

**George Mason University  
College of Education and Human Development  
Prekindergarten – Third Grade Program**

**EDSE 791 Early Childhood Midpoint Portfolio (1 credit)**

**Fall 2009: September 1, September 22, October 6, November 17, December 1**

**7:20-10 p.m. Tuesdays, Robinson Hall A349**

**Instructor:** Debra Fulcher

Email: [dfuche1@gmu.edu](mailto:dfuche1@gmu.edu)

Phone Number: 703-314-2390

Office Hours: By Appointment

Websites: [www.taskstream.com](http://www.taskstream.com)  
<https://gmublackboard.com>

### **Course Description**

This course provides an opportunity for students to develop their portfolio. This serves as the vehicle to assess whether they are meeting the standards of their professional organization, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

### **Learner Outcomes**

- Students will discuss issues around teacher preparation portfolio development.
- Students will provide evidence of meeting professional standards.
- Students will articulate the principles that guide and will guide their practice, reflect on the program experiences that contributed to the development of these principles, and provide evidence that supports each of the guiding principles.
- Students will present this portfolio to program faculty.

### **Nature of Course Delivery**

This course will include in-class discussions, peer feedback, and the use of online tools, such as TaskStream, Blackboard, and e-mail.

### **CEHD Syllabus Statements of Expectations**

The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See [www.gse.gmu.edu](http://www.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](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12) for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <https://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, at the beginning of the semester. See [www.gmu.edu/student/drc](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc) or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

### **Relationship of Course to Program Goals and Professional Organizations**

EDSE 791 is part of the Early Childhood Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in Early Childhood Education (EPK3). The program aligns with the standards for teacher licensure established by NAEYC, the major early childhood education professional organization in the United States (see the NAEYC standards on the following website: [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)) and standards for teacher licensure established by CEC, the major special education professional organization in the United States (see CEC standards on the following website: <http://www.cec.sped.org>). This course addresses NAEYC standards, CEC standards and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) assessments.

### **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Standards**

1. Promoting Child Development and Learning
2. Building Family and Community Relationships
3. Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families
4. Teaching and Learning
5. Becoming a Professional

### **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Standards**

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Foundations                                   | 6. Language                          |
| 2. Development and Characteristics of Learners   | 7. Instructional Planning            |
| 3. Individual Learning Differences               | 8. Assessment                        |
| 4. Instructional Strategies                      | 9. Professional and Ethical Practice |
| 5. Learning Environments and Social Interactions | 10. Collaboration                    |

### **Grading**

Students are graded Satisfactory, In Progress, or No Credit.

### **Written Assignments**

All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation as graduate-level writing. The American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition (APA) style will be followed for all written work. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work. When in doubt, they should check the APA manual. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the Mason library web guide at <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/>.

### ***Expectations***

Students will

1. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
2. Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.

3. Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. (Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.)
4. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

### **Textbook**

Jones, M. & Shelton, M. (2006). *Developing Your Portfolio: Enhancing Your Learning and Showing Your Stuff*. New York: Routledge.

## **Midpoint Portfolio Requirement**

### ***NCATE Performance-Based Assessment System***

Teacher candidates will upload the required NCATE performance-based assessments (PBAs) to the *Directed Response Folio* on TaskStream. At the completion of the midpoint portfolio, they will have all PBAs from courses taken to date uploaded to TaskStream. Candidates will continue to upload PBAs as they complete PBAs for their courses. At final portfolio, they will have all required PBAs uploaded to the *Directed Response Folio* on TaskStream.

In addition to uploading PBAs to the *DRF*, teacher candidates will write an introductory narrative that will also be uploaded to the *DRF*. They will also create a *Resource Folio* and will write a *program critique*.

### ***Resource Folio***

Candidates will create a *Resource Folio* to organize their work from their courses into folders. Candidates are required to upload all coursework from courses that have been taken at Mason at the time of the midpoint portfolio. They are encouraged to add to the *Resource Folio* between the midpoint portfolio and the final portfolio. The *Resource Folio* will provide candidates with a way to store coursework that can later be selected as artifacts to support the Guiding Principles narrative they will write for their final portfolio.

### ***Introductory Narrative***

Candidates will write a reflection on why they decided to enter the program and what their goals are for when they complete the program. The *Introductory Narrative* will be uploaded to the *DRF* on TaskStream during the midpoint portfolio course and will be approximately 1 to 2 double-spaced pages in length.

