EDSE 501: Introduction to Special Education
Online course, January 9, 2013 to March 17, 2013
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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

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, and customs that can exist between the 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 11**. 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 10th 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) 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. (2009). 12th Ed. *Exceptional Learners: An Introduction to Special Education.* Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
Additional course readings will be provided by instructor.

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 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 large on engagement and interaction among participants and collaborative learning.

Evaluation:
- Discussion Board   20 pts.
- Field Experience   30 pts.
- Internet Log/Report   15 pts.
- Mid-Term Exam   15 pts.
- Final Exam   15 pts.
- Child Abuse Online Training   5 pts.

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.

Description of Assignments:

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 opinions 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.

Note: Postings should reflect the topic being discussed. Once the week ends (Sunday) all messages should be directed toward the new topic for the coming week.

2. **A Field Experience (30 pts.)** is required. The purpose of the field experience is to learn more about special needs students in international schools. Each participant should complete approximately twenty hours of observations and interviews resulting in a final Field Experience report. The Field Experience may involve interviews with the teacher(s) or parent(s), observations of students, team-teaching or group lessons (with special needs teacher or regular classroom teacher). The participant will keep a daily/weekly dated journal of the Field Experience. When submitting the final report also include documentation such as logs, permission forms, reflections, evaluations and other documentation supporting your experiences. The field experience report should have three main sections: 1) School Description; 2) Fieldwork Journal 3) Evaluation of the Support Program. The report should be double-spaced. A Rubric can be found on Blackboard**.** The report with documentation is the final product of your field experience and should reflect information learned in the course including readings from the text and other sources. **Field Experience Report with documentation will be due on or before March 11.**

3. **The Internet Log/Report (15 pts.)** is designed to increase the participants' 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 six page written report (including 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. 19**

4. **Mid-Term Exam (15 pts.) is due on Feb. 12.**

5. **Final Exam (15 pts.) is due on March 15. Child Abuse Online Training (5 pts.) is due on Feb. 5.** These are the two signature assignments for the course and must be posted on the student's account in TaskStream: http://www.taskstream.com/

The child abuse training can be found at:
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. Once the final exam has been graded, the instructor will provide each student with a rubric that must be posted on TaskStream.

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 special needs services in their own settings. Listed below are the anticipated readings for each week. A powerpoint will be posted in the folder for each week

WEEK 1 Jan 9 – Jan. 15
Topic: Introduction to Special Education – Legal Aspects, Chapters 1 and 2
Assignments: Respond to Trigger Question
                Introduce yourself on Discussion Board
                Review the syllabus and other information on Blackboard
                Become familiar with TaskStream

WEEK 2 – Jan. 16 – Jan. 22
Topics: Multicultural & Bilingual Aspects of Special Education; Parents and Families
Text Readings: Chapters 3 & 4

WEEK 3 – Jan. 23 – Jan. 29 Topics: Intellectual Disabilities, Multiple and Severe Disabilities
Text Readings: Chapters 5 & 13

WEEK 4 – Jan. 30 – Feb. 5
Topic: Specific Learning Disabilities
Text Readings: Chapter 6
Child Abuse Certificate is due to be posted on TaskStream on Feb. 5

WEEK 5 – Feb.6 - Feb. 12
Topics: ADHD; Emotional Disabilities
Text Readings: Chapters 7 & 8
Mid-Term Exam is due on Feb. 12

WEEK 6 – Feb. 13 – Feb. 19
Topic: Communication Disorders
Text Readings: Chapter 9
Internet Log is due Feb. 19

WEEK 7 – Feb. 20 – Feb. 26
Topics: Sensory Loss – Low Vision & Blindness; Hearing Impairment & Deafness
Text Readings: Chapters 10 & 11

WEEK 8 – Feb. 27 - March 5
Topic: Autism Spectrum Disorders
Text Readings: Chapter 12

WEEK 9 – March 6 – March 12
Topic: Physical Disabilities & Other Health Impairment
Text Readings: Chapter 14
Fieldwork experience report with documentation is due on March 11

WEEK 10 – March 13 – March 19
Topic: Learners with Special Gifts & Talents
Text Readings: Chapter 15

Final Exam is due on March 15