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

Summer 2013
EDSE 501 6G2: Introduction to Special Education
CRN: 42096, 3 - Credit(s)

Instructor: Dr. Margaret Weiss	**Meeting Dates:** 05/20/13 - 08/26/13
Phone: 703.993.5732	**Meeting Day(s) and Time(s):** Asynchronous
E-Mail: mweiss9@gmu.edu	
Office Hours: By appointment	**Meeting Location:** Internet

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.

Course Description
Survey of current knowledge on individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. Includes historical factors, legislation, etiology, characteristics, needs, educational strategies, assessment, and support services for individuals with disabilities ranging from mild and moderate to severe. Includes the impact of disabilities on academic, social, and emotional performances. Field experience required.

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-requisite(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. Mason M.Ed. and Certificate students should contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703)993-3145 for assistance. All other students should refer to their faculty advisor.

Nature of Course Delivery
[Instructors, please revise in accordance with your specific course format]
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 Office, internsh@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 how educators and other professionals determine the difference between "normal" and "atypical" behaviors.
• Describe the legal and historical development of the field of special education.
• Describe various theoretical models and perspectives in the field of special education.
• Describe research in etiological factors associated with all disability areas.
• Describe social, cognitive, behavioral and academic characteristics associated with all disability areas.
• Describe historical points of view and contribution of culturally diverse groups to the field of special education.
• Describe the role of families in the educational process.
• Describe past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including use of innovative technology.
• Discuss issues and trends in special education, including legislation and litigation, and use of innovative technology.
• Examine ethical considerations for the treatment of all children.

Required Textbooks
Hallahan, D., Kauffman, J., & Pullen, P. (2012). *Exceptional learners: An introduction to special education* (12th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. (ISBN-13: 9780137033706 ISBN-10: 0137033702)

Recommended Textbooks
American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.).* Washington, DC: Author.

Required Resources
Access to the Internet and Blackboard login.

Additional Readings
Included in Blackboard site.

Course 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, and Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences.

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURES FOR STUDENTS:
a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/].

b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/].

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. [See http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/]

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

Course Policies & Expectations
      Attendance.
All instruction takes place online through Mason's Blackboard environment.

This is a 3-credit graduate level course. Traditional 3-credit courses across a 15-week semester require an average of 45 hours of in-class time and approximately 90 hours of independent reading and assignment completion. This course includes the same amount of content as a traditional 15-week course. As you budget your time for the course, keep in mind the importance of allotting an appropriate amount of time for course preparation, reading assignments, lesson activity completion, and longer module assignments. All of the course content is available to you. I would recommend you review it and develop a schedule for yourself. I have had many students fail the course because they did not allocate time and ran out of it at the end. Please note that **all** work for the course and the upload of your TaskStream assignment must be completed by the end date given in the Course Schedule.

Participation and Completing Work Online

This is both an interactive and independent course that requires a high level of self-direction, communication, and problem solving on your part. You will learn from the material provided and from one another. This is a self-paced course so everyone's schedule will vary. You are responsible for all communication that occurs during the time of the course. Please check your Mason email frequently, even after you have finished all components of the course. If something is missing or I need to contact you, I will send you communication through your Mason email.

Participation Requirements and Technical Support

This course requires you to work in an online environment. Therefore, you must have a working computer and access to the Internet at all times. Computer malfunctions and other technology problems are your responsibility and must be resolved by you in a timely fashion.

If you need technical assistance for gaining access to Mason's Blackboard page or your Mason email, contact ITU Support at
703-993-8870
support@gmu.edu
http://itservices.gmu.edu/

If you need technical assistance with Blackboard, please contact the Blackboard support line at 703-993-8870.

If you are having trouble finding something within the course, direct your questions to me.

Late Work.
ALL assignments are due by midnight on the final day of the course. No late work will be accepted. As indicated in the Course Pacing Guide, I will grade all posted assignments on dates throughout the semester. These are not required due dates; however, if you would like to make sure you know how you are doing on the Module Assignments and in the course before the final due date, you may post assignments by these dates and they will be evaluated. You may also finished the course by any of these dates and receive your final grade.

