



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

Spring 2014

EDSE 540 698: Characteristics of Students with Disabilities who Access the  
General Curriculum  
CRN: 22850, 3 - Credits

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Jugnu Agrawal	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 3/19/14 – 5/28/14
<b>Phone or Text:</b> 571-277-8085	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Wednesdays
<b>E-Mail:</b> jagrawal@gmu.edu	<b>Meeting Time(s):</b> 4:30pm – 8:30pm
<b>Office Hours:</b> By Appointment	<b>Meeting Location:</b> OCL

***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**

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

**Co-requisites:** 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) 993-3670 for assistance. All other students should refer to their faculty advisor.

**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 MAY BE a part of this course. Field Experiences may include observations of a school setting or case studies of individual students. Below are procedures that students need to follow based on their specific situation:

**REQUIRED PROCEDURE FOR ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THIS COURSE:** Complete the online field experiences form [<http://cehd.gmu.edu/endorse/ferf>] at the beginning of the semester (if not before) and complete the information requested **REGARDLESS** if you need assistance in 'finding' an individual for the project/case study or not. This information is required by the state.

**OPTION 1:** Request a placement online through the Clinical Practice Office

- Complete the online request form and indicate that you need a field placement. **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU DO THIS WITHIN THE FIRST TWO CLASSES SO THAT THE FIELD PLACEMENT OFFICE HAS SUFFICIENT TIME TO FIND A PLACEMENT FOR YOU .**

**OPTION 2:** Arrange for your own placement **AND** complete the online field placement form indicating that you do not need assistance finding a placement.

a. I work in a school setting and would like to complete my course assignment in my school or with one of my own students.

→Although you are already a school employee, you should request permission from your principal **BEFORE** you begin your assignment.

b. I don't work in a school setting, but I have a friend or classmate who does and I would like to complete my course assignment in their school or with one of their own students.

→You need to ask the **SCHOOL EMPLOYEE** to request permission from the principal **BEFORE** you begin your assignment. (The guest GMU student should **NOT** contact the principal directly). The school employee needs to send an email that indicates principal consent to the course instructor so it can be forwarded to the CEHD field experience office at [fieldexp@gmu.edu](mailto:fieldexp@gmu.edu).

c. I know a student outside of a school setting that I would like to work with for the assignment (Note: It is not recommended that you work with your own child.)

→You need to obtain consent from the parent of the child and forward written consent to the CEHD field experience office at [fieldexp@gmu.edu](mailto:fieldexp@gmu.edu).

d. I am a consortium student that does not attend GMU

→You need to complete the GMU online field placement form regardless of whether or not you need assistance finding a placement.

You need to make sure that you follow the procedures for field placement at your university to identify a placement or report that you have a placement. Contact your faculty liaison for more information.

### **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.

### **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**

Raymond, H. B. (2012). *Learners with mild disabilities: a characteristic approach* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

### **Digital Library Option**

The Pearson textbook(s) for this course **may be** available as part of the **George Mason University Division of Special Education and disAbility Research Digital Library**. Please note that not all textbooks are available through this option. Visit the links below before purchasing the digital library to ensure that your course(s) text(s) are available in this format. 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. To register your access code or purchase the Digital Library, visit:

<http://www.pearsoncustom.com/va/gmu/digitallibrary/education/index.html>

- 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.pearsoncustom.com/va/gmu/digitallibrary/education/index.html>

### **Recommended Textbooks**

n/a

### **Required Resources**

n/a

### **Additional Readings**

Assigned during class

### **Course Relationships 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 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.

### **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.

Students are expected to (a) attend all classes during the course (b) be actively involved in on-line activities (c) arrive on time and stay for the duration of class time. Lack of attendance and professional participation at all sessions (online and in class) with significantly diminish the impact of the course and interfere with creating a collaborative learning community. As such, absences from any portion of the course are strongly discouraged. Lack of participation by a student for any two weeks will result in a recommendation that the student drop the course(s). **Please notify me *in advance* by phone, text or email if you will not be able to attend class.**

### Late Work.

In-depth reading, study, and work on course requirements require outside class time. Students are expected to allot class study and preparation time weekly in addition to time spent on papers and assignments. **The result of late work will be the loss of 10 points per day until the assignment is received by the instructor.** Individual situations will be addressed with students outside of class.

### Withdraw.

If you are unable to meet the participation requirements of the course(s) it is strongly recommended that you drop the course. Withdrawing from the course is not an automatic process. You must inform the instructor in writing if you wish to withdraw from the course. Failure to notify the instructor will result in an “F” on your official George Mason University transcript.

