



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

Fall 2021

EDSE 201 DL2: Introduction to Special Education

CRN: 83021, 3 – Credits

Instructor: Dr. Shanna Takacs	Meeting Dates: 8/23/21 - 12/15/21
Phone: 703-785-0311	Meeting Day(s): n/a
E-Mail: stakacs@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): Asynchronous
Office Hours: by appointment	Meeting Location: n/a; online
Office Location: by appointment	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

Provides a survey of current knowledge on individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. Includes historical factors, legal aspects, etiology, characteristics, assessment, evidence-based practices, and support services for individuals with disabilities having needs for intervention ranging from mild to severe. Includes the impact of disabilities on academic, social, and emotional performances.

Course Overview

EDSE 201 is a foundational course exploring essential concepts regarding individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. The course includes information about historical factors, legal aspects, etiology, characteristics, assessment, evidence-based practices, and support services for individuals with disabilities having needs for intervention ranging from mild to severe. Students will examine the impact of disabilities on academic, social, and emotional performances.

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

Are you interested in learning more about careers in special education? Go to <http://education.gmu.edu/special-education/advising/> to schedule a meeting with an advisor.

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Course Delivery Method

Learning activities include the following:

1. Readings, lectures, and discussions
2. Websites, videos, and other media-based course resources
3. Application activities and assignments
4. Quizzes and reflective journaling activities
5. Exploratory and research-based project
6. Surveys and course feedback

This course will be delivered online using an asynchronous format via 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 in accordance with the posted start date.

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) (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); (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 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/) (<https://get.adobe.com/reader/>)
- [Windows Media Player](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player) (<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>)
- [Apple Quick Time Player](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/) (www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)

Expectations

Course Week: Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will start on Tuesdays, and finish on Mondays. The course includes 8 modules distributed across the full semester using a consistent pattern of engagement for two weeks per module. The instructor will open a new module every other Tuesday (with one exception noted on the course schedule). Initial postings to the discussion board for that module are due the first Monday (Monday 1) after the module opens and all other assignments for that module are due the second Monday (Monday 2) after the module opens (with

one exception noted on the course schedule). Adjustments will be made to accommodate holidays and other unforeseen events via BB announcements. Modules may be opened for student access earlier than scheduled, but no module assignments will be due earlier than the date noted on the Class Schedule.

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 three (3) times 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 notify the instructor and seek assistance from the Mason Technology Support Center via 703-993-8870 or support@gmu.edu. The website at <https://its.gmu.edu/article-categories/tl-s/> is also a good resource that is accessible 24/7.

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. For technical support, please contact the Mason Technology Support Center via 703-993-8870 or support@gmu.edu

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.

Instructor Support: Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. 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 ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Learner Outcomes

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

1. Explore historical perspectives, models, theories, philosophies, and trends that provide the basis for special education practice.
2. Examine legal aspects of special education regarding litigation, legislation, and expectations associated with the identification, education, and evaluation of students with disabilities.
3. Discuss current regulations governing special education policies and practices including rights, responsibilities, and legal status of all parties.
4. Recognize characteristics of children and youth with disabilities across all IDEA categories

relative to age, varying levels of severity, and developmental differences manifested in cognitive, linguistic, physical, psychomotor, social, or emotional functioning.

5. Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between “normal” and “atypical” behaviors.
6. Describe the etiological factors and medical aspects associated with various disabilities.
7. Describe past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including use of innovative technology.
8. Describe how to identify individual needs such as dyslexia and related evidence-based practices for intervention.
9. Discuss the dynamic influence of family systems relative to the education of students with disabilities.
10. Discuss the dynamic influence of culture and environmental settings relative to the education of students with disabilities.
11. Examine ethical considerations for the treatment of all children in context with professional standards of practice.
12. Describe how to recognize child abuse and prescribed research-based interventions to address abusive situations.

Professional Standards

This course is offered by George Mason University’s Division of Special Education and disAbility Research in the College of Education and Human Development. The goal of the special education programs is to improve the lives, productivity, and education of persons with disabilities. Courses within the special education programs align with the standards established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major international special education professional organization, and the 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 (InTASC 1, 2) & CEC Standard 3: Curricular content knowledge (InTASC 4, 5).

Required Textbooks

Friend, M. (2018). *Special education: Contemporary perspective for school professionals* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson.

Recommended Textbooks

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 as outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard).

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 201, the required PBA is (NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE). 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)

N/A

College Wide Common Assessment (TK20 submission required)

N/A

Performance-based Common Assignments (No Tk20 submission required)

Child Abuse Awareness Certificate, which is included as a Module 5 assignment requiring submission via Blackboard.

Dyslexia Awareness Certificate, which is included as a Module 3 assignment requiring submission via Blackboard.

Other Assignments

Checklists are provided for each module detailing the assignments for each section of the course. Examples of graded elements of the course include discussion forums (initial posting and peer engagement), application activities, quizzes, and reflections.

Assignment Summary

Below are the basic weights of the various kinds of work required for the course, but students should always bear in mind that grading is primarily a judgment about your performance on a particular assignment. Grades are designed to indicate your success in completing assignments, not the level of effort you put into them.

Discussion Forums		25%
Application Activities		25%
Quizzes		25%
Reflections		25%
Total		100%

Attendance/Participation: All coursework will be online in an Asynchronous format. There will be no face-to-face meetings. However, engagement with all assignments provided in each module and timely participation in interactive opportunities is the expectation.

Late Work: All assignments (e.g., discussions, activities, quizzes, reflections) must be submitted via Blackboard or email on or before the 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 one (1) week late unless prior arrangements with the instructor have been made.

