



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

Fall 2015

EDSE 590 690: Special Education Research

CRN: 81636, 3 - Credits

Instructor: Dr. Nancy Cerar	Meeting Dates: 09/17/15 - 11/19/15
Phone: 703-785-4089	Meeting Day(s): Thursday
E-Mail: nirby@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): 4:30 pm-8:30 pm
Office Hours: By appointment	Meeting Location: Off-campus/Other OCL 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

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. Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week: 3 Hours of Lab or Studio per week: 0

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

Advising Tip

Are you ready to apply for graduation? Students completing their program can apply for graduation on Patriotweb. If you are graduating from a Masters and certificate, be sure to apply

to graduate from each program. Visit <http://registrar.gmu.edu/students/graduation/> for more information.

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

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.H. (2012). *Educational research: Fundamentals for the consumer (6th ed.)*. Boston: Pearson Education. ISBN-10: 0132596474; ISBN-13: 9780132566473

Digital Library

Effective summer 2015, the Division of Special Education and disAbility Research will discontinue the use of the Pearson Digital Library. No further registrations will be accepted. Students who hold current subscriptions will continue to have access to the library for the remainder of their subscription time. However, no further updates will be made to the digital library. During this time, should a textbook be revised or a new book is adopted for a class where the text is included in the digital library, Pearson will have options available to you and will provide you with an individual e-text or, if there is no e-text, a printed copy. Students, who have purchased a 3-year subscription directly through Pearson Education, will also have an option to obtain a prorated refund. However, 3-year subscription access cards purchased via the GMU bookstore will need to speak with a George Mason Bookstore Representative. Please be

aware that the issuance of a refund, in this case, is at the discretion of the George Mason bookstore. Concerns or questions may be directed to Molly Haines at Molly.Haines@pearson.com.

Recommended Textbooks

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the APA (6th ed.)*. Washington, DC: Author. ISBN-10: 1-4338-0562-6; ISBN -13: 978-1-4338-0562-2

Additional Readings

Other readings, including special education research studies, will be assigned by the instructor and posted on Blackboard.

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 5: Instructional planning and strategies; Standard 6: Professional learning 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/the-mason-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 expect to (a) attend all classes during the course, (b) arrive on time, (c) stay for the duration of the class time, and (d) complete all assignments. Attendance, timeliness, and professionally relevant, active participation are expected. Attendance and professional participation at all sessions is very important because all of the activities in class are planned in such a way that they cannot necessarily be recreated outside of the class session. Please notify me in advance, if you will not be able to attend class.

Late Work.

Points will be deducted for assignments not submitted on time (the beginning of the class meeting time). Generally, points equal to half of a letter grade are deducted for each class session past due.

Blackboard 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*) to Blackboard (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 Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to Blackboard will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN

grade is changed upon completion of the required Blackboard submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Grading Scale

A = 95 - 100 points

A- = 90 - 94 points

B = 80 - 89 points

C = 70 - 79 points

F = < 70 points

Assignments

Performance-based Assessment (Blackboard submission required).

None for EDSE 590.

Performance-based Common Assignments (No Blackboard submission required).

CITI Module Completion (submitted to Blackboard): The CITI Module involves the completion of GMU Mandatory Training for Persons Conducting Research Using Human Subjects (“Group 1 Social & Behavioral Research, Basic Course”) that 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, if any of the optional modules relates to your research, you can complete the appropriate module(s), 1 point each up to 3 extra credit points. These optional modules can only be opened after you finish the Basic Course. A screenshot of the certification of completion must be uploaded to Blackboard under the appropriate assignment by the beginning of class that the certificate is due. No partial credit will be given on this assignment.

Qualitative and Quantitative Article Review Projects (submitted to Blackboard): To demonstrate beginning competency in the skills needed for special education research and analysis, students will be asked to find, review, and critique one quantitative research article and one qualitative research article, both from peer-reviewed special education journals. It is imperative that students become familiar with using professional journals in the field of special education to inform their professional practice and be proficient in understanding articles that use both quantitative and qualitative research methods. For the reviews, each student is asked to independently read one research article that implements quantitative data collection methods and analysis (these are articles collecting numerical data and using statistical analysis) and one that utilizes qualitative research methods (discussion, narrative, etc.); and then complete a research question and answer sheet that asks the students to identify each article’s essential elements; and critique each article’s ideas and design.. The student will decide which type of article will be reviewed/critiqued first whether quantitative or qualitative. Whatever is chosen for the first

review/critique, the other article type will be chosen for the second review/critique project. The review/critique question and answer sheet will be provided to students on blackboard.

