

**University of Lethbridge
Faculty of Education**

**Education 5620: Learning Disabilities
Fall 2019**

Instructor: Dr. Mitchell Colp, R.Psych.
Email: mitch.colp@uleth.ca
Virtual Office Hours: By appointment
Term Dates: September 4, 2019 to December 4, 2019

Course Description

This course will explore the etiology and treatment of learning disabilities within child, adolescent, and adult populations. Specific emphasis will be drawn towards contemporary issues related to identification and assessment, evidence-based intervention methods, and the ecology that manifests social, emotional, and behavioural challenges for students with learning disabilities in educational contexts.

Learner Outcomes

Through completing this course, students will:

- (1) Become familiar of the wide-range of learning disabilities that can manifest within child, adolescent, and adult populations.
- (2) Understand contemporary approaches and issues revolving the identification and assessment of children, adolescents, and adults with learning disabilities.
- (3) Develop knowledge of what constitutes evidence-based intervention and cultivate strategies that can be used for a broad array of learning disabilities that can present in child, adolescent, and adult populations.
- (4) Comprehend the social ecology that surrounds students with learning disabilities and how educators can intervene on the social, emotional, and behavioural functioning of these students.

Course Delivery and Design

This is a fully online course delivered in an asynchronous manner. Students will be expected to participate in online discussions, view brief video content, complete assigned readings and online quizzes, and craft intervention recommendations that support students with specific learning challenges.

Required Textbook

Lerner, J.M. & Johns, B. (2014). *Learning disabilities and related disabilities: Strategies for success (13th ed.)*. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.

Assigned Reading List by Week

Week 1: Introduction to Learning Disabilities

Required Textbook: Chapter 1

D'Intino, J. & Drapeau, M. (2017). Learning disabilities in Canada: Definitions and accommodations. *Canadian Psychology, 58*(3), 228-237.

Penney, C., & Drapeau, M. (2018). Rethinking the concept of learning disability. *Canadian Psychology, 59*(2), 197-202.

Stegemann, K. (2016). Learning disabilities in Canada. *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal, 14*(1), 53-62.

Week 2: Methods of Detection and Assessment

Required Textbook: Chapter 2

Johnson, E.S. (2014). Understanding why a child is struggling to learn: The role of cognitive processing evaluation in learning disability identification. *Topics in Language Disorders, 34*(1), 59-73.

Kavale, K. (2005). Identifying specific learning disability: Is responsiveness to intervention the answer? *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 38*(6), 553-562.

Maki, K., Burns, M., & Sullivan, A. (2018). School psychologists' confidence in learning disability identification decisions. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 41*(4), 243-256.

Week 3: Specialized Instruction, Educational Setting, and the Role of Family

Required Textbook: Chapters 3 and 4

Falik, L. (1995). Family patterns of reaction to a child with a learning disability: A mediational perspective. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 28*(6), 335-341.

Kennedy, M.J., & Deshler, D.D. (2010). Literacy instruction, technology, and students with learning disabilities: Research we have, research we need. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 33*(4), 289-298.

Lewis, R. (1998). Assistive technology and learning disabilities: Today's realities and tomorrow's promises. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 31*(1), 16-26.

Week 4: Theories of Learning

Required Textbook: Chapter 5

Applegate, A.J., Applegate, M.D., & Turner, J.D. (2010). Learning disabilities or teaching disabilities? Rethinking literacy failure. *Reading Teacher, 64*(3), 211-213.

Mcgrath, A., & Hughes, M. (2018). Students with learning disabilities in inquiry-based science classrooms: A cross-case analysis. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 41*(3), 131-143.

Week 5: Social, Emotional, and Behavioural Challenges

Required Textbook: Chapter 6

Brobbey, G. (2018). Punishing the vulnerable: Exploring suspension rates for students with learning disabilities. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 53*(4), 216-219.

Buonomo, I., Fiorilli, C., Geraci, M., & Pepe, A. (2017). Temperament and social-emotional difficulties: The dark side of learning disabilities. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology, 178*(3), 193-206.

Cavioni, V., Grazzani, I., & Ornaghi, V. (2017). Social and emotional learning for children with learning disability: Implications for inclusion. *International Journal of Emotional Education, 9*(1), 100-109.

