

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
College of Education and Human Development
Program: Special Education

EDSE 440/540

Spring 2010 - Section 001

Characteristics of Students with Disabilities Who Access the General Education Curriculum

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Meeting Dates: Jan. 20 – May 11

Class time: Tues, 4:30–10:10 p.m.

Class location: Loudoun Campus, L219

Course Description

Examines the characteristics of students with mild disabilities. Emphasis on etiology, contributing factors, conditions that affect learning, the challenges of identifying students with disabilities, and the need for academic, social, and emotional accommodations and support. Field experience is required. Prerequisites: none.

Student Outcomes

The purpose of this course is to assist students in developing a solid foundation for understanding learning acquisition and behaviors of children with mild disabilities. EDSE 540 is also designed to prepare students to interact with other professionals about children with these disabilities. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the CEC standards in relation to the student outcomes identified in Table 1. CEC standards that will be addressed in this class include some of the ED and LD disability-specific standards (Standard 1: Foundations; Standard 2: Development and characteristics of learners; Standard 3: Individual learning differences) and some of the CEC Core Standards: The CEC Standards are listed on the following web site: http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf_based_std/standard_core_4-21-01.html

Alignment of Outcomes and Requirements with Key CEC/NCATE Standards (Table 1)

| CEC/NCATE STANDARDS | STUDENT OUTCOMES | COURSE REQUIREMENTS |
|---|---|--|
| <p>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 disabilities both in school and society.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the field of learning disabilities from its origins to policies and practices of today. • Compare the history of education for students with emotional and behavioral disorders with the education for students identified as having a learning disability. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading assignments • Online group discussion • Class activities • Final Exam |
| <p>Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners Special educators understand the similarities and differences in human development and the</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define <i>learning disability</i> and <i>emotional disturbance</i>. • Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading assignments • Online group discussions |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>characteristics between and among individuals with and without exceptional learning needs (ELN). Special educators understand how exceptional conditions interact with the domains of human development and they use this knowledge to respond to varying abilities and behaviors. Special educators understand how disabilities impact families, and the individual's ability to learn, interact socially, and live as contributing community members.</p> | <p>between <i>normal</i> and <i>atypical</i> behaviors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe characteristics of young children and adolescents with learning disabilities and/or emotional disturbances. Compare at least three conceptual models of behavioral deficits with three conceptual models that explain learning disabilities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case Study Field Observations Class activities Final Exam |
| <p>Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences Special educators understand the effects that an exceptional condition has on learning in school and throughout life. Special educators understand that beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures affect relationships among and between students, families, and school. Special educators seek to understand how primary language, culture, and familial backgrounds interact with the disability to affect academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options. Learning differences and their interactions are the basis for individualizing instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the various etiologies in relation to biological, family, cultural, and school perspectives. Identify various procedures and practices that motivate reluctant learners to complete class work and develop skills that build self-understanding and confidence as learners. Describe and discuss a range of learning disabilities and emotional disturbances for a parent and suggest possible interventions for home and school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case study report Reading assignments Field Observations Class activities Final exam |
| <p>Standard 6: Language Special educators understand typical and atypical language development and the ways in which disabilities can interact with an individual's experience with and use of language.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe at least one theory of how children develop language. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small group discussion Class activities Final exam Field Observations |
| <p>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.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe informal assessment procedures for determining knowledge and skills of children with various learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral problems. Based on informal assessment procedures, design appropriate clinical teaching strategies for children with various learning disabilities and/or behavior problems. Describe what an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is and how it is developed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small group discussion Class activities Case study report Student presentation Final exam |

Relationship of Course to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

EDSE 540 is part of the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of ED and LD. The program aligns with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special educational professional organization in the United States. As such, the curriculum for the course includes competencies for teaching students with emotional disturbances and learning disabilities in kindergarten through grade 12.

Student Expectations

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

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://www.gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines for the University Honor Code. This can be accessed at: http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc> or call (703) 993-2474 to access the ODS.
- 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.
- 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.

The instructor expects that all students will abide by the following:

- Use APA guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines. <http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm>
- Use person-first language in our class discussions and written assignments (and ideally in our professional practice). Please refer to “Guidelines for Non-Handicapping Language in APA Journals” <http://www.apastyle.org/disabilities.html>
- Your GMU email will be used for communication in this course. Make sure your gmU email is activated and checked regularly for communications from the instructor as well and GMU announcements. It is possible to forward your gmU email to another account.
- All assignments should reflect graduate-level spelling, syntax, and grammar. If you experience difficulties with the writing process you may need to access the GMU Writing Center during this course to improve your skills (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>). APA guidelines (5th edition) apply for all written (word-processed) assignments. All work produced outside of class must be typed.
- Students are expected to: a) attend all classes during the course; b) arrive on time; c) stay for the duration of the class time; and d) complete all assignments by due dates provided.
- Common sense and instructor discretion will be the governing forces in dealing with any circumstances that may arise that are not explicitly addressed in this syllabus.

