



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

Fall 2024

EDSE 501: Introduction to Special Education

Section: 6S3; CRN: 84473

3 – Credits

Instructor: Dr. Michael Repie	Meeting Dates: 9/23/24 - 12/16/24
Phone: N/A	Meeting Day(s): N/A
E-Mail: mrepie@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): N/A
Office Hours: N/A	Meeting Location: N/A; 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 their LMS (Learning Management System).

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 lifespan. Includes historical factors, legal aspects, etiology, characteristics, assessment, evidence-based practices, and support services for individuals having needs for intervention ranging from mild to severe. Includes the impact of disabilities on academic, social, and emotional performances framed within the teaching profession as a whole.

Course Overview

EDSE 501 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 framed within the teaching profession as a whole.

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

Take advantage of student resources like the Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>), Learning Services (<https://learningservices.gmu.edu/>), Assistive Technology Initiative (<https://ati.gmu.edu/>), Disability Services (<https://ds.gmu.edu/>).

Course Delivery Method

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 your LMS

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using an asynchronous format via Mason's Learning Management system (LMS). You will log in to the course site using your Mason email name (everything before [@masonlive.gmu.edu](mailto:masonlive@gmu.edu)) and email password. The course site will be available on September 23, 2024.

- To access your course in Blackboard Learn: <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/>

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 updated browsers.
 - [Blackboard Learn](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Ultra/Getting_Started/Browser_Support) supported browsers: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Ultra/Getting_Started/Browser_Support
 - [Canvas](https://guides.instructure.com/a/720329) supported browsers: <https://guides.instructure.com/a/720329>
- Consistent and reliable access to GMU email and the course LMS, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Note that 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.

Expectations

- Course Week:
Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will start on Monday, and finish on Sunday
- Log-in Frequency:
Students must actively check the course LMS site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 2 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 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 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.

Learner Outcomes

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

1. Analyze how educators and other professionals address the variance between “typical” and “atypical” behaviors across the lifespan.
2. Distinguish 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.
3. Interpret information on individual differences and formulate ways to create meaningful learning experiences and interaction opportunities for all students.
4. Discuss current regulations governing special education policies and practices including rights, responsibilities, and legal status of all parties within the context of schools and communities.
5. Analyze historical perspectives, models, theories, philosophies, and trends that provide the basis for special education practice within the context of organized public education in the United States.
6. Examine legal aspects of special education regarding litigation, legislation, and expectations associated with the identification, education, and evaluation of students with disabilities.
7. Explain the etiological factors and medical aspects associated with various disabilities.
8. Summarize and evaluate past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including use of innovative technology.
9. Illustrate how principles of learning influence the selection of relevant, appropriate, and culturally responsive materials for all learners (e.g., gifted, English learners, students with disabilities).
10. Identify individual needs such as dyslexia and related evidence-based practices for intervention.
11. Evaluate the dynamic influence of family systems relative to the education of students with disabilities.
12. Evaluate the dynamic influence of culture and environmental settings relative to the education of students with disabilities.
13. Consider ethical considerations for the treatment of all children within the context of

professional standards of practice.

14. Recognize child abuse and implement research-based interventions to address abusive and traumatic situations.

Professional Standards

(Council for Exceptional Children [CEC] 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 Texts

Hallahan, D. P., Kauffman, J. M., & Pullen, P. C., (2022). *Exceptional Learners: An introduction to special education* (15th ed.). Pearson.

Recommended Texts

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

Required Resources

On Blackboard

Additional Readings

On Blackboard

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., LMS, 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/SLL (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/SLL.

For EDSE 501: No requirement to upload a Performance-based Assessment (PBA) to VIA/SLL.

Assignments and/or Examinations

Performance-based Assessment

(VIA submission required)

N/A

College-Wide Common Assessment

(VIA submission required)

This course contains at least one Common Assessment developed by the College of Education and Human Development to assess our candidates' performance on nationally accepted standards for beginning teachers (InTASC) and our programs' performance on national accreditation standards (CAEP). The college-wide common assessment in this course is: Initial Self-Rated Dispositions

