

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
Spring 2014**

## **EDSE 501: Introduction to Special Education**

**Online course, January 21, 2013 to March 31, 2014**

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### **Course Description:**

This course provides a survey of current knowledge on individuals with disabilities within the context of human growth and development across the life span. Content includes historical factors, legislation, etiology, characteristics, needs, educational strategies, including existing and emerging technologies, assessment and support services of/for individuals with disabilities. The course will study the impact of disabilities on academic and social/emotional performance. Field experience is required. Prerequisites: none.

EDSE 501 is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education, and Special Education Program for teacher licensure in special education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The program aligns with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children, the major special education professional organization in the United States. As such, the curriculum for the course includes competencies for teaching students with disabilities from preschool through grade 12.

The CEC Standards are listed on the following web site:

[http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf\\_based\\_stds/common\\_core\\_4-21-01.html](http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf_based_stds/common_core_4-21-01.html)

CEC standards that will be addressed in this class include some of the following CEC Core Standards:

### **Standard 1: Foundations**

- Models, theories, and philosophies that form the basis for special education practice.
- Laws, policies, and ethical principles regarding behavior management planning and implementation.
- Relationship of special education to the organization and function of educational agencies.
- Rights and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers, and other professionals, and schools related to exceptional learning needs.
- Issues in definition and identification of individuals with exceptional learning needs including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Issues, assurances and due process rights related to assessment, eligibility, and placement with a continuum of services.
- Family systems and the role of families in the educational process.
- Historical points of view and contribution of culturally diverse groups.
- Importance of the dominant culture on shaping schools and the individuals who study and work in them.
- Potential impact of differences in values, languages, customs that can exist between home and school

## **Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners**

- Typical and atypical human growth and development.
- Educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities.
- Characteristics and effects of the cultural and environmental milieu of the individual with exceptional learning needs and the family.
- Family systems and the role of facilities in supporting development.
- Similarities and differences of individuals with and without exceptional learning needs.
- Similarities and differences among individual with exceptional learning needs.
- Effects of various medications on individuals with exceptional learning needs.

## **Standard 3 Individual Learning Differences**

- Effects an exceptional condition(s) can have on an individual's life.
- Impact of learners' academic and social abilities, attitudes, interests, and values on instruction and career development.
- Variations in beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures and their effects on relationships among individuals with exceptional learning needs, family, and schooling.
- Cultural perspectives influencing the relationships among families, schools, and communities as related to instruction.
- Differing ways of learning of individuals with exceptional learning needs including those from culturally diverse backgrounds and strategies for addressing these differences.

## **GSE 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/>].

## **Grading Scale for FAST TRAIN:**

**A+ = 100**

**A = 94-99**

**A- = 90-93**

**B+ = 85-89**

**B = 80-84**

**C = 70-79 – does not meet licensure requirements or Level I award recommendation**

**F = Does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education**

**Fieldwork:** All students must complete a minimum of 20 hours of fieldwork in this course. *At the conclusion of the class, students are required to turn in the Fieldwork Log, Fieldwork Evaluation Form or required Teaching Evaluation Form, and the final assignment (Performance Based Assessment) to the instructor.* The deadline for posting the PBA, Fieldwork Log, and Fieldwork Evaluation form to **TaskStream** and for completing the required fieldwork document in this course is **March 24**. Failure to submit this work to the instructor by this deadline will result in an “F” for the course.

**Incomplete (IN):** This grade may be given to students who are in good standing, but who may be unable to complete scheduled course work for a cause beyond reasonable control. The student must then complete all the requirements by the end of the ninth week of the next semester, not including summer term, and the instructor must turn in the final grade by the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> week. Unless an explicit written extension is filed with the Registrar’s Office by the faculty deadline, the grade of IN is changed by the registrar to an F. (Mason catalog); Faculty may grant an incomplete with a contract developed by the student with a reasonable time to complete the course at the discretion of the faculty member. There is no guarantee that such incompletes will be granted. The faculty member does not need to allow up to the following semester for the student to complete the course. A copy of the contract will be kept on file in the FAST TRAIN office.

