Rutgers University   Graduate School of Education
Department of Educational Psychology, Special Education

15.293.522 Learning Disabilities (3 credits)-ONLINE section 91
Fall, 2021
(8/23/2021 revision; minor revisions may follow)

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

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848-932-0843 [NOT IN USE NOW] **(use email to reach me, not phone)**	10 Seminar Pl Rm 335
Office Hours: By Appointment	Prerequisites or other limitations: N/A
Mode of Instruction: ___ Lecture ___ Seminar ___ Hybrid _X_ Online ___ Other	Permission required: X_ No __ Yes Directions about where to get permission numbers: N/A

==**THIS <u>ASYNCHRONOUS</u> ONLINE COURSE IS ON CANVAS: canvas.rutgers.edu/**==

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/MTSS) 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 (2014 New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards # 1 & 2);

- Understand the psychological characteristics of students with LD across the lifespan, including intelligence, perception, memory, metacognition, attention, and language development (2014 New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards # 1 & 2);

- Understand the academic characteristics of individuals with LD in reading, written language, and mathematics (2014 New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards # 1 & 2);

- Understand key diversity and disproportionality related issues concerning students with LD (2014 New Jersey Professional Teaching Standard # 2);

- Understand approaches to assessment and instrumentation used in the field of LD (2014 New Jersey Professional Teaching Standard # 6);

- Understand the social-emotional characteristics of individuals with LD, including emotional self-awareness and self-regulation, self-concept, social imperceptiveness, and learned helplessness (2014 New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards # 1 & 2);

- Identify and describe basic research supported instructional strategies and practices for teaching individuals with LD (2014 New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards # 1, 2, 3, 7, 8);

- 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 (2014 New Jersey Professional Teaching Standard # 10).

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 for 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.

OVERVIEW OF COURSE ACTIVITIES

The course includes substantial weekly readings, structured review and graded online discussions of readings and associated topics, 12 quizzes on the readings, and 4 research-to-practice homeworks. 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 course CANVAS site (in the weekly modules) by the instructor. PPT and related course materials will be posted for one week in advance of the current week for students wishing to work ahead. **Note that many weeks of the course will include videos to watch as noted in the PPTs. Videos are posted on Canvas, in the weekly modules.** Each week of the course will run from Monday morning through Sunday night (with the exception of the first week, which **begins on Wednesday, September 1st**). **Students are strongly encouraged to complete all or most of the assigned week's course readings during the weekend preceding each week of the course.**

COURSE MATERIALS

- Mercer & Pullen (2009). *Students with Learning Disabilities* (**7th edition**). Merrill. ISBN 0132228424
- Klingner & Eppolito (2014) *English Language Learners: Differentiating Between Language Acquisition and Learning Disabilities.* Council for Exceptional Children. ISBN 978-0-86586-478-8

(earlier editions of required texts are NOT acceptable)

- Other required readings available online in the CANVAS course site.

ONLINE STUDY GROUPS

Students are strongly 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 CANVAS 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, and other course requirements, in the online **QUESTION and ANSWER (Q & A) Forum**. It is always a good idea to first try to answer your own questions regarding course readings 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 (for readings, be specific as to pages involved) and the instructor will try to post an answer later that day (sometimes the instructor's response post will appear the next day, depending on when the question was posted and the instructor's other scheduled activities). Chances are that if you are confused about part of the readings or some aspect of an assignment, 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. **Sensitive/confidential issues should be handled via private email to the instructor and not through the Q & A forum.**

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 outdated and inappropriate terms such as *retarded.* 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 points per day late (or part thereof). Students with bona fide emergencies should contact the instructor as soon as possible **IN ADVANCE** 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 Office of Student Conduct supervises issues related to violations of academic integrity

(see http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu). Please familiarize yourself with the university policy on academic integrity.

The Rutgers University Code of Student Conduct can be accessed at:
http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/university-code-of-student-conduct

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 <u>assignment AND course</u>.

ACCOMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES

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.

Students requiring accommodations related to disabilities will be provided all necessary supports and accommodations and confidentiality of related information will be strictly observed to protect student interests. 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 (https://ods.rutgers.edu/) to ensure that they receive appropriate supports commensurate with their needs.

