EDSE 791: Midpoint Portfolio (1 semester hour credit; 15 contact hours)
Performance-Based Assessment of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Standards
Individual Portfolio Development taken when students have completed 4 to 6 EDSE courses and before enrolling in a 7th EDSE course.

Instructor: Dr. Lori Jackman
Associate Professor
113A Krug Hall
703-993-3881
ljackman@gmu.edu

Mailing Address:
Graduate School of Education-GMU
4400 University Drive, MS 1F2
Fairfax, VA 22030
Fax: 703.993.3681

Credit Hours: 1
Course Time: 4:30 – 8:30 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course provides an opportunity for students to develop their professional portfolio. This serves as the vehicle to assess whether they are meeting the standards of their professional organization, The Council for Exceptional Children.

STUDENT OUTCOMES
Upon completion of this course, students will have:
• Completed a midpoint performance-based professional portfolio that is organized by program specifications in alignment with the CEC content area standards.
• Presented this portfolio to program faculty and peers.

Relationship of Course to Program Goals and Professional Organizations
EDSE 791: Midpoint Portfolio is the first part of two portfolio courses; EDSE 792 is the final portfolio course. These courses are part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program required for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in Special Education and the Master’s of Education Degree (M.Ed.). The program aligns with the standards for teacher licensure established by CEC, the major special education professional organization in the United States (see the CEC standards on the following web site: http://www.cec.sped.org) and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). This course addresses the following CEC/NCATE standards:

1. Foundations
2. Characteristics of learners
3. Individual learning differences
4. Instructional strategies
5. Learning environments
6. Language
7. Instructional planning
8. Assessment
9. Ethics and professional practice
10. Collaboration
NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY
Learning activities include the following: Class lecture, peer review and discussion, cooperative learning, application activities, and class presentation of portfolios. This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or if you have emergency medical information to share with the instructor(s) or need special arrangements, please call and/or make an appointment with instructor as soon as possible.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the series, programs, or activities of all state and local governments. Under ADA a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as: learning, working, walking, speaking, hearing, breathing, and/or taking care of oneself. If a student has a disability and needs course adaptations or accommodations because of that disability, it must be established with the faculty, in writing, at the beginning of the semester so arrangements can be made. Please call the Disability Resource Center for required documentation (703-993-2474).

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- The use of electronic devices that produce sound or otherwise interfere with the learning of others (i.e., cell phones, pagers, etc.) is prohibited during class. Please turn these devices off before the start of class.
- For a satisfactory grade in the course, students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom (see attached Professional Disposition Criteria), and complete all assignments with professional quality and in a timely manner.
- When absence from class is unavoidable, students are responsible for getting all class information (e.g., handouts, announcements, notes, syllabus revisions, etc.) from another class member (not from the instructor(s)) prior to the class meeting that follows the absence.
- Exemplary work may be kept and shared in the future.
- Routine access (daily) to electronic mail and the internet for communication and assignments is crucial to participation in this class; students are required to activate their GMU email account; if desired, follow mail forwarding procedures to have email sent to your ISP email address. GMU makes such accounts available at no cost to students.
- For each in-class hour devoted to EDSE 791 content, students are expected to spend 2 hours outside of class on course related assignments (30 hrs. during the semester).

HONOR CODE
To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of George Mason University and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the members of George Mason University, have set forth the following code of honor: Any individual who is caught in the act of cheating, attempting to cheat, plagiarizing, or stealing will be brought forth before a council of their peers. In the event that the individual is found guilty, he or she will be punished accordingly. For further information, please refer to the University Catalog or Website at www.gmu.edu.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Midpoint Portfolio & related documents
- Portfolio development and presentation
- Active participation in reviewing student portfolios
- Program critique (Alternative activity may be on electronic survey)

The portfolio is a collection of artifacts and reflective entries that represent your professional experiences, competencies and growth over a period of time. The portfolio is assembled in a 3-ring binder (3-4 inches deep) that contains an abundance of the student’s best artifacts collected throughout the graduate program from a variety of activities, such as course assignments, field experiences, classroom observations, reflective pieces, publications, letters of acknowledgement, and awards. Each section and document/artifact should be presented in a plastic sleeve for ease in inserting and removing items. The midpoint portfolio will be expanded during the final portfolio course.

The professional portfolio is carefully organized to assess the level of competence the student has achieved. It is important to note that this is both a process and a product. As the student reviews, selects, and reflects on his/her collected artifacts, the process of self-assessment is undertaken. Together the course instructor and the student evaluate the degree of competence that the student has achieved. At the end of the student’s program, during the final portfolio course, the assessment portfolio may be shared with external evaluators, such as school administrators. A passing score on the final portfolio is required in order to be approved for the graduate special education certificate and the master’s degree.