**Online Attendance Policy:** As an enrolled graduate student, you must commit fully to being a member of this learning community over the next several weeks. **Therefore, lack of participation in online sessions will not be allowed.** Your continued presence in this course contributes to the learning of each of your colleagues and it is your obligation to support each other’s learning. In addition, you are responsible for notifying your instructor if your participation in the online course will be interrupted due to a documented emergency. Participation in the class is worth a total of 20 points. Any unexcused absences will result in a deduction of two points for each week of non-participation.

**GMU E-mail & Web Policy:** Mason uses electronic mail ([www.gmu.edu/email](http://www.gmu.edu/email)) to provide official information to students. Examples include notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly (Mason catalog).

**Course Withdrawal with Dean Approval:** For graduate and non-degree students, withdrawal after the last day for dropping a course requires approval by the student’s academic dean, and is permitted only for nonacademic reasons that prevent course completion (Mason catalog). Students must contact an academic advisor in FAST TRAIN to withdraw after the deadline. There is no guarantee that such withdraws will be permitted.

### **Required Text:**

Hallahan, D. P., Kauffman, J. M., & Pullen, P. C., (2012). *Exceptional Learners: An introduction to special education*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson

Additional course readings will be provided by instructor via Blackboard and/or email.

### Course Requirements:

EDSE 501 will meet on-line at: <http://courses.gmu.edu/> weekly. As a community of on-line learners, it is incumbent upon each course member to participate regularly and complete weekly assignments. Students will also be expected to complete fieldwork, to complete collaborative group projects and to undertake self-guided learning. The success of an online class is based largely on engagement and interaction among participants and collaborative learning.

### Evaluation:

• Discussion Board	20 pts.
• Child Abuse Online Training P/F	0 pts.
• Field Log P/F	0 pts.
• Internet Log/Report	15 pts.
• Mid-Term Exam	15 pts.
• A Study in Change - Yours	30 pts.
• Final Exam	20 pts.
	<u>20 pts.</u>
	<b>TOTAL 100 Pts</b>

### TaskStream:

Note: Every student registered for any EDSE course is required to submit signature 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/programs/sped/>. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed upon completion of the required submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester. *The TaskStream assignment for this course is Child Abuse training.*

### Description of Assignments:

- 1. Discussion Board (DB) Postings (20 pts.)** – Students are required to post a minimum of two responses weekly to trigger questions posed by the instructor on Discussion Board. The responses should be thorough and thoughtful. The first posting, *with appropriate reference(s)*, should represent the student's answer to the question. Additional postings should be in response to the comments of others in the class. Simply agreeing or disagreeing to someone else's thoughts is not considered adequate. **A rubric can be found on Blackboard.** In addition to weekly trigger questions, additional assignments will be given. Information on these assignments is described on the Discussion Board Schedule.

It is not acceptable to wait until the end of the week to post your comments as you will not be able to engage fully in the discussion, and others will not have an opportunity to engage with your thoughts and comments. **Each DB posting will begin on a TUESDAY at 12.01am EST and run through the following MONDAY AT MIDNIGHT, EST.** You must start posting for each module by **THURSDAY at 6PM (EST)** so that other course members will have ample time to engage in conversation.

**Note:** Postings should reflect the topic being discussed. Once the week ends (Monday, midnight EST) all posts should be directed toward the new topic for the coming week. **Go to Discussion Board Folder to see weekly prompts**

- 2. Field Work/Experience Log.**

The purpose of the field experience is to learn more about students with special needs. Each participant should complete at least twenty hours of observations and interviews resulting in a final Field Experience log and the case study assignment. The Field Experience may involve interviews with the teacher(s) or parent(s), observations of students, team-teaching or group

lessons (with regular or special education classroom teachers). Each course member will keep a daily/weekly-dated journal of the Field Experience. **Field Experience Log is due by March 24, should be submitted to TaskStream and is P/F.**

### 3. A Study in Change – Yours (30 pts)

This Assignment is an opportunity to show growth in your knowledge about learners with disabilities. It is also an opportunity to use your field work experience to help you reflect and expound on your shift in knowledge from the start of the semester.

