



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

EDSE 540-001: *Characteristics of Students with Disabilities who Access the
General Curriculum*

CRN: 76677, 3 - Credit(s)

Fall 2012

Instructor: Dr. Sharon Ray	Meeting Dates: 08/27/12 - 12/19/12
Phone: Office (703) 993-5247 Cell (703) 673-8540	Meeting Day(s): Monday
E-Mail: sray4@gmu.edu *Best Contact Method	Meeting Times: 7:20pm - 10:00pm
Office Hours: Before/After Class or By Appointment	Meeting Location: PW-BRH 256

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.

Prerequisite(s): None.

Advising Contact Information:

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. For assistance contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703)993-3145.

Nature of Course Delivery:

Learning activities include the following:

1. Class lecture and discussion
2. Application activities
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Research and presentation activities
6. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard

Field Experience Requirement:

A Field Experience is a part of this course. "Field Experiences" entail Mason students conducting activities that may involve students, parents, and/or teachers, etc. in a school setting. "Finding" an individual needed to complete a Field Experience Project/Case Study for a course may be a challenge. Mason's Field Placement Specialist, Lauren Clark lclarkg@gmu.edu can assist in placing Mason students at school sites. Mason is required to track when and where Mason students complete any field experiences. Consequently, EACH PERSON ENROLLED in this course must access this link <http://cehd.gmu.edu/endorse/ferf> at the beginning of the semester (if not before) and complete the information requested REGARDLESS if one needs assistance in 'finding' an individual for the project/case study or not.

Learner Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- Describe the field of learning disabilities from its origins to policies and practices of today.
- Compare the history of education for students with emotional and behavioral disorders, students with learning disabilities students with mild intellectual disabilities.
- Define learning disability, emotional disturbance, and mild intellectual disabilities.
- Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between normal and atypical behaviors.
- Describe characteristics of K-12 students with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and/or mild intellectual disabilities.
- Compare conceptual models of behavioral deficits with three conceptual models that explain learning disabilities and/or mild intellectual disabilities.
- Discuss the various etiologies in relation to biological, family, cultural, and school perspectives.
- Identify various procedures and practices that motivate reluctant learners to complete class work and develop skills that build self- understanding and confidence as learners.
- Describe and discuss a range of learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and mild intellectual disabilities for a parent and suggest possible interventions for home and school.
- Describe how children develop language.
- Describe informal assessment procedures for determining knowledge and skills of children with various learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral problems.
- Based on informal assessment procedures, design appropriate clinical teaching strategies for children with various learning disabilities and/or behavior problems.
- Describe what an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is and how it is developed.

Required Textbooks:

Henley, M., Ramsey, R., & Algozzine, R. (2009). *Characteristics of and Strategies for Teaching*

Students with Mild Disabilities (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education Inc., Allyn and

Bacon.

Recommended Textbooks:

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Required Materials:

Required Access to Course Blackboard Site

Blackboard (Bb) will be used to post important information for this course. Plan to access the Bb site several times per week; announcements and resources are posted on the Bb site in between class sessions. You are responsible for accessing the materials – for printed copies, etc. prior to class. You will use the site: <http://courses.gmu.edu> and click the Login tab. Your Login and password is the same as your George Mason e-mail login. Once you enter, select the EDSE 540 course. The first night of class all handouts will be provided. After the first night, all handouts will be posted by Sunday evening before Monday's class. Students are responsible for downloading these handouts or printing hard copies for use in class from the second class onwards.

****Starting September 10th, be sure to come to class prepared with the week's handouts electronically downloaded or as hard copies (whichever works best for you)!****

Additional Readings:

Other readings relevant to special education applications as assigned by the instructor.

Course's Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organizations:

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Special Education Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of Special Education: Students with Disabilities who Access the General Curriculum K-12. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization. The CEC Standards are listed on the following website: <http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ProfessionalDevelopment/ProfessionalStandards/> The CEC standards that will be addressed in this class include Standard 1: Foundations, Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners, Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences, Standard 6: Language, and Standard 8: Assessment, Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice, and Standard 10: Collaboration. *NOTE: NCATE Assessments (in many but not all courses) may address additional CEC standards.

