



George Mason University College of Education and Human Development

EDSE 501 Introduction to Special Education Spring 2012 Online Course (Section 6F1)

Instructor: Margaret (Peggy) Weiss **Meeting Dates:** 1/9/2012, 3/12/2012; online
Phone: 703.993.5732 **Class Location:** 4050/4051 Gatehouse Admin Center
Email: mweiss9@gmu.edu **Meeting Times:** 4:30-8:30

Course Overview

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. This course requires a field experience.

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 contribution 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 and litigation, and use of innovative technology.

Relationship of Course to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

EDSE 501 is part of the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure 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 educational professional organization in the

United States. As such, the curriculum for the course includes competencies for teaching students with disabilities in kindergarten through grade 12.

The CEC Core Standards are listed on

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

CEC Standards Addressed

Standard 1 - Foundations

Knowledge

- Models, theories, and philosophies that form the basis for special education practice.
- Laws, policies, and ethical principles regarding behavioral management planning and implementation.
- Relationship of special education to the organization and function educational agencies.
- Rights and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, and other professionals, and schools related to exceptional learning needs.
- Issues in 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 within a continuum of services.
- Family systems and the role of families in the educational process.
- Historical points of view and contribution of culturally diverse groups.
- Impact of the dominant culture on shaping schools an the individuals who study and work in them.
- Potential impact of differences in values, languages, and customs that can exist between the home and school.

Skill

- Articulate a personal philosophy of special education.

Standard 2 - Development and Characteristics of Learners

Knowledge

- 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 families 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

Knowledge

- 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 in 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.

Student Responsibilities

Progress in the Program

You are responsible for knowing your status in the program. Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis. Contact Jancy Templeton, GMU Special Education Advisor, at jtemple1@gmu.edu or (703) 993-2387. Please be prepared with your G number when you contact her.

GMU College of Education and Human Development Graduate School Of Education Statements Of Student Responsibilities

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

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions at all times [Please review <http://www.gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm>].

Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [Please review <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].

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/>]. If you need accommodations in this course, please contact me as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester.

Students are responsible for the content of university communications (including but not limited to communication related to this course) 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, program, and instructor will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

Students must use the Blackboard Learning Environment for all course materials and assignments. Students must complete all assignments as directed. Questions should be directed to the instructor, not to other students.

Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices (including cell phones) shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

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 grades, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

Online Course Expectations

Time commitment. This is a 3-credit course. Traditional 3-credit courses across a 15-week semester require an average of 45 hours of in-class time and approximately 90 hours of independent reading and assignment completion. This course includes the same amount of content as a 15-week course in an 8-week timeframe. As you budget your time for the upcoming semester, keep in mind the importance of allotting an appropriate amount of time for course preparation, reading assignments, discussion forum participation, small group interaction, and long-term projects. This is important to ensure success in this course.

What to expect in this course. This is both an interactive and independent course that requires a high level of self-direction, communication, and problem solving on your part. I expect you to learn in collaboration with one another, and I expect to learn from you as well. You are a valuable part of this course and relating what we learn to your past personal, professional and academic experiences will make your learning meaningful. You must consistently communicate and interact with your classmates and your instructor so that you may provide constructive clarity and insights. Furthermore, by sharing evidence-based articles, resources and URLs, you will enrich this course and make it better.

Participation requirements. In joining this course, you are connecting with a learning community that thrives on participation and interaction. The success of our independent small learning groups and our class as a whole depends on your personal commitment for accountability. If you know of an unusual circumstance that creates an absence of more than 3 days, let your team (and me) know, so we can avoid team frustration caused by unfulfilled commitments. By enrolling in this course, you have forged a bond. Although you might feel invisible sitting before your monitor, even your initial post to whole-group or team discussions, makes you an integral class member. Of course, the unexpected could happen too. It often does. Your obligation is simply to let people know why your usual level of participation is about to shift or has suddenly shifted.

For this course, we will meet two times, January 9 and March 12. These meetings are vital to your success in the course. Your attendance is required. Ten points will be deducted from the first and/or the last module assignment for missing a class meeting.

