

George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
Program: Special Education
Spring 2010
EDSE 501: Introduction to Special Education

Professor: Vicky G. Spencer, Ph.D

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Credit Hours: 3

Course Times: 4:30 – 8:30 P.M. on Fridays; 8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. on Saturdays

Course Dates: 1/29/10, 1/30/10, 2/19/10, 2/20/10, 3/5/10, 3/06/10

Course Description

This course provides a survey of current knowledge on individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. Content includes historical factors, legislation, etiology, characteristics, needs, educational strategies, including existing and emerging technologies, assessment, and support services of/for individuals with disabilities ranging from mild/moderate to severe levels of varying disabilities. The course will study the impact of disabilities on academic and social/emotional performances. Field experience is required. Prerequisites: none.

Student Outcomes

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

- Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between “normal” and “atypical” behaviors.
- Describe the legal and historical development of the field of special education.
- Describe various theoretical models and perspectives in the field of special education.
- Describe research in etiological factors associated with all disability areas.
- Describe social, cognitive, intellectual, and academic characteristics associated with all disability areas.
- Describe historical points of view and contribution of culturally diverse groups to the field of special education.
- Describe the role of families in the educational process.
- Describe past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including technological advances.
- Discuss issues and trends in special education, including legislation and litigation, and use of innovative technology.

Relationship of Courses to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

EDSE 501 is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education. 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_stdts/common_core_4-21-01.html

CEC standards that will be addressed in this class include some of the following CEC Core standards:

Standard 1 - Foundations

Knowledge:

- Models, theories, and philosophies that form the basis for special education practice.
- Laws, policies, and ethical principles regarding behavior management planning and implementation.
- Relationship of special education to the organization and function of educational agencies.
- Rights and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, and other professionals, and schools related to exceptional learning needs.
- Issues in definition and identification of individuals with exceptional learning needs, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Issues, assurances and due process rights related to assessment, eligibility, and placement within a continuum of services.
- Family systems and the role of families in the educational process.
- Historical points of view and contribution of culturally diverse groups.
- Impact of the dominant culture on shaping schools and the individuals who study and work in them.
- Potential impact of differences in values, languages, and customs that can exist between the home and school.

Skill:

- Articulate personal philosophy of special education.

Standard 2 - Development and Characteristics of Learners

Knowledge:

- Typical and atypical human growth and development.
- Educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities.
- Characteristics and effects of the cultural and environmental milieu of the individual with exceptional learning needs and the family.
- Family systems and the role of families in supporting development.
- Similarities and differences of individuals with and without exceptional learning needs.
- Similarities and differences among individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- Effects of various medications on individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Standard 3 - Individual Learning Differences

Knowledge:

- Effects an exceptional condition(s) can have on an individual's life.

- Impact of learners' academic and social abilities, attitudes, interests, and values on instruction and career development.
- Variations in beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures and their effects on relationships among individuals with exceptional learning needs, family, and schooling.
- Cultural perspectives influencing the relationships among families, schools, and communities as related to instruction.
- Differing ways of learning of individuals with exceptional learning needs including those from culturally diverse backgrounds and strategies for addressing these differences.

Nature of Course Delivery

Learning activities may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Class lecture and discussion
- Application activities and assignments
- Small group activities and assignments
- Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard
- Research and presentation activities
- Video and other media supports

Required Texts

Friend, M. (2008). *Special education: Contemporary perspectives for school Professionals* (2nd ed.). Boston: Pearson.

This text has a companion website at: <http://www.ablongman.com/friendintro2e/> . There is also a link for the previous edition that includes helpful cumulative timeline and flashcard functions at http://wps.ablongman.com/ab_friend_specedu_1 .

(Supplemental)

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Other readings may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

When seeking additional information, it is helpful to access the variety of professional journals for current data. Some suggestions include:

- *Exceptional Children*
- *Teaching Exceptional Children*
- *Journal of Special Education*
- *Intervention for School and Clinic*

Other Required Resources

Blackboard

Check Blackboard weekly for additional course materials at <http://courses.gmu.edu>

TaskStream

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 onetime 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.

