Interventions for Students with Cultural/Linguistic Differences

EDSE 679
(Pre-requisite/Co-requisite EDSE 670)
University of Northern Colorado

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Phone: 720-284-7227
Online Office Hours: Weeknights, 7:00 - 9:00

“The question is not what you look at, but what you see.”
-Henry David Thoreau

Course Rationale

This course critically analyzes issues of equity through a culturally responsive lens as it applies to assessment, interventions, and education of all students, particularly those with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Understanding equity in schools begins with an examination of “normal,” which is often based on the notion of the normal distribution, bell-shaped curve used to characterize the measurement of achievement and ability. While the bell curve as a statistical tool is valid for measuring the distribution of random events, applying it to humans is inaccurate because human behaviors are simply not random. This commonsense, problematic belief about the bell curve promotes the notion that some students will excel, most will be average, and some will fail. “Normal” implies good across multiple domains (e.g., psychology, medicine). By default, difference is considered deviance, a very problematic analogy. In schools, concepts of “normal” create boundaries in which some students fit and others are marginalized based solely on issues of race, culture, language, and/or perceived ability.

One negative outcome of the concept of “normal” is the disproportionate representation (DR) of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in special education. Disproportionate representation refers to whether or not the percentage of a minority group in special education is larger or smaller than the percentage of that group within the educational system as a whole. Although identification and placement into special education is beneficial and necessary for children with disabilities, it can be stigmatizing and lead to inequitable educational opportunities for students who are mis-identified. And, this can happen if the placement is based on a lack of knowledge regarding cultural/linguistic differences.

Culturally responsive teaching, using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of culturally and linguistically diverse students as avenues for teaching them more effectively, can work to eliminate DR in special education while also supporting CLD exceptional learners in both general and special education. The Response to Intervention (RtI) model was designed to ensure that all students receive quality, evidence-based, culturally responsive instruction in general education before being referred to special education.
Course Description and Objectives

In this course, students will critically increase their knowledge and understanding of:

1. Impacts of cultural diversity in special education:
   - Explore inequities in education
   - Recognize factors leading to disproportionate representation
   - Develop awareness of language differences versus disabilities

2. Issues related to identification/placement of CLDE students in special education:
   - Articulate the role of assessment in DR of CLD students
   - Analyze, develop and/or select appropriate, culturally relevant assessment measures
   - Examine the ACCESS test and issues of accommodations and alternate testing

3. Concerns with established instructional models:
   - Examine general education instructional practices for CLD learners
   - Explore special education instructional practices for CLD learners

4. Importance of collaboration for achieving success with CLD students:
   - Explore collaboration models with families and faculty/staff

Relationship of this Course to the Program Knowledge Base

The faculty of the School of Special Education believes:
- Students with exceptionalities are part of a larger community of diverse learners;
- All students can learn when provided with effective instruction, advocacy, and supports;
- Learners with exceptionalities excel when they are held to the same high standards and expectations as all other students; and
- The larger mission of education is best served when special educators collaborate with families, general educators, and related services professionals.

In this course, students will understand the unique assessment and instructional needs of students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and how to collaborate with teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals and parents to design effective culturally responsive instructional strategies.

Professional Standards

Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Special Education Specialist:
9.01 (1) (d), 9.01 (1) (f), 9.01 (2) (b), 9.01 (2) (c), 9.01 (2) (d),
9.01 (3) (a), 9.01 (3) (c), 9.01 (4) (b), 9.01 (4) (c), 9.01 (4) (d)
Course Expectations

Readings, Discussions, and Assignments:

The success of this class depends on your presence and participation online. Students not actively participating in discussions are not supporting others.

Each online weekly unit will open early Monday morning and will close Sunday night at midnight. It is suggested that you open each unit on Monday. Each unit will begin with an organizational calendar that will include the weekly topic, readings, and assignments. It is suggested that you begin reading right away so that you are able to respond to the readings on the discussion board. Your first post will be expected by Thursday at 5:00 pm. You will also be expected to read and respond to other’s posts before the unit closes on Sunday night. Every week, you will be expected to contribute to our class discussion board. This will assist us with continued collaboration throughout this course. Your discussion posts will be a part of your grade. Please see the rubric in the grading section below for points granted per discussion post.

