

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**Program: Special Education**

**EDSE 440/540, BS1**  
**Summer 2010**

**Characteristics of Students with Disabilities Who Access the General Education Curriculum**

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Class Sessions: Mon/Wed- 7:20–10:00 p.m.  
Meeting Dates: June 07 – July 28  
Class Location: Kellar Annex, Room 103

**Course Description-** Examines the characteristics of students with mild disabilities. Emphasis on etiology, contributing factors, conditions that affect learning, the challenges of identifying students with disabilities, and the need for academic, social, and emotional accommodations and support. Field experience is required. Prerequisites: none.

**Student Outcomes-** The purpose of this course is to assist students in developing a solid foundation for understanding learning acquisition and behaviors of children with mild disabilities. EDSE 540 is also designed to prepare students to interact with other professionals about children with these disabilities. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the CEC standards in relation to the student outcomes identified in Table 1. CEC standards that will be addressed in this class include some of the ED and LD disability-specific standards (Standard 1: Foundations; Standard 2: Development and characteristics of learners; Standard 3: Individual learning differences) and some of the CEC Core Standards: The CEC Standards are listed on the following web site:  
[http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf\\_based\\_stds/common\\_core\\_4-21-01.html](http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf_based_stds/common_core_4-21-01.html)

**Alignment of Outcomes and Requirements with Key CEC/NCATE Standards (Table 1)**

CEC/NCATE STANDARDS	STUDENT OUTCOMES	COURSE REQUIREMENTS
<p><b>Standard 1: Foundations</b>  Special educators understand the field as an evolving and changing discipline based on philosophies, evidence-based principles and theories, relevant laws and policies, diverse and historical points of view, and human issues that have historically influenced and continue to influence the field of special education and the education and treatment of individuals with disabilities both in school and society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the field of learning disabilities from its origins to policies and practices of today.</li> <li>• Compare the history of education for students with emotional and behavioral disorders with the education for students identified as having a learning disability.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading assignments</li> <li>• Online group discussion</li> <li>• Class activities</li> <li>• Final Exam</li> </ul>
<p><b>Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners</b>  Special educators understand the similarities and differences in human development and the characteristics between and among individuals with and without exceptional learning needs (ELN). Special educators understand how exceptional conditions interact with the domains of human</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define <i>learning disability</i> and <i>emotional disturbance</i>.</li> <li>• Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between <i>normal</i> and <i>atypical</i> behaviors.</li> <li>• Describe characteristics of young children and adolescents with learning disabilities and/or emotional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading assignments</li> <li>• Online group discussions</li> <li>• Case Study</li> <li>• Field Observations</li> <li>• Class activities</li> <li>• Final Exam</li> </ul>

development and they use this knowledge to respond to varying abilities and behaviors. Special educators understand how disabilities impact families, and the individual's ability to learn, interact socially, and live as contributing community members.	<p>disturbances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare at least three conceptual models of behavioral deficits with three conceptual models that explain learning disabilities.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences</b> Special educators understand the effects that an exceptional condition has on learning in school and throughout life. Special educators understand that beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures affect relationships among and between students, families, and school. Special educators seek to understand how primary language, culture, and familial backgrounds interact with the disability to affect academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options. Learning differences and their interactions are the basis for individualizing instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the various etiologies in relation to biological, family, cultural, and school perspectives.</li> <li>• Identify various procedures and practices that motivate reluctant learners to complete class work and develop skills that build self-understanding and confidence as learners.</li> <li>• Describe and discuss a range of learning disabilities and emotional disturbances for a parent and suggest possible interventions for home and school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case study report</li> <li>• Reading assignments</li> <li>• Field Observations</li> <li>• Class activities</li> <li>• Final exam</li> </ul>
<p><b>Standard 6: Language</b> Special educators understand typical and atypical language development and the ways in which disabilities can interact with an individual's experience with and use of language.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe at least one theory of how children develop language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small group discussion</li> <li>• Class activities</li> <li>• Final exam</li> <li>• Field Observations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Standard 8: Assessment</b> Assessment is integral to the decision-making and teaching of special educators and special educators use multiple types of assessment information for a variety of educational decisions. Special educators use the results of assessments to help identify exceptional learning needs and to develop and implement individualized instructional programs, as well as to adjust instruction in response to ongoing learning progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe informal assessment procedures for determining knowledge and skills of children with various learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral problems.</li> <li>• Based on informal assessment procedures, design appropriate clinical teaching strategies for children with various learning disabilities and/or behavior problems.</li> <li>• Describe what an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is and how it is developed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small group discussion</li> <li>• Class activities</li> <li>• Case study report</li> <li>• Student presentation</li> <li>• Final exam</li> </ul>

