College of Education and Human Development  
Division of Special Education and disAbility Research

Summer 2014  
EDSE 847 B01: Problem Solving in Contemporary Initiatives in Special Education  
CRN: 41905, 3 - Credits

Instructor: Dr. Sheri Berkeley  
Meeting Dates: 6/2/2014 - 7/22/2014

Phone: 703-993-9689  
Meeting Day(s): Tuesdays & Thursdays

E-Mail: sberkele@gmu.edu (best contact)  
Meeting Time(s): 4:30 pm-7:10 pm

Office Hours: by appointment  
Meeting Location: Finley 119

Note: This syllabus may change according to class needs. Students will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason e-mail and/or through Blackboard.

Course Description
Addresses contemporary initiatives in special education: those introductory and leading actions intended to implement positive change, that can be promoted by federal agencies, professional or advocacy organizations. Focuses on understanding of contemporary special education initiatives through evaluation and analysis. Background, relevant legislative history, existing empirical evidence, and designing future research addressing contemporary initiatives will be studied and discussed.

Prerequisite(s): Admission to the PhD program or by approval of Instructor.

Co-requisite(s): None

Advising Contact Information
Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. Mason M.Ed. and Certificate students should contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703) 993-3670 for assistance. All other students should refer to their faculty advisor.
Nature of Course Delivery
Learning activities in this class will include the following:

1. Class lecture, discussion, and participation.
2. Videos, podcasts, webinars and other relevant media presentations.
3. Study and independent library research.
4. Applications with relevant hardware and software, including survey software, SPSS
5. Application activities, including in class and out of class evaluation and analysis of existing research.
6. Student project presentations.

Learner Outcomes
- Identify contemporary initiatives in special education.
- Explain the historical, educational, empirical, and philosophical roots of current initiatives.
- Review existing research and prominent agencies and organizations to identify contemporary initiatives in special education.
- Explain the multiple perspectives on contemporary initiatives.
- Propose empirical and practical solutions for policy and practice.
- Develop and present an applied project investigating one of the contemporary initiatives in special education.

Required Textbooks

Chapters:


**One of the following:**


*Two of the following:*


**Digital Library Option**

The Pearson textbook(s) for this course may be available as part of the George Mason University Division of Special Education and disAbility Research Digital Library. Please note that not all textbooks are available through this option. Visit the links below before purchasing the digital library to ensure that your course(s) text(s) are available in this format. The division and Pearson have partnered to bring you the Digital Library; a convenient, digital solution that can save you money on your course materials. The Digital Library offers you access to a complete digital library of all Pearson textbooks and MyEducationLabs used across the Division of Special Education and disAbility Research curriculum at a low 1-year or 3-year subscription price. Access codes are available in the school bookstore. Please visit [http://gmu.bncollege.com](http://gmu.bncollege.com) and search the ISBN. To register your access code or purchase the Digital Library, visit: [http://www.pearsoncustom.com/va/gmu/digitallibrary/education/index.html](http://www.pearsoncustom.com/va/gmu/digitallibrary/education/index.html)

- 3 years subscription $525 ISBN-13: 9781269541381
- Individual e-book(s) also available at the bookstore link above or at [http://www.pearsoncustom.com/va/gmu/digitallibrary/education/index.html](http://www.pearsoncustom.com/va/gmu/digitallibrary/education/index.html)

**NOTE: THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO THIS COURSE.**

**Recommended Textbooks**

Type Here

**Required Resources**
CAST
• www.cast.org.udl
National Center on Universal Design
• www.udlcenter.org/
Center on Response to Intervention (American Institutes of Research)
• http://www.rti4success.org/
Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (OSEP Technical Assistance Center)
• http://www.pbis.org/
National Center for Learning Disabilities
• http://www.ncld.org/
NICHCY (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities)
• http://nichcy.org/
LDOOnline (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities)
• http://www.ldonline.org/

Additional Readings


Special issue on research quality indicators of Exceptional Children (2005)

Course Relationships to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:
a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/].

b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/].
c. 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.

d. 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/].

e. 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/].

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

g. 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/].

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS
Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

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. [See http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/]

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

Course Policies & Expectations

Attendance.
Students are asked to attend all classes on time, be prepared, post to Blackboard discussion board, and actively participate and support the members of the class learning community.

Late Work.
Late work will not be accepted.

