

Rutgers University Graduate School of Education
Department of Educational Psychology, Special Education
15.293.525 Psychology of the Exceptional Child ONLINE (section 91)
Fall, 2013

(8/30/2013 Revision; Minor revisions may follow)

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Office Hours: Tue 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., or by appointment.

Note: To reach me, you will be most successful using email.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course develops foundational knowledge in the characteristics, identification, educational needs, and development of students with exceptionalities with specific focus on students with disabilities. Content includes the influence of exceptionalities on the cognitive, educational, communication, motor, and social development of individuals with disabilities and other exceptionalities. The legal and ethical basis for comprehensive programs for exceptional children and adults is discussed.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, candidates can expect to:

1. Identify and describe the historical milestones, legal basis, and current issues in educational programs for students with exceptionalities;
2. Understand key controversial issues in current special education policy and practice, including LD identification, RTI, and disproportionality;
3. Identify the psychological and educational characteristics of students with mild to moderate disabilities (e.g., learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral disabilities, mental retardation, speech and language impairments);
4. Identify the psychological and educational characteristics of students with moderate to severe disabilities (e.g., sensory impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, multiple handicaps);
5. Identify the psychological and educational characteristics of students with giftedness
6. Identify the characteristics and effects of the cultural and environmental influences on a child and family including cultural and linguistic diversity, socioeconomic status, abuse/neglect, and substance abuse;
7. Describe the differential characteristics of individual students with disabilities including level of severity and multiple exceptionalities across the lifespan;

8. Articulate the continuum of educational placements for students with exceptionalities and the benefits and drawbacks of each;
9. Identify the impact of exceptionality on the family;
10. Be familiar with agencies, professional organizations, and related Web resources for information relevant to support of special education students.
11. Be familiar with national advocacy groups addressing needs of students at risk for, or with disabilities, as well as resources, processes, and means to help these students address social and institutional barriers that impede equal access to services and supports that facilitate success in school, home, and the community.
12. Understand the current status of evidence-based research and practice standards in special education

OVERVIEW OF COURSE ACTIVITIES

The course includes substantial weekly readings, structured review and discussion of readings and associated topics, quizzes on the readings, student-produced study guides, Website resource review project, and a best professional practices guide booklet project. PowerPoint slides that highlight select content from each week's assigned readings, reinforcing key concepts and providing a partial review will be posted on the eCollege site by the instructor. Each week of the course will run from Monday morning through Sunday night (with the exception of the first week, which begins on Tuesday, September 3rd). No class activity Thanksgiving week. **Students are strongly encouraged to complete all or most of the assigned week's course readings during the weekend preceding week of the course.**

COURSE MATERIALS

Hallahan, D. P., Kauffman, J. M., & Pullen, P. C. (2012). *Exceptional Learners: An Introduction to Special Education (12th Ed.)*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
(Referred to as **HKP** in reading assignments)

Other required readings available online in the eCollege course site.

ONLINE STUDY GROUPS

Students are encouraged to form online study groups. All students who wish to exchange names and email addresses to help find study group partners should email the instructor who will post the list of names and email addresses on the class eCollege site, available to all enrolled students. After that, students can contact one another about forming study groups.

Q & A FORUM

Students are encouraged to post questions they have about the more challenging parts of the assigned readings, as well as related topics the class covers, in the online **QUESTION and ANSWER Forum**. It is always a good idea to first try to answer your own questions by rereading content and conferring with fellow students—hopefully, you are part of a study group. But if you can't resolve the issue, post the question and the instructor will usually post an answer that day (or sometimes the next day, depending on

when the question was posted). Chances are that if you are confused about part of the readings, some fellow students are also confused, so everyone can benefit from this feature of the course. The Q&A Forum can also be used for general course housekeeping issues.

PROFESSIONAL DISCOURSE

As current and future teaching and allied field professionals, students are expected to present themselves and act in the online class discussions as they would in a professional meeting in the school district where they work. This applies to several dimensions of professional conduct:

- Students are expected to be respectful of divergent beliefs and opinions that may be voiced in online class discussions, offering constructive questioning and feedback as appropriate.
- Except where otherwise customary (e.g., deaf community terminology), students are expected to use *person-first* language when speaking of students with disabilities (e.g., *student with a learning disability*, **NOT**, *LD student*), and never use demeaning terms such as *retard*. Students should avoid language that objectifies human beings as “things” of pity, such as, *wheelchair-bound*, *confined to a wheelchair*, or *suffers a disability*.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS POLICY

All assignments are expected on time. Late assignments will receive a reduced grade, generally, a flat reduction in grade equivalent to 10% of the total possible assignment grade per day late (or part thereof). Students with bona fide emergencies should contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss special arrangements in order to avoid grade penalties. The instructor will work constructively and collaboratively with students who **communicate early** regarding special problems completing assignments on time, with no grade penalties in special situations where advance communication takes place and the circumstances are deemed reasonable, but **will not be supportive of last minute requests for extensions on assignment due dates.**

STUDENT CONDUCT and ACADEMIC HONESTY

The Rutgers University Code of Student Conduct can be accessed at:

<http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/university-code-of-student-conduct>

For information on the Rutgers University academic integrity policy, please go to:

<http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity>

Related policies and procedures may also be found in the Rutgers Graduate School of Education Catalog:

http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/gse_current/pg32.html

For any and all assignments and class activities, **no copying of any kind is allowed**, unless copied text is placed within quotations and author/source is appropriately cited. Excessive use of quoted material in essay assignments, quizzes, and tests is strongly discouraged and this will tend to result in lower grades (students need to express themselves using their own language).

