



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

Spring 2015

EDSE 844 001: Current Issues in Special Education

CRN: 10533, 3 - Credits

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Peggy King-Sears	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 1/26/2015 - 5/11/2015
<b>Phone:</b> 703.993.3916	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Mondays
<b>E-Mail:</b> <a href="mailto:mkingsea@gmu.edu">mkingsea@gmu.edu</a> best way to contact	<b>Meeting Time(s):</b> 7:20 pm-10:00 pm
<b>Office Hours:</b> by appointment only (please schedule at least 24 hours in advance) on: --Monday 4:45 to 6:45 --Wednesday 4:45 to 6:45 Flexibility for appointments by phone or in person on other days. Please ask!	<b>Meeting Location:</b> Fairfax-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**

Develops understanding of the role of convergent research evidence in addressing current issues in special education practice and policy. Describes current issues in special education and the group experimental, single subject, and qualitative research designs used to address these current issues. Students evaluate research studies in terms of methodological strengths and weaknesses, and their part in providing convergent bodies of evidence that can be used for defining practice and policy. Prerequisite(s): Admission to PhD in education program, or permission of instructor. Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week: 3Hours of Lab or Studio per week: 0

**Prerequisite(s):** Admission to PhD in education program, or permission 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 include the following:

1. Participate in class discussions
2. Gather, share, read, and discuss recent research on specific topics and issues\*
3. Deliver presentations
4. Complete activities via Blackboard

### **Learner Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify current issues in special education.
- Explain the historical, educational, and philosophical roots of current issues.
- Explain the multiple perspectives on the topic.
- Propose implications for policy and practice.

### **Required Textbooks**

None American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

### **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> 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>

- 1 year subscription \$200 ISBN-13: 9781269541411
- 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>

### **Required Resources**

Additional resources, some of which will be required for assignments' completion, will be posted on Blackboard. Some resources will be determined by and shared among students in the course.

### **Additional Readings**

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard. Students will also need to access additional and recent (2011 or more recent) research readings relevant to their activities and assignments from peer-reviewed journals. Other documents relevant to current issues (e.g., federal statutes and regulations, court case decisions, recent reports from organizations such as <http://www.projectforum.org/>) will be posted on the class Blackboard site and/or otherwise assigned.

### **Course Relationships to Program Goals and Professional Organizations**

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of Special Education: Students with Disabilities who Access the General Curriculum K-12. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization.

### **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 expected to attend **all** classes, arrive on time, remain in class for the duration of each session, demonstrate professional behavior in the classroom, and complete all assignments with professional quality and on time. When absence from class is unavoidable, it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student (it is recommended that you have *two colleagues* in the course for this). Please be sure to notify the classmate(s) in sufficient time for them to be of assistance for you.

Please notify the Instructor about absences in advance or within 24 hours after an absence. Be aware **any points earned for participation in class activities, during a time of absence, will not be earned and cannot be made up.**

If you need to miss, for any reason, more than two class sessions, contact the Instructor immediately (within 48 hours) with notification of when your course withdrawal will be completed. If you realize after the first class session that this course's requirements are not a match for you for this semester, process your withdrawal immediately (within 48 hours) and notify the Instructor at the same time.

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 use of electronic devices that produce sound or otherwise interfere with the learning of others (such as cell phones, pagers, etc.) is prohibited during class. Please turn these devices off or to vibrate before the start of class.
- **Computers may be used to take notes during class, but they may not be used for internet exploration or other non-class activities during class time.**

### **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 citation. Evidence of plagiarism or any other form of cheating in this class will result in a zero on that assignment and a report of the incident to the registrar. Remember that plagiarism is a very serious offense and can result in dismissal from the University. The instructor reserves the right to submit your work to turnitin or safeassign or similar plagiarism detection services, for an integrity assessment as needed.

### **Late Work.**

To successfully complete this course, students need to adhere to the due dates for specific readings and assignments to be completed. Full earned credit for assignments turned in on time. Anticipate point deductions for late work. For example, for every 24-hour period that an assignment is late, a 5% point deduction will occur.

### **TaskStream Assessment**

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

- 95 –100% = A+
- 90 – 94.9% = A
- 85 – 89.9% = B+
- 80 - 84.9% = B
- 70 – 79.9% = C
- < 70% = F

Note that an Incomplete grade is not an option except under extreme extenuating circumstances. Contact the instructor immediately; a course withdrawal may be appropriate in some situations.