### **Written and Oral Language.**

**APA Style** is the standard format for any written work in the College of Education. If you are unfamiliar with APA, it would benefit you to purchase the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.) You are required to use APA guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines: <http://apastyle.apa.org>

**We will use person-first language** in our class discussions and written assignments (and ideally in our professional practice). We will also strive to replace the term “Mental Retardation” with

“Intellectual Disabilities” in our oral and written communication in accordance with terminology choices in the disability community.

### **Academic Integrity.**

Students in this course are expected to exhibit academic integrity at all times. Be aware that plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as your own. Whether the act is deliberate or unintentional is irrelevant. You must take great care to give credit to an author when you borrow either exact words or ideas. Generally, if you use 4 or more words in a row you should use quotation marks and a proper APA citation. Remember that plagiarism is a very serious offense and can result in dismissal from the University. **Evidence of plagiarism or any other form of cheating in the class will result in a zero on that assignment and a report of the incident to the Dean’s Office.**

### **TaskStream Submission**

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, *Observation Case Study* 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.

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**

95 – 100% = A

90 – 94% = A-

80 – 89% = B

70 – 79% = C

< 70% = F

### **Assignments**

#### **Performance-based Assessment (TaskStream submission required).**

**\*Case Study Paper (100 points).** A comprehensive case study on a student with emotional disability, learning disability, intellectual disability, or high functioning autism will be completed.

**CASE STUDY IS DUE, Class 8.** Be prepared to **present your case study in class orally on one of the following dates: Class 8, Class 9, and Class 10.** Be creative in your presentation style! (see provided examples)

The case study should include the following components:

- Student's characteristics, disability, & strengths/challenges (**Class 4**)
- Description of school and student's community (**Class 4**)
- Educational history (schools attended, reason for referral, pre-referral interventions, results of multidisciplinary evaluation, special education classification, description and location of educational service provision, related services) (**Class 4**)
- Educational goals and objectives, classroom accommodations, & services (**Class 4**)
- Observational information (at least two class periods of observations specifically related to student goals, objectives, and accommodations) (**Class 5**)
- Parent interviews (related to education goals, objectives, accommodations, and any other relevant issues.) (**Class 5**)
- Additional recommendations, educational accommodations, and/or modifications (**Class 5**)
- Summary and synthesis (comparison of student's characteristics with those described in the textbook or other research, **i.e., which characteristics were identified in your student? So What? What have you learned from this case study about teaching students with disabilities?**) (**Class 5**)
- Appendices – to include student work samples, parent interview questions/answers. (**Class 5**)

**Performance-based Common Assignments (No TaskStream submission required).**

N/A

**Other Assignments.**

**Class Attendance and Participation (100 points).** Completion of weekly class activities, participation in class discussions, and project presentation update discussions throughout the semester. **Points missed due to absences cannot be made up. Excessive absences can result in additional penalties and potential withdrawal from class.**

**Philosophy of Teaching Statement (Part I & II- 50 points each=100 points)**

**Due Date: Part I- CLASS 3 and Part II – CLASS 9**

A philosophy of teaching statement is a personal narrative that will include: (1) your conception of teaching and learning; (2) a description of how you teach; and (3) a justification of why you teach the way that you do.

Your philosophy of teaching statement should: (1) demonstrate that you have been reflective and purposeful about your teaching; and (2) communicate your goals for student learning and corresponding actions in your classroom.

Why do teachers need to articulate their philosophy of teaching? What purpose does a philosophy of teaching statement serve? It has been recognized by many teachers that the process of identifying a personal philosophy of teaching and continuously examining and verifying this



philosophy through teaching can lead to change of teaching behaviors and ultimately foster professional and personal growth ( Brookfield, 1990).

You will develop a *personal purpose* -which describes a clear picture of why you are doing what you are doing. You will also develop a *pedagogical purpose*- this perspective allows you to ask the most important question in teaching- “what effect am I having on students and student learning?”

**There is no required content or set format.** There is no right or wrong way to write a philosophy statement. Only you decide how to write your teaching philosophy. ***It is generally 1–2 pages in length.***

**Use present tense, in most cases.** Writing in first–person is most common and is the easiest for your audience to read.

**Include teaching strategies and methods to help people “see” you in the classroom.** Help the reader of your teaching statement visualize what you do in the classroom to establish a student-centered learning environment, including building positive student relationships and engaging all students. Help the reader of your statement visualize your teaching and assessment practices when focused on the learning for all students.

By writing about *your* experiences and *your* beliefs, you “own” those statements and establish a personal mindset for student learning.

### **Journal Abstract Summaries Paper (100 points)**

#### **Due Date CLASS 10**

Each student will summarize three (3) journal articles that are relevant to the needs of the student chosen for the case study. 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 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... **PLEASE DO NOT USE A STUDY WHICH IS NOT INTERVENTION RESEARCH.**

The purpose of this assignment is **twofold: first** to identify research-based findings that are relevant to the needs of your case study student and **second**, to distill the major points of the article to a one-page summary. The abstract should be typed and include an introduction to the students needs, followed by 3 summaries with an APA style citation at the top of the page.

