EDSE 540 Characteristics of Students with Disabilities Who Access the General Education Curriculum

January 10th, 2012 through March 13th, 2012
TUESDAYS
4:30-8:30 PM
(10 sessions)
Fairfax HS, Room D134
Instructor: Conners

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

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, emotional disturbances, and mild intellectual disabilities. EDSE 540 is also designed to prepare students to interact with other professionals about children with these disabilities.

Relationship of Courses to Program Goals and Professional Organizations:

EDSE 540 is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Masters Degree Program. 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. 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 or as listed on the following web site:

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

This course will incorporate the evidence-based practices (EBPs) relevant to Characteristics of students with mild disabilities, etiology of mild disabilities, 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.

REQUIRED TEXT:


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 current or future roles as special educators.

Alignment of Outcomes and Requirements with key CEC/NCATE Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEC/NCATE STANDARDS</th>
<th>STUDENT OUTCOMES</th>
<th>COURSE REQUIREMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Standard 1: Foundations**  
Special educators understand the field as an evolving and changing discipline based on philosophies, evidence-based principles and | • Describe the field of learning disabilities from its origins to policies and practices of today. | • Reading assignments  
• Small group discussion  
• Journal abstracts |
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners</th>
<th>Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Special educators understand the etiologies in relation to biological, family,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Compare the history of education for students with emotional and behavioral disorders, students with learning disabilities students with mild intellectual disabilities.</td>
<td><strong>•</strong> Discuss the various etiologies in relation to biological, family,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Define learning disability, emotional disturbance, and mild intellectual disabilities.</td>
<td><strong>•</strong> Case study report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between normal and atypical behaviors.</td>
<td><strong>•</strong> Reading assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Describe characteristics of young children and adolescents with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and/or mild intellectual disabilities.</td>
<td><strong>•</strong> Small group discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>•</strong> Compare at least three conceptual models of behavioral deficits with three conceptual models that explain learning disabilities and/or mild intellectual disabilities.</td>
<td><strong>•</strong> Case Study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Reading assignments | Small group discussions | Case Study |
### 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.

- Describe at least one theory of how children develop language.*

### 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.

- 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 Differences and Their Interactions
- 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 disabilities, emotional disturbances, and mild intellectual disabilities for a parent and suggest possible interventions for home and school.

### Cultural, School Perspectives
- 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.
learning disabilities and/or behavior problems.

- Describe what an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is and how it is developed.

GENERAL EDSE 540 CLASS EXPECTATIONS:

- **Attendance**: students are expected to (a) attend all classes during the course (b) be actively involved in on-line activities (c) arrive on time and stay for the duration of class time. Lack of attendance and professional participation at all sessions (online and in class) with significantly diminish the impact of the course and interfere with creating a collaborative learning community. As such, absences from any portion of the course are strongly discouraged. Lack of participation by a student for any two weeks will result in a recommendation that the student drop the course(s). Please notify me in advance by phone or email if you will not be able to attend class.

- **Withdraw**: If you are unable to meet the participation requirements of the course(s) it is strongly recommended that you drop the course. Withdrawing from the course is not an automatic process. You must inform the instructor in writing if you wish to withdraw from the course. Failure to notify the instructor will result in an “F” on your official George Mason University transcript.

- **Workload**: In-depth reading, study, and work on course requirements require outside class time. Students are expected to allot class study and preparation time weekly in addition to time spent on papers and assignments. The result of late work will be the loss of 10 points per day until the assignment is received by the instructor. Individual situations will be addressed with 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 (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 the class will result in a zero on that
assignment and a report of the incident to the Dean’s Office.**

- **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). 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 STUDENT EXPECTATIONS**

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University

- 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/](http://ods.gmu.edu/)].