You will **select one disability area** and demonstrate your knowledge of (a) the characteristics of the disability, (b) learning needs of individuals with the disability, (c) lifespan issues related to the disability (including impact of a disability on the individual and the family), and (d) how the disability is similar and different to other types of disabilities (e.g., mild, severe, sensory).

To show this growth you will combine:

1. what you have learned from coursework (e.g., lectures, videos, articles, and textbook readings),
2. independent learning activities you have completed (e.g., IRIS modules, field experiences), and
3. the exploratory activity you completed in this Module.

#### **Paper Guidelines**

Your paper should be 5 to 7 pages with APA style followed for citations otherwise the format for the paper is fairly flexible. You may choose to describe the characteristics and the impact of the selected disability and make connections to how you experienced or observed this in your field experience and exploratory activity. You may choose to describe meaningful experiences from your field experience and exploratory activity and explain how that connects with the content you have learned in the course. You can also come up with an alternative format of your choice.

**Your goal is to clearly show how your own perceptions of disability have changed and evolved this semester AND demonstrate that you clearly understand the important content you have learned.** Regardless of how you choose to approach this assignment, your paper should address the following areas:

#### **A. Disability Characteristics**

What are some characteristics of the disability, for example:

- What is its prevalence? Is it a high- or low- incidence disability?
- How is it diagnosed?
- Are physical/medical issues associated with this disability?
- Are there social or behavioral implications associated with this disability?

#### **B. Learning Needs**

How does the disability affect learning? For example:

- What areas of learning might be impacted by this disability?
- What teaching strategies might benefit learners with this disability?
- What IEP considerations might be needed?
- What accommodations might students with this disability need?
- Where might a student with this disability receive services? (Think LRE.)
- What skills will teachers need to work with students who have this disability?

#### **C. Lifespan Issues (including Impact on Individual and Family)**

How does having this disability impact an individual? For example:

- What are the early childhood issues that need to be considered?
- What are community issues that need to be considered?

- \_What are post-secondary (after high school – job, college, independent living factors that need to be considered?

- \_What impact does having this disability have on social relationships? What is the impact of the disability on family? For example:

- \_What daily living skills might be impacted by this disability?

- \_How does this disability impact family dynamics?

- \_What information do families need to advocate for their children who have disabilities?

#### **D. Similarities and Differences to Other Disabilities**

How is this disability similar and different to other disabilities (or other disability areas)? For example:

- \_Is there a difference in the prevalence of the chosen disabilities?

- \_What are differences in possible school placements for students with the selected disabilities?

- \_What types of instructional strategies or accommodations/modifications may be different for students with the chosen disabilities?

**Note:** For this category, you should contrast your selected disability with **TWO** other disabilities or disability areas. For example, if my paper were on students with ADHD (mild disability), I might contrast it to severe disabilities (or a specific disability such as Cerebral Palsy) AND sensory disabilities (or a specific disability such as blindness). **A Study in Change Report is due on Bb on or before March 24.**

#### **4. The Internet Log/Report (15 pts.)**

This assignment is designed to increase each course members' familiarity with information that is available through the use of technology. Students should begin by selecting a disability. Next, a net search on the web should be conducted to identify useful and practical web sites for teachers that focus on instructional and/or behavioral strategies that have proven effective with the disability group identified. Instructional strategies should focus on reading, writing or mathematics. From the net search, students should select five exceptional web sites for the development of a five page written report (plus a reference page). The one page description of each web site should include the type of information available at the site, a description of the instructional/behavioral strategy and a summary of how the strategy could be implemented in an international school. A Rubric can be found on Blackboard. **Internet Log/Report is due on or before Feb. 17.**

