

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Program: Special Education

EDSE 540: Characteristics of Students with Emotional Disturbances and Learning Disabilities

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Course Description

This class covers theories and specific conditions in learning disabilities and emotional disorders. The course will study the impact of these learning and behavioral differences on academic and social/emotional performances. Diversity within student populations is addressed throughout the course. Experiential, observational, and interactive strategies, including use of technological advances are used to facilitate fulfillment of the outcomes established for the course. Field experience is required. Prerequisites: none.

Student Outcomes

The purpose of this course is to assist students in developing a solid foundation for understanding learning acquisition and behaviors of children with learning disabilities and /or emotional disturbances. EDSE 540 is also designed to prepare students to interact with other professionals about children with these disabilities. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the CEC standards in relation to the student outcomes identified in Table 1.

Required Texts

Kauffman, J. M. (2005). *Characteristics of emotional and behavioral disorders of children and youth, (8th ed)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.

Hallahan, D. P., Lloyd, J. W, Kauffman, J. M, Weiss, M. P., & Martinez, E. A. (2005). *Introduction to Learning Disabilities (3rd ed.)*. Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.

Nature of Course Delivery

Class sessions will include a variety of learning activities and formats that integrate instructional technology with lecture, discussion, video, and small group

activities. Students will engage in dialogue with the instructor and colleagues to mirror the collaborative nature of special education and apply theory to practice.

Alignment of Outcomes and Requirements with Key CEC/NCATE Standards (Table 1)

CEC/NCATE STANDARDS	STUDENT OUTCOMES	COURSE REQUIREMENTS
<p>Standard 1: Foundations Special educators understand the field as an evolving and changing discipline based on philosophies, evidence-based principles and theories, relevant laws and policies, diverse and historical points of view, and human issues that have historically influenced and continue to influence the field of special education and the education and treatment of individuals with disabilities both in school and society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the field of learning disabilities from its origins to policies and practices of today. • Compare the history of education for students with emotional and behavioral disorders with the education for students identified as having a learning disability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading assignments • Online group discussion • Class activities • Final Exam
<p>Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners Special educators understand the similarities and differences in human development and the characteristics between and among individuals with and without exceptional learning needs (ELN). Special educators understand how exceptional conditions interact with the domains of human development and they use this knowledge to respond to varying abilities and behaviors. Special educators understand how disabilities impact families, and the individual's ability to learn, interact socially, and live as contributing community members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define <i>learning disability</i> and <i>emotional disturbance</i>. • Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between <i>normal</i> and <i>atypical</i> behaviors. • Describe characteristics of young children and adolescents with learning disabilities and/or emotional disturbances. • Compare at least three conceptual models of behavioral deficits with three conceptual models that explain learning disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading assignments • Online group discussions • Case Study • Field Observations • Class activities • Final Exam
<p>Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences Special educators understand the effects that an exceptional condition has on learning in school and throughout life. Special educators understand that beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures affect relationships among and between students, families, and school. Special educators seek to understand how primary language, culture, and familial backgrounds interact with the disability to affect academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options. Learning differences and their interactions are the basis for individualizing instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the various etiologies in relation to biological, family, cultural, and school perspectives. • Identify various procedures and practices that motivate reluctant learners to complete class work and develop skills that build self-understanding and confidence as learners. • Describe and discuss a range of learning disabilities and emotional disturbances for a parent and suggest possible interventions for home and school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study report • Reading assignments • Field Observations • Class activities • Final exam

<p>Standard 6: Language Special educators understand typical and atypical language development and the ways in which disabilities can interact with an individual's experience with and use of language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe at least one theory of how children develop language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small group discussion Class activities Final exam Field Observations
<p>Standard 8: Assessment Assessment is integral to the decision-making and teaching of special educators and special educators use multiple types of assessment information for a variety of educational decisions. Special educators use the results of assessments to help identify exceptional learning needs and to develop and implement individualized instructional programs, as well as to adjust instruction in response to ongoing learning progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe informal assessment procedures for determining knowledge and skills of children with various learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral problems. Based on informal assessment procedures, design appropriate clinical teaching strategies for children with various learning disabilities and/or behavior problems. Describe what an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is and how it is developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small group discussion Class activities Case study report Student presentation Final exam

**Topics such as these are included: a) information processing; b) constructivism; c) metacognition; d) learning styles; e) psychological needs of five learning systems; f) neuropsychology; g) neurocardiology; h) attention deficit disorder; i) developmental/maturational stages; i) stages of moral development; k) perceptual deficits; l) auditory processing disorder; m) visual processing disorder; n) visual-motor disability; o) non-verbal learning disability; p) attachment disorder; q) underachieving reluctant learner; r) finger agnosia; and s) soft signs of brain injury. These also include a) attention disorder; b) overt aggression; c) covert antisocial behavior; d) delinquency; e) substance abuse; f) anxiety; g) obsessive-compulsive disorder; h) posttraumatic stress disorder; i) movement disorders; j) eating disorders; k) elimination disorders; l) sexual problems; m) social isolation and ineptitude; n) depression; o) suicidal behavior; p) schizophrenia; q) autism; r) Asperger's Syndrome; and s) communication disorders.*

EXPECTATIONS:

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

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://www.gse.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the

instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

- Products from this course will become part of an individual professional portfolio used to document satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance based standards. Students should retain copies of all course products in electronic formats!

