



George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
Spring 2012

EDSE 440: Spring 2012 – Section 001
Characteristics of Students with Disabilities Who Access the General Curriculum

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Office Hours: By appointment

Meeting Dates: Jan 24-May 15, 2012

Class day/time: Tuesdays, 4:30-7:10pm

Class location: Krug Hall 205

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.

Field experience is required. Prerequisites: none

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 mild disabilities. EDSE 440 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: 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

Alignment of Outcomes and Requirements with key CEC/NCATE Standards

CEC/NCATE STANDARDS	STUDENT OUTCOMES	COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Standard 1: Foundations 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Describe the field of learning disabilities from its origins to policies and practices of today.Compare the history of education for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reading assignmentsSmall group discussionJournal abstracts

<p>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>with emotional and behavioral disorders, students with learning disabilities students with mild intellectual disabilities.</p>	
<p>Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners 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"> • Define <i>learning disability, emotional disturbance, and mild intellectual disabilities</i>. • Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between <i>normal</i> and <i>atypical</i> behaviors. • Describe characteristics of young children and adolescents with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and/or mild intellectual disabilities. • Compare at least three conceptual models of behavioral deficits with three conceptual models that explain learning disabilities and/or mild intellectual disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading assignments • Small group discussions • Case Study
<p>Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences 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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the various etiologies in relation to biological, family, cultural, and school perspectives. • Identify various procedures and practices that motivate reluctant learners to complete class work and develop skills that build self-understanding and confidence as learners. • Describe and discuss a range of learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study report • Reading assignments • Field Observations • Final exam

<p>their interactions are the basis for individualizing instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning.</p>	<p>disabilities, emotional disturbances, and mild intellectual disabilities for a parent and suggest possible interventions for home and school.</p>	
<p>Standard 6: Language 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"> • Describe at least one theory of how children develop language.* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group discussion • Class activities • Final exam
<p>Standard 8: Assessment 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"> • Describe informal assessment procedures for determining knowledge and skills of children with various learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral problems. • Based on informal assessment procedures, design appropriate clinical teaching strategies for children with various learning disabilities and/or behavior problems. • Describe what an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is and how it is developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group discussion • Class activities • Case study report • Journal Abstracts • Student presentation • Final exam

Relationship of Course to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

EDSE 440 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/>].
- 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/>].

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

Evidence-Based Practice Statement: This course will incorporate the evidence-based practices (EBPs) relevant to characteristics of students with mild disabilities, etiology of mild disabilities, and inclusionary practices. These EBPs are indicated with an asterisk (*) in this syllabus. 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 integrated formats with instructional technology, lecture, discussion, guest presenters, videos, and small group activities. Students will be expected to engage in dialog with the instructor and peers cooperatively and collaboratively.

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

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* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

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, active participation will be 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 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 me 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 be the loss of 5 points per day until the assignment is received by the instructor.** If you are absent, you still need to submit the work prior to class or by the due date. Individual situations will be addressed with individual students outside of class.
- **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 (6th 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 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.

- **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 discouraged in this course. Class notes will be posted on Blackboard prior to class and will also be shown during class if you prefer not to print out a copy. 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

Class Attendance & Participation	15%
APA assignment	5%
Abstract of Journal Articles	15%
Case Study & Presentation	25%
Presentation of effective interventions	20%
Final exam	20%
Total	100%

MAJOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and Participation in Class Activities (15 points)

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 class meetings there will be opportunities to earn 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.

After two absences, two points per absence will be deducted in addition to the loss of participation points.

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.

Evaluation:

1. Class attendance and participation (15 points)
2. APA assignment (5 points)
3. Abstract of journal articles (7.5 points each for a total of 15 points)
4. Case study & presentation (25 points)
5. Presentation of effective interventions (20 points)
6. Final Exam (20)

➤ **Points will be deducted for work submitted late**

MAJOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and Participation in Class Activities (15 points)

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After two absences, two points per absence will be deducted in addition to the loss of participation points.

I. APA assignment (5 points)

Students will use APA 6 guidelines to edit a paper into the correct APA format. Students are required to use APA 6 when turning in papers for this class.