Evaluation

a. Class attendance and participation
b. Portfolio development and presentation

Grading Criteria (see attached Evaluation of GSE Special Education Candidate Midpoint Portfolio scoring rubric)

- Satisfactory
- In Progress
- No Credit
# PROPOSED MIDPOINT PORTFOLIO CLASS AGENDA

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>PORTFOLIO PIECE DUE</th>
<th>CLASS ACTIVITIES</th>
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| 1       | **Bring to 1st class session:** | • Review course syllabus and related course materials & requirements  
• Overview of assessment via portfolios  
• Review CEC Content Standards  
• Review how to select artifacts to match CEC standards  
• Draft portfolio entry forms for at least 2 artifacts that address 2 different CEC content standards  
• Use Reviewer Forms to review peers’ entry form(s) drafts  
• Begin to write the Introductory Narrative  
• Instructor facilitates reviews of materials with students |
|         | 1. Artifacts (graded assignments & projects for all courses with professor’s comments or without if unavailable)  
2. Syllabi for all courses completed  
3. Resume  
4. Personal laptop computer if desired |  |
| 2       | **Bring to 2nd session:** | • Introductory narrative reviewed by peers using reviewer forms  
• A set of 5 portfolio entry forms and matching artifacts reviewed by at least 3 peers  
• Feedback on resume  
• Begin portfolio reviews using the “Portfolio Review Form”  
• Begin drafting Program Critique  
• Schedule portfolio reviews |
|         | 1. Portfolio notebook with tabs and beginning table of contents  
2. Five entry forms (completed) with matching artifacts  
3. Five (5) blank copies of the Reviewer Forms  
4. Updated resume  
5. Draft of Introductory Narrative |  |
| 3       | **Bring to 3rd session:** | • Presentation of completed Midpoint Portfolios  
• Review by faculty and peers |
|         | **Completed Midpoint Portfolio**  
1. Portfolio binder with cover  
2. Table of Contents  
3. Tabs for each section  
4. Introductory Narrative  
5. Five revised, completed entry forms with matching artifacts  
6. Resume  
Other: | 1. Three completed Portfolio Reviewer Forms  
2. Program Critique |
REPRESENTATIVE FORMAT FOR PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT ASSIGNMENT

Portfolio Content:

- **Cover** – Be creative. Include personal identification information. Use color and graphics to individualize your portfolio.

- **Prepare a tab for each section of the notebook.**

- **Table of Contents** – This list of contents should make it easy for you and your reviewers to locate specific parts of your portfolio. It should be obvious to the reader that you have organized materials carefully and logically. Identify each tab and standard; list each artifact that relate to each standard as well as indicating the course number and name and instructor.

I. **Introductory Narrative**

Prepare a narrative to accompany the portfolio. Include a description of the approach you took to building your portfolio, including:

- Your rationale for the approach taken
- A brief summary of the portfolio contents, standard by standard and where/when the artifact was produced
- Discuss your experience in creating a portfolio.
- What was most surprising to you about the process of creating the portfolio?
- What was difficult?
- What was easy?
- What did you learn in the process?
- Compare your current professional competencies with those you possessed when you started the program.
- How your coursework at GMU relates to you as a learner and how you will integrate the CEC standards and your skills/knowledge to your future practice in Special Education.
- Reference to specific examples (from section II of portfolio) to illustrate your reflections on how you are meeting CEC Content standards.

The major part of this section is a reflection on how your coursework at GMU relates to you as a learner, how you have met the CEC Content standards (what showed your skills/knowledge) and how you integrate the skills/knowledge you have gained to your future practice in Special Education.

II. **A section for each of the ten CEC Content Standards with accompanying documents/artifacts (for the midpoint only 5 entries & artifacts are required; one artifact may be used to address 2 standards).** By your final portfolio, you will have at least 3 entries for each standard. There should be a tab for each of the following:

1. Foundations
2. Characteristics of learners
3. Individual learning differences
4. Instructional strategies
5. Learning environments
6. Language
7. Instructional planning
8. Assessment
9. Ethics and professional practice
10. Collaboration
A. **Include an entry** form for each document/artifact that addresses the CEC Professional Content Standards listed above. The template for the form for each standard is available on Blackboard.

Three parts to each entry form (completed sample attached here):

- **Demographic Information**: including program concentration, degree seeking, course number and title, semester course was taken and instructor.
- **What is the artifact?** (case study; PowerPoint presentation; teaching evaluation; lesson plan; video-tape, literature review; or other).
- **How does it relate to the standard above?** (use language of the standard to explain how it relates).

