

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Program: Special Education

EDSE 442/542
Characteristics of Students with Mental Retardation
Spring 2006
Fairfax County Public Schools Cohort

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Course Days: Tuesday
Location: Thoreau Middle School Room - 110
Course Time: 4:30 – 8:00 p.m.

When we do the best that we can, we never know what miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another. –Helen Keller

Course Description

This class covers theories and specific conditions in mental retardation and provides advanced study of persons with mental retardation, ranging in age from preschool to adult. Topics include: historical development of the field of mental retardation; theoretical models of mental retardation; etiological factors; characteristics; models of assessment and intervention, including technological advances; issues and trends, including legislation and litigation. The course will study the impact of mental retardation on academic and social/emotional performances. Field experience is required. Prerequisites: none.

Student Outcomes

As a result of active participation, completion of readings, research, and other activities in this course, students will be able to:

- Define “mental retardation.”
- Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between “normal” and “atypical” behaviors.
- Describe the historical development of the field of mental retardation.

- Describe various theoretical models and perspectives in the field of mental retardation.
- Describe research in etiological factors associated with mental retardation.
- Describe social, cognitive, intellectual, and academic characteristics associated with mental retardation.
- Describe past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including technological advances.
- Discuss issues and trends in the field of mental retardation, including legislation and litigation, and use of innovative technology.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the federal and Virginia laws and standards of learning, and agencies that require and provide for transition, vocational, and rehabilitation services for students with disabilities at the elementary/secondary school level (middle & high school).
- Demonstrate the ability to plan and develop a model lesson plan based on the Virginia Standards of Learning that includes appropriate, research-based instructional methods and adaptations for students with disabilities at the secondary level. Products: Lesson plans, accommodations, adaptations, modifications and assessments
- Identify and develop research-based instructional and adaptive strategies for successfully including and planning for students with disabilities at the elementary/secondary level in both regular (math, science, social studies, English, etc.) academics and special education classroom environments.
- Demonstrate the ability to integrate/infuse career development and vocational skills into the general education curricula, as well as justify the importance of such integration.
- Demonstrate an awareness of the importance and ability to implement instruction necessary in life skills, employment skills, self-advocacy, independent living, and functional skills, as well as be able to discuss how these might be infused into the curricula at the elementary/secondary level and prepare students for a culturally diverse world.
- Identify the role and responsibilities of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) teams as they strive to incorporate transition requirements into the IEP and/or develop an Individual Transition Plan (ITP).
- Develop Individual Transition Plans (ITPs) for the implementation or modification of transition to work programs for students with disabilities.
- Identify and describe vocational, employment, supported employment, other opportunities and models, as well as the other types of vocational and postsecondary programs available that could be available to benefit students with disabilities.
- Identify organizations, services, networks, and the variety of state and local agencies that maximize the interagency effort involved in the transition process for students with disabilities.
- Describe elementary/secondary level intervention research and the associated issues in intervention research including technological advances as applied to individuals with disabilities.

Relationship of Courses to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

EDSE 542 is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education area of Mental Retardation. 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 emotional disturbances and mental retardation in kindergarten through grade 12.

The CEC Standards are listed on the following web site:

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 Mental Retardation disability-specific standards (Standard 1: Foundations; Standard 2: Development and characteristics of learners; Standards 3: Individual learning differences) and some of the following CEC Core standards:

Standard 1 - Foundations

Knowledge:

- 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 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 and 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 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.

Nature of Course Delivery

Learning activities include the following:

1. Class lecture, discussion, and participation.
2. Videotapes and other relevant media presentations.
3. Study and independent library research.
4. Applications with relevant hardware and software.
5. Application activities, including in class evaluation of intervention research and materials.
6. Class presentations of case studies papers.
7. Written case study and observation reports using the American Psychological Association format.

Representative Required Texts

Beirne-Smith, M., Patton, J.R., & Ittenbach, R. (2005) *Mental retardation* (7th ed.). Columbus, OH: Prentice Hall/Merrill.

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. ISBN: 1557987912

Other readings from original research assigned by instructor.

Companion websites

The ARC of the United States www.thearc.org

American Association for Mental Retardation www.aamr.org

No Child Left Behind www.ed.gov

State of Virginia Department of Education www.pen.k12.va.us

Center For Advancement Of Learning at Muskingum College Learning Strategies Database <http://muskingum.edu/~cal/database/database.html>

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition: www.ncset.org

LDOnline: www.ldonline.org

Info on policy issues, legislation & best practices:

ideapractices@ideapractices.org

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth: www.ncwd-youth.info

The Transition Coalition: <http://www.transitioncoalition.org/>

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:

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

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See 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.

