



**George Mason University  
Graduate School of Education**

**EDSE 440, Section 001: Characteristics of Students with Emotional  
Disturbance and Learning Disabilities--Fall 2011 – Cohort - Loudoun County  
Public Schools**

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

**Instructor:** Paula Travers, PhD  
**Phone:** Cell: 301-633-5364  
**Email:** ptravers@gmu.edu

**Class day/time:** Tuesdays, 4:30-7:10 PM  
**Class location:** GMU-Loudoun Campus

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Covers theories and specific conditions in learning disabilities and emotional disorders. Includes the impact of these learning and behavioral differences on academic and social and emotional performances. Addresses diversity within student populations. Experiential, observational, and interactive strategies, including use of technological advances, are used to facilitate fulfillment of the outcomes established for the course.

**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, emotional disturbances, and mild intellectual 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.

**Evidence-Based Practices**

This course will incorporate the evidence-based practices (EBPs) relevant to the characteristics of students with mild disabilities, etiology of mild disabilities, inclusionary practices, and inclusionary practices. These EBPs are indicated with an asterisk (\*) in this syllabus’ schedule. Evidence for the selected research-based practices is informed by meta-analysis, literature reviews/synthesis, the technical assistance networks which provide web-based resources, and the national organizations whose mission is to support students with disabilities. We address both promising and emerging practices in the field of special education. This course will provide opportunities for students to take an active, decision-making role to thoughtfully select, modify, apply, and evaluate EBPs in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

**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.

**Learning activities include the following:**

1. Class lecture, discussion, cooperative group work, and participation.
2. Videotapes and other relevant media presentations.
3. Study and independent library research.
4. *Blackboard e-Education Learning System* applications.
5. Application activities, including in class evaluation of intervention research and materials.
6. Class presentations

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

CEC/NCATE STANDARDS	STUDENT OUTCOMES	COURSE REQUIREMENTS
<b>Standard 1: Foundations</b> Special educators understand the field as an evolving and changing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the field of learning disabilities from its origins to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading assignments</li> <li>• Small group</li> </ul>

<p>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>	<p>policies and practices of today.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare the history of education for students with emotional and behavioral disorders, students with learning disabilities students with mild intellectual disabilities.</li> </ul>	<p>discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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 individual’s ability to learn, interact socially, and live as contributing community members.</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 adolescents with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and/or mild intellectual disabilities.</li> <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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading assignments</li> <li>• Small group discussions</li> <li>• Case Study</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>
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<p><b>Standard 6: Language</b>  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"> <li>• Describe at least one theory of how children develop language.*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small group discussion</li> <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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe informal assessment procedures for determining knowledge and skills of children with various learning disabilities and</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>

<p>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>	<p>emotional/behavioral problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>	
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**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 Emotional Disturbance and Learning Disabilities. 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.

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/>]. This link 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 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/>] or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.
- 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. From this link, [<https://thanatos.gmu.edu/masonlive/login>] 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.
- 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. See <http://www.gse.gmu.edu/> for a listing of these dispositions.
- *George Mason Blackboard*: From this link, <http://courses.gmu.edu> 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*: This is a self-service website <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu> 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.

- *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](mailto:jtemple1@gmu.edu) or 703-993-2387. When contacting her, be prepared to provide your G number.

### *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. You may visit <http://caps.gmu.edu> for more information.
- 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. You may visit <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu> for more information.
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website at <http://gse.gmu.edu>.

### **Class Expectations:**

- **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. Attendance, timeliness, and professionally relevant behavior, as well as active participation during class is 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, inadequate class participation, or repeated tardiness will result in a drop in your participation grade. When an absence from class is unavoidable, students are responsible for acquisition of all class information (e.g., handouts, announcements, notes, syllabus revisions, etc.) from another class member prior to the class meeting following the absence. Please notify the instructor in advance by email if you will not be able to attend 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 study and preparation time for each credit hour weekly in addition to time spent on papers and assignments. **The result of late work will result in the loss of at least 5 points.** If you are absent, you still need to submit the work prior to class or by the due date in order to be eligible for full points. Individual situations will be addressed with individual students outside of class.
- **Work submission:** All assignments are to be submitted at the start of the class session when due. Electronic work submissions will only be accepted in extreme emergency situations which impact the entire class (ie. weather, natural disaster, class cancellation). All assignments submitted are considered final work and cannot be resubmitted for re-grading. The instructor will not preview any work due and no sample assignments will be provided. Detailed rubrics for each written assignment are included with this syllabus.
- **Tests/quizzes:** All tests and quizzes will be taken during class times, (unless accommodations are allowed for individual needs), and are closed book and closed note evaluations. Academic integrity while taking quizzes and exams is expected.
- **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 greatly benefit you to purchase the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.)** You are required to use APA guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines: <http://apastyle.apa.org>. It is strongly recommended that you review the APA manual for confidentiality requirements impacting work submitted. NOTE: For all works cited use the *Hanging Indent* format (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/resources-template.php?id=4>). All written work must contain page numbers.
- We will use **person-first language** in our class discussions and written assignments which is a part of 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.