B. **Artifacts**\(^*\) (Final Portfolio will have 3 for each standard). Select three artifacts from your completed courses that demonstrate your competence with each of the ten CEC Professional Standards. Try to include a VARIETY of artifacts that show the breadth of your experience, skills, and knowledge. Artifacts may include: student work samples, journal article reviews, photos, assessments, observations, lesson plans including student assessment and lesson feedback from your cooperating teacher or supervisor, course work from your classes, behavior support plans, field observations, research papers, and other relevant items.

\(^*\)Note: When possible, each artifact should include the comments and grades from your instructors.

- **Resume**

  Present your professional experiences, education, and awards in no more than 2 – 3 pages. Be sure to highlight your professional experiences, and education.

- **Program Critique**: (present as a separate document rather than in the portfolio) Note an alternative electronic survey may replace the program critique.

  Based on the information contained in your portfolio and your personal experiences, suggest changes you view as needed in your GMU program. What components of your GMU program did you find helpful and that you would suggest as experiences for other students in your specialty area.
SAMPLE PORTFOLIO ENTRY FORM
Based on CEC Professional Standards

Program Concentration: __X__ED/LD _____ED/LD/MR ___X__M.Ed.

Course Number/Title where document/artifact was produced:
EDSE 540 Characteristics of ED/LD

Semester course taken: Fall 2004  Instructor(s): Dr. Bonnie Jones

Special Education Content 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 exceptional needs both in school and society. Special educators understand how these influence professional practice, including assessment, instructional planning, implementation, and program evaluation. Special educators understand how issues of human diversity can impact families, cultures, and schools, and how these complex human issues can interact with issues in the delivery of special education services. They understand the relationships of organizations of special education to the organizations and functions of schools, school systems, and other agencies. Special educators use this knowledge as a ground upon which to construct their own personal understandings and philosophies of special education.

Beginning special educators demonstrate their mastery of this standard through the mastery of the CEC Common Core Knowledge and Skills, as well as through the appropriate CEC Specialty Area(s) Knowledge and Skills for which the program is preparing candidates.

1. What is this artifact? (case study; PowerPoint; teaching evaluation; lesson plan; video; literature review; response to exam question)

The artifact is a quiz. This quiz required to memorize the federal definitions of Learning Disability and Emotional Disability as well as reproduce the definitions word-for-word in class.

2. How does it relate to the standard above? (use language of the standard to explain how it relates)

This document relates to the standard #1 because it demonstrates knowledge of relevant laws and policies that apply to learning and emotional disabilities. As mentioned, this required memorizing the federal definitions for Emotional Disability and Learning Disability. Having immediate recall of these definitions is fundamental to knowing and understanding the relationships of organizations of special education to the organizations and functions of schools. Special educators need to be aware that the definition was compiled as a result of collaboration between many advocacy groups and experts for people with disabilities. The structure of school programs for LD/ED is directly related to these definitions.

Additionally, special educators are legally bound by these current definitions and need to use them as a ground upon which to construct personal understandings and philosophies of special education. The federal definitions were developed as part of an evolving and changing discipline based on philosophies, evidence-based principles and theories. Knowing who is eligible for special education services, based on the federal definitions, shows an understanding of how laws and policy influence professional practice, including assessment, instructional planning, implementation, and program evaluation. This quiz demonstrates this essential knowledge was acquired.
Sample PORTFOLIO ENTRY FORM

Based on CEC Professional Standards

Program Concentration:  X_ED/LD _____ED/LD/MR _____X_M.Ed.
Course Number/Title where document/artifact was produced:
EDSE 501: Introduction to LD/ED
Semester course taken: Spring 2003 Instructor(s): Sheila Smith

Special Education Content Standard #2: Development and Characteristics of Learners

Special educators know and demonstrate respect for their students first as unique human beings. Special educators understand the similarities and differences in human development and the characteristics between and among individuals with and without exceptional learning needs (ELN). Moreover, special educators understand how exceptional conditions can interact with the domains of human development and they use this knowledge to respond to the varying abilities and behaviors of individual’s with ELN. Special educators understand how the experiences of individuals with ELN can impact families, as well as the individual’s ability to learn, interact socially, and live as fulfilled contributing members of the community.

Beginning special educators demonstrate their mastery of this standard through the mastery of the CEC Common Core Knowledge and Skills, as well as through the appropriate CEC Specialty Area(s) Knowledge and Skills for which the preparation program is preparing candidates.

1. What is this artifact? (case study; PowerPoint; teaching evaluation; lesson plan; video; literature review; response to exam question)

The artifact is a report written following a field observation. The field observation was conducted first in a general education classroom then in a special education classroom while following a student with Down’s syndrome morning schedule.