Technical support. If you find yourself frustrated with technological problems such as file download issues or silent Ppt. presentations, the first thing I always recommend is to open up the course in a different browser. For example, if you have opened this course in *Internet Explorer*, try opening it again in either *Netscape* or *Mozilla Firefox*. These are all free downloads, and may be used as alternative browsers if one does not run the course properly. If that does not work, please contact the Blackboard support line at 703-993-8870. If you are having trouble finding something, direct your questions to me.

TaskStream

Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is required to submit 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/>. For this course, students must submit their certification of completion of the Virginia Department of Education Child Abuse Recognition program. 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 semester, the grade becomes an F.

Instructor Responsibilities

Course Content

I will make accessible all course content via Blackboard Learning Environment. I will review Blackboard use and organization with students at our introductory meeting. Any questions about content should be directed to me at mweiss9@gmu.edu.

Communication

The best way to contact me is through email. I check my email at least at 9am and 2pm on weekdays. I will check my email around 9pm on Sunday evenings. I will respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays. I will hold virtual office hours on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9-10am. You can call or email me during that time and I will respond right away. If you would like to schedule another time to talk/meet, send me an email.

Evaluation

I will evaluate each assignment according to posted rubrics. You can find the assignment descriptions and rubrics in the Assignments section of Blackboard. I will send completed rubrics to individuals. If you have any questions, please contact me. If you have difficulty with an assignment, either in understanding it or completing it, please contact me immediately to discuss.

Course Specifics

Please note: This syllabus is subject to change. Students will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason email and through Course Announcements.

Required Text

Hallahan, D., Kauffman, J., & Pullen, P. (2012). *Exceptional learners: An introduction to special education* (12th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. (ISBN-13: 9780137033706 ISBN-10: 0137033702)

Highly Recommended

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

Nature of Course Delivery

This course is delivered online. There will be introductory and midpoint face-to-face sessions. Otherwise, all communication and content will be handled electronically. Learning activities include the following:

1. Lecture, discussion, cooperative group work, and participation.
2. Videotapes and other relevant media presentations.
3. Study and independent library research.

4. *Blackboard e-Education Learning System* applications.
5. Application activities, including evaluation of informational sources related to disabilities.

Evaluation

This course is set up in module form. Each module is focused on a certain topic in special education and contains a similar structure. Each module contains individual lessons and a module assignment. Each lesson includes a lecture, video or media component, and a reading check. The course point breakdown is:

<i>Item</i>	<i>Points each</i>	<i>Total</i>
Reading checks	25	400
Module Assignments	150	600
Child Abuse training	REQUIRED	
TOTAL POINTS FOR COURSE		1000

Grading Scale

95-100%	A
90-94%	A-
85-89%	B
80-84%	B-
70-79%	C
<69%	F

It is recommended that students retain electronic copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE ED/LD program.

Late Work

Assignments are due by midnight of the due date listed in the syllabus, unless the date is changed by the instructor. Given the tight time frame of this course, no late work will be accepted.

Assignments

Child Abuse Training Module

All students must complete the online child abuse recognition training module available at http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/mandated_reporters/cws5691/index.html.

This is a mandatory requirement and you will not pass the class without completing this assignment. The certificate of completion will need to be posted to your TaskStream account in order to receive your final grade in the course.

Reading Checks

At the end of each lesson, there is a reading check assignment. In most lessons, these checks are 5-10 multiple choice questions. You may not use any materials such as books or notes to help you complete these checks but you may take each one multiple times.

Module Assignments

Module assignments are a combination of independent and group work. Modules 1 and 4 require students to write two, two to four page papers. The paper in Module 1 is a personal philosophy statement in which students will respond to specific questions given by the instructor. In addition, you will have to choose two activities from a list. You will include a summary of the

activities in your paper. At the end of the course, you will review this statement and make any revisions you find necessary. In Module 4, students are asked to choose a topic related to special education, research the topic, and summarize the current knowledge on it.

