, CO, January 24 & 25, 2014.

Common Core State Standards: Challenges for Teachers of Students who are Visually Impaired, Perkins School for the Blind, Webinar, January 15, 2014

2013

Tips, Tricks, and Strategies for Using iPads with Students Who Have Multiple and Visual Impairments, Presentation at Closing the Gap, Minneapolis, MN, October 11, 2013

RIDE Rubric Training, Co-Presented with Dr. Rona Pogrud, San Antonio, TX August 2013

Tips, Tricks, and Strategies for Using iPads with Students Who Are Multiply Impaired With Visual Impairments, Summer Institute, Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Via Distance Education Software, August 6, 2013

Tips, Tools, and Strategies for using Apple Mobile Technologies with Students with Visual Impairments, Presentation at Texas Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (TAER), Dallas, TX, March, 2013

2010

Seaworld Career Immersion Video Documentary, 2010 Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, San Antonio, TX

PUBLICATIONS

Mason, Tara (2021). Authentic Collaboration in Special Education Teacher Preparation Programs Creates Trauma-informed Teaching Professionals. In Bernhardt, Philip; Brennan, Megan; Schepers, Ofelia; (Eds.), *Contemporary Perspectives on Developing Trauma-Informed Teachers* (pp. pages of chapter). Information Age Press (IAP) (in press).

Mason, Tara (2005). Confines and Collaborations: Where Arts Education Meets the Discipline, M.Ed. Thesis, Published on ERIC, Link: ED 494913

Mason, Tara (2013). Assistive Technology: Does the Law Translate to Practice for Students with Visual Impairments? Volume 57 (4), *DVIQuarterly*, p. 25-33

Mason, Tara (2013) Teaching with iPads for Students with Visual and Multiple Impairments. *Closing the Gap*, p. 9-12

Mason, Tara (2014). Transforming Teaching: Implementing Mobile Learning Strategies Serving Students with Visual Impairments (Doctoral Dissertation), 1-287. <http://repositories.tdl.org/ttu-ir/handle/2346/58671>

Mason, Tara (2014). TVI Transformative Teaching Using iPads: A Ph.D. Study, Howe's Now, p. 28-29, Council of Schools for the Blind (COSB).

PREVIOUS UNIVERSITY-LEVEL TEACHING & SUPERVISION

Adjunct Professor, University of Northern Colorado's Center for Urban Education

2015- 2019

Course: Support Systems in Special Education, EDSE 443

Adjunct Professor, Fitchburg State University

2014- 2016

Course: Preparing for Transition from School to Adult Life- Starting the Process Early!

University Supervisor TVI Graduate Certification Program

2012-2014

Texas Tech University

Teaching Assistant for graduate-level coursework in TVI Program

2012-2014 Texas Tech University

- Course: EDSP 5383, Anatomy and Functions of the Visual System
 - Course: EDSP 5389, Instructional Strategies for Individuals with Visual and Multiple Impairments or Deafblindness (Assisted with course revisions), 2013
 - Course: EDSP 5380, Programs and Services for Individuals with Visual Impairments, 2013
 - Course: EDSP 5381, Instructional Strategies for Individuals with Visual Impairments, 2013
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SERVICE & COMMITTEES

International Society of Technology in Education, Assistive & Adaptive Research Proposals Reviewer, ISTE 2021

American Educational Research Association (AERA) SIG Research Proposal Reviewer, Fall 2020, 2021

Teacher Preparation High Education Educators, (CO TED), 2019- Currently

Committee Chair of Statewide Special Education Mentor Network, (collaboration with CO-TED), 2020-Currently

Co-Director of Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), 2019-Currently

Western Canvas PowerUser, 2019-2020

Co-Coordinator of Inaugural Disability Film Festival, 2020-Currently

Gunnison Middle School Innovation in Technology Committee, 2019-2020

Gunnison Valley School District Technology Advisory Committee, 2019-2020

Gunnison Valley Middle School Design Committee, 2020

Western Departmental Curriculum Committee, 2019-Currently

Member- Council of Learning Disabilities (CLD), 2020- Currently

Member- American Educational Research Association (AERA), 2019-Currently

Member- Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), 2010-Currently

Member- International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), 2011-Currently

National Leadership Honor Society Member- Omicron Delta Kappa, 2004- Currently

BVSD Special Education Advisory Committee (SPAC), 2018- 2019

BVSD District Technology Advisory Board, 2016-2019

SWAAAC Advisory Board, 2015- 2016

ITAC Secondary and Primary Committee Member, St. Vrain Valley School District, 2015- 2016

LMS Committee, St. Vrain Valley School District, 2014-2015

Pioneer Elementary School PTA, Community Fundraising Chair, 2013- 2014

Internal Vice President- TTU, Education Graduate Student Organization (EGSO), 2013-2014

Representative- TTU, Graduate Student Advisory Council (GSAC), 2013-2014 Co-Distance Education Officer- TTU, EGSO, 2012- 2013

Member- Texas Tech University, Education Graduate Student Organization (EGSO), 2012- 2014

Member- Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), 2012- 2015

AWARDS

Recipient, Rookie of the Year, Statewide Assistive Technology, Augmentative, Alternative Communication, Colorado Department of Education, June 2015

Recipient, Professional Preparation Scholarship, Texas Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (TAER), 2013

Recipient, Division on Visual Impairment Sowell Student of the Year Award, Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), 2013

Recipient, Koenig LaMunyon College of Education, Scholarship, 2012 Texas Tech University

Recipient, Graduate School Designated Scholar, 2012 Texas Tech University

Recipient, TSBVI Special Programs Grant: SeaWorld Career Immersion Grant, 2009

Recipient, Reach Across Texas Grant Scholarship, 2008-2010 Texas Tech University

REFERENCES

Dr. George Kamberelis, Chair, Department of Education, Western Colorado University, gkamberelis@western.edu

Dr. Jean Rice, Special Education Coordinator, Douglas School District, Email: jlrice@d49.org & Phone: 710-495-1116

Dr. Rona Pogrund, *Professor, Special Education Program & Coordinator, Program for Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments*, Texas Tech University, Email: rona.pogrund@ttu.edu & Cell: 806.252.8026

Dr. Robi Kronberg, Coordinator of Special Education Certification Center for Urban Education Program, University of Northern Colorado, Email: Robi.Kronberg@unco.edu & Phone: 303.637.4336

Dr. Mary Zatta, Director of Professional Development at Perkins School for the Blind, Email: mary.zatta@perkins.org & Phone: 617-972-7344