

**George Mason University
Graduate School of Education**

EDCD 797 – 001 (1 credit)

Counseling Strategies for Working with Special Learners

Spring 2012, Section 001

Saturdays, Jan 28, 2012 and Feb 4, 2012 9:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Krug Hall 107

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Hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course Description

Special Topics course, EDCD 797: *Counseling Strategies for Working with Special Learners* provides an overview of counseling theory and creative techniques to help children who struggle with learning disabilities and behavior/emotional disorders in the school settings where they must deal with the changes and pressures placed upon them by teachers, parents, and others.

Course Objectives/Student Outcomes

Students will review several counseling theories and learn to integrate theory and creative counseling techniques to add impact and depth to work with clients. Students will learn about basic principles founded in counseling and psychology that guide decisions and interactions when counseling special learners.

Relationship to Course and Program Goals and Professional Organizations

EDCD 797 is a special topics course and meets the requirement that all masters' students take 2 credits of special topics course work. This 1-credit course will contribute to the counseling students knowledge of a particular population of clients.

EDCD 797 fulfills the requirements of the following professional organizations:

- Virginia Department of Education requirement for school counseling licensure that candidates understand the knowledge, skills and processes of individual counseling.
- Virginia Department of Health Professions requirement that Licensed Professional Counselor candidates complete graduate study in theories and techniques of counseling and psychotherapy.
- Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) core requirement described in Section II.K.e: Helping relationships: An understanding of counseling and consultation processes.

- American Counseling Association Code of Ethics requirement that counselors establish counselor education and training programs that integrate academic study and supervised practice.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

1. Students will better understand their role in working with students with special needs.
2. Students will understand pertinent legal and ethical issues related to working with students with special needs.
3. Students will survey a comprehensive list of resources such as assessment tools, activities, Websites and books to support practice.
4. Students will increase their knowledge and ability to apply principles in their practice
 - Improved organizational climate and culture
 - Decreases in critical incidents such as anxiety attacks, bullying, behavior incidents, etc.
 - Increased collaborative opportunities with teachers, parents and others in the best interests of the children
 - Improved student outcomes

Professional Dispositions:

Professional Performance Criteria (Effective February 25, 2003).

The American Counseling Association (ACA) code of ethics requires counselors and counselor trainees to maintain standards of professional competence and possess good moral character. The Counseling and Development Program in the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University has adopted a set of professional performance criteria that is consistent with the ACA code of ethics. Please refer to the dispositions found on the C & D Homepage at:

http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/counseling/professional_performance.htm

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

The following course requirements will be explained in detail during class meetings:

Assignment	Point Value
Class Participation	25
Article Reflection	25
Class Journal	25
Counselor Interview and Research Collection	40
TOTAL	115

Final grades are calculated as a percent of total points earned:

A	= 90% - 100%	115 --103 pts.
B	= 89% - 80%	102 -- 92
C	= 79% - 70%	91 -- 80
D	= 69% - 60%	79 -- 69
F	= 59% or lower	68 -- lower

CLASS PARTICIPATION POLICY

To maximize the benefit of this interactive course, students are expected to attend and participate actively in every class session. Attendance is all that is required to earn the full 25 points for class participation. For each session you are absent, 12 points will be deducted from your class participation grade. Attendance will be taken beginning on the second class session. The only exclusions are class cancellations by the university or the professor.

REQUIRED READINGS

Assouline, S. G. & Nicpon, M.F. (2006). The Impact of Vulnerabilities and Strengths on the Academic Experiences of Twice-Exceptional Students: A Message to School Counselors. *Professional School Counseling*, 10(1), 14-24.

Milson, A.S. (2002). Students with Disabilities: School Counselor Involvement and Preparation. *Professional School Counseling*, 5(5), 331-338.

Myers, H. N. F. (2005). How Elementary School Counselors Can Meet the Needs of Students with Disabilities. *Professional School Counseling*, 8(5), 442-50.

GENERAL INFORMATION - GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Academic integrity (honor code, plagiarism) – Students must adhere to guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].

Mason Email – 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, division, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301ge.html>].

Counseling and Psychological Services – 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/>].

Office of Disability Services – 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 <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].

Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

The Writing Center (Optional Resource) – 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/>].

University Libraries (Optional Resource) – The George Mason University Libraries provide numerous services, research tools, and help with using the library resources [See <http://library.gmu.edu/>].

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

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Course Structure:

A variety of lecture, reading material and experiential activities will be provided during the two day course. Students should come to class prepared to actively participate in class discussion, role play and activities. Class activities will include lecture, small group work, experiential exercises.

Course Requirements:

Attendance

Students are expected to attend and participate in all scheduled class sessions.

Discussion of Readings

Discussion of readings from the text will take place during each class meeting. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss all readings.

Skill Work

Active participation and high levels of performance are expected in all class and skill-work activities. Class participation is essential to successful completion of this course.

Technology Competence

Students are expected to be able to use a computer, send and retrieve email, open attachments, access the internet, use Blackboard, participate in online discussions, and conduct a library search on line. Students are **required** to check their GMU email frequently.

Technology in the Classroom

Cell phones, pagers, and other communicative devices are not allowed in this class. Please keep them stowed away and out of sight. Laptops or tablets (e.g. iPads) may be permitted for the purpose of taking notes only, but you must submit a request in writing to do so. Engaging in activities not related to the course (e.g. gaming, email, chat, etc.) will result in a significant deduction in your participation grade.

ASSIGNMENTS

Article Summary (30)

Students will find a multimedia (e.g. movie clip, TV show, song, book, web resource, etc.) example that could be used as a creative technique with a client. Students will complete a discussion (no more than 2 pages) of how the resource could be used as a creative approach in counseling. The discussion should include what population the multimedia resource is best suited for, issue, age, cultural considerations, etc.

Class Journal [30 points]

Students will be required to spend 2 sessions practicing in class and be able to discuss the experience with the class. The first session will focus on Impact Therapy, specifically, the depth chart and RCFF. (a session is from 10-20 minutes). The second session will focus on the use of a creative technique, e.g. chair, prop, movement, writing/drawing etc. Students will process the practice session in small groups and we will process the exercise as a class.

Counselor Interview and Research Collection [30 points]

Students will interview a teacher and collect three supporting research papers on a counseling topic (i.e., transiting, pregnancy, etc.). Students will write a four (4) page summary, analysis, and reflection of the session. *Classmates may be used as clients for the purpose of this session.*

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Under ADA a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, working, speaking, or hearing. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability please inform your instructor at the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible, so that arrangements can be made. Please call the Disability Resource Center (703) 993- 2474 for information and the required documentation.

Tentative Course Agenda

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DUE
Saturday, January 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus Review • Introductions • Special education terminology • Types of Special Learners <p><i>Special Topics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic principles for working special learners - the art of helping students with disabilities • Counseling students with disabilities: The basics Assessment and intervention, including RTI • Behavioral and academic challenges associated with disabilities • Collaboration with school and community personnel and medical specialists 	<p>Read: 3 Articles under required reading</p> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class Journal • Article Summary • Counselor Interview and Research Collection
Saturday, February	<p><i>Special Topics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal and ethical issues Individual and group counseling • School counseling programs: Genuine inclusion • Partnering with parents • Meeting students' academic needs • Meeting elementary students' personal and social needs • Meeting adolescent students' personal and social needs • Meeting students' career- planning needs 	<p>Assignment: Class Journal Due: Collection Presentation Due: Article Summary</p> <p>Due February 10, 2012: <i>Student Interview and Research Collection</i></p>