Evaluation

| | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Class attendance and participation | 10% |
| 2. Creative Expression Presentation | 10% |
| 3. Functional Academic Lesson Plan | 20% |
| 4. Case study and Field Observation Report | 20% |
| 5. Community Resource Investigating | 20% |
| 6. Issue Analysis and presentation | 20% |

Note: Points will be deducted for work submitted late.

It is recommended that students retain copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE MR program. Products from this class can 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.

ASSESSMENT OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

All assignments should be word-processed and are due on the dates indicated. Consult with the instructor in advance if there is a problem. In fairness to students who make the effort to submit papers on time, points per day will be deducted from your grade for late papers. Please retain a copy of your assignments in addition to the one you submit. All assignments should reflect graduate-level spelling, syntax, and grammar. If you experience difficulties with the writing process you will need to document your work with the GMU Writing Center during this course to improve your skills.

Course participants wishing to suggest other learning activities may, with instructor approval, substitute these for a required activity. The major portion of your learning in this course will be the result of your personal involvement in the materials provided and in your application of the principles to your own situation. My role in your learning is to be a facilitator and to provide a favorable environment in which learning can take place; however, the major responsibility must necessarily remain with you.

GRADING SCALE:

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

IMPORTANT:

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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 can 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.

This syllabus may change according to class needs.

EXPECTATIONS:

- ❖ 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 Blackboard discussion boards and other assignments. Attendance and professionally relevant, active participation is expected in class sessions for a grade of **B** or better. Attendance 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. Information, activities, guest speakers, and role plays will be presented in

class that are not a part of the text and can only be experienced in the class sessions (missing more than two classes, {or one Saturday session} during this summer session will make it impossible to achieve a passing grade). Please notify me by email in advance if you will not be able to attend class.

- ❖ 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 papers and assignments.
- ❖ Use APA guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines. <http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm>
- ❖ We will 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>
- ❖ Use APA guidelines for course assignments. This website offers a great deal of information about using APA: <http://www.docstyles.com/apacrib.htm>
- ❖ Please subscribe to the GMU/GSE Special Education list serve. Send an email to listproc@gmu.edu and type the following in the message of the text: Subscribe (special-education-program) (your full name). For example: subscribe special-education-program John Doe. Send the email message and you will receive an email confirmation of your subscription to the list. This allows you to receive important notices from special education.

BLACKBOARD:

GMU's Blackboard will be used to post important information and presentations for this course and for you to check grades and communicate with your classmates. Your email address should be entered in the **Blackboard** system.

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 - jrazeghi).

This will serve as both your username and password.

Click **Login**.

You can begin using Blackboard following class session #2 of this course.

MAJOR LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

I. Attendance and Participation (10% of final grade)

Attend and participate in all class sessions. Except for a limited number of previously approved absences, attendance is expected at all class meetings. You must call or e-mail the instructor before the class meeting, if you feel you need to be absent. Otherwise no credit will be given for any work completed during the evening.

II. Issue Analysis: (20% of final grade)

In conjunction with the instructor choose a topic, which has direct relationship to the themes discussed in the class sessions. The instructor must approve the topic for analysis. This written report should not exceed five pages double spaced. Have sufficient copies of the paper for the instructor and your colleagues. You will also present the issue to the class. The presentation should be no longer than 10 minutes.

III. Creative Expression Presentation (10% of final grade)

Pretend you are the parent of a child with Mental Retardation. Describe your thoughts, feelings, attitudes, joys, and frustrations. You may express these in any form other than an essay.

Present your response (10 minutes max.) to the class in any form other than reading an essay.

IV. Functional Academic Lesson Plan (20% of final grade)

The functional academics lesson plan should cover one to two class periods and use the appropriate Elementary or Secondary grade level Standards of Learning (SOL's) to teach in a content area (math, science, social studies or other academic area of your choice). Make this something you or another teacher could actually use. This lesson is to include a variety of activities, teaching strategies, and assessment tools to match the needs of the learners, the topic being taught, and the resources available. In your lesson plan, you should have the students engaged in hands-on activities at least half of the time. The goal of your lesson should be to infuse critical life skills into content area instruction as described in a course of study and the SOL(s) for that grade level and subject. In other words, you need to take a lesson that is being taught according to the SOL's and modify it to meet the needs of students with mental retardation. Remember the importance of teaching skills to these students that will generalize to adult life: i.e., vocational and independent living skills.