Communication

The best way to contact me is through email. There is a Send Email icon on the left navigation bar in our course. My email (as well as the emails of your classmates) is located here. I check my email at least once a day on weekdays. I will respond to emails within 24 hours, if not sooner, on weekdays.

Evaluation

Assignments are evaluated according to posted rubrics. You can find the assignment descriptions and rubrics in each Module and also under the Course Syllabus link on the left side navigation bar. Grades for most reading checks will be available immediately after you finish and will post to the Grade Center (My Grades in the left side navigation bar). For Module assignments (and some reading checks), I will grade the assignment and post the score you earned and my comments to Grade Center. You can read the comments by clicking on the grade. If you have any questions, please contact me. If you have difficulty with an assignment, either in understanding it or completing it, please contact me immediately to discuss.

TaskStream Submission

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, Abuse/Neglect Certificate to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in TaskStream. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete(IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Written Work

All Module assignments require you to synthesize material from the Course and outside sources into coherent statements of your ideas. In all cases, your writing should be data-based, meaning that you must support statements and ideas with evidence from these sources, giving these sources credit. The standard format for writing in the field of education is outlined in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). The citation for this manual is included in the section entitled, Recommended Texts. This is also termed "APA Style." For an online resource, see www.apastyle.org. Specifically, final Module Assignments for Modules 1 and 4 should be written in APA style, including a cover page, running head, pagination, headings (as needed), citations (as needed in Module 4 at the least), and reference pages.

Grading Scale

95-100%	A
90-94%	A-
85-89%	B
80-84%	B-
70-79%	C
<69%	F

Assignments
      NCATE/TaskStream Assignments.

Child Abuse Training Module
All students must complete the online Child Abuse Recognition training module available at
http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/mandated_reporters/cws5691/index.html. If you have
already completed the training module, you will just need to post your certificate (or evidence of
completion on your teaching license) to TaskStream.
**This is a mandatory requirement and you will not pass the class without completing this
assignment. The Certificate of Completion will need to be posted to your TaskStream
account in order to receive your final grade in the course.**

      Common Assignments.

     None.
      Other Assignments.

Reading Checks (16 at 25 points each/ 400 points)

At the end of *each lesson*, there is a reading check assignment. In most lessons, these checks are
5-10 multiple choice questions. These reading checks assess your understanding and recall of the
chapter in the textbook you were assigned. You may not use any materials such as books or notes
to help you complete these checks but you may take each one multiple times.

**Module Assignments (Appendices A and B provide complete descriptions; 4 at 150 points
each/600 points)**

Module assignments are a combination of independent and group work. Modules 1 and 4 require
students to write two to four page papers individually. The paper in Module 1 is a personal
philosophy statement. It also requires you to choose two activities from a list of school- and
community-based options. You will include a summary of the activities in your paper. At the end
of the course, you will review this statement and make any revisions you find necessary. In
Module 4, students must choose a topic related to special education, research the topic, and write
about it.

Assignments for Modules 2 and 3 are slightly different. Once you complete the Module lessons,
you will choose a disability area from the Module and post your choice to the Discussion Board.
If there are already five students who have posted for a disability area, please choose another
one.
Once you have completed your worksheets for the Module, you will post them to your disability
area Wiki.
After posting your worksheets, choose a DIFFERENT disability area Wiki, read over the
postings, and comment on the group information provided. Each comment should be posted to

the group comment Wiki and include how the information related to at least one aspect of the Module.

Schedule

Course Pacing Guide/Schedule

Date	Topic	Material
5/20	Course is opened in Blackboard	Students begin work on Course Introduction. Students may begin work on course material.
6/17	GRADING POINT 1—All assignments and reading checks posted by this date will be graded within 48 hours. If all of your assignments are completed and posted, a final grade will be generated.	
7/8	GRADING POINT 2—All assignments and reading checks posted by this date will be graded within 48 hours. If all of your assignments are completed and posted, a final grade will be generated.	
7/25	GRADING POINT 3—All assignments and reading checks posted by this date will be graded within 48 hours. If all of your assignments are completed and posted, a final grade will be generated.	
8/15	GRADING POINT 3—All assignments and reading checks posted by this date will be graded within 48 hours. If all of your assignments are completed and posted, a final grade will be generated.	
8/26	GRADING POINT 4—All assignments and reading checks posted by this date will be graded within 48 hours.	FINAL DUE DATE All Course Material should be completed Revisions to Philosophy statement posted to Journal (as separate entry) Course evaluation completed