The instructor expects that all students will abide by the following:

- Use APA guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines. <http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm>
- Use person-first language in our class discussions and written assignments (and ideally in our professional practice). Please refer to “Guidelines for Non-Handicapping Language in APA Journals” <http://www.apastyle.org/disabilities.html>
- Please subscribe to the GMU/GSE Special Education list serve to receive important program updates and announcements. You can subscribe (join) or unsubscribe (sign-off) the listserv via e-mail:

1. Address an e-mail message to listserv@listserv.gmu.edu
2. Put the following in the body of the message:
subscribe SPECIAL-EDUCATION-PROGRAM-L yourfirstname
yourlastname

A confirmation message will be sent to your e-mail address asking you to confirm your subscription request. You must reply to this message with ok in the body of the message. Leave the subject unchanged.

- Your gmU email address is the email address that will be used for communication in this course. Please make sure your gmU email is activated and checked regularly for communications from the instructor as well as university announcements. It is possible to forward your gmU email to another account.
- **GMU’s** Blackboard will be used to post important information for this course. You will use it to extend your learning through exposure to resources beyond the text and participate in group discussions. Your GMU email address will be entered in the **Blackboard** system. Please verify with the instructor the username and email address that was entered for the Blackboard for this course.

The following is how you will access the **Blackboard-GSE Login Page**: Enter the URL <http://blackboard.gmu.edu> into your browser location field. Click on the **Login** button.

Enter your **Username & Password** assigned to you. Most likely it will be **your** first initial of your first name and **your** entire last name (for example - csmith). This will serve as both your username and password (unless you already have an account). Please verify your account information the first night of class then Click **Login**.

- All assignments should reflect graduate-level spelling, syntax, and grammar. If you experience difficulties with the writing process you may need to access the GMU Writing Center during this course to improve your skills (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>). APA guidelines (5th edition)

apply for all written (word-processed) assignments. All work produced outside of class must be typed.

- 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 by due dates provided.
- Common sense and instructor discretion will be the governing forces in dealing with any circumstances that may arise that are not explicitly addressed in this syllabus.

Evaluation

The following tasks will allow the student to earn points toward the final grade:

1. Class attendance and participation
2. Field observation report
3. Case study report, presentation, and posting to True Outcomes
4. Discussion Forums in Blackboard
5. Exam

General Comments:

- Arrangements must be made with the instructor ***in advance*** to submit assignments after deadlines. Points will be deducted from work submitted late. Written documentation of extenuating circumstances will be required to alter deadlines.
- The instructor is solely responsible for assigning grades. Student non-compliance with stated academic, honor, attendance, or participation expectations will result in a '0' for the associated evaluation. Because class participation is a factor in grading, the instructor may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of non-participation.
- It is recommended that students retain copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE ED/LD program. Products from this class will become part of your individual professional portfolio used in your portfolio classes that documents your satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance based standards.
- Grades of "A" in this course are earned by students who do exemplary, distinguished work. The A/A- student participates actively and thoughtfully in class; completes all required reading assignments and related assignments in a timely and professional way; shows coherence and thoroughness in work products; completes well-organized, well-written work samples; and consistently demonstrates the ability to make connections between theory and practice.

Grading scale

94 – 100% = A; 90 – 93.5% = A-; 80 – 89.5% = B; 70 – 79.5% = C; < 70% = F

ASSIGNMENTS**Class Attendance and Participation (10% of grade):**

Attendance and participation are critical; class time will provide opportunities for (1) completion of and preparation for a variety of activities, (2) contribution of effective teaching strategies and content application ideas during discussion, and (3) reflection on readings, assignments, and your past experiences. Students are expected to be consistently well-prepared to participate in class as active, thoughtful discussants. This means that you must prepare all assigned readings prior to coming to class. Good teachers are lifelong learners, open to new developments in both theory and practice. Respect of the free exchange of thought in an academic environment and the participants therein is critical for effective discussions. For example: a) silence any sound emitting devices, b) wait until the teacher/guest speaker has finished prior to gathering your belongings, and c) refrain from sleeping, and d) refrain from talking while others are talking. Evidence of engagement in learning can be shown with preparedness, on-time attendance, effort to complete in-class activities thoroughly, positive non-verbals, respect for others, improvement, and positive self-advocacy. Class discussions will be conducted in a professional, informed fashion wherein disruptive students will be asked to leave the class. Your contributions are not only welcomed, they are essential.