II. Abstracts of Journal Articles (15 points)

Each student will summarize two (2) journal articles that are relevant to working with students with disabilities. 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/ ID 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...*

The purpose of this assignment is twofold: first to identify research-based findings that are relevant to the needs of individuals with disabilities, and subsequently to synthesize the major points of each article in a two page summary. The papers should be typed (double spaced) and follow the format provided.

Your paper will be in APA format and content should be no more than 2 pages long. Title page, abstract and reference pages are additional pages.

III. Presentation on effective interventions for students with mild disabilities (20 points)*

Each student will choose an area of interest (e.g. reading, writing, math, behavioral management) and will investigate research-based interventions on the selected area of interest. A list of effective interventions will be provided. Then, each student will prepare a 20-30 minute presentation on the intervention investigated. The presentation should include an introduction to the topic, description of the intervention (with appropriate citations) and examples of how to apply the intervention. In addition, a hands-on activity should be developed as part of the presentation as well as handouts for your class peers.

**** IV. Case study (25 points)***

The observation case study provides you with the opportunity to observe a student with mild to moderate exceptional learning needs, examine his or her educational history and goals, conduct parent interviews, and make comprehensive recommendations for the student. This plan has 8 sections and each should be labeled with the heading noted below in your APA formatted paper.

1. **Demographic and Background Data:** Describe your student's demographic and background data
 - a. Select a student with exceptional learning needs that you have access to and would like to observe.
 - b. In order to maintain confidential communication about your student with exceptional learning needs, create a pseudonym to use throughout this paper.
 - c. Provide a thorough description of your student, including his or her etiology and diagnosis, any medical conditions that exist, psychological and social-emotional characteristics, and any other information required to paint a clear picture of your student.
 - d. Describe skills and characteristics of your student that are similar to those of typically human growth and development and those that are similar to atypical.
 - e. Access information on your student's specific exceptionalities in order to create a rich student description. This should include the educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities and the impact of sensory impairments, physical and health exceptional learning needs on individuals, families, and society.
2. **School and Classroom Information:** Describe your student's school, classroom

- placement, and student's community.
- a. Describe your student's educational placement in the greater context of the continuum of placement and services available for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
 - b. Describe the impact of the principles of normalization and concept of least restrictive environment on your student's classroom placement.
3. **Educational History and Educational Goals, Objectives and Accommodations:** Describe your student's educational history and summarize your student's educational goals and objectives and classroom accommodations.
- a. Include schools attended, reason for initial referral, pre-referral interventions, results of multidisciplinary evaluation, special education classification, description and location of educational service provision, related services provided, and any other pertinent information.
 - b. Include a discussion of the impact of your student's academic and social abilities, attitudes, interests, and values on instruction and career development.
 - c. Include a discussion of the impact your student's disability may have on auditory and information processing skills.
 - d. Relate levels of support to the needs of the individual.
4. **Student Observation:** Observe at least two class periods of instruction. Summarize the information from those observations.
- a. Summarize your observations.
 - b. Describe the relationship between your observations and your student's goals, objectives, and accommodations.
 - c. Describe the effects your student's exceptional condition(s) appears to have on his or her life.
 - d. Describe the perceived impact of your student's academic and social abilities, attitudes, interests, and values on instruction and career development.
5. **Parent Interview:** Interview at least one of your student's parents or guardians who is knowledgeable of the student's goals and needs.
- a. Begin your interview with questions about the family, in order to build up a collaborative relationship and gather information about the family system and the role of family in the student's development and education.
 - b. Ask the parents about their child's education goals, objectives, and accommodations. Did they have a role in the development of these goals, etc? Do they feel they are appropriate for their child?
 - c. Effective special educators communicate effectively with families of students with exceptional learning needs from diverse backgrounds. Please be sure that you consider the following as you speak with the parents:
 - a. Ways in which you can foster a respectful and beneficial relationship with the family.
 - b. Characteristics and effects of the cultural and environmental milieu of the individual with exceptional learning needs and the family.
 - c. The potential impact of differences in values, languages, and customs between your student's home and school lives.
 - d. Ways in which you can demonstrate your respect for variations in beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures. Also consider the effect

of these variations on the relationships among individuals with exceptional learning needs, their family, and school personnel.

