

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**  
**PROGRAM – SPECIAL EDUCATION**  
**Syllabus for EDSE 635: Interventions for Students with Autism (3 credits)**

Semester and Year: Spring 2010  
Course day/time: Wednesday at 4:30-8:30  
Course location: Kellar Annex and Distance Education

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Research-based interventions that promote progress in the areas of communication, social, academic, behavior, and sensory motor skills for students with autism are described. Methods for monitoring the impact of interventions are identified in a variety of service delivery models are described.

Prerequisites\*: There are no *required* prerequisites for this course, but it is strongly recommended that students completing the Certificate in Autism complete courses in a specific order. In particular, students completing this course should have already completed the “Characteristics of Students with Autism” course. Please refer to your Program of Studies for the recommended sequence of courses if you are completing the Certificate in Autism.

**Objectives/Competencies**

This course is designed to enable students to:

- 1) Target appropriate interventions for students with autism.
- 2) Design learning environments that promote gains in the areas of communication, social, academic, behavior, and sensory motor skills for students with autism.
- 3) Given the heterogeneity of students with autism, demonstrate competencies in distinguishing behaviors and “labels,” and selecting corresponding interventions to be implemented in the least restrictive environment appropriate for individual students with autism.
- 4) Identify how to teach self-determination skills to students with autism.
- 5) Describe career- and life-long goals and their corresponding skills, including daily living and leisure areas, to teach students with autism during their school-age years.
- 6) Implement an intervention that has a research-base for students with autism, and monitor the impact of the intervention on the student’s performance.
- 7) Describe ways for teams to collaborate so that students with autism receive services in the least restrictive environment.
- 8) Compare and contrast the variety of intervention approaches that can be used with students with autism, particularly related to matching the student’s characteristics.

\*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](mailto:jtemple1@gmu.edu) or 703.993.2387. Please be prepared with your G number when you contact her.

**COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS**

**Required Texts:**

\* American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual (6<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Washington, DC: Author.

Heflin, L. J., & Alaimo, D. F. (2007). *Students with autism spectrum disorders: Effective instructional practices*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

\* Kluth, P. (2003). *You're going to love this kid!* Baltimore: Brookes.

\* Prelock, P. A. (2006). *Autism spectrum disorders: Issues in assessment and intervention*. Austin: Pro-Ed.

\* Note that these three texts were required in the course that precedes this course (EDSE 634 Characteristics of Students with Autism). For students completing the autism course in the recommended sequence, there is only one new text for this course on interventions.

If you are taking this course out-of-sequence, you should read chapters 1 and 2 from the Heflin and Alaimo (2007) text so that you have some information on characteristics of students with autism.

**Required Recent (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010) Peer-Reviewed Journal Readings:** To be determined and selected by students throughout the semester and for the Case Study Part II.

**Required Access to Course Blackboard Site:** Blackboard <http://courses.gmu.edu> 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. Additionally, there will also be materials and web sites on the Bb site for supplemental resources.

## **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

### **Course's Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organization**

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Special Education Program. This program complies with the standards for special educators established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization. The CEC Standards are listed on the following web site:

<http://www.cec.sped.org> . Look in the second column on the left, and click on “Professional Standards.” On this page, to the right, there is a red book pdf document titled “What Every Special Educator Must Know.” The CEC Standards are located in this document.

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.

The primary CEC standards that will be addressed in this class will be Standard 3 on Individual Learning Differences and Standard 4 on Instructional Strategies:

### **Standard #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 provides the foundation upon which special educators individualize instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

### **Standard #4: Instructional Strategies**

Special educators possess a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to individualize instruction for individuals with Exceptional learning needs. Special educators select, adapt, and use these instructional strategies to promote positive learning results in general and special curricula and to modify learning environments appropriately for individuals with exceptional learning needs. They enhance the learning of critical thinking, problem-solving, and performance skills of individuals with exceptional learning needs, 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 life span.

## **NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY**

### **Learning activities include the following:**

- Instructor lecture, to include explicit instruction using demonstration and modeling, and implicit instruction by setting up learning experiences that build on students' background knowledge and skills.
- Student participation (e.g., discussion, demonstration, inquiry) in small group and cooperative learning activities, including analysis of students with language, reading, and writing deficits as depicted in scenarios (e.g., review of cases).
- Review and expansion of material read in preparation for course sessions.
- Access and analyze materials and resources using a variety of medium, including Blackboard, web-based resources, and professional peer-reviewed journal articles.
- Observe and analyze student learning deficits, patterns, and strategies (such as observations at school sites, viewing video scenarios).
- Instructor-student dialogue and interactions during and outside of class sessions that bring relevance and heightened skills, knowledge, and insights to the students and Instructor, with a focus on strengthening pedagogical skills for acquiring information about the characteristics of students with autism.

## **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS**

### **All students must abide by the following:**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. Therefore, the Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects its students to act professionally as indicated in the below criteria.