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of
Computing [See [http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html](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/]

GSE faculty may add at the conclusion:

- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See http://gse.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/

EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation (attendance and in class)</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study Paper*</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Summaries Paper</td>
<td>100 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100 points</td>
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</table>

TOTAL POINTS: 400 points
*This assignment is the “signature” assignment for the student portfolio. Students are required to post the signature case study in GMU’s portfolio TASKSTREAM site no later than Tuesday, February 28th, 2012. Failure to post a signature case study for evaluation under Standards 2 & 3 will result in an INCOMPLETE grade for the course until posted.

**GRADING CRITERIA**

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

*TaskStream*

Students must retain electronic copies of all graded course products to document their progress in the Special Education program. Products from these classes are likely to become part of your individual performance based assessment portfolio (EDSE 791 & 792).

Each course in the program has an identified signature assignment. A signature assignment is a specific assignment, presentation, or project that best demonstrates one or more CEC standard(s) connected to the course. A signature assignment is evaluated in two manners. The first is for a grade based on the instructor's grading rubric. The second is for GSE program evaluation. Each student must add the identified signature assignment for each course into the TaskStream portfolio system. Additionally, students completing the portfolio courses will build their portfolios electronically via TaskStream (https://www.taskstream.com/pub/). In order to assure your signature assignments for these courses will be (a) included in your electronic portfolio and (b) available for your instructor to evaluate in connection with the GSE program evaluation, you must electronically add the completed signature assignment to your electronic portfolio, via TaskStream.

The electronic submission to TaskStream is likely to be in addition to the version you submit to your instructor for a graded evaluation. Instructions for submitting work to TaskStream will be provided to you.

**MAJOR COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

100 points: **Class Attendance and Participation**

Completion of weekly class activities, participation in class discussions, and 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.

100 points: **Case Study Report**

**Due Date Tuesday, February 28th, 2012**

A comprehensive case study on a student with emotional disability, learning disability, intellectual disability, or high functioning autism will be completed. **A MODEL PAPER WILL BE PROVIDED.** The case study should include the following components:

- Student’s demographic data *(Draft 1/31)*
- Description of school and student’s community *(Draft 1/31)*
- 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) *(Draft 1/31)*
- Educational goals and objectives, classroom accommodations *(Draft 1/31)*
- Observational information (at least two class periods of observations specifically related to student goals, objectives, and accommodations) *(Draft 2/7)*
- Parent and student interviews (related to education goals, objectives, accommodations, and any other relevant issues.) *(Draft 2/7)*
- Additional recommendations, educational accommodations, and/or modifications *(Draft 2/7)*
- 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? So What? What have you learned from this case study about teaching students with learning disabilities?**) *(Draft 2/7)*
- Appendices – to include student work samples, parent interview questions/answers. *(Draft 2/7)*

**CASE STUDY IS DUE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28th, 2012.** Be prepared to **present your case study in class orally on one of the following dates: Feb. 28th; March 6th; or March 13th, 2011.** Be creative in your presentation style! (see provided examples)
100 points: Abstracts of Journal Articles

Due Date TUESDAY, MARCH 13th, 2012

- 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... PLEASE DO NOT USE A STUDY WHICH IS NOT INTERVENTION RESEARCH.

- 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 and include 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. A “so what” section is asked to state what you have learned about the student to enhance your teaching practice.

A MODEL PAPER WILL BE PROVIDED. All articles should be from current literature and should not be more than seven years old. You must use your own words to summarize but be sure to cite liberally! Please hand in a copy of your journal summaries paper on the last night of class.