### ***Beliefs and Values Exploration***

Candidates will begin to examine their evolving beliefs and values specific to teaching and learning through close examination of their personal experiences, observations and knowledge about education. Candidates will create a graphic organizer illustrating beliefs and values related to teaching and learning that they have encountered through their coursework, observations, resources, and class discussions that resonate with them. Candidates will upload their Belief and Value Graphic Organizer to the *DRF* on TaskStream during the midpoint portfolio course.

***Midpoint Portfolio Review***

Candidates e-mail the instructor when all PBAs have been uploaded to the *Directed Response Folio* on TaskStream. They will participate in a final class discussion on portfolio development.

***Program Critique***

Candidates will write a single-spaced critique of the program based on the information contained in the portfolio and the candidates' personal experiences. Candidates will discuss the components of the Mason program they found helpful and would suggest as experiences for other candidates in their specialty area. They will also suggest changes they view are needed in the Mason program. This will be anonymous and will be submitted separately from the portfolio. It will not be uploaded to TaskStream.

**Class Schedule**

| <b>DATE</b>  | <b>CLASS TOPICS</b>  | <b>READINGS &amp; ASSIGNMENTS DUE</b>  |
|--------------|--|--|
| September 1  | Portfolio overview   | Formulating ideas for writing an introductory personal narrative   |
| September 22 | Portfolio Development Issues<br>Performance Standards and Accountability<br>Electronic Portfolios<br>Phase I – Collecting and Selecting for Resource Folio<br>Peer feedback on personal statement topics | Read Jones & Shelton Chapters 1-3<br><br>Bring list of possible topics to include in a personal statement/narrative              |
| October 6    | Phase II – Evidence<br>Connecting Standards to Portfolio Documentation<br>Creating a Resource Folio on TaskStream  | Read Jones & Shelton:<br>Chapters 4-6<br>Bring copies of revised introductory narrative and beliefs and values topics to discuss |
| November 17  | Phase III -- Examples<br>NCATE Assessment System<br>Uploading PBAs to the Directed Response Folio on TaskStream  | Read Jones and Shelton Chapter 7<br>Bring a draft of your Beliefs and Values Graphic Organizer to discuss                        |
| December 1   | Wrap Up Discussion   | Submit program critique  |

# **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

## **Initial Licensure Standards**

### **1: Promoting Child Development and Learning**

Candidates use their understanding of young children's characteristics and needs, and of multiple interacting influences on children's development and learning, to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for all children.

### **2: Building Family and Community Relationships**

Candidates know about, understand, and value the importance and complex characteristics of children's families and communities. They use this understanding to create respectful, reciprocal relationships that support and empower families, and to involve all families in their children's development and learning.

### **3: Observing, Documenting, and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families**

Candidates know about and understand the goals, benefits, and uses of assessment. They know about and use systematic observations, documentation, and other effective assessment strategies in a responsible way, in partnership with families and other professionals, to positively influence children's development and learning.

### **4: Teaching and Learning**

Candidates integrate their understanding of and relationships with children and families; their understanding of developmentally effective approaches to teaching and learning; and their knowledge of academic disciplines, to design, implement, and evaluate experiences that promote positive development and learning for all young children.

### **5: Becoming a Professional**

Candidates identify and conduct themselves as members of the early childhood profession. They know and use ethical guidelines and other professional standards related to early childhood practice. They are continuous, collaborative learners who demonstrate knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on their work, making informed decisions that integrate knowledge from a variety of sources. They are informed advocates for sound educational practices and policies.

## CEC Initial Licensure Standards

### 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.

### □ 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.

### □ 3: Individual Learning Differences

Special educators understand the effects that an exceptional condition can have on an individual's learning in school and throughout life. Special educators understand that the beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures can affect relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community. Moreover, special educators are active and resourceful in seeking to understand how primary language, culture, and familial backgrounds interact with the individual's exceptional condition to impact the individual's academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options. The understanding of these learning differences and their possible interactions provide the foundation upon which special educators individualize instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning for individuals with ELN. 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.

