

Syllabus

Characteristics of Students with Severe Disabilities

EDSP 663 Characteristics of Students with Severe Disabilities (RU)
 EDSE 547 Section AS2: Medical and Developmental Risk Factors for Children with
 Disabilities (GMU)
 EDIS 5130 Characteristics of Persons with Severe Disabilities (UVA)
 SEDP651 Characteristics of Students with Severe Disabilities (VCU)
 SPE 523: Attributes and Medical Condition Associated with Disabilities (NSU)

Summer 2012

**Class meetings Monday, May 21, Tuesdays May 22-July 10, 4:00-6:40 p.m.
 And weekly asynchronous web-based discussions and assignments**

Instructor: Melissa Ainsworth

Contact Information:

Office phone : 703-642-4100
 cell phone: 703-380-9633
 E-mail: mainswor@gmu.edu

Office Hours: If you need to talk, you may contact me via email and we can arrange a phone or face-to-face conference. I will also be available after class every week.

Course Text:

Required:

- Collins C. Belva (2007) *Moderate and severe disabilities: A foundational approach*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Selected readings on current research in the field of severe disabilities in the journal *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*.
- Web-based readings: Additional websites to be explored and articles to be read will be posted in the Assignments folder on Blackboard.

Recommended:

- Kamata, S. (Ed.). (2008). *Love you to pieces*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

GMU Course Description

Examines nature and causes of disabling or special health conditions. Covers screening and evaluation techniques, characteristics, and educational implications.

Consortium Course Description:

This course examines the nature and causes of disabling or special health conditions. It will cover screening and evaluation techniques, characteristics, and educational implications. *Characteristics* serves as the foundational course for the licensure program in Special Education adapted Curriculum K-12, and will be offered as a combination of distance-learning and web-based learning modules and interactive sessions (within both synchronous and asynchronous formats.) The purpose of this course is to provide students with knowledge and understanding of the characteristics and needs of individuals with severe disabilities. The text will be used as a jumping off place to connect with texts, persons and organizations (e.g.

TASH, AAMR) that have shaped our current ways of understanding, valuing and supporting people with severe disabilities, their families and their cultures. Course assignments will also include inquiry into current research and evidence-based practice in areas such as biomedical intervention, assistive technology, and programs, services and intervention/teaching strategies for individuals with severe disabilities at various points in the lifespan (e.g. Batshaw, 1997; Hunt & Goetz, 1997; Giangreco; Fisher; other research articles published in Research and Practice.)

Topics to be covered will include:

- Overview
- Definition and prevalence
- History of services and educational approaches
- Values that undergird our work
- Characteristics of the disabilities that result in or are associated with severe disability including intellectual disability, developmental delay, autism, cerebral palsy, multiple disabilities, sensory impairments (deaf-blindness), and traumatic brain injury
- Critical social, educational and political issues for people with severe disabilities and their families
- Importance and need for culturally competent services for people with severe disabilities and their families
- Comparison of organizations established to support, serve and/or study people with severe disabilities
- TASH policy statements
- Inclusion as a value and a practice
- Basic principles of service and support
- Services available and needed at various key points across the life span

Learning Objectives:

The following Virginia Department of Education competencies will be addressed by this course as they relate to students with severe disabilities (Special Education Adapted Curriculum K-12)

- **Human growth and development (birth through adolescence).** Skills in this area shall contribute to an understanding of the physical, social, emotional, speech and language, and intellectual development of children and the ability to use this understanding in guiding learning experiences. The interaction of children with individual differences -- economic, social, racial, ethnic, religious, physical, and mental -- should be incorporated to include skills contributing to an understanding of developmental disabilities and developmental issues related to but not limited to attention deficit disorders, substance abuse, child abuse, and family disruptions.
- **An understanding and application of service delivery, curriculum, and instruction of students with disabilities including:**
 - Use of technology to promote student learning; and
 - Structure and organization of general education classrooms and other instructional settings representing the continuum of special education services.
- **Knowledge and understanding of the characteristics, learning and support needs of K-12 students with disabilities whose cognitive impairments or adapted skills require adaptations to the general curriculum.** This includes intellectual disabilities, developmental delay, autism, multiple disabilities, traumatic brain injury and the

emotional, social, neurobiological, linguistic, medical, and educational aspects of severe disabilities based upon current research, best practice and legal considerations;

- **Child abuse recognition and prevention, and issues and strategies unique to working with students with disabilities.**

The following CEC Knowledge and Skill standards for All Beginning Special Education Teachers of Students with Disabilities in Individualized Independence Curriculum will be addressed by this course.

