

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
FAST TRAIN PROGRAM
EDSE 501: Introduction to Special Education
Spring 2011
ONLINE COURSE**

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Course Meeting Dates/Times:

This 10-week course will be taught on-line, using *Blackboard* course software (<http://courses.gmu.edu/>). The course will begin on Thursday, January 6.

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. The course will study the impact of disabilities on academic and social/emotional performance. 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 contributions 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 Course 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 special education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The program aligns with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children, the major special education professional organization in the United States. As such, the curriculum for the course includes competencies for teaching students with disabilities from preschool through grade 12.

The CEC Standards are listed on the following web site:

http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf_based_stds/common_core_4-21-01.html

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

Standard 1: Foundations

- 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 with 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.
- Importance 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

Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners

- 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 facilities in supporting development.
- Similarities and differences of individuals with and without exceptional learning needs.
- Similarities and differences among individual with exceptional learning needs.
- Effects of various medications on individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Standard 3 Individual Learning Differences

- 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:

Due to the international residence of enrolled students, the course is delivered entirely online.

Required Text:

Hallahan, D. P., & Kauffman, J. M. (2009). 11th Ed. *Exceptional Learners: An Introduction to Special Education*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Additional course readings will be provided by instructor.

Course Requirements:

EDSE 501 will meet on-line at: <http://courses.gmu.edu/> weekly. As a community of on-line learners, it is incumbent upon each of us to participate regularly and complete weekly assignments. Students will also be expected to complete fieldwork, to complete collaborative group projects and to undertake self-guided learning. The success of an online class is based large on engagement and interaction among participants and collaborative learning.

Evaluation:

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|-------------------------------|------|
| • Discussion Board | 15 % |
| • Field Experience | 30 % |
| • Internet Log/Report | 25 % |
| • Final Exam | 25 % |
| • Child Abuse Online Training | 5 % |

Grading Criteria:

95 – 100	A
90 – 94	A-
85 – 89	B+
80 – 84	B
70 – 79	C
< 70	F

College of Education and Human Development

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

TaskStream:

Note: Every student registered for any EDSE course is required to submit signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream may result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN).

Description of Assignments:

Discussion Board (DB) Postings (15%) – Students are required to post a minimum of two responses to questions placed on Discussion Board. The discussion postings should be thorough and thoughtful. The first response, with appropriate reference(s), should represent the student's answer to the question posted by the instructor. Additional postings should be in response to the opinions of others in the class. Simply posting an "I agree/disagree with your comment" to someone else's thoughts is not considered adequate. A Rubric can be found on Blackboard.

Note: Postings should only be made during the week the topic is discussed unless otherwise specified. Once the week ends all messages should be directed toward the new topic.

2. **A Field Experience (30%)** will be required. The purpose of the field experience is to learn more about special needs students in international schools. Each participant should complete approximately twenty hours of observations and interviews resulting in a final Field Experience report. The Field Experience may involve interviews with the teacher(s) or parent(s), observations of students, team-teaching or group lessons (with special needs teacher or regular classroom teacher). The participant will keep a daily/weekly dated journal of the Field Experience. When submitting the final report also include documentation such as logs, permission forms, reflections, evaluations and other documentation supporting your experiences. The field experience report should have three main sections: 1) School Description; 2) Fieldwork Journal 3) Evaluation of the Support Program. The report should be double-spaced. A Rubric can be found on Blackboard. The report with documentation is the final product of your field experience and should reflect information learned in the course including readings from the text and other sources. **Field experience report with documentation will be due on March 9 or before.**
3. **The Internet Log/Report (25%)** is designed to increase the participants' familiarity with information that is available through the use of technology. Students should begin by selecting a disability area. Next, a net search on the web should be conducted to identify useful and practical web sites for teachers that focus on instructional and/or behavioral strategies that have proven effective with the disability group identified. Instructional strategies should focus on reading, writing or mathematics. From the net search, students should select **five exceptional web sites** for the development of a six page written report (including a reference page). The one page description of each web site should include the type of information available at the site, a description of the instructional/behavioral strategy and a summary of how the strategy could be implemented in an international school. A Rubric can be found on Blackboard.
Internet Log/Report will be due on Feb. 9 or before and will be submitted to Assignment Dropbox.
4. **Final Exam (25%) – due March 16 to Assignment Dropbox. Child Abuse Online Training: (5%) – due Feb. 23 to TaskStream.** These are the two signature assignments for the course and must be posted on the student's account in TaskStream: <http://www.taskstream.com/>
The child abuse training can be found at: <http://www.vcu.edu/vissta/training/va teachers/>
Upon completion of the Child Abuse training, the certification of completion must be posted on TaskStream. Once the final exam has been graded, the instructor will provide each student with a rubric that must be posted on TaskStream.

