EDSE 590: Research Methods- Mason
Spring 2005 page 1

George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
Program: Special Education

EDSE 590 – Research Methods in Special Education, Section 001

Location: Robinson B222
Professor: Christine Y. Mason, Ph.D.
Office Hours: Before/after class and by appointment
Office Location: TBD
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Phone: 571-213-3192
WEATHER CHECK: (703)993-1000

Credit Hours: 3
Course Days: Wednesdays, January 26 –May 4, 2005
Course Time: 4:30 –7:10 p.m.

Course Description: Describes fundamental concepts and practices in education research in special education. Specific application of educational research methods to problems in special education will be covered. Emphasis is on reviewing and critiquing special education research and applied classroom research for teachers.

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

- Identify and understand different methods of educational research suitable for different research purposes in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of quantitative experimental and quasi-experimental research in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of survey research in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of single subject research in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of qualitative research in special education.
- Describe and implement teacher application of classroom research to address specific classroom problems.
- Critique published research in special education, noting strengths, biases, and flaws in the research design, analysis, interpretation, and discussion.

***Note this syllabus is subject to modifications. Any modifications will be listed on Blackboard

Relationship of Course to Program Goals and Professional Organizations
This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of Emotional Disturbance and Learning Disabilities, and Mental Retardation. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children, the major special education professional organization. As such, the learning objectives for this course cover many of the competencies for learning environments and social interactions.

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
Nature of Course Delivery: Learning activities include the following:
- Class lectures, handouts, overheads, discussions, & participation
- Study and independent library research
- Videos & other relevant media presentations
- Application with relevant hardware and software
- Application activities, including research project
- Presentation of research article papers and research projects

Required Texts:

It is highly recommended that students bring the Creswell textbook to class each week as the instructor may make specific reference to it during class.

Suggested Supplementary Text and Readings:
**However, some differences between the web site and APA 5th edition.
Note for electronic references must include “retrieved date and from” as follows:

Other reading relevant to special education research applications will be assigned by the instructor as appropriate. Some of these readings may be placed on online reserve through the GMU library: http://library@gmu.edu.

BLACKBOARD. http://blackboard.gmu.edu link to EDSE 590, 001, to obtain copies of class materials, readings in pdf formats and links to relevant sites.

Classroom Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability or if you have emergency medical information to share with the instructor or need special arrangements, please call or make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible.

Student Responsibilities & Course Companion Websites:

George Mason University Email: https://mserver3.gmu.edu/
From this link, follow the directions for activating my account. Every student is required to establish a GMU email account. Course email correspondence and other important university emails will be sent to GMU email accounts. Once an email account has been established it is possible to forward any email send from this account to forward any email from this account to another account.

George Mason Patriot Web: https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/
A self-service website for students, faculty, and staff of George Mason University. There is a wealth of useful links, information, and online forms on this website.

This website is offered as a companion to the APA style manual. However, it should not be considered a substitute for directly consulting the APA manual, 5th edition.
Evaluation and Course Requirements

Note on this instructor’s approach to EDSE 590. Students will probably find it beneficial to apply these strategies/approaches to their learning.

**Cooperative learning:** Educational research, like teaching, tends to be a collaborative endeavor.

**Self Determination and Universal Design for Learning:** Many options are presented in this course for EDSE 590 students to choose both how you will learn and how you will demonstrate your learning. The instructor expects that early in the course students will select areas of focus and then will strive to develop specific expertise in these areas. Consider particularly whether you want to develop expertise as a qualitative or quantitative researcher, expertise with large scale or single subject designs, and also areas for self-improvement such as writing or research presentation skills.

**SQ3R (survey, question, read, recite, review):** To gain the most from this course during this brief time period, please use the SQ3R method with the Creswell Text.

Participation & Class Attendance: Students are expected to attend each class on time, having read the required assignments in advance. If unable to attend, please arrange to obtain notes and handouts from another student. Students who must miss a course need to notify instructor (preferably in advance) and are responsible for completing all assignments and readings for next class. Active participation includes asking questions and presentation of one’s own understanding with regard to the readings and lectures, as well as interactive discussion and participation in activities with other class members. Includes individual (I) and small group (SG), as well as whole class, activities. (10 points)

9 –10 Exemplary- Attends all classes on time and is prepared for classes, active group and class participant who supports fellow classmates—including involvement with cooperative learning activities, follows class procedures regarding absences.