Week 6: Young Children, Adolescents, and Adults with Learning Disabilities

Required Textbook: Chapter 8 and 9

Alberta Government (2017). Working together to support mental health in Alberta schools. Retrieved from <https://goo.gl/abvSaz>

Mental Health Commission of Canada (2016). The mental health strategy for Canada: A youth perspective. Retrieved from <https://goo.gl/hSUo29>

Week 7: The Role of Spoken Language

Required Textbook: Chapter 11

Kent, S., Wanzek, J., Petscher, Y., Al Otaiba, S., & Kim, Y. (2014). Writing fluency and quality in kindergarten and first Grade: The role of attention, reading, transcription, and oral language. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 27(7), 1163-1188.

Slusser, E., Ribner, A., & Shusterman, A. (2019). Language counts: Early language mediates the relationship between parent education and children's math ability. *Developmental Science*, 22(3), N/a.

Week 8: Reading Disabilities

Required Textbook: Chapter 12

Fuchs, Douglas, Compton, Donald L., Fuchs, Lynn S., Bryant, V. Joan, Hamlett, Carol L., & Lambert, Warren. (2012). First-grade cognitive abilities as long-term predictors of reading comprehension and disability status. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 45(3), 217-231.

Gustafson, Stefan, Falth, Linda, Svensson, Idor, Tjus, Tomas, & Heimann, Mikael. (2011). Effects of three interventions on the reading skills of children with reading disabilities in grade 2. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 44(2), 123-135.

Week 9: Writing Disabilities

Required Textbook: Chapter 13

Gillespie, Amy, & Graham, Steve. (2014). A meta-analysis of writing interventions for students with learning disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 80(4), 454-473.

Roessingh, H., Nordstokke, D., & Colp, M. (2019). Unlocking academic literacy in grade 4: The role of handwriting. *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 35(2), 1-19.

Week 10: Mathematics Disabilities

Required Textbook: Chapter 14

De Weerd, F. (2012). Working memory in children With reading disabilities and/or mathematical disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities.*, 46(5), 461-472.

Fleischner, J.E., & Manheimer, M.A. (1997). Math interventions for students with learning disabilities: Myths and realities. *School Psychology Review*, 26(3), 397-413.

Week 11: Comorbid Conditions

Required Textbook: Chapter 7

Dupaul, G., Gormley, M., Laracy, S., Montague, M., & Cavendish, W. (2013). Comorbidity of LD and ADHD: Implications of DSM-5 for assessment and treatment. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 46(1), 43-51.

Fuchs, L., Compton, D., Mann Koepke, D., Miller, K., & Miller, B. (2013). Intervention effects for students with comorbid forms of learning disability: Understanding the needs of non-responders. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 46(6), 534-548.

Week 12: Semester Wrap-Up

No required readings for this week. Students are encouraged to use the available time to complete any outstanding learning tasks and the final online quiz.

Weekly Course Schedule

| Week | Date | Topic |
|-------------|--------------|---|
| 1 | September 4 | Introduction to Learning Disabilities |
| 2 | September 11 | Methods of Detection and Assessment |
| 3 | September 18 | Specialized Instruction, Educational Settings, and the Role of Family |
| 4 | September 25 | Theories of Learning |
| 5 | October 2 | Social, Emotional, and Behavioural Challenges |
| 6 | October 9 | Young Children, Adolescents, and Adults with Learning Disabilities |
| 7 | October 16 | The Role of Spoken Language |
| 8 | October 23 | Reading Disabilities |
| 9 | October 30 | Writing Disabilities |
| 10 | November 6 | Mathematics Disabilities |
| 11 | November 20 | Comorbid Conditions |
| 12 | November 27 | Semester Wrap-Up |

Changes To Schedule

Please note that changes to the schedule may occur in response to student questions and conversations and/or to meet the emerging needs and dynamics of the participants in the course.

