“Preparing Professionals for Changing Educational Contexts”  

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas**  
**Department of Special Education**

Syllabus

I. **Prefix & Number:**  
ESP 421

II. **Title:**  
Characteristics and Inclusive Strategies for Students with Emotional Disturbance, Learning Disabilities, and Mental Retardation

III. **Credit:**  
3.0

IV. **Semester:**  
Fall, 2003

V. **Class Location & Time:**  
CEB 117; M – F 8:00 -- 5:00 p.m.

VI. **Instructor:**  
Sherri Strawser, Ph.D.

VII. **Office / Phone / Email:**  
CEB 122 / 895-1109 / strawser@unlv.edu

VIII. **Office Hours:**  
M – F: 12:00 – 1:00

IX. **Prerequisite Courses:**  
ESP 200

X. **Course Description:**  
This course introduces common characteristics and educational needs of students with emotional disturbance (ED), learning disabilities (LD), or mental retardation (MR). Appropriate educational strategies will be discussed.

**Council for Exceptional Children Program Standards Addressed in this Course**

Characteristics of Learners (Common Core 2)
- Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation (Common Core 3)
- Instructional Content and Practice (Common Core 4)
- Communication and Collaborative Partnerships (Common Core 7)
- Professionalism and Ethical Practices (Common Core 8)

Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (BD 1, 2, & 4)
- Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations in Special Education
- Characteristics of Learners
- Instructional Content and Practice

Learning Disabilities (LD 1, 2, & 4)
- Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations in Special Education
- Characteristics of Learners
- Instructional Content and Practice

Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities (MR 1, 2, 3, & 4)
- Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations in Special Education
- Characteristics of Learners
- Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation
- Instructional Content and Practice

XI. **Course Objectives:**

**Knowledge**  
Upon completion of this course, the student will have acquired knowledge related to:

1. Curricula for the development of motor, cognitive, academic, social, language, affective, career, and functional life skills for individuals with exceptional learning needs. (CEC-CC4-K3)

2. Instructional and remedial methods, techniques, and curriculum materials. (CEC-CC4-K4)

3. Techniques for modifying instructional methods and materials. (CEC-CC4-K5)

4. Development of individual student programs working in collaboration with team members. (CEC-CC7-K3)
5. Roles of individuals with exceptionalities, parents, teachers, and other school and community personnel in planning an individualized program. (CEC-CC7-K4)

6. Current educational terminology and definitions of students with emotional/behavioral disorders (E/BD), including the identification criteria and labeling controversies, utilizing professional accepted classification systems, and current incidence and prevalence figures. (CEC-BD1-K1)

7. Major social characteristics of individuals with E/BD. (CEC-BD2-K2)

8. The effects of dysfunctional behavior on learning, and the differences between behavioral and emotional disorders and other disabling conditions. (CEC-BD2-K3)

9. Research-supported instructional strategies and practices for teaching students with E/BD. (CEC-BD4-K3)

10. Current educational definitions of individuals with learning disabilities, including identification criteria, labeling issues, and current incidence and prevalence figures. (CEC-LD1-K6)

11. The psychological characteristics of individuals with learning disabilities, including intelligence, perception, memory, and thinking skills. (CEC-LD2-K3)

12. The relationship between individuals with learning disabilities and other associated conditions, including attention deficit disorder, attention deficit with hyperactivity, and dyslexia. (CEC-LD2-K4)

13. The social/emotional aspects of individuals with learning disabilities. (CEC-LD2-K5)

14. The impact of language development on the academic and social skills of individuals with learning disabilities. (CEC-LD4-K2)

15. The impact of social skills on the lives of individuals who have learning disabilities. (CEC-LD4-K5)

16. Current educational definitions of students/individuals with mental retardation/developmental disabilities, including identification criteria, labeling issues, and current incidence and prevalence figures. (CEC-MR1-K1)

17. Continuum of placement and services available for students with mental retardation/developmental disabilities. (CEC-MR1-K3)

18. Psychological characteristics of students with mental retardation/developmental disabilities, including cognition, perception, memory, and language development. (CEC-MR2-K4)