Module assignments for Modules 2 and 3 are slightly different. At the beginning of the course, you will be randomly assigned to a group. Each group will determine the disability area on which each student will complete his/her assignments. Each student will post these assignments to a group Wiki. Group members will comment on the assignments and then each group will post a final compilation of assignments from each member. See the attached assignment descriptions for more information.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Assignment Due
1/9	FACE TO FACE MEETING Introductions, Blackboard overview	Child Abuse Training Certificate posted to TaskStream
1/23	<i>Module 1: History of special education and disability, legislation, and issues and services</i> Lesson 1: History of special education and disability Lesson 2: Legislation Lesson 3: Issues and services	All reading checks and Module 1 assignment completed
2/6	<i>Module 2: Higher incidence disabilities</i> Lesson 1: Students with Intellectual Disabilities Lesson 2: Students with Learning Disabilities Lesson 3: Students with speech/language impairments Lesson 4: Students with emotional/behavioral disorders Lesson 5: Students with autism spectrum disorders	All reading checks and Module 2 assignments completed (Final Higher Incidence Module Assignment posted)
2/27	<i>Module 3: Lower incidence disabilities</i> Lesson 1: Students with Other health impairments Lesson 2: Students with visual impairments, including blindness Lesson 3: Students with hearing impairments or who are deaf Lesson 4: Students with severe/multiple disabilities, including deaf/blindness or TBI Lesson 5: Students with orthopedic impairments	All reading checks and Module 3 assignments completed (Final Lower Incidence Module Assignment posted)
3/5	<i>Module 4: Issues and Collaborations</i> Lesson 1: Students with special gifts and talents Lesson 2: Parents and families Lesson 3: The future of special education	All reading checks and Module 4 assignment completed
3/12	FACE TO FACE MEETING Course feedback and evaluation Sharing an assignment	Revisions to Philosophy statement posted to Journal

Appendix A Assignment Descriptions

Module 1 Assignment

Given your previous experiences and the material you have read, write at least a two-page description of your personal philosophy of special education. In addition, you will write a one page summary of at least two activities chosen from the list that follows.

For the philosophy component, address the following questions in a narrative format:

Page one: My Ideas about special education

- What is a disability?
- How should a disability be handled in/by society?
- How should students with disabilities be treated in schools, colleges, and the workplace?
- What should the education of students with disabilities look like?
- What ethical considerations must I face as a special educator?
- Include a rationale for your ideas. This should be an honest description of your ideas at this moment in time.

Page two: My Ideas about My Role as a Special Educator

- Who are the students I serve?
- How do I determine their unique needs?
- How should I meet their unique needs within the context of my school?
- What are some barriers to meeting these unique needs?
- What is one goal for myself related to this course?

Page three: Summary of activities and their effect on your philosophy (choose 2 of the following; observations should be at least 1 hour each)

- Observe relevant school settings
- Observe relevant community settings
- Shadow/interview an individual in a position of interest to you (e.g., Interpreter, teacher, audiologist, counselor, physical therapist, etc.)
- Interview a person with a disability
- Interview a sibling of a person with a disability
- Interview a parent of a person with a disability
- Interview the entire family of an exceptional learner
- Conduct an accessibility assessment
- Attend a relevant information presentation

Post your paper to your Blackboard journal. This is a private posting. Only you and I will be able to see what you have posted. Please be as honest and reflective as possible.

Module 2 Assignment

1. You will be assigned a disability area and group.
2. For the disability area you are assigned, provide for the group:
 - a. information about at least one professional or parent organization related to your assigned disability area.
 - b. an evaluation of at least one website related to your assigned disability area (see attached worksheet).

- c. A summary of one peer-reviewed journal article that describes a study including students with your assigned disability (see worksheet).
 - d. A critique of one article, news item, advertisement, or video in the popular press that shows or refers to a person with your assigned disability (see worksheet).
3. When you have finished all of the components of this assignment for your disability area, put all of the information together into one document. Post the document to your group Wiki.
4. Read one your other group member's work and provide feedback through the comments feature in the group Wiki. Make sure everyone has at least one reader.
5. Revise your assignment based upon your group's comments.
6. As a group, determine who will compile final drafts of each individual's assignments and copy and paste them into one document. This person is also responsible for posting the final document to the group wiki under the title, "Final Higher Incidence Module Assignment."