COURSE GRADING PLAN

1. Class discussion participation (@ 8 pts. for 2 prompts (9 classes) or 12 pts. for 3 prompts (5 classes) = 132 pts.).
2. Quizzes (12 quizzes at 10 points each = 120 points)
3. Homework Assignments (4 HWs at 25 points each = 100 points)

Course Grades: (out of 352 possible points)

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

ASSIGNMENT/GRADING REQUIREMENTS: ADDITIONAL DETAILS

1. Participation: Students are required to participate in weekly online class discussions. <u>**ONLINE DISCUSSION POSTS ARE DONE INDIVIDUALLY.**</u> For each weekly session, the instructor will usually post 2 (but sometimes 3) discussion prompts (possible points vary accordingly). For ==**EACH** discussion prompt==, **each student is required to post 2 things:** (A) an original contribution (about 7-10 sentences, or a bit more), and (B) at least one reply to another student's original posting or student's response to another student's original posting (also about 7-10 sentences). So, for example, if there are 2 discussion prompts in a week, you need to make at least 4 posts (2 originals and 2 replies); if there are 3 discussion prompts in a week, you need to make at least 6 posts. Students' will be graded on the thoughtfulness, ==**CONNECTIONS TO THE READINGS**== with specific page citations (not quoted content), originality, and overall quality of their postings/replies to others. <u>**EXPECTATION: Three or more different page citations from the assigned readings for each post.**</u> Students must post all of their comments for that week by 10pm ET Sunday night. <u>**Students are required to read all other student postings.**</u> ==Please remember that these are meant to be very scholarly discussions, not just personal opinions.==

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 (Fuchs, Mock, Morgan, & Young, p. 158), RTI can help change the learning trajectory for many early elementary students for the better. But as suggested by Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton (2012, p. 2), and the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (2005, pp. 8-10), 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. This points to much needed major infrastructure development nationally across school districts in 50 states. 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 (Fuchs, Fuchs, and Compton, 2012, pp. 12-13)? Consider that most students with LD are educated in the general education classroom, but may receive fewer accommodations and supports there than they received in the most intensively supported tier of RTI that preceded their classification as LD. Concern also exists over the varying approaches to measuring and determining responsiveness under an RTI approach. Fuchs and Deschler (2007, pp. 133-134) reported on research demonstrating that multiple methods used by leading researchers to identify responsiveness ended up classifying somewhat different, yet overlapping groups of students. This research review suggests that there is yet to be an agreed upon evidence-based way to measure responsiveness to intervention leading to a special education classification decision. 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 (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (2005, pp. 4, 8, 9-10). Thus, there remain many challenges and much to learn about how to make implementation of RTI successful.

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 weekly quizzes (weeks 2-13) based on the assigned readings. <u>**QUIZZES ARE DONE INDIVIDUALLY.**</u> The quizzes are designed to help students engage in structured review of critical content from each week'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***, but students are not allowed to use the Internet to access general web-based sources and they are not allowed to consult with other people regarding the quiz questions. Quizzes will be made available one week before the week in question for students who may wish to work ahead of schedule and <u>**QUIZZES ARE DUE SUNDAY EVENING AT 10PM AT THE CLOSE OF THE WEEK FOR WHICH THEY ARE ASSIGNED**</u>.

Any questions regarding the quizzes must be directed to the course instructor via email.

3. Homework Assignments. Students will be assigned FOUR (4) graded class homework assignments The purpose of the HW assignments is to help students bridge research to practice, especially connecting prior assessment and methods courses learning, and field experiences, to more advanced knowledge on LD gained in this course.

The HWs may be <u>SUBMITTED BY INDIVIDUALS OR TEAMS OF 2 STUDENTS</u> (NOTE that all other course assignments are done on an individual basis). Team membership can change from HW assignment to HW assignment as students prefer. Due dates will be assigned with each HW assignment, but generally speaking, they will be due by the second Sunday evening following the class at which they were assigned. Students will receive a written guidance sheet for each HW assignment which will be posted on CANVAS.

Students will be supported in orienting themselves to each HW through a **Homework Brainstorming Forum**, which will be an open discussion section on CANVAS. The purpose of this discussion forum is for students to post some general ideas along with a few specific brief examples of different ways to think about the particular HW assignment and ways to organize their approach to the assignment. This HW brainstorming forum is meant to take the place of some 40-minute breakout activities used in the face-to-face LD class for the purpose of priming students to be well positioned to take on the HW assignment. **It is important that the postings on this HW brainstorming forum not be so detailed and extensive that they relieve others of the necessity of thinking through their approach to the HW assignment. This should be seen as a form of support, providing a helping hand getting started on the assignment.** All students are strongly encouraged to participate in the Homework Brainstorming Forum.

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY READINGS AND CONTENT COVERAGE

Many readings are in the 2 required course texts. All other assigned readings are available on the course CANVAS site in the weekly modules.