Appendix

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Appendix A
Assignment Descriptions

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Module 1 Assignment

Given your previous experiences and the material you have read, write at least a two-page description of your personal philosophy of special education, citing any sources you use. In addition, choose two activities from the list below to complete. Write a summary of each activity and how it relates to any aspect of your philosophy.

For the philosophy statement, address the following questions (and any others you feel necessary) in a narrative format:

Part one: My Ideas about special education

- What is a disability?
- How should a disability be handled in/by society?
- How should students with disabilities be treated in schools, colleges, and the workplace?
- What should the education of students with disabilities look like?
- What ethical considerations must I face as a special educator?

Include a rationale for your ideas. This should be an honest description of your ideas at this moment in time.

Part two: My Ideas about my role as an educator

- Who are the students I serve? Will I serve students with disabilities?
- How can I meet the unique needs of students (and those with disabilities) within the context of my school and classroom?
- What are some barriers to meeting these unique needs?
- What is one goal I have for myself related to this course?

*Part three: Summary of activities and their relation to your philosophy (choose **2** of the following; observations should be at least 1 hour each)*

- Observe relevant school settings
- Observe relevant community settings
- Shadow/interview an individual in a position of interest to you (e.g., Interpreter, teacher, audiologist, counselor, physical therapist, etc.)
- Interview a person with a disability
- Interview a sibling of a person with a disability
- Interview a parent of a person with a disability

- Interview the entire family of an exceptional learner
- Conduct an accessibility assessment
- Attend a relevant information presentation

Post your paper to your Blackboard journal. This is a private posting. Only you and I will be able to see what you have posted. Please be as honest and reflective as possible. You will review this Journal again at the end of the course.

Module 2 and 3 Assignments

1. You will a disability area and post that choice to the Discussion Board.
2. For the disability area you chose, provide:
   a. Information about (and critique of) one professional or parent organization related to your chosen disability area.
   b. Information about (and critique of) one website related to your chosen disability area.
   c. A summary of (and reflection on) one peer-reviewed journal article that describes a study including students with your chosen disability area.
   d. A summary of (and reflection on) one article, news item, advertisement, or video in the popular press that shows or refers to a person with your chosen disability.
3. All of the above will be completed using the worksheets found in Appendix B. There is one worksheet (with directions) for each of the components, a-d.
4. When you have finished all of the components of this assignment for your disability area, put all of your worksheets together into one document. Post the document to your disability group Wiki, using the title "Final Module 2 Assignment *your name*."
5. Once you have posted your worksheets, you must choose another disability area. Read your classmates' postings. Alternatively, you may choose to read one posting from each disability area.
6. Citing at least two specific worksheets, prepare a reflection on the postings you read and post it to the Comment wiki with the title, "Comments on *disability area your name*."

Module 4 Assignment

Choose one of the topics listed below or request approval of another topic from your instructor.

When you have chosen your topic:

1. Find at least three different sources of information about the topic, including websites, professional organizations, popular press articles, and **AT LEAST ONE** journal article.
2. Using those sources and any others you feel are relevant, write a two to three page paper that includes:
   - a definition or description of the topic,
   - what the issues are about the topic, and
   - your position on those specific issues.

Write the summary in APA style, paying attention to citing your sources and person-first language. Post to the Module 4 assignment Wiki.

