

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**Graduate School of Education College of Education and Human**  
**Development**  
**TFA 6: Fall 2011**

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**EDSE 540 (Section 673): Characteristics of Students with Disabilities Who Access the General Curriculum**

**Class Dates:** Thursdays, September 1-December 16, 2011 (no class 11/24)

**Class Times:** 7:30-10:00pm

**Location:** Arlington Campus, Founders Hall Room 113

*"My heart is singing for joy this morning. A miracle has happened! The light of understanding has shone upon my little pupil's mind, and behold, all things are changed" -- Annie Sullivan*

*"He who opens a school door, closes a prison" -- Victor Hugo*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

EDSE 540 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.

**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 learning disabilities and /or emotional disturbances. 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.

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

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

**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.

**Alignment of Outcomes and Requirements with Key CEC/NCATE Standards**

CEC/NCATE STANDARDS	STUDENT OUTCOMES	COURSE REQUIREMENTS
<p><b>Standard 1: Foundations</b>            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"> <li>• Describe the field of learning disabilities from its origins to policies and practices of today.</li> <li>• Compare the history of education for students with emotional and behavioral disorders, students with learning disabilities students with mild intellectual disabilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading assignments</li> <li>• Small group discussion</li> <li>• Journal abstracts</li> </ul>
<p><b>Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners</b>            Special educators understand the similarities and differences in human development and the 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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define <i>learning disability, emotional disturbance, and mild intellectual disabilities</i>.</li> <li>• Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between <i>normal</i> and <i>atypical</i> behaviors.</li> <li>• Describe characteristics of young children and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading assignments</li> <li>• Small group discussions</li> <li>• Case Study</li> </ul>

<p>individual's ability to learn, interact socially, and live as contributing community members.</p>	<p>adolescents with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and/or mild intellectual disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare at least three conceptual models of behavioral deficits with three conceptual models that explain learning disabilities and/or mild intellectual disabilities.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences</b>  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"> <li>• Discuss the various etiologies in relation to biological, family, cultural, and school perspectives.</li> <li>• Identify various procedures and practices that motivate reluctant learners to complete class work and develop skills that build self-understanding and confidence as learners.</li> <li>• Describe and discuss a range of learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and mild intellectual disabilities for a parent and suggest possible interventions for home and school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case study report</li> <li>• Reading assignments</li> <li>• Field Observations</li> <li>• Final exam</li> </ul>
<p><b>Standard 6: Language</b>  Special educators understand typical and atypical language development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe at least one theory of how</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small group discussion</li> </ul>

<p>and the ways in which disabilities can interact with an individual's experience with and use of language.</p>	<p>children develop language.*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class activities</li> <li>• Final exam</li> </ul>
<p><b>Standard 8: Assessment</b>          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"> <li>• Describe informal assessment procedures for determining knowledge and skills of children with various learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral problems.</li> <li>• Based on informal assessment procedures, design appropriate clinical teaching strategies for children with various learning disabilities and/or behavior problems.</li> <li>• Describe what an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is and how it is developed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small group discussion</li> <li>• Class activities</li> <li>• Case study report</li> <li>• Journal Abstracts</li> <li>• Student presentation</li> <li>• Final exam</li> </ul>

**Note:**  
 This syllabus may change according to class needs. If you have emergency medical information to share with the instructor or need special arrangements, *please call and/or make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible.*

**Course Expectations For Students**

**Attendance:**  
 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 to earn the **5-point class participation grade**. Attendance, timeliness, and professionally relevant, active participation are expected. Attendance and professional participation at all sessions is very important because many of the activities in class

are planned in such a way that they cannot necessarily be recreated outside of the class session. Missing **more than one class** or **repeated** tardiness/leaving early will result in losing your participation grade for the course. Please notify me **in advance** by phone or email if you will not be able to attend class.

**Note: It is impossible to participate fully in this class while texting, Facebooking, tweeting, working on documents, etc. Please be *fully* present in class 😊**

**Workload:**

In-depth reading, study, and work on course requirements require outside class time. Students are expected to allot approximately three hours for class readings and preparation for *each* credit hour weekly in addition to time spent on papers and assignments.