100 points: Take Home Final Exam

Due Date TUESDAY, MARCH 13th, 2012

- An exam that covers course content will be provided as a take home examination. The exam will be based on case studies and other class related topics. It will be provided on the second night of class and you may choose to work on it throughout the semester as information is shared and discussed. Please hand in a copy of your final exam on the last night of class.
## Course Calendar (subject to change based on class needs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Due This Class Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Tuesday, January 10th, 2012 (1) | Registration, Introductions, and Backgrounds  
Cohort Structure and Questions  
Syllabus Review + Education Library Overview | N/A | N/A |
| Tuesday, January 17th, 2012 (2) | Context of Special Education  
Introduction—review of exceptionalities & legislation  
Overview of Students with Mild Disabilities | Read Chapters 1 & 2; start thinking about a student for case study assignment | Read Chapters 1 & 2 |
| Tuesday, January 24th, 2012 (3) | Students with Learning Disabilities | Chapter 5 | Read Chapter 5  
Please select the student that you will use for the case study by this date. |
| Tuesday, January 31st, 2012 (4) | Students with Emotional Disabilities  
Guest Speaker-TBD  
Classroom Management | Chapter 7 & 10 | Read Chapters 4, 9, & 10  
First four sections of DRAFT case study paper DUE:  
-Student Demographics  
-Description of School and Neighborhood  
-Student’s Educational History  
-Student’s Current Areas of Need |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic and Notes</th>
<th>Assignments/Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Tuesday, February 7th, 2012 (5) | Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities  
Review journal studies paper/APA format | Chapter 3 & 8  
Read Chapter 3 & 8  
Last sections of DRAFT case study paper DUE:  
-Observations  
-Parent Interview Summary  
-Student Interview Summary  
-Instructional Recommendations  
-So What  
-Summary and Synthesis of Case Study  
-References  
-Appendices |
| Tuesday, February 14th, 2012 (6) | Building Family Partnerships  
Behavior Interventions  
Work time-searching databases support and summarizing research studies | WORK ON CASE STUDY PAPER, FINAL EXAM, AND JOURNAL SUMMARIES PAPER |
| Tuesday, February 21st, 2012 (7) | Students with High Functioning Autism  
Writing Effective IEPs and Educational Reports  
Possible Guest Instructor and Speaker TBD-Asperger’s Syndrome | Chapters 6 & 7  
Read Chapters 6 & 7  
WORK ON CASE STUDY PAPER, FINAL EXAM, AND JOURNAL SUMMARIES PAPER |
| Tuesday, February 28th, 2012 (8) | Access to the Curriculum, Accommodations, Modifications  
What is intervention research? What is | Chapters 4 & 9  
Read Chapters 4 & 9  
CASE STUDY PAPER DUE  
Start Case Study Presentations |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, March 6th, 2012</td>
<td>Collaboration and Inclusive Practices</td>
<td></td>
<td>Read Chapter 6 Case Study Presentations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Co-teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case Study Presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, March 13th, 2012</td>
<td>LAST CLASS</td>
<td></td>
<td>Finish Case Study Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finish Case Study Presentations</td>
<td>Chapters 6 &amp; 11</td>
<td>JOURNAL SUMMARIES PAPER DUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course Evaluations</td>
<td></td>
<td>TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DUE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Case Study Assignment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study</th>
<th>Points Possible (100)</th>
<th>Points Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Style Mechanics/APA</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Demographic Information</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of School and Neighborhood</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational History</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEP Goals and Objectives</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent Interviews</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional Recommendations</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary and Synthesis</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observational Information/Appendices (student work, etc…)</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of Case Study</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL POINTS</strong></td>
<td><strong>_____ /100 POINTS</strong></td>
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</table>

**COMMENTS:**
# Journal Abstracts Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal Abstracts</th>
<th>Points Possible (100)</th>
<th>Points Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Style/Quality Mechanics/APA</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Student’s Needs (based on your case study)</td>
<td>10 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appropriate choices of INTERVENTION RESEARCH STUDIES</strong></td>
<td>20 points</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(cause/effect studies—3 peer reviewed research studies)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of Summaries</td>
<td>15 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Critiques</td>
<td>15 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion/Appropriateness of Recommendations and “SO WHAT”</td>
<td>30 points</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL POINTS</strong></td>
<td>________/100 POINTS</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**COMMENTS:**