



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

Fall 2024

EDSE 501: Introduction to Special Education

Section: 6S5; CRN: 84206

3 – Credits

Instructor: Dr. Kevin Monnin	Meeting Dates: 9/16/24 – 12/9/24
Phone: Email to set up call	Meeting Day(s): N/A
E-Mail: kmonnin@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): N/A
Office Hours: By Appointment	Meeting Location: N/A; Online
Office Location: Zoom	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. Video and other media supports
4. 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) and email password. The course site will be available on Monday, September 16 at 12:00 am.

- 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](#) supported browsers:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Ultra/Getting_Started/Browser_Support

- 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 at 12:00 am and finish on Sunday at 11:59 pm.
- 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. 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.

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., (2019). *Exceptional Learners: An introduction to special education* (14th ed.). Pearson.

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., 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.**

Assignment Summary

Course Action Items	Earned Points	Possible Points
Beyond the Modules Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Abuse Recognition training • Dyslexia Awareness Module • Cultural Competency Module • Professional Disposition Survey 		25 (5, 5, 10, 5 points)
Reading Checks		150 (10 points each)
Lesson Checks		150 (10 points each)
Reflections		200 (50 points each)
Teaching Philosophy		100
Profile		100
Poster		100
Disability in Pop Culture		25
Final Paper		150
TOTAL POINTS FOR 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 course work will be online in an asynchronous format.

Late Work

Most assignments have recommended due dates. There are two firm due dates: 12/1 and 12/8. Apart from the Final Paper (Due 12/8), all major assignments (Teaching Philosophy, Profile, and Poster assignments) are due by 11:59 pm on 12/1. This policy is to ensure ample attention can be paid to each student's work. All late major assignments will receive a 10% point deduction off the resulting grade for each calendar day after 12/1.

Grading

A = 95-100% A - = 90-94% B+ = 86-89% B = 80-85% B- = 77-79% C = 73-76%
F = < 73%

***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.

Module	Topic(s)	Activities and Readings	Deliverables	Due Date: Sunday at 11:59 pm
Module A	Getting Started; Introduction to the course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get to know the course - Explore directions for Teaching Philosophy Paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child abuse and Neglect Certification* - Cultural Competency Module* - Professional Disposition Survey (BOC) - Purchase/Rent Textbook - Reflection 1 	Suggested Due Date: 9/22
Module B	Foundations of Special Education: Historical Perspectives, Legal Mandates, Personnel, Procedural Safeguards, and Ethical Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: Ch. 1 - Read: Ch. 2 - Lesson: Historical Foundations and Special Education Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Check: Ch. 1 - Reading Check: Ch. 2 - Lesson Check: Historical Foundations and Special Education Law - Teaching Philosophy Paper 	Suggested Due Date: 9/29
Module C	The Cognitive Continuum: Exploring Intellectual Disabilities (ID), Multiple Disabilities, and Giftedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: Ch. 13 - Lesson: Severe Disabilities - Explore Profile Assignment - Read: Ch. 5 - Lesson: Intellectual Disabilities - Read: Ch. 15 - Lesson: Giftedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Check: Ch. 13 - Lesson Check: Severe/multiple disabilities - Reading Check: Ch. 5 - Lesson Check: ID - Reading Check: Ch. 15 - Lesson Check: Giftedness 	Suggested Due Date: 10/6
Module D	The Dynamic Duo: Exploring Specific Learning Disabilities (LD) and Emotional and Behavior Disorders (EBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: Ch. 6 - Lesson: LD - Read: Ch. 8 - Lesson: EBD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Check: Ch. 6 - Lesson Check: LD - Dyslexia Awareness Certification* - Reading Check: Ch. 8 - Lesson Check: EBD - Reflection 2 	Suggested Due Date: 10/13
Module E	Spectrum of Considerations: Exploring Speech or Language Impairment (SLI) and Autism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: Ch. 9 - Lesson: ASD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading Check: Ch. 9 - Lesson check: ASD - Profile Assignment: Exploring Disability Profile Characteristics, 	Suggested Due Date: 10/20