Module 3 Assignment

1. You will be assigned a disability area and group.
2. For the disability area you are assigned, provide for the group:
 - a. information about at least one professional or parent organization related to your assigned disability area.
 - b. an evaluation of at least one website related to your assigned disability area (see attached worksheet).
 - c. A summary of one peer-reviewed journal article that describes a study including students with your assigned disability (see worksheet).
 - d. A critique of one article, news item, advertisement, or video in the popular press that shows or refers to a person with your assigned disability (see worksheet).
3. When you have finished all of the components of this assignment for your disability area, put all of the information together into one document. Post the document to your group Wiki.
4. Read one your other group member's work and provide feedback through the comments feature in the group Wiki. Make sure everyone has at least one reader.
5. Revise your assignment based upon your group's comments.
6. As a group, determine who will compile final drafts of each individual's assignments and copy and paste them into one document. This person is also responsible for posting the final document to the group wiki under the title, "Final Lower Incidence Module Assignment."

Module 4 Assignment

Choose one of the following discussion topics (or request approval of another topic from your instructor). Find at least three different sources of information about the topic, including websites, professional organizations, popular press articles, and/or journal articles. In a two to three page summary, provide a definition or description of the topic, what the issues are about the topic, and your position on it. Write the summary in APA style, paying attention to citing your sources and person-first language. Post to your group Wiki and comment on at least one other post.

Response to Intervention

Inclusion

Co-teaching

No Child Left Behind (or Elementary and Secondary Education Act)

Standards-based IEPs

Standards-based assessments

Working with students and/or parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Appendix B Frameworks for Assignments

Directions for Finding an Organization Module Assignment Component A

The first part of your module assignment requires you to find an organization related to your assigned disability area. You can usually find organizations by doing a web search with the terms “organization” and the name of your disability area. Finding an organization is different from finding a website related to a disability area. For example, TeachingLD.org is a website related to learning disabilities. It is sponsored by the Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD) of the Council for Exceptional Children. You can find information about DLD in the “About Us” section of the website. For the purpose of this assignment, you would be gathering information about DLD, not about the website, TeachingLD.org.

In addition to searching the web, you could begin by going to the website of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC; cec.sped.org). This is a professional organization that has independent subdivisions related to almost every disability category. CEC works within the disability field in all areas, including advocacy, legislation, professional development, teacher education, and parent information. You can find a tremendous amount of information about the field of special education at CEC’s website.

Once you have found an organization that interests you, complete the questions in the table on the next page. The completed table should be part of the document you post to your group Wiki. The table is what will be graded for this assignment.

<i>Finding an Organization</i>	
Item	Information
Student Name	
Disability area of focus	
Name of organization related to disability	
Website of organization (if available)	
Mission statement of the organization	
How is the organization funded?	
Who is the target audience of the organization?	
What does the organization do or provide?	
Would you recommend this organization to the target audience? Why or why not?	
Other comments about the organization	

Directions for Finding a Website Module Assignment Component B

The second part of your module assignment requires you to find a website related to your assigned disability area. You can usually find websites by doing a web search with the name of your assigned disability area. Once you find the website, you will need to burrow down into its information to find some of the items such as what organization sponsors the site or how it is funded. If you are having a difficult time finding a website, you might try going back to the organization you found in the first part of the assignment and looking for links that may be provided.

Once you have found a website that interests you and is related to your assigned disability area, complete the questions in the table on the next page. The completed table should be part of the document you post to your group wiki. The table is what will be graded for this assignment.

Finding a website	
Item	Information
Student Name	
Disability area of focus	
Title of website	
URL	
Purpose of website (as stated on website)	
What group sponsors the website? What information does the website give about that group?	
Who is the target audience of the website?	
What information does the website provide for users?	
Does the website provide any information about where it gets its information or whether it is research-based? If so, what?	
Would you recommend this website to a colleague, parent, or student? Why or why not?	
Other comments or questions you have about the website	

Directions for Finding a Study Module Assignment Component C

The third part of your module assignment requires you to find a study that includes students with your assigned disability. The best way to find a peer-reviewed study is to use the George Mason library databases.