CEC 2003: What Every Special Educator Must Know - Ethics, Standards and Guidelines for Special Educators

http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ProfessionalDevelopment/ProfessionalStandards/Red_book_5th_edition.pdf

- Current educational terminology and definitions of individuals who would benefit most from an independence curriculum, including the identification criteria and labeling controversies, utilizing professional accepted classification systems and current incidence and prevalence figures.
- Evolution and major perspectives from medicine, psychology, behavior, and education on the definitions and etiologies of individuals with disabilities*.
- Continuum of placement and services available for individuals with disabilities*.
- Current educational terminology and definitions of individuals who would benefit most from an independence curriculum, including the identification criteria and labeling controversies, utilizing professional accepted classification systems and current incidence and prevalence figures.
- Articulate the pros and cons of current issues and trends in the education of individuals with disabilities*.
- Delineate the principles of normalization versus the educational concept of “least restrictive environment” in designing educational programs for individuals with disabilities*.
- Physical development, physical disabilities, sensory disabilities, and health impairments as they relate to the development and behavior of individuals who would benefit most from a functional independence curriculum
- The various etiologies and medical aspects of conditions affecting individuals with disabilities*.
- Sources of unique services, networks, and organizations for individuals with disabilities*, including career, vocational, and transition support.
- Consumer and professional organizations, publications, and journals relevant to individuals with disabilities*.
- Rights to privacy, confidentiality, and respect for differences among all persons interacting with individuals with disabilities*.
- Participate in the activities of professional organizations relevant to individuals with disabilities*.
- Seek information regarding protocols, procedural guidelines, and policies designed to assist individuals with disabilities* as they participate in school and community-based activities.
- Maintain confidentiality of medical and academic records and respect for privacy of individuals with disabilities*.

Attendance:

This class is designed to be interactive and rigorous. This is so your learning is optimized. Your attendance in class is important and *required*. If you are absent, your class activity grade for that date will be 0. **In class Activities may NOT be made up.** Please contact

the instructor if you know ahead of time that you will not be in class on a particular day due to illness or an emergency.

Class Schedule:

A class schedule of reading assignments and assignment due dates will be handed out the first night of class.

Course Policies:

CONSORTIUM COURSE POLICIES

Honor Code

Each university has its own honor code and it is important for you to review the honor code at your university. However, all students taking this course, regardless of the university they are enrolled in, are expected to follow this honor code and also to pledge all assignments and their exam to indicate that they have followed the honor code. A pledge means that you have not cheated or plagiarized, nor have you given or received assistance that violated the description of how assignments are to be completed for this course. The shortened version may be used: "Pledged" followed by the date and your full name (typed "signatures" will be OK for assignments/tests submitted electronically).

A complete copy of each university's Honor System document is available through

GMU: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>

VCU: www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/rg7honor.html.

UVA: <http://www.virginia.edu/honor/>

Radford: http://www.radford.edu/~dos-web/handbook02-03/Honor_Code.pdf

NSU: http://www.nsu.edu/student_judicial/policy.html

Accommodations for Disability

At all the participating universities, accommodations can be made with the instructor if a student has a disability. If this is relevant to you, please contact me on the first night of class (can be through email) and indicate both what the disability is and how your university has made accommodations for you in the past. I will discuss (via email) this further with you until we reach consensus. University specific information regarding eligibility, services and accommodations can be found at:

GMU: <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/>

VCU: <http://www.students.vcu.edu/dss/index.html>

UVA: <http://www.virginia.edu/vpsa/services.html>

Radford: <http://www.radford.edu/~dro/>

NSU: <http://www.nsu.edu/disabilityservices/index.html>

Inclement Weather

If classes are cancelled at George Mason University, a message will be posted on the class Blackboard site and all class members will receive an email. Because such cancellations are often at the last minute, it may be difficult to get this message prior to leaving for class. If in doubt, dial the University phone number (703-993-1000) or visit the university website (www.gmu.edu). Do not email us; I will email you regarding weather as soon as it is announced. Please note, the cancellation of classes due to inclement weather is determined by the decision of the instructing university only. If the instructing university is open and operational then you are expected to attend class.