Policies (Attendance and Late Work Policies):

Attendance Policy:

Class attendance and participation are an important part of this class because of the technical nature of the information learned through the course. Attendance points are earned for each class to emphasize the importance of engaging in the learning activities and educational environment of the course. Students are expected to arrive on time, participate in all class discussions and activities, and stay until the end of class. Attendance will be maintained through the artifacts students produce during class through group and individual work. For full attendance credit during each class, students must not only attend the full class session, but actively participate, work cooperatively, and turn in high quality class products. If you are unable to make any class sessions during the semester, please contact the instructor by phone or e-mail **before** the class session where you will be absent. In the rare event of an emergency or severe sickness, each student is given 1 “grace” absence without a point penalty, **as long as the instructor is notified before the class session.** In this case, it is still the student’s responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student. **Attendance points missed for more than one absence or any absence without instructor contact before class cannot be made up!** Two or more unexcused absences will result in no credit for this course.

Late Work Policy:

All assignments should be submitted *on or before* the assigned due date. **In fairness to students who make the effort to submit work on time, total assignment points will be deducted from your grade for late assignments.**

Late assignments will be accepted in the following manner (**Note: No late work will be accepted for the Exam**):

- **5% point deduction – up to 1 week late**
- **10% point deduction – 1-2 weeks late**
- **25% point deduction – 2 weeks late up through last class before exam**

TaskStream Submission:

For student evaluation, program evaluation, and accreditation purposes, all students are required to submit an NCATE assignment from selected Special Education courses to TaskStream. The NCATE assignment required for this course must be submitted electronically to Mason’s NCATE management system, TaskStream: (<https://www.taskstream.com>).

Note: Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is required to submit NCATE assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>. Students who do not submit the required NCATE assignment

to TaskStream will receive a grade of Incomplete (IN) in the course. The Incomplete (IN) will change to a grade of (F) if the required signature assignment has not been posted to TaskStream by the incomplete work due date listed in the current semester's Schedule of Classes.

Grading Scale:

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

Evidence-Based Practices:

This course will incorporate the evidence-based practices (EBPs) relevant to characteristics of students with mild disabilities, etiology of mild disabilities, inclusionary practices. These EBPs are indicated with an asterisk (*) in this syllabus' schedule. Evidence for the selected research-based practices is informed by meta-analysis, literature reviews/synthesis, the technical assistance networks which provide web-based resources, and the national organizations whose mission is to support students with disabilities. We address both promising and emerging practices in the field of special education. This course will provide opportunities for students to take an active, decision-making role to thoughtfully select, modify, apply, and evaluate EBPs in order to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Schedule:

COURSE SCHEDULE		
Date	Topics	Assignments Due
8/27	<p>Introductions and Icebreaker</p> <p>Syllabus and Course Expectations</p> <p>Field Placement Information</p>	

9/3	NO CLASS – <i>Labor Day Holiday!</i>	
9/10	Context of Special Education Introduction Relevant Legislation	Read Chapter 1 Register with Field Placement Office if a placement is needed
9/17	Overview of Mild Disabilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types • Characteristics • Possible Causations 	Read Chapter 2
9/24	Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities (ID) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Etiology • Screening, assessment, and classification • Educational and service delivery models • Dual Language Assessments • Progress monitoring* 	Read Chapter 3
10/1	Students with Learning Disabilities (LD) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Etiology • Characteristics 	Read Chapter 5 Field Observations Report Due
10/8	No In Class Meeting – <i>Columbus Day Holiday!</i> Independent Work Week on Observation Case	