1. Go to the library homepage at <http://library.gmu.edu/>
2. Click on the “Databases” tab.
3. In addition to general search engines such as Academic Search Premier, there are two education-specific databases that you should be familiar with: ERIC and PsycInfo. You can choose either of these from the alphabetical list of databases.
4. Once you choose a database, you will have to sign in to gain access. Use your Mason username and password.
5. Once you have signed in, you will get a search box that has many options. You can use terms such as your assigned disability area, a content area in which you are interested, or whatever term you think will help you find a study. Be sure to check the box that says “peer reviewed” or “peer-reviewed journals only.” That means the articles that you find will have already gone through a review process and they are not posted just because someone felt like they wanted to post them!
6. It is best to try to find a study that has been published in the last five years or so. If your search is not successful, Mason has some great resources for help. Just look at the “Get Help” section of the library homepage. If all else fails, contact your instructor.
7. To make sure the article you find is a study, read through the abstract first. You should try to determine if the authors included individuals and found results. If there is not mention of participants and results, you might have an opinion article or a review of some type. If you cannot get enough information from the abstract, look through the article quickly. If you find sections titled, Methods and Results, you probably have a study.

Once you have found a study article that interests you and is related to your assigned disability area, you must determine the type of research it was in order to determine the correct questions to answer in the attached worksheet.

There are three basic types of research studies you will probably find. They are:

1. Descriptive research—This type of research attempts to report things as they are and does not try to intervene. The study may include interviews, observations, or questionnaires.
2. Group intervention research—This type of research includes a control group and an experimental group. Each group has probably more than 25 or 30 participants. The researchers actually do (or have someone do) something to the experimental group, such as teach them in a different way or teach them something different from the control group. In this case, the “something different” is the independent variable and the what the researchers measured is the dependent variable.
3. Single subject research—In many cases, special education research is conducted on smaller groups of students, most times less than 10. In these cases, student results are usually graphed and are evaluated by how they changed. You will still have a dependent

(measured) variable and an independent (what the researchers or others did for these students) variable.

Student Name	
Citation (in APA format)	
Research Questions (What questions were the researchers trying to answer; usually stated at the end of the introduction)	
Type of Research (Descriptive, Group experimental, single subject)	
Participants (who participated in the study; this should include students with your assigned disability and perhaps peers—just describe the individuals involved either in an intervention or who were being interviewed/observed)	
Independent variable— Skip this for descriptive studies (This is what the researchers did with or provided to the experimental group. Essentially, it's what made the experimental group different from the control group. If you do not have these two groups, do not complete this column.)	
Dependent variables— Skip this for descriptive studies (This is essentially what the researchers measured. If you have an experimental study, what tests or measures did the researchers use to compare the experimental and control groups? If you have a descriptive study, what did the researchers do to collect data—observation, interview, etc?)	
Method	

<p>(A brief description of how the researchers did the study. For example, the experimental group received 50mins of reading comprehension instruction daily for 10 weeks. Scores on a reading test were compared before the instruction (pre) and after the instruction (post)).</p>	
<p>Results (What happened in the study? If it was experimental, did the experimental group outperform the control group? Don't worry about statistics—just results. If it was a descriptive study, what did they describe as findings?)</p>	
<p>Your Thoughts (What did you think about the study? How do you think it translates to practice?)</p>	

Directions for Finding a Popular Press Article Module Assignment Component D

The final part of your module assignment requires you to find a popular press article related to your assigned disability area. “Popular press” means any media source that is not a professional journal. This could be The Washington Post, People magazine, Glamour, YouTube, etc. If the article is published online, that is fine as long as you can determine the source of the article. The focus of the article should be some aspect of your assigned disability area, for example including a person with your assigned disability, describing an issue related to your assigned disability area, or reporting about a caretaker of someone with your assigned disability.

Once you have found an article that interests you and is related to your assigned disability area, complete the questions in the table on the next page. The completed table will be part of the document you post to your group wiki. The table is what will be graded for this assignment.

Student Name	
Citation (Source, date, author, title)	
Type of media	
Author's stated (or implicit) purpose of the article	
Summary of the article	
How does the author portray people with disabilities?	
What are the underlying assumptions about disability that the author makes? Describe.	
Does the author provide information about sources or data for the article?	
What is your overall impression of the article? Is it a good information source for people who may not know much about disabilities?	
Would you recommend this article to someone? If so, to whom? If not, why not?	