

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Characteristics of Students with Visual Impairments

Tuesdays 4:00 PM-6:40 PM 8/31/2010-9/28/2010

Fall 2010

- GMU- EDSE 411/511 Characteristics of Students with Visual Impairments
- JMU- EXED 435/530 Characteristics of Students with Visual Impairments
- RU- EDSP 650 Characteristics of Students with Visual Impairments
- NSU- SPE XXX Characteristics of Students with Visual Impairments
- ODU- ESSE XXXX Characteristics of Students with Visual Impairments

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Click on the link below to go directly to the section of the syllabus:

<u>LEARNER OUTCOMES</u>	<u>REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS</u>	<u>PROPOSED SCHEDULE</u>
<u>ASSIGNMENTS</u>	<u>GRADING</u>	<u>MENU ITEMS</u>
<u>SIMULATION PAPER</u>	<u>MEDIA PORTRAYAL PAPER</u>	<u>TRAVELING BLIND PAPER</u>

COURSE DESCRIPTION: (1:1:0) No prerequisites

Provides an overview of the characteristics of and services to persons with visual impairments; including the impact of visual impairment on infants' and children's growth and development, child and adolescent emotional and social development, and family interaction patterns. Considers the educational, conceptual, psychosocial, and physical implications of a visual impairment.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY:

Learning activities in this class will include the following:

1. Class lecture, discussion, and participation via synchronous face to face, web-conferences or videoconferences
2. Video and other relevant interactive media presentations
3. Study and independent research
4. Application activities, including regular assignments

LEARNER OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course, the participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the history of the education of persons with a visual impairment.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the terminology used in the field of working with persons with a visual disability.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the current trends in education of persons with a visual impairment.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the educational settings, which provide education of persons with a visual impairment.
- Demonstrate knowledge of a variety of local, state, and national resources for services to persons with a visual impairment.
- Demonstrate basic knowledge of basic anatomy of the eye and eye diseases.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the impact of a visual impairment on a person's physical, conceptual, academic, vocational and social development.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the legal rights of a person with a visual impairment.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the basic techniques for adapting and modifying instruction for a student with a visual disability.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the need for specialized instruction for certain persons with a visual disability, to include orientation and mobility, low vision aids, and technology.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS:

Course's Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organization

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Special Education Program. This program complies with the standards for special educators established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization.

The CEC Standards are listed on the following web site: <http://www.cec.sped.org> In the second column on the left, access link for "Professional Standards." On this page, to the right, there is a red book pdf document titled "What Every Special Educator Must Know." The CEC Standards are located in this document. The primary CEC standard that will be addressed in this class will be Standard 2 on Characteristics of Learners.

CEC Special Education Content Standard #2: Development and Characteristics of Learners

Special educators know and demonstrate respect for their students first as unique human beings. Special educators understand the similarities and differences in human development and the characteristics between and among individuals with and without exceptional learning needs (ELN)^{1/}. Moreover, special educators understand how exceptional conditions can interact with the domains of human development and they use this knowledge to respond to the varying abilities and behaviors of individual's with ELN. Special educators understand how the experiences of individuals with ELN can impact families, as well as the individual's ability to learn, interact socially, and live as fulfilled contributing members of the community.

Beginning special educators demonstrate their mastery of this standard through the mastery of the CEC Common Core Knowledge and Skills, as well as through the appropriate CEC Specialty Area(s) Knowledge and Skills for which the preparation program is preparing candidates.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Erin, J. N. & Spungin S. (2004). When you have a visually impaired student with multiple disabilities in your classroom: A guide for teachers. New York: AFB Press.

McNear, D. & Torres, I. (2004). When You Have a Visually Impaired Student s in Your Classroom: A Guide for Teachers. New York: AFB Press.

Fogg, L. (2007). Traveling Blind: Life Lessons from Unlikely Teachers. Ukiah, CA: Medusa Muse Press.