8 Adequate – Attends all classes on time and is prepared for classes, participates in group and class discussions—including cooperative learning activities, follows class procedures regarding absences.

7 Marginal - Attends classes on time and is prepared for classes, if student must miss a course, the class procedure is followed.

6 - 0 Unacceptable - Student is late for class, absences are not documented. Student is not prepared for class and does not participate actively in class. May fail to exhibit professional behavior.

NOTE: ALL HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS ARE TO BE TYPED AND PRESENTED AS HARD PRINT COPIES UNLESS INSTRUCTOR INDICATES OTHERWISE.

*Research Critiques: Students will critique 2 journal articles—covering 2 of the 4 areas (1) general education research from a special education perspective, (2) special education research – large scale experimental study or survey research, (3) special education research – single subject design (4) special education qualitative research (including interviews or focus group research). Two of the critiques must come from sources identified by the instructor (1- Exceptional Children and 2- the Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis or TASH). Note that these critiques may support the student’s line of research—see research application. (20 points) ----1 typed page

- Students may work in teams of 2-3 students for 1 of the 2 critiques
- Students will present info to class for 1 of the 2 critiques

Submit a copy of the article along with the critique.

When working in a team, only submit 1 paper, making sure that all students who participated in the assignment are listed and their roles identified. *Refer to class notes on cooperative learning from the lecture discussion on the first or second session of class. For any joint projects, must identify role of each team member. For example, consider roles of researcher, discussant, lead writer, editor.
**Scoring:** See p. 266-267 of Creswell. Accurate citation of article, discussion of background, methods, results, visual presentation, discussion, limitations, conclusions, APA style. Must submit copy of article that is critiqued.

Exemplary 9-10 Includes all scoring elements  
Adequate  8: Includes most scoring elements, some minor elements missing, not adequately designed.  
Marginal  7: Misses major elements,  
Unacceptable 0-6: Substantial problems with critique—may not have adequately described study or failed to provide an evaluation of the study, or failure to submit paper.

**Mini-assignments (MA):** This course includes several mini-assignments. These smaller assignments are designed both to help individual students become actively engage in learning about the topics and also for students to ease the burden of learning by sharing knowledge and skills. Some of these assignments will be cooperative group assignments, or at least the option will be given to participate as a team. Mini-assignments typically involve reading or completing an activity outside of class time and providing a brief presentation to class. It is anticipated that students will complete 6-8 mini-assignments—however, this may be modified.

Because the workload is shared with mini-assignments, not all students will complete each mini-assignment.

(Examples of mini-assignments: research plan/timeline for EDSE 590 for this semester—including self-determined areas of expertise to develop, interview a researcher, try out an electronic coding system, try out a research data collection strategy, research online a topic specified by the instructor, edit a paper for APA style). Note that the instructor is willing to consider ideas that students may have for mini-assignments that they believe will enhance the learning experience for the class.

Most mini-assignments should be able to be completed in 30-40 minutes—exception is presentation of Chapters 11-18—see below.

**Instructor will provide some brief amounts of time (5-15 minutes) in class for small groups to collaborate each week, as needed.**

Mini-Assignments I (3 points for written, 5 for group except for Chapters 11-18 which is worth 15 points—45 points total)  
ALL: Index Cards  
ALL: 5 things learned/Questions from Ch 4  
ALL: 3 Self-Determined Areas of Expertise to Develop  
What Works Clearinghouse  
Human Subjects Research  
APA Guidelines  
ALL: APA Guidelines 5 things/Questions  
ALL: Review: 5 things learned/Questions Ch 1-6  
ALL: 3 Questions for Creswell Review Game  
ALL: Research team member for at least 1 classmate  
Others- TBD

Rubric I for written MA:  
3- completed and turned in on time – accurate and thoughtful information  
2 – completed and submitted on time, some minor inaccuracies or omissions  
1 - late submission or major omissions/inaccuracies

Rubric II for group presentations MA (5 points):  
5 - On time, Accurate, thoughtful, interesting/creative, informative presentation, evident that all group members participated and that individual student fulfilled role-obligation to classmates  
4 - On time, technically correct presentation, evidence of involvement of individual group members.  
3 - On time, technically correct—with 1-2 minor inaccuracies, needs better organization, more information, better coordination among group members
Mini-Assessment II. Review of Chapters 11-18. Each student is assigned to 1 group for a 15-20 minute presentation (15 points). See Rubric II MA for Group presentation above (Multiply points by x3)

Each Student will be responsible for group presentation (of 2-3 students) of 1 of the following chapters: 11-18 (These presentations may take longer to prepare). For this MA, students must find a creative way to present material to class, including excerpting examples from published research. **Some time will be provided in class for preparation of these topics.**

*Research Application:* Students will employ appropriate research methodology to investigate a problem of interest in a classroom, using group-experimental or quasi-experimental, single-subject, survey, or qualitative methodology. Students will prepare a brief research report (12 pages maximum) on this project using the format recommended by the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.).