Cell Phones and Weapons

All cell phones and beepers should be deactivated while in the classroom. Also, University rules at all participating universities prohibit the possession any firearm, other weapon, or explosive. Please consult the student handbook and your university for specific information concerning this policy at your university.

Course Materials

This course gives you access to PowerPoint files, class lecture notes, handouts, and copyrighted articles. For the articles (available both on Blackboard and on a class CD), copyright laws must be followed: print only one copy per student. The PowerPoint presentations, notes, and handouts are provided on Blackboard for your convenience and to facilitate your mastery of concepts presented in this course; PowerPoints should be available on Blackboard by noon of the class day or sooner. If you plan to print copies of PowerPoint slides, this must be done before class begins (before 4 pm or 7:20 pm) and using a 3 or more slides per page handout format (do not print full slide pages). All of these materials should be regarded as authored materials, which if used or referred to must be fully credited through reference to the author, the class, and date. If used beyond citation, permission of the instructor/author is required.

Technology Proficiencies

All students participating in this course are expected to be proficient in several technology skills. Students are expected to be proficient in using the Internet and have reliable and consistent Internet access. Students are also expected to have an active email account and to check email regularly. This course requires students to use Blackboard, which is our online course management system located at <http://mymason.gmu.edu>

NON GMU Students: Your login for Blackboard Organizations is: *x_first name.last name* For example John Smith's username would be: *x_john.smith* Your password is: *bbcommunity*

Students are expected to login to this system frequently and be proficient in using its features. Students are expected to be proficient in using the computer, which includes downloading and saving files, typing, and word processing skills. Students participating in this course are expected to use Microsoft Word for all written assignments. Furthermore, students are expected to use Microsoft PowerPoint and Adobe Acrobat Reader for class documents located on the Blackboard website.

TaskStream Submission

TaskStream (www.taskstream.com) is an electronic portfolio and assessment management tool that the SD Consortium is utilizing in part to meet accreditation requirements for the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) as well as for student portfolio evaluation purposes. EVERY student taking this course at EVERY university IS REQUIRED to upload and submit the signature assignment for this course to TaskStream for evaluation by the end of the semester. Directions for submitting assignments are available on Blackboard in the *TaskStream* folder within the *Syllabus* section.

The signature assignment(s) for this class is: *Disability Case Study (Assessment 8)*

Course Facilitators

Each class will have a facilitator or assistant who will assist with the class. Learn who that person is as they will be taking role and keeping track of class participation and reporting it to me weekly. However, if you think you must miss a class, please email me ahead if at all possible (or later if need be). Because of the potential of confusion caused by people speaking at the same time in this multi-site course, it will be important to raise hands before asking questions or making comments. Along with the facilitators, I will try hard to enforce this rule and to be alert to questions from the distance sites. Facilitators will also FAX in-class written tasks following class or early the next day to me. When in class assignment forms or handouts are send the day of the class, facilitators will need to download and copy them for class members.

Blackboard Assistance

This course requires that you be a regular email user and be able to use various features of Blackboard (sign on, download materials, hand in completed assignments electronically in the drop box). You may direct your questions about Blackboard to the facilitator at the class site as well as to email Marci Kinas Jerome (mkinas@gmu.edu). She will be the best resource. We are all learning this system together and some of us will be faster than others. Expect some snafus along the way, but please help each other out as you can. You will want to download all the required materials early in the semester or as soon as they are posted. Please note that some handouts/readings may be given to you in class that are not posted on blackboard. Also check Blackboard for announcements. Sometimes I will place handouts for class on Blackboard and will alert you by email or in the previous class; in these cases please download and bring them to class.

Remote Site Viewing

All Consortium courses are recorded and archived on a video-streaming server. Students and faculty are welcome to view previous classes at <http://torrent.gmu.edu> and click on the link for [SD Characteristics] in the Public Folders link. Classes are listed by date and time. Since the Consortium includes some remote site students, all consortium classes are broadcast live via the Internet at the same website. It is the policy of the consortium that students attending classes at university sites are expected to be present at those university sites during class time. However, in instances where students would otherwise miss class (in accordance to the attendance policy) students may participate in the class via the live web stream. However, students who participate in the web-stream instead of at their university site are still subject to the response cost as outlined in the attendance policy for this course. Directions for viewing the video-stream can be found in the course Blackboard site.

