Department of Special Education  
San Diego State University  

Special Education 524:  
Characteristics of Students with  
Mild/Moderate Disabilities  
Spring 2014

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Book on reserve: LC 4705 R39 2012


Course Description: Historical and philosophical perspectives of programs related to students with mild/moderate (M/M) disabilities - with a strong focus on learning disabilities - including review of research on educational programs, curricular approaches, and characteristics.

Objectives
1. Identify and discuss federal legislation regarding assessment, identification, placement, and service delivery for students with M/M disabilities.
2. Discuss and critique current definitions of disabilities such as learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, mild intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbance, language disorders, and behavior disorders.
3. Discuss issues related to the identification and education of culturally and linguistically diverse students with M/M disabilities.
4. Discuss the history of people with M/M disabilities and understand the overall impact of the treatment of people with disabilities.
5. Identify major sources of literature related to the education of students with M/M disabilities and demonstrate skill in searching the literature base for specific topics.
6. Demonstrate the ability to review literature related to students with M/M disabilities and their families.
7. Discuss the educational implications of characteristics of students with M/M disabilities, to include characteristics related to cognitive, learning, behavioral, social, and physical needs.
8. Describe current approaches to the provision of educational and health services to students with M/M disabilities.
9. Identify current issues and trends in special education related to students with M/M disabilities, including transition needs.
10. Describe areas of evidence-based practice in special education, core academic standards, and response to intervention programs.
11. Discuss programming options for students with M/M disabilities in the preschool, elementary, secondary, and post-school years.

California Teaching Credential Standards Addressed by this course: Mild/Moderate Credential
Specific Standards: Characteristics

Department of Special Education Mission Statement: The mission of the Department of Special education is to develop the untapped potential of individuals with disabilities, talents, and diverse backgrounds and to make a significant positive impact on the learning and life environments of people with exceptionalities.

Student Conduct: Students preparing to become special educators are expected to conduct themselves in a highly ethical manner that is consistent with the Council for Exceptional Children Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Practice as well as with SDSU Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities. (Note: former can be found on the Council for Exceptional Children webpage: http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/code.html and the latter can be found on the SDSU webpage: http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/statement/index.html. In this course, each student is expected to contribute to a positive learning environment by being on time to class, not leaving class early, turning off cell phones and beepers, and, in all class related interactions, treating others in a manner that is courteous and that promotes mutual respect and equality of others. Further, students are expected to exhibit academic conduct that reflects the highest levels of honesty and integrity. The Student Disciplinary Procedures for the California State University specifically prohibit cheating or plagiarism and provide that such acts may result in a student being expelled, suspended, placed on probation, or given a lesser sanction.

Assignments

1. Class participation and attendance: Attendance is very important. Students are expected to attend every class session. Attendance will be taken. More than one unexcused absences will result in a 2 point loss for each absence. (See instructor for unique and unforeseeable situations!)

2. Readings/Quizzes: All reading assignments should be completed prior to the class meeting for which they are listed (see tentative outline). Chapter information will be included on the quizzes. Some of the quiz questions will be taken from the focus questions at the beginning of each chapter. A reading jigsaw activity (5 points) will be assigned. Each student will be assigned a chapter from the text. The chapter will be outlined and presented to small groups for discussion.

3. Abstracts: Each student is required to read two articles from journals in the field of special education. These articles should discuss a research project or study. The abstract
will summarize and critique the findings in the study. One article summarized in an abstract format will be taken from your course packet. The second article must be from your own search. To receive credit for the abstract assignment, it must have a citation that conforms to the APA citation style, follow the directions that are attached in this syllabus, and be no more than three pages in length. The article for the second abstract assignment must be xeroxed and attached to the abstract. Points will be deducted for spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors.

4. Case Study – Each student will be assigned to a case study group. The group will receive a packet of information regarding a student who is having difficulties in school. The group will decide the interventions and outcome that best meets the student’s needs. The group will present this information to the class in the format of a Student Study Team or IEP team (depending on the situation).

5. Adaptation/Modification of Core Curriculum: Using a core curriculum textbook lesson from a subject area (language arts, math, science, social studies), adapt the lesson for a student with Mild/Moderate disabilities. The modification must include a description of the student with mild/moderate disabilities. This description should include the characteristics of the student. These characteristics should relate to the particular adaptation. The lesson will be presented to the class (3-5 minutes). Be prepared to present using transparencies, document presenter, or PowerPoint Presentation. You may pair up with another student for this presentation.