Student Responsibilities

George Mason University Email: <https://msserver3.gmu.edu/> From this link, follow the directions for activating an email account. GMU makes such accounts available at no cost to students. Every student is required to establish a GMU email account to access Blackboard and other important university correspondence that will be sent to GMU email accounts only. Once an email account has been established, it is possible to forward email sent to the GMU account to another email account. Students are responsible for any information shared electronically and should check e-mail regularly.

George Mason Blackboard: <http://courses.gmu.edu>. From this link, you will find a variety of materials related to this course. The site will be updated as the course progresses. **Students are responsible** for any information shared via Blackboard and should check the site regularly

George Mason Patriot Web: <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu>. This is a self-service website for students, faculty, and staff of George Mason University. A wealth of useful links, information, and online forms are available on this website including program of studies details, application for graduation, request for transfer of credit, and internship application.

Cohort Information: Please visit Blackboard at <http://gmucommunity.blackboard.com> and begin by clicking “login” and using the User Name “cohort” followed by the Password “cohort” to access a variety of materials including the Frequently Asked Questions Guide, Enrollment forms, Textbook information, and TaskStream support.

Advising Contact Information: Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through the special education program. You may wish to contact Jancy Templeton, GMU Special Education Advisor, at jtemple1@gmu.edu or 703-993-2387. When contacting her, be prepared to provide your G number.

APA Style: The standard format for any written work in the College of Education. If you are unfamiliar with APA, it would benefit you to purchase the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.) or to access one of the internet sites that provides a summary of this information.

Academic Integrity: Students in this course are expected to exhibit academic integrity at all times. Be aware that plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as your own. **Whether the act is deliberate or unintentional is irrelevant.** You must take great care to give credit to an author when you borrow either exact words or ideas. Generally, if

you use 4 or more words in a row you should use quotation marks and a proper citation. Evidence of plagiarism or any other form of cheating in this class will result in a zero on that assignment and a report of the incident to the registrar. Remember that plagiarism is a very serious offense and can result in dismissal from the University. The instructor reserves the right to submit your work to **turnitin** or **safeassign**, plagiarism detection services, for an integrity assessment as needed.

Graduate School of Education Dispositions Criteria: Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://www.gse.gmu.edu/> for a listing of these dispositions.

George Mason University Honor Code:

http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 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.

Students with Disabilities: www.gmu.edu/student/drc 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 the website or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.

Responsible Use of Computing: <http://mail.gmu.edu> Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. From the link above, click on the Responsible Use of Computing link found at the bottom of the screen.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend **all** classes, arrive on time, remain in class for the duration of each session, demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom (see Professional Disposition Criteria), and complete all assignments with professional quality and in a timely manner.

When absence from class is unavoidable, students are responsible for getting all class information (e.g., handouts, announcements, notes, syllabus revisions, etc.) from another class member prior to the class meeting that follows the absence. Be aware that any points earned for participation in class activities during a time of absence will not be earned and cannot be reclaimed.

Computers, Cell Phones, Blackberries, and Recording Devices

Please turn all of these off, and keep them put away during class time.

The use of electronic devices that record class or photograph individuals or materials may not be used without instructor permission.

Course Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Below are the basic weights of the various kinds of work required for the course, but students should always bear in mind that grading is primarily a judgment about your

performance on a particular assignment. Grades are designed to indicate your success in completing assignments, not the level of effort you put into them.

Your performance in the course will be rated upon the following:

Participation Activities	12%
Discussion Board Activities	20%
Exploratory Activities	25%
Child Abuse Awareness Program*	8%
Final Exam*	35%
Total	100%

Note: *Points will be deducted for work submitted late.* This includes any items that are not submitted upon request due to class absence or tardiness.