Other Assignments

- Beyond the Modules Activities: **During Week 1 of the course, there are some Beyond the Modules Activities.** They are all required for a passing grade in the course.
- Module Activities: **This course is set up in module form. Each module is focused on a certain topic in special education and contains a similar structure. Each module contains individual lessons, a module assignment, and a self-reflection. Each lesson includes a reading, lecture, video or media component, and a reading check. Below are brief summaries of the module activities; see Blackboard for detailed directions and grading rubrics.**
 - Reading Checks: **At the end of each lesson, there is a reading check assignment. In most lessons, these checks are 5-10 multiple choice or true-false questions. These reading checks assess your understanding and recall of the chapter in the textbook you were assigned. You may use materials such as books or notes to help you complete these checks, but you may take each reading check no more than twice.**
 - Module Self-Reflections: **At the end of each module, there is a module self-reflection in which you will read statements about special education topics and write a written reflection. You will analyze, judge, and apply module content within your reflections.**
 - Module Assignments:
 - Modules 1 and 4 **require students to write individual APA-style papers.**
 - The paper in Module 1 is a personal philosophy statement. It also requires you to choose two activities from a list of school- and community-based options. You will include a summary of the activities in your paper.
 - The Module 4 assignment is the Final Paper in the course. You will likely use information from the other module assignments to inform the final paper. The Final Paper is an opportunity to show growth in your knowledge about learners with disabilities. You will **select one disability area** and demonstrate your knowledge based on course activities. (Please see the Appendix for a detailed description of the Final Paper and Blackboard for additional details/resources).

- **Modules 2 and 3** are intended to help you collect information from multiple types of sources to dig deeper into one disability group for each. At the beginning of the module, you will choose a disability group (high incidence or low incidence) that corresponds to the module's focus.

Assignment Summary

Course Action Items	Earned Points	Possible Points
Beyond the Modules Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required Modules • Professional Disposition Survey 		25 (10, 10, 5 points)
Reading Checks		150 (10 points each)
Lesson Checks		150 (10 points each)
Reflections		200 (50 points each)
Teaching Philosophy (Assignment 1)		100
Profile (Assignment 2)		100
Poster (Assignment 3)		100
Disability in Pop Culture		25
Final Paper (Assignment 4)		150
TOTAL POINTS FOR THE COURSE		1000

Student Evaluations of Teaching:

The student evaluation of teaching, or SET, is an online course survey. You are strongly encouraged to complete this form for each course as this feedback helps instructors and administrators improve your class experiences. Towards the end of the course, you will receive email and LMS notifications when the evaluations open. Your anonymous and confidential feedback is only shared with instructors after final grades have been submitted. More information about the SET can be found on The Institute of Effectiveness and Planning website at <https://oiep.gmu.edu/set/>

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance/Participation

All coursework will be online in an asynchronous format. Please log in regularly.

Late Work

Work is considered on time if it is submitted by 11:59 p.m. EST on the date that it is due. Work can be turned in early, but all late work will receive a 10%-point deduction off the resulting grade for each calendar day. For example, on a 25-point Reading Check, there would be a 2.5-point deduction (10%) per day, so if a student submitted the Reading Check one day late and earned 20 out of 25 points, their final grade would be 17.5 points. After one week from the due date or after the last day of class (whichever comes first), assignments will no longer be accepted and a score of zero will be entered into the grade book for that assignment.

Grading

To compute your final course grade, divide total “earned points” by total “possible points” for percentage.

A = 95-100%	A - = 90-94%	B+ = 86-89%	B = 80-85%	B- = 77-79%	C = 73-76%	F = < 73%
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***Note:** George Mason University Academic Standards will be strictly enforced *through an institutional sanctioning matrix that all colleges and departments will need to adhere to if they find there are students who are engaged in academic dishonesty.* See [Academic Standards](http://academicstandards.gmu.edu/) (<http://academicstandards.gmu.edu/>) and [GMU Catalog - Academic Standards](https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic-standards/) (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic-standards/>) Students are responsible for reading and understanding the Standards. The Office of Academic Integrity “works to promote authentic scholarship, support the institution’s goal of maintaining high standards of academic excellence, and encourages continued ethical behavior of faculty and students to cultivate an educational community which values integrity and produces graduates who carry this commitment forward into professional practice.” Work submitted must be your own new, original work for this course or with proper citations.

Professional Dispositions

Throughout study in the College of Education and Human Development, students are expected to demonstrate behaviors that reflect the positive dispositions of a professional. See [Student Guide](https://cehd.gmu.edu/current-students/cehd-student-guide) (<https://cehd.gmu.edu/current-students/cehd-student-guide>). 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 a designated course (EDSE 501), the mid-point self-evaluation is completed in designated courses (EDSE 627, EDSE 661, and EDSE 616), and the internship evaluation is completed by instructors in EDSE 783, EDSE 784, and EDSE 785. 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.

Use of Generative AI

Generative AI tools should follow the principles of Mason’s Academic Standards. This includes being honest about the use of these tools for submitted work and including citations when using the work of others, whether individual people or Generative AI tools.