**Format:**
- Title Page
- Abstract
- Introduction and Purpose
- Method
- Findings
- Discussion
- References
- Information on Authors

Exemplary (54-60 points): Appropriate topic, good literature search procedures, literature review with reference to at least 5-6 articles, logical conclusions, discussion of limitations, good graphics. Written APA style, logical, grammatically correct, references in correct format.

Adequate (48-53 points): Good overall paper, literature review with at least 4-5 articles, lacking in 1-2 criteria for an exemplary paper. Not entirely reflective or thoughtful, or minor writing style errors.

Inadequate (42-47 points). Substantial problems, inadequate literature review, writing errors, not relevant to special education, inadequate attention to APA style.

Unacceptable/no paper (0-41 points). Substantial problems with several elements of paper: style, grammar, literature, conclusions, APA style; paper not approved for this assignment.

*Research Spot Checks (RSC).* Students will bring to class drafts of instruments, baseline data, pretest data, etc. to share with instructor/others in small group discussions for feedback. **Timeliness is very important!** (18 points)

Check points: (For All Students) – 3 points each (Rubric as Per MA)
1. Research Plan (Brief 1 page)
2. Refine Research Plan
3. SS Baseline or Instrument
4. Pretest or Intervention Data, or Coding Categories for Qualitative
5. Data Analysis and Conclusions
6. Outline of Paper

Note that while the syllabus lists specific dates that RSC are due, students may submit at an earlier date.

*Research Presentation:* Students will present the results of their research project to the class in a formal research presentation or poster board format. (allow 6-8 minutes for presentation and 2-3 for questions)

**Format:** Title, authors, purpose of research, relevant literature/research, method, data sources and analysis, results, discussions, and implications
Exemplary (15-17). Poster or visuals contains all relevant elements. Interesting presentation, able to answer basic questions from audience.

Adequate (13-14): Good overall presentation, but may lack polish and 1-2 criteria for exemplary. Response to audience may reflect lack of understanding of relevant research methods.

Inadequate (11-12). Weak overall presentation that reflects very little knowledge of topic. May appear to be disorganized, or poorly prepared. Style or visual elements lacking.

Unacceptable or no presentation: (0-10). Completely unsatisfactory presentation, with little reasonable reference to topic or project, or no presentation is made.

* Indicates these assignments are possible entries for the student portfolio
Points may be deducted for assignments not submitted on time.

Competency-Based Approach. Students may opt to redo and resubmit selected assignments to demonstrate their proficiency. This must be arranged in advance with the instructor. Note that if an assignment is resubmitted, it will not be possible to receive more than an 89% total score for that assignment.

Evaluation and Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Student Grade Sheet</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Attendance &amp; Participation:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Critiques:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini-Assignments:</td>
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<td>Research Spot checks:</td>
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<td>Research Project:</td>
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It is strongly recommended that students retain copies of all graded course products to document their progress throughout the GSE ED/LD program. Products from this class should 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. Graded assignments marked with an * are probable entries for student portfolios.

Grading: The course letter grade will be determined by a point system in which the following thresholds will be used:

- \( A = 95-100\%, \ 160-170 \text{ points} \)
- \( A- = 90 – 94\%, \ 153-159 \text{ points} \)
- \( B = 85 – 89\%, \ 144-152 \text{ points} \)
- \( B- = 80 – 84\%, \ 136-143 \text{ points} \)
- \( C = 70 – 79\%, \ 119-135 \text{ points} \)
- \( F = < \text{ than } 70\%, \ 0-118 \text{ points} \)
Note: Assignments below are listed are the date they are assigned. Due date is the following week unless it is an in-class activity or is otherwise specified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Big Topics</th>
<th>Readings/Activities/ HW-some MA</th>
<th>Homework/RSC/Some MA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 1/26</td>
<td>• Introductions</td>
<td>• Student Information Cards</td>
<td>• HW: Activate GMU email account</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Course and Instructor Expectations</td>
<td>• I: Name a faulty practice</td>
<td>• HW: Send instructor email for the GMU email account to be added to the class address book.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cooperative Learning, UDL, and Self Determination</td>
<td>• SG— Research in the Classroom</td>
<td>• HW: 1 Team MA: Human Subjects Research</td>
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<td>• Research Teams</td>
<td>• I: Index Cards</td>
<td>• MA: Based on skimming entire text, and first class discussion, Identify 3 Self Determined “areas of expertise” to develop this semester and 3 chapters of focus (Creswell)</td>
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<td>• Student Expectations</td>
<td>• SG: Propose a Research Practice-Theoretical Teacher Scenarios</td>
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<td>• Why Research?</td>
<td>• HW: Read Ch 1 &amp; 4 Creswell. MA: List 5 things learned/or questions</td>
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<td>• The Last 50 Years- a Snapshot of History of Research in Spec Ed</td>
<td>• HW-MA: Skim the Creswell text</td>
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<td>• What do you know?</td>
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<td>• Research Problems and Pragmatics</td>
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<td>• The Nature of Scientific Investigation</td>
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<td>• Variables, Hypotheses, &amp; Research Questions</td>
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<td>• Introduction</td>
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<td>• Research Problems in Education and Special Education</td>
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<td>• Ethical Standards for Conducting Research- Human Subjects Protection</td>
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<td>• Implementing Research in Your Classroom – Procedures, protocols and obstacles</td>
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<td>#2 2/2</td>
<td>• Sharing Targeted Areas of Expertise</td>
<td>• SG—Critiquing an Article</td>
<td>• HW: One Article Critique Due 2/16. See p. 276-277 Creswell</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Reviewing the Literature</td>
<td>• MA: Presentation Human Subjects Research</td>
<td>• MA: Need 2 groups to prepare for in-class MA: The What Works Clearinghouse</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Purpose and Steps for Conducting a Literature Review</td>
<td>• HW: Read Ch 2 &amp; 3 Creswell</td>
<td>• 1 Team MA: APA guidelines</td>
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<td>• Primary and Secondary Sources</td>
<td>• HW: Visit the What Works Clearinghouse Website</td>
<td>• HW- MA: APA guidelines – 5 things/questions</td>
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<td>• Educational Searches Via the Internet</td>
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<td>• Writing a Review of the Literature</td>
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<td>• Evaluation of Internet Information</td>
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<td>• How to Critique An Article</td>
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<td>• APA Writing Style</td>
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<td>• Components of Research Report or Articles</td>
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<td>• Evidenced Based Research – the Gold Standard</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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| #3 2/9 | • Quantitative and Qualitative Research Characteristics & Brief Overview of Single Subject Research  
• Setting and Population, Sampling  
• Hypotheses – Generating and Writing  
• Data Collection – Behavioral Observation Reliability & Validity; Records storage  
• Designing Your Study – Initial Pointers | • MA: Presentation APA Guidelines and What Works Clearinghouse  
• (I) Refine classroom research problem for investigation and identify possible variables for research (independent & dependent)  
• (I) Craft possible research hypothesis for investigation**note from class  
• HW: Read Ch 5, 6 Creswell  
• HW Recommended: APA – Chap. 2 If available | • HW RSC1: Develop Research Plan |
| #4 2/16 | • Problems that Occur in Research – How to Avoid/Remedy  
• Large Scale Designs – Independent/Dependent Variables, Data Coding-Electronic Data Coding—QDA Miner (intro), SPSS considerations | • In Class Presentation of Article Critiques from HW  
• Sharing in class: Study RSC2Proposed  
• (SG) Review APA Editing (suggest bring APA manual or notes from Web site to class)  
• (SG) Identifying possible research terms & sources for conducting a literature review  
• Skim Chapters 8 & 9 Creswell  
• SPSS: Article to Read | • HW RSC2: Refine research proposal |
| #5 2/23 | • SPSS Statistical Coding  
Guest Lecturer: Dr. Fran Harmon, Sr. Project Leader, Arbitron, possibly meeting in Computer Lab (TBD) | • SPSS Coding  
• HW: Review Ch 1- 6 Creswell | • ALL HW: 3 Questions for Creswell Review Game – Chapters Assigned, Rules Explained in Class |
| #6 3/2 | • Subjects, Participants, and Sampling  
• Probability and Non-probability Sampling  
• Hypotheses | • SG: Creswell Review Game  
• HW: Read Creswell Ch 7 | • HW-RSC3: Single Subject Study—start your baseline research. Other Research Approach—Design your instrument. Bring drafts to class or baseline data (SS) next week |
| #7 3/9 | • Descriptive Statistics: Definition and Essential Terms  
• Questionnaires, Observations, & Surveys  
• Experimental and Non-Experimental Quantitative Research Designs | • In Class Presentation of HW- RSC 2: SS baseline or instrument  
• SG: Data Coding  
• HW Read Ch 8 & 9 Creswell | • HW: Research Article Critique 2  
• HW:RSC4 Coding, or Pretest/Intervention Data |
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| #8 3/16 | • Validity and Reliability  
• Measurement, Evaluation, and Assessment  
• Electronic Data Coding QDA Miner, Part II |                                                                                                                                                 |                      |
| #8 3/16 | • SPRING BREAK                                                            |                                                                                                                                                 |                      |
| #9 3/23 | • Analyzing Data, Generalizations, Referring back to literature, conclusions, discussion | • HW: Read one of Chapters 11-18 Creswell according to your assignment  
• HW: Skim the other 7 Chapters 11-18 Creswell | • HW – RSC5 Analysis & Conclusions |
| #9 3/30 | • Chapters 11-14 Experimental, Correlational, Survey, Grounded Theory     | • MA Group Presentations Ch. 11-14 Creswell                                                    | • HW – RSC6 Outline of Research Project Paper |
| #10 4/6 | • Chapters 15-18 Ethnographic, Narrative, Mixed Method, and Action Research Designs | • MA Group Presentations Ch. 15-18 Creswell  
Presentation due: 4/20 or 4/27  
HW:MA: Interview a Researcher (Need 1 team to complete) |
| #11 4/13 | • Mock Research Presentations  
• Tables, Figures and Visual Presentation  
• Reminders about APA guidelines | • SG; Time in class for feedback from Research Team on Draft  
• Presentation from MA: Interview a Researcher | |
| #12 4/20 | • Research Project Presentations                                           | • SG: Time in class for feedback from Research team on Draft  
• Research Presentations | |
| #13 4/27 | • Research Project Presentations                                           | • Research Presentation | |
| #14 5/4 | • Celebration  
• End of Course Logistics | • (I) Self Evaluation, evaluation of 3 areas of expertise  
• Research Paper Due | |
| #15 5/11 | Exam WEEK                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                 |                      |

