

## **An Online Master's Degree Program for the Preparation of Adapted Physical Education Teachers for Children with Significant Developmental Disabilities**

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**Abstract :** Online programs developed for preparing qualified teachers have significantly increased over the years in the United States of America (USA). However, no online graduate programs for training adapted physical education (APE) teachers for children with significant developmental disabilities are currently available in the USA. The purpose of this study was to develop an online master's degree program for the preparation of APE teachers to serve children with significant developmental disabilities. The characteristics demonstrated by children with significant developmental disabilities, the competencies required for certified APE teachers, and the evidence-based positive behavioral interventions (PBI) documented for teaching children with significant developmental disabilities were fully reviewed in this study. An online graduate program with 14 courses for 42 credit hours (3 credit hours per course) was then developed for training APE teachers to serve children with significant developmental disabilities. Included in this online program are five components: (a) 2 capstone courses, (b) 4 APE courses, (c) 4 PBI course, (d) 2 elective courses, and (e) 2 capstone courses. All courses will be delivered online through Desire2Learn administered by the Extended University Programs at Western Michigan University (WMU). An applicant who has a bachelor's degree in physical education or special education is eligible for this proposed program. A student enrolled in this program is expected to complete all courses in 2.5 years while staying in their local area. This program will be submitted to the WMU curriculum committee for approval in the fall of 2018.

**Keywords :** adapted physical education, online program, teacher preparation, and significant disabilities

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