- Placement for this Field Experience/Case Study: If you have difficulty finding a student for the case study assignment, Mason's Field Placement Specialist Lauren Clark [lclarkg@gmu.edu](mailto:lclarkg@gmu.edu) can assist in placing Mason students at school sites. Mason is also required to track where self-placed students will complete their field experiences. Consequently, each person must access <http://cehd.gmu.edu/endorse/ferf> to complete the information requested (i.e., inform GMU of the school where you are working, the grade level of the youngster, and the approximate number of hours you anticipate working with the youngster) after targeting the youngster with whom this Case Study will be completed. Note: you will need to observe a reading classroom AND you will need access to work with a child with a disability over the semester.
- Signature Assignment: 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.

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.

- **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 the class will result in a zero on that assignment and a report of the incident to the Dean's Office.**

- **Computers, Cell Phones, Blackberries, and Recording Devices**  
The use of personal computers is *strongly discouraged* during class time. The use of electronic devices that produce sound or otherwise interfere with the learning of others (i.e., cell phones, pagers) is prohibited during class. Please turn these devices off before the start of class. Texting and other non-class use of cell phones or similar devices is also prohibited during class sessions.

**UNDERGRADUATE GRADING CRITERIA**

95 - 100%	= A
90 - 94%	= A-
87 - 89%	= B+
84 - 86%	= B
80 - 83%	= B-
77 - 79%	= C
+74 - 76%	= C
70 - 73%	= C-
60 - 69%	= D
<60%	= F

**EVALUATION**

**POINTS**

1.	Class Participation (attendance and in class).....	15 points
2.	Quiz-Relevant Legislation (9/13).....	10 points
3.	Summary of Journal Articles (10/11).....	15 points
4.	Quiz-Definition, Identification, and Characteristics of students with Mild ID, ED, and SLD (10/18).....	15 points
5.	Quiz-Identifying Effective Interventions/MID/ED/SLD (11/29).....	10 points
6.	<b>Case Study(Including Presentation) (12/6).....</b>	<b>10 points*</b>
7.	Final Exam (12/13).....	25 points

**TOTAL ..... 100 points**

**\*This assignment is the “signature” assignment for the student portfolio and must be uploaded to Taskstream.**

It is recommended that students retain copies of all course products to document their progress through the GMU Special Education program. Products from this class can become part of your individual professional portfolio used in your portfolio classes to document your satisfactory progress through the GMU program and the CEC performance based standards.

## MAJOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

### 1. **Class Attendance and Participation (15 points)**

Promptness and presence in all class sessions is expected. In addition, students are expected to complete weekly in class and out of class activities, participate in class discussions, and give project presentation update discussions throughout the semester. Points missed due to absences can not be made up. **Excessive absences can result in additional penalties and potential withdrawal from class.**

### 2. **Quiz - Relevant Legislation (Due: 9/13, 10 points)**

This quiz will cover an overview of the American Disabilities Act, No Child Left Behind, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) legislation. Students will be expected to identify key components of each law and be able to delineate the differences between the three pieces of legislation. Students will also be expected to identify which regulation relates to a specific student situation. The quiz will consist of multiple choice, true/false and short answer questions.

### 3. **Summary of Journal Articles (Due: 10/11, 15 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 and should be data-based examinations of issues relevant to the MID/ED/SLD field.

You may use ERIC to search for documents but no ERIC-generated documents can be used to complete the assignment. 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.

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. This summary must be typed, and double-spaced (only), and include a title page. An introduction to your student's needs must be included, followed by each summary. 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.** APA style must be utilized throughout the paper and must include the required citations and confidentiality maintenance of the student discussed.

**4. Quiz-Definition, Identification, and Characteristics of students with Mild ID, ED, and SLD (10/18, 15 points)**

This quiz will cover the specific characteristics of students with MID, ED and SLD to include cognitive, social and emotional functioning. Given specific characteristics, students will be asked to identify the disability most likely associated with the characteristics. Students will also be asked to describe the factors associated with the origin and causes of each disability. Finally, students will also be asked to identify the level of services in which programs can be implemented. This quiz will consist of multiple choice, true/false and short answer questions.