**George Mason University Expectations and Supports**

George Mason University Honor Code: [http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html](http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html)

This URL defines student and faculty conduct to promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community. The honor code deals specifically with cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing.
Students with Disabilities: [www.gmu.edu/student/drc](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc)

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DCR) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See the website or call 703.993.2474 to access the DRC.

Responsible Use of Computing: [http://mail.gmu.edu](http://mail.gmu.edu)

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. From the link above, click on Responsible Use of Computing found at the bottom of the screen.

Thanks to Drs. Margo Mastropieri and Lori Jackman for generously sharing their course syllabi and information on their sections of EDSE 590, and thanks to all the students and teachers with whom I have worked during my career; these experiences have helped me to become a better teacher and have shaped my approach to this course. Special thanks to the Glasgow Middle School students in Alexandria, VA who I taught from 1994-1997—you reinforced my love of teaching and life long learning.

Record of Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH CRITIQUES (2 CRITIQUES- 20 PTS)</th>
<th>Date Due/Submitted</th>
<th>Score- Notes/ Resubmissions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MINI-ASSIGNMENTS (MA) (3-5 POINTS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Index Cards</td>
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<td>3 Questions for Creswell Review Game</td>
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<td>Research Team Member for 1 classmate</td>
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<td>Ch 11-18 Presentation</td>
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<td>RESEARCH APPLICATION</td>
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<td>Research Paper (60 points)</td>
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<td>Research Spot Checks (RSC) (18 points)</td>
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<td>- 4. Pretest, intervention Data, or Coding</td>
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<td>- 5. Data Analysis and Conclusions</td>
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<td>- 6. Outline of Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Presentation (17 points)</td>
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