A theme entitled *Education for Transformation* provides a conceptual framework that unifies programs at the Graduate School of Education. The mission of the University of Massachusetts Lowell to promote and sustain regional economic development. The Graduate School of Education (GSE) contributes to this mission by developing professionals who help transform the region through leadership roles in education. The GSE’s commitment to “Education for Transformation” produces graduates who:

- demonstrate excellent knowledge, judgment and skills in their professional fields;
- promote equity of educational opportunity for all learners;
- collaborate with other educators, parents and community representatives to support educational excellence;
- use inquiry and research to address educational challenges

The fundamental tenets of the School are excellence, equity, collaboration and inquiry.

*Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire*

*—William Butler*
My gift as a teacher is the ability to “dance” with my students, to teach and learn with them through dialogue and interaction.

- Palmer, 2000

Effective teaching is a dynamic mixture of expertise in a vast array of instructional strategies combined with a profound understanding of the individual students in class and their needs at particular points in time.

- Berliner, 1986

Course Overview
Goals: This course is designed to provide candidates seeking a Moderate Disabilities (PreK-8) license through the UMass Lowell Certificate Program with the foundation for understanding the Special Education policies, process, and procedures. Candidates will explore historic and current state and federal laws and regulations enacted to ensure that all children with disabilities receive free and appropriate education. Candidates will focus of the academic, social, emotional, and cultural challenges facing students identified in each disability category. They will develop a knowledge of research-based methods, best practices, instructional strategies, and assessment practices found to effectively address the learning and behavior needs of students identified with mild to moderate disabilities.

During the semester, our study of special education will draw from a variety of resources: class text, journal articles, websites, and others. Many of the readings will come from the required text and articles; some will be taken from the Internet.

Communication
My goal is to foster open communication within our learning community. Through in-class – large and small group – discussions, and one-on-one conversations, my hope is that we will address issues, concerns, and/or challenges directly while also generating/sharing insights, ideas and questions. I will be available to meet before and after class, or at another pre-arranged time. Additionally, I will be available by email.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Overview
Candidates are expected to attend all course sessions (with the exception of excused absence because of extenuating circumstances, such as medical emergencies); actively participate in full class and small group discussions; complete required weekly assignments in My Education Lab for Special Education in advance of each session (and write a related, brief reflection paper); and complete/present an end-of-semester major project.

Attendance and Class Participation (30%)
Attending all course sessions is essential to meaningful learning in this course, for you and for everyone in our learning community. Attentive, active participation in class – by sharing insights and generating questions – is strongly encouraged!
Candidates will often be asked to share briefs in class, whether within the large group or in a smaller sub-group.

**Weekly Reading Briefs (30%)**
- Beginning week two you will submit a weekly informal brief related to assigned activities. Each brief will answer the question, “How is what you have learned and observed in *MyEducation Lab for Special Education* (or assigned reading) going to change your instructional practices to improve student learning?”
  - This writing should be no more than one double-spaced page (and should not take more than 30 minutes to write).
  - The purpose of this assignment is to foster substantive engagement with the activities and readings – for individual learning, and for the benefit of our learning community. Briefs will be used to guide class discussions each week.
  - Each week, I will write comments on everyone’s briefs.
  - In lieu of a weekly reading brief for our 7/6; 7/13; and 7/20 class, an observation write up, case study, IEP development will be assigned.

**Final Project (40%)**
- *Strong Recommendation:* “keep a journal” throughout the semester, in whatever way is most helpful for you; this will help you as you reflect on, trace, and write about your learning. It will also provide you with information that may be useful for your final project.
- Presentations of final projects will take place during our July 27 class. At the end of each presentation, there will be time for discussion / input – clarifying questions, ideas, etc. – from others in the seminar. This will likely be very useful feedback. It is expected that you bring copies of your project for each member of our class. More details about this end-of-semester project will be given by early-June.

**Grading**
- Participation – 30%
- Weekly Reading Briefs, Observation Paper, Case Study, IEP development– 30%
- Final project – 40% - A rubric will be provided prior to the assignment

**Classroom Participation Rubric – maximum points = 30**

| Often cites from readings; uses readings to support points; always willing participant; responds frequently to questions; routinely volunteers point of view; demonstrates commitment through thorough preparation (3 points per class) | Occasionally cites from readings; sometimes uses readings to support points; often a willing participant; responds occasionally to questions; occasionally volunteers point of view; rarely unprepared (2 points per class) | Rarely able to cite from readings; rarely uses readings to support points; rarely a willing participant; seldom responds to questions; Often unprepared (1 point per class) |
### Weekly Reading Brief Rubric (case study, observation, and IEP) – maximum points = 30

| Response conveys extensive evidence of a personal response to the issues raised in the assigned activity; clearly states how the activity will change their instructional practices to improve student learning; cites relevant examples (3 points per brief) | Response conveys some evidence of a personal response to the issue raised in the assigned activity; demonstrates an ability to reflect on instructional practices; provides some examples. (2 points per brief) | Response conveys little evidence of a personal response to the issue raised in the activity; reflects on instructional practices but examples provided are minimal; (1 point per brief) |

