

The Teacher Leadership for School Improvement Handbook for Specialist (Ed.S.) Students



2009-2010

The University of Florida
College of Education
School of Teaching & Learning
The Lastinger Center for Learning

Welcome to the Teacher Leadership for School Improvement (TLSI) online specialist degree program. We are thrilled to welcome you to this exciting and unique degree program designed exclusively for practicing educators. Best yet, we welcome you to the TLSI Community of Educators!!

Being part of a community requires an understanding of cultures, customs, and norms. This document will better explain the TLSI community and also help you feel more confident with the “nuts and bolts” of working in a blended (online and face-to-face) degree program.

Please carefully read this packet so you’ll be informed, confident, and ready to begin your academic journey and become a member of the TLSI community. You’ll find the following information in our handbook.

- Getting Started Checklist
- The TLSI Specialist (Ed.S.) Program
- Specialization Areas Available to you
 - Specialization Selection Procedure
- Program of Study Information
- TLSI People to Know
- Becoming an Active Member of the TLSI Community
- Important “Nuts and Bolts” for Success
- Important UF Graduate School Policies and Requirements

Again, welcome to the Teacher Leadership for School Improvement degree program and Community of Educators! We also offer you a formal welcome to the College of Education at the University of Florida. Go Gators!

TLSI Program Checklist

To Do NOW	Page No.
<input type="checkbox"/> Create your Gatorlink account at http://gatorlink.ufl.edu	10
<input type="checkbox"/> From your UF account, email the TLSI Program Coordinator your Gatorlink email address and UFID	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Update your Emergency Contact Information at http://my.ufl.edu	11
<input type="checkbox"/> Get your Gator1 Card (your UF ID card)	11
<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure the UF Graduate School has a copy of your transcript showing your master's degree conferred from your previous university/college. Contact Ms. Tammy Perez at jtperez@coe.ufl.edu	
<input type="checkbox"/> Study the specialization area in this handbook	6-7
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Specialization Selection Procedure	7
<input type="checkbox"/> From your UF account, email your TLSI faculty advisor to introduce yourself	
<input type="checkbox"/> Start checking your UF account on a daily or every-other-day basis. Get in the habit now!	
<input type="checkbox"/> Read UF Graduate Policies that influence you	14
<input type="checkbox"/> Read this entire handbook	all pages
Several Weeks Before Your First Class Begins	
<input type="checkbox"/> Order your textbooks for your classes	12
<input type="checkbox"/> Explore the following websites: my.ufl.edu, ISIS, and the UF library system. Becoming familiar with these sites will help you easily use these UF resources.	13-14
The First Day of Class	
<input type="checkbox"/> Check your UF email account for Course Enrollment Information. The email will come from the COE Distance Education Office. If you have not received an email by 4:00 EST on the first day of classes, please email the TLSI program coordinator.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Start your course on the FIRST day of the online term. Eight weeks goes by very quickly and you don't want to get behind.	
In the Second Week of Classes During Your First Semester	
<input type="checkbox"/> Start participating in the TLSI Learning Community Portal in Moodle. Once we enroll you during your first course, you'll be a member forever.	10
During Your First Semester	
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete your Program of Study. Once this is done, please: PRINT, SIGN, and Mail to the TLSI Program Coordinator at PO Box 117048, 2403 Norman Hall, Gainesville, FL 32611-7048	7-8

The TLSI Specialist (Ed.S.) Program

The TLSI faculty we want you to know is how much we value you, the practicing educator, and the work you are doing in schools. We also know that teaching and learning is very messy business and we want to grow with you. You are a part of a blended or fully online, job-embedded program designed exclusively for full-time practicing educators. Now, that sentence might already have some terms that make you a little nervous. What is a job-embedded degree program? What is a blended or fully online program? How does an online program work? In this document, we'll answer those questions and more.

The TLSI program has 3 specific goals as we work together to advance teaching and learning for students and teachers alike. As part of your academic program, you'll grow and develop as:

1. a master teacher
2. a teacher leader
3. a teacher researcher

Educators have a complex job so the TLSI degree helps you grow in these areas. We want to help you strengthen your instructional expertise. There are so many things that influence our instructional time: our students, the world in which they live and interact, classroom management, local, state, and national standards, and that is just naming a few. We have courses that will assist you in your instructional practice.

