

EDSE 401 (001): INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL EDUCATION
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
College of Education and Human Development
Spring 2011

Instructor: Nancy Cerar
Office hours: By appointment
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Meeting Dates: 1/24/11 – 5/18/11
Class time: Wednesdays 4:30 - 7:10 p.m.
Class location: Robinson A245

Course Description

Survey of current knowledge on individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. Includes historical factors, legislation, etiology, characteristics, needs, educational strategies, assessment, and support services for individuals with disabilities ranging from mild and moderate to severe. Includes the impact of disabilities on academic, social, and emotional performances. Field experience required.

Prerequisites: none.

Student Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between “normal” and “atypical” behaviors.
- Describe the legal and historical development of the field of special education.
- Describe various theoretical models and perspectives in the field of special education.
- Describe research in etiological factors associated with all disability areas.
- Describe social, cognitive, intellectual, and academic characteristics associated with all disability areas.
- Describe historical points of view and contributions of culturally diverse groups to the field of special education.
- Describe the role of families in the educational process.
- Describe past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including technological advances.
- Discuss issues and trends in special education, including legislation, litigation, and use of innovative technology.

Relationship of Course to Program Goals & Professional Organization

EDSE 401 is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure in special education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The program aligns with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization in the United States. As such, the curriculum for the course includes competencies for teaching students with disabilities from preschool through grade 12.

The CEC standards: http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf_based_stds/common_core_4-21-01.html

CEC standards that will be addressed in this class include some of the following CEC Core Standards:

Standard 1: Foundations

- Models, theories, and philosophies that form the basis for special education practice.
- Laws, policies, and ethical principles regarding behavior management, planning, and implementation.
- Relationship of special education to the organization and function of educational agencies.
- Rights and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, and other professionals, and schools related to exceptional learning needs.
- Issues with definition and identification of individuals with exceptional learning needs including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Issues, assurances, and due process rights related to assessment, eligibility, and placement with a continuum of services.
- Family systems and the role of families in the educational process.
- Historical points of view and contributions of culturally diverse groups.
- Impact of the dominant culture on shaping schools and the individuals who study and work in them.
- Potential impact of differences in values, languages, & customs that can exist between home and school.

Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners

- Typical and atypical human growth and development.
- Educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities.
- Characteristics and effects of the cultural and environmental milieu of the individual with exceptional learning needs and the family. Family systems and the role of facilities in supporting development.
- Similarities and differences of individuals with and without exceptional learning needs.
- Similarities and differences among individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- Effects of various medications on individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences

- Effects an exceptional condition(s) can have on an individual's life.
- Impact of learners' academic and social abilities, attitudes, interests, and values on instruction and career development.
- Variations on beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures and their effects on relationships among individuals with exceptional learning needs, family and schooling.
- Cultural perspectives influencing the relationships among families, schools, and communities as related to instruction.
- Differing ways of learning of individuals with exceptional learning needs including those from culturally diverse backgrounds and strategies for addressing these differences.

Nature of Course Delivery

Learning activities include the following:

- Class lecture, discussion, and participation

- Videotapes, other relevant media presentations, and guest speakers
- Study and independent library research
- Applications with relevant hardware and software
- Application activities, including in-class evaluation of intervention research and materials
- Class presentations
- Written case study and observation reports using APA format.

Required Text

Hallahan, D., Kauffman, J., & Pullen, P. (2009). *Exceptional learners: An introduction to special education* (11th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. ISBN 9780136067931 / 013606793x

Highly Recommended

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Ed. (2009). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Other readings may be assigned by the instructor as needed.

