



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

Fall 2015

EDSE 540 001: Characteristics of Students with Disabilities who Access the
General Curriculum

CRN: 71882, 3 - Credits

Instructor: Dr. Jill Jakulski	Meeting Dates: 08/31/15 - 12/21/15
Phone: 703-380-2289	Meeting Day(s): Thursday
E-Mail: jjakulsk@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): 7:20 pm-10:00 pm
Office Hours: by appointment	Meeting Location: Fairfax KH 17

***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

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. Notes: School-based field experience required. Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week: 3 Hours of Lab or Studio per week: 0

Prerequisite(s): None

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.

Advising Tip

Have you met with an advisor? All students should make an appointment to meet with an advisor to outline a plan for completing coursework and non-course requirements such as testing. To make an appointment by phone or in person, go to <http://gse.gmu.edu/special-education/advising/>.

Nature of Course Delivery

Learning activities include the following:

1. Class lecture and discussion
2. Application activities
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Research and presentation activities
6. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard

Field Experience Requirement

A Field Experience is a part of this course. A field experience is a variety of early and ongoing field-based opportunities in which candidates may observe, assist, tutor, and/or conduct research. Field experiences may occur in off-campus settings, such as schools (NCATE, 2008). Below are REQUIRED PROCEDURES FOR ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THIS COURSE

1. Prior to representing George Mason in off-campus settings, visit this site: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/teacher/internships-field-experience>. The site has a comprehensive PowerPoint on the registration process and tips for a successful field experience. This is called the Field Experience Presentation. View this.
2. Complete the online field experience registration form [<http://cehd.gmu.edu/endorse/ferf>] at the beginning of the semester (if not before) and complete the information requested REGARDLESS if you need assistance in 'finding' an individual for the project/assignment or not. This information is required by the state. It is important that you do this within the first two classes so that the Clinical Practice Office has sufficient time to find a placement for you.

Please indicate how your placement will be arranged.*

- I will need George Mason (Clinical Practice Specialist) to arrange a placement for my field experiences (including observations and/or case studies).
- I have been assigned a placement by my program for my field experiences (including observations and/or case studies).
- I will arrange my own field experience (observations and/or case studies) because I am a full-time contracted school system employee and will complete field experience at my workplace.
- I will arrange my own field experiences (observations and/or case studies) because I am conducting a case study or individualized child portfolio with an individual outside of the school system (Special Education, Early Childhood Education PK-3, Dual Licensure Early Childhood Education PD-3 and Early Childhood Special Education only).
- I will arrange my own placement for my field experiences (including observations and/or case studies) because my instructor has offered access to a student(s) inside of a school system.

Fields marked with * are required. Your preferences may not be guaranteed.

NOTE: When selecting options of “I will arrange my own...” you will be asked to specify further, and/or identify the region and/or school of your arrangement. You will also be asked to obtain permission from a school principal or school administrator. Students should keep this documentation.

- I understand that I must obtain permission from my principal/school administrator.

NOTE: It is not recommended that you work with your own child.

NOTE: If you selected the last option above, an email from the host teacher and the administrator is required to be sent to cuanseru@gmu.edu. The email serves as documentation of the approval. The administrators must approve all visitors in their school.

Evidence-Based Practices

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.

Learner Outcomes

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

- Describe the field of learning disabilities from its origins to policies and practices of today.
- Compare the history of education for students with emotional and behavioral disorders, students with learning disabilities students with mild intellectual disabilities.
- Define learning disability, emotional disturbance, and mild intellectual disabilities.
- Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between normal and atypical behaviors.
- Describe characteristics of K-12 students with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and/or mild intellectual disabilities.
- Compare conceptual models of behavioral deficits with three conceptual models that explain learning disabilities and/or mild intellectual disabilities.
- 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 disabilities, emotional disturbances, and mild intellectual disabilities for a parent and suggest possible interventions for home and school.
- Describe how children develop language.
- 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.

Digital Library

Effective summer 2015, the Division of Special Education and disAbility Research will discontinue the use of the Pearson Digital Library. No further registrations will be accepted. Students who hold current subscriptions will continue to have access to the library for the remainder of their subscription time. However, no further updates will be made to the digital library. During this time, should a textbook be revised or a new book is adopted for a class where the text is included in the digital library, Pearson will have options available to you and will provide you with an individual e-text or, if there is no e-text, a printed copy. Students, who have purchased a 3-year subscription directly through Pearson Education, will also have an option to obtain a prorated refund. However, 3-year subscription access cards purchased via the GMU bookstore will need to speak with a George Mason Bookstore Representative. Please be aware that the issuance of a refund, in this case, is at the discretion of the George Mason bookstore. Concerns or questions may be directed to Molly Haines at Molly.Haines@pearson.com.

Required Textbook

Raymond, E. B. (2012). *Learners with mild disabilities: A characteristics approach* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. ISBN-13: 9780137060764

Required Resources

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American psychological association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN 9781433805615

Additional Readings

Additional readings will be: a) provided during class; b) posted to Blackboard; or c) student-retrieved via online database.