You are to find and/or create each activity to be completed by the students.

If you select a published activity you must cite the reference.

The following will help you to develop this project, **but YOU WILL USE THE RUBRIC TO ORGANIZE YOUR COMPLETED PRODUCT.**

Step 1. Standards of Learning.

Obtain a curriculum (often referred to as a program of study) from general education at the *elementary/secondary* level. Locate and clearly identify the related standards of learning (SOLs). SOLs can be found on the Virginia Department of Education website:

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Superintendent/Sols/home.shtml> and <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/sol.html>

Step 2. Integration of Career Development within an Academic Mini-Unit.

Using the *secondary* general education curriculum (or program of study) and the Standard(s) of Learning (SOLs), develop a well-designed lesson which will cover one to two block sessions of content and will reflect the integration of career development/life skills activities.

Step 3. Unit Objectives and the Career Development Objectives.

Identify the Standards of Learning (SOLs) upon which the lessons are based. List general education objectives for each lesson. These are to be based on the Standards of Learning (SOLs) that you identified. Please indicate which one(s) and for which grade level and subject that you select.

Then, identify what career concepts/life skills will be infused into the lesson, and what the objectives are for them.

Step 4. Lesson Format

Provide the format in detail for the lesson (**will be provided by the instructor**)

Step 5. Adaptations & Accommodations.

For the lesson(s), demonstrate (in general) how you would adapt the content and/or methods of presentation to meet the needs of students with disabilities, especially those with mild mental retardation, moderate mental retardation, and severe and profound.

Step 6: Assessment Plan for the Lessons/Mini-Unit.

Summarize the multiple forms of assessment (formal and informal) that will be embedded in the lesson(s).

Describe and provide actual examples of how the students' learning will be assessed both formally and informally and where to find the assessment activities.

Include a discussion of how the results of each assessment will be used in instructional decision-making.

V. Community Resources: Investigating Adult Services for Individuals with Mental Retardation. (20% of final grade)

Visit an agency or program that provides services to adults with mental retardation and describe the services available to this population. Your 2-3 page write-up should include services, accommodations, description of agency or program, and questions for staff. Your “lens” for this visit should be “what opportunities exist for individuals with mental retardation through this avenue during after high school?” Include copies of materials available at the agency or program. You will probably need to make an appointment. See instructor for suggestions.

VI. *Case Study and Field Observation Report (20% of final grade):

A comprehensive case study on a student with mental retardation will be completed. This case study will include 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 with those described in the textbook, i.e., Which characteristics were identified in your student? 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.

***Field Observations and Report**

Observations of students with mental retardation in school settings will be completed. Observation reports containing information including the following: (a) student-teacher and student-student interactions in classrooms or other organized settings that serve students with mental retardation; (b) identification of teaching methods and strategies that appear to be beneficial to students with mental retardation as well as those you consider inappropriate; and (c) how the observation and interactions reflect views articulated by readings from class. (10 hours)

Rubrics for Major Learning Assignments

I. Issue Analysis

| | 4 Exemplary | 3 Good | 2 Acceptable | 1 Inadequate | 0 Unacceptable |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| <p><i>Issue</i> Student stated the issue and gives a description of issue prior to developing written response</p> | | | | | |
| <p><i>Quality</i> Addresses all aspects of discussion starter/prompt. Reacts both to prompt and classmates' responses</p> | | | | | |
| <p>Reflection Summarizes thoughts about articles read, information received and includes rationales for the statements made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depth of reflection & depth of linkages to other course readings, teaching, and learning in general. | | | | | |
| <p>Presentation Student provides in-depth and informative information regarding the issue. Handouts also provided to classmates. Acknowledges differences of opinion appropriately. Recognizes and validates multiple viewpoints. Answers questions with knowledge and understanding of topic.</p> | | | | | |
| <p>Writing The paper is written to graduate-level standards and there are <u>very few</u> writing or printing errors.</p> | | | | | |

