



DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY

School of Education

Master of Science in Special Education Course Descriptions

SPED 500 Childhood Growth and Development: Infancy-Adolescence

This course is a comprehensive introduction to the principles and basic concepts of typical and atypical child growth and development. This course integrates the physical, cognitive, and social dimensions of a child's life from prenatal development through pubescence. Specific emphasis will be given to the growth and development of young children aged birth through eight years.

OR

EDU 520 Educational Psychology

This course focuses on the concepts and principles of human development, motivation, and learning theories (K-12). Candidates explore effective instructional strategies and processes for applying theory in practice. They also examine current challenges facing teachers in increasingly diverse classrooms in today's schools. Candidates also examine current research and journal articles to develop a grasp of available resources to support teaching. They learn to apply this foundational knowledge in instructional situations in elementary, middle and secondary school settings to meet individual student needs. NOTE: Candidates are required to earn 25 hours of early field experience to complete this course. This course is a prerequisite for other program courses.

SPED/ECE 503 Child, Family & Community Relations

The purpose of this course is to assist candidates in developing the necessary skills to work cooperatively with families and community members. This starts with the understanding that all young children are fully functioning members of a diverse and multicultural school, family and community. In this class, candidates gain insight into family perspectives and experiences by examining the social, economic, legislative and technological impacts on children and families, including families with special needs children. They evaluate existing support services and service delivery models in the school and community with respect to diversity, exceptionality, and family health and well-being. A particular emphasis is placed on strategies to promote and assure effective communication, collaboration and consultation between home, school and community. Topics covered include, but are not limited to, social-ecological framework and assessment, life-span development in relation to life history and historical moments, community resources, programs, and service personnel, cultural sensitivity, family demographics, family systems theory, family stressors and grievance, intergenerational family assessment, child abuse and neglect, collaborative and communicative techniques, professional ethics, legal rights of parents, teachers and students in the school system, legislation and advocacy.

EDU 560 Integrating Technology into Programming, Services, and Instruction

This course provides an overview of media technologies used in the teaching/learning process. Emphasis is given to effective utilization of media (including interactive and multimedia technologies); facilitating creation/production of media by students and teachers in elementary, middle and secondary schools; copyright issues; and planning for technology. (3-credit hours)

EDU 533 Reading and Writing Instruction and Improvement

In this course, candidates focus on a balanced literary approach at the K-12 levels to literacy instruction with an emphasis on reading and writing including the critical areas of: phonics, phonemic awareness, work study, fluency, and comprehension. In addition, the course examines various theoretical models of reading along with the principles of teaching reading and writing, using a variety of diverse instructional strategies, materials, software, effective program organization, assessment, and classroom management.

SPED 526 Psycho-Educational Diagnosis (Ages 3-21) (4 credit hours)

In this course candidates are introduced to the diagnostic assessment and the processes of assessment involved in determination of the presence of disabilities. The administration, scoring and interpretation of educational tests used in the diagnosis of all types of learning problems in a variety of multi-cultural settings will be addressed. The candidates will receive specific training on how to administer achievement, processing, observation/checklist based and other types of evaluation instruments for students aged preschool through high school. Attention will be given to the terminology of assessment, importance of family history data, the ethical and legal guidelines of assessment and necessary considerations for diagnostic assessment of ELL students. Administration of a variety of CBM measures will be addressed focusing primarily on reading, math and written language probes for students in kindergarten through high school. Participants will also study interpretation of test data including analysis of diagnostic test results and analysis of progress monitoring data. Creating educational assessment reports, and preparation and communication of data for use in educational and instructional planning and data-based decision making are also elements of this course.

EDU 657 Foundations of Language Minority Education

In this course, candidates explore the theoretical frameworks for understanding how children acquire multiple languages, how languages are processed in the brain, the history of language education, the different types of language education programs and the types of national and state policies that affect language education, as well as the legal aspects of how bilingual students should be served in local schools. The course grounds itself on the theoretical constructs of bilingual schooling in the United States from historical, political, philosophical, sociological and pedagogical perspectives.

SPED 646 Internship and Seminar in Special Education

The purpose of this course is to provide candidates further and more focused experience in working directly with students with disabilities. Candidates will be assigned to a setting with students with disabilities and work with a certified special education teacher. The candidate observes in this setting and takes an active part in the classroom activities. Through this experience candidates will observe similarities and differences across various aspects of development in students with a variety of disabilities, demonstrate communication and collaboration skills with teachers and related service providers, and will observe and participate in the delivery of different forms of instruction. Candidates will reflect on this experience and address key questions, experiences and issues through

focused observations and reflections on specific classroom elements such as behavior management, modes of communication within the classroom, and use of evidence-based practices. A university supervisor and the special education cooperating teacher or principal will evaluate the candidate as part of this internship experience. Candidates also complete a self-evaluation as part of this internship.

