

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Special Education

EDSE 590
Research Methods in Special Education
Fall 2009

Section #: 001
 Time: 7:20 – 10:00 p.m. Wednesdays
 Location: Innovation Hall 333

Instructor: Sheri Berkeley, Ph.D.
 Email: sberkele@gmu.edu (best contact)
 Phone: 703-993-3670
 Office Hours: Mondays 2:00-4:00 or by appointment
 Krugg Hall 110A (Inside Kellar)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Describes fundamental concepts and practices in educational research in special education. Specific applications 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.

Prerequisites

There are no *required* prerequisites for this course, but each Program in Special Education strongly *recommends a specific sequence*. Please refer to your Program of Studies to determine where this course fits within your overall program.

*Advising contact information: 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 Jancy Templeton, GMU Special Education Advisor, at jtemple1@gmu.edu or 703-993-2387. Please be prepared with your G number when you contact her.

Student Outcomes

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

- Identify and understand different models 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 applications of classroom research to address specific classroom problems

Relationship of Courses to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

EDSE 590 is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Masters Degree Program. The program aligns with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children, the major special education professional organization in the United States. As such the curriculum for the course includes competencies for teaching students with disabilities from preschool 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

Required Texts and Other Readings

McMillan, J. (2004). *Educational Research: Fundamentals for the Consumer* (4th Edition). AB Longman: Boston.

American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. [5th edition ok]

Other readings relevant to special education applications assigned by instructor.

Required Access to Course Blackboard Site

Blackboard will be used to post important information for this course. Plan to access the Bb site several times per week; announcements and resources are posted on the Bb site in between class sessions. You are responsible for accessing the materials – for printed copies, etc. prior to class. <http://courses.gmu.edu> Click the Login tab. Your Login and password is the same as your George Mason e-mail login. Once you enter, select EDSE 590 course.

Graduate School of Education Statements of Expectations

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

- Students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior and dispositions. See www.gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these professional dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode> for the full honor code.
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on *Responsible Use of Computing Policy* at the bottom of the screen.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

Other Course Expectations

1. **Professional Behavior:** For a satisfactory grade in the course, students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, be prepared for class, demonstrate professional behavior (see *Professional Disposition Criteria* at <http://www.gse.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions), and complete all assignments with professional quality in a timely manner. To successfully complete this course, students need to adhere to the due dates for specific readings and assignments to be completed. If you feel you cannot adhere to the schedule noted in the syllabus, please contact the Instructor immediately to discuss options for withdrawing and completing the course during another semester.
2. **Promptness:** All assignments must be submitted *on or before* the assigned due date. **In fairness to students who make the effort to submit work on time, 5% of the total assignment points will be deducted each day from your grade for late assignments.**

3. **Written Products:** All written assignments must be prepared in a professional manner following guidelines stated in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th or 6th editions are acceptable). All final products must be typed. Products that, in the judgment of the instructor, are unreadable or unprofessionally prepared will be returned un-graded or assigned a lower evaluation.
4. **Writing Support:** All assignments should reflect graduate level spelling, syntax, and grammar. If you are deficient in any of these areas, you will need to document your work with the GMU Writing Center during this course to improve your skills (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).
5. **Signature Assignment:** For student evaluation, program evaluation, and accreditation purposes, students will be required to submit a signature assignment from each of their Special Education courses to Taskstream, an electronic portfolio system. In addition, students completing Midpoint and Final Portfolio courses will use Taskstream to create a full portfolio of their work based on assignments completed throughout their program. For this reason, students will need to retain electronic copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE Special Education program. In addition to the signature assignment, products from this class can become part of your individual program portfolio used in your portfolio classes that documents your satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance based standards.

Note:* **Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is **required** to submit signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a “one time” course, or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed, upon completion of the required submission, the IN will convert to a F nine weeks into the following semester.*

6. **Program Advisement:** 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 Jancy Templeton, GMU Special Education Advisor, at jtemple1@gmu.edu or 703-993-2387. Please be prepared with your G number when you contact her.

ASSIGNMENTS

Regular Attendance & Participation (10 points)

Students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, and stay for the duration of the class time. **Three or more absences will result in no credit for this course.** As you all lead active lives and circumstances sometimes happen at unfortunate times – so, if you are unable to attend class, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student. Students who are absent are held responsible for the material covered and assignments given and due. It is also recommended that you notify the instructor about absences in advance or within 24 hours after an absence. Be aware that any points for participation in class activities during a time of absence will not be earned and cannot be made up.

Human Subjects CITI Training Module Completion (5 points)

GMU Mandatory Training for Persons Conducting Research Using Human Subjects is accessed at <http://www.citiprogram.org>. Seven learner modules in the Basic Course are required prior to conducting any research at Mason using human subjects. In addition, if the information in any of the optional modules relates to your research, you are required to complete the appropriate module. This assignment will be evaluated as pass/fail.

Research Application Mini-Project (20 points)

The research application mini-project is designed to provide experience in designing, implementing, and evaluating a research application project in special education. Specific guidelines for the assignment will be provided. The project should be submitted by 7:20 pm on the due date.

Scoring Rubric

Exemplary paper (18-20 points): Appropriate topic, thorough and thoughtful review of previous research, appropriate and clearly described implementation procedures, careful measurement and evaluation plan for results, thorough and appropriate discussion of implications of findings. Good writing style, free of mechanical or stylistic errors, appropriate use of APA format.

Adequate paper (16-17 points): Good overall paper, lacking in one or two of the criteria for an exemplary paper. Not entirely reflective or thoughtful, or minor writing style errors may be present.

Marginal paper (14-15 points): Overall, acceptable but with one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information, but may have substantial problems with evaluation, writing style, or implementation procedures of project.