Discussion Board and E-Activities (20% of grade):

Discussion Board activities online will be utilized to enable students to further explore and apply the ideas presented in class sessions and in the required readings. Responses to these assignments should reflect careful consideration of course content as you indicate your own views and share additional resources on the required topics. The format of these assignments will be consistently designed to have each student respond individually to a prompt and then interact with the responses posted by your peers. Discussion Board assignments should be completed as scheduled as they will often be used as the basis for additional class discussions and activities. Additional e-activities, such as completion of GMU enrollment requirements, will be posted to Blackboard for completion by Week 8 of the course.

Field Observations and Report (20% of grade):

Observations of students with learning disabilities and emotional disabilities in school settings will be completed. Observation reports will be developed containing, but not limited to, the following information: (a) student-teacher and student-student interactions in classrooms or other organized settings that serve

students with learning disabilities and emotional disabilities; (b) identification of teaching methods and strategies that appear to be beneficial to students with learning disabilities and/or emotional disabilities as well as those you consider inappropriate; and (c) how the observation and interactions reflect views articulated by readings from class.

***Case Study and Presentation (30% of grade):**

A comprehensive case study on a student with emotional or learning disabilities will be completed. This case study will include, but not be limited to, the following components: (a) student’s demographic data; (b) description of school and neighborhood; (c) educational history (schools attended, reason for referral, placement); (d) IEP goals and objectives, classroom accommodations; (e) observational information; (f) teacher interviews; (g) additional recommendations, educational accommodations, and/or modifications; (h) summary and synthesis (Comparison of student’s characteristics and effective interventions with those described in the textbook and other resources, i.e., Which characteristics were identified in your student? What interventions should work? Integrate sources from the literature with what you observed in your case study.); and (i) appendices such as student work samples, teacher interview questions/answers.

*This assignment has been designated as the performance based assessment for this course. Starting this semester, the Special Education Program will evaluate student work in its relation to meeting the CEC Content Standards as part of NCATE requirements. Students in this class will be expected to submit their designated assignment to True Outcomes (web-based portfolio system) for a faculty member in the Special Education program to score on a 4-point rubric. Although your score on this rubric will not affect your grade in this class, your submission of the assignment to True Outcomes will impact your grade. Students are expected to post their assignment to True Outcomes electronically by the last day of class. Additionally information on this process will be provided.

Exam (20% of grade):

A cumulative Final Exam covering course content will be administered in a two-part format (in-class and take-home).

COURSE TOPICS

Schedule (subject to change)

Date	Topics	Assignments Due
9/13W 9/14L	Introduction to the course Context of special education Legislation relevant to the education of individuals with learning disabilities; laws and policies regarding pre-referral, referral, and placement procedures; definitions and issues related to the identification of individuals with learning disabilities.	www.apastyle.org/disabilities.html ; IDEA/NCLB exploration via Blackboard external links; K1; H3

9/20W 9/21L	Screening, assessment, and classification; educational, and service delivery models; least restrictive environment Historical perspectives and conceptual models of ED/LD; educational approaches; foundations and issues related to knowledge and practice in ED/LD	K2 & 3 (give a cursory look at K5-6); H1 &10 Blackboard DB 1
9/27W 9/28L	Causes and characteristics of learning disabilities; Early Intervention	H 2 & 5 Blackboard DB 2
10/4W 10/5L	Causes and characteristics of emotional/behavioral disabilities; Biological Factors	K7; H7
10/11W 10/12L	Family Factors influencing ED/LD; School/cultural factors influencing LD and ED	K8-10; H4 Blackboard DB 3
10/18W 10/19L	Cognition, metacognitive, motivational, and attention problems Cognition, metacognitive, motivational, and attention problems	K11; H8 & 9 Blackboard DB 4
10/25W 10/26L	Facets of Academic Difficulty; Designing instruction in clinical and classroom settings	H11-14 as assigned Field Observations Due
11/1W 11/2L	Facets of Disordered Behavior; legal, judicial, and educational systems serving individuals with emotional/behavioral disorders; Principles of normalization relative to least restrictive environment	Complete Online Class Activities Folder on K12-17 E-activities due
11/8W 11/9L	Developing an IEP for individuals with learning disabilities or emotional/behavioral disabilities in the LRE; Transition Planning	H15 Case Study Project Components Due
11/15W 11/16L	Multicultural perspectives on the identification and treatment of learning disabilities and emotional disturbances	Turn-in the “take home” portion of Final Exam at promptly 4:30; Complete “in-class” portion of Final Exam

*K=Kauffman text, H=Hallahan, et al. text; W=Winchester Cohort, L=Loudon Cohort

Bibliography

Please refer to the Blackboard site for a collection of additional resources that may support your continued exploration of course content.