SPED 649 Psychology and Characteristics of Students with Disabilities

The purpose of this course is the study of the 13 major disability categories identified in IDEA with special attention to: learning disabilities, emotional/behavioral disorders, intellectual disability, attention deficit disorder, autism, other health impaired, orthopedic impairments and traumatic brain injury. The etiology, characteristics and impact of each of these disabilities on development, language development and language skills, learning and behavior of students at the preschool, elementary, middle, high school and post high school levels will be addressed. Candidates will review case studies, become familiar with issues within and across these disability categories, and engage in research on the varied aspects of these disability areas. Considerations for ELL learners with suspected disabilities and the distinction of language differences from language disabilities/disorders are addressed in this course. The impact of the diagnosis on family, the role of culture in the diagnosis of a disability and related issues will be examined. Candidates will also become familiar with resources and sources of current information/research on these disabilities.

SPED 654 Academic Methods for Early Childhood and Elementary Level Students with Disabilities

The purpose of this course is to prepare candidates to use a variety of instructional strategies and create learning experiences that encourage early childhood and elementary level student development across many skill domains and the Illinois Learning Standards. The content of this course will initially focus on various forms of lesson planning (including direct instruction, the inquiry approach, and universal design for learning). Major emphasis is placed on development of effective instructional skills including scaffolding and a variety of academic methods for instruction and remediation in the basic areas for students with a variety of disabilities. This course places particular emphasis on oral language, a balanced approach to reading instruction, written language, mathematics instruction and support of instruction in content areas (science and social studies). Candidates study evidence/research-based practices for assessment, planning and instruction and their use in varied contexts and service delivery models including: tiered RTI interventions, instruction addressing IEP goals and objectives, academic adaptations within the general education classroom, and instructional support for ELL students. Within this course, candidates are expected to prepare pre- and post-assessments, lessons and lesson plans, tools and activities for instruction of specific skills and strategies, which are based on knowledge of the discipline, student needs, the general education curriculum and IEP goals.

SPED 655 Academic Methods for Middle and Secondary Level Student with Disabilities

The purpose of this course is to prepare candidates to use a variety of instructional strategies and create learning experiences that encourage middle and high school level student development across many skill domains and the Illinois Learning Standards. The content of this course will focus on academic methods for students with a variety of disabilities with emphasis on RTI tier 2 and 3 academic interventions at the middle and secondary level, the use of technology as a support for math and science instruction, content area instruction, learning strategies and study skills. This course provides significant coverage of the elements of the evidence-based practice of Learning Strategy Instruction. Candidates will gain knowledge of a variety of teaching methods thus enabling

them to choose and implement instructional sequences and methods that address IEP goals and objectives, consider the needs of ELL students and allow for errorless learning, development of conceptual understanding and the maintenance and generalization of skills across learning environments. Development of pre- and post-assessments, lessons and lesson plans and strategies for performance data analysis are an expectation of this course.

SPED/ECE 656 Collaboration/Adaptation in General Education Settings (2 credit hours)

In this course, candidates will examine the importance and process of collaboration with family, classroom teachers, para-educators, paraprofessionals and other school and community personnel in integrating individuals with disabilities and special learning needs into various social and learning environments. Candidates will examine the Response to Intervention (RTI) model, teacher roles and responsibilities in the Response to Intervention process for both academics and behavior, evidence based practice for students with and without disabilities, including Positive Behavior Intervention Supports and other Tier I academic and behavior interventions as well as universal design for instruction. Additional elements of this course include coverage of instructional supports and interventions for ELL students and for students with disabilities within the general education setting. The process of examining the learning environment and classroom demands combined with the learning characteristics of the students for the purpose of selection of appropriate strategies and materials will be studied. Techniques for modifying instructional methods, curricular materials and the environment as well as modifications of state and local assessments will be investigated. Collaboration will be practiced and experienced through involvement in exercises and projects within this course.

SPED 658 Fostering and Development of Prosocial Behavior (2 credit hours)

The purpose of this course is to address the social skill needs of students with various disabilities including emotional/behavior disorders, autism, intellectual disability, learning disabilities and traumatic brain injury. Candidates will explore assessment of individual and group performance in order to design instruction that meets learners' current needs in the social and emotional domains at the appropriate level of development in the least restrictive environment. Candidates will examine characteristics of environments including materials, equipment and spatial arrangements that facilitate development, learning and interactions between and among students. Evidence-based strategies and resources for teaching the scope and sequence in social curricular domains and social skill instruction's place within Response to Intervention Tier 2 and 3 interventions will be addressed. Candidates will design instructional programs that enhance individuals' social participation in family, school and community activities and develop a series of lesson plans that integrate social skills instruction into academic instruction. Additionally, strategies and techniques to arrange and modify the learning environment to facilitate learning according to students' emotional, social and behavioral needs will also be considered in this course. In this course candidates develop a series of lesson plans that integrate social skill instruction into academic instruction.

