

AEDX 420
Introduction to Learning Disabilities

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Semester: Fall, 2008

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I. Descriptive Information

A. Introduction to Learning Disabilities (AEDX 420)

B. Introduction to Learning Disabilities (AEDX 420) is an overview of the field that includes historical treatment, etiology, characteristics, assessment methods, teaching strategies, and the IEP process.

C. USCA School of Education Conceptual Framework: The objectives of this course are designed to facilitate the candidate's development as a Dynamic Educator. This course will focus specifically on the development of the Dynamic Educator as Planner.

II. Course Goals and Objectives

A. General Goals

The USCA candidate in teacher education will identify the characteristics, historical treatment, etiology, diagnosis, and instructional strategies of those with learning disabilities. Candidates will demonstrate their understanding of this knowledge through observations, examinations, written assignments, oral presentations, and class discussion and participation.

B. Instructional Objectives:

At the end of the course, the candidate will be able to:

1. Discuss key contributors to and the historical development of the field of learning disabilities.
2. Discuss the federal definition of learning disabilities.
3. Identify and explain the etiologies and basic medial aspects of learning disabilities.
4. Identify the learning theories associated with individuals who have learning disabilities.
5. Identify the educational placement options for students with learning disabilities.
6. Identify appropriate academic and social strategies in the areas of math, reading, writing, social development, and communication to instruct students with learning disabilities.
7. Identify the effects of a learning disability across an individual's lifespan.

8. Demonstrate the use of the career guidance standards and competencies by designing a classroom activity based on South Carolina's Pathways to Success.

III. Course Readings

Lerner, J. (2006). *Learning Disabilities and Related Disorders: Characteristics and Teaching Strategies*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Additional text and article readings may be assigned at the professor's option. Candidates will be expected to read and understand the class text as well as hand-outs distributed in class, via email, and on Blackboard. Although all material in the text may not be discussed in class, the candidate is responsible for all assigned material for examination purposes.

IV. Instructional Procedures

This course may include, but is not limited to, lecture, multimedia presentations, small and large group discussions, activity groups, projects, technology, and hands-on activities. Be prepared to participate fully, regardless of the format used. Be prepared to ask questions and to state your viewpoints and opinions. If you are unable to attend a class, it is your responsibility to acquire all information covered in that session. This includes all information presented in class, such as handouts, films, videos, and audiotapes, as well as presentations and discussions.

V. Course Requirements

A. Administrative Requirements

1. It is the responsibility of all members of the USCA academic community to promote, maintain, and enforce academic honesty as noted in the Academic Code of Conduct published in the *USCA Student Handbook*. Students have the right to expect that the provisions of this Code will be enforced. I will do so. The following statement is to be included on the cover sheet of **every** assignment, regardless of type:

On my honor as a University of South Carolina Aiken student, I have completed my work according to the principle of Academic Integrity. I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on the assignment/examination.

This is to be signed by the student when a paper copy is submitted. When an assignment is electronically submitted, a typed name will be accepted. Assignments turned in without the Academic Code of Conduct will be returned to the sender so that it can be added and points may be lost.

2. If any candidate has a physical, psychological, and/or learning disability which might affect his/her performance in this class, please contact the Office of Disability Services, 126A B & E, (803) 641-3609, as soon as possible. The

Disability Services Office will determine appropriate accommodations based on medical documentation. Also, please see the professor during the first week of the semester.

3. Class time together is very important to the achievement of class goals. Punctual attendance at all class sessions is expected. Absence from a class does not alter any candidate's responsibilities. All assignments are due at the beginning of the class - if a candidate is absent on that day, it is nonetheless her/his responsibility to ensure the assignment is turned in. Late assignments, unless arrangements have been made before the beginning of class, will result in a lower grade. It is also the candidate's responsibility to get a copy of anything distributed during class and to learn the material covered during the class. It is suggested candidates exchange contact information with other candidates in the class at the beginning of the term.

Similarly, a pattern of tardy arrival and/or leaving class early is not acceptable and will result in a lowered grade. Being ten or more minutes late or leaving class ten or more minutes early is disruptive to the class. Any combination of two such instances will count as an absence.

Three absences will result in a lower grade. Candidates who have four absences may receive a failure for the class.

4. It is the candidate's responsibility to sign the attendance sheet on a class-by-class basis to document attendance. Failure to do so will result in an absence.

B. Participation: Class participation is of primary importance. The process of exploring and discussing ideas and concepts, developing and improving foundational knowledge, and illuminating misinformation and misunderstandings is integral to the class. Each class member has a responsibility to contribute to the dialogue.