II: Career Integration Lesson Rubric

| | Lesson Plan | 4 Fully Identified & Clearly Described | 3 Identified or Described | 2 Minimally Identified or Described | 1 Unsatisfactory, Inappropriate or Missing |
|----|--|---|--|--|---|
| 1 | Grade level for the lesson | | | | |
| 2 | Content of lesson is indicated (math, English, science, etc) | | | | |
| 3 | SOLs addressed in lesson are clearly identified & related to the academic content | | | | |
| 4 | Lesson objectives are based on the SOLs (above) and are measurable (include all 4 components of a measurable objective) | | | | |
| 5 | Career development/life skills objective is written based on the objective(s) above, and is measurable. | | | | |
| 6 | Theme or topic of the Lesson is identified | | | | |
| 7 | Lesson clearly describes how & when career education life skills will be integrated | | | | |
| 8 | General adaptations & modifications are included for the lesson and are clearly identified and described | | | | |
| 9 | Formal and informal assessment for the lesson is described; one example of each is included along with a discussion of how the results will be used in making instructional decisions that should be sensitive to diverse populations. | | | | |
| 10 | It is clear to the reader that career education/life skills have been infused into an existing SOL-based lesson plan | | | | |
| 11 | The lesson plan (format according to the example handed out) is included. | | | | |

III. Community Resources: Investigating a One-Stop Center
 Research/Application Projects (20%) Scoring Rubric

| | 4 Exemplary | 3 Good | 2 Acceptable | 1 Inadequate | 0 Unacceptable |
|---|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| <p>Background Relevance of assignment to course content-- Why chosen? Link to Transition or Instructional Methods</p> | | | | | |
| <p>Quality Assignment reflects all requirements in syllabus description and quality reflects graduate-level status</p> | | | | | |
| <p>Reflection Summarizes thoughts about articles read, information received and includes rationales for the statements made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depth of reflection & depth of linkages to other course readings, teaching, and learning in general. | | | | | |
| <p>Format Research is referenced so sources can be easily located</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are from refereed journals or empirical professional literature • Are from expert sources such as One Stop Managers, Students and Family members | | | | | |
| <p>Writing Paper is written to graduate-level standards and there are <u>very few</u> writing or printing errors.</p> | | | | | |

V: Case Study and Field Observation Presentation

- a. Provide the essential student's demographic data.
- b. Include a brief description of school and neighborhood.
- c. Education history and IEP Goals and Objectives
- d. Observation Information
- e. Teacher Interview
- f. Recommendations, Accommodations, Modifications
- g. Summary and synthesis

| Criteria | 4 Exemplary | 3 Adequate | 2 Marginal | 1 Inadequate | 0 Unacceptable |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Student's Demographic data | | | | | |
| Description of school and neighborhood have been described adequately | | | | | |
| Education history and IEP goals and objectives | | | | | |
| Observation information | | | | | |
| Teacher interview have been identified and adequately described | | | | | |
| Recommendations, Accommodations, and modification | | | | | |
| Summary and synthesis | | | | | |

Class Agenda for Spring 2006 EDSE 442/542 (subject to change)

*These assignments are probable entries for the student portfolio

| Date | Topic | Chapter Assignment(s) | Assignment Due This Session | MIC. and Guest Speakers |
|-------------------|---|--|--|---|
| January 31, 2006 | Introduction | | | |
| February 7, 2006 | Historical Perspectives Terminology and Definition | Chapter 1 Chapter 2 | | |
| February 14, 2006 | Assessment of mental retardation | Chapter 3 | Issue Analysis and Presentation | |
| February 21, 2006 | Individual rights and legal issues | Chapter 4 | Issue Analysis and Presentation Creative Expression Presentation Due | |
| February 28, 2006 | Psychosocial aspects of mental retardation | Chapter 5 | Issue Analysis and Presentation | |
| March 7, 2006 | Biological sources of mental retardation; prevention efforts | Chapter 6 | Issue Analysis and Presentation | |
| March 14, 2006 | Family considerations | Chapter 7 | Issue Analysis and Presentation | Cynthia Zorn Pettigrew, LCSW |
| March 21, 2006 | Characteristics of individuals with milder forms of mental retardation | Chapter 8 | Issue Analysis and Presentation Agency Visitation Paper Due | |
| March 28, 2006 | Characteristics of individuals with more severe forms of mental retardation | Chapter 9 Read: Educating Ashley | Issue Analysis and Presentation Lesson Plan Due | Dr. Marie Sobers |
| April 4, 2006 | Developmental aspects and educational programming: Infancy and early childhood | Chapter 10 Read: A Job for Sarah | Issue Analysis and Presentation Case Study and Observation Report Due | View: Educating Peter Clare Talber GMU Life Program |

| | | | | |
|----------------|---|--------------------------|---|---|
| April 11, 2006 | Spring Break | | | |
| April 18, 2006 | Developmental aspects and educational programming: School years, and transitional years | Chapter 11 | Issue Analysis and Presentation, Case Study Presentations | |
| April 25, 2006 | Adult years: Life in the community Assistive technology applications | Chapter 12 Chapter 13 | | Patti Lindstrom, GMU Assistive Technology |