Clear evidence of extensive plagiarism will likely result in a grade of F for the assignment AND course.

ACCOMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES

Students requiring accommodations related to disabilities will be provided all necessary supports and accommodations. In such circumstances, students should make sure that they communicate their needs in advance to the instructor in coordination with the Rutgers Office of Disability Services

(<http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/>) to ensure that they receive appropriate supports commensurate with their needs.

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

COURSE GRADING PLAN

1. Class discussion participation (@ 4 points per class x 14 sessions = 56 points).
2. Quizzes (12 quizzes at 10 points each = 120 points)
3. Student-produced study guide (20 points)
4. Best Professional Practices Guide Booklet (60 points)
5. Website Review Sheets (24 points)

Course Grades: (out of 280 possible points)

| GRADE | PERCENT | POINTS |
|-------|-----------------|---|
| A | 93.00 – 100.0 % | Point totals will be converted to percentages. N.B. A grade of 86.99 earns a B, not a B+ Any mid-course modification of course assignments will be reflected accurately as percentage of total possible points earned. |
| B+ | 87.00 – 92.99 % | |
| B | 81.00 – 86.99 % | |
| C+ | 77.00 – 80.99 % | |
| C | 70.00 – 76.99 % | |
| F | Under 70 % | |

ASSIGNMENT/GRADING REQUIREMENTS: ADDITIONAL DETAILS

1. Participation: Students are required to participate in weekly online class discussions. For each weekly session, the instructor will post 3-4 discussion prompts. For each discussion prompt, each student is required to post an original contribution (about 5-6 sentences, or a bit more), and also at least one reply to another student’s original posting or student’s response to another student’s original posting (also about 5-6 sentences). Students’ will be graded on the thoughtfulness, connections to the readings, originality, and overall quality of their postings/replies to others. Students must post all of their comments for that week by 10pm ET Sunday night. Students will receive weekly feedback on their postings with grades and suggestions for improvement as warranted. **Students are required to read all other student postings.**

EXAMPLE DISCUSSION PROMPT: *Discuss what you see as potential promises and pitfalls associated with RTI.*

EXAMPLE high-quality posting: I believe that RTI is not a panacea, but rather, an unproven approach to LD identification and prevention of early reading problems that may hold promise. Using early screening and intervention for emerging reading problems, avoiding a “wait-to-fail” approach, RTI can help change the learning trajectory for many early elementary students for the better. But as Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton (2012) suggest, to do this well would require a massive commitment of financial and human resources,

professional development, staff buy-in, and administrative leadership in the schools. And the question remains, once a student receives remediation through multiple RTI tiers, and is subsequently referred, evaluated, and classified as having a learning disability, what types and intensities of academic services will they receive, compared to those in the RTI tiers to which they were not fully responsive? We also need to consider the new roles for both general and special education teachers under an RTI approach and the data management systems necessary to help make it all work well (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Stecker, 2010).

EXAMPLE low-quality posting: I like what Robert said about RTI and I agree with most of his points. His response was very thoughtful. I mean, you can't expect schools and teachers to solve all of the world's problems—there really are limits. And what about the parents? What are their responsibilities to help kids learn to read early on? Everybody needs to work together under an RTI model to help kids succeed.

2. Quizzes: The course includes 12 brief weekly quizzes (weeks 2-13) based on the assigned readings and other course materials (e.g., video). The quizzes are used for various learning purposes. Some quizzes are designed to help students engage in structured review of content from assigned readings. Students will be required to demonstrate a complete knowledge of key points and issues in the readings and also to apply this knowledge with critical thought. Other quizzes involve complementary learning assignments linked to parts of the week's assigned materials (written and/or video). Quizzes will be *open notes*, *open book*, but students are not allowed to consult with other people regarding the quiz questions. Any questions regarding the quizzes must be directed to the course instructor.

3. Student-produced Study Guide. Beginning at session #2, 1-2 students per week will each upload to the Dropbox a 5-6 page, single spaced, outline form, bulleted study guide for a particular reading from that week. Each student will be assigned a different reading. The student-produced study guide will be posted by the instructor on the class eCollege site, available to all students enrolled in the course. A grading rubric will be posted on the site as well as an exemplar completed study guide assignment.