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. The CEC standards that will be addressed in this class include Standard 1: Learner development and individual learning differences; Standard 2: Learning environments; Standard 3: Curricular content knowledge; Standard 4: Assessment; Standard 5: Instructional planning and strategies; Standard 7: Collaboration.

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 and Participation

- Students are expected to (a) attend all classes during the course, (b) arrive on time, (c) stay for the duration of the class time; (c) show evidence of having read/studied material; and (d) complete all assignments to earn the participation grade. Attendance, timeliness, and professionally relevant and active participation are 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 or repeated tardiness/leaving early will result in not earning your full participation grade for the course. Please notify me *in advance* by phone or email if you will not be able to attend class.

Late work

- Late work will not be accepted unless, due to extenuating circumstances, I agreed in advance to an alternate due date and time, in which case I will have confirmed this with you via email.
 - If you are not in class on the day an assignment is due, it remains your responsibility for submitting the assignment on or before the due date and time.

Workload

- Graduate-level courses require in-depth reading, study, and work on course requirements outside of class time. Students are expected to allot class study and preparation time in addition to time spent on assignments.

Written and Oral Language

- For any written work in the College of Education, APA Style is the standard format to be used. Most students would benefit from the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). The use of APA guidelines is required for all assignments. Please use the following website for general APA format guidelines: <http://apastyle.apa.org>.
- First-person language is used in class discussions, written assignments, and, ideally, in our professional practice.

Blackboard Submission

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, *Observation Case Study* to Blackboard (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 Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to Blackboard will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required Blackboard submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Grading Scale

- 95 – 100 = A
- 90 – 94 = A-
- 80 – 89 = B
- 70 – 79 = C
- < 70 = F

Assignments/Evaluation

Attendance/Participation

1. **Attendance/Participation** (25% of final grade) points will be awarded for each class. Points will be based on the following: on-time arrival and thoughtful participation and contributions throughout the class which reflect prior preparation (e.g. readings, assignments)

Performance-based Assessment (Blackboard submission required)

2. **Case Study Report** (25% of final grade) → *Due Date: 11/19*

The observation case study provides you with the opportunity to get an in-depth understanding of a student with mild to moderate exceptional learning needs. You will examine his or her educational history and goals, observe in classroom settings, conduct parent or guardian interviews, and synthesize the information gathered, relating it to the content of the course. The purpose of the case study is to help you understand the complexity of each individual case of a student with a disability. This case study assignment has six major sections. Each section should be labeled with the heading given below. The paper should be formatted using APA style with related documents and samples in the Appendix.

Part I: Demographic and Background Data

- A. Select a student with exceptional learning needs who accesses the general curriculum and you would like to study. Verify with school officials that you have permission to access confidential records for that student and that you may contact the student's parents or guardians. If you do not have access to a student with exceptional learning needs, please talk with your instructor.
- B. Create a pseudonym to use throughout your project. (It is of the utmost importance that the identity of your student remain confidential. If school officials or parents ask, your case study will be evaluated by your instructor and will not be available for public view.)
- C. Provide a thorough description of your student, including
 - a. demographic information,
 - b. disability diagnosis and etiology,
 - c. any medical conditions that exist,
 - d. psychological and social-emotional characteristics, and
 - e. any other information relevant to the student's academic achievement (e.g., has moved repeatedly, has significant family changes). Do not include the student's educational history. That is included in Part III.
- D. Identify and provide examples of the skills and characteristics of your student that are (a) similar to the their peers (typical growth and development) and (b) those skills and characteristics that are dissimilar (atypical).
- E. Identify the educational implications of the characteristics in C and D.

Part II: Educational History, Goals, Objectives, and Accommodations

- A. Describe your student's educational history, including
 - a. schools attended,
 - b. reason for initial referral,
 - c. pre-referral interventions (if available),
 - d. results of multidisciplinary evaluation,
 - e. special education classification,

- f. description and location of educational service provision, and
 - g. related services provided.
- B. From the student's IEP, summarize the educational goals and objectives and identify the classroom accommodations.
 - C. Describe the impact of your student's academic and social abilities, attitudes, interests, and values on instruction and career development. Does your student's disability have an impact on auditory and information processing skills? If so, describe.
 - D. Evaluate how the levels of support correspond to the needs of the individual.

Part III: School and Classroom Information

- A. Give a description of your student's school, including
 - a. Demographics of students,
 - b. Staffing
 - c. Continuum of services for students with exceptional learning needs.
- B. Describe your student's educational placement. What special education and general education services are provided? In what locations or ways are the services provided?
- C. Evaluate how this placement is the Least Restrictive Environment to address the student's specific skills and characteristics, as described in Part I.
- D. Describe the classroom(s) in which the student participates, including
 - a. Number of students
 - b. Content area
 - c. Curriculum standards used

Part IV: Student Observation

Observe at least two class periods of instruction for your student.