C. Required Activities

1. Quizzes/Analysis & Reflections/ Worksheets	30%
2. Observation	10%
3. Journal search	5%
4. Two Article critiques	15%
5. Board Game	20%
6. Individual Study Presentations	20%

D. Access to the Internet

All email correspondence with the candidates will be done using the candidates' USCA email accounts. Candidates must have access to the internet and know how to access their university email account. Candidates are required to check their USCA account throughout the week for information and updates. Some readings may be posted on Blackboard - such readings will be announced in class or via email.

E. Labeling emails and attachments

When **emailing** the professor, candidates need to include the class number (**AEDX 420**) in the **subject line** of the email. Failure to do so may make the email look like spam and be deleted without being viewed.

All assignments must be submitted as an attachment, not as an email. Each **attachment** should be labeled with the candidate's last name and then the name of the assignment. For example, Dr. Hanson's article critique #1 would be labeled: **Hanson article critique #1** The labeling of the document is important so that the document can be filed correctly and easily checked to see that it has been received. Labeling is also extremely important so that one candidate's assignment does not overwrite another candidate's assignment or one of the candidate's own previous assignments.

Percentage points will be deducted for assignments that are incorrectly labeled. If a candidate has problems sending an MS Word document, please contact the HELP desk (telephone: 641-4357) for assistance.

F. Word processing

All assignments turned in must be completed on a computer. Candidate's are encouraged to use a program that checks spelling and grammar. Papers must be double spaced using a 12 point block font (Arial strongly preferred) with a minimum of one inch margins on all sides. Cursive or stylized fonts are not acceptable. All assignments must be written in APA format. An Honor Code must be included on all assignments.

G. Writing standards

1. The following general standards are used as a referent for written materials:

Excellent writing: Clearly articulated, organized, developed, and accurate ideas that convey reflective insight. Fluid language, with correct spelling and appropriate vocabulary, syntax, grammar, and usage are expected.

Good writing: Ideas are accurate and organized, usually clear and adequately developed. Minor errors in vocabulary, syntax, grammar, or usage exist but no spelling errors are evident.

Fair writing: Ideas are mostly accurate and organized, but some lack of development creates ambiguity. Some errors in vocabulary, syntax, grammar, or usage, but not enough to be distracting, exist. One or two spelling errors may be found.

Poor writing: Written work that has enough accuracy to indicate the candidate has made an effort at the assignment, but has failed to account for the complexity of the ideas. A moderate quantity of grammatical and spelling errors are present.

Unacceptable writing: Inaccurate work replete with various vocabulary, syntax, grammar, spelling, or usage errors.

H. Policy on Written Work and Research

1. The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.) is the style guide to be used in this course. All assignments submitted must adhere to the requirements set forth in this manual. All assignments must have a title page (with Honor Code) and be double-spaced with 1" to 1.5" margins on all four sides. If appropriate, assignments are to have a Reference page. Copies of the APA Manual are available in the USCA library. Information on the APA format also may be accessed through the Internet at several sites, including:

<http://www.wisc.edu/writetest/Handbook/DocAPAFformatting.html>

<http://www.crk.umn.edu/library/links/apa5th.htm>.

Failure to adhere to APA format will result in a reduction in the number of points awarded for the assignment.

2. Candidates are encouraged to use all appropriate sources (e.g., books, audio and videotapes, interviews, lectures, and articles) as references. In every paper that includes outside sources, documentation of references is necessary to give value to the originality of the candidate's own contribution to the assignment and to avoid charges of plagiarism. Also, an explanation of how the candidate determined credibility of the references used will be included with each assignment.

3. Plagiarism occurs when a writer takes any other person's ideas and/or language and uses the materials as his own without proper acknowledgment through some form of referencing. Plagiarism may be the result of carelessness, ignorance, or premeditation, but any form of it in any assignment is inappropriate. Papers that contain plagiarized material will result in the student receiving a failing grade on the assignment and a disciplinary report being sent to the appropriate administrative officer. The following are some types of plagiarism:

a. Word by word copying without an appropriate citation and/or without using quotation marks.

b. Copying numerous words or phrases without an appropriate citation and/or without using quotation marks.

c. Copying an occasional key word or phrase without an appropriate citation and/ or without using quotation marks

d. Paraphrasing without an appropriate citation.

e. Taking another's idea(s) without acknowledging the source.