**Relationship of Course to Program Goals and Professional Organizations-** EDSE 540 is part of the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of ED and LD. The program aligns with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special educational professional organization in the United States. As such, the curriculum for the course includes competencies for teaching students with emotional disturbances and learning disabilities in kindergarten through grade 12.

**Student Expectations-** The GSE expects that all students abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://www.gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines for the University Honor Code. This can be accessed at: [http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC\\_H12](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12)
- 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.

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc> or call (703) 993-2474.
- 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.
- 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](mailto:jtemple1@gmu.edu) or 703-993-2387.

The instructor expects that all students will abide by the following:

- Use APA guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guide lines. <http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm>
- Use person-first language in our class discussions and written assignments (and ideally in our professional practice). Please refer to “Guidelines for Non-Handicapping Language in APA Journals” <http://www.apastyle.org/disabilities.html>
- Your GMU email will be used for communication in this course. Make sure your gmU email is activated and checked regularly for communications from the instructor as well and GMU announcements. It is possible to forward your gmU email to another account.
- All assignments should reflect graduate-level spelling, syntax, and grammar. If you experience difficulties with the writing process you may need to access the GMU Writing Center during this course to improve your skills (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>). APA guidelines (5<sup>th</sup> edition) apply for all written (word-processed) assignments. All work produced outside of class must be typed.
- Students are expected to: a) attend all classes during the course; b) arrive on time; c) stay for the duration of the class time; and d) complete all assignments by due dates provided.
- Common sense and instructor discretion will be the governing forces in dealing with any circumstances that may arise that are not explicitly addressed in this syllabus.

#### General Comments:

- Arrangements must be made with the instructor *in advance* to submit assignments after deadlines. Points will be deducted from work submitted late. Written documentation of extenuating circumstances will be required to alter deadlines.
- The instructor is solely responsible for assigning grades. Student non-compliance with stated academic, honor, attendance, or participation expectations will result in a ‘0’ for the associated evaluation. Because class participation is a factor in grading, the instructor may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of non-participation.
- Grades of "A" in this course are earned by students who do exemplary, distinguished work. The A/A- student participates actively and thoughtfully in class; completes all required reading assignments and related assignments in a timely and professional way; shows coherence and thoroughness in work products; completes well-organized, well-written work samples; and consistently demonstrates the ability to make connections between theory and practice.

**Nature of Course Delivery**- Class sessions may include a variety of formats and integrate instructional technology with lecture, discussion, guest presenters, video, and small group activities. Students will be expected to engage in dialog with the instructor and peers cooperatively and collaboratively; mirroring their future roles as special educators.

### **Required Text**

Henley, M., Ramsey, R., & Algozzine, R. (2009). *Characteristics of and Strategies for Teaching Students with Mild Disabilities* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

### **Highly Recommended**

American Psychological Association. (2002). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

### **Evaluation**

1. Class attendance and participation (15)
  - a. Excessive absences will result in no participation points and potential withdrawal from class
2. Abstracts of journal articles (25)
3. Quizzes (10)
4. Case study and presentation (20)
5. Presentation of effective interventions (10)
6. Exam (20)

\*Points will be deducted for work submitted late.