Note:

This syllabus may change according to class needs. If you have emergency medical information to share with the instructor or need special arrangements, *please call and/or make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible.*

GMU College of Education and Human Development Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
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- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

Course Expectations for Students:

- I. **Class Attendance and Participation:** Students are expected to (a) attend all classes during the course, (b) arrive on time, (c) stay for the duration of the class time, and (d) actively participate in class activities and discussions. Attendance and professional participation at all sessions is very important because many of the activities in class are planned in such a way that they cannot necessarily be recreated outside of the class session. Points will be deducted for missed sessions, lack of preparation, or chronic tardiness. Please notify me *in advance* by phone or email if you will not be able to attend class.
- II. **Workload:** In-depth reading, study, and work on course requirements require outside class time. Students are expected to allot approximately three hours for class study and preparation for *each* credit hour weekly in addition to time spent on papers and assignments.
- III. **Written and Oral Language:** **APA Style** is the standard format for any written work in the College of Education. If you are unfamiliar with APA, it would benefit you to purchase the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.) You are required to use APA guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines: <http://apastyle.apa.org/> or <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> We will use person-first language in our class discussions and written assignments (and ideally in our professional practice). We will also strive to replace the term “Mental Retardation” with “Intellectual Disabilities” in our oral and written communication in accordance with terminology choices in the disability community.
- IV. **Academic Integrity:** Students in this course are expected to exhibit academic integrity at all times. Be aware that plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as your own. **Whether the act is deliberate or unintentional is irrelevant.** You must take great care to give credit to an author when you borrow either exact words or ideas. Generally, if you use 4 or more words in a row you should use quotation marks and a proper APA citation. Remember that plagiarism is a very serious offense and can result in dismissal from the

University. Evidence of plagiarism or any other form of cheating in this class will result in a zero on that assignment and a report of the incident to the Dean's Office.

- V. **Email:** Please note that your GMU email will be used exclusively for this course: Please activate and forward your gmu email to your most-checked account!!! Go to <http://masonlive.gmu.edu>. For directions on how to forward email to another email account, see: <http://help.outlook.com/en-au/141/ms.exch.ecp.learnredirectto.aspx?r=eu>
- **Be an Informed Student:** Negotiating all the requirements for your Master's and/or VA Licensure is extremely complex. It is recommended that you schedule a phone/email or in-person appointment with the Special Education Advisor, Jancy Templeton (jtemple1@gmu.edu 703/993-2387). You may also schedule with the Cohort Advisor, Terry Werner (twerner@gmu.edu 703-993-2064). Doing so each semester will ensure that you rectify any outstanding issues, are timely with all necessary paperwork, and are ultimately in good standing to graduate on time.

Assignments

- **Class Attendance and Participation (10 points):** Students are expected to (a) attend all classes during the course, (b) arrive on time, (c) stay for the duration of the class time, and (d) actively participate in class activities and discussions. Attendance and professional participation at all sessions is very important because many of the activities in class are planned in such a way that they cannot necessarily be recreated outside of the class session. Points will be deducted for missed sessions, lack of preparation, or chronic tardiness. Please notify me *in advance* by phone or email if you will not be able to attend class.
 - **Weekly Readings:** from the text and other sources will be required. It is expected that students will allot approximately three hours per week for class study/readings. Students are expected to share acquired information and reactions during class discussion.
- **Child Abuse Awareness Program (10 points):** Students will complete an online child abuse awareness training module at http://www.vcu.edu/vissta/training/va_teachers/. The site includes the definitions and indicators of child abuse and neglect, how to respond to signs of abuse and to report abuse, the legal requirements of Virginia teachers to report abuse, state support services, and the actions that follow reports of abuse. Quizzes and scenarios assess student understanding and a certificate of completion is awarded. ***This is the first submission to Taskstream for the Signature Assignment for CEC Standard 1. Very important: You must provide a link to this certificate, save and upload, or print and scan it to use as a signature assignment in your electronic portfolio on TaskStream for 401.***
- **Field Exploratory Activity (30 points):** Adult learners bring varying levels of experience to introductory courses such as this.

Part I: The Pre-Exploratory Reflection Paper is a 3-5 page paper designed to help you reflect on where you are now, where you wish to go in the future, and what you feel your learning needs are currently. At the conclusion of the paper the student is to *specifically state* the three activities planned to further the exploration/knowledge-base related to special education.

Part II: Eight hours of field experience are required for this course. Adult learners bring varying levels of experience to introductory courses such as this. In order to address your differing backgrounds, you will select activities from a menu of options so that you can tailor this portion of the course to address your own educational needs as you build an emerging philosophy of special education. You should refer to the separate handout for details regarding this assignment.