Each entry should consist of two parts labeled 1.-Summary and 2.-Critique. Finally, a conclusion that ties together the 3 summaries’ findings should be presented as an action plan for assisting the student to meet an identified need. A “so what” section is asked to state what you have learned about the student to enhance your teaching practice. **A MODEL PAPER WILL BE PROVIDED.** All articles should be from current literature and should not be more than seven years old. **You must use your own words to summarize but be sure to cite liberally!**

**TOTAL POINTS: 400 points**

**Schedule**

Class	Topics	Assignments	Due This Class Session
Class 1 3/19	Registration, introductions and backgrounds Syllabus review Big picture ideas for the course	N/A	N/A
Class 2 3/26	Context of Special Education Introduction-review of exceptionalities & legislation	Read Chapters 1 & 2; Start thinking about a student for case study assignment	Read Chapters 1 & 2
Class 3 4/2	Students with Learning Disabilities	Ch. 5	Read Chapter 5 Textbook <b>Due: Philosophy in Teaching Statement Part I</b> Please select the students that you will use for the case study by this date.
Class 4 4/9	Students with Emotional Disabilities  Classroom Management  <b>ONLINE CLASS</b>	Ch. 6 & Ch. 12	Read Chapter 6 & Chapter 12 Textbook <b>First four sections of DRAFT case study paper DUE:</b> *Student characteristics *Description of school and neighborhood *Student's educational history *Student's current areas of need and services
Class 5 4/23	Students with Mild, Developmental Disabilities, and Attention Issues	Ch. 4 & Ch. 7	Read Chapter 4 & Chapter 7 Textbook <b>Last sections of DRAFT case study paper DUE</b> *Observations * Parent Interview Summary *Student Interview Summary *Instructional Recommendations/Needs * Summary and Synthesis of Case Study (So what? How is this important to

			me?) * <b>References</b> * <b>Appendices</b>
Class 6 4/30	Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders  Writing Effective IEPs and Educational Reports	Ch. 3 & 8	Read Chapter 3 & 8
Class 7 5/7	Focus on Learning; Planning and Teaching; Ongoing Assessment Building Family Partnerships Differentiations, Universal Design and Technology Integration (Universal design for learning; technology supports for executive functioning; co-teaching test practices and approaches)	Chapter 9 & 11	Read Chapter 9 & 11  <b>WORK ON CASE STUDY PAPER</b>
Class 8 5/14	Access to the Curriculum, Accommodations, Modifications Specialized Instruction and Supports (special education) <b>BEGIN Case Study Presentation</b>	Chapter 3	Read Chapter 3 <b>CASE STUDY PAPER DUE</b> <b>Start case Study Presentations</b> <b>PLEASE POST YOUR CASE STUDY IN TASKSTREAM NO LATER THAN TODAY!</b>
Class 9 5/21	Language Development Case Study Presentations	Chapter 10	Read Chapter 10 WORK ON JOURNAL SUMMARIES PAPER <b>Case Study Presentations DUE</b> <b>Philosophy of Teaching Statement Part II</b>
Class 10 5/28	Collaboration and Inclusive Practices Co-teaching Case Study Presentations <b>Synthesis: Putting the Pieces Together</b> (Connectedness-Relationships, Responsive Instruction, Collaborative Team Cycle, Differentiation, and Best		<b>Finish Case Study Presentations</b> <b>JOURNAL SUMMARIES PAPER DUE</b> <b>Course Evaluations</b>

	Practices)		
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## Appendix

### Case Study Assignment Rubric

Case Study	Points Possible (100)	Points Received
Writing Style/Mechanics/APA formatting	10 points	
Student Demographic Information	10 points	
Description of School and Neighborhood	10 points	
Educational History	10 points	
IEP Goals and Objectives	5 points	
Parent/Student Interviews	10 points	
Instructional Recommendations	15 points	
Synthesis & Summary- your "SO WHAT"	20 points	
Observational Information/Appendices (student work, etc.....)	10 points	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	_____ /100 POINTS	
Comments		

### Journal Abstracts Scoring Rubric

Journal Abstracts	Points Possible (100)	Points Received
Writing Style/Quality  Mechanics/APA	10 points	
Introduction to Student's Needs (based on your case study)	10 points	
<b>Appropriate choices of INTERVENTION RESEARCH STUDIES</b> (cause/effect studies-3 peer reviewed research studies)	20 points	
Quality of Summaries	15 points	
Quality of Critiques	15 points	
Conclusion/Appropriateness of Recommendations and "SO WHAT"	30 points	
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	_____ /100 POINTS	
<b>COMMENTS:</b>   		