

EDUCATIONAL STUDIES 318 - SPECIAL EDUCATION
TRINITY COLLEGE
FALL 2001

Prerequisite ED 200, PSYCH 295 or permission of instructor
Tuesday 6:45 PM - 9:15PM
McCook 225

Dr. Mark S. Brown

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Office: Wheaton 116 (adjacent to Health Services)

Office Hours: Tuesday 4PM - 6PM **NOTE: I am on campus on Monday and Thursday also and can arrange other hours if requested.**

Brief Course Description:

Educational Studies 318 explores the field(s) of Special education from four perspectives:

- historical and cultural heritage
- diagnostic criteria
- educational intervention and accommodations
- legal protections and advocacy

Students are invited to trace how children are labeled or mislabeled . . . how parental advocacy empowers legal access to services for children with special needs . . . how adults are challenged by learning disabilities and differences . . . how definitions and diagnoses have changed over the past two decades . . . how media and cultural features shape and drive educational policy and practice in Special Education . . . how research methodologies interface with media and cultural features . Students will critically analyze current research on disorders, review special education case law, and identify community resources for children and adults with special needs.

This outline will guide you through the course with regard to readings and assignment deadlines. There should be ample flexibility in adapting to each student's needs and interests through collaborative projects and opportunities for practicum experiences. You will ultimately shape the course direction after the first six weeks of lectures, video presentations and guest speakers.

Student Objectives:

1. Students will identify historical markers which predate current policies and practices in Special Education.

2. Students will demonstrate understanding of the evolution of definitions of concepts including: "normal", "disabled", "handicapped", and "challenged".

3. Students will participate in a case study approach to major domains of exceptionality and disability, including:

Learning Disabilities (Nonverbal and Language Based)

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD)

Spectrum Disorders (Autism, Asperger's, Pervasive Developmental Disorder)

Developmental Disability and Mental Retardation.

4. Students will demonstrate understanding of how diagnostic criteria work in conceptualizing Special Education "labels".

5. Students will demonstrate understanding of the history of legal protections for students with special needs: The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (PL101-476); the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (PL 94-142); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

6. Students will demonstrate understanding of the educational, planning and intervention processes utilized by local public school districts to implement Special Education services, including safeguards for students and parents as collaborators in planning and placement decisions.

7. Students will analyze and compare services related to Special Education in public v. private domains.

8. Students will identify current conflicts emerging within educational communities regarding: eligibility criteria and funding for Special Education.

9. Students will recognize the voices of challenged and disabled individuals and their families as legitimate reflections of all of our voices.

10. Students will fulfill all individual and collaborative assignments.

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Texts:

Robert J. Sternberg and Elena L. Grigorenko, Our Labeled Children. (Reading: Perseus Books, 1999). **Note: Paper edition available 2001**

Lennard J. Davis (editor), The Disability Studies Reader. (New York: Routledge, 1997).

Additional readings will be distributed in class.

Class Attendance:

Weekly meetings of 2.5 hours means that we will pack in substantial information, as well as class activities and guest speakers. Students are expected to be on time and prepared. There is no "excused absence" policy. If you find yourself unable to attend one session, **timely** notification is essential and "make-up" work can be negotiated. If you miss two sessions you will be asked to leave the course.

Exams:

The Mid-Term will be on October 30 and will consist of short answer and essay items. The exam will be cumulative. This exam is weighted approximately 20% of your grade.

There is no Final Exam; **however, the final exam date will be used 'as a presentation date when individual Major Assignments are presented.**

Weekly Assignments:

There are two types of weekly assignments. In-class collaborative activities will be used to provide forums for discussion of video tape presentations and to problem solve a variety of issues. Additionally, occasional 2 - 3 page reaction papers will be assigned based on text and other readings. Weekly assignments are weighted approximately 20% of your grade.

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Major Project:

To meet the 10 Student Objectives listed above, we clearly need another **60%**! That's the Major Project. And, that 60% is divided -- 40% Written, 20% Oral Presentation.