APA Style: The standard format for any written work in the College of Education and Human Development here at Mason is APA. If you are unfamiliar with APA, it would benefit you to explore the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.) or access one of the internet sites that provides a summary of this information. For online resources regarding APA Style, please access the *Library Resources* button on the course Blackboard site.

Evaluation: All Module assignments require you to synthesize material from the course and outside sources into coherent statements of your ideas. You should support your statements and ideas with evidence from these sources, giving these sources credit in accordance with APA Style. Assignments are

evaluated according to posted rubrics. You can find the assignment descriptions and rubrics in each Module. Grades will post to the Grade Center and can be accessed by clicking on the *My Grades* button. If you have any questions, please contact me. If you have difficulty with an assignment, either understanding it or completing it, please contact me immediately.

Academic Integrity: Students in this course are always expected to exhibit academic integrity. 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 use either exact words or paraphrased 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 Office of Academic Integrity and the CEHD Dean's office. 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 plagiarism detection services for an integrity assessment as needed. For online resources regarding plagiarism, please access the *Library Resources* button on our site.

Communication: Email is the best way to contact me, although I am happy to arrange phone or videoconference calls upon request. There is a Send Email icon accessed via the Tools button on the left navigation bar in the course. My email (as well as the emails of your classmates) is located there. I will check email at least once a day on weekdays unless I notify you otherwise. I will respond to emails within 24 hours, if not sooner, on weekdays. On the weekends, I will check email at least once, which could increase response time to 48 hours. As communication is a two-way process, please plan to check your Mason email frequently. Please reach out early and often if you have questions or concerns.

Grading Scale (traditional rounding principles apply)

A	95-100%
A-	90-94%
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 \(https://oai.gmu.edu/\)](https://oai.gmu.edu/) and [Honor Code and System \(https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/\)](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 \(https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/\)](https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/). Professional dispositions are an essential function of a special educator's job, indicating that these dispositions are critical to develop and assess in

special education licensure programs. In the College of Education and Human Development, dispositions are formally and separately evaluated in at least three points in each student's program – a self-evaluation at the start of their program, a self-evaluation at the mid-point of their program, and a university supervisor's evaluation during internship. In special education graduate licensure programs, the initial self-evaluation is completed in designated courses (EDSE 241, EDSE 361, EDSE 311), the mid-point self-evaluation is completed in designated courses (EDSE 445, EDSE 465, and EDSE 419), and the internship evaluation is completed by instructors in EDSE 482, EDSE 483, and EDSE 484. In addition to these three designated evaluation times, instructors may complete instructor-rated disposition assessments other times throughout the program. When dispositions are assessed, it is important that for areas where a positive disposition is rated as "not proficient," the student takes steps to grow as an educator. See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/epo/candidate-dispositions>.

Class Schedule

*Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.
 “Due” means submitted on or before the posting date.

Module	Topic	Deliverables	Due Dates
1 Opens 8/23/21	Getting Started Foundations of Special Education: Historical Perspectives, Legality, Personnel, Procedural Safeguards, and Ethical Practices	Complete all elements of the Module 1 Checklist (provided overview section of Module 1) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 1	Initial post to Discussion Forum 1 (DF1) due 8/29/21 Rest of Module 1 assignments due 9/5/21
2 Opens 9/6/21	The Cognitive Continuum: Exploring Intellectual Disabilities (ID), Multiple Disabilities, and Giftedness	Complete all elements of the Module 2 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 2) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 2	Initial Post to DF2 due 9/12/21 Rest of Module 2 work due 9/19/21
3 Opens 9/20/21	The Dynamic Duo: Exploring Specific Learning Disabilities (LD) and Emotional and Behavior Disorders (EBD)	Complete all elements of the Module 3 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 3) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 3	Initial Post to DF3 due 9/26/21 Rest of Module 3 work due 10/3/21
4 Opens 10/4/21	Spectrum of Considerations: Exploring Speech or Language Impairment (SLI) and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)	Complete all elements of the Module 4 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 4) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 4	Initial Post to DF4 due 10/10/21 Rest of Module 4 work due 10/17/21
5 Opens 10/18/21	The Physical Realm: Exploring Orthopedic Impairments (OI) and Other Health Impairments (OHI) including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	Complete all elements of the Module 5 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 5) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 5	Initial Post to DF5 due 10/26/21 Rest of Module 5 work due 10/31/21
6 Opens 11/1/21	The Sensory Arena: Exploring Visual Impairments (VI) including Blindness, Hearing Impairments (HI), Deafness, and Deaf-Blindness	Complete all elements of the Module 6 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 6) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 6	Initial Post to DF6 due 11/7/21 Rest of Module 6 work due 11/14/21
7 Opens 11/15/21	Creating Opportunities for All Learners: Exploring: Exploring Multicultural Perspectives and Collaboration in Special Education	Complete all elements of the Module 7 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 7) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 7	Initial Post to DF7 due 11/21/21 Rest of Module 7 work due 11/28/21
8 Opens 11/29/21	Review and Wrap-up: The Past, the Present, and the Future	Complete all elements of the Module 8 Checklist (provided in overview section of Module 8) Submit all deliverables as noted in the Learning Objectives section of Module 8	Initial Post to DF8 due 12/5/21 Rest of M8 work due 12/12/21

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/) (<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/) (<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/) (<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/) (<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/) (<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 “non-confidential 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](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu) (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/) (<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/) (<http://cehd.gmu.edu/>).