Articles will be posted on Blackboard and students are expected to read articles as assigned.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE DEPENDING ON STUDENT NEEDS)

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments
Aug. 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Review syllabus • Terminology & History ▪ Professional Roles 	*McNear & Torres, Ch. 1 Hong, Rosenblum, Petrevay & Erin
Sept. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Structure & Function of the Eye, Common Diseases ▪ Implications of Visual Impairment ▪ Families and Multicultural Issues 	Bishop; Barton; Topor Simulation Activity Summary Due
Sept. 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Modifying Instruction & the Learning Environment ▪ Literacy and Technology ▪ Expanded Core Curriculum 	*McNear & Torres, Chs. 2-6; Cox & Dykes Media Portrayal Due
Sept. 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Legal Rights ▪ Psychosocial Issues 	Barclay; Correa-Torres Menu Item Due
Sept. 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multiple Disabilities & Deafblindness ▪ Placement Options 	*Erin & Spungin; Tomasik; Griffin-Shirley & Matlock; MacFarland; Griffin, Davis & Williams Fogg Paper Due

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Assignment	500 Total Points Possible	% of grade	Due Date
Class Attendance & Participation	50	=10%	
Simulation Activity	100	=20%	9/7/2010
Media Portrayal Assignment	125	=25%	9/14/2010
Menu Assignment	100	=20%	9/21/2010
Fogg Reaction Paper	125	=25%	9/28/2010
Total	500		

Grading Scale:

- A – 500 - 450 points
- B – 449 – 400 points
- C – 399 – 350 points
- F – below 350 points

Class and Grading Policies

As indicated above, each requirement has a point value allocated toward the final grade. All requirements must be completed and received by the instructor by the date (see class schedule). At the end of the semester, you will be given a grade based on the total number of points you have accumulated.

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all formal written work must be word-processed. All assignments must be typed and free of grammatical and spelling errors.
2. Acceptance of late assignments is at the discretion of the instructor and 5 points will be deducted for each day late.
3. Remediation of assignments (not exams, quizzes or attendance) is possible; however additional work will be required. Such remediation should be discussed individually with the instructor. Typically, only one revision or resubmission per assignment will be accepted.
4. Please allow time after submitting your assignment, for grades and comments to be posted. Most grades will be posted as soon as possible; however, sometimes commitments to other class or duties interfere with grading time.

Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend class. Only in emergency circumstances will one absence be excused if the student submits a 200-word summary of the required reading and topics discussed in class for the missed session. In the event more than one absence is necessary, students are asked to withdraw from the course and register for this class next semester. Significant tardiness or early departure may result in the loss of some or all weekly participation points.

SIMULATION PAPER RUBRIC

Assignment: Spend at least 2 hours in conditions simulating a visual impairment (very low vision or blindness). Prior to the simulation you should show the person who will be with you how to act as a human guide. This person should be instructed to monitor for your safety and provide information when requested, but to allow you to do things for yourself. You can borrow a sleepshade or low vision simulator from the instructor; you can purchase your own sleepshade; or you can create a blindfold from fabric.

Select a 2 hour **continuous period of time** when you will be in your home or apartment. Arrange for the human guide to be with you for the entire 2 hours. Part of the time should be spent in your home doing typical activities (e.g., laundry, preparing and eating a meal, cleaning). Part of the time should be spent in your home doing an activity that is not as familiar to you (e.g., preparing a meal you've never made before, planting plants in your garden you've never planted before, trying a new craft project, playing a new card game with someone).

Directions: Following your simulation, write a 4 to 6 page paper describing the experience emphasizing the following: (a) adaptations you used, (b) feelings you experienced, (c) interactions with others including your guide, and (d) what knowledge you gained about visual impairment and how you will apply this to your own career. Discuss things the guide did to help you, things that the guide did that made you uncomfortable, and things you learned from working with your guide.

Grading Rubric: I will assign points to your paper using the following rubric.

# Points	Item
____/5	Paper is double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins, 4-6 pages in length.
____/5	Introductory paragraph provides an accurate overview of the content of the paper.
____/20	Adaptations used by the writer are described.
____/20	Feelings experienced by the writer are described.
____/15	Social interactions, including those with the human guide, are described.
____/20	Knowledge the writer gained about visual impairment and how the writer will apply this in the future are described.
____/5	Closing paragraph provides a summary of key points the writer made in the paper.
____/10	Grammar – Writer may use the word “I” in this paper. The writer uses consistent verb tenses, accurate spelling, no run on sentences, etc.