	Study	
10/15	<p data-bbox="313 264 883 296">Students with Emotional Disabilities (ED)</p> <ul data-bbox="362 338 894 940" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="362 338 516 369">• Etiology <li data-bbox="362 443 721 474">• Classroom Management <li data-bbox="362 548 837 579">• Reinforcement & Consequences* <li data-bbox="362 653 862 726">• Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs)* <li data-bbox="362 800 894 831">• Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs)* <li data-bbox="362 905 894 936">• Positive Behavioral Supports (PBIS)* 	<p data-bbox="1125 264 1328 296">Read Chapter 4</p> <p data-bbox="1013 474 1442 579">Please select the student that you will use for the case study by this date.</p>
10/22	<p data-bbox="313 1052 740 1083">Teaching and Learning Models</p> <ul data-bbox="362 1125 951 1869" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="362 1125 870 1157">• Effective Instruction for all students <li data-bbox="362 1230 951 1262">• Direct instruction/systematic and explicit* <li data-bbox="362 1335 862 1409">• Semantic Feature Analysis/Graphic Organizers* <li data-bbox="362 1482 889 1556">• Evidence-Based intervention learning strategies <li data-bbox="362 1629 740 1661">• Metacognitive Strategies* <li data-bbox="362 1734 740 1766">• Peer-mediated Strategies* <li data-bbox="362 1839 578 1871">• Mnemonics* 	<p data-bbox="1125 1052 1328 1083">Read Chapter 7</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and Practice to Mastery* • Teacher Variables* 	
10/29	The Inclusive Classroom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion* • Co-Teaching/Collaboration* 	Read Chapter 6 Abstracts of Journal Articles Due
11/5	No Full Class Meeting – Individual Meetings on Observation Case Study as Needed	
11/12	Social Skills Instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Positive Environments* • Behavioral Modification* • Routines, Rules, & Structure* 	Read Chapter 10
11/19	Classroom Management/ Improving classroom behavior * <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-Based intervention learning strategies • Applied Behavior Analysis* (ABA – observation and data) • Direct instruction/systematic and explicit* • Behavioral Modification* 	Read Chapter 9

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routines, Rules, & Structure* 	
11/26	Building Family Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration* • Self-Determination/Advocacy* 	Read Chapter 11 Case Study Paper Due
12/3	Case Study Presentations Writing Effective IEPs* and Educational Reports	Case Study Presentations
12/10	Case Study Presentations Summary of Learning Course Evaluations Review for Final Exam	Case Study Presentations Course Evaluations
12/17	Final Exam	

Assessment of Course Requirements:

Requirements of this course include readings from your textbook and other reading materials as assigned by the instructor, website access, and activities, which include in-class individual and group work, as well as independent assignments outside of class. The goal of all work for this course is to increase your knowledge and skills about working with students with mild disabilities.

The required NCATE assignment for this course is the Observation Case Study, which will assist you in learning more about the characteristics of students with mild disabilities, their educational programs, and research-based instructional practices for working with these individuals, including academic, self-regulatory, and motivation strategies. Students are expected to complete all forms of class assessment and final grading will be based on the cumulative points that students *earn* based on their performance on all course assessments. Student performance on assignments is expected to be both timely and of high quality.

Online submission of student work is required. All written assignments should be submitted through the Blackboard Digital Assignments tab. Assignments should not be submitted by email unless there is an emergency technical issue with Blackboard. In the case of an emergency, submit your assignment to the instructor’s Blackboard email account. Each assignment should be submitted by the start of class on the due date (7:20 PM). Assignments that are not submitted at the appropriate time *are late*. Late assignments will be accepted with a point deduction. All course assignments should be completed with college level use of content, grammar, spelling, and written expression clarity. If writing is an area of difficulty, you will need to visit the GMU Writing Center to work on these skills (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

Assignments submitted through the Blackboard Digital Assignments Tab should be labeled with filenames that correspond to: <your first initial your last name abbreviated form of the assignment’s name>. I will return graded assignments to you via the course Blackboard email. It is suggested that you download and save all returned assignments, as well as corresponding evaluations and comments. Below is example labeling for submission of all written assignments:

SRayObsRep – Field Observations and Report

SRayJournAb – Abstracts of Journal Articles

SRayCasStu – Case Study

SRayCasStuPres – Case Study Presentation

Course Requirements Evaluation	
Assignment	Points Earned/Total Points
1. Attendance & Participation (1 pt. per class meeting, except for the exam class which is worth 2 pts.)	/15

2. Field Observations and Report	/15
*3. Observation Case Study	/30
4. Abstracts of Journal Articles	/15
5. Case Study Presentation	/10
6. Exam	/15
Total # of points earned	/100

***TASKSTREAM SUBMISSION*:**

This Observation Case Study is the required NCATE assignment for this course and must be submitted digitally to Taskstream. If this is your first GMU Special Education class, you will need to self-enroll into Taskstream. There is further Taskstream information on the GMU Special Education Program website: <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>.