19. The social-emotional aspects of mental retardation/developmental disabilities, including adaptive behavior, social competence, social isolation, and learned helplessness. (CEC-MR2-K5)

20. Specialized policies regarding referral and placement procedures for students with mental retardation/developmental disabilities. (CEC-MR3-K5)

21. Approaches to create positive learning environments for individuals with special needs. (CEC-MR4-K3)

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**Skills**

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Access information on various cognitive, communication, physical, cultural, social, and emotional conditions of individuals with exceptional learning needs. (CEC-CC2-S1)

2. Evaluate supports needed for integration into various program placements. (CEC-CC3-S11)

3. Analyze and articulate current issues and trends in special education and the field of E/BD. (CEC-BD1-S1)

4. Articulate the factors that influence the over-representation of culturally/linguistically diverse students in programs for individuals with E/BD. (CEC-BD1-S2)

5. Articulate the factors that influence over-representation of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals in programs for individuals with learning disabilities. (CEC-LD1-S1)

6. Articulate the pros and cons of current issues and trends in special education and the field of learning disability. (CEC-LD1-S2)

7. Articulate the pros and cons of current issues and trends in special education and the field of mental retardation/developmental disabilities. (CEC-MR1-S1)
8. Articulate the factors that influence over-representation of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals in programs for individuals with mental retardation/developmental disabilities. (CEC-MR1-S2)

9. Describe and define general developmental, academic, social, career, and functional characteristics of individuals with mental retardation/developmental disabilities as they relate to levels of support needed. (CEC-MR2-S1)

Dispositions

Upon completion of this course, the student will display the following dispositions:

1. Demonstrate commitment to developing the highest educational and quality-of-life potential of individuals with exceptional learning needs. (CEC-CC8-S1)

2. Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication. (CEC-CC8-S5)

XII. Suggested Resources:

Required Texts / Readings


Current & Classical References


Electronic materials can be important for students with disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 34(2), 87.


Specific learning disabilities. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997. 34 C.F.R. Sections 300.540-300.543.


Website: Technology: http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/technology/technology.html


XIII. Course Assignments and Grades

Assignments

Because of the intense course schedule, it is essential that you attend class, be prepared, and participate in class activities and discussions.

1. Each student will be expected to complete five case studies during the course. The case studies give students the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned in a practical application situation. The case studies are in the textbook from the following chapters:
   Chapter 1: Perspectives on Disability: Ed Murphy
   Chapter 5: Issues in Placement: Benny
Chapter 9: Learners with Other Disorders and Conditions (AD/HD): Frank
Chapter 10: Cognitive Characteristics: Charlene
Chapter 4: Issues in Curriculum and Instruction: Angie

Class time will be devoted to completion and sharing responses. Although group study or discussion about major points of the questions posed in the case studies is encouraged, it is required that each student develop and write their own responses to turn in. (worth 1/3 of grade)

2. For the material covered on the third and fourth days of the course (chapters 7, 8, 10, and 11), students will work in groups to develop checklists of questions or observation criteria that can be used to identify and describe a learner’s characteristics in ways that are instructionally relevant. The development of these checklists will provide evidence that students have grasped the important points of the material covered. Time in class will be given to work on these checklists and/or access lab computers. (worth 1/3 of grade)

3. Final project: Students will work in groups to develop a brief in-service (i.e., lasting a maximum of 15 minutes) about LD, AD/HD, MR, and ED that potentially could be used to present content to other faculty members in their schools. Each group will choose a grade level that their in-service will be oriented toward, and the specific area that the in-service will cover. The content must include information about the disability’s characteristics and some methods for including students with the disability in the general education classroom. Time in class will be given to work on the in-service and/or access lab computers. The project will consist of an oral presentation and a completed written project that must include the following components:

a. an outline or description of the content that is important to cover and why the specific content area or material is be important for the participants to learn (i.e., what’s important to include and why). If sources other than the text are used to obtain information, these must be referenced.
b. the visual aids or other materials that will be used
c. the way that your group would evaluate the results of the in-service (including a pre- and post-test with answer key, if desired) or whatever means you believe appropriate to evaluate your in-service participants’ acquired knowledge.