6. Student Observation Report: Developing any sort of understanding of learners with mild disabilities and special education services must involve some degree of first-hand observation. An observation report will be developed as a result of a classroom visitation. (See observation guide below)

7. Quizzes & Exam: (see tentative outline for scheduled dates).

Abstract Directions and Format
Articles for abstracts should be selected from professional research journals in special education. Articles selected should describe a study or research project. The first article must be selected from your packet. The second article is to be found on your own. Each abstract should be no longer than three typed pages (double spaced) and contain the following sections:


b. A description of what was reported or investigated, i.e. a statement of the problem or research question(s). Ask yourself, "is the problem clearly stated and to the point?"

c. A summary of the procedures developed to answer the research questions or describe the phenomenon

d. A summary of the results, conclusions, and/or recommendations

e. Your own evaluation and personal reaction to the article, including a state related to the impact that the information had on you as a future special education professional. Points will be deducted for spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors.

See example of format included in packet.
**OBSERVATION GUIDE**

Arrange to observe a student in a Special Education program for students with mild/moderate disabilities. The student must be school age and have been identified as having a specific learning disability, mild mental retardation, ADHD, and/or emotional disturbance.

Prior to the visitation you are responsible for obtaining the permission of the principal and/or the teacher (and possibly the parent) to visit the program and complete the observation. Some teachers and principals will want to discuss the program with you prior to the visitation. If this is required, allow time to provide for this conference.

Observations should be at least 45 minutes long. As the observer, you should arrange a short period following the visit to ask questions and make comments. This should not be carried out while the class is in session.

You may choose to observe a child in your own classroom. If this is your choice, answer the questions as a self-reflective evaluation of a specific day in your classroom.

Following the visitation/observation provide all the information requested below. Attempt to make comments that are objective and derived from observation or the review of the data. Save subjective comments for the subjective section of the report.

**OBSERVATION FORMAT:**

Subject’s First Name (or initials to protect confidentiality)  Date:  
Grade/Age of Subject:  Time:  
Location:  Total Observation Time:  
Name of Teacher:  Type of Setting:

Exceptionality of Observation: (SLD, MMR, ED, ADHD, etc.,)

1. Describe the classroom environment and personnel involved. Number of students, adults working with students, room environment, etc.
2. Include any background information on student (if available and appropriate)
3. Objectively observe and describe the lesson/activity and behaviors of the selected student. Include interactions with peers, teachers, assistants, etc.
4. List the student’s strengths and weaknesses. Group characteristics into the domain areas: learning/academic; social/emotional/behavioral; language; cognitive abilities; physical/motor; perceptual/processing.
6. Were there a variety of instructional materials and resources available in the classroom?
7. Would you recognize the exceptional needs of the student in other situations? Be specific.
8. **Your turn:** Your personal observations and reflections regarding the observation (subjective response). Very important part of the observation!!
Grading
All assignments must be neatly typed and free of punctuation and spelling errors. Written assignments must be prepared in a PROFESSIONAL manner. Those papers, which in the judgment of the instructor, are illegible, or unprofessionally prepared will be returned without a grade or assigned a lower evaluation. Late papers will be penalized 2 points for each school day following the due date.

Missed quizzes will be replaced with a slightly more intense quiz. Only one missed quiz is permissible. After one, students will lose 10 points for each quiz (as well as class points for absences).

Grading Scale:
- Quizzes (3) at 10 points each: 30
- Abstracts (2) at 5 points each: 10
- Exam (1) at 25 points each: 25
- Student Observation: 10
- Reading Jigsaw Activity: 5
- Case Study Participation: 10
- Curriculum Presentation: 10
Total Points: 100

Scale:
- A 94-100%
- A- 90-93.9%
- B+ 88-89.9%
- B 83-87.9%
- B- 80-82.9%
- C+ 78-79.9%
- C 73-77.9%
- C- 70-72.9%
- D+ 68-69.9%
- D 63-67.9%
- D- 60-62.9%
- F – below 60% of possible points

Course Liability Statement
This course requires students to participate in field trips, research, or studies that include course work that will be performed off campus. Participation in such activities may result in accidents or personal injury. Students participating in the event are aware of these risks, and agree to hold harmless San Diego State University, the state of California, the Trustees of the California State University and Colleges, and its officers, employees, and agents against all claims, demands, suits, judgments, expenses and costs of any kind on account of their participation in the activities. Students using their own vehicles to transport other students to such activities should have current automobile insurance.

Syllabus Statement for Students with Disabilities:
If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at 619-594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact SDS as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from SDS. Your cooperation is appreciated.