Throughout the first weeks of the semester we will sift through a variety of readings and other resources from which, hopefully, will emerge areas of interest which can evolve into a Major Project for each student. Some of you may have experience in special needs classrooms or in other Special Education settings. Others may wish to blend issues relating to Psychology, Sociology, Neurobiology, Et cetera with issues highlighted in Education 318.

Consultations between students and instructor early in the semester are essential (and required). This supports the recognition that the topic and format you choose will move beyond another "long research paper instead of a final exam ..."

Major Project Model Structure:

"Specialist" Model

1. Select one primary area of disability or learning difference in which you plan to "specialize" by researching its evolution or "discovery"; its history of diagnostic procedures and treatments; and its defining characteristics within earlier and current societies. **Pay particular attention to competing, contrasting, and conflicting interpretations and educational, psychosocial, or medical treatments over time! You can compare "symptom" lists across generations to observe "what's in a name".**

Research must include information relating to legal and statutory safeguards (past and current). Additionally, school policies and procedures for developing pupil placements and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) need to be considered from school, parent and student points of view. Philosophical battles over such ideas as "inclusion", "portfolio assessment alternatives", and co-teaching may be examined as related to intervention or treatment modalities.

2. Compile relevant research materials from scholarly journals and texts. For historical perspectives there is no "statute of limitations" regarding dated texts and articles. **However, for current perspectives articles and texts need to be within the past decade.**

3. Develop an Outline and Chronology which traces and summarizes key milestones and changes in educational and other interventions.

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4. Identify another area of learning difference or disability -- an secondary area -- with which you can draw parallels or contrasts to your primary area of research. This area requires less breadth of research, but appropriate depth.
5. Write up your "Specialist" research in a 20 -25 page paper with appropriate citations and with a format and style consistent with research standards. An annotated bibliography is required. (Further discussion will determine when in the course of your work the bibliography will be due.)

NOTE: Thus far not too different from other research . . .
For example, you could choose Dyslexia as a primary area of research looking back to 19th century concepts of reading and of literacy . . . then forward to the current heated educational and political debates about teaching reading to children with special needs. You can choose "Giftedness" as a secondary area and scrutinize relationships between differences which may place an Individual in perpetual conflict between competence and challenge...
Or , what about ADHD and Learning Disabilities . . . and Giftedness . . . and "Conduct Disorder" . . . How about parental advocacy and children with Autism . . . or with significant developmental disabilities with onset at birth? The role of psychopharmaceuticals with . . . preschoolers... Montessori and medication . . . Medication issues and development of behavioral controls . . . sense of self . . . Socialization of the Asperger's individual with stories and scripts . . .

6. You are now a specialist and you are in high demand. The next step in the Major Project is the preparation for an Oral Presentation which will take place in class sessions in late November and early December (remember, save the "finals" date!). There are choices here. You may continue to complete your scholarly research and construct your 30 ▪ **45 minute** Oral Presentation based totally on what you have identified in text and articles. You may include video resources.

Or . . . you may opt for an Oral Presentation which includes observations, interviews, and other directly acquired data from experts in the field of Special Education, parents, and students. To take on this option we will need to discuss consultation and observation opportunities in Greater Hartford. More on this option in class . . .

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Class Schedule:

September 4, 2001

Class Introductions, Review Syllabus
Video: Origins of "Normalcy" in Testing

September 11

Due: Sternberg and Grigorenko (S&G): pp Preface - 90
Davis(D): pp 9 -28; 75 - 109

Learning Disabilities: Labels, Liabilities, Leverage, and Luck
Video: "F.A.T. City -- How Difficult Can this Be?" with Dr. Richard Lavoie
In-Class Activity with Follow Up Home Assignment (due 9-25)

September 18

No Class Rosh Hashonah

September 25

Due: S&G : pp 93 - 189
D: pp 110 - 127
153 - 171

Due: Follow-Up Home assignment (TBD)

The Neuropsychology of Learning Disabilities Part I

Language Acquisition, Cognition, Deafness: Modality, Myth, and Mastery

October 2

Due: Non-text readings to be provided

The Neuropsychology of Learning Disabilities Part II

"Educational Care" and Caring: Biology and Education In the Work of Mel Levine, M.D.