General Comments:

- Arrangements must be made with the instructor *in advance* to submit assignments after deadlines. Points will be deducted from work submitted late. Written documentation of extenuating circumstances will be required to alter deadlines.
- The instructor is solely responsible for assigning grades. Student non-compliance with stated academic, honor, attendance, or participation expectations will result in a '0' for the associated evaluation. Because class participation is a factor in grading, the instructor may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of non-participation.
- Grades of "A" in this course are earned by students who do exemplary, distinguished work. The A/A- student participates actively and thoughtfully in class; completes all required reading assignments and related assignments in a timely and professional way; shows coherence and thoroughness in work products; completes well-organized, well-written work samples; and consistently demonstrates the ability to make connections between theory and practice.

Nature of Course Delivery

Class sessions may include a variety of formats and integrate instructional technology with lecture, discussion, guest presenters, video, and small group activities. Students will be expected to engage in dialog with the instructor and peers cooperatively and collaboratively; mirroring their future roles as special educators.

Required Text

Henley, M., Ramsey, R., & Algozzine, R. (2009). *Characteristics of and Strategies for Teaching Students with Mild Disabilities* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Highly Recommended

American Psychological Association. (2002). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Evaluation

1. Class attendance and participation (15)
 - a. Excessive absences will result in no participation points and potential withdrawal from the class.
2. Abstract of journal articles (20)
3. Case study and presentation (25)
4. Presentation of effective interventions (20)
5. Exam (20)

*Points will be deducted for work submitted late.

It is recommended that students retain electronic copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE ED/LD program. Products from this class can become part of your individual professional portfolio used in your portfolio classes that documents your satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance-based standards.

Grading Criteria

A = 95 - 100% A- = 90 - 94% B = 80 - 89% C = 70 - 79% F = <70%

REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and Participation (15 points)

Attendance and participation are essential. Class time will provide opportunities for (1) completion of and preparation for a variety of activities, (2) contribution of effective teaching strategies and content application ideas during discussion, and (3) reflection on readings, assignments, and your past experiences. Students are expected to be consistently well-prepared to participate in class as active, thoughtful discussants. This means that you must prepare all assigned readings prior to coming to class. After two absences two points per day absent will be deducted.

Presentation on effective interventions for students with mild disabilities (20 points)

Each student will choose an area of interest (e.g. reading, writing, math, behavioral management) and will investigate research-based interventions on the area of interest. A list of effective interventions will be provided. Then, each student will prepare a 30-minute presentation on the intervention (s) investigated. The presentation should include an introduction to the topic, description of the intervention (s) (with appropriate citations), and examples of how to apply the intervention. In addition, a hands-on activity should be developed as part of the presentation as well as hand-outs for classmates.

Abstract of Journal Articles (20 points)

Each student will summarize three (3) journal articles that are relevant to the needs of the student chosen for the case study. Papers chosen for this requirement must be from peer-reviewed published journals (no ERIC documents!) and should be data-based examinations of issues relevant to the ED / LD/ MR field. Appropriate sources for journal articles include: *Exceptional Children*, *The Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *Learning Disabilities Quarterly*, *The Journal of Special Education*, *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, *Remedial and Special Education*, *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, etc. A word document of common journals is included under Course Resources on Blackboard.

The purpose of this assignment is twofold: first to identify research-based findings that are relevant to the needs of your case study student and second, to distill the major points of the article to a two-page summary. The abstract should be typed (double spaced) and following APA style. The paper should include a brief introduction to the students needs, followed by 3 summaries with an APA style citation at the top of each article. Each entry should consist of two parts labeled 1.- Summary, 2.-Critique. Finally, a conclusion that ties together the 3 summaries and findings should be presented as an action plan for assisting the student to meet an identified need. All articles should be from current literature and should not be more than three (3) years old. You must use your own words to summarize. Overall, your paper should be 10-12 pages long.

Case Study* (25 points)

A comprehensive case study on a student with emotional and learning disabilities will be completed. This case study will include the following components: a) student's demographic data; b) description of school and neighborhood; c) educational history (schools attended, reason for referral, pre-referral interventions, results of multidisciplinary evaluation, special education classification, placement); d) IEP goals, objectives, classroom accommodations; e) observational information (at least two class-period observations specifically related to IEP goals, objectives and

accommodations); f) teacher interviews (related to IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations, and other accommodations or relevant issues not included on IEP); g) your additional recommendations, educational accommodations, and/or modifications; h) summary and synthesis (Comparison of student's characteristics with those described in the textbook, i.e., Which characteristics were identified in your student? Integrate at least three sources from the literature with what you observed in your case study); and I) appendices such as student work samples, teacher interview questions/answers.