Inadequate paper (<14 points): Paper with substantial problems in important areas such as writing, implementation procedures of intervention, evaluation plan for results, overall thoughtfulness. Contains little or no information of value to special education practice.

Unacceptable/no paper (0 points): Paper with no value whatsoever relative to the assignment, or no paper turned in at all. May describe a project of no value that was not approved for this assignment.

Exemplary paper	Adequate paper	Marginal paper	Inadequate paper	No paper
20 - 18	17 – 16	15 - 14	<14	0

Final Research Project: Research Review Paper (40 points)

You will complete a traditional research review paper of a selected intervention area of your choice.

Your topic must be approved by the instructor prior at the beginning of the semester. You will need to collect a minimum of 10 original intervention research studies on a particular topic to include in your review paper. Specific guidelines will be provided. A hard copy AND an electronic copy of the project should be submitted by 7:20 pm on the due date.

Scoring Rubric

Exemplary paper (36-40 points): Appropriate topic, thorough and thoughtful review of previous research. Good writing style, free of mechanical or stylistic errors, appropriate use of APA format.

Adequate paper (32-35 points): Good overall paper, lacking in one or two of the criteria for an exemplary paper. Not entirely reflective or thoughtful, or minor writing style errors may be present.

Marginal paper (28-31 points): Overall, acceptable but with one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information, but may have substantial problems with evaluation, writing style, or review of relevant literature.

Inadequate paper (1-27 points): Paper with substantial problems in important areas such as writing, evaluation of research, overall thoughtfulness. Contains little or no information of value to special education practice.

Unacceptable/no paper (0 points): Paper with no value whatsoever relative to the assignment, or no paper turned in at all. May describe a literature of no value or relevance, or that was not approved for this assignment.

Exemplary paper	Adequate paper	Marginal paper	Inadequate paper	No paper
40 - 36	35 – 32	31 - 28	<28	0

Final Research Project Presentation (5 points)

You will present the findings of your final research project in a poster session format.

1. Be prepared to explain clearly your search procedures and findings, and to answer questions about your project.
2. Prepare visual materials use in your presentation – refer to the AERA Poster Session Guidelines document on Blackboard.
3. Prepare a one-page summary hand-out for your audience and the instructor.

Scoring Rubric

Exemplary presentation (5 points): Poster clearly describes major elements of the proposal; poster reflects clarity, organization, knowledge and interest in the content being presented; reflects a high level of preparation; makes effective use of visual format and presents an interesting, attractive appearance; describes very clearly the methods under consideration; poster and discussion keep the audience engaged; provide information of interest and value to audience. Presenter is able to answer basic audience questions about the proposal with poise, clarity, and thoughtfulness.

Adequate presentation (4 points): Good overall poster presentation, but may be lacking in one or two of the criteria specified in exemplary response. May seem a little less polished or prepared, may be vague in some places, or may fail to completely answer audience questions.

Marginal presentation (3 points): Poster presentation provides relevant information, but demonstrates only a limited understanding of the topic or project. Style, organization, or visual elements may be less than adequate. Responses to audience questions may reflect lack of understanding of relevant research methods.

Inadequate presentation (1-2 points): Weak overall presentation that reflects very little knowledge of topic or project. May appear very poorly prepared, or may not have followed directions. Style or visual elements may be inadequate or lacking.

Unacceptable/no presentation (0 points): Completely unsatisfactory presentation, with no reasonable reference to topic or project; or no presentation made.

Exemplary presentation	Adequate presentation	Marginal presentation	Inadequate presentation	Unacceptable/no presentation
5	4	3	<3	0

Final Exam (20 points)

There will be a final exam for the course over the lectures and readings throughout the course.

GRADING

1. Regular Attendance & Participation	10 points
2. CITI Training	10 points
3. Research Application Mini-Project	20 points
4. Final Research Project: Research Review Paper	40 points
5. Final Research Project: Presentation	10 points
6. Final Exam	10 points
TOTAL	100 POINTS

Student Self-Management for Calculating Course Grade Based on Points Earned on Performance Based Summative Evaluations	
Title of Performance-Based Summative Evaluation	Points Earned/Total Points
1. Regular Attendance & Participation	/10
2. CITI Training	/10
3. Research Application Mini-Project	/20
4. Final Research Project: Research Review Paper	/40
5. Final Research Project: Presentation	/10
6. Final Exam	/10
Total # of points earned	/100

Students can calculate their points earned/total points available at any date in the semester in order to determine what their grade-to-date is. This is particularly important for students to self-evaluate their performance prior to key dates in the George Mason University schedule, such as withdrawal dates with varying tuition penalties.

Grading Scale:

A = 90-100%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

F = <79%

CLASS TOPICS & DUE DATES

Date	Class Topic & Reading Assignments	Due Dates
9/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course overview • The anatomy of a research article 	Chapter 1
9/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to special education research • Library database orientation 	Chapters 3 & 4
9/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature Reviews 	Chapter 2
9/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants, Subjects & Sampling • Human Subjects Protection 	Chapters 5

9/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ONLINE CLASS: CITI TRAINING 	
10/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative Research Designs 	Chapters 8 & 9 DUE: CITI Training Certificate
10/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Quantitative Research Designs 	Chapter 12
10/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement & Procedures 	Chapters 6 & 7
10/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Statistical Inferences 	Chapter 10
11/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion & Conclusion • Peer-editing in Academia 	Chapter 13 DUE: Final Research Paper <i>Draft</i>
11/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini-research Project Presentations 	
11/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative Research Designs 	Chapter 11
11/25	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break	
12/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Activity: Synthesizing research 	DUE: Final Research Paper
12/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project Presentations • Final Exam Review • Course Evaluations 	
12/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Exam 	

NOTE: This syllabus may change according to class needs.