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

Spring 2021
EDSE 361 DL1: Characteristics of Students with Severe Disabilities
CRN: 17838, 3 – Credits

Instructor: Ms. Maureen Howard	Meeting Dates: 1/25/21 – 5/10/21
Phone: Email for appointment	Meeting Day(s): N/A
E-Mail: mhowar16@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): N/A
Office Hours: Mondays 4-5 via Google Meet	Meeting Location: Asynchronous; Online
Office Location: N/A	Other Phone: N/A

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

Prerequisite(s):
None

Co-requisite(s):
None

Course Description
Examines the academic, social, medical and behavioral characteristics of individuals with severe disabilities such as intellectual disability, autism, traumatic brain injury, and severe/multiple cognitive, physical and/or sensory disabilities. Focuses on etiology, contributing factors, impact on life and family, the challenges of identifying students with disabilities, and the need for intensive instruction, accommodations, and support.

Course Overview
EDSE 361 focuses on the academic, social, medical and behavioral characteristics of individuals with severe disabilities and the impact these characteristics have on school, family, and life outcomes. The course examines the etiology, contributing factors, identification process, and required intensive instruction of these disabilities.

Advising Contact Information
Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress in your program. Students in Special Education and Assistive Technology programs can contact the Special Education Advising Office at 703-993-3670 or speced@gmu.edu for assistance. All other students should refer to their assigned program advisor or the Mason Care Network (703-993-2470).

Advising Tip
Would you like the opportunity to work on campus with students with special needs? The LIFE Program (http://masonlife.gmu.edu/) is an innovative post-secondary program at Mason for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who desire a university experience in a supportive academic environment. A variety of employment opportunities are available.

Course Delivery Method
Learning activities include the following:
1. Module readings
2. Module lectures
3. Video and other media supports
4. Application activities and participation
5. Discussion board posts and responses

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using an asynchronous format via the Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on 1/25/2020.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technical Requirements
    To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see: Browser support (https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers)

  To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see: Tested devices and operating systems

(https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems)

- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students will need a headset microphone for use with Zoom web conferencing tool for optional synchronous sessions.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader (https://get.adobe.com/reader/)
  - Windows Media Player (https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player)
  - Apple Quick Time Player (www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)

Expectations
- Course Week:
  Because asynchronous courses do not have a "fixed" meeting day, our week will start on Mondays, and finish on Sundays.
- Log-in Frequency:
  Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 1 time per week.
- Participation:
  Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- Technical Competence:
  Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- Technical Issues:
  Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- Workload:
  Please be aware that this course is not self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the Class Schedule section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- Instructor Support:

Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

- Netiquette:
  The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.
- Accommodations:
  Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Learner Outcomes

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

1. State the federal definitions of students with severe disabilities including students with autism, developmental delay, intellectual disability, traumatic brain injury, and multiple disabilities- including sensory, deaf-blindness, speech-language, orthopedic and other health impairments as an additional disability.
2. Describe the history and evolution of severe disability.
3. Describe the characteristics of individuals with severe disabilities whose cognitive impairments or adaptive skills require adaptations to the general curriculum and whose functional skills are significantly different from typically developing peers and therefore require adaptations to the general curriculum for an appropriate education. Describe how the following characteristics impact education, behavior, and social interactions:
   a. Age-span and developmental issues;
   b. Levels of severity;
   c. Medical and health needs and positioning and handling needs;
   d. Cognitive functioning;
   e. Speech, language development, and communication;
   f. Emotional and behavioral development and supports;
   g. Social development; and
   h. Cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic factors.
4. Describe the impact of disability on self-determination and self-advocacy skills.
5. Describe historical and legal perspectives, models, theories, philosophies, and trends related to specific student populations.
6. Describe how educational environments impact students with severe disabilities.
7. Describe how to build strong parental connections and relationships for families with severe disabilities.

Professional Standards

(Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC). Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following

professional standards: CEC Standard 1: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences (nTASC 1,2); CEC Standard 3: Curricular Content Knowledge (InTASC 4,5) & CEC Standard 6: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice (InTASC 9).

Required Texts

Agran, M., Brown, F., Hughes, C., Quirk, C. & Ryndak, D. (2014). *Equity & full participation for individuals with severe disabilities: A vision for the future*. Paul H. Brookes.

