University Mission and Guiding Principles:
Teaching and learning constitute the central mission of Western Carolina University. The University seeks to create a community of scholarship in which the activities of its members are consistent with the highest standards of knowledge and practice in their disciplines. The guiding principle for instruction in the College of Education and Allied Professions is the belief in the educator as an inviting, reflective, decision-maker.

Rationale/Purpose:
This course provides an overview of exceptional children with an emphasis on methods and materials for integrating students into general classrooms in elementary and middle grades.

Multicultural Focus:
The disproportionate representation of culturally diverse students in special education programs is addressed throughout the text and discussions of this course. Differentiated instruction lesson plans and projects are assigned to address diversity in the classroom.

Course Objectives:
Upon successful completion of SPED 337, students will be able to:
1. reflect on their own philosophies about the individual needs of students;
2. describe legislation relating to individuals with disabilities;
3. identify the characteristics of exceptional learners;
4. analyze the issues surrounding the labeling and stereotyping of students;
5. collaborate in problem-solving activities and curriculum planning for diverse learners
6. develop effective teaching strategies for all students, including those with disabilities;
7. differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students in the classroom;
8. utilize strategies that promote learning and social acceptance in the classroom;
9. develop classroom accommodations for students with disabilities;
10. develop strategies that enhance motivation and self-esteem in students;
11. develop classroom strategies for creating a classroom community;
12. critique and reflect upon in-class behaviors of teachers that either promote or inhibit instruction of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

“The biggest mistake of past centuries in teaching has been to treat all children as if they were variants of the same individual, and thus to feel justified in teaching them the same subjects in the same ways.”
~ Howard Gardner

Required Textbook:

Supplemental Readings:
Case studies and articles will be accessible online through course reserves, WEBCAT, or distributed in class.
“A disability label is not the defining character of a person, any more than one’s age, religion, ethnicity, or gender is the defining characteristic.”
~ Kathie Snow

**Student Responsibilities:**

1. Students are required to attend all classes, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class. Students will be allowed one absence without penalty to the final grade. In the case of absence, students will be responsible for getting the material covered in class.

2. **Assigned readings are to be done before the class meeting. Dates for most reading assignments are in the tentative course schedule. Others will be assigned as appropriate.**

3. Students are required to **actively** participate in class. Assignments are to be turned in on time. Points will be deducted for late assignments.

4. Students must adhere to academic honesty in their work. If plagiarism is evident, the student will receive no credit for the assignment and may receive a failing grade for the class. Turnitin software will be used to analyze plagiarism.

5. Any student with a documented disability requiring accommodations to complete course requirements should make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible.

**Class Attendance and Participation**

Students are expected to attend all classes and actively participate in class discussions and activities. Collaborative learning activities are planned throughout the semester, which will count in the participation grade. If a student is absent for more than one class, 25 points will be deducted from the participation grade for each additional absence. More than 3 absences will constitute a failing grade for the course. If at all possible, students should notify the instructor PRIOR to their absence. It is the student’s responsibility to ask the instructor for make up possibilities.

**Course Requirements:**

**Class Meeting and Strategic Collaborative Reading Reflections**
Students will be required to read the individual articles and produce a 2 page reflective paper that outlines 1. their reaction to the article, and 2. how the information presented could be incorporated into a Jamaican classroom

**Chapter Reading Reflections**
Students will be asked to reflect upon 5 chapters during the course. Each reflection will consist of 1-2 pages (as determined by the professor)

**Reflective Journal**

- **Arrange to interview** the parent and/or child with a disability and reflect on their educational history or experiences and how they have been assisted during the educational process by the school. Reflect on what you will do as a future educator to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities and families based on the information provided in the interview.
Disability in the Media and Reference Guide/Research Project for Diversity in the Classroom

Develop and lead a class discussion about a movie, book, or current media that portrays a person with a disability. Show a short clip of the media or read a selection of printed material. Include an activity that helps establish the purpose of your selection. Assignment can be done singularly or in pairs.

Cooperative groups will conduct research relating to an assigned area of disability. Information will primarily come from the text. This assignment will be done in conjunction with Disability in the Media assignment. The project will include a simulation or awareness activity to implement with the class. Partial class time will be given to work on this project in groups. Additional information will be given when the assignment is discussed in class. A rubric for the presentation will be developed.

Evaluation and Grading:

Class attendance, participation, in-class assignments 100 points
Chapter Reading reflections 50 points
Reflective Journal 50 points
Class Meeting and Strategic Collaborative Reading 100 points
Research/Reference Guide on Diversity and Media presentation on Disabilities 200 points

TOTAL: 500 Possible Points

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