Class Schedule

*Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

EDSE 501 Course Schedule (Summer 2024)					
Week (Starts on Monday 9/23/24)	Module	Topic(s)	Activities and Readings	Deliverables	Due Date 11:59 pm
Week 1 (9/23-10/27)	Module A	Getting Started; Introduction to the course	<input type="checkbox"/> Getting to know the course <input type="checkbox"/> Capturing your thinking	<input type="checkbox"/> Child abuse and Neglect Certification <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Disposition Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase/Rent Textbook <input type="checkbox"/> Reflection 1	10/27
Week 2 (10/28)	Module B	Foundations of Special Education: Historical Perspectives, Legal Mandates, Personnel, Procedural Safeguards, and Ethical Practices	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: Historical Foundations and Special Education Law	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Check: Historical Foundations and Special Education Law <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Philosophy Paper	11/3
Week 2 (10/28)	Module C	The Cognitive Continuum: Exploring Intellectual Disabilities (ID), Multiple Disabilities, and Giftedness	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 13 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: Severe Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce Profile Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 13 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Check: Severe/multiple disabilities	11/3

Week 2 (10/28)	Module C	The Cognitive Continuum Continued	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: Intellectual Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 15 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: Giftedness	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Check: ID <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 15 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Check: Giftedness	11/3
Week 3 (11/4)	Module D	The Dynamic Duo: Exploring Specific Learning Disabilities (LD) and Emotional and Behavior Disorders (EBD)	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: LD	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Check: LD <input type="checkbox"/> Dyslexia Awareness Certification	11/10
Week 3 (11/4)	Module D	The Dynamic Duo Continued	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: EBD	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Check: EBD <input type="checkbox"/> Reflection 2	11/10
Week 4 (11/11)	Module E	Spectrum of Considerations: Exploring Speech or Language Impairment (SLI) and Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: ASD	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson check: ASD <input type="checkbox"/> Profile Assignment: Exploring Disability Profile Characteristics, Needs, and Reliable Sources	11/17
Week 4 (11/11)	Module E	Spectrum of Considerations Continued	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: Speech/Language and communication disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson check: SLI <input type="checkbox"/> Reflection 3	11/17

Week 5 (11/18)	Module F	The Physical Realm: Exploring Orthopedic Impairments (OI) and Other Health Impairments (OHI) including Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) , and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 14 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: Orthopedic Impairments <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce Poster Assignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 14 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Check: Orthopedic Impairments	11/24
Week 5 (11/18)	Module F	The Physical Realm Continued	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: ADHD	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Check: ADHD	11/24
Week 5 (11/18)	Module F	The Physical Realm Continued	<input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: TBI	<input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Check: TBI <input type="checkbox"/> Poster Assignment: Comparing and Contrasting, Disability Profiles, Organizations, and Resources	11/24
Week 6 (11/25)	Module G	The Sensory Arena: Exploring Visual Impairments (VI) including Blindness, Hearing Impairments (HI) , Deafness, and Deaf-Blindness	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: Visual Impairments	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Check: Visual Impairments	12/1

Week 6 (11/25)	Module G	The Sensory Arena Continued	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: Hearing Impairments <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce Final Paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Check: Hearing Impairments <input type="checkbox"/> Disability in Pop Culture Assignment	12/1
Week 7 (12/2)	Module H	Creating Opportunities for All Learners: Exploring Multicultural Perspectives and Collaboration in Special Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: Cultural Competency <input type="checkbox"/> Read: Ch. 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson: Families	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Check: Cultural Competency <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Check: Ch. 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson Check: Families <input type="checkbox"/> Reflection 4	12/8
Week 8 (12/9)	Module H	Final Class & Wrap-up	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion on the future of special education <input type="checkbox"/> Wrap up video	<input type="checkbox"/> Final Paper Due <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education Disposition Survey	12/16

CEHD Commitments

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to fostering collaboration and community, promoting justice and equity, and advancing research-informed practice. Students are expected to adhere to, and contribute to, these commitments, the CEHD Mission, and Core Values of George Mason University. More information can be found here: [Culture \(https://cehd.gmu.edu/about/culture/\)](https://cehd.gmu.edu/about/culture/)

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to Mason’s Academic Standards. See [Academic Standards \(https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic-standards/\)](https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic-standards/)
- 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 VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>.
- Questions or concerns regarding use of your LMS should be directed to:
 - o [Blackboard Learn: https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/](https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/)
 - o [Canvas: https://its.gmu.edu/service/canvas/](https://its.gmu.edu/service/canvas/)
- For information about [student support resources](https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus) on campus, see: <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>
 - o [TimelyCare: https://caps.gmu.edu/timelycare-services/](https://caps.gmu.edu/timelycare-services/)
 - o [Writing Center: https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/](https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/)

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, 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 the [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 or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

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/).

