

**George Mason University (GMU) - Graduate School of Education (GSE)
Special Education Cohort Program
Fall 2004**

EDSE 792: Final Portfolio (1 semester hour credit; 15 contact hours)

Performance-Based Assessment of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Standards

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Credit Hours: 1

Course Time: 4:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Course Days: FF I Tuesdays - Sept. 28, Oct. 26, & Dec. 7, 2004 –FF High School

FF II Wednesdays — Sept. 29, Nov. 3, & Dec. 8, 2004 – FF High School

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 final 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 792: Final Portfolio is the final part of two portfolio courses. These courses are part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program requirements 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.
- 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 with permission from the student.
- 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.

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

- **Final Portfolio & related documents**
- **Portfolio development and presentation**
- **Active participation in reviewing student portfolios**
- **Program critique**

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, awards, and letters of acknowledgement. Each section and document/artifact should be presented in a plastic sleeve for ease when inserting and removing items. The final portfolio is expanded from the midpoint portfolio.

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 for approval for the graduate special education certificate and the master's degree.**

Evaluation

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

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

- Satisfactory
- In Progress
- No Credit

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 the artifacts that relate to each standard indicating from which course or experience the artifact was produced.

I. Introductory Narrative

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

- a. Your rationale for the approach taken
- b. A brief summary of the portfolio contents and where/when produced
- c. 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.
- d. 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.

- e. 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 the ten CEC Content Standards with accompanying documents/artifacts. For the final portfolio, you will have at least 3 entries for each standard. There should be a tab for each of the following standards and a plastic sleeve for each artifact and portfolio entry form for that standard:

A. Include a portfolio entry form for each document/artifact that addresses the CEC Professional Content Standards listed above.

Three parts to each entry form (attached here):

- 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* (3 for each standard). Select three artifacts from your completed graduate course work 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) 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.

PROPOSED FINAL PORTFOLIO CLASS AGENDA

Session	PORTFOLIO PIECE DUE	CLASS ACTIVITIES
1	<p>Bring to 1st class session:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 update the Introductory Narrative • Instructor facilitates reviews of materials with students
2	<p>Bring to 2nd session:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Portfolio notebook with tabs and draft of table of contents 2. 20 entry forms (completed) with matching artifacts in plastic sleeves in appropriate CEC standard location 3. Five (5) blank copies of the Reviewer Forms 4. Updated resume 5. Updated draft of Introductory Narrative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory narrative reviewed by peers using reviewer forms • A set of 20 portfolio entry forms and matching artifacts reviewed by at least 2 peers • Feedback on resume • Begin portfolio reviews using the "Portfolio Review Form" • Begin drafting Program Critique • Schedule portfolio reviews
3	<p>Bring to 3rd session:</p> <p>Completed Final Portfolio</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Portfolio binder with cover 2. Table of Contents 3. Tabs for each section 4. Introductory Narrative 5. 30 completed entry forms with matching artifacts 6. Resume <p>Other:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Three completed Portfolio Reviewer Forms 3. Program Critique 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of completed Final Portfolios • Review by faculty and peers

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)

This artifact is a quiz that we took in EDSE 540: Characteristics of ED/LD. For this quiz, we were required to memorize the federal definitions of Learning Disability and Emotional Disability. In class we had to reproduce the definitions word-for-word.

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 my knowledge of **relevant laws and policies** that apply to learning and emotional disabilities. For this quiz we were required to memorize the federal definitions for Emotional Disability and Learning Disability. Having rote knowledge of these definitions is fundamental to knowing and understanding the **relationships of organizations of special education to the organizations and functions of schools**. We, as 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 our school programs for LD/ED is directly related to these definitions.

Additionally, we are legally bound by these current definitions and should use them **as a ground upon which to construct our own personal understandings and philosophies of special education**. I understand that 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 that I understand how laws and policy **influence professional practice, including assessment, instructional planning, implementation, and program evaluation**. As Dr. Jones said in class, if we are to present ourselves as “masters” of learning and emotional disabilities, we should have more than a working knowledge of the defining characteristics of the disabilities. This quiz demonstrates that I have acquired that knowledge.

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)^{1/}. 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)

This is a field observation and report on the observation. I spent a morning observing a student with Down's syndrome in the general education classroom and the special education classroom. I then wrote a report based on my observation.

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 that I spent observing this student with Down's Syndrome in the general and special education classrooms helped me to recognize some of the **similarities and differences in human development and the characteristics between and among individuals with and without exceptional learning needs (ELN)**. I was able to observe typically developing kindergartners and a child with ELN in the same setting, side-by-side. I gained knowledge about effective and ineffective ways to **respond to the varying abilities and behaviors of individual's** with ELN.

During this field observation I saw teachers who **demonstrated respect for their students, first, as unique human beings**. Unfortunately, I also saw examples of teachers who were doing little more than warehousing students. Both experiences gave me a better understanding of how the **experiences of individuals with ELN can impact the individual's ability to learn and interact socially**.

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 627 Psy Assess.
Semester course taken: Fall 2003 Instructor(s): S. Geller

Special Education Content Standard #8: **Assessment**

Assessment is integral to the decision-making and teaching of special educators and special educators use **multiple types of assessment information** for a variety of educational decisions. Special educators use the results of assessments to help identify exceptional learning needs and to develop and implement individualized instructional programs, as well as to adjust instruction in response to ongoing learning progress. Special educators understand the **legal policies and ethical principles of measurement and assessment** related to referral, eligibility, program planning, instruction, and placement for individuals with ELN, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Special educators understand **measurement theory and practices** for addressing issues of validity, reliability, norms, bias, and interpretation of assessment results. In addition, special educators understand the appropriate **use and limitations** of various types of assessments. Special educators collaborate with families and other colleagues to assure **non-biased, meaningful assessments and decision-making**. Special educators conduct **formal and informal assessments** of behavior, learning, achievement, and environments to design learning experiences that support the growth and development of individuals with ELN. Special educators use assessment information to **identify supports and adaptations** required for individuals with ELN to access the general curriculum and to participate in school, system, and statewide assessment programs. Special educators **regularly monitor the progress** of individuals with ELN in general and special curricula. Special educators **use appropriate technologies** to support their assessments.

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)

This artifact is an assessment case study that I completed in EDSE XXX. I selected a student and evaluated his skills using three different assessment methods: informal observation, the Woodcock Johnson, and a curriculum based assessment. I summarized the results of these assessments in a formal report and then updated his IEP based on the evaluation. I presented my results to a small group in my class.

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

This project demonstrates my ability to administer formal and informal assessments and use the results of those evaluations to design appropriate learning environments, identify supports and adaptations required for the student to access the general curriculum and to participate in school,. My use of appropriate confidentiality safeguards (seeking and receiving written permission from the parents) demonstrates my understanding of the legal provisions and ethical principles regarding assessment of individuals. My class presentation demonstrated my ability to report assessment results using effective communication skills (see professor's comments).

Final 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:

5 = strongly agree

4 = agree

3 = agree somewhat, but could be more clearly written

2 = disagree

1 = strongly disagree

0 = not clear at all (or missing)

IP = in progress

Rating Scale

	Statement	Yes	No or IP	5	4	3	2	1	0
1	The Table of Contents clearly delineates the contents of the portfolio and it is easy to find documents.								
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.								
3	In the Introductory Narrative it is clear that the writer knows what was learned as a result of this experience or creating this product.								
4	Course name or experience from which each artifact was produced is included on each entry form .								
5	On each entry form it is clear what the artifact is (lesson plan; lit review; teaching evaluation, etc.)								
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. 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

Collaboration

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

Professionalism

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

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.