COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course focuses on current best practices in curriculum and methods for students with intellectual/cognitive disabilities (mental retardation), including specific strategies for teaching students with mild and moderate MR, general strategies for working with heterogeneous groups of students in inclusive settings, and methods for adapting the general education curriculum to include students with intellectual disabilities.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY
Class lectures, discussions & participation; independent study and research; collaborative problem solving; small group application activities; presentations; observations, videos & other relevant media presentations.

STUDENT OUTCOMES
Upon completion of this course, you should have improved ability to:
1. Write IEPs so they define individualized sequences of measurable objectives for teaching needed functional skills, beginning with the present level of performance and ending with goal performance.
2. Use an informal skill assessment to identify appropriate objectives and evaluate student performance; assess using either a task analytic or a discrete behavior approach.
3. Assess target skills before (baseline) and during (probe) instruction using direct observation or assessment of permanent products.
4. Describe and develop appropriate instructional activities for the variety of settings in which students with MR are served.
5. Use student performance data to evaluate the effects of instruction and make data-based decisions for improving student performance.
6. Embed targeted IEP objectives into functional daily routines and activities.
7. Select appropriate instructional strategies that provide access to the general curriculum and address state standards.

8. Plan, implement, and evaluate a variety of (a) antecedent teaching strategies (e.g., observational learning, milieu approach, system of least intrusive prompts, simultaneous prompting, time delay, graduated guidance, backward and whole task chaining) and consequent teaching strategies (e.g., shaping, error correction, consequential strategies, and interspersed review).

9. Write and implement an instructional plan that specifies a sequence of instructional objectives leading to a goal, uses a task analysis (for multiple step skills) or a skill sequence (for discrete skills), incorporates antecedent and consequence teaching strategies aimed at a specific stage of learning, and specifies a plan for collecting and analyzing student performance data on an ongoing basis.

10. Understand general education teaching practices that promote inclusion of students with intellectual/cognitive disabilities in the general education curriculum (e.g., curriculum and instructional adaptation, group instruction, self management, schedule following, cooperative learning, peer tutoring).

11. Adapt and modify general education curriculum and class activities to meet the instructional needs of students with intellectual/cognitive disabilities.

**RELATIONSHIP OF COURSES TO PROGRAM GOALS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

This course 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 areas of Mental Retardation and/or Severe Disabilities. 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 curriculum and methods for teaching individuals with mental retardation and intellectual disabilities, 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](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 the following:

**Standard 4: Instructional Strategies**

**Skills:**
- Use strategies to facilitate integration into various settings.
- Teach individuals to use self-assessment, problem solving, and other cognitive strategies to meet their needs.
- Select, adapt, and use instructional strategies and materials according to characteristics of the individual with exceptional learning needs.
- Use strategies to facilitate maintenance and generalization of skills across learning environments.
• Use strategies that promote successful transitions for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

**Standard 7: Instructional Planning**

**Knowledge:**
- Theories and research that form the basis of curriculum development and instructional practice.
- Scope and sequences of general and special curricula.
- National, state or provincial, and local curricula standards.
- Technology for planning and managing the teaching and learning environment.

**Skill:**
- Identify and prioritize areas of the general curriculum and accommodations for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- Develop and implement comprehensive, longitudinal individualized programs in collaboration with team members.
- Involve the individual and family in setting instructional goals and monitoring progress.
- Use functional assessments to develop intervention plans.
- Use task analysis.
- Sequence, implement, and evaluate individualized learning objectives.
- Integrate affective, social, and life skills with academic curricula.
- Develop and select instructional content, resources, and strategies that respond to cultural, linguistic, and gender differences.
- Incorporate and implement instructional and assistive technology into the educational program.
- Prepare lesson plans.
- Prepare and organize materials to implement daily lesson plans.

**REQUIRED TEXTS (NOTE APA FORMAT!)**


*Relevant readings will also be assigned.

**ASSESSMENT OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

All assignments must 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 that have not been previously excused.
by the instructor. Please retain a copy of your assignments in addition to the one you submit. All assignments must 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 (http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/).

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-
- 87-89% = B+
- 84-87% = B
- 80-83% = B-
- 70-79% = C
- < 70% = F

IMPORTANT

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

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See http://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. Be especially observant of proper documentation of source material to avoid plagiarism. See http://mason.gmu.edu/%7Emontecin/plagiarism.htm for guidelines.

- 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, of their accommodation requirements at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

- It is recommended that students retain electronic copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE ED/LD/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. As the program moves towards electronic portfolios, it will be even more important to have artifacts saved electronically.

- Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. You may wish to contact Amie Fulcher, GMU Special Education Advisor, at afulcher@gmu.edu or 703-993-2387. Please be prepared with your G number when you contact her.

**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 all 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. A great deal of information and activities are not a part of the text and can only be experienced in the class sessions. Please notify me by email in advance if you will not be able to attend class. Excessive unexcused absences/tardiness (more than 2 classes) will affect your final grade by reducing it one-half letter grade.

- 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.

- You are required to use APA guidelines (5th edition) for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines. [http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm](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](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.

- Very Important: 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.

**MAJOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

I. **Four Online Discussions/Reflections:** (20 points: 5 pts. apiece)
   **Due dates:** Wednesdays 2/8, 2/15, 2/22, 3/1 by 9 AM

Each class member is expected to participate online on Blackboard. The instructor has posted discussion assignments that should be addressed after selected class sessions (do not complete ahead of time), and thoughtful, detailed responses (usually 3-5 paragraphs) that address the topic and your classmates’ reflections are expected no later than 9 am Wednesday morning of the next class session. Use your text and other research/readings to support your responses. A total of 4 responses must be posted ON TIME for full credit. There will be no credit given for late Blackboard Assignments!!