Student and Faculty Names and Pronouns

Name and pronoun use: If you wish, please share your name and gender pronouns with me and indicate how best to address you in class and via email. I use [faculty insert your specific pronouns here] for myself and you may address me as “[YOUR NAME]”, “Dr./Prof. [NAME]” or “Mr./Ms./Mx. [NAME]” in email and verbally. I encourage students to use tools Mason provides to change your name and pronouns on Mason records, if you so choose: <https://registrar.gmu.edu/updating-chosen-name-pronouns/>

Diversity and Inclusion Statement

The College of Education and Human Development, an intentionally inclusive community, promotes and maintains an equitable and just work and learning environment. We welcome and value individuals and their differences including race, economic/class status, gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and ability status, among other characteristics.

- We value our diverse student body and desire to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff.
- We commit to supporting students, faculty and staff who have been the victims of bias and discrimination.
- We promote continuous learning and improvement to create an environment that values diverse points of view and life experiences.
- We believe that faculty, staff, and students play a role in creating an environment that engages diverse points of view.
- We believe that by fostering their willingness to hear and learn from a variety of sources and viewpoints, our students will gain competence in communication, critical thinking and global understanding, and become aware of their biases and how they affect their interactions with others and the world.

Land Acknowledgement Statement

Land acknowledgment engages all present in an ongoing indigenous protocol to enact meaningful, reciprocal relationships with ancestors and contemporary tribal nations. As a state university, we have a responsibility to include and support indigenous communities and sovereign tribes in our work.

At the place George Mason University occupies, we give greetings and thanksgivings to these Potomac River life sources, to the Doeg ancestors, who Virginia annihilated in violent campaigns while ripping their lands apart with the brutal system of African American enslavement, to the recognized Virginia tribes who have lovingly stewarded these lands for millennia, including the Rappahannock, Pamunkey, Upper Mattaponi, Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Nansemond, Monacan, Mattaponi, Patawomeck, and Nottaway, past, present, and future, and to the Piscataway tribes, who have lived on both sides of the river from time immemorial.

Appendix

Teaching Philosophy Paper (Due: Week 2)

Given your previous experiences and the material you have read, write at least a two-page description of your personal philosophy of special education, citing any sources you use. In addition, choose two activities from the list below to complete. Write a summary of each activity and how it relates to any aspect of your philosophy.

For the philosophy statement, address the following questions (and any others you feel necessary) in a narrative format:

Part one: My Ideas about special education

- What is a disability?
- How should a disability be handled in/by society?
- How should students with disabilities be treated in schools, colleges, and the workplace?
- What should the education of students with disabilities look like?
- What ethical considerations must I face as a special educator?

Include a rationale for your ideas. This should be an honest description of your ideas at this moment in time.

Part two: My Ideas about my role as an educator

- Who are the students I serve? Will I serve students with disabilities?
- How can I meet the unique needs of students (and those with disabilities) within the context of my school and classroom?
- What are some barriers to meeting these unique needs?
- What is one goal I have for myself related to this course?

Part three: Summary of activities and their relation to your philosophy (choose 2 of the following; observations should be at least 1 hour each) Note: these observations should not take place in a public school setting. Do not go through the GMU CEHD Field Experience Office to arrange your observation(s). These need to be arranged in a community setting by you.

- Observe relevant community settings
- Shadow/interview an individual in a position of interest to you in a community setting (e.g., Interpreter, teacher, audiologist, counselor, physical therapist, etc.)
- Interview a person with a disability
- Interview a sibling of a person with a disability
- Interview a parent of a person with a disability
- Interview the entire family of an exceptional learner
- Conduct an accessibility assessment
- Attend a relevant information presentation

Post your paper to the Assignments tab of Blackboard. This is a private posting. Only you and I will be able to see what you have posted. Please be as honest and reflective as possible.

Assignment Rubric

Page one: My Ideas about special education (25 points)

- What is a disability?
- How should a disability be handled in/by society?
- How should students with disabilities be treated in schools, colleges, and the workplace?
- What should the education of students with disabilities look like?
- What ethical considerations must I face as a special educator?
- Include a rationale for your ideas. This should be an honest description of your ideas at this moment in time.

Page two: My Ideas about my role as an educator (25 points)

- Who are the students I serve? Will I serve students with disabilities?
- How can I meet the unique needs of students (and those with disabilities) within the context of my school and classroom?
- What are some barriers to meeting these unique needs?
- What is one goal for myself related to this course?