Student may also view the PowerPoints, communicate with the instructor, and interact with other at home students using Adobe Connect. Each consortium class has their own Adobe

Connect website. To get to your Adobe Connect course site go to:

- Characteristics: <http://webcon.gmu.edu/characteristics/>
- Transition: <http://webcon.gmu.edu/transition/>
- Reading: <http://webcon.gmu.edu/reading/>

You will login with the guest username (sdcguest@gmu.edu) and password (sdcsite). The first time you use Adobe Connect you may be prompted to download a plug in, it only takes a few seconds to install.

Special Addendum for Students enrolled in Characteristics Summer 2012

Characteristics is a course offered through the Virginia Consortium for Teacher Preparation in Severe Disabilities. Courses in the consortium are generally capped at lower enrollment than a traditional GMU course because of additional student enrollment from the other participating universities. This semester the enrollment in Characteristics is quite large for a class in the adapted curriculum licensure program. We discussed opening a second section; however we have decided instead to utilize a “grader” to assist the instructor with the large enrollment.

Melissa Ainsworth is the course instructor. She will conduct all class lectures, design course assignments, and answer content questions. Alex Britt from GMU will serve as the course grader for some course content. This means that Alex will grade some course assignments and provide assignment feedback. He will collaborate with Melissa Ainsworth to ensure that grading is consistent. He will also assist in monitoring and facilitating Blackboard Discussions.

Alex Britt
apbritt@fcps.edu

GSE Syllabus Statements of Expectations

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:
Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University 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 must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

Assignments

A brief description of each assignment appears below. A detailed explanation and written guidelines will be handed out and explained during the appropriate class time.

LATE Policy

1. All late assignments not previously approved by instructor will receive 5 points off per day late.

All submitted work must have appropriate citations and references for any and all resources used to help you with the assignment. APA style must be used for your reference page. Please purchase an APA style manual. You can also refer to this tutorial at <http://lib.radford.edu/tutorial/index.asp> for specific rules on quoting, paraphrasing, and creating a reference list.

1. **Online Discussions- 100 points:** Students will participate in a series of online discussions throughout the semester using the Discussion Forum on Blackboard. Students will be expected to respond to topic questions posed by the instructor related to course readings and lectures. Students are expected to utilize their knowledge and skills acquired during class as well as their experiences to answer the questions. For Discussions students are expected to engage in interactive dialogue with classmates. Students will be expected to post their direct response by a specific date and then respond/comment to at least three peers by second date.

- 1: Personal Teaching Statement -40 points
2. Discussion 2: Rebuttal to Staff Concern -60 points

2. **Online Learning Modules - 50 points each (150 total):** Students will participate in a series of online modules throughout the semester. The module assignments will be posted in the Assignment section of Blackboard at least two weeks before each module is due. Each module will contain readings in PDF format, links to websites, and supplemental activities related to course topics. Student may be required to submit written responses either through the Upload Assignment link or the discussion board within Blackboard. Please refer to Blackboard for complete assignment description and rubric.

- a. Module 1: -50 points
- b. Module 2: -50 points
- c. Module 3: -50 points

3. Disability Study- 150 points: (Signature Assignment) This is a draft of this assignment. A final draft and rubric will be posted by June 1. Students will be assigned to work in small groups to develop a paper related to a specific disability. The group will also develop a 5 minute presentation highlighting the most important aspects of their findings to present to the class on the last night of class. The paper will contain the following sections:

1. Etiology and overview of the assigned disability including cause of the disability or theories of causes, characteristics of the disability, medical implications and care if needed, range of effects of the disability along a continuum and manifestations of these effects. (CEC standards: 1-IIC1K1, 2-ICC2K6, 2-IIC2K3, 3-ICC3K1, 3-IIC3K1)
2. Impact on families including cultural considerations, financial and legal implications (CEC standards: 1-ICC1K7, 1-ICC1K10, 2-ICC2K3, 2-ICC2K4)
3. Educational issues related to this disability including the range of special education services and accommodations needed to maximize the individual's achievement and capacity. (CEC standards: 9-ICC9K1, 1-IIC1K4, 2-ICC2K2)
4. Legal issues including the following: educational rights of the individual, rights of the individual with a disability, legal responsibilities of parents/guardians and of the individuals with disabilities. (CEC 1-IIC1K3,)
5. Resources available to families and individuals with the assigned disability (CEC standards: 9-IIC9K1, 10-IIC10K3)
6. Resources available to professionals who work with individuals with the assigned disability. (CEC standards: 9-IIC9K2, 9-ICC9K4)