6. **Additional Recommendations:** Describe any additional recommendations, educational accommodations, and/or modifications that you would make for the student.
 - a. Keep in mind that it is the special educator's ethical responsibility to advocate for appropriate services for individuals with exceptional learning needs and demonstrate a high level of commitment to developing the highest education and quality-of-life potential of individuals with exceptional learning needs. You must act ethically in advocating for appropriate services and demonstrate sensitivity for the culture, language, religion, gender, disability, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation of your student.
 - b. Consider the importance of the teacher serving as a model for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
 - c. Include any sources of unique services, networks, and organizations for individuals with exceptional learning needs. Use local community, and state and provincial resources to assist in programming recommendations for your student with exceptional learning needs.
7. **Summary, Synthesis and Reflection:**
 - a. **Summary:** Write a clear description of your student including all pertinent information obtained throughout the observations, interviews and background information review. Provide enough detail that a stranger could walk into the classroom and identify your student from your summary alone.
 - b. **Synthesis:** Compare your student's characteristics with those described in the textbook or other research. Which characteristics were identified in your student? What are the social and educational implications of these characteristics?
 - c. **Reflection**
 - i. How do your personal cultural biases and differences affect your interactions with students and their families and therefore your teaching
 - ii. What have you learned from this case study about teaching students with learning disabilities?
8. **Appendices:**
 - a. Include student work samples, parent interview questions/answers and any other pertinent items.

Each student will prepare a 10-15-minute presentation and share what they learned through the case study activity.

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).

****This is the Signature Assignment for this course and you will be submitting the Case Study assignment electronically to Taskstream at the end of the semester. Final grades will NOT be posted until you have submitted your Signature Assignment to TaskStream. TaskStream information is available at <https://www.taskstream.com>. 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.**

V. Final Exam (20 points) to be discussed in class.

NOTE: This syllabus may change according to class needs.

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or if you have emergency medical information to share with instructor or special needs arrangements, **please call and/or make an appointment with instructor as soon as possible.**

Course Calendar

Date/Class	Topics	Assignments/ Due Dates
Jan. 24 (1)	Introduction to the course Syllabus review Library Resources Discuss APA format/empirical articles	In class APA activity, complete for next class if needed
Jan. 31 (2)	Foundations of Special Education Relevant legislation	Chapter 1
Feb. 7 (3)	Overview of Students with Mild Disabilities	Chapter 2 APA Activity Due Bring Journal Article #1 to class
Feb.14 (4)	Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities Definitions, Identification, Characteristics, Teaching Approaches	Chapter 3 Peer Review Journal Abstract # 1
Feb. 21 (5)	Students with Emotional Disabilities Definitions, Identification, Characteristics, Teaching Approaches	Chapter 4 Informal Case Study Updates Journal Abstract # 1 Due
Feb. 28 (6)	Students with Specific Learning Disabilities Definitions, Identification, Characteristics, Teaching Approaches	Chapter 5 Peer Review Journal Abstract Bring Journal Article #2 to class
Mar. 6 (7)	The Inclusive Classroom* Inclusion Collaboration	Chapter 6 Peer Review Journal Abstract # 2
	Spring Break March 12-18	
Mar. 20 (8)	Learning and Teaching*	Chapter 7 Journal Abstract # 2 Due
Mar. 27 (9)	Instructing Students with Mild Disabilities* Accommodations, Modifications, Strategies	Chapter 8 Informal Case Study Updates
April 3 (10)	Classroom Management/Improving* classroom behavior Teaching Social Skills	Chapter 9 & 10
April 10 (11)	Interventions*	Effective Intervention Presentations
April 17 (12)	Discussion of Final Exam	Effective Intervention Presentations
April 24 (13)	Working with families: Building Partnerships	Chapter 11 Guest Speaker
May 1 (14)	Summary of learning Course evaluations	Case study presentations Case Study uploaded to Taskstream - Due by 7:20pm
May 8	Reading Day	
May 15 (15)	Final Exam	Due by 7pm (Blackboard)

***Rubrics will be posted on Blackboard.**