



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

Fall 2013

EDSE 590 DL1: Special Education Research

CRN: 73902, 3 - Credits

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Vicky Spencer	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 8/26/2013 - 12/18/2013
<b>Phone:</b> 703-993-5598	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Asynchronous; Synchronous classes are listed on schedule.
<b>E-Mail:</b> vspencer@gmu.edu	<b>Meeting Time(s):</b> Asynchronous
<b>Office Hours:</b> Wed. 4pm - 5pm (via Blackboard Collaborate) or by appointment	<b>Meeting Location:</b> 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**

Describes fundamental concepts and practices in educational research in special education. Covers specific applications of educational research methods to problems in special education. Emphasizes review and critique of special education research, and applied classroom research for teachers.

**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**

Learning activities include the following:

1. Recorded lecture and online discussion
2. Application activities
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Research and presentation activities

This course is asynchronous. Please plan to access the Blackboard site several times per week. Access Blackboard 9.1 at <https://mymason.gmu.edu>. Your login and password is the same as your George Mason e-mail login. Once you enter, select EDSE 590-DL1 Fall 2013 course.

The weekly learning modules will run on a Thursday through midnight Wednesday schedule. All new materials, readings, and assignments will be posted on Thursday and students will be expected to complete and **submit** due assignments by **midnight on Wednesday** before the deadline. The instruction will be provided via regular and/or narrated PowerPoint presentations. Presentations, case studies, videos and additional appropriate readings will be provided under **Learning Modules** tab. Assignments and weekly activities will be completed using asynchronous tools such as **Discussion Boards, Wikis**, and/or submitted under the **Assignments** link. Multiple **Collaboration Tools** will be offered for students to explore different research methods through the **Group Project** of designing a research study.

In order to facilitate interaction, the instructor will be available for office hours via **Blackboard Collaborate** (within Blackboard 9.1) or in person by appointment. Students will be asked to use **Discussion Board** to interact and reflect on the readings and course content.

### **Learner Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and understand different methods of educational research suitable for different research purposes in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of quantitative experimental and quasi-experimental research in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of survey research in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of single subject research in special education.
- Describe and discuss basic theories and methods of qualitative research in special education.
- Critically evaluate education research and describe implications for educational practice.

### **Required Textbooks**

McMillan J. (2011). *Educational research: Fundamentals for the consumer* (6th ed.). Boston: AB Longman.

### **Digital Library Option**

The Pearson textbook(s) for this course is available as part of the **George Mason University Division of Special Education and disAbility Research Digital Library**. The division and Pearson have partnered to bring you the Digital Library; a convenient, digital solution that can save you money on your course materials. The Digital Library offers you access to a complete digital library of **all Pearson textbooks** and MyEducationLabs used across the Division of Special Education and disAbility Research curriculum at a low 1-year or 3-year subscription price. Access codes are available in the school bookstore. Please visit <http://gmu.bncollege.com> and search the ISBN.

- 1 year subscription \$200 ISBN-13: 9781269541411
- 3 years subscription \$525 ISBN-13: 9781269541381
- Individual e-book(s) also available at the bookstore link above or at <http://www.pearsonhighered.com/>. Search by author, title, or ISBN.

### **Recommended Textbooks**

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

### **Required Resources**

None

### **Additional Readings**

The textbook will be used as a framework for the course. Additional readings relevant to the will be provided by the instructor.

### **Course Relationships to Program Goals and Professional Organizations**

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Masters in Special Education Program. 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 that will be addressed in this class include Standard 4: Instructional Strategies and Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice.

### **GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES 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.**

This is an asychonorus course.

### **Late Work.**

All assignments must be submitted via Blackboard *on or before* the due date. **In fairness to students who make the effort to submit work on time, points will be deducted from your grade for late assignments. Assignments will not be accepted more than 3 days late unless prior arrangements with the instructor have been made.** Allow additional time for as well as plan for additional participation during activities that require constructive feedback.

## **TaskStream Submission**

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, (NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE) (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.