Response to Intervention

Inclusion (be sure to define exactly what you are talking about here)

Co-teaching

No Child Left Behind (or Elementary and Secondary Education Act)

Standards-based IEPs

Standards-based assessments (be specific in your definition and discussion)

Working with students and/or parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Appendix B

Frameworks for Modules 2 and 3 Assignments

Directions for Finding an Organization

Module Assignment Component A

The first part of your module assignment requires you to find an organization related to your chosen disability area. You can usually find organizations by doing a web search with the terms "organization" and the name of your disability area. Finding an organization is different from finding a website related to a disability area. For example, TeachingLD.org is a website related to learning disabilities. It is sponsored by the Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD) of the Council for Exceptional Children. You can find information about DLD in the "About Us" section of the website. For the purpose of this component of the assignment, you would be gathering information about DLD, not about the website, TeachingLD.org.

In addition to doing a wide open search of the web, you could begin by going to the website of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC; cec.sped.org). This is a professional organization that has independent subdivisions related to almost every disability category. CEC works within the disability field in all areas, including advocacy, legislation, professional development, teacher education, and parent information. You can find a tremendous amount of information about the field of special education at CEC's website.

Once you have found an organization that interests you, complete the questions in the table on the next page. The completed table should be part of the document you post to your group Wiki. The table is what will be graded for this assignment. You DO NOT have to write this in a narrative; just use the table.

Finding an Organization	
Item	**Information**
Student Name	
Disability area of focus	
Name of organization related to disability	
Website of organization (if available)	
Mission statement of the organization	
How is the organization funded?	
Who is the target audience of the organization?	
What does the organization do?	
Would you recommend this organization to the target audience? Why or why not?	
Other comments about the organization	

Directions for Finding a Website

Module Assignment Component B

The second part of your module assignment requires you to find a website related to your chosen disability area. You can usually find websites by doing a web search with the name of your chosen disability area. Once you find the website, you will need to burrow down into its information to find some of the items such as what organization sponsors the site or how it is funded. If you are having a difficult time finding a website, you might try going back to the organization you found in the first component of the assignment and looking for links that may be provided.

Once you have found a website that interests you and is related to your chose disability area, complete the questions in the table on the next page. The completed table should be part of the document you post to your group wiki. The table is what will be graded for this assignment. You DO NOT have to write this in a narrative; just use the table.

Finding a website	
Item	Information
Student Name	
Disability area of focus	
Title of website	
URL	
Purpose of website (as stated on website)	
What group sponsors/created the website? What information does the website give about that group?	
Who is the target audience of the website?	
What information does the website provide for users?	
Does the website provide any information about where it gets its information or whether it is research-based? If so, what?	
Would you recommend this website to a colleague, parent, or student? Why or why not?	
Other comments or questions you have about the website	

Directions for Finding a Study

Module Assignment Component C

The third part of your module assignment requires you to find a study that includes students with your chosen disability. The best way to find a peer-reviewed study is to use the George Mason library databases.

1. Go to the library homepage at http://library.gmu.edu/
2. Click on the "Databases" tab.
3. In addition to general search engines such as Academic Search Premier, there are two education-specific databases that you should be familiar with: ERIC and PsycInfo. You can choose either of these from the alphabetical list of databases.
4. Once you choose a database, you will have to sign in to gain access. Use your Mason username and password.
5. Once you have signed in, you will get a search box that has many options. You can use terms such as your chosen disability area, a content area in which you are interested, or whatever term you think will help you find a study. Be sure to check the box that says "peer reviewed" or "peer-reviewed journals only." That means the articles that you find will have already gone through a review process and they are not posted just because someone felt like they wanted to post them!
6. It is best to try to find a study that has been published in the last five years. If your search is not successful, Mason has some great resources for help. Just look at the "Get Help" section of the library homepage. If all else fails, contact your instructor.
7. To make sure the article you find is a study, read through the abstract first. You should try to determine if the authors described "participants" or "results." If there is no mention of participants and results, you might have an opinion article or a review of some type. If you cannot get enough information from the abstract, look through the article quickly. If you find sections titled, Methods and Results, you probably have a study.

Once you have found a study article that interests you and is related to your chosen disability area, you must determine the type of research it is in order to determine the correct questions to answer in the attached worksheet.