Page three: Summary of activities and their effect on your philosophy (choose 2 of the following; exploratory activities should be at least 1 hour each) Note: these should not take place in a public school setting. Do not go through the GMU CEHD Field Experience Office to arrange your observation(s). These need to be arranged in a community setting by you. (40 points)

- Observe relevant community settings
- Shadow/interview an individual in a position of interest to you in a community setting (e.g., Interpreter, teacher, audiologist, counselor, physical therapist, etc.)
- Interview a person with a disability
- Interview a sibling of a person with a disability
- Interview a parent of a person with a disability
- Interview the entire family of an exceptional learner
- Conduct an accessibility assessment
- Attend a relevant information presentation

APA style formatting (e.g., cover page, pagination, headings), grammar, and spelling (10 points)

Grading Checklist

	Earned Points	Possible Points
Content: Special Education (Describe & Analyze) Students' current understanding of disability and special education are described. Rationale for this understanding is provided.		25
Content: Role as an Educator (Describe & Analyze) Students' current understanding of role as an educator is described. Learning goal for this course is included		25
Philosophy Statement (Judge & Apply) Two exploratory activities are described along with the effect they had on the students' special education philosophy.		40
APA Style Writing is clear and easy to understand. There are few to no grammar errors/typos. References are correctly cited in APA format.		10
		100

Exploring Disability Profile Characteristics, Needs, and Reliable Sources
(Due: Week 4)

Objectives:

- 1. Develop a better understanding of one of the characteristics of one disability area that we have learned about thus far in the semester. (These include severe/multiple disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and learning disabilities)**
- 2. Gather information that can be used for the final paper. This serves as a form of scaffolding, which is an instructional strategy that breaks up long-term learning into manageable chunks with built-in supports.**
- 3. Demonstrate an understanding of what constitutes a reliable source and where to find them.**

Disability Categories for this Assignment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Severe Disabilities○ Intellectual Disabilities○ Learning Disabilities

Directions:

Imagine a student with one of the disabilities that we have learned about thus far (severe/multiple disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and learning disabilities) has just joined your class. Choose one of those disabilities and imagine this fictional student. Your task is to utilize reliable sources to explain to your school community, co-teacher, instructional assistant, etc., the unique characteristics of the disability and the learning needs of students with this disability. Create a visually-appealing product (slide show, infographic, research brief, video, other option) that explains the disability characteristics and learning needs of this fictional student. You do not need to create this student, but rather utilize what you have learned from class and your sources to generalize the characteristics and needs. You must utilize at least three reliable sources (other than the textbook) and cite your sources in APA format somewhere in the product.

Steps:

- 1. Watch the videos on finding and citing reliable sources. Then, explore sources for your chosen disability area.**

Finding Reliable Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Utilizing the GMU Library</u>• <u>Evidence-based</u>• <u>Effective Search Terms</u>• <u>Boolean Searching</u>• <u>Citing a Source in APA</u>
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- 2. Complete the Progress Tracking Document and answer each specific question. You must answer each question somewhere in your product.**

3. Create a product. This should be straightforward and clear. Again, imagine you are giving this to a busy person who needs the information quickly. Examples of products include slide shows, infographics, videos, or something else creative of your choosing. For this assignment, a multi-page academic paper would not constitute an appropriate product.

4. Turn in your product AND Progress Tracking Document to the blackboard by the date listed in the syllabus.

Page Break

Progress Tracking Document

	You must include the following:	Where is it located? (e.g., pg. number, slide, section, etc.)
Disability Characteristics	○ What is its prevalence? Is it a high- or low-incidence disability?	
	○ How is it diagnosed?	
	○ Are physical/medical issues associated with this disability?	
	○ Are there social or behavioral implications associated with this disability?	
Learning Needs	○ What areas of learning might be impacted by this disability?	
	○ What teaching strategies might benefit learners with this disability?	
	○ What IEP considerations might be needed?	
	○ What accommodations might students with this disability need?	
	○ Where might a student with this disability receive services? (Think LRE.)	
	○ What skills will teachers need to work with students who have this disability?	
References	○ Three references cited in APA formatting, NOT including the textbook	

Page Break

Resources

Finding Reliable Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizing the GMU Library • Evidence-based • Effective Search Terms • Boolean Searching • Citing a Source in APA
Product Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue Briefs • Infographics • Pow Toon • Prezi