4. No paper, project, or assignment may be submitted to fulfill the requirements of more than one course. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in disciplinary action being taken. If you have any question at all regarding this Policy on Written Work and Research, contact the Instructor immediately.

VI. Evaluation and Grading Scale

It is the intention of this class that every candidate be successful. Since individual grades are not computed on a curve, it is possible for every candidate in the class to earn an A. Grading in this course will be determined by examination, critical reading, contributions to class, individual and group activities and projects, writing clarity and skill, and other activities regarding the course material. Completing assigned readings and coming to class prepared to engage in focused discussions are necessary for making the course a meaningful experience.

A. Incompletes

This course is designed so that candidates can successfully meet their responsibilities within this semester. However, incompletes may be granted at the discretion of the professor but only in very rare and exceptional cases under extenuating circumstances beyond the candidate's control. It is the candidate's responsibility to provide proof that he/she was not able to complete the required work for the course due to special circumstances. Prior arrangements must be made with the professor for such a grade to be assigned and the appropriate form submitted. Review USCA policy for additional information.

B. Extra Credit

The class is designed so that all candidates who consistently attend class, actively participate in and contribute to class discussions, study and comprehend class readings, turn in quality written assignments, and adequately prepare for quizzes will achieve a high grade in the class. Under these circumstances, extra credit is not needed.

C. Evaluation and Grading Scale

If a candidate has any questions or concerns about the grading process or progress, he/she is encouraged to arrange a meeting with the professor. Grades will be posted on Blackboard.

A	(93 - 100%)
B+	(90 - 92%)
B	(83 - 89%)
C+	(79 - 82%)
C	(70 - 78%)
D+	(66 - 69%)
D	(60 - 65%)
F	(59% and below)

VII. Policy for Portable Electronic Devices:

The use of any portable electronic devices, including cell phones, pagers, MP3 players, iPods, etc., during class is not allowed for any reason unless prior approval has been given to a candidate from the professor or unless required for

the course. If a candidate has any of these devices in class, they must be **turned off and stowed away** during the entire class period.

VIII. Other Requirements

A. Class preparation

Candidates are responsible for reading and comprehending the text and any additional materials distributed, assigned, presented, and/or discussed (see Tentative Schedule). Although all material presented in the text or other materials may not be discussed in class, candidates are nonetheless responsible for their content for examination purposes.

B. Assignments

Assignments are an integral part of the learning process. They are due at the beginning of class. It is recommended that a candidate not try to complete assignments at the last minute since computer and printer problems will not be an acceptable excuse for not turning in an assignment on time. Late assignments will result in a lower grade.

All assignments are to be checked for spelling and grammar before being turned in; grammar and spelling errors will lower your grade. APA format is to be used for written assignments.

If work is submitted as a paper copy, the work should not be placed in a folder or binder of any kind. Instead, submit on 8 X 11" paper, either stapled or clipped securely together (no paperclips).

All assignments, whether submitted electronically or on paper, need to have a cover sheet that includes the candidate's name, the class number, the assignment, the date due, and a signed Honor Code. Papers turned in without an Honor Code will be returned to be resubmitted; this will result in a lowered grade. For a candidate's own protection, it is recommended that he/she keep a copy of all work until the final grades have been posted.

C. Assignment Descriptions

The following are short descriptions of assignments and assessments for the semester. More specific information and explanations will be distributed in class.

Observations: Candidates will conduct two observations in a school setting in which there is at least one student with learning disabilities. Both observations will focus on the same student. The observations must be conducted during academic coursework and without the interruption of other activities (lunch, P.E., etc.) It will be the candidate's responsibility to make the arrangements for the observations, which should last a minimum of one hour each. The candidate will then write a description of what he/she saw during each observation, along with a reflection on the classroom, the student, and their own experience.

Journal Search: Each candidate will choose two journals in the area of special education and present in class an overview of each journal and a comparison of the two journals. This is not a written assignment – the journal searches will be presented orally.

Article Critiques: Each candidate will read and critique two peer-reviewed scholarly special education journal research articles published within the last four years. The articles are to be in the area of the student's individual study and are to be used as references to support their presentations.

Quizzes: From time to time, and at the discretion of the professor, quizzes will be administered over the course of the semester. These quizzes may consist of, but are not limited to, short answer, true/false, multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer, and essay questions. The material covered will include all test chapters, lectures, assigned reading material, and class discussions that have occurred since the last quiz. These quizzes may be announced ahead of time or given as pop quizzes (which can occur at any time).