**Written and Oral Language:**

**APA Style** is 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 (5th ed.) You are required to use APA guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines: <http://apastyle.apa.org/>

We will use *person-first language* in our class discussions and written assignments (and ideally in our professional practice). We will also strive to replace the term “Mental Retardation” with “Intellectual Disabilities” in our oral and written communication in accordance with terminology choices in the disability community.

**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 APA citation. Remember that plagiarism is a very serious offense and can result in dismissal from the University. 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 Dean's Office.

**Email: Please note that your GMU email will be used exclusively for all your GMU courses: Please activate and forward your GMU email to your most-checked account!**

Go to <http://mail.gmu.edu>. Click on Options tab at the top of the page. Click on Settings link on the left of the page. Type in your most-checked email account in the box labeled Mail Forwarding.

**Be an Informed Student:**

Negotiating all the requirements for your Master’s and/or VA Licensure is extremely complex. It is recommended that you schedule a phone/email or in-person appointment with the Special Education Advisor, Jancy Templeton ([jtemple1@gmu.edu](mailto:jtemple1@gmu.edu) 703/993-2387). You may also schedule with the Cohort Advisor, Pam Baker ([pbaker5@gmu.edu](mailto:pbaker5@gmu.edu) 703/993-1787). Doing so each semester will ensure that you rectify any outstanding issues, are timely with all necessary paperwork, and are ultimately in good standing to graduate on time.

## **GMU Graduate School Of Education Statements Of Student**

### **Responsibilities**

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12> for the full honor code.
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/1301gen.html> 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 course. See <http://www2.gmu.edu/dpt/unilife/ods> or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.
- 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.

### **EVALUATION**

• Blackboard Activities	15 (3 x 5 pts. ea.)
• Class Participation	5
• <b>Case Study*</b>	<b>30*</b>
• Journal Summaries Paper	30
• Final Exam	25
	<u>Total</u> 100

### **\*TASKSTREAM SUBMISSION\*: Electronic Portfolio**

This assignment is the “signature” assignment for the student portfolio and must be submitted digitally to Taskstream, your electronic portfolio, under **CEC Standard 3: Case Study**. Because this is one of your first classes, you will need to make sure you self-enroll into Taskstream. You will be emailed directions as to how to enroll through

your GMU email. Every class you take in this program will have a signature assignment that must be submitted (540 has one). In addition, you will be submitting other documents from your courses to complete your portfolio.

**Every student registered for any EDSE course including this 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. \***

### **Grading Criteria**

95-100% = A

90-94% = A-

84-89% = B

83-70 = C

< 70% = F

### **MAJOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **1. Three Online Discussions/Reflections: (15% of final grade)**

**Due dates: by 9:00 AM the day of class**

- Each class member is expected to participate online on **Blackboard's Discussion Board**. The instructor will post discussion assignments that should be addressed after selected class sessions (do not complete ahead of time), and thoughtful, detailed responses that address the topic *and* your classmates' reflections are expected *no later than 9:am the day of the next class session*. A total of 3 responses must be posted ON TIME for full credit (**no late postings will be accepted**).
- It is highly recommended that students compose their responses in a word-processing program so they can be proofread and edited prior to posting. Responses can then be copied and pasted into the Discussion Board. Doing so also reduces the possibility that responses are "lost" before submission.