TaskStream Submission
Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, (NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE) (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in TaskStream. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete(IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

If you have never used TaskStream before, you MUST use the login and password information that has been created for you. This information is distributed to students through GMU email, so it is very important that you set up your GMU email. For more TaskStream information, go to http://cehd.gmu.edu/api/taskstream.

**Grading Scale**

- **A** = 90-100%
- **B** = 80-89%
- **C** = 70-79%
- **F** = <79%

**Assignments**

- **Performance-based Assessment (TaskStream submission required).**

- **Performance-based Common Assignments (No TaskStream submission required).**

**Other Assignments.**

**Participation & Blackboard Posts (20 points)**

Students are asked to attend all classes on time, be prepared, complete enter slips, post to Blackboard discussion board, and actively participate and support the members of the class learning community. *Specific guidance for the content of Blackboard posts will be provided by the instructor.*

**Discussion Leader (10 points)**

Students will lead one of the class discussions. Specific guidance will be provided by the instructor.

**Project Update (10 points)**

Throughout the semester, students will prepare to present an overview of what has been done to date using relevant audio visual materials. Students will explain clearly what they have done, what questions remain, and what issues or barriers they have encountered. *This assignment will be evaluated as pass/fail.*
Applied Project (40 points) (Performance Based Assessment)

Option 1: Individual Research Review Paper

The research review paper is designed to provide experience in critically evaluating existing research in an area of your choice including the quality of the design, implementation, and interpretation of the findings. You may select to complete a traditional or integrative review paper on a contemporary issue in special education. Have your topic approved prior to beginning. You should also prepare materials based on the paper to present to class.

1. Select a contemporary issue impacting special education.
2. Complete a literature search of Psych Info and other relevant databases to identify relevant original research articles (check for other relevant data bases).
3. Obtain and read original research articles.
4. Develop a coding system to organize your articles
5. Code, organize, analyze, and synthesize the information from the articles.
6. Write the paper using the American Psychological Association Publication Manual (6th edition) guidelines:
   • Title Page
   • Abstract
   • Introduction and Purpose
   • Method
     o Search Procedures
     o Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria
     o Coding Conventions and Procedures
     o Data Synthesis Procedures
   • Results (this is the section that will vary according to your specific topic/articles)
     Overall characteristics of the studies (number of articles, sample descriptions, general descriptions of methods for studying/testing the issue, overall findings; and quality of studies)
   • Discussion
     o Synthesis of Findings
     o Summary and Conclusions
   • References

Option 2: Research Application Project

The research application project is designed to provide experience in designing, implementing, and evaluating a contemporary issue in special education. Be sure to have your research question and design approved before beginning to implement as the instructor can assist you with the design components. In addition, you will need to obtain GMU IRB and district human subjects’ approval. This will include:

• Completing CITI training (if you have not done so in the last 5 years)
• Submitting and obtaining permission from the GMU IRB
• Submitting and obtaining permission from the school system (if relevant)

It is recommended that APA format and the following can guide your paper:

Questions of the Research Application Project:

Sample questions:

How does the implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) impact the identification of learning disabilities and improve early identification of students with disabilities?
How do schools, but especially low performing schools, implement evidence based practices for students with and without disabilities?

How do teachers integrate technological advances in their classes to improve access and learning for students with and without disabilities?

Background Literature:
Provide a brief description of the background literature that indicates a need for your question.

Design/Method of the Project:
This section will be based upon your question. There are a variety of methodologies you could select to investigate your selected question.

Participants: Use the following marker variables as guidelines to describe the participants in your applied project. (may be students, faculty members, student interns, in-service teachers, pre-service teachers, etc.). Initially complete a coding sheet like the brief one below for each relevant study you include in your search and then compute the averages and ranges and report that data. Staple your individual data sheets to your report.

Ex.
• Administrator/Teacher/Student Identification #________
• School/Setting ___________ Size______ (urban, suburban, metropolitan, rural)
• Special education students served________________________
• Teacher of/Grade in school________________________
• Date of birth (month, day, year)______________
• Sex (Male or female)_________________

Instrument/Testing materials: Carefully describe all of the materials that were used. Include copies of any surveys, interview protocols, observation protocols, and/or pre/posttests. Remember these measures will be used to describe whether or not your methods were “EFFECTIVE.”

Procedure: Carefully describe in a step by step fashion what you did. Use subheadings if you have multiple conditions of a selected intervention (for example; electronic survey with links emailed via list serve; monthly professional development focus group meetings; interviews)

Testing procedures: Describe how the measures were administered. For example, were interviews completed 1:1? Did individuals complete online surveys?