Grading Checklist

	Earned Points	Possible Points
Disability Characteristics (Describe & Analyze) Disability characteristics are described. The following topics are addressed: prevalence, diagnosis, physical or medical considerations, and social/behavioral implications are addressed		40
Learning Needs (Analyze & Judge) Considerations of learning needs are addressed including: areas of learning impacted, beneficial teaching strategies, IEP considerations, service location, and requisite teacher skills		40
Visual Appeal Product is straightforward, clear, purposefully organized, and visually appealing		10
APA Style Writing is clear and easy to understand. There are few to no grammar errors/typos. References from three peer-reviewed journal articles are cited using APA formatting. The textbook can also be cited in addition to the three scholarly publications.		10
		100

Comparing and Contrasting: Disability Profiles, Organizations, and Resources
(Due: Week 5)

Objectives:

- 1. Understand the similarities and differences between disabilities, including their prevalence, impacts on school placement, and different instructional strategies.**
- 2. Gain a better understanding of how a disability of your choice (from the list below) impacts families, communities, and social relationships.**
- 3. Create an academic poster that disseminates what you have learned about different disabilities, organizations, and resources.**

Directions:

This assignment has three parts.

Disability #1 (from Profile Assignment)	Disability #2 (choose for this assignment)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Severe Disabilities ○ Intellectual Disabilities ○ Learning Disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emotional and Behavioral Disorders ○ Autism Spectrum Disorders ○ Speech or Language Impairments ○ Orthopedic Impairments ○ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder ○ Traumatic Brain Injury

- **Part 1: Choose a disability area that we have learned about since assignment two (see above) and contrast it with one of the disabilities that we learned about earlier in the semester (LIST). Use the accompanying Venn Diagram.**
- **Part 2: Explore a disability organization related to a disability category that we have learned about since the Disability Profile Assignment. This organization can be a professional organization, a family organization, or an advocacy group. Complete the corresponding graphic organizer.**
- **Part 3: Create an academic poster to share the information which you have gathered. You should utilize your Venn Diagram and graphic organizer to create this final poster. You will upload the graphic organizer and final poster to Blackboard.**

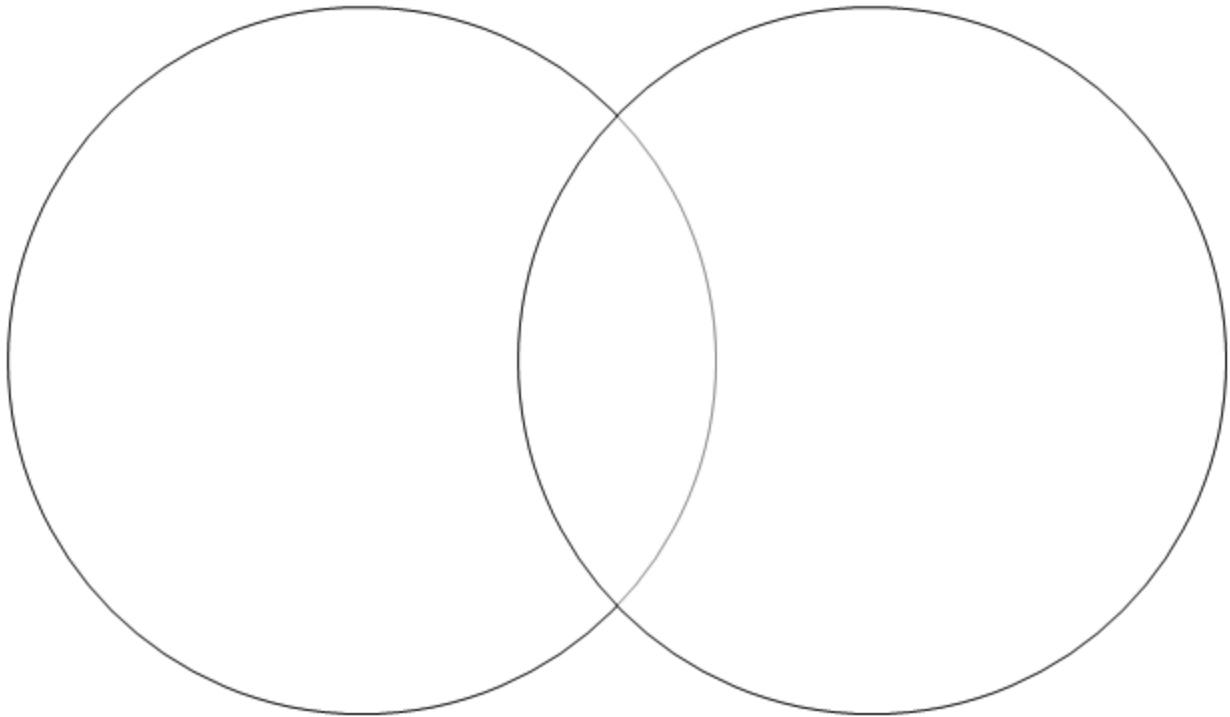
Part 1: Contrasting Disabilities

Directions: **Compare and contrast your choice disability from Assignment 1 with another disability. Be sure to document each similarity and difference, including:**