MEDIA PORTRAYAL PAPER (SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENT)

Watch a movie that features a character with a visual impairment. After the movie is watched, write a 3 to 5 page paper in which you discuss the portrayal of the character with a visual impairment. Provide a *1-2 paragraph overview* of the movie and use the rest of the paper to discuss in depth the character with visual impairment. Topics to discuss in the critique include: (a) how the character felt about his/her visual impairment, (b) attitudes of others toward the visual impairment, (c) techniques used by the character with a visual impairment to complete tasks (e.g., cooking, traveling), (d) your impressions of the realistic portrayal of the visual impairment, (e) how you perceive the character will be viewed by someone watching the movie etc. Focus on the visual impairment, **not** a play-by-play of the movie plot!

Grading Rubric: I will assign points to your paper using the following rubric.

# Points	Item
____/5	Paper is double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins, 4-6 pages in length.
____/5	Introductory paragraph provides an accurate overview of the content of the paper.
____/15	Description of how character with visual impairment felt about his/her visual impairment
____/20	Attitudes of other characters in the movie about the person with visual impairment
____/20	Techniques used by the character with a visual impairment to complete tasks
____/25	Your impressions of the realistic portrayal of the visual impairment
____/20	How you perceive the character will be viewed by someone watching the movie (negative, positive)
____/5	Closing paragraph provides a summary of key points the writer made in the paper.
____/10	Grammar – Writer may use the word “I” in this paper. The writer uses consistent verb tenses, accurate spelling, no run on sentences, etc.

MENU ITEMS

Graduate Students must complete one menu item.

- a. Observe in an educational or rehabilitation setting and write a 3 to 5 page paper detailing your observation. **Do not use real names!** Describe the setting, activities that were occurring, information about the visual abilities of the individuals, materials that were used, social interactions between the individuals with visual impairments and others, and any other relevant information that ties to the expanded core curriculum. You may not observe in a setting in which you have worked or volunteered in the past. This needs to be a new experience. **Please speak with Dr. Lawson by Sept 31st if you'd like to do this assignment and she will help you locate an observation site.**
- b. Spend three days without the use of your personal car and write a 3 to 5 page paper describing the impact this had on your activities during the time period you were car-free. Discuss your feelings related to independence/dependence, asking for assistance, the methods you used for travel and why you selected them, and how you will apply the information you learned to your future work. Do not provide a time diary, rather synthesize the experience when writing your paper. (You may do this only if you regularly drive your own car in Tucson. The assignment must be completed during the fall semester.)
- c. Develop a 2 hour in-service about visual impairment or deafblindness for a school or adult agency in which a child or adult is to be included. Include a brief description of the child/adult including visual condition, functioning level, and classes/work the student is involved with at the setting. Your in-service should include an outline of the key points you will make, a description of any activities you will have participants do, samples of unique handouts (not simply a Xerox of things off of the course web site or what the instructor has provided in class), a list of references, an agenda etc. Creativity and thoroughness will be considered in the assignment of a grade for this project.
- d. Interview an individual with a visual impairment OR the parent of a person with a visual impairment. This individual should not be someone whose history you know in regards to his/her visual impairment or child's visual impairment. Gather information about ways in which his/her life is affected by blindness/low vision and about how others respond to the visual impairment. Write a 3 to 5 page paper summarizing the interview. Your paper should be a reflective summary, not a transcript of the interview! It is fine to use quotes in the paper, however, it is important to organize the information and weave together a story about the person interviewed. Please speak with Dr. Lawson by Sept 6th if you'd like to do this assignment and she will help you locate someone to interview.
- e. Read an **adult level** autobiography or a biography of an individual with a visual

impairment. Write a 3 to 5 page paper about the experiences of the person as they relate to the visual impairment, the reactions of others to the visual impairment, the adaptations the individual uses, etc. Do not spend more than 1 page telling the story of the book! Your paper should focus on the **character's visual impairment and his/her experiences** as an individual with visual impairment. *See Blackboard link for ASSIGNMENTS partial list of books*