**It is recommended that students retain electronic copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE ED/LD program. Products from this class can become part of your individual professional portfolio used in your portfolio classes that documents your satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance-based standards.**

**Grading Criteria:** A = 95 - 100%    A- = 90 - 94%    B = 80 - 89%    C = 70 - 79%    F = <70%

## **REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Attendance and Participation (15 points)**

Attendance and participation are essential. Class time will provide opportunities for (1) completion of and preparation for a variety of activities, (2) contribution of effective teaching strategies and content application ideas during discussion, and (3) reflection on readings, assignments, and your past experiences. Students are expected to be consistently well-prepared to participate in class as active, thoughtful discussants. This means that you must prepare all assigned readings prior to coming to class. After two absences two points per day absent will be deducted.

### **Abstracts of Journal Articles (25 points)**

On five occasions, each student will summarize three (3) journal article, based on practical, research-based interventions, that are relevant to the topics being studied. Articles chosen for this requirement must be from peer-reviewed published journals (no ERIC documents!) and should be data-based examinations of issues relevant to the ED/LD/ID field. Appropriate sources for journal articles include: *Exceptional Children*, *The Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *Learning Disabilities Quarterly*, *The Journal of Special Education*, *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, *Remedial and Special Education*, *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, etc. A word document of common journals is included under Course Resources on Blackboard.

The purpose of this assignment is twofold: first to identify research-based findings that are relevant to the field of special education, to distill the major points of the article to a one- or two-page summary. The abstract should be typed (double spaced) and following APA style. An APA style citation should be included at the top of each article. After summarizing the articles, include a conclusion that ties together the three summaries and discuss how you, as a teacher, might apply interventions. All articles should be from current literature and should not be more than three (3) years old. You must use your own words to summarize. Each set of abstracts should be 3-5 pages. At least one sample will be provided on Blackboard.

### **Presentation on Strategies/Interventions (10 points)**

Each student will choose an area of interest (e.g. reading, writing, math, behavioral management) and will investigate research-based strategies/interventions on the area of interest. Based on this investigation, each student will prepare a 15-minute presentation on the interventions investigated. The presentation should include an introduction to the topic, description of the intervention (s) and examples of how to apply the strategy intervention. In addition, a hands-on activity should be developed as part of the presentation as well as hand-outs for classmates. A minimum of two strategies/interventions should be discussed.

### **Quizzes (10 points)**

A total of five quizzes will be given to assess understanding of assigned readings. These quizzes will be quick, and not detailed.

### **Case Study\* (20 points)**

As a signature assignment for this course, a comprehensive case study on a student with mild disabilities will be completed. This case study will include the following components: a) student's demographic data; b) description of school and neighborhood; c) educational history (schools attended, reason for referral, pre-referral interventions, results of multidisciplinary evaluation, special education classification, placement); d) IEP goals, objectives, classroom accommodations; e) observational information (at least two class-period observations specifically related to IEP goals, objectives and accommodations); f) teacher interviews (related to IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations, and other accommodations or relevant issues not included on IEP); g) your additional recommendations, educational accommodations, and/or modifications; h) summary and synthesis (comparison of student's characteristics with those described in the textbook, i.e., Which characteristics were identified in your student? Integrate at least three sources from the literature with what you observed in your case study); and I) appendices such as student work samples, teacher interview questions/answers. A sample case study will be provided on Blackboard.

\*Note: Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is required to submit signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one time course or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed, upon completion of the required submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester

### **Exam (20 points)**

Exam covering course content will be administered. The signature assignment required for this course must be submitted electronically to Mason's NCATE management system, TaskStream: (<https://www.taskstream.com>).