Educators are also incredibly important and powerful forces in the overall educational system. TLSI courses will help you see your role as a leader, an advocate, and a powerful influence on what happens in your classroom, school, and community.

In addition, educators have to ask and answer important questions and wonderings. We all want to know whether what we're doing is effective and why things are happening (or not) in our classrooms. In the TLSI program, you'll learn a systematic way to study what is taking place in your classroom and school. Every teacher can be a teacher researcher and we'll provide you with one model of doing that. It is also incredibly important for you to know that as a practicing educator, you provide valuable knowledge and data to other educators and the educational research community. What you do as a teacher researcher matters!!

We hope you are seeing that you are joining a very special degree program. Not only will this help you develop as a teacher but you are helping to improve the entire educational system!! Wow!!

In total, your specialist program will be a minimum of 36 credits beyond your master's degree. Just as the TLSI program has three core goals, there are basically three areas of your program of study. These areas include:

1. TLSI Core (Required) Courses (18 – 22 credits)
 - Guided Teacher Inquiry
 - Culturally Responsive Classroom Management
 - Transforming the Curriculum
 - Data Driven Decision Making
 - Teacher Leadership and School Change
 - TLSI Courses Approved by Academic Advisor
2. TLSI Specialization Courses (12 - 15 credits)
3. TLSI Portfolio Preparation Courses (6 credits)
 - TLSI Online Portfolio Preparation (1 credit)
 - EDG 6910: Supervised Research (total of 5 credits)

We will discuss the specialization options and your program of study in more detail later in this handbook. For now, let's go back to those three questions where we introduced the TLSI specialist degree.

What is a job-embedded degree program? This means that as part of this degree program, you'll be "doing and trying" things you learn in your courses with your students or yourself. You'll be getting assignments that you implement in your educational context (e.g. your class or school) and you'll study yourself as an educator. It is all about honoring the incredible work that takes place in your educational working environment. You will use the findings from your reflective study of your practice and what happens with your students as artifacts for your TLSI portfolio. As a matter of fact, 6 credits of your specialist program are devoted to the creation of your TLSI portfolio. (Don't worry, we'll tell you all about the portfolio. You won't be caught off guard at all.)

What is a blended or fully degree program? There are two "flavors" of the TLSI program. Some educators work at Lastinger Center for Learning partner schools. Teachers in these schools progress together through the TLSI program as a cohort. As part of one of the Lastinger Center partner schools, these educators work online and also have a face-to-face component of the degree program. Lastinger cohorts work with a Professor-in-Residence, a UF faculty member who works in the TLSI program with TLSI teachers and also supports the principal and other teachers not participating in the TLSI program. Therefore, TLSI educators who teach in a Lastinger school have courses that are face-to-face and online. So they are participating in a blended program.

For TSLI educators who do not teach at Lastinger partner schools, we refer to these students as traditional TLSI students, their courses are all online. Therefore, they are participating in a fully online program.

How does the "online" part work? You'll take many of your courses in Moodle, the College of Education's online learning environment. If you want, you can sneak a peek at the login page (<http://online.coe.ufl.edu/>). We are hopeful that you'll also be an active participant in the TLSI Community of Educators also available in Moodle. In the "Nuts and

Bolts” section of this handbook, we’ll give you more logistical information on gaining access to your courses and the TLSI Community of Educators.

TLSI Specialization Areas

We have areas where you can deepen your understanding of various curricular areas within the TLSI program. The specializations are listed in alphabetical order and not in order of what we are recommending. We have also noted specializations that are under development. If you are interested in one of those specializations, please let your academic advisor know this.

Once you have carefully considered the specialization areas, please follow the specialization selection procedure (detailed below) so this important information can be included with your records.