Research Application Project (submitted to Blackboard)

Option 1 (you may work a partner on the final project): Students will employ appropriate research methodology to investigate a problem of interest in a classroom, using group-experimental or quasi-experimental, single-subject, survey, or qualitative methodology. Students will prepare a research report on this project using the format recommended by the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). This includes Title page; Abstract; Introduction and purpose; Method (participants, materials, procedures); Findings or Results; Discussion; References. A grading rubric will be made available.

- Title page
- Abstract
- Introduction
 - o Quantitative: specific research questions need to be stated
 - o Qualitative: general problem statement needs to be presented and clarified
- Review of the literature
 - o Quantitative: review of the previous research studies that have been done in this area
 - o Qualitative: brief review of the previous research studies that have been completed
- Research problem statement or questions
 - o Quantitative: specific, narrow question should be presented along with a hypotheses
 - o Qualitative: general, foreshadowed questions should be introduced
- Method and design
 - o Quantitative: research design, participants, instruments, and procedures
 - o Qualitative: research design, participants, and setting/sites
- Results
 - o Quantitative: statistical explanations provided
 - o Qualitative: narrative descriptions explained
- Discussion
- Conclusions
- References

Option 2: The research review is geared at having students get extensive experience in reviewing literature found in both the virtual and physical library facilities. For this type of paper, a student(s) can select a specific topic or intervention to investigate via the available research base. Ten original research studies on the specific topic of selection will be needed for this option and

should come from peer-reviewed special education research journals. For larger groups, five studies should be added for each additional group member. Be sure to have your research topic approved by the instructor PRIOR to beginning your journal search. The project should be completed in sections by the students throughout the course of the semester. Time will be provided weekly for students to share and get feedback in their groups. The final research review paper should be submitted via the Assignment Tab in Blackboard and should include the following:

- Title page
- Abstract
- Introduction
 - o General Topic: presented as an area that has needed understanding, exploration, and research
 - Trends: if any trends have been found on the topic during the research, they should be briefly outlined here
 - Thesis: statement of perspective and reason for writing the review
 - Review criteria: elements used in evaluative relevant literature and specified
- Literature Reviewed: this section should be organized by the different studies reviewed
 - o First study- summary and discussion
 - o Second study- summary and discussion
 - o Third study- summary and discussion, etc. until all studies covered
- Comparative analysis highlights the similarities and differences between studies summarized in the literature reviewed
 - o Similarities (if any) between all studies presented, discussed, and evaluated
 - o Differences (if any) between all studies presented, discussed, and evaluated
- Conclusion/Summary brings closure to the review
 - o Key points throughout the review are summarized
 - o Bigger Picture: Relevance and role of research area to larger field of special education established
- References

Research Presentation (submitted to Blackboard): Students will present the results of their research project to the class in a formal research presentation format. The presentation should not exceed 8 minutes, most of which should be spent on your method and findings. The use of audiovisual, posters, handouts, or other presentation materials is encouraged.

Submitting assignments: Students will submit assignments online. All written assignments should be submitted through Blackboard. Assignments should not be submitted by email unless there is an emergency technical issue with Blackboard. Each assignment should be submitted by

the start of class on the due date (4:30 PM). Assignments that are not submitted on Blackboard at the appropriate time are late. Late assignments will be accepted with a point deduction. All course assignments should be completed with graduate level use of content, grammar, spelling, and written expression clarity. If writing is an area of difficulty, you will need to visit the GMU Writing Center to work on these skills (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>).