SPED 659 Managing Challenging Behavior

In this course, candidates will study use of appropriate non-aversive, least intrusive management procedures when presented with a variety of behavioral problems including challenging behavior. Candidates will learn the PBIS model, evidence-based practices for individual behavior management, crisis prevention, conflict resolution and effective use of reinforcement. Attention will also be given to procedures to help individuals develop self-awareness, self-control, self-reliance, self-esteem and self-determination and manage their own behavior and for fostering maintenance and generalization of skills across learning environments. As part of this course candidates will study and complete

functional assessments of behavior and develop behavior intervention plans based on student case studies.

SPED 663 Planning and Assessment in Special Education

This course focuses on the instructional planning involved in special education and ongoing assessment as a necessary component to this planning, and addresses development of Individual Educational Plans (IEP's) and Transition Plans for students with various disabilities across the age span of K-12. Using case studies, candidates will write IEP's and prepare transition plans for students in special education with particular attention given to development of statements of present levels of performance, annual goals, short term objectives/benchmarks, progress monitoring and reporting of progress, the least restrictive environment, and access to general education and documentation of modification of instruction and assessment in general education settings. The importance of linkages to outside agencies in transition planning will also be addressed within this course. Issues of confidentiality, collaboration with family, community and other professionals will be stressed. As part of this course candidates will examine curriculum-based decision making as each relates to the Response to Intervention Model through the use of case studies and student CBM data.

SPED 664 Curriculum and Methods for Students with Moderate to Severe Disabilities

In this course, candidates will study instructional techniques and specialized methods that may be aspects of instruction of students with moderate to severe disabilities. This includes coverage of the functional curriculum across a variety of domains including self-care, life skills, recreation/leisure, domestic, community and career/vocational. Specialized interventions and methodology for individuals (preschool through high school) with a focus on physical (including positioning/support), communication (including augmentative communication) and other techniques and methods that support student learning and development of key functional skills will also be addressed. Candidates will examine assessment and adjustment of learning environments, planning and development of instructional programs directed toward objectives established for a variety of key skills, provision of opportunities for student choice and development of positive self-concepts. This course will also include consideration of the importance of use of appropriate materials emphasizing functionality, instruction in natural settings and interactions between students with and without disabilities. Field hours are required for this course.

SPED 702 Clinical Practice Seminar in Special Education (1 credit hour)

In this course candidates engaged in their clinical experience in special education meet for weekly seminar meetings. Within these meetings, candidates discuss their clinical experience, examine classroom challenges, and discuss their roles and responsibilities as professionals in the field of special education. Completion of the Teacher Work Sample/Student Learning Assessment which candidates then implement within the clinical setting is a critical element in this experience. Reexamination of candidates' individual philosophies of education, preparation of resumes and the certification process are also addressed. Concurrent enrollment in SPED 703 is required with this course.

SPED 703 Clinical Practice in Special Education (4 credit hours)

In this course, candidates will be involved in a full-time, full semester guided experience in classrooms working with students with disabilities. This course offers candidates the opportunity to apply, in a diverse setting, the knowledge and skills gained through the program's course work and fieldwork. Candidates will provide direct instruction to students individually, in small groups and as

a whole class in inclusive and special education classrooms. Candidates are expected to demonstrate communication and collaboration skills with teachers and families of students with disabilities, to participate in and provide instruction based on evidence-based practices and design/provide modifications based upon specific needs of students across skill domains (academic, social, physical, behavioral, etc.). Within this clinical setting, candidates will demonstrate the ability to interpret information from formal, curriculum-based measures and informal assessment. Candidates are observed and evaluated by a university supervisor multiple times during the semester. The candidates themselves and the special education cooperating teacher or principal evaluate the candidates as well. Concurrent enrollment in SPED 702 is required with this course.

SPED 705 Clinical Internship and Seminar in Special Education (1 credit hour)

In this course, candidates who are seeking special education certification as a second certificate will be involved in an intensive experience with students with disabilities in a school setting. This course offers candidates the opportunity to apply, in a diverse setting, the knowledge and skills gained through the program's course work and fieldwork. Candidates will provide direct instruction to students individually, in small groups, and as a whole class in inclusive and special education classrooms. Candidates are expected to demonstrate communication and collaboration skills with teachers and families of students with disabilities, to participate in and provide instruction based on evidence-based practices, and design/provide modifications based upon specific needs of students across skill domains (academic, social, physical, behavioral, etc.). Within this clinical setting, candidates will demonstrate the ability to interpret information from formal, curriculum-based measures and informal assessments. Completion of the Teacher Work Sample/Student Learning Assessment at the clinical site is a critical part of this internship.