Mental Energy Distribution and Control: ADHD Primer (To be continued . . .)

In Class Activities, Self "Assessments"

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October 9 Trinity Day

MOVIE "The Rain Man" and Forum on Oddness

October 16

Due: Non-text assignment on Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Students will be divided into Reading Groups representing perspectives of individuals diagnosed with Autism or Asperger's Syndrome or representing the work of diagnosticians and practitioners. Included is work by Dr. Temple Grande, Donna Williams, Dr. Lorna Wing, Tony Atwood, Dr. Fred Volkmar and Dr. Donald Cohen. Group presentations will focus on the merger of "experiencing Autism" and "treating Autism".

Videos: Dr. Temple Grande
PBS "Newshour" (A Chemist's Approach)
PBS "Frontline" (Facilitative Communication)

October 23

Communication Disorders and Communication Systems: Guest Lecture

The Work of Dr. Barry Prizants

Video: PECS System

October 30

Mid-Term Exam

Outlines Due for Major Project

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November 6

Due: D pp 203 • 240; 241 - 294

In Class Activity Based On Readings and Media Analysis

Stigma and Vulnerability, Profile of "The Healthy Family" in Western Society

Gender and Disability

A Review of Developmental Disabilities and Parental Advocacy For Retarded Children

How Birth To Three and Early Identification Systems Work (Guest Speaker)

November 13

Due: S&G pp 191 • 260

Advocacy, Politics, Courtrooms -- Lottery Without Jackpots

Parents and Students Speak -- Class Forum With Guests

In-Class Activity

Preparation and implementation will cover two weeks and includes participation from parents and high school students.

November 20

Attention! Attention Deficit Disorder: ADHD Revisited with Dr. Russell Barkley and others

Videos on ADHD Current Constructs (Executive Function: "Inhibition, Time, and Self Control") (Adult ADHD)

Medication Wars in Preschool, Groves of the **Academe**, in Work and Life

Intervention Paradigms

Hallowell on ADHD and on Worrying

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November 27. December 4. December 11

MAJOR PROJECT ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Dates will be assigned to individuals.

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Who's normal here? Who's odd? Who's got a problem? Who will make it?
Who's living up to potential . . . to expectations . . . to standards?
Who's normal? What's normal? Why normal?

"Now I am a customer representative for Southern Sattelite Systems in Tulsa. We distribute WTBS . . . out of Atlanta . . . and my job is selling and talking to cable operators all across the U.S. ... the part I like best (about work is) . . . to have . . . the (identified) problem . . . explained to them in a way that they (can understand) ..." (Pat)

"I started to teach last January, as a long-term substitute teacher. Now I teach chemistry and physics." (Guy)

"My favorite role is the one I just finished, the Stage Manager in "Our Town". (Michael)

"I had a boyfriend at CSI and his name is **Phillip**. I would be living with him if I were ready to go out on my own . . .we may get married." (Judy)

"I'm pretty independent; very strong-willed . . . jovial . . ." (Issac)

"I got a car when I turned 17 . . . I've been a real safe driver." (Trish)
Adapted from Voices by Michael Orlansky and William **Heward**, 1981

" 'I've written a book,' I said to the (psychiatrist) behind the desk, 'I want you to read it and tell me why I'm like I am,' I told him.

"The psychiatrist was taken aback and asked me what the book was about. I told him how I'd been called crazy, stupid, disturbed and just plain weird, and that my father had told me people said I was autistic.

" 'Well, the way you've presented me this book seems rather autistic,' he commented.

"He asked why I'd chosen him to read it, and I explained that I'd simply looked for a door with the right label on it."
From Nobody Nowhere by Donna Williams, 1992

"(at 14) . . . he collected and classified facts and ideas in much the same way he collected and classified stamps, birds ... memorabilia . . . they did not become integral parts or illustrative examples . . . they were never inwardly related aspects of an overall system of meaning. They seem to have remained, simply, collections."

K. Davis on FDR cited by Dr. Mel Levine, Developmental Variation and Learning Disorders, 1987