2. How does it relate to the standard above? (use language of the standard to explain how it relates)

This field observation demonstrates both skill and knowledge needed for CEC Standard #2. The time spent observing this student with Down’s Syndrome in the general and special education classrooms helps one recognize some of the similarities and differences in human development and the characteristics between and among individuals with and without exceptional learning needs (ELN). This observation provided the opportunity to observe typically developing kindergartners and a child with ELN in the same setting, playing and learning side-by-side. Additionally, this observation experience made evident effective and ineffective ways to respond to the varying abilities and behaviors of individual’s with ELN.

The field experience included the opportunity to extend the understanding of how the experiences of individuals with ELN can impact the individual’s ability to learn and interact socially in a positive and negative light. The experience included witnessing teachers who demonstrated respect for their students, first, as unique human beings and unfortunately examples of teachers who were doing little more that warehousing students.
Midpoint Portfolio Reviewer Form

Name of Person whose Portfolio You Are Reviewing ___________________________ Date __________

Completed by: (check one & include signature)

___ peer reviewer: Name____________________________

___ faculty member: Name____________________________

___ other (school division staff) Name____________________________

Each document/artifact has an accompanying entry form. Review the student’s entry form for each artifact and provide written feedback. Use the back for additional comments. Respond to the statements with the following rating scale:

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<th>Statement</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No or IP</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 The Table of Contents clearly delineates the contents of the portfolio and it is easy to find documents.</td>
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<td>2 The Introductory Narrative makes it clear what is contained in the portfolio, how it’s organized, and how it relates to the portfolio developer.</td>
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<td>3 In the Introductory Narrative it is clear that the writer <em>knows what was learned</em> as a result of this experience or creating this product.</td>
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<td>4 Course name or experience from which each artifact was produced is included on each entry form.</td>
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<td>5 On each entry form it is clear what the artifact is (lesson plan; lit review; teaching evaluation, etc.)</td>
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<td>6 On entry forms it is clear how each artifact relates to the standard for which it is included; it reflects competence in the standard and language of the standard is used.</td>
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The author clearly presents *why he/she included* a particular document/artifact.

Please note **missing or incorrect parts** of the entry forms below. Or use this space for other relevant comments. Use the back of this form to continue comments, if needed.
Professional Disposition Criteria

The Virginia Department of Education promotes maintaining standards of professional competence and requires applicants for licensure to possess good moral character. Therefore, the Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects its students to exhibit the following:

Communication
- Clear oral communication
- Clear written communication
- Clear presentation skills

Professionalism
- Commitment to children and their families
- Sound judgment
- Integrity and honesty
- Acceptance of constructive criticism
- Integrity and honesty
- Acceptance of constructive criticism
- Positive attitude
- Ability to meet deadlines
- Appropriate assertiveness
- Ability to handle stress

Collaboration
- Respect for the opinion and dignity of others
- Ability to collaborate with others
- Effective interpersonal skills

Procedure for Identifying Students Who Need Help

Expectations for communication, collaboration, and professionalism are clearly stated on the GSE web site and are distributed to students.

1. If an instructor observes that a student is having difficulty with any of the behavioral indicators, the instructor completes a Professional Disposition Criteria concern form and meets with the student to discuss concerns and actions to be taken. GSE staff or other professionals may communicate concerns to program coordinators for action.
2. The instructor sends this completed form to the program coordinator. The coordinator opens a file and sends a copy to the student's advisor.
3. The coordinator states the concern at the next program meeting, and the concern is included in the minutes.
4. This one concern may be of large enough magnitude to warrant an immediate action. The Associate Dean for Student and Academic Affairs will be notified in writing with a copy of the concern form for placement in the student's official file. Or, if there is more than one concern form completed for a student, a pattern may be evident. The coordinator discusses the student at the next program meeting. The program faculty recommend to the advisor to meet the student to discuss concerns and recommendations to improve.
5. The advisor meets with the student and plans a course of action (e.g., referral to units in GMU such as the Writing Center, Health and Counseling Services, or Disability Support Services).
6. The student later presents evidence to the advisor of efforts to improve.
7. The advisor shares evidence of the student’s progress at the next program faculty meeting and a statement is included in the minutes.
8. If a student with one or more forms on file applies for a teaching internship, the advisor considers whether the corrective action taken warrants approval for internship.
9. If the advisor cannot approve the internship, the application will be discussed by the program faculty and appropriate recommendations come from the faculty as a whole. If the decision is to deny the request for teaching internship, the program coordinator sends a letter with documentation to the Associate Dean for Student and Academic Affairs.