Early Learning Specialization (currently open to Quality Counts cohorts only)

- Issues in Transition
- Implementing Developmentally Appropriate Practice
- Parents and Families
- Issues in Early Childhood Assessment

Educational Technology

- The Internet in K-12 Instruction
- Designing Technology Rich Curriculum
- Literacy & Technology
- Digital Photography

Interdisciplinary (combination of courses from all listed specializations plus the following):

- Education and American Culture
- Cross-Cultural Communication for Teachers

Media Education (http://distance.education.ufl.edu/Media_Literacy.aspx)

- Teaching Multiliteracies
- Teaching Media Literacy with the Internet
- Teaching Narrative Across the Media
- Literacy & Technology

Meeting the Needs of Struggling Learners (Special Education)

- Differentiated Instruction – and then select 3 of the following;
- Teaching and Managing Behavior for Student Learning
- Evaluation in Special Education
- Intervention for Language and Learning Disabilities
- Math Strategies for Struggling Learners

Reading – 5-course sequence that can lead to Florida state-approved reading endorsement

- Teaching Reading in Elementary Schools
- Teaching Reading in Secondary Schools
- Diagnosis of Reading Difficulties
- Remediation of Reading Difficulties
- Reading Practicum

Specializations Under Development:

- English Speakers of Other Languages
- Mathematics Education
- Science Education

Specialization Selection Procedure

Now that you've carefully considered your specialization options, you need to do the following. Please follow the directions completely and precisely.

1. Using your UF email account (Gatorlink account), email your selection to the TLSI program coordinator. This selection will not be entered into the TLSI records system unless we receive it from your UF email account.
2. In the subject line put Specialization Selection
3. In the body of your email, please provide the following information:
Your Name
Your Specialization Area
The Date You are Sending the Email

When this information is provided, we will send you the appropriate program of study form. This document will be emailed to your UF account with instructions on completing the document and returning it to us with official signatures.

NOTE: You are allowed to change your specialization. Once you start taking specialization courses, changing your specialization could add to the length of your degree program.

The TLSI Specialist (Ed.S) Program of Study

Your official program of study is your contract with the UF Graduate School on what you will take and the requirements for you to earn your degree. It is critical that you complete, sign, and return your program of study to your advisor by the end of your first semester. Please know that we can always change your program of study. However, you **MUST** have one on file prior to starting your second semester in the TLSI program.

As noted in the TLSI program description, the TLSI specialist program has a minimum of 36 credits beyond the master's degree. It could be that your program is longer but it will never be shorter. That is a UF Graduate School minimum. All of the 36 credits in your program of study directly support the TLSI program goals of developing as a master teacher, teacher leader, and teacher researcher.

To provide evidence of your growth in the three goal areas, you will create a portfolio throughout your degree program. As the TLSI program is a highly applied degree, we require that you not just learn new ideas but USE those ideas in your educational role and then demonstrate thoughtful reflections about the implementation of those ideas. You will learn more about the portfolio during your first year in the program. (As a matter of fact, there is a one-credit course dedicated to helping you understand the TLSI portfolio and work on the development of your first artifact for your portfolio.) As a specialist student, you are required to come to Gainesville to defend your portfolio in front of TLSI faculty and your peers.

Everyone will not have the same program of study as specialization areas differ. However, everyone takes the core courses so the body of your program is already designed. Generally, here is what a program of study looks like this:

TLSI Core Courses:

First Course in the TLSI Degree: Guided Teacher Inquiry

Second Core TLSI Course (or very close to the beginning): Culturally Responsive Classroom Management

Other Core TLSI Courses:

Transforming the Curriculum

Data Driven Decision Making

TLSI Courses as approved by advisor

Final TSLI Core Course: Teacher Leadership and School Change

TLSI Portfolio Preparation Courses:

A majority of you will take this course three times. The first time will be for one credit where you learn more about the portfolio and how to create an artifact and reflection statement to provide evidence of your growth in a TLSI goal. We recommend you take this course in the beginning of your program.

Once you have taken the one-credit course regarding the preparation of your TLSI portfolio, you will take a total of five (5) credits of EDG 6910: Supervised Research. Generally students take 2 credits in one online session and the remaining 3 credits the semester in which they graduate. During this course, you will be working with TLSI program faculty to complete and prepare your portfolio for the defense. Remember, you are required to come to Gainesville to defend your specialist program. It is also a UF Graduate School requirement to have written (your portfolio) and oral (your defense) exams in order to earn a specialist degree. *You are required to come to UF in Gainesville and defend your portfolio. You are only required to come to Gainesville this one time.*

Specialization Area Courses:

You will select a specialization area. Depending upon your TLSI Core, you would take 12-15 credits in your specialization area.