Exam (20 points)

Exam covering course content will be administered. The signature assignment required for this course must be submitted electronically to Mason's NCATE management system, TaskStream: (<https://www.taskstream.com>).

*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 an F nine weeks into the following semester

NOTE: The syllabus may change according to class needs. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or if you have emergency medical information to share with instructor or special needs arrangements, **please call and/or make an appointment with instructor as soon as possible.**

COURSE TOPICS

| Date | Concepts | Assignments Due |
|-------------|---|--|
| January 19 | Introduction to the course Syllabus review Overview of mild disabilities | |
| January 26 | Context of special education Relevant legislation Overview of child disabilities | Chapter 1 & 2 |
| February 2 | Dual Language Assessments Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities | Chapter 3 |
| February 9 | Students with Emotional disabilities | Chapter 4 |
| February 16 | Students with Learning Disabilities | Chapter 5 |
| February 23 | Wrap-up of Students with ED and LD Multicultural perspectives on the identification and treatment of learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and intellectual disabilities. | |
| March 2 | Early intervention The inclusive classroom | Chapter 6 |
| March 9 | No Class- GMU Spring Break | |
| March 16 | Classrooms and Learning for students with Mild Disabilities/ Effective instruction for all students/ Study skills | Chapter 7 |
| March 23 | Instructing Students with mild disabilities/ Enhancing motivation and affect/ Attention & Memory Research based interventions learning strategies | Chapter 8 Individual Presentations |
| March 30* | Classroom Management/Improving classroom behavior/ Teaching Social Skills Research based interventions learning strategies | Chapter 9 & 10 Individual Presentations |
| April 6 | Working with families: Building Partnerships Guest speaker: | Chapter 11 |
| April 13 | Transition to post secondary environments Transition planning | Journal Abstracts DUE |
| April 20 | Writing effective IEPs | tba (Blackboard) |
| April 27 | Case study 5 minute presentations Summary of learning Course evaluations | DUE by 4:30: Case Study (on Taskstream) |
| May 4 | Reading Day | |
| May 11 | Final Exam | Due by 4:30: (to Blackboard) |

Presentation Guidelines

Presentation on effective interventions for students with mild disabilities (20 pts.):

Each student will choose an area of interest (e.g. reading, writing, math, behavioral management) and will investigate research-based interventions on the area of interest.

Presentation Content

Presentations will include:

- A brief introduction to the topic description of the intervention
- An overview of “what works” from the scholarly literature on instructional best practices,
- Examples of how to apply the intervention.
- A hands-on activity
- A handout for classmates, including references used.

In addition to using the textbook as a source of information, at least three other scholarly sources of information must be included in the presentation. For instance, intervention studies or information from national organizations may be used.

Examples of scholarly journals:

Exceptional Children
Journal of Learning Disabilities
Journal of Special Education
Learning Disabilities Quarterly
Reading and Writing Quarterly
Remedial and Special Education

Examples of websites from national organizations:

Council for Exceptional Children: www.cec.sped.org
National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities: www.nichcy.org
TA Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports: www.pbis.org
American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities:
www.aamr.org

Class Presentations

Presentations should last approximately 30 minutes.

Presentation of Interventions Scoring Rubric

Name _____

Total Points (out of 20) _____

| Evaluation Standard | Exceeds Expectations | Meets Expectations | Below Expectations |
|---|---|---|--|
| Introduction/Overview of Topic (4 points) | All aspects of the topic were covered; provided the background necessary for audience to easily understand findings from the literature | Covered most aspects of the topic; provided enough information for audience to understand subsequent discussion of the literature | Limited introduction to the topic or missing critical components |
| Review of best practices from the scholarly literature (8 points) | Thorough review of literature and in-depth explanation of “what works” or key points with concrete examples; supported by 3 or more scholarly resources | Adequate review of the literature with complete explanation of “what works” or key points; supported by 3 scholarly resources | Limited review of the literature, or gaps in explanation of “what works” or key points; supported by 2 or fewer scholarly resources, or includes resources that are not considered scholarly |
| Hands on activity related to topic/issue (2 points) | Activity is related to the topic and aids students in learning the key information presented | Activity is related to the topic | Activity is unrelated to the topic |
| Handout for classmates (2 points) | Handouts support the learning and discussion; all aspects of the topic were covered completely | Handouts supported the learning and discussion; most aspects of the topic were covered | Handouts covered few aspects of the topic |
| High interest/engaging, presentation (2 points) | Presenter engaged students throughout the 30 minute presentation using a range of teaching strategies | Presenter used some teaching strategies to engage students throughout most of the 30 minute presentation | Presenter used few methods to engage students throughout the presentation |
| Knowledge and preparation level (2 points) | Presenter was knowledgeable about the topic; presentation was professional, clear, and error free | Presenter was knowledgeable about the topic; presentation was clear with only a few errors | Presenter demonstrated gaps in knowledge of topic; presentation was unclear or contained many errors |

