Rutgers University
Graduate School of Education
Department of Educational Psychology, Special Education
15.293.522 Learning Disabilities (Section 02)
Spring, 2014
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Semester: Spring, 2013
Mondays 4:50 – 7:30 pm
Location: Hardenburgh Hall B6

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This advanced level graduate course provides an overview of the field of learning disabilities (LD). The focus of the course is on causes, characteristics, assessment, and instructional needs of students with LD. Topical coverage addresses cognitive characteristics that distinguish students with LD in areas of attention, memory, and organization, and the academic needs of students in writing, reading, math, and social competence. The needs of students with LD across the continuum of educational placements will be examined. Ongoing developments in the field with changing conceptualizations of LD and alternative identification methods to IQ-achievement discrepancy (e.g., RTI) will be covered in depth.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, students can expect to:

- Identify and describe the historical milestones, legal basis, and current issues in educational programs for students with learning disabilities;

- Understand the current educational definition of individuals with LD, including identification criteria, labeling issues, and current incidence;

- Understand the psychological characteristics of students with LD across the lifespan, including intelligence, perception, memory, metacognition, attention, and language development;

- Understand the academic characteristics of individuals with LD in reading, written language, and mathematics;

- Understand the social-emotional characteristics of individuals with LD, including emotional self-awareness and self-regulation, self-concept, social imperceptiveness, and learned helplessness;

- Identify and describe basic research supported instructional strategies and practices for teaching individuals with LD;

- Identify professional organizations, governmental agencies, and advocacy groups relevant to providing services and supports to individuals with LD, as well as related journals and Web-based resources.

OVERVIEW OF COURSE ACTIVITIES

The course includes substantial readings for each session, structured review and discussion of readings and associated topics, quizzes on the readings, student-produced study guides, Website resource review project, teacher manual project, and a final exam. PowerPoint slides that highlight select content from each session's assigned readings, reinforcing key concepts and providing a partial review will be posted on the SAKAI site by the instructor. **Students are strongly encouraged to keep up with the reading in order to be prepared for upcoming sessions.**

COURSE MATERIALS

- Mercer & Pullen (2009). *Students with Learning Disabilities* (7th edition). Merrill. ISBN 0132228424 **(The text is referred to as M&P in the readings assignments section)**
- Swanson, Harris, & Graham (2013). *Handbook of Learning Disabilities* (**2nd Ed.**) (Paperback). ISBN 1462508499 Guilford Press.
- Other required readings available online at SAKAI: https://sakai.rutgers.edu

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are required to attend every class. More than one unexcused absence will result in lowering the student's final grade by the equivalent of one full letter grade (e.g., from B+ to C+) for each additional unexcused absence beyond one (except for documented emergencies, illness, religious observance, or other serious needs). More than three absences total (regardless of absences being excused) will likely necessitate repeating the course to earn credit. Bona fide emergencies and highly unusual situations should be discussed in private with the instructor to explore the possibility of special accommodations and/or arrangements.

PROFESSIONAL DEMEANOR

As current and future teaching and allied field professionals, students are expected to present themselves and act in class 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 focus totally on class activities and not engage in alternate activities (social conversations, text messaging, email/Web multitasking, etc.).
• Students are expected to be respectful of divergent beliefs and opinions that may be voiced in class discussions, offering constructive questioning and feedback as appropriate. 3
• 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 terminology that objectifies human beings as "things" of pity, such as, wheelchair-bound, confined to a wheelchair, or suffers a disability.

APPROPRIATE & INAPPROPRIATE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

This course will utilize a Student Response System (handheld radio frequency "clickers") as part of an effort to offer improved learning options and greater variability in class activities. Students will be oriented to clicker use at the first class session. This technology facilitates instant feedback from

students on an anonymous basis and can support student learning and engagement in multiple ways. This technology should comprise less than 10% of total class learning activity, and will be used selectively and strategically. Students are expected to use these clickers appropriately per guidelines discussed in class. Clickers are provided to students by the instructor at the beginning of each class.

Students are expected to put all other electronic devices away during class, including telephones/text messaging devices. Students with bona fide reason for accessing text messaging during class (e.g., family member in hospital) will be permitted to do so, but are requested to privately contact the instructor in advance as to the need. Laptop/notebook computers are not to be used in class unless by special advance arrangement with the instructor (students are provided class PPT notes for every session).

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 to ensure that they receive appropriate supports commensurate with their needs.

COURSE GRADING PLAN
1. Participation (@ 2 points per class x 14 sessions = 28 points).
2. Quizzes (4 quizzes at 15 points each = 60 points)

3. Student-Led Presentation/Discussion (30 points)
4. Website Review Sheets (24 points)
5. LD Teacher Manual Project (80 points)
6. Take-home final exam (60 points)

Course Grades: (out of 282 possible points)

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

ASSIGNMENT/GRADING REQUIREMENTS: ADDITIONAL DETAILS

1. Participation: Students are expected to come to class having completed all assigned readings for that week in advance and to participate in class discussions, offering informed ideas and opinions.