Again, it is important to note that your program of study **MUST** be submitted prior to beginning your second semester in the TLSI program. You will be emailed (on your UF email address) a program of study when we receive your emailing specifying your specialization area.

Your program of study will be emailed to you. Once it has been completed, you will print the document, sign it, and mail it to the TLSI Program coordinator. The mailing address is: PO Box 117048, 2403 Norman Hall, Gainesville, FL 32611-7048.

TLSI Faculty and Support Personnel

You have an incredible team of faculty and support staff working to assist you in the completion of your degree and participating in the TLSI community of educators. Here is a list of these individuals in alphabetical order.

Dr. Alyson Adams adamsa@coe.ufl.edu
UF Gainesville campus

Dr. Sylvia Boynton sboynton@coe.ufl.edu
Professor-in-Residence, Pinellas County

Dr. Magdalena (Madgi) Castaneda mcastaneda@coe.ufl.edu
Professor-in-Residence, Miami

Ms. Chris Cook cpcook@coe.ufl.edu
TLSI Program Coordinator

Dr. Nancy Dana ndana@coe.ufl.edu
UF Gainesville campus

Ms. Darby Delane delane@coe.ufl.edu
TLSI Portfolio Coach

Dr. Raquel Diaz rdiaz@coe.ufl.edu
Professor-in-Residence, Miami

Dr. Matthew Ohlsen mohlsen@coe.ufl.edu
Professor-in-Residence, Collier County

Dr. Colleen Swain Packer cpacker@coe.ufl.edu
UF Gainesville campus

Dr. Philip Poekert
Professor-in-Residence, Miami

poekert@coe.ufl.edu

Dr. Dorene Ross
UF Gainesville campus

dross@coe.ufl.edu

Becoming an Active Member of the TLSI Community

We hope you will be an active member of the TLSI Community of Educators. Becoming a member of a community does require more than attending classes. We hope you will want to get involved with the TLSI community through discussions, sharing of resources, participating or leading research, leadership or advocacy projects, and more!!

We have provided information regarding much of the TLSI program at our website (<http://education.ufl.edu/school/Programs/TLSI/index.html>). This information is one-way and to be part of a true community, we need INTERACTION! Therefore, we have a Moodle shell where the TLSI Community of Educators comes together.

The TLSI Community of Educators shell is a place where all kinds of discussions (forums, chats, etc.) can take place, where we share resources (web links, videos, etc.), and logistical information. It is a place to celebrate with each other, share concerns, and more.

Once you log into the Moodle system, you can access the TLSI Community of Educators by looking in the My Courses box on the left side of the screen. You should see a course titled "Teacher Leadership Community". Click on this course. If you are asked for an enrollment key, it is tlsiarea (all lowercase letters). If you cannot access the TLSI Community of Educators, please email the TLSI Program Coordinator. We hope that you will want to take part of this community...without you it just isn't the same!!

Nuts and Bolts for Success in the TLSI Program

What is the first step to beginning my degree? [Getting Your Gatorlink Account](#)

The first thing you should do is sign up for your Gatorlink account that also has an email account associated with it. You can forward your Gatorlink email address to any email account you want but UF policy requires us to send materials to your UF Gatorlink email account. You will need your UFID in order to sign up for a Gatorlink account. When you applied to UF, you were assigned a UFID. Your UFID is extremely important as UF uses your UFID in place of the Social Security Number. If you didn't write down your UFID when you submitted your online application to the TLSI program, you can find it at <http://www.it.ufl.edu/ufid/>

You need to sign up for your Gatorlink account (<http://gatorlink.ufl.edu>). Click on "Create a new account" and carefully follow the directions.

NOTE: Once you get your Gatorlink email account, please email the TLSI Program Coordinator FROM your Gatorlink account so your TLSI records can be updated. We are required to use that email address for all correspondence but if you don't tell us, we might not be able to access your Gatorlink email address.

How can I control and access my UF Student Account? Use [My.ufl.edu](http://my.ufl.edu)

Your my.ufl.edu (<http://my.ufl.edu>) is an extremely important website for you to explore. This web portal is where you set up your directory profile, see financial aid information, update your emergency contact information, and more. Please take time to go through all the links so you'll know where to find useful information and update information as required by UF policy. (Make sure to read the next question.)