- A. Summarize your observations, including
 - a. Content area,
 - b. Teachers and service providers involved,
 - c. Length of observation,
 - d. Placement of student in classroom,
 - e. Interactions of student with teacher(s) and other students,
 - f. Learning activities, and
 - g. Level of engagement of student with activities.
- B. Describe how what you observed corresponded to your student's IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations.
- C. Describe the effects your student's exceptional condition(s) appears to have on his or her life in school.
- D. Identify any biases that you may have that may affect how you perceive the classrooms during observations.

Part V: Family Member Interview

Interview at least one of your student's parents, guardians, or family member who is knowledgeable of the student's goals and needs.

- A. Begin your interview with questions about the family, focusing on developing a collaborative relationship. Ask questions that gather information about the family system and the role of family in the student's development and education, respecting differences across families.
- B. Ask the parents about their child's educational goals, objectives, and accommodations. What was the process used in developing these? Did they feel they had a role in their development? Do they feel these goals, objectives, and accommodations are appropriate and will provide benefit 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 within the bounds of ethical practice.
 - 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.

Include a statement about how you addressed these items with specific examples.

Part VI: Summary, Synthesis and Recommendations

- A. Summary- Write a brief, one paragraph summary (referring to relevant pages in your case study as necessary) 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 course readings for a student with the identified disability. How are they similar and different? Are the described implications similar or different? How do your student's characteristics compare to typical development? Provide specific examples.
- C. Recommendations- Given the information you have compiled about your student and your learning from the course,
 - 1. Do you think your student is receiving the services and supports he or she needs? Provide a rationale for your response.
 - 2. If you could provide recommendations to the IEP team about effective instruction to match the characteristics of your student, what would they be? Provide a rationale for your response.
- D. Final reflection
 - 1. How did your personal cultural biases and differences affect your interactions with this student and his or her family during this case study process?
 - 2. How does the development of this case study address CEC Standards 1, 2, 3, 9, and 10?

Appendix (required) -Include student work samples relevant to your case study specifics, parent interview questions and answers. Other relevant materials may be included but are optional.

Performance-based Common Assignments (No Blackboard submission required)

3. Summaries of Journal Articles (15% of grade) → *Due Date: 10/22*

- Each student will summarize three (3) journal articles that are relevant to the needs of the student chosen for the case study. 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 overall abstract should be an introduction to the students' needs, including the disability area(s). Each summary starts with an APA style citation at the top of the page. The body should consist of two labeled parts: Summary; and Critique. Finally, a conclusion that ties together the findings of the summaries. Included in this, you are to provide reflective commentary as to what you have learned as a result of your readings/summarization, and how that could relate to supporting the needs of the student for whom you are writing a case study. Conclusions should also include an action plan for assisting the student to meet an identified need.
- Articles must be from peer-reviewed published journals no more than five years old, and should be data-based examinations of issues relevant to the Mild Disabilities field. A Word document of common journals is included under Course Documents on Blackboard.

4. In-Class Exam (20% of final grade) → *12/17*

A final exam that covers course content will be administered.

Other Assignments

5. In-Class Problem-Solving and Presentations (15% of final grade, 5 pts each)

Students will be divided into groups and provided a reading related to research, a topic of interest, or a professional dilemma. Using prior learning and information gained from readings, students will discuss and give a brief presentation based on reading-specific prompts.

Schedule

CLASS	TOPICS	DUE THIS CLASS SESSION
09/03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions and Backgrounds • Syllabus/ Review • Assignment Explanation 	
09/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context of Special Education • Introduction/Review of Exceptionalities and Legislation • Issues in Assessment and Identification 	Read Chapters 1 & 2 <i>provide info for case study –</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student name & school • disability/disabilities • confirmation that info is available • confirmation that family member is available for interview
09/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues in Instruction and Placement • Learners with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 	Read Chapters 3 and 4
09/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners with Learning Disabilities 	Read Chapter 5
10/01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners with Learning Disabilities, cont. 	<i>in-class problem-solving/dilemma activity</i>
10/08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online Class/Assignments 	<i>Complete IRIS Module</i>
10/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders 	Read Chapter 6
10/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners with Emotional or Behavioral Disorders, cont. 	Read Chapter 6 <i>journal summaries due</i>
10/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners with ADHD and Other Disorders and Conditions • Cognitive and Perceptual Characteristics 	Read Chapters 7 & 9 <i>in-class problem-solving/dilemma activity</i>
11/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorders 	Read Chapter 8
11/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study review and guidance 	<i>in-class problem-solving/dilemma activity</i>
11/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Characteristics • tbd (guest panel) 	Read Chapter 10 <i>case study due</i>
11/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic and Learning Characteristics • Social/Emotional Characteristics 	Chapters 11 and 12
12/03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations of Case Studies and Intervention Recommendations 	
12/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose ends • Review for Final Exam 	
12/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Exam 	Final Exam

Note: Schedule will be adjusted as needed

Appendix

All rubrics and other course information will be posted on Blackboard