It is recommended that students retain electronic and hard copies of ALL course assignments. Products from this class can become part of one's individual professional portfolio used to document satisfactory progress towards licensure as based on the CEC standards. The final exam and child abuse certification are mandatory components of the course (regardless of who teaches it) as they are **probable entries for the student portfolio.*

ASSIGNMENTS

Class Preparation: Students are expected to read text assignments by the date they are listed for discussion in class. Utilizing the companion website may be beneficial for some learners while others may benefit by taking notes, discussing, highlighting, or by marking key concepts with post-it notes. The goal is to convert your text into a valuable resource.

Participation in Class Activities: (12%) Students are expected to attend class and actively participate in all assignments, group activities, and class discussions. Active participation includes the asking of questions and the presentation of one's own understanding with regard to the readings and lectures as well as interactive discussion and participation in activities with other class members. Active participation also includes listening and respectful consideration of the comments of others. This will require all students to complete the required readings, activities, and assignments for that specific class meeting. Additionally, during each class meeting there will be opportunities to earn 2 points for successful completion of in-class activities. If you are not in attendance and thus not able to participate when these activities occur, assigned points cannot be earned.

Discussion Board Activities: (20%) Students are expected to complete specific activities listed online to further explore class topics. Please refer to the Discussion section of Blackboard, then click on the specific topic or individual links to participate.

Exploratory Activities: (25%) Each adult learner brings varying levels of experience to introductory courses such as this. In order to address your differing backgrounds, you will select activities from a menu of options so that you can tailor this portion of the course to address your own educational needs as you build an emerging philosophy of

special education. You should refer to the separate handout for details regarding this assignment.

***Child Abuse Awareness Program: (8%)** Students will complete an online child abuse awareness training module at http://www.vcu.edu/vissta/training/va_teachers/. The site includes the definitions and indicators of child abuse and neglect, how to respond to signs of abuse and to report abuse, the legal requirements of Virginia teachers to report abuse, state support services, and the actions that follow reports of abuse. Quizzes and scenarios assess student understanding and a certificate of completion is awarded.

***Comprehensive Final Exam: (35%) Signature Assignment**

A comprehensive exam covering key course content will be administered. Key points of emphasis include the foundations of special education, procedures of special education, and the characteristics of each disability area.

**These assignments are probable entries for the student portfolio.*

Grading criteria**

- 94 – 100% = A
- 90 – 93% = A-
- 87 – 89% = B+
- 80 – 86% = B
- 70 – 79% = C
- <70 = F

***Traditional rounding principles apply (i.e. .5 rounds up)*

COURSE TOPICS

Class Session	Date	Topics	Readings and Assignments Due
1.	1/29/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of Class Logistics • Introduction to Special Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Contact Cards and enrollment materials
2.	1/30/10 A.M.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundations of Special Education *Historical perspectives *Legal mandates *Ethical practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1
3.	1/30/10 P.M.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cycle of Special Education *Referral *Evaluation & Eligibility *IEPs & Placements * 504 Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2
Discussion Board One		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow instructions on Blackboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due by 2/18/10
4.	2/19/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cognitive Continuum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 8, 14, & 15

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *G/T *MR (aka ID) *MD *DD 	
5.	2/19/10 A.M.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with LD/ED • ADHD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 5,6, & 7 • Child Abuse Awareness Program Certificate Due
6.	2/19/10 P.M.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Concerns *SLI *Autism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 9 & 12
Discussion Board Two		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow instructions on Blackboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due by 3/4/10
7.	3/5/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Physical Realm *OI *OHI *TBI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 13 • Exploratory Activities Due
8.	3/6/10 A.M.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sensory Arena *VI *HI *Deaf-Blindness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 10 & 11
9.	3/6/10 P.M.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Issues in Special Education *Multiculturalism *ELL *Collaboration & Co-teaching *Other • Review and Wrap-up activities • Exam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 3 & 4
Final Exam			

NOTE: Syllabus is subject to change as needed. 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. Inclement weather cancellations will shift content to online delivery format and do not excuse students from completion of requirements.