### **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

See <http://www.gse.gmu.edu> for more information regarding 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. This URL defines student and faculty conduct to promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community. The honor code deals specifically with cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. In an effort to maintain trust in the classroom as well as provide a prerequisite for deterring plagiarism, *Turnitin*, a plagiarism detection service, may be used to evaluate materials submitted by students for evaluation.

## Plagiarism Statement

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple listing of books and articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting. Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions for this include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writers' own insights or findings from their own field research, and what has been termed common knowledge. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious; what is common knowledge for one audience may not be so for another. In such situations, it is helpful, to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being "reader friendly." In other words, writers provide a citation for any piece of information that they think their readers might want to investigate further. Not only is this attitude considerate of readers, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will never be guilty of plagiarism. (Statement of English Department at George Mason University)

## Plagiarism and the Internet

Copyright rules also apply to users of the Internet who cite from Internet sources. Information and graphics accessed electronically must also be cited, giving credit to the sources. This material includes but is not limited to e-mail (don't cite or forward someone else's e-mail without permission), newsgroup material, information from Web sites, including graphics. Even if you give credit, you must get permission from the original source to put any graphic that you did not create on your web page. Shareware graphics are not free. Freeware clipart is available for you to freely use. If the material does not say "free," assume it is not. Putting someone else's Internet material on your web page is stealing intellectual property. Making links to a site is, at this time, okay, but getting permission is strongly advised, since many Web sites have their own requirements for linking to their material. ([Virginia Montecino](#))

Montecino, V. (n.d.). George mason university honor system and code. Retrieved Jan. 06, 2006, from Education and Technology Resources Web site:  
<http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>.

- 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 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.

***Keep Products from This Course for Future Use in Your Professional Portfolio!***

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 a F nine weeks into the following semester.

George Mason University Email: <https://mail.gmu.edu/>

From this link, follow the directions for activating an email account. Every student is required to establish a GMU email account. Course email correspondence and other important university emails will be sent to GMU email accounts.

Another type of writing support during this course is available via the George Mason University Writing Center for support in writing (support needs will vary among students). The web site for the Writing Center is: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>. Many resources are available both on site and on the web, and students can now conveniently register online for appointments.

*Absences:*

Understanding you are individuals with full and active lives, who have made the intellectual and financial commitment to regularly attend class, there may be an instance when you are not able to attend. If this unlikely event should occur, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student (it is recommended that you have two colleagues in the course for this). Students who are absent are held responsible for the material covered and assignments due as if in attendance. Please be sure to notify the classmate(s) in sufficient time for them to be of assistance for you. You are required to notify the Instructor about absences in advance or within 24 hours after an absence. Be aware any points earned for participation in class activities, during a time of absence, will not be earned and cannot be made up. If you need to miss, for any reason, more than two class sessions, contact the Instructor immediately to discuss options for withdrawing and completing the course during another semester.

There are absolutely no "redo" and/or "retake" on assignments. Full earned credit given for assignments turned in on time (class start time for the due date, unless otherwise stated in this syllabus). Five points of the total assignment points are deducted for each 24-hour period that passes after the class start time for the due date. All assignments must be

typed. The APA format for clear and excellent written language and technical aspects for citations and formatting must be used. Refer to the APA Publication Manual 6<sup>th</sup> edition. A final grade of Incomplete will be considered only due to extreme extenuating circumstances; please contact the Instructor.

- A = 94 - 100
- A- = 90 - 93
- B+ = 87 - 89
- B = 84 - 86
- B- = 80 - 83
- C = 70 - 79
- F = < 69

**Performance-Based Evaluations:**

1. Intervention Summary	15 points
2. Case Study Part I: Describe Student with Autism	20 points
3. Case Study Part II: Implement Intervention	50 points
4. Activities During Class	15 points

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**TOTAL**

**100 points**

**Performance-Based Evaluations**

**#1 Intervention Summary == 15 points**

Use a PowerPoint modality to discuss selected intervention by focusing on the following points (3 points each):

- a) Describe intervention. Use visuals if helpful.
- b) What is the history?
- c) What population is the intended target
- d) What key strategies would be needed to implement this intervention?
- e) Discuss a research study where this intervention was employed.

The PowerPoint should include references. Presentation of the PowerPoint should be 15-20 minutes. Students may but are not required to work in pairs.