- **Disability-Specific Information Paper (20 points):** will ensure you are more informed about specific types of disabilities within a given Federal category. Within the 13 Federal disability categories, there are numerous specific disabilities and disorders: for example, Cerebral Palsy, Retinitis Pigmentosa, Down Syndrome, Cri de Chat Syndrome, Dyslexia, Schizophrenia, etc. You will investigate a specific disability of your choosing (please clear with instructor first) and provide research-based information about the identification, implications, and impact of that disability: medical, physical, social, educational, etc. across the lifespan (birth to death). You will also connect the reader to evidence-based resources and supports pertaining to this disability. Your paper will be approximately 10 + pages in length.
- **Presentations (10 points):** students will develop a 10-minute class presentation focused on their Disability-Specific Information Paper.
- **A Final Exam (25 points):** Open book and note, essay responses will be given to assess knowledge and understanding of student outcomes. *This is the second signature assignment for this course for TaskStream for CEC Standard 1*

Evaluation	Points
• Class participation	10
• *Child Abuse Awareness*	10
• Field Observations/Exploratory Activities	30
• Disability-specific paper	20
• Presentation	10
• *Final Exam*	25

Points will be deducted for work submitted late.

***TASKSTREAM SUBMISSION*: Electronic Portfolios**

These assignments are “signature” assignments for the student portfolio and must be submitted to Mason’s NCATE management system, digitally to Taskstream via <https://www.taskstream.com> . Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is required to begin submitting signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream

may result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). See <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/taskstream/> for detailed steps. Your electronic portfolio under **CEC Standard 9 for the Child Abuse Online Training (the receipt issued after completion of the module) and CEC Standard 1 (Field Observation)**. Because this is your first class, you will need to self-enroll into Taskstream. There is a folder under Course Documents on Blackboard that contains step-by-step directions for Taskstream. Every class you take in this program will have a signature assignment that must be submitted (401/501 has 2). In addition, you will be submitting other documents from your courses to complete your portfolio. **Every student registered for any EDSE course including this semester is required to submit signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one-time course or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed, upon completion of the required submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.***

GRADING CRITERIA

- 95-100% = A
- 90 - 94% = A-
- 87 - 89% = B+
- 84 - 86% = B
- 80 - 83% = B-
- 77 - 79% = C+
- 74 - 76% = C
- 70 - 73% = C-
- 60 - 69% = D
- < 70% = F

Class	Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Readings to do for that class
1	1/26	Introductions Course Overview Assignment/Blackboard/Taskstream Explanation Introduction to the Field		
2	2/2	History of Special Education Legislation. Understanding the IEP process Eligibility 101	Select Disability Paper topic	Chapters 1 & 2
3	2/9	Eligibility (IEPs) continued Families, Communities, Multicultural and Bilingual Aspects of Special Education	Plan Field Exploration Activities	Chapters 3 & 4
4	2/16	Learners with Intellectual Disabilities		Chapters 5
5	2/23	Learners with Learning Disabilities		Chapters 6
6	3/2	Learners with ADHD Learners with Communication Disorders	Copy of Child Abuse Awareness Program Certificate and submission to TS	Chapter 7 & 9
7	3/9	Learners with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders	Optional submission draft copy of Disability Paper	Chapter 8
8	3/16	Spring Break		
9	3/23	Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorders	Submit Disability Specific Paper Presentation Disability Specific Papers	Chapter 12
10	3/30	Learners who have Sensory Impairments: Deaf, Blind, Hard of hearing, Low vision	Presentation Disability Specific Papers	Chapters 10 & 11
11	4/6	Learners with Low-Incidence, Multiple, or Severe disabilities	Presentation Disability Specific Papers	Chapters 13

12	4/20	Learners with Physical Disabilities and Other Health Impairments Individuals with special gifts and talents	Presentation Disability Specific Papers	Chapter 14 & 15
13	4/27	No class		
14	5/4	Review Summary of learning Course Evaluations	Submit Field Observation Paper	
15	5/11	Final Exam	Final Submit on TaskStream	