### Quantity of Points Per Assignment:

<b>Performance-Based Assessment</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>
Blackboard Interactions/Discussions/Webinars (points vary)	15.5 points
Synthesis Papers (3 @ 7 points each)	21.0 points
Class Presentation	15.0 points
Paper + Project	41.0 points
Class Participation (15 @ .5 points per class session)	7.5 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0 points</b>

### Assignments

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

None for EDSE 844

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

### Synthesis Papers (7 points per each of 3 synthesis papers = 21 points total)

For each of three topics identified as a current issue in special education, select a minimum of two to three recent (2011 or later) research articles published in peer-reviewed journals on that topic. On no more than three pages (double-spaced, 1" margins, 12-point font), synthesize the three research studies. Each person may be choosing different articles, or if the same articles are selected, the way in which each person synthesizes can vary. Each paper will be worth 7 points

*Caution: This assignment is not about summarizing, it is about synthesizing. Think in terms of analyzing the content of the studies, determine how you want to approach a synthesis, and focus on that synthesis for a maximum of three pages.*

Follow this format:

1<sup>st</sup> page: Cover sheet

2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> pages: Your Synthesis (use headings as appropriate, but be judicious)

5<sup>th</sup> page: References (there should be a minimum of three references)

### Synthesis Assignment's Scoring Rubric Synthesis

Paper # ____	Points Possible
1. Directions are followed.	/0.25
2. The synthesis of the three research articles makes it clear which areas are being synthesized. Written language is excellent.	/6
3. Technical APA (e.g., citations in the assignment, Reference section, headings/subheadings) is completely accurate	/0.75
<b>TOTAL points earned*</b>	<b>/7.0</b>

### *Grading Rubric for Synthesis Papers*

Exemplary paper (7 points): A thoughtful description of a significant issue in special education and why this issue is relevant for meeting the needs of persons with disabilities. In addition, the students should consider implications of this issue throughout the life of the person with a disability. Appropriate references are used and information presented is accurately synthesized (rather than only summarized). Any conclusions that are drawn include appropriate support (rather than solely based on student opinion).

Adequate paper (5.5 points): Good overall paper, lacking in one of the criteria for an exemplary paper.

Marginal paper (4 points): Overall, acceptable but with one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information, but may have substantial problems with evaluation, writing style, or literature selected.

Inadequate paper (<4 points): Paper with substantial problems in important areas such as writing, synthesis, overall thoughtfulness. Contains little or no information of value to special education practice.

Unacceptable/no paper (0 points): No paper turned in or paper was not approved for this assignment.

### **Feedback on Assignment Using APA Numeric Codes**

Throughout your assignment, there are numbers that correspond to the feedback below.

This # on your paper	...corresponds to this section of the APA Manual Sixth Edition. Please review your paper in light of the APA writing style. Contact the Instructor if you have questions.
1	Chapter 3 on writing style (3.01 to 3.11)
2	Chapter 3 on guidelines to reduce bias in language (pp. 70-76, particularly 3.15)
3	Chapter 3 on grammar (3.18 to 3.23)
4	Chapter 4 on punctuation, spelling, capitalization, italics, abbreviations, numbers (4.01 to 4.38)
5	Chapter 6 on plagiarism and quotations (6.01 to 6.10) <i>For <u>all</u> assignments in this course, do not quote. Always paraphrase.</i>
6	Chapter 6 on reference citations in text (6.11 to 6.21)
7	Chapter 6 on Reference list (6.22 to 6.32) Chapter 7 for Reference Examples: All of Chapter 7 provides Reference Examples. You will likely use 7.01 the most for articles from peer-reviewed journals (periodicals) and 7.02 for books and book chapters.
An arrow or phrase (e.g., "CHECK THROUGHOUT") indicate that a pattern of this type of feedback has evolved, and the writer needs to self-check the remaining portions of paper for that error type. The reader is no longer noting every instance of that feedback from that point on, but will mark some content intermittently. The writer should focus on reducing this type of error in subsequent papers in order to enhance meaning and clarity for communicating in writing using excellent written language per APA style as well as accurate technical APA style (e.g., citations).	



## Special Education Paper and Project (41 points)

### Special Education Paper

Students will self-select a special education population and describe issues related to some aspect of education for this population. Issues are derived from the following topics, from which a minimum of 3 must be addressed in the paper:

- Eligibility & Labelling
- Free and Appropriate Education
- Individualized Education Programs
- Continuum of Placement
- Access to General Curriculum
- Accountability for Student Learning
- Specialized Instruction
- Self-Determination
- Family Involvement

You should plan to have a minimum of 8 current (2011 or more recent) research-based citations for this assignment. Your paper should be 8-10 double spaced pages (not including references), and include a reference page(s). More detailed directions will be provided on the Bb site.