#### **2. Case Study Report (30% of final grade)**

**Due Date:**

A comprehensive case study on a student with an intellectual, emotional and/or learning disability will be completed. The case study should include the following components:

- Student's demographic data
- Description of school and student's community
- Educational history (schools attended, reason for referral, pre-referral interventions, results of multidisciplinary evaluation, special education

classification, description and location of educational service provision, related services)

- Educational goals and objectives, classroom accommodations
- Observational information (at least two class periods of observations specifically related to student goals, objectives, and accommodations)
- Parent interviews (related to education goals, objectives, accommodations, and any other relevant issues.)
- Additional recommendations, educational accommodations, and/or modifications
- Summary and synthesis (comparison of student's characteristics with those described in the textbook or other research, i.e., which characteristics were identified in your student? Integrate at least three (3) sources from the literature with what you observed in your case study.)
- Appendices – to include student work samples, parent interview questions/answers.
- Be prepared to present your case study in class orally

### 3. Abstracts of Journal Articles (30% of final grade)

#### Due Date:

- 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 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 Documents 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 one-page summary. The abstract should be typed an introduction to the students needs, followed by 3 summaries with an APA style citation at the top of the page. Each entry should consist of two parts labeled 1.-Summary and 2.-Critique. Finally, a conclusion that ties together the 3 summaries' 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.**

### 4. Final Exam (25% of final grade)



**Due Date:**

- An exam that covers course content will be administered. The exam will be based on case studies and include IEP-writing.

<b>CLASS</b>	<b>TOPICS</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENTS to do after this session</b>	<b>DUE THIS CLASS SESSION</b>
1 September 1	Syllabus Review	Acquire Books Ensure successful entry to Blackboard for this course  Chapter 1	
2 September 8	Foundations of Special Education	Chapter 2	
September 15	Overview of Students with Mild Disabilities	Chapter 11	Discussion Board 1
September 22	*Family Partnerships	Chapter 3	Discussion Board 2
September 29	Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities	Chapter 5	Discussion Board 3
October 6	Students with Learning Disabilities	Chapters 9 and 10	
October 13	Students with Emotional Disturbance	Chapter 6	
October 20	Classroom Management and Behavior	Chapter 4	
October 27	Inclusive Classrooms and Programming	Chapter 7	Case Study Paper and submission to Taskstream under CEC Standard 3
November 3	Learning and Teaching	Chapter 8	
November 10	Quality Instruction and Teaching	Handout	
November 17	Quality Instruction and Teaching	Handout	Journal Articles Paper
November 24	Thanksgiving Holiday No Class		
December 1	Presentations of Case Studies		
December 8	Presentations of Case studies and Review		
December 15	Final Exam		

<b>I. Blackboard 3 Online Discussion/Reflections Rubric</b>	<b>5 Exemplary</b>	<b>4 Good</b>	<b>3 Acceptable</b>	<b>2 Inadequate</b>	<b>1 Unacceptable</b>
<p><i>Background</i> Student has clearly completed the discussion prompt or activity prior to developing written response. Response is on time!</p>					
<p><i>Quality</i> Addresses all aspects of discussion starter/prompt. Reacts to both prompt <b>and</b> classmates' responses (<b>very important!</b>)</p>					
<p><i>Reflection</i> Summarizes thoughts about articles read or information received and includes rationales for the statements made. Depth of reflection &amp; depth of linkages to other course readings, teaching, and learning in general.</p>					
<p><b>Collaboration</b> Student incorporates classmates' responses into own response. Acknowledges differences of opinion appropriately. Recognizes and validates multiple viewpoints.</p>					
<p><b>Writing</b> Reflection is written to graduate-level standards and there are <u>very few</u> writing or printing errors.</p>					

**Case Study Assignment  
Scoring Rubric**

<b>Case Study</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>Points Received</b>
Writing/APA	1	
Student's Demographic Data	2	
Description of School and Neighborhood	2	
Educational History	5	
IEP Goals and Objectives	3	
Parent Interviews	3	
Additional Recommendations	3	
Summary and Synthesis	8	
Observational Information/Appendices (Student work, etc.)	3	
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>30</b>	

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade** \_\_\_\_\_

**Journal Abstracts  
Scoring Rubric**

<b>Case Study Presentation</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>Points Received</b>
APA Style and Writing Quality	3	
Introduction to Student's Needs (based on your case study)	5	
Quality of Summaries	7	
Quality of Critiques	7	
Conclusion/Appropriateness of Recommendations	8	
Total Points	30	

**Student Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade** \_\_\_\_\_