### REQUIRED TEXT

OUTLINE OF COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS

Week One (5/25/10)
Introduction
Foundations of Special Education / Preparing to Teach Students with Mild and Moderate Disabilities

Focus Questions:
Special Education: How did we get to where we are now?
What should you know about federal and state laws and what do they mean for teaching children with special needs? How do these regulations guide identification and eligibility for special education services?
What are the basic principles of IDEA and Chapter 28 (MA Special Education law)? How do they relate to research-based practices and student achievement and how are they aligned with NCLB?
What is section 504 and what does it mean?

Week Two (6/1/10)
Special Education Policies and Procedures


Objectives:
- Candidates will develop an understanding of how Special Education mandates impact policies, procedures, and practices for the identification and eligibility determination of children with special needs.

Focus Questions
How does the special education process ensure students will meet high academic standards?
What is the Special Education Team Evaluation Process, from pre-referral to Eligibility Determination?

What are the specific disability categories and how are they defined?

**Week Three (6/8/10)**

**Students with Mild Disabilities – Specific Learning Disabilities**

**Focus Questions/Statements:**

How do we define and identify students with Specific Learning Disabilities?

What are the characteristics of learning disabilities and how do they impact acquisition of reading, math, and language skills in school-aged children?

What does brain research tell us about how students with learning disabilities process and respond to information?

Which scientifically research based programs address the needs of students identified with a specific learning disability.

**Week 3 Assignments:**

My Education Lab for Special Education (p 51): Select the topic *Learning Disabilities* and read the article entitled “Reading Disabilities and the Brain”.
Be prepared to discuss this article and share your insights.

**Week Four (6/15/10)**

**Students with Intellectual Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder and other health impairments**
Focus Questions/Statements:
How do we define and identify students with ADHD and mild intellectual disabilities?

What are the causes and characteristics ADHD and other health impairments, and mild intellectual disabilities and how do they impact acquisition of reading, math, and language skills in school-aged children?

What does brain research tell us about how students with ADHD process and respond to information?

Identify Executive Controls and how do they impact students with ADHD.

What specialized instructional approaches and related services assist students with mild intellectual disabilities in developing basic academic, social, and communication skills?

What assessment measures are used to assess adaptive functioning and general intelligence? How are the results of assessments used in decision making and program planning for students?

Week 4 Assignments:

1. My Education Lab for Special Education (p 83): Select the topic Intellectual Disabilities and watch the video “Beyond School: Rachel”. Be prepared to discuss your answer to the following question: How might you collaborate with a regular classroom teacher and a student like Rachel?

2. My Education Lab for Special Education: Select the topic Attention Deficit Hyperactivity and view the video ADHD. Be prepared to discuss the following:
What characteristics of ADHD does Eric demonstrate?
Eric’s educational planning was complicated by emotional and ADHD issues. As his classroom teacher, what resources would you draw upon to insure that all of Eric’s needs are being met?
Week Five (6/22/10)

Students with Emotional Disturbance
Students with Nonverbal Learning Disorders


**My Education Lab For Special Education:** *Select the topic: emotional and behavioral disorders.* View the following videos:

**Managing Behavior** - consider how the teacher uses developmentally appropriate techniques to engage and redirect the child.

**Teacher Praise** - Be prepared to discuss the management systems that were in place in this classroom.

**Behavior Disorders** - Be prepared to discuss how behavior and emotional impairments impact a child’s educational progress. Additionally, consider the accommodations teachers can make for a child with emotional or behavior impairments.

**Teaching Respect** – What additional activities can you implement in your classroom to promote social competence for students with learning difficulties in the general education classroom.

**Objectives:**
- Candidates will be able to identify and describe the academic, social, and behavioral characteristics of students identified with Nonverbal Learning Disabilities and Emotional Disabilities.
- Candidates will examine the impact these disabilities have on academic progress and identify specialized instructional methodologies, accommodations, and modifications necessary for students to make effective progress.

**Focus Questions:**

What are the common characteristics and educational needs of students identified with nonverbal learning disorders?

What are the causes and characteristics of children identified with emotional disturbance, and how do they effect student learning, socialization, and behavior?

How are behavior, motivation, and academic achievement inextricably linked?

Which scientific research based instructional methodologies, strategies, and resources will assist you in working with these students?
How do educators work as a team to integrate positive behavior supports and interventions into instructional practice?