Recommended Texts

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA, hard copy).

VIA Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement

It is critical for the special education program to collect data on how our students are meeting accreditation standards. Every teacher candidate/student registered for an EDSE course with a required Performance-based Assessment (PBA) is required to upload the PBA to VIA (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one-time course or part of an undergraduate minor). A PBA is a specific assignment, presentation, or project that best demonstrates one or more CEC, InTASC or other standard connected to the course. A PBA is evaluated in two ways. The first is for a grade, based on the instructor's grading rubric. The second is for program accreditation purposes. Your instructor will provide directions as to how to upload the PBA to VIA.

For EDSE 361, the required PBA is Disability Case Study. Please check to verify your ability to upload items to VIA before the PBA due date.

    Assignments and/or Examinations

        Performance-based Assessment
        (VIA submission required)

        The performance-based assessment for this course is the *Disability Case Study*. Please see the *Course Assignments* and/or Module 7 for assignment description.

        College Wide Common Assessment
        (VIA submission required)

The required college-wide common assessment in EDSE 361 is the dispositions self-assessment. Towards the beginning of their licensure programs, all teacher candidates complete a self-rating of dispositions, which reflect one's attitudes and deeply held beliefs. The self-assessment will be an online survey, which can be accessed via the Assessments page of the course Blackboard site. Your instructor will notify you when the link is available. The self-assessment has 12 items that ask you to reflect on your professional responsibility, collaboration and leadership, cultural responsiveness, and high expectations for learning. Please note that in addition to this initial self-rating in EDSE 361, your dispositions will also be assessed at least 2 other times during your program: a mid-point self-rating during a designated course (EDSE 465) and an instructor-rated evaluation by a university supervisor during internship (EDSE 483). Instructors may complete instructor-rated disposition evaluations other times throughout your program. For more information on dispositions, see https://cehd.gmu.edu/epo/candidate-dispositions.

Course Assignments
There are 8 assigned learning modules. All modules will open on Mondays at 9:00 am and all work must be submitted by Sundays at 11:59 pm on the specified due date. Within any learning module, students will be presented with a series of readings and activities. Required assignments/activities will have a red target beside them within the module. All activities identified as the target assignments must be submitted on time and be of satisfactory quality to receive full credit. The points for assignments will be listed on Blackboard within each module. Modules will open as the semester progresses; therefore not all modules will be available on the first day of class.

- Weekly Discussion board posts (8 discussion boards x 20 points each = 160 points): Each week a module will open with 1 discussion board post. Read the directions for each post carefully and complete for full points. At times, students may be required to initial post by a particular date and respond to peers by the end of the module.
- Short answer assignment (2 assignments x 40 points each= 80 points): Students will be asked to reflect on questions pertinent to the specified module. Directions for short answer assignments are located within selected modules. These are to be turned in via Blackboard.
- Inclusion Table (Module 5= 60 points): *See detailed instructions within the listed Module.* The purpose is to provide general education teachers information needed to implement instructional programming that accommodates the medical and educational needs of a child with a specific condition who will be included in their classroom. You will complete a table for this assignment.
- Disability Case Study (Module 7= 100 points): *See detailed instructions within the listed module.* Students will complete a table related to a specific disability. Students will provide an overview of

the specified disability as well as outline how the specified disability impacts families, and what cultural differences must be addressed; describe the complete needs of individuals with this disorder/disability, presents a range of special education and community-based supports and services that are needed to maximize their achievement and capacity, and discusses the impact of the disability on normal growth and development and the ability to learn, interact socially and live as fulfilled and contributing members of the community.

- Teacher Talks (3 meetings x 5 bonus points each = 15 bonus points) 3 times in the semester students will have the opportunity to participate in a live synchronous meeting with a GMU faculty member to discuss hot topics and real world issues in the field of severe disabilities. Students will be able to earn up to 5 bonus points for attending and engaging in productive discussion. Students that cannot attend will have the opportunity to complete an alternate assignment which will be posted on Blackboard. Meeting details will be posted on Blackboard.

