

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
College of Education and Human Development
Graduate School of Education
Fall 2011

EDSE 501 (Section 6L1): INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

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Class Dates: Tuesdays, September 13-November 15

Class Times: 4:30-8:30

Location: Loudoun County School Administration Building, Room 100A

“America’s future walks through the doors of our schools every day” ~Mary Jean LeTendre

“Will you be the rock that redirects the course of the river?” ~Clair Nuer

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.

Field experiences, conducted in public school settings, are required. Prerequisites: none.

Nature Of Course Delivery

Learning activities include the following:

- Class lecture, discussion and participation
- Videotapes and other relevant media presentations
- 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.

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 Organizations

EDSE 501 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, 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.

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.*

Course Expectations For Students

Attendance:

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) complete all assignments to earn the **5-point class participation grade**. Attendance, timeliness, and professionally relevant, active participation are expected. 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. Missing **more than one class or repeated tardiness/leaving early** will result in losing your participation grade for the course. Please notify me *in advance* by phone or email if you will not be able to attend class.

It is impossible to participate fully in this class while texting, Facebooking, tweeting, working on documents, etc. Please be *fully* present in class ☺

Workload:

In-depth reading, study, and work on course requirements require outside class time. Students are expected to allot approximately three hours for class readings and preparation for *each* credit hour weekly in addition to time spent on papers and assignments.

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 (5th ed.) You are required to use APA guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines: <http://apastyle.apa.org/>

We will use *person-first language* in our class discussions and written assignments (and ideally in our professional practice). We will replace the term “Mental Retardation” with “Intellectual Disabilities” in our oral and written communication in accordance with terminology choices in the disability community.

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.

Email: Please note that your GMU email will be used exclusively for all your GMU courses: Please activate and forward your gmu email to your most-checked account!

Go to <http://mail.gmu.edu>. Click on Options tab at the top of the page. Click on Settings link on the left of the page. Type in your most-checked email account in the box labeled Mail Forwarding.

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). 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

1. 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.

2. Child Abuse Awareness Program:

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. **Very important: You must provide a link to this certificate or print and scan it to use as a signature assignment in your electronic portfolio on TaskStream for 501.**

3. Blackboard:

You will begin using Blackboard following class session #2 of this course to complete your 4 **discussion board assignments**.

GMU's Blackboard will be used to post important information and presentations for this course and for you to check grades, complete assignments, and communicate with your classmates and instructor. You are responsible for checking Blackboard at least once a week and right before class to make sure you are informed about class/GMU issues.

Your **GMU email username and password** are entered in the Blackboard system. The following is how you will access the Blackboard to get into My Mason:

You will need your Username (Mason NetId) and strong password (PatriotPass) credentials to access this, so it is important to activate your account asap! <http://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>

On MyMason, the Blackboard site Quick Link for your courses is listed on the left menu as Courses (CE) (CE Learning Management System).

You can also enter the Blackboard site for your courses by going to: <https://courses.gmu.edu> and use your same username and password as you do for My Mason.

4. Field Exploratory Activities Paper:

These school-based observations/activities will occur in public school settings. See descriptions following this section for more details.

5. Disability-Specific Information Paper:

Will ensure you are more informed about specific types of disabilities within a given Federal category. A brief presentation will be given in class to share your research with your colleagues.

6. A Final Exam:

Will be given to assess knowledge and understanding of student outcomes.

Evaluation

• Blackboard Activities	15 (3 x 5 pts. ea.)
• *Child Abuse and Recognition Quiz*	10
• Field Observations/Exploratory Activities	25
• Class participation	5
• Disability-specific paper	20
• *Final Exam*	25
	<u>Total</u> 100

Grading Criteria

95-100% = A

90-94% = A-

80-89% = B

80-84% = B-

70-79% = C

< 70% = F

Performance –based Assessment and Evaluation Criteria

I. Field Exploratory Activities *

Note: This project will be used to fulfill the 8 hour field experience requirement for students who are already working with students with disabilities in a public school.

