Course Syllabus

Rutgers University

Department of Educational Psychology

5.293.522 Section 2   Fall 2021   Learning Disabilities

Class Meets: Online Course

Course Instructor: Dr. Colleen Belmonte, Ph.D., BCBA

Office Hours: By appointment.

Contact Me:

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Required Texts:

- Mercer, C. D., & Pullen, P. C. (2009). *Students with learning disabilities (7th ed.).* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Klingner & Eppolito (2014) *English Language Learners: Differentiating Between Language Acquisition and Learning Disabilities*. Council for Exceptional Children. Paperback. ISBN 978-0-86586-478-8
- Other readings available on the Canvas website at https://canvas.rutgers.edu/ (Links to an external site.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This 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, and 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 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 relevant 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.

SPECIAL EDUCATION MASTERS PROGRAM GOALS

Learning Goal 1: Attain mastery of the essential aspects of practice and research in the field of special education.

Learning Goal 2: Attain in-depth understanding of Council of Exceptional Children (CEC) professional standards and code of ethics for special education professionals.

Learning Goal 3: Further develop critical professional dispositions that help education professionals promote improvement in the lives of their students (commitment to ongoing professional development, using data-informed approaches, collaborative approaches, developing cultural competencies, etc.)

Learning Goal 4: Prepare to be professionals in special education or closely allied professional fields or to further advance in their professional work.

COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION

15:293:522. Learning Disabilities (3) Origins of the concept of learning disabilities (LD). Cognitive and neuropsychological test patterns as LD indicators. Emphasis on cognitive characteristics that distinguish students with disabilities in the areas of reading, mathematics, attentional processes, organization for learning, and executive functioning. Influence of emotional and sociocultural factors on self-image and academic performance.

GRADING POLICY

Evaluation of your performance in this course is based on the percentage of total points that you earn in the course. Course assignments have been assigned a point value and the total number of points will be used to calculate the final grade. Late assignments will only be accepted with the

permission of the instructor. Online activities are based on assigned readings; as a result, it is important that students keep up to date on their reading.

These number grades will be converted to letter grades as follows:

  90 - 100%   = A

  87 - 89%   = B+

  80 - 86%   = B

  77 - 79%   = C+

  70 - 76%   = C

  60 - 69%   = D

  59% and below = F

ONLINE COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Students should be comfortable in an online environment. Specifically, students should be able to use basic computer and Internet tools such as Word Processing, Power Point, Canvas, and email. If you need additional support, you can contact the Canvas help desk at:

help@Canvas.rutgers.edu.

CLASS FORMAT

The primary method of instruction in this course will be online, which will include readings, class discussions, assignments, and presentations.

OVERVIEW OF COURSE ACTIVITIES

The course includes extensive readings, student led presentations on the readings, a midterm, and a series of homework assignments.

Required Activities	Due Date	Points Available
Participation	weekly	10
Group presentation	TBA	15
Homework assignments (4)	TBA	60
Midterm	10/18/21	25

Policies

Academic Integrity: I expect that you will comply with standards of academic integrity (that is, you will not even think about cheating) in this course. If you need assistance in understanding an assignment or course content, please seek assistance from other appropriate resources or me. Assignments, however, should be your own work, except in cases where I have required a group product. The consequence for violating policies of academic integrity and other elements of the student code of conduct are serious and can have a tremendous negative impact on your academic progress and future career. You should not turn in the same work in two separate classes without the specific written approval of the faculty members involved. Leaving work until the last minute can increase the temptation to plagiarize work from journals or "borrow" friends' work. You can avoid problems by getting your work done early.   Exams are also your own work. The Office of Student Conduct supervises issues related to violations of academic integrity. Please familiarize yourself with the university policy on academic integrity (http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/policy-on-academic-integrity (Links to an external site.)).

Attendance: Attendance at all regularly scheduled classes is required in accordance with the university's attendance policy. Excused absences include absences due to religious observance (please let me know *before* the holiday), travel on university business (e.g., sports team), and properly documented illnesses. Students who were frequently absent last semester did not do as well in the course as those who were regularly in attendance. Attendance will be monitored by the professor as well as in-class assignments that students will turn in and these will also function as a record of attendance.

Missed Classes: It is your responsibility to get notes, including handouts, from another student if you miss class.

Grading Policy: Grades are assigned based on a points system described previously.

Policy on Late Assignments: Assignments must be submitted on time. Late assignments will be accepted if you have discussed your reasoning with me, but the grade will be reduced.

Classroom Culture: Please turn all cell phones to **SILENT** during class. Please refrain from sending text messages during class. If you bring a laptop to class, I expect that you will use it for the purposes of the class ONLY. In other words, please do not use your laptop to surf the web or check email. I expect that all of us (instructor included) will treat one another with respect and have a pleasant learning environment.

Problems?

Personal problems.   A variety of resources are available at the university to assist you with personal difficulties (e.g., stress, anxiety, bereavement, etc). Each campus has a counseling center and these services are free to you as a student. Please seek assistance as early as you can so you can maintain a good academic performance.

Academic problems. If you are having difficulties with this course, you should seek assistance from me during office hours or by making an appointment with me.

ACCOMMODATIONS 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. A student with special needs should contact the office of Disability Services at https://ods.rutgers.edu (Links to an external site.).