**Week Six (6/29/10)**

**Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders**


(PP 82-120)

**Focus Questions:**
What are the causes and characteristics of children identified with an autism spectrum disorder (Autism, PDD, and Asperger’s) and how do they effect student learning and behavior?

What are the environmental, sensory, communication, social skill, and behavioral challenges for a student with an autism spectrum disorder and how do you effectively meet their needs within a least restrictive setting?

What is Chapter 57 and how do you address it within a student’s IEP?

**The Inclusive Classroom**


**MyEducationLab for Special Education**: select the topic *Parents and Families*. Then read the article, *Interactive Teaming*. Be prepared to share your thoughts.

**Objectives:**
- Candidates will be able to compare and contrast the characteristics of students with autism, PDD, Asperger’s Syndrome.
- Candidates will identify appropriate instructional strategies, accommodations, and modifications to ensure that these student’s academic, communication, social, emotional, and behavioral needs are met within the least restrictive setting.

**Focus Questions:**
What makes a classroom an inclusive classroom?
How do you define a Least Restrictive Environment and how do you ensure students’ needs are being addressed effectively within that setting?

What are the contemporary models of collaboration?

How does the special educator work with other professionals in planning, implementing, and progress monitoring learning activities?

**Week 7  (7/6/10)**

**Classroom Management**


Observe the student you have identified for your case study. Write a one-page paper describing the lesson presented, the student’s engagement in the lesson, his/her interaction with peers and staff. Note observed behaviors related to academic challenges, attention, social interaction, and motivation. Describe specific strategies (or specialized programs) the teacher employed and how the student(s) responded to those strategies.

**Objectives:**

- Candidates will investigate how to plan and implement social skills instruction for students with special needs.
- Candidates will become familiar with the functional behavior assessments practices that identify social, affective, cognitive, and environmental factors that contribute to behavior problems within the school setting.
- Candidates will review the significant impact that learning disorders can have on student’s ability to maintain his/her motivation in a variety of settings.

**Focus Questions/Statements:**

Describe your school culture and how you promote behaviors that are beneficial to all learners. What do you do when challenging behaviors warrant corrective action?

How does structured training in social skills reduce the risk of problem behaviors in the school environment? What strategies do you implement to enhance and develop social skills so that all students learn in a safe environment?

What are the IDEA regulations regarding discipline of special needs students and how do schools respond when these students’ behavior warrants an evaluation?

What strategies will you begin to use in your classroom to improve learning for your special needs students?

Candidates will share an example of a classroom assessment in a subject area of their choice and identify how they would use the assessment to guide decision making for students with special needs.

Case Study: ******

**My Education Lab for Special Education** ( p241)

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<th><strong>Objective:</strong></th>
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<td>- Candidates will identify the fundamental elements of Pyramid Response to Intervention.</td>
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<td>- Through a review of tiered intervention models, candidates will be able to identify strategies to differentiate core instruction, to provide targeted supplemental interventions, to monitor progress, and to prescribe specific scientifically researched based instruction for students in need of intensive interventions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Candidates will compare and contrast the use of the RTI model versus the aptitude/achievement discrepancy model for the identification of students with Specific Learning Disabilities.</td>
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**Focus Questions:**

What is Pyramid Response to Intervention (PRTI) and how does it provide supplemental support to struggling learners and integrate special education and regular education?

What assessment practices have you implemented in your classroom and how do you monitor progress?

Considering the many challenges special needs students experience when required to demonstrate acquisition of knowledge, what types of assessments will you use to determine effective progress? How will you use the data from these assessments to guide your instructional decision-making?

What strategies do you use to differentiate instruction for struggling learners?

What research based contemporary methods of teaching guide educators in instructional
Which contemporary methods of teaching do you currently utilize and why?

Based on the information you have gained from this unit, what strategies and techniques will you now begin to implement in your classroom to ensure success for all students?

What information pertinent to student learning must be considered when developing an IEP?

Week Nine (7/20/10)
Instructional Strategies Across the Curriculum


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<td>• Candidates will learn how to link assessment with instructional strategies, classroom accommodations, and specialized instruction in the areas of literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Given a student profile of their choice, candidates will develop a comprehensive IEP which will identify student strengths, how the disability impacts learning, appropriate accommodations, modifications, and SMART goals.</td>
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Focus Questions/Statements:
What assessment approaches, instructional strategies, and methodologies support the development of reading, mathematics, science, and social studies instruction for special needs students?

Identify ways in which you can incorporate technology into your instruction. How does technology maximize the ability for students to acquire and demonstrate knowledge across the curriculum?

Week Ten (7/27/10)
Lesson presentations and wrap up