Required:

Compose a **2-4 page overview** of your teaching situation, your personal philosophy about teaching exceptional learners, and the learning needs **you have** as you enter this profession.

I. Teaching Situation

Describe your current teaching situation. Include information regarding the types of learners in your setting (e.g. LD, ED, etc). Describe your background experience relative to exceptional learners. Include an idea of your long-term goals in this field.

II. Personal Philosophy of Special Education

Discuss your reasons for entering this profession and what you believe about teaching the exceptional learner.

Why do you want to do this? How do you think one should approach this profession?

III. Learning Needs*

What do you need to know more about right now? Identify the direction that the rest of your exploration of the field of special education will take. **This section should match with the activities you choose to complete in the remainder of this project.**

Activity Options:

Select an aspect(s) of the field of special education that you need to explore. Choose and **complete at least 3 activities** to enhance your knowledge of that aspect of special education. Compose 2-4 pages for **each** activity selected. Include a brief description of the context and what you learned. **Document the time spent** engaged in the field exploration and the location of the experience at the top of each reflection. Make sure that there is a link between the activities selected and the learning needs you stated. **Your activities (not including the write up) should total no less than 6 hours and should consist of at least 3 separate activities.**

Ideas to Consider:

- Observe relevant school settings or community settings (e.g., self-contained, co-taught class, job sites, group homes)
- Conduct a home visit for one of your students
- Shadow/Interview an individual in a position of interest to you (e.g. Interpreter, Teacher, Audiologist, Counselor/Social Worker, Physical Therapist, Principal, Recreation Therapist, Speech Pathologist, Work-Study Coordinator, Job Coach, Reading or other curriculum specialist etc.)
- Interview an adult with a disability
- Interview a parent of a person with a disability
- Interview a sibling of a person with a disability
- Interview the entire family of an exceptional learner
- Learn how to conduct (by observation) one of your school's assessments
- Attend an eligibility meeting for a student (not one of your own)
- Attend a child study team meeting (again, not for one of your own students)
- Attend staff development presentations (maximum of 2 hours allowed)
- Examine media-based resources (maximum of 2 hours allowed; e.g. journals, documentaries, webquest, etc.)
- Other (ask instructor to confirm acceptability/assist with ideas for you)

Note: You may have your own family members help you arrange experiences, but you may not use them for field observations or interviews.

II. Description –Disability-Specific Information Paper *

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, Asperger 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 through adulthood). 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. You will design and deliver a 5-7 minute summary presentation to share your research in class. The presentation will include a description of the disability/condition, the features/manifestations that you would identify as central to the impact on learning and 2-3 strategies or considerations key for students with this disability or condition.

III. Online Child Abuse Training Module

Students will complete an online child abuse awareness training module at

http://www.vcu.edu/vissta/training/va_teachers/ *This is the first submission to Taskstream as the Signature Assignment for CEC Standard 9*

IV. Blackboard Discussion Boards*

Respond to discussion respectfully and thoroughly by writing at least one paragraph that addresses the prompt and one that acknowledges others' responses. Do not do ahead of time.

V. Final Exam *

Open book and note, essay responses. *This is the second signature assignment for this course to be submitted for TaskStream for CEC Standard 1*

VI. Class Participation

Presence, Participation, and Collaboration

Required Text

Hallahan, Kauffman & Pullen, *Exceptional Learners: An Introduction to Special Education*, 12th edition, 2009 ABLongman, ISBN 9780136067931 / 013606793x

***TASKSTREAM SUBMISSION*: Electronic Portfolio**

These assignments are "signature" assignments for the student portfolio and must be submitted digitally to Taskstream, 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 (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. *

Evidence Based Practices (EBPs)

This course will incorporate the evidence-based practices (EBPs) relevant to inclusion, Individualized Education programs, and lesson planning. These EBPs are indicated with an asterisk (*) in this syllabus' schedule. Evidence for the selected research-based practices is informed by meta-analysis, literature reviews/synthesis, the technical assistance networks which provide web-based resources, and the national

organizations whose mission is to support students with disabilities. We address both promising and emerging practices in the field of special education. This course will provide opportunities for students to take an active, decision-making role to thoughtfully select, modify, apply, and evaluate EBPs in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- 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/>].