Assignment	Points possible
Module discussion boards	160 (20 points each)
Short answer assignments	80 (40 points each)
Inclusion table	60
Disability case study	100
Total Points Possible	400

**Items that are due each week are indicated by a red Target sign within each module.

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance/Participation

Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which include viewing of all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions. Please note that while only certain learning elements are assessed through "grades", the instructor can still assess student involvement and engagement using other measures. Blackboard enables the instructor to view such data as login dates, duration of time spent online, access to specific content elements, and more. The instructor will use this data along with course grades to ensure that students are actively engaged in the course. Students struggling to complete work on time or who appear to not be engaging fully with course content will be asked to conference with the instructor.

Late Work
All assignments (e.g., discussion boards original posts, responses, tables, etc.) must be submitted via Blackboard on or before 11:59pm on the stated due date. In fairness to students who submit work on time, points will be deducted for late submissions (up to 10% per day). Assignments will not be accepted more than 1 week late unless prior arrangements with the instructor have been made.

Grading Scale

A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D	60-69%
F	<60%

*Note: The George Mason University Honor Code will be strictly enforced. See Academic Integrity Site (https://oai.gmu.edu/) and Honor Code and System (https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/). Students are responsible for reading and understanding the Code. "To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." Work submitted must be your own new, original work for this course or with proper citations.

Professional Dispositions
Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See Policies and Procedures (https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/). Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. In the College of Education and Human Development, dispositions are formally and separately evaluated in at least two points in each student's program – a self-evaluation at the start of their program, and a university supervisor's evaluation during internship. In special education licensure programs, the self-evaluation is an online survey distributed via email upon program entry for graduate students and within initial courses (EDSE 241, EDSE 361, and EDSE 311) for undergraduate students. When dispositions are assessed, it is important that for areas where a positive disposition is 'occasionally evident' or 'rarely evident,' the student takes steps to grow as an educator. See https://cehd.gmu.edu/epo/candidate-dispositions.

Class Schedule (see module in Blackboard for details on assignments)
*Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Module	Module Opens	Module Topic	Module Due	Extra Credit Opportunities
0	1/25	Orientation and course overview	1/31	
1	2/1	The historical treatment and outcomes for individuals with severe disabilities	2/14	Teacher Talk: +5 for attendance *See Blackboard if cannot attend
2	2/15	Understanding and planning for individuals with severe disabilities	2/28	
3	3/1	The developing child	3/14	
4	3/15	Developmental and intellectual disabilities/Down Syndrome	3/28	Teacher Talk +5 for attendance *See Blackboard if cannot attend
5	3/29	Cerebral Palsy/Traumatic Brain Injury	4/11	
6	4/12	Autism Spectrum Disorders/Behavioral and psychiatric disorders	4/19	Teacher Talk +5 for attendance *See Blackboard if cannot attend
7	4/20	Disability case study	5/5	

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: See Core Values (http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/).

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code. See Honor Code and System (https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/).

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

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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 with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor. See Disability Services (https://ds.gmu.edu/).

- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

   Campus Resources
- Support for submission of assignments to either Tk20 or VIA should be directed to https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments/

- Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to Blackboard Instructional Technology Support for Students (https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/).

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:
- As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing the Title IX Coordinator (titleix@gmu.edu).

- **For information on student support resources on campus, see Student Support Resources on Campus (https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus).**

- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website College of Education and Human Development (http://cehd.gmu.edu/).

Appendix
Assessment Rubric(s): *Disability Case Study*

Criteria	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations

Disability Overview and Etiology: Definitions and Characteristics	**1 Point** Candidate's description of definitions and characteristics of learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities including typical and atypical development in cognitive, physical, and sensory functioning is limited.	**2 Points** Candidate provides definitions and characteristics of learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities including typical and atypical development in cognitive, physical, and sensory functioning.	**4 Points** Candidate provides definitions and characteristics of learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities including typical and atypical development in cognitive, physical, and sensory functioning. In addition, candidate discusses the effect of the exceptionality across the student's lifespan.
Disability Overview and Etiology: Medical Complications and Implications	**1 Point** Candidate partially identifies etiologies and medical complication and implications of conditions related to learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities and discusses the impact those conditions can have on a learner's life is limited.	**2 Points** Candidate identifies etiologies and medical complication and implications of conditions related to learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities and discusses the impact those conditions can have on a learner's life.	**4 Points** Candidate identifies etiologies and medical complication and implications of conditions related to learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities and discusses the impact those conditions can have on a learner's life including psychological and social-emotional characteristics of individuals with exceptionalities.
Disability Overview and Etiology: Identification	**1 Point** Candidate discusses issues related to the identification of learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities, however does not identify issues related to those from culturally and	**2 Points** Candidate discusses issues related to the identification of learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.	**4 Points** Candidate discusses issues related to the identification of learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and how those issues effect placement and