Course Outline, Topics and Text Readings:

Students will be asked to consider each of these weekly topics in direct relationship to the themes, research-based perspectives, methodology considerations, and other issues as they exist in international school environments. Students will be asked to become reflective learners and educators in their understanding of research-based suggested practices and the form and function of special needs services in their own settings. Listed below are the anticipated readings for each week.

WEEK 1 Jan 6 – Jan. 12

Topic: Introduction to Special Education, Chapters 1 and 2

Assignments: Respond to Trigger Question
Introduce yourself on Discussion Board.
Review the syllabus and other information on Blackboard
Become familiar with TaskStream

WEEK 2 – Jan. 13 – Jan. 19

Topics: Multicultural & Bilingual Aspects of Special Education; Parents and Families

Text Readings: Chapters 3 & 4

WEEK 3 – Jan. 20 – Jan. 26

Topics: Intellectual Disabilities, Multiple and Severe Disabilities

Text Readings: Chapters 5 & 13

WEEK 4 – Jan. 27 – Feb. 2

Topic: Specific Learning Disabilities

Text Readings: Chapter 6

Child Abuse certificate due to be posted on TaskStream on Feb. 23

WEEK 5 – Feb. 3 - Feb. 9

Topics: ADHD; Emotional Disabilities

Text Readings: Chapters 7 & 8

WEEK 6 – Feb. 10 – Feb. 16

Topic: Communication Disorders

Text Readings: Chapter 9

Internet Log due Feb. 9

WEEK 7 – Feb. 17 – Feb. 23

Topics: Sensory Loss – Low Vision & Blindness; Hearing Impairment & Deafness

Text Readings: Chapters 10 & 11

WEEK 8 – Feb. 24 - March 2

Topic: Autism Spectrum Disorders

Text Readings: Chapter 12

WEEK 9 – March 3 – March 9

Topic: Physical Disabilities & Other Health Impairment

Text Readings: Chapter 14

WEEK 10 – March 10 – March 16

Topic: Learners with Special Gifts & Talents

Text Readings: Chapter 15

Professional Performance Criteria Dispositions for a Career Educator

The Virginia Department of Education promotes maintaining standards of professional competence and requires applicants for licensure to possess good moral character. Students must meet CEHD grading standards and course requirements as well as *demonstrate professional performance* in the areas required of professional educators: communication, collaboration and professionalism. Therefore, the College of Education and Human Development expects its students to develop and exhibit the following:

Commitment to the Profession

- Promoting exemplary practice
- Excellence in teaching and learning
- Advancing the profession
- Engagement in partnerships

Commitment to Honoring Professional Ethical Standards

- Fairness
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Trustworthiness
- Confidentiality
- Respect for Colleagues and students

Commitment to Key Elements of Professional Knowledge

- Belief that all individuals have the potential for growth and learning
- Persistence in helping individuals succeed
- High standards
- Safe and supportive learning environments
- Systematic planning
- Intrinsic motivation
- Reciprocal, active learning
- Continuous, integrated assessment
- Critical thinking
- Thoughtful, responsive listening
- Active, supportive interactions
- Technology-supported learning
- Research-based practices
- Respect for diverse talents, abilities and perspectives
- Authentic and relevant learning

Commitment to Being a Member of a Learning Community

- Professional dialogue
- Self-improvement
- Collective improvement
- Reflective practice
- Responsibility
- Flexibility
- Collaboration
- Continuous, lifelong learning

Commitment to Democratic Values and Social Justice

- Understanding systemic issues the prevent full participation
- Awareness of practices that promote equity and access
- Respects the opinion and dignity of others
- Appreciates and integrates multiple perspectives

Adopted by GSE – May 2004

I understand my responsibility to develop and maintain professional behaviors and dispositions that are associated with career professionals in education.

Signature

Date

References: Virginia DOE, INTASC, NEA Code of Ethics, Graduate School of Education