- f. Review 3 children's books that have characters with visual impairment or dual sensory impairment. Write a review of each book you read. Your reviews should focus on the **character's visual impairment or dual sensory loss**, do not spend more than 1-2 paragraphs retelling the story. Read at least one of the books to a child. For the one(s) you read to a child, tell about the child's reaction to the book and any material presented. You may substitute an adolescent level book (grades 6 and up) for 2 children's books thus only reading 2 books instead of 3. *See course lecture notes for a link to a list of books. See Blackboard link for ASSIGNMENTS partial list of books*
- g. Pick a topic covered in the course. Design a public relations promotional project (e.g., a Power Point, a collage, a role play script, a brochure, a video) that educates the general public about the positive abilities of visually impaired children and/or adults in this area. This project will be graded based on your creativity, clarity with which information is conveyed, and the message given about people with visual impairment. Provide a paragraph of information explaining the purpose or goals of the project as well as characteristics of the intended audience.
- h. Pick one of the 3 scenarios below. For the individual in the scenario locate 10 web sites that would assist the individual in getting information specific to his/her needs at this time. For each web site provide the (a) name of the company or organization, (b) the address (URL) and (c) 1-2 paragraphs describing what you found at the site that would **specifically** be of value to the individual in the scenario. Give at least one example of something on the site and how it applies to the individual in the scenario. Your opinion of the site and a description in your own words is what is being sought here – please do not “cut and paste” the site's description into your paper! **You will lose points if you “cut and paste” directly from the site or if you don't give examples of what specifically on the site would be relevant to the individual in the scenario.**

(1) Lyle was born with a syndrome called CHARGE. Mrs. Hines is going to be Lyle's 3rd grade teacher this year. She has been told that Lyle cannot see and has a severe hearing loss. Lyle will have an intervener working with him. Mrs. Hines has never had a child who is deafblind in her classroom. She wants to learn more about CHARGE, how deafblind people communicate, what exactly an intervener does, what materials and equipment Lyle might use in her classroom, and what she can do to assist the 24 other 3rd graders to get to know and accept Lyle as their peer.

(2) Shawn is the father of a 10 month old daughter, Ashley, who has been diagnosed with cortical visual impairment and appears to have delays cognitively. Ashley is not yet sitting by herself and rarely reaches out for things. Shawn has an older son (age 7) and an older daughter (age 5). His wife is taking on the primary responsibility for Ashley's care and is the one who is home when the teacher of the visually impaired comes each week. Shawn wants to know more about his daughter's visual impairment. He wants to know what equipment and materials she'll need at school as she gets older. He's also interested in knowing what resources are out there for siblings of children who have disabilities such as Ashley's. He'd like to learn about how people who have disabilities and can't read and write communicate.

(3) Marla is 16 and has just been diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP). She has failed the eye exam to get her driver's license because her visual fields are so restricted. She is really having a lot of trouble seeing the white board and overheads in school. When walking she often has branches hit her in the head because she does not see them. She is unable to see at night and therefore won't go out of the house unless she is with a family member or close friend. Marla would like to find out what resources are available to her if she goes to college, she'd like to know about tools that may help her at night, she is very anxious to talk to other's with the same condition, and most importantly she wants to see if there is a way she can drive.

- i. Go to the public library and find out what services are available for patrons with visual impairments. Develop a handout for families of children with visual impairments to familiarize them with the services available for their child who has a visual impairment. Make your handout attractive, informative, and jargon free. This should be your own work, not a handout from the library. In developing your handout consider how to present material about the services to parents of children with low vision and to parents of children who are blind. Also give consideration to the age of the child and the presence of additional disabilities.
- j. Develop an individual project to increase your knowledge or understanding of visual impairment or deafblindness. Submit a one-paragraph description of your proposed project to the instructor via e-mail by **Sept 7th** for approval. Examples of projects might include a public opinion survey, development of a videotape, or creation of instructional materials. **If you don't get your project approved ahead of time it may not be accepted by the instructor, resulting in a grade of zero points.**

TRAVELING BLIND PAPER RUBRIC

Assignment: Write a reflective 4 to 6 page paper about the book *Traveling Blind* by Laura Fogg. Pick two children described by Fogg. For each child select a **minimum of three areas of the** Expanded Core Curriculum and discuss how Fogg addressed them in her teaching. **Please do not** provide a summary of the child’s life, rather focus on areas of instruction in the Expanded Core Curriculum. Compare and contrast these two children sharing what similarities and differences they have. Discuss a **minimum of three** strategies Fogg used with all of her students that you believe are exemplary. Finally, explain how you will apply Fogg’s work in your own work with people with visual impairments or other disabilities. End your paper with a conclusion in which you summarize key points from your paper.

In this paper use “Fogg” not “Laura” when referring to the author.

Grading Rubric: I will assign points to your paper using the following rubric.