Where do I update my Emergency Contact Information? Access <http://my.ufl.edu>

You are required by UF policy to update your Emergency Contract information each semester. As an online student, you'll need to do this approximately every 4 months. You do this at <http://my.ufl.edu> You'll enter your Gatorlink username and password. Then, if you select My Account, you'll see where you click to Update your Emergency Contract Information. (Please know that everyone has to do this...faculty, staff, and students.) If you do not enter this information at the requested times, we will not be able to register you for classes. Therefore, it is extremely important to do this.

Do I have to use this UF email account? Yes and No!

You can forward your UF Gatorlink mail to any email address you want. However, we will only send email to your Gatorlink account. If you don't forward your email to another account, you will want to check your UF email (Gatorlink) account daily. Regardless, make sure to read all email from UF even though some of them will not apply to you.

How can I get my Gator1 card? Follow these instructions

Send an email to IDCARD@bsd.ufl.edu. Attach a jpeg picture of yourself (222 pixels in width and 234 in height). In the text of the email put your UF ID#, the address to which you want the ID sent, and the name of the program in which you are enrolled.

The cost is \$15. Do NOT put your credit card number in the email. Rather, after you have sent the email, call the Gator 1 office (352-392-8343) and give them the number over the phone.

What are the dates of the online courses? See the [COE Distance Education website](#)

The College of Education Distance Education Office provides an initial listing of all courses offered. (Please know they create the webpage far in advance so sometimes all of the course listings are not available.) The great news is the dates of the courses are always listed. If you enter the home page of the COE Distance Ed Office (<http://distance.education.ufl.edu/>) you can select Course Schedule and see the listing of

the courses along with the dates. You will want to be careful to scroll through the webpage to make sure you get the dates of the TLSI courses. (Some online programs run 16-week courses. TLSI courses are mostly 8 weeks in length.)

How do I register for courses? We do it for you!

This is a cool part of being a distance student...we register you for classes. However, that also means it is extremely important for you to stay in touch with the TLSI program coordinator and your advisor so you know you are making progress toward your degree. You must also update your emergency contact information in order for us to register you for courses.

How do I get information on accessing my online course? You'll receive an email in your UF account

On the day your online course will begin, you'll get an email from the COE Distance Education in your UF account. This email will provide you with all the needed information (i.e.: enrolment keys, etc.) for your course(s) that online session. You'll then enter Moodle, the online environment for the College of Education (<http://online.coe.ufl.edu>.) You'll enter in your Gatorlink username and password to enter the system. Once you have logged into the system, you'll follow the email instructions provided by the COE Distance Education office. Remember that this information will only be provided in your UF email account.

How do I know what textbooks are needed? Check ISIS

At UF, faculty submit required textbook information to a system that allows you to determine what textbooks you need. We are required to enter this information months in advance so you should always have time to purchase your textbooks online (i.e.: using Amazon or Barnes and Nobles, etc.) or through the UF bookstore.

To view the textbooks entered by faculty for your courses, you'll go to ISIS (<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/>). On the left side of the screen, you'll see a navigation bar. At the bottom is a link "My Textbooks". Select the semester you want to view your textbook list. You'll then be asked to enter in your Gatorlink name and password. Once you do that, IF you are registered for courses, the textbooks associated with those courses will be shown. Collect that information and then order your textbooks. I would encourage you to order your textbooks as soon as possible. As our online courses are only 8 weeks in length, you'll get very far behind quickly if you don't have your textbooks the day classes start.

Note: ISIS has a great deal of information so explore that left-side navigation bar!!

How much time should I schedule for my online course? At least 12-16 hours per week

In a traditional semester-long course, you should devote at least 6 hours of preparation and study along with the 3 hours you spend in class. That would give you a total of 9 hours a week preparing and participating in class. Over the course of a semester, that is a total of

135 hours devoted to one course. As our online courses are eight weeks long, you need to plan on scheduling at least 12-15 hours per week on each course. As a full-time teacher, this is why we advise taking one course per online session.

Can I be successful in courses and the program if I only participate on the weekends? No

These courses are designed for you to work on the content and interact with your peers throughout the week. Therefore, you will not be successful if you work on your courses only on the weekends. We've seen teachers try and then end up not happy with their overall experience and sometimes even their grade. We want you to be successful so please plan to work on your course throughout the week, each and every week of your course.