Scoring procedures: Describe how the measures were scored. For example, if tests consisted of multiple choice items, scoring is usually straightforward, however, if short answer items were used, then what was the scoring criteria? Did you have multiple raters completing an observational tool?

Data Sources: Provide a listing of all of the sources of data you obtained. We will use this list to help determine the appropriate data analyses procedures.

Results: Describe all of the testing results. You can present individual scores (use the same ID#s used in the demographic data sheets) and then compute a column average (we may learn
several statistical tests that you will be able to use for analyzing your data).

**Discussion:** Provide a discussion of your findings. The first few sentences can provide summary accounts of the findings. For example, This contemporary issue (identify the issue) remains controversial (or conversely seems well adopted and solves problems) following analyses of an online survey completed by teachers and administrators.

Provide some insights as to why you might have obtained the findings. Provide a summary paragraph describing what you learned from the application project and how you could implement projects like this in your teaching to determine which methods work best with your students.

It is recommended that the following APA format be followed when reporting your results:

- **Introduction/Literature Review**
- **Method**
  - Research design
  - Participants and setting
  - Materials
  - Measures (dependent variables)
  - Procedures
  - Data analyses
- **Results**
- **Synthesis, Discussion, and Conclusions**
- **References**

**Project Presentations (20 points)**
You will present the findings of your applied project in a panel session format. In addition:
- Be prepared to answer questions about your project.
- Prepare visual materials to use in your presentation.
- Prepare a one-page summary hand-out for your audience and the instructor.

*Specific directions for this assignment will be provided by the instructor.*

**Applied Project Rubrics (Performance Based Assessment)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applied Project Option 1</th>
<th>0-33 Does Not Meet Expectations 1</th>
<th>34-37 Meets Expectations 2</th>
<th>38-40 Exceeds Expectations 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contains one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information, but may have substantial problems with evaluation, writing style or APA</td>
<td>Good overall paper, lacking in one or two of the criteria for an exemplary paper. Not entirely</td>
<td>Establishes an important educational problem that needs to be addressed, a logical presentation of information that leads to the purpose statement of the paper. A method section that has clearly replicable procedures and demonstrates competency in the search techniques (search of educational data bases with key terms, ancestry and/or descendent searches, hand searches of relevant journals), and identifies clear and reasonable decision making criteria for individual studies included in the review (inclusion/exclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applied Project Option 2</td>
<td>Contains one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information, but may have substantial problems with evaluation, writing style or APA format, or unclear or inappropriate description of implementation of project.</td>
<td>Good overall paper, lacking in one or two of the criteria for an exemplary paper. Not entirely reflective or thoughtful, or minor writing style or APA format errors may be present.</td>
<td>Establishes an important educational problem that needs to be addressed, a logical presentation of information that leads to the purpose statement of the paper. Selects appropriate research design to address the stated research questions. A method section that has an appropriate and clearly described research design, participants, materials, data sources, implementation procedures that are clearly replicable, and careful brief description of data analyses. Demonstrates efforts to control for threats to internal validity. Appropriate data analysis procedures selected, and clear and accurate representation of the findings. A discussion section that provides a thoughtful and analytical discussion of findings and is based firmly on findings from the study (not solely the authors opinion), and references implications for practice where appropriate. Good writing style, free of mechanical or stylistic errors, appropriate use of APA format.</td>
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2. Assignment Weighting and Scale
Evaluation will be based upon a point system. The point value for each assignment is as follows:

- Classroom Participation ....................................................... 20
- Discussion Leader ................................................................... 10
- Project Update Presentation ................................................... 10
- Applied Project ..................................................................... 40
- Project Presentation ............................................................ 20
- TOTAL POINTS ....................................................................... 100
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Topic &amp; Reading Assignments</th>
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</table>
| 6/3/14 | - Course Overview  
  - Empirical Research vs. Position Statements vs Legal Mandates  
  - Introduction to recognizing contemporary initiatives in special education from perspectives of current research and work of prominent organizations (e.g., Response to Intervention Project, LDOnline, NCLD, CEC, CAST) |
| 6/5/14 | - Historical Perspectives & Review of Legislation of IDEA & ESEA  
  - Empirical Models to Study Contemporary Initiatives in Special Education  
  Readings from Handbook of Special Education:  
  - Gerber, M. (2011); Kauffman, Nelson, Simpson, & Mock, (2011); Thurlow & Quenemoen (2011); Zigmund & Kloo (2011); Lindstrom (2011)  
  - At least one of the following: Polloway, Patton, & Nelson (2011); Pullen, Lane, Ashworth, & Lovelace (2011); Ronney (2011); Landrum (2011); Loncke (2011); Conroy, Stichter, & Gage (2011)  
  Additional Reading:  
  - Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton (2010a) |
| 6/10/14 | - Classification & Placement in Special Education  
  - Changes in LD Identification  
  - RTI Research Base & Implications for Other Populations  
  Readings from Handbook of Special Education:  
  - O’Connor & Sanchez (2011); Berkeley & Riccomini (2011)  
  Additional Readings:  
  - Scruggs & Mastropieri (2002); Berkeley et al. (2009); Hale et al. (2010); Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton (2012); Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton (2010b); Learning Disabilities Association. (2010) |
| 6/12/14 | - Beyond K-12: Impact of Academic Challenges  
  Readings from Handbook of Special Education:  
  - Madaus, Banerjee, & Merchant (2011); Rojewski & Gregg (2011); Scanlon, Patton, Raskind (2011); Schloss & Gunter (2011)  
  - Also recommended: Inge & Moon (2011); Everson & Trowbridge (2011)  
  Additional Reading  
  - Shifter, L. (2011) |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>6/17/14</td>
<td>School to Prison Pipeline (implementing instruction with marginalized populations)</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<td>- Wexler, Pyle, Flower, Williams, &amp; Cole (2014); Solis et al. (2014)</td>
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<td>- Carr et al. (2002); Lane, Gresham, &amp; O'Shaughnessy (2002); Safron &amp; Oswald (2003); Coffey &amp; Horner (2012); Horner, Sugai, &amp; Anderson (2010)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/19/14</td>
<td>School Implementation of Contemporary Initiatives: Practitioner Perspectives on RTI and PBIS</td>
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<td>6/24/14</td>
<td>Universal Design for Learning “Battle”: Differing Perspectives, Limitations in the Research Base, and Future Directions</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<td>- Rao, Ok, &amp; Bryant (2014); Edyburn (2010); Hehir (2009); CAST [<a href="http://www.cast.org.udl">www.cast.org.udl</a>]; National Center on Universal Design [<a href="http://www.edlcenter.org">www.edlcenter.org</a>]; TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/26/14</td>
<td>Research on Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)</td>
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<td>Empirical Support vs. Methodological Issues</td>
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<td><strong>Readings from Handbook of Special Education:</strong></td>
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<td>- Read at least 2: Santoro, Gersten, &amp; Newman-Gonchar (2011); Pullen &amp; Cash (2011); Graham &amp; Harris (2011); Fuchs et al. (2011); Scruggs, Mastropieri, &amp; Marshak (2011)</td>
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<td><strong>Additional Readings:</strong></td>
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<td>- Forness (2005); Lane, Weisenbach, Phillips, &amp; Wehby (2007)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/1/14</td>
<td>Supporting Inclusion of Students with Disabilities through Integration of Technology</td>
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<td>Issues with the Research Base &amp; Fidelity of Implementation</td>
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<td><strong>Reading from Handbook of Special Education:</strong></td>
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<td>- Wissick &amp; Gardner (2011)</td>
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<td><strong>Additional Readings:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Edyburn (2001); Gersten &amp; Edyburn (2007); Kennedy &amp; Deshler (2010)</td>
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<td>7/3/14</td>
<td><strong>No Class</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>7/8/14</td>
<td>Contemporary Initiatives in Early Childhood</td>
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<td><strong>Readings from Handbook of Special Education:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Bailey, Raspa, Humphreys, &amp; Sam (2011); Dunst (2011); Marshall, Brown, Conroy, &amp; Knopf (2011); Snyder, McLaughlin, &amp; Denney (2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/10/14</td>
<td>Research to Practice Gap... and more!</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<td>• TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/15/14</td>
<td>Funding for Contemporary Initiatives in Special Education: Implications for Future Research, Policy, &amp; Practice</td>
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<td>7/17/14</td>
<td><strong>Final Student Presentations:</strong> Contemporary Issues Applied Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/22/14</td>
<td><strong>Final Student Presentations:</strong> Contemporary Issues Applied Project</td>
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**Appendix**