4. Research Journal - 100 points total: Students will critique six (6) peer reviewed articles from *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*. Articles must not be older than five years. Four of your selections must be either research or reviews of research on instructional practice with students with severe disabilities. The remaining two are your choice – however, they (1) must be a minimum of five pages in length, (2) they may not be book reviews or introductions, and (3) if you choose to respond to commentary, you must include all articles related to that commentary section. A separate handout with more information can be found on Blackboard. All articles will be submitted to Blackboard in the assignment area. You will create a reading journal with a brief summary and personal and critical reflection on six articles. Please refer to Blackboard for complete assignment description, research journal template, examples and rubric.

5. In Class Activities – 75 points: During most class sessions, we will have an in-class activity or writing assignment for which you will be awarded points contributing to your final grade. There will be 6 activities. Each activity is worth 15 points and the lowest score will be dropped.

6. Class Participation – 25 points: You are expected to come to class having read the assigned materials and prepared to engage in the class discussions. This class is designed to be interactive. Please refer to the participation rubric on blackboard.

Grading (Total points possible 600):

A (94-100%) = 564-600

A- (91-93%) = 546-563

B+ (88-90%) = 528-545

B (84-87%) = 504- 527

B- (81-83%) = 486-503

C+ (78-80%) = 468-485

C (74-77%) = 444-467

F (<73% = 443 or less

Course grades will be calculated by summing the points earned on assignments along with a consideration of the average and range of performance of others in class. All written products must be edited before submission – No submission with significant problems with writing quality and/or errors in writing mechanics will be eligible to receive the grade of A. The average and range of performance of others in class may also be considered in determining the need for a grading curve.. There will be a penalty of one letter grade for assignments submitted after the due date. But I will work with you if there are extenuating circumstances – please contact me in advance of the due date to contract for an extension or a grade of incomplete. Any incomplete grades need to be completed within six weeks following the end of the course or final grades will be reduced a grade for each additional month delay.

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Note: Spelling, grammar and writing style are important components of professional writing. Accurate, clear, concise writing is required of all professionals and will be considered in the grading of all assignments. Written assignments will be evaluated for content, clarity, format, cohesiveness, and use of person-first language. Additionally, points will be deducted for spelling, grammatical, and word processing errors.

All written papers should follow the American Psychological Association format (6th edition)
<http://www.apa.org/publications/>

Proposed Class Schedule **Subject to change!**

Date	Topic/ In class Discussion	Readings Please read before class	Articles to bring to class	Assignment Due
May 21 Monday (Face to face)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Nuts & bolts • Biology • 		“Dilemmas in a NICU”	None
May 22 Tuesday (Face to face)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other causes • Sign up for final paper topics. 	“The Coldest Heart”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pillow Angel Ethics - Pillow Angel parents speak out - The story of Genie - Valuing life - Promise seen in drug - Baby Doe - Court rules... 	
May 23 Wednesday (on-line)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin on-line discussion through Sunday May 27 		-	Discussion 1 – Personal Teaching statement
May 29 Tuesday (face to face)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terminology & History • 	Chapter 1 and “Respect and the Retarded”	“Being Handicapped.”	
June 5 Tuesday (face to face)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family concerns 	Chapters 3, 9 & “Parenting/Bonding and Valuing the Retarded”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -“Patient at the door with a gun” -“TASH alternatives to guardianship -“Should an Autistic child be charged with Murder” -“TASH resolution on Medical Treatments” 	Module1 Upload by 4:00
June 12 Tuesday (face to face)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment & psychological aspect 	Chapter 2	“The story of Genie”	Module 2 Upload by 4:00
June 19 Tuesday (face to face)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Programming 	Chapters 4,6,7,8		
June 26 Tuesday (face to face)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Rights and Legal issues 	Chapter 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do the retarded have the right to be eaten? - How is a MR person... 	Research Journal Due Upload before class

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MR women & forced contraception - Respect and the Retarded - Shold MR people be allowed to have children - TASH resolution on sexuality - The coldest Heart 	
June 27 Wednesday (on line)				Discussion 3 – rebuttal On-line
July 3 Tuesday (on line)	No Class			Module 3 uploaded by 4:00
July 10 Tuesday (face to face)	Final presentations		Final Paper & presentations	Upload final paper before class: Presentation In class