How is this disability similar to and different from other disabilities (or other disability areas)? For example:

- **Is there a difference in the prevalence of the chosen disabilities? (High/Low-Incidence)**

- Are there similarities or differences in the chosen disabilities' characteristics?
- What factors might the IEP team consider when determining a student's placement?
- Are there prominent advocacy groups representing students, adults, or families with these disabilities?
- What types of instructional strategies or accommodations/modifications may be different for students with the chosen disabilities?



Part 2: Organizations

Directions: The second part of your module assignment requires you to find an organization related to your chosen disability area. (You can usually find organizations by doing a web search with the terms “organization” and the name of your disability area). Finding an organization is different from finding a website related to a disability area. For example, TeachingLD.org is a website related to learning disabilities. It is sponsored by the Division

for Learning Disabilities (DLD) of the Council for Exceptional Children. You can find information about DLD in the “About Us” section of the website. For the purpose of this component of the assignment, you would be gathering information about DLD, not about the website, TeachingLD.org.

In addition to doing a wide-open search of the web, you could begin by going to the website of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC; cec.sped.org). This is a professional organization that has independent subdivisions related to almost every disability category. CEC works within the disability field in all areas, including advocacy, legislation, professional development, teacher education, and parent information. You can find a tremendous amount of information about the field of special education at CEC’s website. Once you have found an organization that interests you, complete the questions in the table on the next page. The table is what will be graded for this assignment. You DO NOT have to write this in a narrative; just use the table.

<i>Disability Organization</i>	
Item	Information
Disability area of focus	
Name of organization related to disability	
Website of organization (if available)	
Mission statement of the organization	
How is the organization funded?	
Who is the target audience of the organization?	
What does the organization do?	

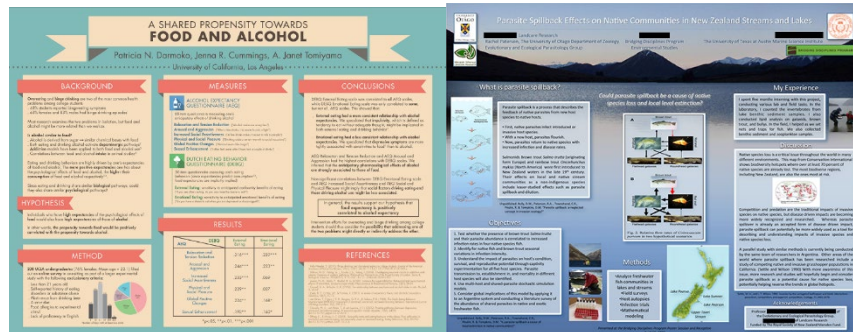
Part 3: Creating an Academic Poster

Directions: **Utilize your Venn Diagram and a graphic organizer to create an academic poster (48” x 36”) that effectively and efficiently shares your information with your audience. This poster should meet the structural requirements of an academic poster and include all of the components listed in the Progress Tracking Document. You do NOT need to print this poster.**

Resources:

- [Components of an Academic Poster](#)
- [Creating a Poster in Power Point](#)
- [Templates](#)

Examples:



Progress Tracking Document

	You must include the following:
Contrasting Disabilities	○ Include your Venn Diagram that answers the following questions:
	● Is there a difference in the prevalence of the chosen disabilities? (High/Low-Incidence)
	● Are there similarities or differences in the chosen disabilities’ characteristics?
	● What factors might the IEP team consider when determining a student’s placement?
	● Are there prominent advocacy groups representing students, adults, or families with these disabilities?
	○ Include answers to the following questions regarding your chosen disability and organization:

Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of organization related to disability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website of organization (if available)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission statement of the organization
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the organization funded?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is the target audience of the organization?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the organization do?
Additional Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What other resources might be available to students with this disability and their families?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ APA sources for all information (including organization website).