## COURSE TOPICS AND PLANNED SCHEDULE

Date	Concepts	Readings/Assignments Due
June 7	Syllabus Review Context of Special Education Relevant Legislation	Chapter 1
June 9	Overview of Mild Disabilities	Chapter 2 <i>Quiz 1</i>
June 14	Mild Intellectual Disabilities	Chapter 3 <i>Due: 1<sup>st</sup> Journal Abstract Assignment</i>
June 16	Emotional Disabilities	Chapter 4 <i>Quiz 2</i>
June 21	Learning Disabilities	Chapter 5 <i>Due: 2<sup>nd</sup> Journal Abstract Assignment</i> <i>Quiz 3</i>
June 23	Impact on Learning: SES, Language, and Culture	<i>Due: Effective Instructional Strategies Presentations (half of class)</i>
June 28	Inclusive Classroom Teaching and Learning	Chapters 6 & 7 <i>Due: 3<sup>rd</sup> Journal Abstract Assignment</i>
June 30	Instruction for Students with Mild Disabilities	Chapter 8 <i>Quiz 4</i>
July 5	<i>class will not meet –alternative assignment</i>	
July 7		<i>Due: Effective Instructional Strategies Presentations (half of class)</i>
July 12	Classroom Management and Teaching Social Skills	Chapters 9 & 10 <i>Due: 4<sup>th</sup> Journal Abstract Assignment</i>
July 14	Building Family Partnerships	Chapter 11 <i>Quiz 5</i>
July 19	Using Existing Data: Putting it All Together to Develop Effective Individualized Education Programs	<i>Due: 5<sup>th</sup> Journal Abstract Assignment</i>
July 21	Assistive Technology additional topic(s) tbd	<i>Due: case studies</i>
July 23	Case Study Presentations Summary of Learning Course Evaluation	
July 28	Final Exam	

**NOTE:** The syllabus may change according to class needs. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or if you have emergency medical information to share with instructor or special needs arrangements, **please call and/or make an appointment with instructor as soon as possible.**

## **Guidelines: Presentation of Interventions**

### **Presentation on effective interventions for students with mild disabilities (20 pts.):**

Each student will choose an area of interest (e.g. reading, writing, math, behavioral management) and will investigate research-based interventions on the area of interest.

#### **Presentation Content**

Presentations will include:

- a brief introduction to the topic description of the intervention
- an overview of “what works” from the scholarly literature on instructional best practices,
- examples of how to apply the intervention.
- a hands-on activity
- a handout for classmates, including references used

In addition to using the textbook as a source of information, at least three other scholarly sources of information must be included in the presentation. For instance, intervention studies or information from national organizations may be used.

Examples of scholarly journals:

*Exceptional Children*

*Journal of Learning Disabilities*

*Journal of Special Education*

*Learning Disabilities Quarterly*

*Reading and Writing Quarterly*

*Remedial and Special Education*

Examples of websites from national organizations:

Council for Exceptional Children: [www.cec.sped.org](http://www.cec.sped.org)

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities: [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

TA Center on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports: [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: [www.aamr.org](http://www.aamr.org)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Total Points (out of 20) \_\_\_\_\_

## Journal Abstracts

### Scoring Rubric

Evaluation Standard	Meets Expectations	Partially Meets Expectations	Did Not Meet Expectations	Points Earned
<b>Full Citation of Journal Article</b> (2 points)	written in its entirety, in correct APA format	written in its entirety, in correct APA format with minimal errors	not written in its entirety and/or in APA format	
<b>Topic Rationale</b> (2 points)	rational/reasons specific to why the strategy was selected	rationale included, but with limited information	not included	
<b>Purpose and Research Questions</b> (2 points)	purpose and research questions clearly stated in understandable terms	purpose and/or research questions not clearly stated	purpose and/or research questions not included	
<b>Participants</b> (2 points)	number, ages/grades, gender, setting, population (gen ed, spec ed)	missing/partial information specific to number, ages/grades, gender, setting and/or population	participant information not included	
<b>Intervention</b> (2 points)	clear and detailed description of the intervention being tested		information about intervention limited and/or unclear	
<b>Results of the Study</b> (5 points)	overall results summarized, describing efficacy of intervention (or lack there-of)	summary of results and efficacy of intervention lacked depth for thorough understanding	summary and/or efficacy of intervention not included	
<b>Reflection</b> (5 points)	thoughtful and detailed reflection of: a) the intervention being studied; and b) how the new learning might influence your practice as an educator	reflection lacked depth and/or thoughtful reflection of the intervention and how it may impact you as an educator	reflection not included	