If you have never used TaskStream before, you MUST use the login and password information that has been created for you. This information is distributed to students through GMU email, so it is very important that you set up your GMU email. For more TaskStream information, go to <http://cehd.gmu.edu/api/taskstream>

### Grading Scale

Requirements	Points	Percent
Participation in class activities	90	60%
Research Application: Mini Project	20	15%
Final Research Project: Research Review Paper	40	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

Grade	Range
A	94 – 100%
A-	90 – 93%
B+	86 – 89%
B	80 – 85%
C	70 – 79%
F	69% - below

### Assignments

#### **NCATE/TaskStream Assignments.**

There are no Taskstream Assignments for this course.

#### **Common Assignments.**

Final Research Project: Research Review Paper

#### **Other Assignments.**

Participation in class activities

Research Application: Mini Project

1. Students will complete class readings to include a supplemental set of articles that reflect current special education research trends and will explore different methodologies in published special education research.

**Class activities and discussions**\* - 90 points (5-10 points per week): Students will participate in class activities and interactive quizzes in order to practice literature searches, reviews, and relevant research applications. In addition to weekly class activities, students will be prompted to work on their Research Review Wiki Page. This work is designed to help students prepare for their final Research Review Paper assignment on step at a time.

**2. Human Subjects CITI Training Module Completion – Pass/Fail**

GMU Mandatory Training for Persons Conducting Research Using Human Subjects is accessed at <http://www.citiprogram.org>. Seven learner modules in the Basic Course are required prior to conducting any research at Mason using human subjects. In addition, you are required to complete additional modules related to conducting research with school aged children and persons with disabilities. *This assignment will be evaluated as pass/fail.*

**3. Research Application: Mini-Project – 20 points**

The research application mini-project is designed to provide experience in designing, implementing, and evaluating a research application project in special education. All activities for this assignment will be completed in research teams. *Specific directions and a rubric for this assignment will be provided by the instructor.*

**4. Final Research Project: Research Review Paper – 40 points** You will complete a traditional research review paper of a selected intervention area of your choice. **Your topic must be approved by the instructor.** You will need to collect a minimum of 8-10 original intervention research studies on a particular topic to include in your review paper. An electronic copy (posted to blackboard) should be submitted no later than 4:30 pm on the due date.

- a. As part of class activities, students will provide constructive feedback to at least one classmate on their drafts of the literature review introduction, method, results, and discussion sections.

*Specific directions will be provided by the instructor and this assignment will be evaluated using the attached rubric.*

\*Detailed descriptions and step-by-step instructions for each class activity and course assignments will be provided by the instructor and posted in the corresponding Learning Modules.

## Schedule

### Tentative Class Topics and Due Dates

(Subject to change for any unforeseen interruptions)

Choose two of the four Synchronous meetings to attend. These will be question/answer sessions.

Date	Learning Module	Textbook Readings* Weekly Activities & Assignments Due at the end of the Module
Thursday, August 29	1. Introduction to research methods in special education	Chapter 1 (pp. 2 – 18) <b>CITI Training</b> <b>Introduction Form</b>
Thursday, September 5	2. Literature searches & reviews <i>Synchronous meeting 5:00 – 6:00pm</i> <i>Blackboard Collaborate</i>	Chapter 3 Literature Search Scavenger Hunt
Thursday, September 12	3. Empirical article anatomy Research problem & questions	Chapter 1 (pp. 19-30) Chapter 2 (pp. 32-38; 43-55) <b>Overview of Research in My Field</b> <b>Research Review Wiki: Purpose Statement &amp; Research Questions</b>
Thursday, September 19	4. Experimental research designs: Group Research	Chapter 8 <b>Research Review Wiki: Introduction</b> <b>Section Draft &amp; Peer Feedback</b> <b>Mini-Research Method Group</b> <b>Brainstorming Session</b>
Friday, September 20	<i>Synchronous meeting 5:00 – 6:00pm</i> <i>Blackboard Collaborate</i>	
Thursday, September 26	5. Experimental research designs: Single-subject Research	Chapter 8 <b>Research Review Wiki: Method</b> <b>Section Draft &amp; Peer Feedback</b>
Thursday October 3	6. Research components Part I: Participants & variables	Chapter 2 (pp. 38-42) Chapter 4 <b>Research Review Wiki:</b> <b>Description of Each Individual</b> <b>Study Draft</b>
Thursday October 10	7. Research components Part II: Educational measurements & data collection <i>Synchronous meeting 8:00 – 9:00pm</i> <i>Blackboard Collaborate</i>	Chapter 5 Chapter 6 <b>Research Review Wiki: Results and</b> <b>Discussion Section Draft &amp; Peer</b> <b>Feedback</b>