Assignments submitted through Blackboard should be labeled with a filename that corresponds to: <your first initial followed by your last name with an abbreviated form of the assignment's name>. For example: NCerarCITI for CITI Module Completion Certificate, NCerarART1 or NCerarART2 for Article Reviews, or NCerarPAPER for Research Paper, or NCerarPPTPres for Research PowerPoint Presentation. I will return graded assignments to you via Blackboard.

Other Assignments.

Additional assignments related to the application of the concepts of the course may be given in the class as appropriate.

	Possible Points	Points Earned
Attendance/Participation	10	
Article Review	17 (x2)	
CITI Module	16	
Research Project	30	
Research Presentation	10	
Total	100	

Schedule

Class	Date	Big Topics	Readings/Assignments Due
1	9/17	-Syllabus and Course Expectations -Quantitative/Qualitative Research Methodology Overview -Chapter 1: Intro. to Educational Research -List of Special Education Journals -Research Project Brainstorm	Read Chapter 1
2	9/24	-Conducting a literature search -Research Questions -Action Research	Read Chapter 2, 3, & 12
3	10/1	- Research -Foundations of Educational Measurement -Data Collection	Read Chapters 5 & 6 CITI Module Due *Come to class with a topic or idea for final project

4	10/8	- Nonexperimental Quantitative	Read Chapter 7
5	10/15	- Experimental (Quantitative) Research Designs	Read Chapters 4 (pp.94-104, 109-115) & 8 (pp. 210-237) Read: Gersten, et al. (2005). Quality Indicators for Group Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Research in Special Education
6	10/22	- Understanding Statistical Inferences	Read Chapter 9 Read: Odum, et al. (2005). Research in Special Education: Scientific Methods and Evidence-Based Practices; First Article Review Due
7	10/29	- Qualitative Research design, data collection, and analysis	Read Chapter 4 (pp. 105-108) &10 Read: Brantlinger et al. (2005). Qualitative Studies in Special Education.
8	11/5	- Mixed-Method Design - Single Subject Design	Read Chapter 4 (pp. 108-109), 11 & 8 (pp. 238-248) Read: Horner, et al. (2005). The use of single-subject research to identify evidence-based practice in Special Education Second Article Review Due
9	11/12	-Discussions/Conclusions -Action Research Revisited -Work on papers and presentations	Read Chapter 13
10	11/19	- Presentations	Research Paper Due Presentations Due

Appendix

Research Application Paper Rubric (Option 1)		
<i>Elements</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Title Page	<i>/1</i>	
Abstract	<i>/2</i>	
Introduction	<i>/2</i>	
Review of the literature	<i>/3</i>	
Research problem statement or questions	<i>/4</i>	
Method and design	<i>/5</i>	
Results	<i>/4</i>	
Discussion	<i>/3</i>	
Conclusion	<i>/2</i>	
References	<i>/2</i>	
Writing Style <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Appropriate usage of standard written English grammar, spelling, and clarity of expression- APA format	<i>/2</i>	
TOTAL	<i>/30</i>	

Research Review Paper Rubric (Option 2)

<i>Element</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Title Page	/1	
Abstract	/2	
Introduction	/2	
General topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trends - Thesis - Review criteria 	/5	
Literature reviewed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First study- summary and discussion - Second study- summary and discussion - Third study- summary and discussion - More studies- etc. 	/7	
Comparative analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Similarities (if any) - Differences (if any) 	/5	
Conclusion/Summary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key points summarized - Bigger Picture- Relevance and role of research area to larger field of special education established 	/3	
References	/3	
Writing Style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate usage of standard written English grammar, spelling and clarity of expression - APA format 	/2	
TOTAL	/30	

Paper Presentation Rubric

<i>Element</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Overall Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summary of key research paper points included - Comprehensive in nature 	/2	
PowerPoint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Varied types of information included (narrative, data, charts, etc.) - Visual clarity - Creativity and appeal 	/3	
Research Discussion/Question Answering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engages peers in active discussion and the research project - Knowledgeably answers questions related to the project's research question and surrounding details 	/2	
Oral Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most pertinent research paper points highlighted - Adequate voice projection - Eye contact made with audience 	/2	
Detail Elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate usage of standard written English grammar, spelling and clarity of expression - APA format 	/1	
TOTAL	/10	