There are three basic types of research studies you will probably find. They are:

1. Descriptive research—This type of research attempts to report things as they are and does not try to intervene. The study may include interviews, observations, or questionnaires.
2. Group intervention research—This type of research includes a control group and an experimental group. Each group has probably more than 25 or 30 participants. The researchers actually do (or have someone do) something to the experimental group, such as teach them in a different way or teach them something different from the control group. In this case, the "something different" is the independent variable and the "what the researchers measured" is the dependent variable.

3. <u>Single subject research</u>—In many cases, special education research is conducted on smaller groups of students, most times less than 10. In these cases, student results are usually graphed and are evaluated by how they changed. You will still have a dependent (measured) variable and an independent (what the researchers or others did for these students) variable.

Once you have determined the type of study you have, proceed to the worksheet to answer the questions posed. If your study is a review of previous research on a topic, please contact your instructor for how to proceed. The completed table should be part of the document you post to your group wiki. The table is what will be graded for this assignment. You DO NOT have to write this in a narrative; just use the table.

Student Name	
Citation (in APA format)	
Research Questions (What questions were the researchers trying to answer; usually stated at the end of the introduction)	
Type of Research (Descriptive, Group experimental, single subject)	
Participants (who participated in the study; this should include students with your assigned disability and perhaps peers—just describe the individuals involved)	
Independent variable— *(Skip this for descriptive studies)* (This is what the researchers did with or provided to the experimental group [or the subject in a single subject design]. Essentially, it's what made the experimental group different from the control group. If you do not have these two groups, do not complete this column.)	
Dependent variables— (This is essentially what the researchers measured. If you have an experimental study, what tests or measures did the researchers use to compare the experimental and control groups? If you have a descriptive study, what data did the researchers collect— observation, interview, questionnaire?)	

Method (A brief description of how the researchers did the study. For example, the experimental group received 50mins of reading comprehension instruction daily for 10 weeks. Scores on a reading test were compared before the instruction (pre) and after the instruction (post)).	
Results (What happened in the study? If it was experimental, did the experimental group outperform the control group? Don't worry about statistics— just results. If it was a descriptive study, what did they describe as findings?)	
Your Thoughts (What did you think the results indicated? How do you think it translates to or informs practice?)	

Directions for Finding a Popular Press Article

Module Assignment Component D

The final part of your module assignment requires you to find a popular press article related to your chosen disability area. "Popular press" means any media source that is not a professional journal. This could be The Washington Post, People magazine, Glamour, YouTube, etc. If the article is published online, that is fine as long as you can determine the source of the article. The focus of the article should be some aspect of your chosen disability area. This could mean, for example, including a person with your chosen disability, describing an issue related to your chosen disability area, or reporting about a caretaker of someone with your chosen disability.

Once you have found an article that interests you and is related to your chosen disability area, complete the questions in the table on the next page. The completed table will be part of the document you post to your group wiki. The table is what will be graded for this assignment. You DO NOT have to write this in a narrative; just use the table.

Student Name	
Citation (Source, date, author, title)	
Type of media	
Author's stated (or implicit) purpose of the article	
Summary of the article	
How does the author portray people with disabilities?	
What are the underlying assumptions about disability that the author makes? Describe.	
Does the author provide information about sources or data for the article?	
What is your overall impression of the article? Is it a good information source for people who may not know much about disabilities?	
Would you recommend this article to someone? If so, to whom? If not, why not?	

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       EMAIL                    BLACKBOARD                 TASKSTREAM
      ACCOUNT
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Use for all course   Contains all   Electronic portfolio
communication;   course material   for all Education
Required for   students
Blackboard access

1. You will receive an email from Mason with login information. 2. You can set preferences to forward to another account MUST BE CHECKED AT LEAST WEEKLY If difficulties, contact IT Support 703-993-8870 support@gmu.edu itservices.gmu.edu Getting started guide at http://masonlive.gmu.edu/gettingstarted.html	1. Uses your email login as login information 2. mymason.gmu.edu Courses tab at top. Click on EDSE 501 6F2 If difficulties with program, contact Blackboard support mymason.gmu.edu, click on Help (far right corner)	1. You will receive an email with login information. 2. See first time login information and support at http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/taskstream (bottom of page) 3. Post Child Abuse certificate by end of course