#### **5. Mid-Term Exam (15 pts.) due March 3. Go to Bb, Assessment mid-/final Folder for exam**

#### **6. Child Abuse Online Training (P/F).**

This signature assignment for the course must be posted on the student's account in TaskStream [www.taskstream.com/](http://www.taskstream.com/)

The child abuse training can be found at:

[http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/mandated\\_reporters/cws5691/index.html](http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/mandated_reporters/cws5691/index.html)

Upon completion of the Child Abuse training, the certification of completion must be posted on TaskStream. **Child Abuse assignment is due on Feb. 3 on TaskStream**

#### **7. Final Exam (20 pts.) due by March 31. Go to Bb, Assessment mid-/final Folder for exam**

#### **Course Outline, Topics and Text Readings:**

Students will be asked to consider each of these weekly topics in direct relationship to the themes, research-based perspectives, methodology considerations, and other issues as they exist in international school environments. Students will be asked to become reflective learners and educators in their understanding of research-based suggested practices and the form and function of

services to individuals identified as having a disability or special educational need in their own settings. Listed below are the anticipated readings for each week. A powerpoint will be posted in the folder for each week as well.

**WEEK 1** Jan 21 – Jan. 27

Topic: Introduction to Special Education – Legal Aspects, etc.

Text Readings: Chapters 1 & 2 AND go to Blackboard for other material

Assignments: Introduce yourself on Discussion Board (DB)

Review the syllabus and other information on Blackboard

Respond to first Trigger Question on DB

Become familiar with TaskStream

Read chapters 1 & 2

Become familiar with Blackboard and course requirements, etc After the first week you should fall into a pattern where you regularly check Bb for assignments, weekly session materials, DB prompts, etc. If you have any questions please contact instructor.

**WEEK 2** – Jan. 28 – Feb. 3

Topics: Multicultural & Bilingual Aspects of Special Education; Parents and Families

Text Readings: Chapters 3 & 4 AND go to Blackboard for other material

**Child Abuse Certificate is due to be posted on TaskStream on Feb. 3**

**WEEK 3** – Feb. 4 – Feb. 10 Topics: Intellectual Disabilities, Multiple and Severe Disabilities

Text Readings: Chapters 5 & 13 AND go to Blackboard for other material

**WEEK 4** – Feb. 11 – Feb. 17

Topic: Specific Learning Disabilities

Text Readings: Chapter 6 AND go to Blackboard for other material

**Internet Log is due Feb. 17**

**WEEK 5** – Feb. 18 - Feb. 24

Topics: ADHD; Emotional Disabilities

Text Readings: Chapters 7 & 8 AND go to Blackboard for other material

**WEEK 6** – Feb. 25 – Mar. 3

Topic: Communication Disorders

Text Readings: Chapter 10 AND see inside folder for other material

**Mid-Term Exam is due on March 3. Go TO ASSIGNMENT FOLDER AND OPEN MID-TERM EXAM-**

**Take exam by 3 March**

**WEEK 7** – Mar. 4 – Mar. 10

Topics: Sensory Loss – Low Vision & Blindness; Hearing Impairment & Deafness

Text Readings: Chapters 11 & 12 AND go to Blackboard for other material

**WEEK 8** – Mar. 11 – Mar. 17

Topic: Autism Spectrum Disorders

Text Readings: Chapter 9 AND go to Blackboard for other material

**WEEK 9** – Mar. 18 – Mar. 24

Topic: Physical Disabilities & Other Health Impairment

Text Readings: Chapter 14 AND go to Blackboard for other material

**Fieldwork experience report with documentation is due on March 24**

**WEEK 10** – Mar. 25 – Mar. 31

Topic: Learners with Special Gifts & Talents

Text Readings: Chapter 15 AND go to Blackboard for other material

**Final Exam is due on March 31**