During the latter part of the day, groups will present their completed projects to the class. (worth 1/3 of grade)

Course Grades
Assignments will be evaluated on both content and language usage. All assignments must look “professional” and contain correct grammar, spelling, and writing mechanics (e.g., capitalization, punctuation, etc.). Points will be deducted for errors in any of these areas.
Assignments not turned in on time will be penalized 5% per day unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. For group projects, each member of the group will receive the grade for the project. Therefore, to assure the grade you wish to get, you assume the responsibility of assuring the final product is of the quality deserving that grade. The instructor may ask members of the groups to evaluate their group members’ contribution and participation, if necessary.
For the total grade, the percentage of the total possible will be determined; and grades will be assigned according to the scale below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59%</td>
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</tbody>
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An Incomplete for the course will be given only in medical or emergency situations.
Instructional Methods

A variety of instructional methods will be used to teach the course content. Included among these methods are lecture, class discussion, small group application activities, hands-on activities, and multimedia presentations.

Class Schedule – ESP 421 at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1       | 8-25 | 1. Setting the stage: history and perspectives on disability; identification  
|         |      | 2. Persons with mild disabilities: mental retardation                   | quick skim of chapters 1, 2,  
|         |      | Who are they?                                                          | 3 (pp. 57-70), & 5 to review  
|         |      | What do we know about their characteristics?                           | Chapter 6    |
| 2       | 8-26 | Persons with mild disabilities: learning disabilities; AD/HD, emotional or behavioral disorders  
|         |      | Who are they?                                                          | Chapters 6 - 9  
|         |      | What do we know about their characteristics?                           | Due: Cases (Ed Murphy & Benny) |
| 3       | 8-27 | What are learners with mild disabilities like?                         | Chapters 10 - 13  
|         |      |                                                                       | Due: Case (Frank) |
| 4       | 8-28 | Continued                                                             | Checklists developed for cognitive characteristics, perceptual characteristics, academic learning characteristics, social-emotional characteristics due at the end of the day |
| 5       | 8-29 | What types of learning situations, services, and instruction are best for these learners?  
|         |      | Issues in curriculum and instruction for students with mild disabilities in the classroom. | Chapter 4  
|         |      |                                                                       | Due: Cases (Charlene & Angie)  
|         |      |                                                                       | Groups present in-services |
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Rubric for In-Service Presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proficiency Levels</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Thoroughness</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Enthusiasm / Creativity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Exemplary**      | • Explains content without errors  
|                    |         | • Includes important information  
|                    |         | • Provides detailed instruction to ensure understanding  
|                    |         | • Content is well organized  
|                    |         | • Maintains lively instructional pace without unnecessary pauses  
|                    |         | • Excellent evaluation included  
|                    |         | • Knows who does what when throughout the lesson  
|                    | • Demonstrates lesson components without errors  
|                    | • Includes most important information  
|                    | • Provides adequate instruction for most persons in the class  
|                    | • Content seems organized  
|                    | • Knows who does what when throughout most of the lesson  
|                    | • Adequate evaluation included  
|                    | • Uses voice to express enthusiasm  
|                    | • Uses facial expressions to express enthusiasm  
|                    | • Uses visual displays to enhance learning  
|                    | • Uses supplemental materials, motivating activities, etc.  |
| **Acceptable**     | • Displays major misunderstandings related to content presented  
|                    | • Demonstrates errors when teaching the lesson  
|                    | • Includes information that is not important for teachers to understand the disability  
|                    | • Provides insufficient detail for most to understand content  
|                    | • Demonstrates confusion regarding lesson components, lesson sequence and/or who does what when  
|                    | • Poor presentation momentum  
|                    | • No evaluation of presentation included  
|                    | • Uses voice or body language to express enthusiasm  
|                    | • Uses some visual display or supplemental material or motivating activity  |
| **Unacceptable**   | • Displays major misunderstandings related to content presented  
|                    | • Demonstrates errors when teaching the lesson  
|                    | • Includes information that is not important for teachers to understand the disability  
|                    | • Provides insufficient detail for most to understand content  
|                    | • Demonstrates confusion regarding lesson components, lesson sequence and/or who does what when  
|                    | • Poor presentation momentum  
|                    | • No evaluation of presentation included  
|                    | • Uses monotone voice  
|                    | • Uses facial expressions that indicate boredom  
|                    | • Lacks ideas that extend beyond the basic information  |
Topics for Learner Characteristic Checklists