			services available for students with exceptionalities.
Impact on Families	**1 Point** Candidate's discussion of the impact of learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities on family systems and the role of families in supporting development within the educational process is limited. Candidate's discussion of the impact of differences in values, languages, and customs that can exist between the home and school as well as the effect of personal cultural biases and differences that affect one's teaching is limited.	**2 Points** Candidate discusses the impact of learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities on family systems and the role of families in supporting development within the educational process. Candidate discusses the impact of differences in values, languages, and customs that can exist between the home and school as well as the effect of personal cultural biases and differences that affect one's teaching.	**4 Points** Candidate discusses the impact of learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities on family systems and the role of families in supporting development within the educational process. Candidate discusses the impact of differences in values, languages, and customs that can exist between the home and school as well as the effect of personal cultural biases and differences that affect one's teaching. In addition, candidate discusses their own cultural biases and differences that affect their teaching.
Educational Issues: Continuum of Placements and Services	**1 Point** Candidate partially identifies continuum of placement and services available for learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities.	**2 Points** Candidate identifies the continuum of placement and services available for learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities.	**3 Points** Candidate identifies the continuum of placement and services available for learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities with consideration to the models, theories, and philosophies that form the basis of special education

			practice.
Educational Issues: Levels of Support and LRE	**1 Point** Candidate fails to relate levels of support to the specific needs of learners' moderate to severe exceptionalities to support them within the least restrictive environment.	**2 Points** Candidate relates levels of support to the needs of learners' moderate to severe exceptionalities to support them within the least restrictive environment.	**3 Points** Candidate relates levels of support to the specific needs of learners' moderate to severe exceptionalities to support them within the least restrictive environment. Candidate discusses specialized materials, curricula, and resources for learners with exceptionalities.
Educational Issues: Educational Implications	**1 Point** Candidate's discussion of the educational implications of characteristics of learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities is limited and only partially identifies strategies to support learners including those from culturally diverse backgrounds.	**2 Points** Candidate discusses the educational implications of characteristics of learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities and identifies strategies to support learners including those from culturally diverse backgrounds.	**4 Points** Candidate discusses the educational implications of characteristics of learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities and identifies several evidence-based strategies to support learners including those from culturally diverse backgrounds.
Legal Issues	**1 Point** Candidate's discussion of the impact of the legal, judicial, and educational systems on the rights of	**2 Points** Candidate discusses the impact the legal, judicial, and educational systems on the rights of learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities.	**3 Points** Candidate discusses the impact of various legal, judicial, and educational systems on the rights of learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities.

	learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities is limited.		
Family Resources	**1 Point** Candidate accesses information but identifies limited sources of unique services, networks, and organizations that may not specifically support families and learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities. Candidate's discussion of the roles of professional groups and referral agencies in identifying, assessing, and providing services to learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities is limited.	**2 Points** Candidate accesses information to identify sources of unique services, networks, and organizations to support families and learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities. Candidate discusses roles of professional groups and referral agencies in identifying, assessing, and providing services to learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities.	**3 Points** Candidate accesses information to identify and evaluate a range of unique services, networks, and organizations to specifically targeted to support families and learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities. Candidate discusses roles of professional groups and referral agencies in identifying, assessing, and providing services to learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities.
Professional Resources	**1 Point** Candidate accesses information but identifies limited professional organizations and publications reporting current research-validated	**2 Points** Candidate accesses information to identify professional organizations and publications reporting current research-validated practices relevant to learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities.	**3 Points** Candidate accesses information to identify a range of professional organizations and publications reporting current research-validated practices specifically targeted to learners with

	practices that may not be specifically relevant to learners with moderate to severe exceptionalities.		moderate to severe exceptionalities.