October 17	8. Discussion and conclusions. APA 6th edition style	Chapter 13 <b>Mini-Research Method Outline</b>
October 24	9. Mini-Research Proposal work time	<b>Mini-Research Method Due</b>
<b>Friday, October 25</b>	<i>Synchronous meeting 5:00 – 6:00pm Blackboard Collaborate</i>	
October 31	10. Qualitative research designs	Chapter 10 <b>Research Review Wiki: Final Research Review Draft &amp; Peer Feedback</b>
Nov. 7	11. Non-experimental quantitative research designs: Survey research	Chapter 7 <b>Reference List in APA Format</b>
Thursday Nov. 14	12. Work on Research Review Paper	<b>Final Research Review Paper Due</b>
Thursday Nov. 21	13. Mixed methods research designs	Chapter 11
Thursday Nov. 28	Thanksgiving	No Assigned Module
Thursday Dec. 5	14. Intelligent Research Consumer/Action research	Chapter 12 <b>Reflection Due</b>
Thursday Dec. 12	15. Final Assignment	

\* Additional readings will be provided by the instructor for some Learning Modules.



## Appendix

### Rubric for Participation in Class Activities

**Exemplary (5 points):** The student:

- Correctly completes and posts all activities on time;
- Actively participates and supports the members of the learning group and the members of the class. When appropriate provides constructive feedback to at least one of the classmates in a respectful manner.

**Adequate (1-3 points):** The student:

- Completes and posts the majority of the activities that are partially correct;
- Occasionally participates in discussions and provides feedback.

**Inadequate (0 points):** The student:

- Does not complete class activities;
- Does not actively participate in discussions and does not provide constructive feedback;
- The student may fail to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions.

### Final Research project: Research Review Paper Scoring Rubric

Effective literature reviews contain the following:

- **An introduction** that establishes an important educational problem that needs to be addressed, a logical presentation of information that leads to the purpose statement of the paper (in this case a systematic literature review). Important concepts are defined in this section as well as any background information needed to support search procedures in the methodology.
- **A method section** that has clearly replicable procedures and demonstrates competency in the search techniques learned in class (search of educational data bases with key terms, ancestry and/or descendent searches, hand searches of relevant journals), and identifies clear and reasonable decision making criteria for individual studies included in the review (inclusion/exclusion criteria).
- **A results section** that provides an overview of the characteristics of the data set, is logically organized for the reader, demonstrates that search procedures described in the method section were consistently followed, and succinctly and sufficiently describes relevant information from each of the studies reviewed. A visual representation of the findings (i.e., a table) with accurate information helps the reader to understand more thoroughly the research reviewed.
- **A discussion section** that provides a thoughtful and analytical discussion of findings and is based firmly on studies reviewed (not solely the authors opinion), and references

- implications for practice where appropriate.
- **Overall** student understanding of the purpose of each of these sections of a research paper, a professional writing style (has been thoroughly edited), and citations that are in APA format (with careful attention to 'glaring' errors).

Exemplary paper (36-40 points): Meets all of the criteria above.

Adequate paper (32-35 points): Good overall paper, lacking in one or two of the criteria for an exemplary paper.

Marginal paper (28-31 points): Overall, acceptable but with one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information, but may have substantial problems with evaluation, writing style, or review of relevant literature.

Inadequate paper (1-27 points): Paper with substantial problems in important areas such as writing, evaluation of research, overall thoughtfulness. Contains little or no information of value to special education practice.

Unacceptable/no paper (0 points): No paper turned in or paper was not approved for this assignment.

Exemplary Paper	Adequate Paper	Marginal Paper	Inadequate Paper	No Paper
40-36	35-32	31-28	< 28	0