**5. Quiz--Identifying Effective Interventions for MID/ED and SLD students (11/29, 10 points)**

This quiz will cover research-based instructional strategies found useful in teaching students with mild disabilities. Students will be asked to identify specific ways to help students maintain organization and improve study and test-taking skills. Specific accommodation and modifications to text and tests will be queried. This quiz will consist of multiple choice, true/false and short answer questions.

**6. Case Study Report (12/6, 10 points) SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENT**

A comprehensive case study on a student with emotional or learning disability will be completed on a scenario of a student provided to you. 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
- 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

DO NOT INCLUDE COPIES OF ANY CONFIDENTIAL STUDENT DATA IN YOUR STUDY

THE CASE STUDY MUST BE UPLOADED INTO TASKSTREAM BEFORE YOU MAKE YOUR PRESENTATION.

### **Final Exam (12/13, 25 points)**

The final exam will cover 1) the components of the IEP, 2) the Due Process timeline, 3) formal and informal assessment procedures for various learning disabilities, 4) origins of learning disabilities. In addition, students should be familiar with terms (acronyms) specific to special education including: inclusion, LRE, and FAPE. Finally, given specific characteristics, students will be asked to identify a student disability, and discuss instructional approaches, accommodations, and modifications to the curriculum which are appropriate for the student. This exam will consist of multiple choice, true/false and an extended answer question.

## COURSE CALENDAR

<b>Class Date</b>	<b>Class Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
Aug. 30	Registration Introductions  Introduction to course  Syllabus Review Research resources (APA usage review)	Class participation: APA activity
Sept. 6	Foundations of Special Education Legislation	<b>Read Chapter 1</b>
Sept. 13	Quiz - Relevant Legislation  Overview of students with Mild Disabilities	<b>Read Chapter 2</b>
Sept. 20	Understanding students with mild intellectual disabilities: definitions, characteristics, identification, instructional approaches	<b>Read Chapter 3</b>
Sept. 27	Understanding students with emotional disabilities: definitions, characteristics, identification, instructional approaches.	<b>Read Chapter 4</b>
Oct. 4	Understanding students with specific learning disabilities: : definitions, characteristics, identification, instructional approaches	<b>Read Chapter 5</b>
Oct. 11	<b>NO CLASS COLUMBUS HOLIDAY</b>	<b>Read Chapter 6</b>
Oct. 18	<b>Quiz - Definition, identification, characteristics of students with Mild ID, ED and SLD</b> The Inclusive Classroom Collaborating in the classroom	<b>Review disability characteristics</b>
Oct. 25	Learning and Teaching Overview	<b>Read Chapter 7</b>
Nov. 1	Instructing students with mild disabilities Accommodations, modifications and strategies	<b>Read Chapter 8</b>
Nov. 8	Classroom management	<b>Read Chapters 9</b>
Nov. 15	Teaching Social Skills	<b>Read Chapter 10</b>
Nov. 22	Working with families: Building relationships and partnerships	<b>Read Chapter 11</b>

## Course Calendar (Continued)

Nov. 29	<b>Quiz- Identifying Effective Interventions</b>	Review intervention material
Dec. 6	Final Exam Review	Case study presentations 5-7 minutes
Dec. 13	Course Evaluations <b>Final Exam</b>	Review exam material
Dec. 20	Case Study Presentations (continued, if needed)	

This syllabus is subject to modification.

## Journal Article Summary Scoring Rubric

Journal Summaries	Points Possible	Points Received
APA style and writing quality Typed Double-spaced Title page Page numbering Quality of writing (ie. mechanics, flow of ideas)	7	
Student Introduction Gender Ethnicity Disability School level/grade Classroom setting/instructional format	1	
Relevance of article topics to student needs Addresses disability Feasibility of implementation Implications for student improvement	1	
Quality of Summaries <u>Brief</u> synopsis of study, research, or topic Concise summary of article key points, findings...	2	
Quality of Critiques Challenges to key article points Challenges to implementation for case study student	2	
Conclusion Recommendations for modifications Personal reflection	2	
Total Points	15	



### Case Study Scoring Rubric

Case Study	Points Possible	Points Received
Writing/ APA Typed Double-spaced Title page Page numbering Quality of writing (ie. mechanics, flow of ideas)	5	
Student's Demographic Data Gender Ethnicity Disability School level/grade Classroom setting/instructional format	2	
Description of School and Neighborhood Maintenance of confidentiality is required	2	
Educational History	3	
Review of IEP Goals and Objectives	3	
Evidence of Parent Interview Parent response to interview questions	1	
Summary Additional Recommendations Personal Reflections	2	
Observational Information Appendices (ie. Student work)	1	
Oral Presentation Engaging for class members Informative about student issues and challenges	1	
Total Points	20	