Candidates who are late (the quizzes will be given during the beginning of class) or absent on the day of a quiz, whether announced or unannounced, will receive a 0 for the quiz. There will be no make-ups for the quizzes. Instead, candidates may, at the end of the semester, delete their two lowest grades from final grade calculations. Since the quizzes are spread out over the semester, there will be no midterm or final.

Analysis & Reflections: From time to time, instead of a quiz or a worksheet, candidates will be expected to write a critical analysis and reflection on a particular subject. Each reflection will be a minimum of two pages and count the same as a quiz.

Worksheets: From time to time, instead of a quiz or an analysis and reflection, candidates will be expected to complete worksheets on a particular area. Each worksheet will count the same as a quiz.

Board Game: Candidates will create and present one board game based on South Carolina's *Pathways to Success*.

Individual Study Presentations: Candidates will choose one area from the curriculum in which to do an individual study. This will be presented at the end of the semester in the form of a power point to the class. Teacher approval of the subject can be requested at any time, but there is a deadline for the subject selection. Across the semester, candidates will submit outlines and drafts for their presentations which will be graded and these grades will be calculated as a part of the final presentation grade.

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*Tentative Class Schedule

Th 8-21 Class #1	Introductions, Explanations, and Expectations No preparation required
T 8-26 Class #2	Quiz (Assessment #1) (includes Chapter 1 & syllabus) Overview of Learning Disabilities Chapter 1
Th 8-28 Class #3	Court Cases Worksheet (A#2) due Court Cases & LD
T 9-2 Class #4	Overview of LD (continued)
Th 9-4 Class #5	Analysis & Reflection (A#3) on Court Cases due Oral Presentation of Journal Search due Assessment – Reciprocal Teaching Chapters 2 & 3
T 9-9 Class #6	Quiz (A#4) (includes Chapters 2, 3, & 4) Evaluating Research Articles Continuum of Services & Educational Settings Chapter 4
Th 9-11 Class #7	Quiz (A#5) (includes Chapter 5) Observations due Individual Study Presentation subject due Learning Theories Chapter 5
T 9-16 Class #8	Learning Theories (continued) Learning Theories Worksheet due (A#6) Article Critique #1 due
Th 9-18 Class #9	Quiz (A#7) (includes Chapters 5 & 6) Attention Deficit Disorder Chapter 6
T 9-23 Class #10	ADHD Worksheet due (A#8)

Th 9-25 Class #11	Attention Deficit Disorder (continued)
T 9-30 Class #12	<i>Pathways to Success</i> Article Critique #2 due
Th 10-2 Class #13	Quiz (A#9) (includes Chapter 7) Young Children with LD Chapter 7
T 10-7 Class #14	Young Children with LD (continued) Individual Study Presentation references page due
Th 10-9 Class #15	<i>Semester Midpoint – Fall Break – No Classes</i>
T 10-14	Outline of Individual Study Presentations Adolescents & Adults Chapter 8
Th 10-16 Class #17	Quiz (A#10) (includes Chapters 8 & 9) Medical Aspects Chapter 9
T 10-21 Class #18	Medical Aspects (continued) Observations due
Th 10-23 Class #19	Quiz (A#11) (includes Chapter 10) Oral Language Chapter 10
T 10-28 Class #20	Individual Study Presentation draft #1 due Oral Language (continued)
Th 10-30 Class #21	Language Development Worksheet (A#12) due Oral Language (continued)
T 11-4 Class #22	<i>Election Day – No Classes</i>
Th 11-6 Class #23	Board Game due Presentation of EEDA & Board Games

T 11-11 Class #24	Quiz (A#13) (includes Chapter 11) Reading - Decoding Chapter 11
Th 11-13 Class #25	Individual Study Presentation draft #2 due Reading - Comprehension
T 11-18 Class #26	Reflection on the Relationship between Reading and Written Language (A#14) Written Language Chapter 12
Th 11-20 Class #27	Written Language (continued)
T 11-25 Class #28	Quiz (A#15) (includes Chapter 12) Mathematics Chapter 13
Th 11-27 Class #29	<i>Thanksgiving Holiday – no classes</i>
T 12-2 Class #30	Quiz (A#16) (includes Chapter 14) Individual Study Presentations due Social & Emotional Behavior Chapter 14
Th 12-4 Class #31	Individual Study Presentations due <i>Last Day of Class</i>
T 12-9 2PM	<i>Final Exam Period</i>

*This schedule is a work in progress and may be changed at any time to meet the needs of the class