Course Assignment Details:

Attendance and Participation - Weekly (1 pt. per class meeting, except for the exam class which is worth 2 pts. = 15 points total)

In general terms, attendance points are earned based on the Attendance Policy described in the Policies section of this syllabus. More specifically, Points for class attendance and participation are positively impacted by:

- a. attending class and being psychologically available to learn,
- b. completing and handing in weekly class assignments,
- c. participating in class discussions/activities throughout the semester,
- d. thoughtfully contributing to class discussions,
- e. listening to the ideas of other peers, respectfully, and
- f. demonstrating an enthusiasm for learning,
- g. successfully facilitating assigned group work activities, which may include guided questioning and problem solving roles,
- h. and taking initiative and leadership in class discussions, which may include leading class discussions on assigned sections of specific content.

Points are negatively affected by being late to class, demonstrating a disinterest in the material/discussions (e.g., reflection activities, small group activities, discussions, etc.), failure to guide your group's collaborative work or take leadership roles on assigned content, and/or absences. Also, please display digital etiquette during class sessions. Use of laptops may be used to observe the class PowerPoints/materials, specifically. **Additionally, the use of electronic**

devices that produce sound or otherwise interfere with the learning of others (i.e., cell phones, pagers, etc.) is prohibited during class. Please turn these devices off or to vibrate before the start of class.

Specific Attendance Points: Each class (13 sessions): .5 = psychologically invested, prepared, and present; .25 = participation, thoughtful contributions, completed in-class assignments, and .25 = actively guiding group discussions towards thoughtful work completion and presenting assigned content in a knowledgeable and reflective manner.

Field Observations and Report – Due October 1st (15 points)

Observations of students with learning disabilities and/or emotional disabilities in a school setting will be completed with a report written following these observations. At least three class-period observations with the same group of target students (a class of students with individuals with learning disabilities and/or emotional disabilities included) should occur to assure adequate information on interactions and teaching methods. The focus of observations should be the interactions of the teacher with the class as a whole, as well as the target students, in the school environment; the methods of instruction employed with the class as a whole and with the target students (these may or may not differ from one another); and the methods and strategies that appear to be successful with the students, making note if there are differences in the methods and strategies that are successful with students with mild disabilities.

Observational report information should include the following: a) student-teacher and student-student interactions in classrooms or other organized settings; b) identification of teaching methods and strategies that appear to be beneficial to students as well as those you consider inappropriate; and c) how the observation and interactions reflect views articulated by readings from class. The observations should focus on the class as a whole, with specific notations made on students with mild disabilities within that group, and examples of specific interactions (e.g., illustrate your assertion of student-teacher interactions through observed examples).

RUBRIC for Field Observation Report

Exemplary report (14-15 points): The report descriptively discusses student-teacher and student-student interactions across multiple observation periods. Specific identification of strategies used with students, with examples employed to emphasize key ideas. Paper is reflective and demonstrates a thorough understanding of observations and their connection to the readings presented within the course. Good writing style, free of mechanical or stylistic errors, appropriate use of APA format.

Adequate report (11-13 points): Good overall report, lacking in one or two of the criteria. Not entirely reflective or thoughtful, or minor writing style errors may be present.

Marginal report (9-10 points): Overall, acceptable but with one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information, but may have substantial problems with evaluation or writing style.

Inadequate report (1-8 points): Report with substantial problems in important areas such as writing, descriptions, or overall thoughtfulness.

Unacceptable/no report (0 points): Report not relevant to the assignment or no report turned in at all. May describe observations of no value or relevance, or that were not approved for this assignment.

Abstracts of Journal Articles – Due October 29th (15 points)

Each student will summarize three (3) journal articles that are relevant to working with students with disabilities. Papers 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...