### Special Education Services Project

Students will select a topic related to special education services, such as: intervention (academics, behavior), related services, transition, or another instructor-approved topic. Students will create a resource for practitioners such as a how to article or other practitioner resource, an online module, or another instructor approved dissemination option. Students will review resources for practitioners from the Bb site + in-class before selecting which option they will choose for their project, after which more detailed directions will be provided on the Bb site.

### *Evaluation of Special Education Paper and Services Project*

The paper and services project are individualized per EDSE 844 student. Rubrics will be provided by the instructor and available on the Bb site.

## Presentation (15 points)

Prepare a 20-minute presentation of your Special Education Services Project. Build into your presentation at least one way to *briefly* engage class colleagues in a discussion related to these articles during your presentation. Additionally, *at the conclusion* of your presentation, identify an open-ended question or thought that leads to a brief class discussion, and elicit / answer questions regarding the issue. Facilitate the discussion so that the focus stays on the Project related to the issue and so that each colleague actively participates. Prepare a handout that goes with your presentation, and include a Reference page with all sources cited accurately in APA style.

### *Evaluation of Presentation*

Scoring Rubric for Class Presentation	Points Possible
1. Quality of presentation content is excellent, including handout. The clarity of information presented (on the PPT) and its importance to the field of special education is excellent.*	/12

2. Interactions with class colleagues are well-planned, high-level, and stay within the time limit. Excellent facilitation at the conclusion of the presentation, including eliciting active participation of each peer.*	/2
3. Reference page and all use of APA (technical and written language) is excellent / completely accurate.	/1
<b>Questions:</b> *Did the presenter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep within the time limits?</li> <li>• Reflect poise, clarity, knowledge, and interest in the content being presented?</li> <li>• Make effective use of visuals (i.e., PPT)?</li> <li>• Describe, and stay focused on, the research as it relates to the topic being presented?</li> <li>• Keep the audience's attention?</li> </ul>	
<b>TOTAL points earned</b>	<b>/15</b>
<b>Comments from instructor:</b>	

### Other Assignments.

#### Blackboard Discussions, Interactions, and Webinars (15.5 points)

On about six occasions across the semester, questions or points-of-view or a brief reading or a webinar will be posted on Bb for you to view, react to, integrate with research, align with your experiences, and/or otherwise discuss. Specific directions for what you need to do will be posted on Bb. Follow the directions for each Bb posting to earn the maximum points available for that Bb assignment. On some occasions, webinars may be posted for viewing.

*For example: Students will locate and post to Blackboard one peer-reviewed article or policy document from a reliable source (e.g., CEC) related to your self-selected topic and one of the areas that we are discussing for classes indicated on the syllabus:*

- *Eligibility & Labelling*
- *Free & Appropriate Education (FAPE)*
- *Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)*
- *Continuum of Placement*

#### **Evaluation Criteria:**

The timeliness and quality of your postings (i.e., avoid general comments like "good idea" or "neat") will be assessed along with their regularity. Quality criteria will include your contributions of new and meaningful ideas, coherence of your messages, and the relevance of your replies to other messages as they build on other messages to elaborate, contradict, modify, or explain ideas.

## Schedule

Session	Date	Topic/Lecture	Readings and Assignments Due
1	1/26	Introductions Overview of Course Content of Syllabus Group Suggestions for Current Issue Topics <i>Perusing peer-reviewed journals</i> <i>Using the GMU online library</i>  <i>Monday January 26<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 in Finley 119, the Instructor will demonstrate using the GMU library and how to access the most relevant information in the APA Manual.</i>	
2	2/2	Historical Perspectives (PKS assigns readings)	Historical readings – these will be available via Bb
3	2/9	Synthesis Papers, Current Issues in Special Education sign-up, Presentation sign-up	Readings designated by PKS (look on Bb)
4	2/16	<b><i>A new Course Schedule will be submitted for Class 4 to 13.</i></b>	<b>Synthesis Paper # 1</b>
5	2/23		
6	3/2		
7	3/16		<b>Synthesis Paper # 2</b>
8	3/23		
9	3/30		
10	4/6		
11	4/13		<b>Synthesis Paper # 3</b>
12	4/20		
13	4/27		
14	5/4	Course Summary and Conclusion Course Evaluations	
15	5/11		<b>Special Education Paper (early submissions accepted)</b>

**Appendix** *There is no appendix for this syll*