SESSION #	CONTENT COVERAGE	READINGS (by informal, shortened name)
1 **(9/1-9/5)**	• Course Introduction • Overview of Learning Disabilities • Medical Aspects • LD & Cultural Issues	• Mercer & Pullen – Chapter 2 • *History of the Field (Fletcher, 2007)* • *Historical and Current Perspectives on LD in the U.S. (Pullen, 2016)* • *Cultural Underpinnings of Special Education (Kalyanpur & Harry, 2012)*
2 **(9/6-9/12)**	• Early Identification and Intervention • Assessment	• Mercer & Pullen – Chapters 4 & 13 • *Data-based Decision Making (IRIS Module)* (All Material) https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf_case_studies/ics_rtidm.pdf • Klingner & Eppolito – Chapters 1 & 7
3 **(9/13-9/19)**	• RTI, MTSS, & Evolving Views of LD ==HW#1 assigned== ==Due 10pm Sun., 9/26==	• *What We Need to Know about RTI (Fuchs & Deschler, 2007)* • *Response to Intervention and the Identification of Specific Learning Disabilities (Reschly, 2014)* • *RTI & MTSS: How Do They Differ and How Are They the Same, If AT All? (Pullen et al., 2019)* • (ALL Material) New Jersey NJTSS Website https://www.nj.gov/education/njtss/ • IRIS Module (All Material)

4 **(9/20-9/26)**	• Working with Families • Adolescents with LD • Transition Programming	• Mercer & Pullen – Chapters 12 & 14 • *Reading Comprehension for Adolescents with Significant Reading Problems (Vaughn et al., 2013)* • *Transition: Why It Does Not Work (McCollin & Obiakor)* • Klingner & Eppolito – Chapter 8
5 **(9/27-10/3)**	• Social-Emotional-Behavioral Issues	• Mercer & Pullen – Chapter 11 • *Social-Emotional Learning and LD (Elias, 2004)* • *Social Competence / Social Skills of Students with LD: Interventions and Issues (Vaughn et al., 2004)*
6 **(10/4-10/10)**	• ADHD	• ADHD-Pfiffner & DuPaul, Chapter 24 (2014) • ADHD-Nigg & Barkley (2014) • *Executive Functioning and Self-Regulation (Barkley, 2015)* • *Behavior Management & ADHD: He Just Needs a Little Discipline (IRIS STAR Sheet)*
7 **(10/11-10/17)**	• Theory & Practice Addressing LD • Educational Settings & Services • Instructional Models ==**HW#2 assigned**== ==**Due 10pm Sun., 10/24**==	• Mercer & Pullen – Chapters 5 & 6 • *Special Education and Direct Instruction: An Effective Combination (Marchand-Martella et al., n.d.)* • *Cooperative Learning in Inclusive Classrooms: Students Who Work Together, Learn Together (Emerson, 2013)*
8 **(10/18-10/24)**	• Cognitive, Metacognitive, & Memory Issues with LD	• *Memory Difficulties in Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities (Swanson & Zheng, 2013)* • *Success for Students with Learning Disabilities: What Does Self-Regulation Have To Do with It? (Butler & Schnellert, 2015)* • *Metacognition and Self-Regulation in Learning (Butler, 2015)*
9 **(10/25-10/31)**	• Spoken Language	• Mercer & Pullen - Chapter 7 • Child and Adolescent Development for Educators Chapter 7 (Language Development) • Early Language Development and Language Learning Disabilities • Klingner & Eppolito – Chapter 2
10 **(11/1-11/7)**	• Reading	• Mercer & Pullen – Chapter 8 • *Word Identification Difficulties in Children and Adolescents with Reading Disabilities: Intervention Research Findings (Lovett et al., 2013)* • *Developing a New Intervention to Teach Text Structure at the Elementary Level (Williams & Pao, 2013)* • *Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) and Reading Fluency (Norton & Wolf, 2012)* • Klingner & Eppolito – Chapter 6

11 (11/8-11/14)	• Writing **HW#3 assigned** **Due 10pm Sun., 11/21**	• Mercer & Pullen – Chapter 9 • *Written Expression Disabilities (Fletcher et al., 2019)* • *Want to Improve Children's Writing? (Graham, 2009)* • *Effective Writing Instruction Across the Grades (Troia & Graham, 2003)* • *SRSD: Using Learning Strategies to Enhance Student Learning (IRIS Module)* (All Material) https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/srs/
12 (11/15-11/21)	• Math	• Mercer & Pullen – Chapter 10 • *Instructional Intervention for Students with Mathematics Learning Disabilities (Fuchs et al., 2013)* • *Balancing Perspectives on Mathematics Instruction (Jones & Southern, 2003)*
	No Class Activities Thanksgiving Week (11/22-11/28)	
13 (11/29-12/5)	• Els/ELLs **HW#4 assigned** **Due 10pm Sun., 12/12**	• Klingner & Eppolito – Chapters 3, 4, 5, 9, & 10 • *Teaching English Language Learners: Effective Instructional Practices (IRIS Module)* (All Material) https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/ell/ • *English Learners with Learning Disabilities in an RTI System (Kaye et al. / Powerpoint Presentation)*
14 (12/6-12/12)	• Access to the General Education Curriculum	• Watch this short video: https://youtu.be/bDvKnY0g6e4 • UDL Guidelines.pdf • Using UDL to Design Standards Based Lessons.pdf • VISIT THIS SITE AND EXPLORE AT LEAST 5 TOOLS: https://sites.google.com/view/freeudltechtoolkit/home **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.**