Journal Abstracts
Scoring Rubric

Student Name _____

Grade _____

| Case Study Presentation | Points Possible | Points Received |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|
| APA Style and Writing Quality | 2 | |
| Introduction to Student's Needs (based on your case study) | 4 | |
| Quality of Summaries | 4 | |
| Quality of Critiques | 4 | |
| Conclusion/Appropriateness of Recommendations | 6 | |
| Total Points | 20 | |

Case Study (25 points)

This assignment has been designated as the performance based assessment for this course. The Special Education Program will evaluate student work in its relation to meeting the CEC Content Standards as part of NCATE requirements. Students in this class will be expected to submit their designated assignment to True Outcomes (web-based portfolio system) for a faculty member in the Special Education program to score on a 4-point rubric. Although your score on this rubric will not affect your grade in this class, your submission of the assignment to True Outcomes will impact your grade. Students are expected to post their assignment to True Outcomes electronically by the last day of class. Additionally information on this process will be provided.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC Standards) addressed through task:

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.

Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences

Special educators understand the effects that an exceptional condition² 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.

Components:

1. Introduction
 - a. Provide general context with citations and areas to be covered.
2. Description of case
 - a. Student demographic data
 - b. Description of school and neighborhood
 - c. Educational history (schools attended, reason for referral, pre-referral interventions, results of multi-disciplinary evaluation, special ed classification, and placement)
 - d. IEP goals and objectives, classroom accommodations
3. Observation and interviews
 - a. Observational information (at least two class-period observations specifically related to IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations)
 - b. Interviews with relevant people (related to IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations, and other accommodations or relevant issues not included on IEP).
4. Analysis
 - a. Your additional research-based recommendations, educational accommodations, and/or modifications.
5. Summary and synthesis
 - b. Comparison of student's characteristics and effective interventions with those described in the textbook and other resources (e.g., which characteristics were identified in your students? What interventions should work? **Integrate sources from literature with what you observed in your case.**
6. Appendices
 - a. Student work samples
 - b. Teacher interview questions/answers
 - c. Observation field notes

To protect identities, pseudonyms should be used for all individuals and buildings.

Case Study Rubric (25 pts)

Name _____

Total Points _____

| | <u>Exceeds Expectations</u> | <u>Meets Expectations</u> | <u>Below Expectations</u> |
|---|--|---|---|
| Observations 3 pts. | Greater than two observations | Two observations (<i>of 45 minutes or more each</i>) | Less than two observations |
| Introduction 2 pts. | Introduction provides general context with citations and areas to be covered | Introduction provides general context and areas to be covered | Introduction does not identify areas to be covered and/or provide general context |
| Description 3 pts. | Provides detailed description of all components listed in <i>point 1 above</i> , including specific examples for each component. | Provides detailed description and examples for at least 4 components, and provides limited information about other components | Provides limited description and examples of components, or missing a component |
| Observational information 3 pts | Detailed information about observations specifically related to student IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations | Information about observations related to student IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations | Information about observations is not focused on student IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations |
| Teacher interviews 3 pts. | Thorough and specific information is reported concerning student IEP goals, objectives, accommodations, and other accommodations or relevant issues not included on IEP | Information reported is related to IEP goals, objectives, accommodations, and other accommodations or relevant issues not included on IEP | Information is general and/or does not include all of the following components: information related to IEP goals, objectives, accommodations, and other accommodations or relevant issues not included on IEP |
| Analysis 5 pts. | Logical recommendations w/ thorough & detailed support based on observations, interview, and literature. Recommendations highlight critical issues. | Logical recommendations with some support based on observations, interview and literature. | Illogical recommendations with little support based on observation, interview, and literature. |
| Summary and synthesis 5 pts. | Thorough and detailed description of student characteristics with those described in the textbook and more than 3 additional sources from literature. | Some comparison of student characteristics with those described in the textbook and 3 additional sources from literature. | General or incomplete description of student characteristics compared with textbook. Less than 3 additional resources from literature. |
| Appendices 3 pts. | Relevant, thorough, organized and readable examples of student work, teacher interview questions/ answers, and copies of field notes. | Organized and readable examples of student work, teacher interview question and answers, and copies of field notes. | Unorganized or unreadable examples of student work, teacher interview questions and answers, and copies of field notes. |
| APA style 3 pts. | Paper is well-organized, writing is clear and easy to follow, provides correct citations and references in APA style, and free from spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. | Writing lacks clarity or organization in parts, and has a few APA style errors, or a few mechanical errors. | Writing lacks clarity and organization, with some APA style or mechanical errors. |