**Notes:**



## Guidelines: Case Study

### Components:

1. Introduction
  - a. Provide general context with citations and areas to be covered.
2. Description of case
  - a. Student demographic data
  - b. Description of school and neighborhood
  - c. Educational history (schools attended, reason for referral, pre-referral interventions, results of multi-disciplinary evaluation, special ed classification, and placement)
  - d. IEP goals and objectives, classroom accommodations
3. Observation and interviews
  - a. Observational information (at least two class-period observations specifically related to IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations)
  - b. Interviews with relevant people (related to IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations, and other accommodations or relevant issues not included on IEP).
4. Analysis
  - a. Your additional research-based recommendations, educational accommodations, and/or modifications.
5. Summary and synthesis
  - b. Comparison of student's characteristics and effective interventions with those described in the textbook and other resources (e.g., which characteristics were identified in your students? What interventions should work? **Integrate sources from literature with what you observed in your case.**
6. Appendices
  - a. Student work samples
  - b. Teacher interview questions/answers
  - c. Observation field notes

*To protect identities, pseudonyms should be used for all individuals and buildings.*

## Case Study Rubric (20 pts)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Total Points \_\_\_\_\_

	<b><u>Exceeds Expectations</u></b>	<b><u>Meets Expectations</u></b>	<b><u>Below Expectations</u></b>
Observations <b>3 pts.</b>	Greater than two observations	Two observations ( <i>of 45 minutes or more each</i> )	Less than two observations
Introduction <b>2 pts.</b>	Introduction provides general context with citations and areas to be covered	Introduction provides general context and areas to be covered	Introduction does not identify areas to be covered and/or provide general context
Description <b>2 pts.</b>	Provides detailed description of all components listed in <i>point 1 above</i> , including specific examples for each component.	Provides detailed description and examples for at least 4 components, and provides limited information about other components	Provides limited description and examples of components, or missing a component
Observational information <b>3 pts</b>	Detailed information about observations specifically related to student IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations	Information about observations related to student IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations	Information about observations is not focused on student IEP goals, objectives, and accommodations
Teacher interviews <b>2 pts.</b>	Thorough and specific information is reported concerning student IEP goals, objectives, accommodations, and other accommodations or relevant issues not included on IEP	Information reported is related to IEP goals, objectives, accommodations, and other accommodations or relevant issues not included on IEP	Information is general and/or does not include all of the following components: information related to IEP goals, objectives, accommodations, and other accommodations or relevant issues not included on IEP
Analysis <b>5 pts.</b>	Logical recommendations w/ thorough & detailed support based on observations, interview, and literature. Recommendations highlight critical issues.	Logical recommendations with some support based on observations, interview and literature.	Illogical recommendations with little support based on observation, interview, and literature.
Summary and synthesis <b>5 pts.</b>	Thorough and detailed description of student characteristics with those described in the textbook and more than 3 additional sources from literature.	Some comparison of student characteristics with those described in the textbook and 3 additional sources from literature.	General or incomplete description of student characteristics compared with textbook. Less than 3 additional resources from literature.
Appendices <b>1 pt.</b>	Relevant, thorough, organized and readable examples of student work, teacher interview questions/ answers, and copies of field notes.	Organized and readable examples of student work, teacher interview question and answers, and copies of field notes.	Unorganized or unreadable examples of student work, teacher interview questions and answers, and copies of field notes.
APA style <b>2 pts.</b>	Paper is well-organized, writing is clear and easy to follow, provides correct citations and references in APA style, and free from spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.	Writing lacks clarity or organization in parts, and has a few APA style errors, or a few mechanical errors.	Writing lacks clarity and organization, with some APA style or mechanical errors.