Breakdown: 1 point for attendance AND active attention throughout class session; 1 point for active discussion/participation (no points earned when absent, except in excused absence cases of serious, documented emergencies/religious observance/illness/etc.—then 1 point is awarded)**.**

2. Quizzes: The course includes FOUR **<u>unannounced</u>** quizzes based on the assigned readings. The quizzes are designed to help students engage in structured review of critical content from each session's 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. Quizzes will be *open notes, open book*, Students are strongly encouraged to highlight, underline, and take notes on readings—available for use on quizzes. Bring all assigned readings for the week to each class. Students who do no bring their materials may not borrow the instructor's or classmates' materials during quizzes. There will be make-ups for quizzes **ONLY** in cases of excused absences (usually requiring documentation on the reason for absence, or in an obvious emergency or other serious situation).

3. Student-led presentation/discussion. Beginning at session #2, one or more students will present on a selected reading during each class. Some will be team presentations. Following a brief introduction in which the presenter states the topic and previews the main presentation content (1 minute, with accompanying presentation overview slide), the main content part of the presentation will last 9-10 minutes, to be followed by 8-9 minutes of facilitated (by the presenter) discussion (or, discussion can be embedded throughout the presentation), and a 1-minute summary/closure with accompanying slide.

Under no circumstances can the total time exceed 20 minutes per presenter (due to other content coverage and activities during class). Students should rehearse to make sure their presentation timing is appropriate and they are responsible to bring a small clock or other timing device to help them manage their presentation time. Students will sign up for topics during session #1. The oral

presentation should cover just the main concepts and major informational points from the selected reading—not all of the content. A rubric will be distributed at class session #1. The student must prepare three things to accompany the presentation:

 a. A brief PowerPoint slide show for the presentation. Email the PPT to Professor Vyas no later than 5pm the day before the presentation. See the exemplar PPT with content, design, and presentation TIPS for student presenters on SAKAI
b. Copies of a 4- to 6-page (single spaced) detailed handout (with more detail than in the PPT show) for class members containing summary information (see exemplar on SAKAI)
c. A list of 4 - 5 challenging discussion questions (higher order thinking) for the class with prepared follow-up probes in case of limited audience response on certain questions.

4. **LD Class Teacher Manual Project:** The project involves designing, writing, and publishing (in print and electronic form--WORD) a comprehensive teachers manual for teachers working with students with LD. This handbook will be geared to teachers, and should bridge relevant research to practice. Within this training manual, students will consider potential barriers, and identify solution paths for teachers struggling to meet the needs of a variety of students with LD. The manual will serve as a guide for teachers, and will include information across a variety of domains. Keep in mind that the content of the manual must link research to practice within each of these domains. All recommendations and suggestions must be supported by research. **Students must write the manual using their own language.** The finished training manual should be approximately 20-25 pages in length (1" margins, **double-**spaced, 12-point Times Roman font, block paragraph format). The cover, preface, and Table of Contents are not part of the total page count. A project rubric with greater detail on the assignment and the required report format will be posted online on the class SAKAI site. **The project is due by the end of class session #13.**

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 provided by Professor Vyas on class session #3). Students will complete the review sheets individually throughout the semester and **turn them in by the end of class session #12**. Some websites may have been already reviewed in the Classroom Organization course and also may be assigned in the EBD course. Students may simply copy and edit/resubmit their own previously completed website review sheets in cases of identical websites under review.

6. **Final Exam:** The final exam will contain two sections: (1) **Test of Specific Knowledge** (15 T-F/Multiple Choice), (2) **Framing Issues** (One short essay response: 2 pages).

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND CONTENT COVERAGE

Assigned reading to be completed BEFORE the session (except Week #1, with optional extra credit).
M&P= Mercer & Pullen text
Handbook of LD = Swanson, Harris, & Graham text
All other readings are on SAKAI: https://sakai.rutgers.edu

SESSION #	CONTENT COVERAGE	READINGS (by informal, shortened name)

1
(1/27)
	• Course Introduction
	• Overview of Learning
	  Disabilities
		• **M&P** Chapter 1
		• Handbook of LD – Chapter 2: A Brief History of
		  Learning Disabilities

2
(2/3)
	• Overview of LD
	  (continued)
	• Medical Aspects of
	  Learning Disabilities
		• **M&P** Chapter 2
		• Handbook of Neurodevelopmental and Genetic
		  Disorders in Children-Chapter 6
		• Handbook of LD-Chapter 16: Behavioral Genetics,
		  Learning Abilities, and Disabilities