	Spectrum Disorders (ASD) / Time to Work on Profile Assignment		Needs, and Reliable Sources	
Module E	Spectrum of Considerations Continued	Read: Ch. 10 Lesson: Speech/Language and communication disorders	Reading Check: Ch. 10 Lesson check: SLI Reflection 3	Suggested Due Date: 10/27
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)	Read: Ch. 14 Lesson: Orthopedic Impairments Explore Poster Assignment Read: Ch. 7 Lesson: ADHD	Reading Check: Ch. 14 Lesson Check: Orthopedic Impairments Reading Check: Ch. 7 Lesson Check: ADHD	Suggested Due Date: 11/3
Module F	The Physical Realm Continued / Time to work on Poster Assignment	Lesson: TBI	Lesson Check: TBI Poster Assignment: Comparing and Contrasting, Disability Profiles, Organizations, and Resources	Suggested Due Date: 11/10
Module G	The Sensory Arena: Exploring Visual Impairments (VI) including Blindness, Hearing Impairments (HI) , Deafness, and Deaf-Blindness	Read: Ch. 12 Lesson: Visual Impairments	Reading Check: Ch. 12 Lesson Check: Visual Impairments	Suggested Due Date: 11/17
Module G	The Sensory Arena Continued	Read: Ch. 11 Lesson: Hearing Impairments Explore Final Paper	Reading Check: Ch. 11 Lesson Check: Hearing Impairments Disability in Pop Culture Assignment	Suggested Due Date: 11/24
Module H	Creating Opportunities for All Learners: Exploring Multicultural Perspectives and Collaboration in Special	Read: Ch. 3 Lesson: Cultural Competency Read: Ch. 4 Lesson: Families	Reading Check: Ch. 3 Lesson Check: Cultural Competency Reading Check: Ch. 4 Lesson Check: Families	Suggested Due Date: 12/1 (All prior major assignments are due by 12/1)

	Education / <i>Time to work on Final Paper</i>		- Reflection 4	
Module H	Final Class & Wrap-up	Finish Final Paper!	- Final Paper Due - Special Education Disposition Survey (EOC)	FIRM Due Date: 12/8
Notes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *Indicates assignment is required to pass the course 2. If you enter the course after it begins, please communicate with your instructor to plan how to get on track for successful completion of the course. 3. It is HIGHLY encouraged that you follow suggested due dates. 4. Apart from the Final Paper (Due 12/8), all major assignments (anything in bold) are due by 12/1. This is to ensure ample attention can be paid to each student's work. 			

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/>
 - o **Canvas:** <https://its.gmu.edu/service/canvas/>
- For information about [student support resources](#) on campus, see: <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>
 - o **TimelyCare:** <https://caps.gmu.edu/timelycare-services/>
 - o **Writing Center:** <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 he/him for myself and you may address me as "Kevin" or "Dr. Monnin" 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/>

Appendix

Final Paper Rubric

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:

<p>A. Disability Characteristics</p>	<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?
<p>B. Learning Needs</p>	<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?
<p>C. Lifespan Issues (including Impact on Individual and Family)</p>	<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?
<p>D. Similarities and Differences to Other Disabilities</p>	<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 are differences in possible school placements for students with the selected disabilities? • 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.

Final Paper Requirements	Possible Points	Earned Points
Disability Characteristics Salient characteristics of the disability are clearly described. Requirements related to identification for special education are included.	25	
Learning Needs Learning needs associated with the chosen disability are clearly described including relevant IEP considerations.	25	
Lifespan Issues (including Impact on Family) A clear description of the impact of the disability across the lifespan is provided.	25	
Similarities and Differences to Other Disabilities The paper compares and contrasts the chosen disability with <u>2</u> other disabilities (or disability categories: mild, severe, or sensory).	25	
Information Synthesis 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	
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	
Total Points	150	