Learning Tasks

There are four required Learning Tasks for this course.

| Learning Task | Description | Percentage | Due Date |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Discussion Board Reflection | 30% | Weekly |
| 2 | Midterm Online Quiz | 20% | October 14 |
| 3 | Final Online Quiz | 20% | November 25 |
| 4 | Intervention Recommendations | 30% | November 28 |

Important Note: Percentage scores will be given for each course assignment. The weighting of each will be calculated and summed to provide the final letter grade. The completion of all assigned tasks is required for a passing grade in this course. All assignments are due by 11:59pm of the assigned date.

Late Bank

A 5 day “Late Bank” will be provided to all students, and they can use these days at their own discretion and without explanation during the term. For instance, a student could submit his/her/their discussion board post 2 days late and his/her/their intervention suggestion paper 3 days late, or just his/her/their intervention suggestion paper 5 days late without penalty. The “Late Bank” cannot be used, however, for the Midterm Exam or Final Exam. This is designed to provide students with some flexibility regarding personal situations, illness, workload management, or other concerns that may arise during the course timeline. Once you have used up your 5 Late Bank days, a penalty of 5% per day will apply for unexcused late assignments. No submissions will be accepted after December 4, 2019.

Learning Task #1: Discussion Board Reflection (30%)

Over the course of the term, students will be expected to provide **six reflections** related to the assigned reading list. Recognizing there are 11 weeks of assigned readings, students may pick any six of these to provide a written reflection. These reflections will be due by the **Saturday of each week**. For example, if a student wishes to complete a reflection on Week 10 (November 6, 2019: Mathematics Disabilities), their written reflection will be due no later than November 9, 2019 at 11:59pm MST. In the event that a student experiences difficulty in submitting their reflection on time, they are allowed to employ their 5 day "Late Bank" to avoid penalty.

Each reflection post is graded on a pass/fail basis and will, overall, constitute 30% of their final grade. If a student obtains a passing grade on all six reflection, they will receive the full 30% towards their final grade in the course.

Criteria for assessment of this learning task can be found in Appendix A.

Learning Task #2: Midterm Online Quiz (20%)

The midterm online quiz will cover the first five weeks of assigned readings, and constitute 20% of the final grade. Students will be given **one hour** to complete the online quiz assessing their knowledge, understanding, and synthesis of course materials and core concepts to date. While this quiz is open book, students will be expected to complete it independently. The quiz will be made available on **October 8** and be composed of 25 multiple choice questions. Students may complete the one-hour quiz anytime between **October 8** and **October 14**. Material covered up to and including **October 2** will be assessed in the quiz.

Learning Task #3: Final Online Quiz (20%)

The final online quiz will be non-cumulative and cover material since the midterm online quiz, and constitute 20% of the final grade. Students will be given **one hour** to complete the online quiz assessing their knowledge, understanding, and synthesis of course materials and core concepts. While this quiz is open book, students will be expected to complete it independently. The quiz will be made available on **November 19** and be composed of 25 multiple choice questions. Students may complete the one-hour quiz anytime between **November 19** and **November 25**. Material covered up to and including **November 6** will be assessed in the quiz.

Learning Task #4: Intervention Recommendations (30%)

Each student will be assigned a fictitious scenario of a student experiencing a specific learning difficulty within the domain of reading, writing, and/or mathematics. They will be tasked to generate intervention recommendations that could be carried out by teachers in the classroom and identify mechanisms by which parents can support intervention within the home environment. These recommendations will be formatted in a written style suitable to for them to be completed by a novice educator or parent, and should span no more than six pages. This learning task will constitute 30% of their final grade. This learning task will be due to the instructor by **November 28**.

The recommendations will then be compiled by the instructor to be shared with all students, with the intention of facilitating the development of a recommendations folder for future use. Recommendations should be evidence-based, although citations are not required. You may also wish to include pertinent websites and reading materials easily accessible to teachers and parents.

Criteria for assessment of this learning task can be found in Appendix B.