Schedule/Calendar

CLASS	TOPICS	ASSIGNMENTS to do after this session	DUE <u>THIS CLASS SESSION</u>
September 13	Registration Introductions Syllabus Review Introduction to Special Education and Graduate School at GMU Legal History	Acquire Books Ensure successful entry to email, Blackboard, and GMU! Begin Chapter1 Finish Chapter 1	
September 20	Referral and Assessment Working with Families	Chapter 2 Chapter 4	Discussion Board 1
September 27	Intellectual Disabilities	Chapter 5 Chapter 13	Discussion Board 2
October 4	Learning Disabilities Emotional Disabilities	Chapter 6 Chapter 8	Discussion Board 3
October 11	ONLINE	IRIS module (description to be provided in class)	Discussion Board 4
October 18	Hearing Disabilities and Deafness Autism Spectrum Disorders	Chapter 10 Chapter 12	Disability-Specific Information Paper
October 25	Vision, Physical Disabilities, TBI Speech and Language Disabilities	Chapter 11 Chapter 14 Chapter 9	Copy of Child Abuse Certificate and submission to TS
November 1	Students who are Twice - Exceptional & Multicultural and Bilingual Aspects of Special Education	Chapter 3 Chapter 15	
November 8	Summary/Review		Field Exploration Activities Paper
November 15	Final Exam		Submit to Taskstream immediately following class

I. Blackboard 3 Online Discussion/Reflections Rubric

	5 Exemplary	4 Good	3 Acceptable	2 Inadequate	1 Unacceptable
<p><i>Background</i> Student has clearly completed the discussion prompt or activity prior to developing written response. Response is on time!</p>					
<p><i>Quality</i> Addresses all aspects of discussion starter/prompt. Reacts to both prompt and classmates' responses (very important!)</p>					
<p><i>Reflection</i> Summarizes thoughts about articles read or information received and includes rationales for the statements made. Depth of reflection & depth of linkages to other course readings, teaching, and learning in general.</p>					

<p>Collaboration Student incorporates classmates' responses into own response. Acknowledges differences of opinion appropriately. Recognizes and validates multiple viewpoints.</p>					
<p>Writing Reflection is written to graduate-level standards and there are <u>very few</u> writing or printing errors.</p>					

II. Field Exploratory Activities Rubric

	Exemplary	Good	Acceptable	Inadequate	Unacceptable
<p>Teaching Situation Describes current teaching situation. Includes information regarding the types of learners. Describes background experience relative to exceptional learners. Includes idea of long-term goals in this field (5 points)</p>					
<p>Personal Philosophy of Special Education Discusses reasons for entering profession and beliefs about teaching the exceptional learner. Why writer wants to do this and how one should approach this profession (5 points)</p>					
<p>Learning Needs Identifies direction for rest of exploration of the field of special education. Match activities chosen to complete the remainder of project (2.5 points)</p>					

<p>Reflection of Activities For each (minimum 3) Brief description of context and what was learned. Time and location documented at the top of each reflection. Link between activities selected and learning needs stated. (15 points)</p>					
<p>Writing Paper is written to APA & graduate-level standards and there are <u>very few</u> writing or printing errors. (2.5)</p>					

III. Disability-Specific Information Paper Rubric

	5 Exemplary	4 Good	3 Acceptable	2 Inadequate	1 Unacceptable
<p>Introduction Description of specific disability is presented and linked with appropriate federal category 5 points</p>					
<p>Body Paper describes: manifestation, identification, physical/cognitive implications, educational impact, and life-span implications and prognosis 5 points</p>					

Resources Linkages to supporting resources, organizations, initiatives, programs, and Research are provided 5 points					
Format Clear, concise, and comprehensive. 2.5 points					
Writing Paper is written to graduate-level standards in APA and there are <u>very few</u> writing or printing errors. 2.5 points					