ASSIGNMENT/GRADING REQUIREMENTS: ADDITIONAL DETAILS

1. **Class discussion/ Weekly Participation:** Each student must make an initial post for each question no later than 11:59 p.m. on Monday. Each post must be thorough, answer the questions fully, and demonstrate that you have completed the reading assignments for the week. You must follow the directions for each week and make comments to the postings of two classmates.
2. **Homework assignments.** Students will be assigned **FOUR (4)** graded homework assignments. The purpose of the homework is to help students bridge research to practice, especially connecting learning in prior assessment and methods courses, practica/student teaching experiences, to more advanced knowledge of LD gained in this course. Due dates are posted on the schedule below. Students will receive a written guidance sheet for each homework assignment, which will be posted on Canvas. Please submit the homework in Assignments no later than 4pm on the due date.
3. **Presentation.** Each person will present one of the readings from the course. During the second week of classes, I will organize groups and determine the schedule of presentations. Additional assignment information will be available in a Canvas Module.
4. **Midterm (10/18):** This will consist of short answer and multiple-choice questions and will be designed to last about an hour.

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY READINGS AND CONTENT COVERAGE

SESSION #	CONTENT COVERAGE	READINGS
1 Sep. 6	· Course Introduction/ Overview of LD · Medical aspects of LD · LD and Cultural Issues	Mercer and Pullen Chapter 1 Mercer and Pullen Chapter 2 Kalyanpur & Harry (2012) *Cultural Underpinnings of Special Education* (pp. 3-14)

2 Sep. 13	· Early Identification and Intervention · Assessment	Mercer and Pullen Chapter 13 & 4
3 Sep. 20	· RTI, MTSS, and Evolving Views of LD ****HW # 1 assigned (due 10/4)**	Fuchs & Deschler: What We Need to Know About RTI (2007) Response to Intervention and the Identification of Specific Learning Disabilities (Reschly, 2014) Pullen et al. (2019) RTI & MTSS: How Do They Differ and How Are They The Same, If At All? New Jersey NJTSS Website https://www.nj.gov/education/njtss/ (Links to an external site.) IRIS Module https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/rti01/ (Links to an external site.).
4 Sep. 27	· Working with Families · Adolescents with LD · Transition Programming	Mercer and Pullen Chapters 12 & 14 *McCollin & Obiakor: Transition: Why it does not work (2010)
5 Oct. 4	· Social-Emotional-Behavioral Issues ****HW # 2 assigned (due 3/22)**	Mercer & Pullen Chapter 11 Social Competence/Social Skills of Students with LD: Interventions and Issues ==****HW1 due**==
6 Oct. 11	· ADHD	Mercer & Pullen Chapter 3 ADHD-Pfiffner & DuPaul, Chapter 24 (2014) Website review (pbisworld.com, behaviorbosses.com)

	· Theory & Practice Addressing LD	
7 Oct. 18	· Educational Settings & Services	Mercer & Pullen Chapters 5 & 6 Cooperative Learning in Inclusive Classrooms
	· Instructional Models	****MIDTERM

8 Oct. 25	· Cognitive, Metacognitive, and Memory Issues with LD **HW # 3 assigned (due 11/22)**	Handbook of LD-Chapter 12: Memory difficulties in children and adults with learning disabilities *Butler (2015) Chapter 28- Metacognition and Self-Regulation in Learning **HW 2 due

9 Nov. 1	· Spoken Language	Mercer & Pullen Chapter 7 *Child and Adolescent Development for Educators Chapter 7 (Language Development) Early Language Development and Language Learning Disabilities
10 Nov. 8	· Reading	Mercer & Pullen Chapter 8 *2012-RAN and Reading Fluency
11 Nov. 15	· Writing	Mercer & Pullen Chapter 9 Want to Improve Children's Writing? *Effective Writing Instruction Across the Grades Harris, Graham,& Mason: Self Regulated Strategy Development (2003)

12 Nov. 22 · ELLs ****HW # 4 assigned (due 12/6)**	Klingner & Eppolito (2014) English Language Learners: Differentiating Between Language Acquisition and LD (Booklet) <mark>****HW 3 due**</mark>	
13 Nov. 29 · Mathematics	Mercer & Pullen - Chapter 10 Handbook of LD (2013)- Chapter 21: Instructional Intervention for Students with Mathematics Learning Disabilities *Balancing Perspectives on Mathematics Instruction Watch this short video:UDL At A Glance (Links to an	

external site.)

UDL Guidelines.pdf

Using UDL to Design Standards Based Lessons.pdf

14 Dec. 6 · Access to the general education curriculum	<mark>****HW 4 due**</mark>	

· VISIT THIS SITE AND EXPLORE AT LEAST 5 TOOLS:

https://sites.google.com/view/freeudltechtoolkit/home (Links to an external site.)

NOTE: This last item connects to the required Discussion Prompt #2 for this week where you need to discuss what you consider to be the most valuable tech "tool/resource" for teachers.

Universal Design for Learning –Delaware

SKIM Checkpoints 1.1 to 9.3
(EXPLORE 1 link from each of 9 sections)
http://www.udlcenter.org/implementation/examples (Links to an external site.)