**Case Study**

The Case Study in APA format requires selection of a student with autism with whom you implement a comprehensive sequence of tasks representing excellent practices in informal assessment (the focus for Case Study Part I) and intervention (the focus for Case Study Part II). You must be able to work with this student over a period of time (e.g., three sessions per week for about 4 weeks). People who are not currently working with students with autism may network with colleagues in the course or other personal/professional contacts to ensure they have a youngster to work with during the semester for this assignment. A brief overview follows:

## # 2 Case Study Part I == 20 points

### Part I:

- Prior to working directly with the student, gather sufficient background information so that you are better able to target academic and/or affective assessments / levels with the student and provide motivating and meaningful instruction via the intervention you select.
- Conduct initial informal assessments (e.g., informal inventories located in your textbooks, curriculum-based assessments) to determine appropriate instructional levels and interventions. Data representing specific strengths and areas of concern are identified at this stage. Some of these data represent the student's baseline data. Gather enough preliminary information about the student and the student's skill levels so that you're ready to examine the results, analyze the student's learning, and target a specific skill area that you will teach to the student for Part II.
- Paper (approximately 3-5 pages) should contain student pseudonym (1pt), demographic information (2pts), background of student's educational placement (4pts), description of informal inventory (3pts), results of that assessment (5pts), and preliminary interventions being considered (5pts).

## # 3 Case Study Part II == 50 points

### Part II:

- Using information from this course and at least two recent (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010) peer-reviewed journal articles, design an intervention.
- Implement the intervention three sessions per weeks for 4 weeks.
- Continue to collect data to monitor the student's performance during the intervention.
- Your paper should summarize the impact of the intervention, including your reflection and recommendations. Make sure to include your data and graph as an appendix.
- Prepare a one-page description of the intervention (to include citations for the source), and make photocopies to distribute to peers in the course.
- On the due date for Part II, briefly describe the intervention (with your handout) and the impact of the intervention (including sharing a graph indicating student performance) with peers in the course.



## Case Study/Summative Evaluation Rubric—Part II Signature Assignment

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

	Does Not meet	Meets	Exceeds
<b>Background—10 pts.</b> Relevance of assignment to course content-- Why chosen? Link to Autism Intervention			
<b>Quality—13 pts.</b> Assignment reflects all requirements in syllabus description and quality reflects graduate-level status			
<b>Reflection---20 pts.</b> Summarizes thoughts about articles read, data collected, graph, and includes rationales for the statements made. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depth of reflection &amp; depth of linkages to other course readings, teaching, and learning in general.</li> </ul>			
<b>Format—3pts.</b> Research sources are referenced so sources can be easily located <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are from peer –reviewed journals?</li> </ul>			
<b>Writing—4pts.</b> Paper is written to graduate-level standards and there are <u>very few</u> writing or printing errors.			

Total: 50 possible

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

\* Additional required readings, typically internet resources, will be announced either via Bb and/or during class sessions. These resources supplement the text(s) and facilitate your completion of activities during the semester.

<b>Session / Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Preparation* and Assignments Due</b>
<b>1. Jan. 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate introductions</li> <li>Overview the syllabus</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Jan. 13</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss commercially-available programs and research-based interventions for students with autism</li> </ul>	
<b>3. Jan. 20</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify ways to informally assess and teach academic skills</li> <li>Intervention Summary</li> <li>Discuss Case Study Part I</li> </ul>	Ch. 4 from H & A Ch. 10 from H & A Ch. 8 from Kluth <i>DUE: Intervention Summary</i>
<b>4. Jan. 27</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze the role of language and communication related to interventions</li> <li>Identify ways to informally assess and teach language and communication skills</li> <li>Intervention Summary</li> </ul>	Ch. 9 from Prelock Ch. 8 from H & A <i>DUE: Intervention Summary</i>
<b>5. Feb. 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss methods for informally assessing, teaching, and monitoring improvements for social skills</li> <li>Describe how to arrange the environment so that students with autism are more likely to experience success</li> <li>Peer Review Drafts of Case Study Part I</li> </ul>	Ch. 5 from H & A Ch. 9 from H & A Ch. 5 from Kluth <i>DUE: Case Study Part I Draft</i>
<b>6. Feb. 10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze scenarios about service delivery models, and identify ways for students with autism to receive services in the least restrictive environment</li> <li>Discuss results from Case Study Part I</li> </ul>	<i>DUE: Case Study Part I</i>
<b>7. Feb. 17</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe ways to teach students with autism to interact appropriately in social situations with others</li> </ul>	Ch. 9 from Kluth Ch. 10 from Prelock
<b>8. Feb. 24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe interventions that can be used to include students with autism in general education settings</li> <li>Identify ways that students with autism may process social-emotional feelings and interactive situations, and describe interventions that may enable the students, their peers, and other adults to develop more authentic relationships</li> </ul>	Ch. 11 from H & A Ch. 11 from Prelock Ch. 13 from Prelock

<b>9. March 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss ways to prioritize the skills for intervention</li><li>• Describe the importance of teamwork for intervention implementation</li><li>• Peer Review Drafts of Case Study Part II</li></ul>	Ch. 8 from Prelock Ch. 3 from H & A <i>DUE: Case Study Part II Draft</i>
<b>10. March 10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Share interventions and the impact of the interventions on the student with autism you worked with for Case Study Part II</li></ul>	<i>DUE: Case Study Part II</i>