3 **(2/10)**	• Early Identification and Intervention • Assessment	• **M&P** Chapter 13 & 4 • LD Assessment-Speece & Hines (2007)

4
(2/17)
	• Challenges to Traditional
	  Views
	• RTI and Evolving Views of
	  LD
	
	**(START THIS WEEK'S
	READING IN
	ADVANCE)**
		• Rethinking LD- Chapter 12
		• *Redefining LD as Inadequate RTI (2003) RTI
		  Definitions, Evidence, and Implications* (2003)
		• Fuchs & Fuchs RTI Blueprint (2004)
		• Fuchs & Deschler: What We Need to Know About RTI
		• (Fuchs) Smart RTI

5 **(2/24)**	• Working with Families • Adolescents with LD • Transition Programming	• **M&P** Chapters 12 & 14 • Handbook of LD Chapter 20: Reading Comprehension for Adolescents with Significant Reading Problems • Transition: Why it does not work (2010)

6
(3/3)
	• Social-Emotional-
	  Behavioral Issues
		• **M&P** Chapter 11
		• Handbook of LD-Chapter 15: Soial Cognition of
		  Children and Adolescents with LD: Intrapersonal and
		  Interpersonal Perspectives
		• Social-Emotional Learning and LD
		• Social-Emotional Side of LD

7 **(3/10)**	• ADHD **(START THIS WEEK'S READING IN ADVANCE)**	• **M&P** Chapter 3 • Barkley Chapter 2 • ADHD-Pfiffner, Barkley, & DuPaul, Chapter 15 • Rethinking ADHD and LD in DSM-5: Proposed Changes in Diagnostic Criteria

8
(3/24)
	• Theory & Practice
	  Addressing LD
	• Educational Settings &
	  Services
	• Instructional Models
		• **M&P** Chapters 5 & 6
		• Handbook of LD Chapter Direct Instruction as
		  Eonomine and Contronym: Why the Right Words and
		  the Details Matter
		• Handbook of LD 27: Cooperative Learning for
		  Students with Learning Disabilities: Advice and

		Caution Derived from the Evidence
		• Handbook of LD Chapter 28: Data-Based Individualization as a Means of Providing Intensive Instruction to Students with Serious Learning Disorders
9 **(3/31)**	• Spoken Language and Related Learning Processes	• **M&P** Chapter 7
		• Child and Adolescent Development for Educators Chapter 7 (Language Development)
		• Early Language Development and Language Learning Disabilities
		• Handbook of LD Chapter 14: Language Processes: Characterization and Prevention of Language-Learning Disabilities
		• Handbook of LD Chapter 5: Linguistically Diverse Students' Reading Difficulties: Implications for Models of LD Identification and Effective Instruction
10 **(1/27)**	• Cognitive, Metacognitive, and Memory Issues with LD	• Handbook of LD-Chapter 12: Memory Difficulties in Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities
		• Metacognition and LD
		• Handbook of Educational Psychology Chapter 12
		• Handbook of LD-Chapter 17: Diagnosing and Treating Specific Learning Disabilities in Reference to the Brain's Working Memory System
11 **(4/7)** **(START THIS WEEK'S READING IN ADVANCE)**	• Reading	• **M&P** Chapter 8
		• Handbook of LD Chapter 10: Rapid Automatized Naming and Reading: A Review
		• Handbook of LD Chapter Chapter 11: Basic Cognitive Processes and Reading Disabilities
		• Handbook of LD Chapter 18 Word Identification Difficulties in Children and Adolescents with Reading Disabilities: Intervention Research Findings
		• Handbook of LD Chapter 19: Developing a New Intervention to Teach Text Structure at the Elementary Level
12 **(4/14)** **WEBSITE REVIEWS DUE**	• Writing	• **M&P** Chapter 9
		• Handbook of LD Chapter 23: Classroom Spelling Interventions for Students with Learning Disabilities
		• Self-Regulated Strategy Development-Writing Instruction for Students with Disabilities
		• Want to Improve Children's Writing?
		• Effective Writing Instruction Across the Grades
13 **(4/21)**	• Math **TEACHER MANUAL DUE**	• **M&P** Chapter 10
		• Handbook of LD Chapter 13: Learning Disabilities in Mathematics: Recent Advances
		• Handbook of LD Chapter 21: Instructional Intervention

		for Students with Mathematics Learning Disabilities • Balancing Perspectives on Mathematics Instruction

14
(4/28)
	• Access to the General
	    Education Curriculum
		• Handbook of LD Chapter 30: Technology Applications
		    for Improving Literacy: A Review of Research
		• Strategies to Improve Access to the General Education
		    Curriculum
		• Universal Design for Learning –Delaware
		• SKIM Checkpoints 1.1 to 9.3
		    (EXPLORE 1 link from each of 9 Guideline sections)
		    http://www.udlcenter.org/implementation/examples