# Points	Item
___/5	Paper is double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins, 4-6 pages in length.
___/5	Introductory paragraph provides an accurate overview of the content of the paper.
___/20	The writer accurately describes one child’s learning needs in a minimum of three areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum and how Fogg addressed them in her teaching. Specific examples are used to illustrate each area of the ECC.
___/20	The writer accurately describes one child’s learning needs in a minimum of three areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum and how Fogg addressed them in her teaching. Specific examples are used to illustrate each area of the ECC.
___/20	The writer compares and contrasts the selected two children sharing what similarities and differences they have. A minimum of 2 similarities and 2 differences are provided.
___/20	The writer discusses a minimum of three strategies Fogg used with her students that the writer believes are exemplary. An example for each strategy is provided.
___/20	The writer explains how he/she will apply Fogg’s work to his/her own work with people with visual impairments or other disabilities. (For this section you may use “I.”)
___/5	Closing paragraph provides a summary of key points the writer made in the paper.
___/10	Grammar – Writer used past tense, with the exception of the section on how he/she will apply what was gained from reading the book. The writer uses consistent verb tenses, accurate spelling, no run on sentences, etc.

***Keep Products from This Course for Future Use in Your Professional Portfolio!
TaskStream and Signature Assignments:***

For student evaluation, program evaluation, and accreditation purposes, students will be required to submit a signature assignment from each of their Special Education courses to TaskStream, an electronic portfolio system. In addition, students completing Midpoint and Final Portfolio courses will use TaskStream to create a full portfolio of their work based on assignments completed throughout their program. For this reason, students will need to retain electronic copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE Special Education program. In addition to the signature assignment, products from this class can become part of your individual program portfolio used in your portfolio classes that documents your satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance based standards. Grades will not be submitted at the end of the semester unless TaskStream requirement has been fulfilled.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:

All students must abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://www.gse.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Accommodations:

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Office of Disability Services or participating consortium university accommodations office and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://ods.gmu.edu/> or call 703.993.2474 to access the DRC.

Advising:

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. You may wish to contact Jancy Templeton, GMU Special Education Advisor, at jtemple1@gmu.edu or 703 993-2387. Please be prepared with your G number when you contact her.

George Mason University Email: mail.gmu.edu

Please activate your account and check it often. Course email correspondence and other important university emails will be sent to GMU and Consortium email accounts.

George Mason Blackboard: <http://bb-gmu.blackboard.com> GSE Blackboard will be used to post important information for this course (and others) and in completing some course assignments. Materials, resources, dialogues, notes,

and other types of information will be housed on this course's Blackboard web site.

George Mason Patriot Web: <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>

This is a self-service website for students, faculty, and staff of George Mason University. There is a wealth of useful links, information, and online forms on this website including program of studies details, application for graduation, request for transfer of credit, and internship application.

Recommended Websites to Explore:

NOTE: Internet and web resources are not the same as peer-reviewed professional journal articles. Web sites will be posted on the course Bb that contain information that your Instructor recommends out of the millions of websites on reading on the internet! Be sure that you distinguish, however, between peer-reviewed professional journals and web resources. More about this distinction (as well as distinguishing professional journals from magazines) will be discussed in class.

Writing Resources and Support:

One type of writing support during this course is your use of relevant parts of the APA manual. As you're completing writing assignments, you may find it helpful to review parts of the APA manual, such as: For example:

- Chapter 2 on writing style (2.01 to 2.05)
- Chapter 2 on grammar (2.06 to 2.12)
- Chapter 2 on guidelines to reduce bias in language (focus on 2.16)
- Chapter 3 on punctuation, spelling, capitalization, italics, or abbreviations (3.01 to 3.29)
- Chapter 3 on quotations (3.34 to 3.41) Paraphrase, please (refer to other information on plagiarism in the APA manual as well as other resources and notes in this syllabus)
- Chapter 3 on reference citations in text (3.94 to 3.103)
- Chapter 4 on Reference list (4.01 to 4.16)

APA Formatting Guidelines are also available at

<http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm>

This website is offered as a companion to the APA style manual. *However, it should not be considered a substitute for directly consulting the APA manual, 5th edition for standard of procedures for applying APA style.* Additional APA help URLs are available on the GSE library URL and may be available on the course Blackboard site. Caution with using web sites or resources other than the APA manual because some may have erroneous information on them.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple

listing of books and articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting.

Cell Phones

All cell phones and beepers should be silenced during class.

Weapons

All universities participating in the consortium prohibit the possession firearms, weapons or explosives. Please consult the student handbook and your university for specific information concerning this policy at your location.