It is highly recommended that students compose their responses in a word-processing program so they can be proofread and edited prior to posting. Responses can then be copied and pasted into the Discussion Board. Doing so also reduces the possibility that responses are “lost” before submission. Also, students should double-check to make sure their submission actually posts to the site.

II. **General Curriculum Adaptations Plan** (20 points) Due 3/8
You will develop an adapted lesson plan for students with disabilities to access the general curriculum. You will select a lesson from the SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence for English, Math, Science or Social Studies (available from [www.ttaconline.org](http://www.ttaconline.org), Region 4) that matches the grade level of the students with whom you currently work (or grade level you are interested in working with if you are not currently teaching) and develop adaptations for students with intellectual disabilities to access the content. The plan will include both general and specific instructional adaptations. You will present your lesson plan and adaptation.
options in class. You are expected to create at least three instructional adaptation artifacts to show doing your presentation. You are also expected to provide a handout to everyone in the class. The handout should list specific and general adaptations for that lesson plus any available resources that may be helpful to teachers teaching this lesson.

III. Content Area Research and Materials (20 points) Due 4/12

You will research the professional literature to determine best instructional practices/strategies for students with MR/intellectual/cognitive disabilities in a particular content area (e.g., mathematics, reading, social studies, science, etc.) You may choose to focus on a particular grade/age range (e.g., elementary reading strategies) or a topic that spans across all grade/age ranges (best practices in mathematics instruction for students with MR). Along with a minimum of 5 research-supported instructional practices/strategies, you will identify instructional materials (commercial or otherwise) that will enable teachers to successfully implement the strategies/practices. You will provide copies to each student in the class so that everyone will have a useful resource manual to use in educational settings.

IV. Life Skills/ Social Skills/Vocational Skills Unit (40 points)* Due 4/26

You will develop a detailed life skills/social skills/vocational skills instructional program unit. In this unit you will describe the present level of performance for a student in a specific functional skills area. You will then develop lesson plans to teach the student in your selected area. The unit should include goals and objectives, description of lesson procedures and materials, and formal and informal evaluation plans. You are expected to present your unit plan and include one artifact to display (such as your adapted equipment, social story, or visual strategy cards).

a. Describe the student/individual (1st name, age, disability, skills),
   i. Identify the PLOP, objective (s), and goal; provide a rationale for teaching these skills to this person,
   ii. Describe in general terms the teaching strategy you may use,
   iii. Describe in general how you will measure the student’s performance of the target skills
b. Write the introduction and method
   i. Introduction
      1. Topical focus, purpose and importance, relevant literature reviewed (minimum of 2 relevant studies and 2 additional
supportive references), and transition from introduction to method

ii. Method
1. Describe the setting where instruction will occur
2. Describe the collaborative teaming you used to plan
3. Include the PLOP, the targeted instructional objective(s), and the goal (all should be stated in measurable terms with conditions, behavior, and criterion), describe your method for testing the student on the target skill(s) during baseline and probe, and include your data collection sheet,
4. Describe in detail your teaching procedures, including antecedents, teaching strategies and consequences.
5. Summarize these procedures (1-4) in a 1-2 page table form in simple but complete terms for all team members to understand (use the Brief Teaching Guide form which will be handed out in class).

   c. Once the method has been developed, you will collect at least 2 days of baseline data and then implement the teaching procedures, recording periodic data during training and during probes (tests/using the baseline assessment procedures).
      i. You will present these data in the results section of the paper. Include both an objective explanation of the results and a graph, or a graph and a table of the student performance data.

d. Provide a discussion section for the program, including evaluation of the program based on student performance, and limitations/suggestions for changes in future implementation.

*This assignment has been designated as the performance based assessment for this course.
# Proposed Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/25</td>
<td>Course Introduction: Syllabus &amp; Assignments Issues in the field of MR</td>
<td>Review VAAP</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>Accessing the General Curriculum</td>
<td>Chap. 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Access Blackboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>The IEP</td>
<td>Chap. 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>Blackboard 1 by 9 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/15</td>
<td>Assessment/Evaluation of Students, Program, and Progress</td>
<td>Chap. 5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>Blackboard 2 by 9 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/22</td>
<td>Planning Adaptations: Accommodations and Modifications</td>
<td>Chap. 7</td>
<td>Blackboard 3 by 9 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/1</td>
<td>Teaching Strategies and Functional Academics</td>
<td>Chap. 8</td>
<td>Blackboard 4 by 9 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/8</td>
<td>Managing behavior and the learning environment</td>
<td>Chap. 9 &amp; 11</td>
<td>General Curriculum Adaptation Plans Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/15</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>GMU Chap. 16</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/22</td>
<td>Assistive Technology with Amie Fulcher</td>
<td>Chap. 10 &amp; 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/29</td>
<td>Functional Academics</td>
<td>Chap. 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>Functional Academics and Community-Based Instruction</td>
<td>Chap. 14</td>
<td>Content Area Research and Materials Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/12</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
<td>Chap. 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/19</td>
<td>Testing Accommodations and Alternatives/VAAP</td>
<td>Chap. 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/26</td>
<td>Future Issues/Transition</td>
<td></td>
<td>Life/Social/Vocational Skills Unit Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>5/3</td>
<td>Student Presentations Course Evaluations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Happy Summer!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This syllabus may change to reflect course/student needs