Welcoming Emails for Courses

Some instructors get a list of their students prior to the course starting and send them a welcoming email. (We use your UF email if we have access to it.) Often, the instructor will introduce herself/himself, let you know a few neat things about the course, and often provide you with textbook information. Please know that all instructors do not do this. We do want you to be aware of this but it is not a requirement for instructors.

How do I drop a Course?

Contact your academic advisor and the TLSI Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator will get you started on the paperwork and corresponding process. It is very important that your advisor be aware if you are going to drop a course so adjustments to your program of study can be made.

I need to skip a semester. Is that possible? Yes, with stipulations.

We understand that life happens and you might need to skip a semester in your program. The UF Graduate School allows this for ONE semester. In order to make this happen, you must email the TLSI program coordinator and your faculty advisor. If you are not enrolled for two semesters (and summer does count as a semester), you must reapply for admission into the TLSI program. That means you complete a readmission application. The TLSI Program Coordinator will be able to assist you with the paperwork and will also keep the STL Graduate Records Office aware of your situation.

Where Can I See My Grades? Use ISIS

You can see your final grade in a course by using ISIS (<http://www.isis.ufl.edu>). You'll look at the left-hand navigation bar. There is a link for Final Grades.

I believe you can also see this information in you're my.ufl.edu account. However, the student portal looks different from the faculty portal. We'd appreciate it if a student would let us know if you can access your grades from my.ufl.edu.

Where are good TLSI information resources? Our Website and the Moodle Community

We are constantly working to provide you with information about the TLSI program. Honestly, we'd like you to have access to more information than you could ever use. One thing we're working on is the TLSI program area website (<http://education.ufl.edu/school/Programs/TLSI/index.html>). This website is constantly evolving so please check it often.

We are also working on a TLSI Moodle environment where we can develop a caring community of educators. You can enter the TLSI Moodle environment when you log into the COE site (<http://online.coe.ufl.edu>). As a TLSI student, you are automatically enrolled into this TLSI Community of Learners.

How do I use the UF library system?

As a UF student, you have access to all resources available to students. The UF Library is set-up to assist you as a student. You'll want to carefully explore the following links so you can take full advantage of the wonderful library available through UF.

Distance Services: <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/distance/>

Connecting to the UF Library from Off-Campus: <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/ufproxy.html>

Delivering the Library to your Laptop: <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/desktop.html>

Other questions? Please let us know

We're happy to add frequently asked questions to this list so please contact the TLSI Program Coordinator with other questions or concerns you have about the "nuts and bolts" of being successful in the TLSI program.

Important UF Graduate School Policies that Apply to You

GPA Requirement to stay in Good Standing: In order to stay in good standing with the UF Graduate School, you must maintain a 3.0 GPA in your major and cumulative GPA. With the new UF grading scale that includes grades of "minus" a B- now earns GPA points of 2.67. Therefore, B- grades will not help you in maintaining a 3.0 GPA.

GPA Required to Graduate: You must have a 3.0 in your major and overall in order to graduate from the UF Graduate School. (Again, this means you must be very careful of earning any grade below a B (i.e.: B-, C+, C, etc.) as they carry GPA weights of below 3.0.

Minimum Registration in Order to Graduate: In the fall and spring term, you must be registered for a minimum of 3 credits in order to be eligible for graduation. In the summer term, you must be registered for a minimum of 2 credits in order to be eligible for

graduation. This is critical for you to know when it is your last semester of your degree program.

Applying to Graduate: Graduation at UF doesn't "just happen". You must apply to graduate on the ISIS portal (<http://www.isis.ufl.edu>). You have to apply to graduate the first few weeks of the semester in which you plan to graduate. It does NOT cost money and if you don't graduate that semester, it is okay. However, if you do not apply to graduate by the deadline set by the UF Graduate School, you will NOT be able to graduate. There are NO exceptions to this rule and we cannot do anything for you. Don't miss the deadline to graduate!

Other UF Policies: You MUST use your Gatorlink email account so check it at a minimum of several times a week. Also, you must update your Emergency Contact Information when required by the University. We cannot register you for classes until this done.