4. Best Professional Practices Guide Booklet: Students will create a 12-15 page research-based best practices booklet in one of the following topic areas:

- Working with Students with [you select one] Disability (e.g., LD, EBD, ID, Autism, etc.)
- Working with families of students with disabilities
- Bullying and Violence Prevention (must devote sufficient attention to students with disabilities)
- Disproportionality in special education identification
- Classroom and school-wide behavior management
- Teaching in an inclusive [ELEM/M.S./H.S.] classroom
- Early literacy supports and methods for non-responders (students not learning to read through typical instructional approaches)
- Transition for high school students with disabilities
- Other focus topic discussed with and **approved by instructor** (before student starts work on it)

A project rubric/guidance sheet is posted on the eCollege site. No project exemplars are available as this is a new course project, starting this semester. However, the instructor will provide each student with formative feedback on their draft project upon request (once per student), up to (Sunday, 11/24/2013) about 2 weeks before the project is due. Final student projects will be posted on the eCollege course site for class access and sharing. Names of student project authors can be removed upon email request to instructor for those students who prefer to remain anonymous.

The best professional practices guide booklet project is to be submitted through the Drop Box tool of eCollege. **Project Due: Monday, December 9 at 10:00 p.m.**

5. Website Review Sheets: Students will review selected LD and related special education resource Websites, filling out a review sheet on each Website (review sheets posted on the course eCollege site). Students will complete the review sheets individually and **upload them any time earlier in the semester, but they are due by the end of class session #10, at 10:00 PM on Sunday, November 10th.**

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY READINGS AND CONTENT COVERAGE

Students are expected to keep pace with the posted schedule of readings, discussions, and assignments.

All Readings other than HKP are posted in eCollege.

| Session | Date | Topic | Activity |
|---------|---------------|--|---|
| 1 | 9/3 – 9/8 | Overview of course and requirements Overview of special education Evidence-based practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapter 1 • Identifying and Implementing Educational Practices Supported by Rigorous Evidence (2003). |
| 2 | 9/9 – 9/15 | FOCUS TOPIC: IDEA 2004 and the intersection of IDEA and NCLB | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yell Chapters 5 (IDEA) and 8 (NCLB) • Education Policy Brief on Impact of NCLB on Students with Disabilities (C. Cole, 2006) |
| 3 | 9/16 – 9/22 | Inclusion and support for success Multicultural issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapters 2-3 |
| 4 | 9/23 – 9/29 | FOCUS TOPIC: Disproportionality in special education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP pages 58-61 (Multicultural & Bilingual Special Education) • Artiles et al. article on over-identification (2002) • Justifying and Explaining Disproportionality (2010) • Discipline Policies, Successful Schools, and Racial Justice (Losen, 2011) |
| 5 | 9/30 – 10/6 | Working with families Child well-being | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapter 4 • A.E. Casey Foundation report • Child Welfare League of America data tables |
| 6 | 10/7 – 10/13 | Cognitive/Intellectual Disabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapter 5 • Students with Disabilities as Citizens in the Classroom (Kliewer, 1998) |
| 7 | 10/14 – 10/20 | Learning Disabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapter 6 • Handbook of LD, Chapter 2 • Rethinking LD, Chapter 12 |
| 8 | 10/21 – 10/27 | FOCUS TOPIC: Response to Intervention and evolving views of LD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI: Definition, evidence, and implications • Fuchs and Fuchs: RTI blueprint • RTI NJCLD Report, June 2005 • Fuchs et al.: Blurring of Special Education (2010) |

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart RTI (Fuchs et al., 2011) |
| 9 | 10/28 – 11/3 | ADHD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapter 7 • Pfiffner, Barkley, and DuPaul, Chapter 15 • 80+ Classroom Accommodations for ADHD |
| 10 | 11/4 – 11/10 | Emotional Behavioral Disorders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapter 8 • Handbook of Research in EBD, Chapter 3 • A National Perspective of Children with EBD (Bradley et al., 2004) • Website review sheets due (in Dropbox) on November 10 by 10:00 p.m. |
| 11 | 11/11 – 11/17 | FOCUS TOPIC: Behavior management, school-wide discipline, and violence/disruption prevention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How Can We Improve School Discipline? (Osher and Sprague, 2010) • Rethinking effective bully and violence prevention effects • CTPSV Fact Sheets |
| 12 | 11/18 – 11/24 | Communication Disorders Deafness/Hard-of-hearing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapters 10-11 • NCLB Effects on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students (AERA, 2007) |
| 13 | 12/2 – 12/8 | Autism and Developmental Disabilities Low Incidence and Severe Disabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapters 9 and 13 • Problem behavior interventions for children with autism: research synthesis • Effective practices for students with Asperger's Syndrome |
| 14 | 12/9 – 12/15 | Visual Disability/Blindness Physical Disabilities and Other Health Impairments Giftedness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HKP Chapters 12, 14-15 • Best Practices Booklet Project due on December 9 at 10:00 p.m. |
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