The purpose of this assignment is twofold: first to identify research-based findings that are relevant to the needs of individuals with disabilities, and subsequently to synthesize the major points of each article in a two page summary. The papers should be typed (double spaced) and follow the form of: identification of purpose of the research, summary of key article points, and meaning and relevance of the data collected in the research article to the ED/LD/ID field. At the end of the third article summary, provide a conclusion section to tie together the findings of the three articles. This section also provides an opportunity to reflect and offer suggestions as to how the information from the abstracts could be implemented to assist students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom.

All articles should be from current literature and should not be more than five years old. Your paper will be in APA format and content should be no more than 7 pages long (2 pages for each abstract and 1 page for the conclusion section). Title page, abstract and reference pages are additional pages.

RUBRIC for Abstracts of Journal Articles

Exemplary abstracts (14-15 points): Abstracts comprehensively discuss research purpose, key research ideas, and report the data collected and its relevance to the mild disabilities field. A

thorough conclusions section makes understandable connections between the three articles.
Good writing style, free of mechanical or stylistic errors, with appropriate use of APA format, including title and reference pages.

Adequate abstracts (11-13 points): Good overall abstracts, lacking in no more than one of the criteria. Not entirely comprehensive or specific, or minor writing style errors may be present.

Marginal abstracts (9-10 points): Overall, acceptable but with one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information relevant to the articles read, but may have substantial problems with evaluation or writing style.

Inadequate abstracts (1-8 points): Abstracts with substantial problems in important areas such as writing, descriptions, or overall specifics.

Unacceptable/no abstracts (0 points): Abstracts not relevant to the assignment or no abstracts turned in at all. May describe observations of no value or relevance, or that were not approved for this assignment.

Observation Case Study – Due November 26th (30 points)

The observation case study provides an opportunity to observe a student with mild to moderate exceptional learning needs, examine his or her educational history and goals, conduct parent interviews, and make comprehensive recommendations for the student. This plan has 9 sections and should be written in APA style. This assignment is the course's required NCATE assignment and should be electronically posted to Taskstream. Detailed directions and a rubric for the assignment will be distributed separately.

Case Study Presentation – Due December 3rd or 10th (10 points)

Students should prepare a 15-minute oral and visual presentation of their Observation Case Study. Presentation elements should incorporate all major components of the Observation Case Study written assignment with specifics and examples given for each particular area, which is a level of specificity often required by master teachers. Include a PowerPoint in your presentation – please provide a digital copy for the instructor via the Blackboard Digital Assignments Tab prior to the start of class on the date of the presentation. Utilize specific materials or visuals in the presentation to illustrate key points (i.e. samples of curriculum used with the student, illustrations of specific strategies that have been successful with the student).

*Remember to use a pseudonym for the case study student and maintain the student's confidentiality at all times during the presentation.

RUBRIC for Observation Case Study Presentation

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Exemplary presentation: (9-10 points): Keeps within the time limits; demonstrates knowledge on all required elements of the observation case study and is able to effectively convey information to audience; reflects poise, clarity, knowledge and enthusiasm; effective use of prepared materials; keeps the audience engaged; employs detailed information and specific examples within the presentation.

Adequate presentation: (8 points): Good overall presentation, but may be lacking in one or two of the criteria specified in an exemplary presentation. May seem a little less prepared or somewhat unclear on specific required areas pertaining to the target student. Some elements of the presentation may be lacking in detail or examples.

Marginal presentation (7 points): Presentation provides relevant information on some case study elements, but is missing information in several key areas. Style or visuals may be less than adequate. Minimal detail and few examples seen throughout the presentation.

Inadequate presentation (1-6 points): Weak overall presentation that reflects very little information on any case study elements. Appears poorly prepared or has not followed directions. Visual aids are lacking. Little to no detail and examples provided within the presentation.

Exam – Due December 17th (15 points)

An exam that covers course content will be administered as an in-class examination. The exam will be application-based and focus on short answer and essay questions surrounding case studies and IEP writing.

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:

- a.** Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- b.** Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- c.** 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.

- d.* 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/>].
- e.* 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/>].
- f.* Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g.* 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/>].

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

CORE VALUES COMMITMENT

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. [http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/Revised 06/25/12](http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/Revised%2006/25/12)

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

Note: *This syllabus may change according to class needs. Students will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason e-mail and/or through Blackboard.*