Grading Checklist

	Earned Points	Possible Points
Contrasting Disabilities (Describe & Analyze) Disability characteristics are compared and contrasted. The following topics are addressed: prevalence of the disabilities, similarities and differences in disability characteristics, IEP team considerations, prominent advocacy groups related to the selected disabilities, and instructional strategies		40
Organizations (Analyze & Judge) Description of the selected organization includes: name, website, mission statement, funding, target audience, and what the organization does		40
Poster Product is straightforward, clear, purposefully organized, and visually appealing. Venn diagram and graphic organizer are included.		10
APA Style Writing is clear and easy to understand. There are few to no grammar errors/typos. Additional resources for students with disabilities and their families are included. References for all cited information, including organization websites follow APA formatting.		10
		100

Final Paper Assignment Details
(Due: Week 8)

The final Module Assignment (Final Paper) is an opportunity to show growth in your knowledge about learners with disabilities. Select one disability area and demonstrate your knowledge of all five areas outlined in Paper Guidelines below. Combine what you have learned from coursework, independent learning, and the exploratory activity you completed in this Module.

Paper Guidelines:

Your goal is to clearly show how your own perceptions of disability have changed and evolved this semester AND demonstrate that you clearly understand the important content you have learned.

Regardless of your approach this assignment, your paper must address the following areas:

A. Disability Characteristics	<p>What are some characteristics of the disability, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is its prevalence? Is it a high- or low- incidence disability? • How is it diagnosed? • Are physical/medical issues associated with this disability? • Are there social or behavioral implications associated with this disability?
B. Learning Needs	<p>How does the disability affect learning? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What areas of learning might be impacted by this disability? • What teaching strategies might benefit learners with this disability? • What IEP considerations might be needed? • What accommodations might students with this disability need? • Where might a student with this disability receive services? (Think LRE.) • What skills will teachers need to work with students who have this disability?
C. Lifespan Issues (including Impact on Individual and Family)	<p>How does having this disability impact an individual? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the early childhood issues that need to be considered? • What are community issues that need to be considered? • What are post-secondary (after high school – job, college, independent living) factors that need to be considered? • What impact does having this disability have on social relationships? <p>What is the impact of the disability on family? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What daily living skills might be impacted by this disability? • How does this disability impact family dynamics? • What information do families need to advocate for their children who have disabilities?
D. Similarities and Differences to Other Disabilities	<p>How is this disability similar to and different from other disabilities (or other disability areas)? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a difference in the prevalence of the chosen disabilities? • What factors might the IEP team consider when determining a student’s placement? • What types of instructional strategies or accommodations/modifications may be different for students with the chosen disabilities? <p>Note: For this category, you should contrast your selected disability with TWO other disabilities or disability areas. For example, if my paper were on students with ADHD (mild disability), I might contrast it to severe disabilities (or a specific disability such as Cerebral Palsy) AND sensory disabilities (or a specific disability such as blindness).</p>

E. Information Synthesis	<p>Integrate what was learned through independent learning activities (e.g., IRIS modules, exploratory activities) and from other coursework (lectures, discussions, articles, and textbook readings) to demonstrate knowledge about learners with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key takeaways for this paper? • How do you tie all the ideas you presented throughout this paper together?
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Additional Final Paper Details:

- ✓ **Be sure to include all required topics as outlined in the paper guidelines above.**
- ✓ **There is no minimum or maximum page length, but typically students' papers are around 10 pages.**
- ✓ **The paper should be written in APA format and style (see <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/> for help with APA)**
- ✓ **I highly recommend using the headings you see in the Grading Rubric below to organize your paper.**
- ✓ **Notice the synthesis portion of the paper is the most heavily weighted and therefore should receive the most attention. This section will likely have citations from outside sources to support your ideas and demonstrate your learning.**

Grading Checklist

Final Paper Requirements	Earned Points	Possible Points
Disability Characteristics (Describe) Salient characteristics of the disability are clearly described. Requirements related to identification for special education are included.	25	25
Learning Needs (Describe) Learning needs associated with the chosen disability are clearly described including relevant IEP considerations.	25	25
Lifespan Issues (Describe & Analyze) A clear description of the impact of the disability across the lifespan is provided. Potential impact on family members is analyzed.	25	25
Similarities and Differences to Other Disabilities (Judge) The paper compares and contrasts the chosen disability with <u>2</u> other disabilities (or disability categories: mild, severe, or sensory).	25	25
Information Synthesis (Apply) Student demonstrates personal growth in knowledge about learners with disabilities. Student demonstrates completion of independent learning activities (e.g., IRIS modules, exploratory activities) by integrating what was learned through these experiences with learning from other coursework (lectures, discussions, articles, and textbook readings).	40	40
APA Style Writing is clear and easy to understand. There are few to no grammar errors/typos. References are correctly cited in APA format.	10	10
Total Points		150