♦ Cognitive characteristics
  ➢ Piaget’s level of cognitive development
  ➢ cognitive disequilibrium
  ➢ assimilation
  ➢ accommodation
  ➢ Zone of proximal development (Vgotsky)
  ➢ Field independence
  ➢ Field dependence
  ➢ Impulsivity
  ➢ Reflectivity
  ➢ Immediate memory
  ➢ Long-term memory
  ➢ Procedural knowledge
  ➢ Declarative knowledge
  ➢ Attention (alertness, selective attention, sustained attention)
  ➢ Mnemonic or memory strategies
  ➢ Metacognitive regulation (executive control functions)

♦ Perceptual characteristics
  ➢ Perceptual processing
  ➢ Visual perception
  ➢ Auditory perception
  ➢ Haptic perception

♦ Academic learning characteristics
  ➢ Stages of learning
  ➢ Effect of cognitive processing deficits
  ➢ Motivation (extrinsic, intrinsic)
  ➢ Locus of control and attributions of success or failure
  ➢ Issues related to adolescence
  ➢ Learning styles and multiple intelligences

♦ Social-emotional characteristics
  ➢ Social competence and cognitive development
  ➢ Physical competence
  ➢ Social competence
  ➢ Conceptual intelligence
  ➢ Emotional competence
  ➢ Practical intelligence
  ➢ Social cognitive delay
  ➢ Risk and resilience
  ➢ Maladaptive behaviors
Additional Statements of Rules and Regulations - Academic Integrity Statement

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UNLV and its College of Education demand a level of scholarly behavior and academic honesty on the part of students. Violations by students exhibiting honesty while carrying out academic assignments and procedural steps for dealing with academic integrity are delineated within the Regulations Governing Probation and Suspension Within the College of Education. This publication may be found in the Office of the Dean of the College of Education (301).

In addition to successful academic performance in prescribed coursework, you are enrolled in a professional course of studies, which is governed by a student code of ethics and programmatic expectations. The Handbook of the Committee to Review Initial Licensure Students outlines the UNLV Student Code of Conduct, NEA Code of Ethics for the Teaching Profession, and student expectations. The handbook is available in the COE Dean’s office. Misdemeanor or felonious conviction(s) may bar teacher licensure in Nevada or other States. If you have any questions, please direct them to the Director of Teacher Education, CEB 301, 895-4851.

If you have a documented disability that requires assistance, you will need to go to Disability Services (DS) for coordination in your academic accommodations. DS is located within the Learning Enhancement Services office in the Reynolds Student Services Center, room 137. The DS phone number is 895-0866 or TDD-895-0652. You may visit their website at www.unlv.edu/studentlife/les

Students are encouraged to secure an e-mail account with UNLV and to use this to communicate with the professor and other students in the class during the semester.

Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The makeup will apply to the religious holiday absence only, and students must notify the course instructor of anticipated absences by the second week of the semester. Students who represent UNLV at any official extracurricular activity shall have the opportunity to make up assignments, but the student must provide official written notification to the professor no less than one week prior to the missed class(es).

Beeper and cellular phones should be turned off during the class sessions. Socialization unrelated to the topics and issues of group and class discussion must be at a minimum level. Such disruptions may also be considered in determining a “participation” grade component, if included in the course.

Collection of Student Assignments for Accreditation Purposes  Assignments completed for this course may be used as evidence of candidate learning in national, regional and state accreditation reports of COE programs. Names and other identifying elements of all assignments will be removed before being included in any report. Students who do not wish their work to be used for accreditation purposes must inform the instructor in writing by the end of late registration. Your participation and cooperation in the review of COE programs is appreciated.