COURSE GRADING

The course will be graded based upon successful completion of course requirements as per course outline and determined by the course instructor. Percentage scores will be given for each course assignment/learning task, excluding the discussion board posts which require a pass for each of the individual posts. The weighting of each percentage score will be calculated and summed to provide the final letter grade.

| Percentage Value | Letter Grade | Grade Point Average |
|-------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 97-100 | A+ | 4.00 |
| 93-96 | A | 4.00 |
| 90-92 | A- | 3.70 |
| 87-89 | B+ | 3.30 |
| 83-86 | B | 3.00 |
| 80-82 | B- | 2.70 |
| 77-79 | C+ | 2.30 |
| 73-76 | C | 2.00 |
| 70-72 | C- | 1.70 |
| 67-69 | D+ | 1.30 |
| 63-66 | D | 1.00 |
| <63 | F | 0.00 |

Important Note: Any course with a grade of less than B- cannot be considered for credit in completing a Masters of Education within the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge. It is also at the instructor's discretion to round off either upward or downward to determine a final grade when the average of term work and quizzes are between two letter grades.

Student Conduct

Students are subject to the student discipline policy for academic and non- academic offences in accordance with the University Calendar. Student Discipline Policies available:
<https://www.uleth.ca/ross/sites/ross/files/imported/academic-calendar/sgs/sgs.pdf>

Academic Honesty

The University of Lethbridge subscribes to Turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection service. Please be advised that assignments submitted in this course may have their originality verified using this system.

Professional Obligations and Standards

The University of Lethbridge subscribes to Turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection service. Please be advised that assignments submitted in this course may have their originality verified using this system.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Please do not use the names of people or schools or school boards in your discussions. Any writing or discussion board postings should use pseudonyms if it is necessary to mention a person or school. The idea here is not to use any identifying information about people in your conversations. That being said, if you do discuss situations and stories in your course work (written or online discussions) we would expect that these conversations remain confidential and not be discussed outside of the course. The short video lectures in this course may not be distributed without prior consent from the course instructor.

Withdrawal From The Course

If you have indicated in writing to your instructor that you will be withdrawing from an online course, your access to that course will need to be removed as soon as possible. You must notify the program staff immediately to complete the required paperwork.

Students with Disabilities/Other Needs Policy

If you are a student with a disability, special learning needs, or a recent injury that requires academic accommodation to complete the required activities and/or assignments, please follow the procedures outlined in the University Calendar.

Appendix A

Evaluation Rubric for Learning Task 1

| Area | Pass | Fail |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Content | <p>Post reflects a basic understanding of key learning points. An in-depth account of all information is not necessary, nor appropriate.</p> <p>Students are NOT required to provide information regarding study methodologies/data for this particular task.</p> | <p>Only restating the ideas found in the assigned readings.</p> <p>Entry exceeding 500 words.</p> |
| Reflection | <p>The post reflects on how the information identified would apply to the students current/future/hypothetical field of practice.</p> | <p>Post does not provide a reflection.</p> <p>It is not necessary to agree with all assigned sources, but posts that simplistically state that the information does not apply to a student's area of practice will not be given a passing mark.</p> |
| Writing Form | <p>The post predominantly reflects the student's own writing. If summarizing key information from sources in their reflection, ideas are appropriately paraphrased.</p> | <p>More than 10% of the text consists of direct quotations.</p> <p>Any instance of not crediting sources appropriately/plagiarism is considered a failed submission.</p> |

Appendix B

Evaluation Rubric for Learning Task 4

| Area | Exemplary | Good | Unacceptable | Score |
|---|--|---|--|--------------|
| Quantity of Suggestions | 12+ suggestions. | 8 - 11 suggestions. | 7 or fewer suggestions. | / 10 |
| Quality of Suggestions | Suggestions have a strong evidence-base. | Suggestions have an adequate evidence-base. | Suggestions have a poor evidence-base. | / 20 |
| Practicality of Suggestions | Suggestions are practical and useful to both parents and teachers. | Suggestions are practical and useful for parents or teachers. | Suggestions are neither practical nor useful. | / 10 |
| Sentence Structure & Word Choice | Varied sentence structure; scholarly style; easy to read. | Varied sentence structure; few awkward passages. | Limited variety of sentences; informal style; awkward wording. | / 5 |
| Grammar & Mechanics | No grammar or mechanical errors in the write-up. | 1-2 grammar or mechanical errors in the write-up. | 3+ grammar or mechanical errors in the write-up. | / 5 |
| | Total / 50 = % | | | |