#### □ 4: **Instructional Strategies**

Special educators possess a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to individualize instruction for individuals with ELN. Special educators select, adapt, and use these instructional strategies to promote challenging learning results in general and special curricula and to appropriately modify learning environments for individuals with ELN. They enhance the learning of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills of individuals with ELN, and increase their self-awareness, self-management, self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem. Moreover, special educators emphasize the development, maintenance, and generalization of knowledge and skills across environments, settings, and the lifespan. 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.

#### □ 5: **Learning Environments and Social Interactions**

Special educators actively create learning environments for individuals with ELN that foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional well being, positive social interactions, and active engagement of individuals with ELN. In addition, special educators foster environments in which diversity is valued and individuals are taught to live harmoniously and productively in a culturally diverse world. Special educators shape environments to encourage the independence, self-motivation, self-direction, personal empowerment, and self-advocacy of individuals with ELN. Special educators help their general education colleagues integrate individuals with ELN in regular environments and engage them in meaningful learning activities and interactions. Special educators use direct motivational and instructional interventions with individuals with ELN to teach them to respond effectively to current expectations. When necessary, special educators can safely intervene with individuals with ELN in crisis. Special educators coordinate all these efforts and provide guidance and direction to paraeducators and others, such as classroom volunteers and tutors. 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.

#### □ 6: **Language**

Special educators understand typical and atypical language development and the ways in which exceptional conditions can interact with an individual's experience with and use of language. Special educators use individualized strategies to enhance language development and teach communication skills to individuals with ELN. Special educators are familiar with augmentative, alternative, and assistive technologies to support and enhance communication of individuals with exceptional needs. Special educators match their communication methods to an individual's language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences. Special educators provide effective language models, and they use communication strategies and resources to facilitate understanding of subject matter for individuals with ELN whose primary language is not English. Beginning special educators demonstrate their mastery of language for and with individuals with ELN 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.

## □ 7: **Instructional Planning**

Individualized decision-making and instruction is at the center of special education practice. Special educators develop long-range individualized instructional plans anchored in both general and special curricula. In addition, special educators systematically translate these individualized plans into carefully selected shorter-range goals and objectives taking into consideration an individual's abilities and needs, the learning environment, and a myriad of cultural and linguistic factors. Individualized instructional plans emphasize explicit modeling and efficient guided practice to assure acquisition and fluency through maintenance and generalization. Understanding of these factors as well as the implications of an individual's exceptional condition, guides the special educator's selection, adaptation, and creation of materials, and the use of powerful instructional variables. Instructional plans are modified based on ongoing analysis of the individual's learning progress. Moreover, special educators facilitate this instructional planning in a collaborative context including the individuals with exceptionalities, families, professional colleagues, and personnel from other agencies as appropriate. Special educators also develop a variety of individualized transition plans, such as transitions from preschool to elementary school and from secondary settings to a variety of postsecondary work and learning contexts. Special educators are comfortable using appropriate technologies to support instructional planning and individualized instruction. 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.

## □ 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.



### □ 9: **Professional and Ethical Practice**

Special educators are guided by the profession's ethical and professional practice standards. Special educators practice in multiple roles and complex situations across wide age and developmental ranges. Their practice requires ongoing attention to legal matters along with serious professional and ethical considerations. Special educators engage in professional activities and participate in learning communities that benefit individuals with ELN, their families, colleagues, and their own professional growth. Special educators view themselves as lifelong learners and regularly reflect on and adjust their practice. Special educators are aware of how their own and others attitudes, behaviors, and ways of communicating can influence their practice. Special educators understand that culture and language can interact with exceptionalities, and are sensitive to the many aspects of diversity of individuals with ELN and their families. Special educators actively plan and engage in activities that foster their professional growth and keep them current with evidence-based best practices. Special educators know their own limits of practice and practice within them. 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.

### □ 10: **Collaboration**

Special educators routinely and effectively collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways. This collaboration assures that the needs of individuals with ELN are addressed throughout schooling. Moreover, special educators embrace their special role as advocate for individuals with ELN. Special educators promote and advocate the learning and well being of individuals with ELN across a wide range of settings and a range of different learning experiences. Special educators are viewed as specialists by a myriad of people who actively seek their collaboration to effectively include and teach individuals with ELN. Special educators are a resource to their colleagues in understanding the laws and policies relevant to Individuals with ELN. Special educators use collaboration to facilitate the successful transitions of individuals with ELN across settings and services. 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.