Due dates for readings, discussions and assignments are indicated in the course calendar. Please complete all assigned readings, videos, and activities, and post your responses to discussion prompts in a timely manner.

Written Work:

All written projects must be typed and in correct APA style: 12 point font, one inch margins, double-spaced. Writing quality, including mechanics, organization, and content, should be at graduate level. Written projects are due by 5:00 pm on the date assigned in the syllabus. See Purdue’s writing lab for support with writing in APA style: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/.

Late assignment policy:

Late papers and projects will not be accepted without penalty, excepting extraordinary circumstances. Assignments are due on the date and time indicated in the syllabus. It is essential that you complete and turn in assignments on time.

Required Texts

Book (available on Amazon):


**Articles/Online Chapters (links provided in each weekly unit):**


**Suggested Readings:**


**Grading**

Grades are based on points received for assignments and participation as follows:

- Literature Review Assignment: **50 points**
- Electronic Strategy Resource Book: **30 points**
- Discussion Responses: **20 points**
Assignments

1. Literature Review Assignment (50 points):

Students who are culturally and linguistically diverse are often overrepresented in special education in both behavioral and academic needs. A multi-tiered system of support, such as RtI or PBIS, can help us respond to the behavioral and academic needs of CLD students, if developed correctly. For this assignment, you will write a review of the literature that examines issues surrounding the overrepresentation of CLD students in special education, specifically looking at how we can meet their needs in a multi-tiered model of support.

Your focus for your literature review may be on either an academic or a behavioral need, and should be drawn from your own work experience. After identifying a topic or issue, research and write a literature review discussing the current and relevant literature related to this topic. The final section of your paper should focus on the implications of this literature review for your school. For this paper, draw from at least 10 research articles, with 8 coming from peer-reviewed journals.

Please review the folder “Literature Review” in the “Assignments” tab on the course website for specific support in completing this assignment.

2. Electronic Strategy Resource Book: (30 points)

For this assignment, you will gather at least 8 ideas, resources, and instructional strategies learned from this course to create a strategy resource book that you can use to share with colleagues. For each strategy, you will include:

1. Description of the strategy
2. Relevance for:
   a. Working with students (assessment, instructional strategies, evidence-based practices, behavioral strategies)
   b. Working with families
   c. Working with other faculty members

Be creative in how you put together your resource book. Be sure to make it attractive and engaging as you will share it with colleagues. The final format is up to you, but it must be capable of being sent electronically (e.g., Word, PowerPoint, pdf).

3. Discussion Responses (20 points):

It is my philosophy that learning occurs in collaboration with others. As we share together our questions, thoughts, ideas and beliefs, we push ourselves and others to grow and learn more. Therefore, the success of this class depends on your participation. Be prepared each week by having read the assigned readings and engaging in the activities. Post your discussion responses to the prompts provided along with any questions, concerns and insights about the readings or
activities by 5:00 on Thursday of that week. Discussion responses should be no more than 3 paragraphs in length and will be graded based on the following rubric:

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<th>Points</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Grading Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>The comment is accurate, original, and relevant to the topic. It contributes something new to the discussion, makes connections to the PowerPoint or to other readings, and is well written. Three point comments are expansive in nature by stimulating reflective and/or creative thinking about the issue being discussed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>The comment lacks at least one of the above qualities, but is above average in quality. A two point comment makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the issue being discussed.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>The comment lacks two or more of the above qualities. A one point comment presents little or no new information.</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>No comment submitted, comment is a repeat of a classmate's response without citing or acknowledgement (indicates participant has not read prior posts), or comment adds no value to the discussion.</td>
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The following are guidelines for determining final grades:

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<th>Percentile</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>95 – 100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>93 – 94</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>91 – 92</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>88 – 90</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>86 – 87</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<td>84 – 85</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>80 – 83</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>78 – 79</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<td>76 – 77</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>72 – 75</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>70 – 71</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 70</td>
<td>F</td>
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Course Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>January 12-16</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Disproportionate Representation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Due:</strong> Discussion Response</td>
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<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>January 19-23</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Multi-Tiered Models of Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Due:</strong> Discussion Response</td>
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<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>January 26-30</strong></td>
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| **Second Language Acquisition – Assessment Issues** | **Due:** Draft of 1 strategy for Electronic Resource book  
**Due:** Citations for literature review |
| **Week 4** | **February 2-6** |
| **Culturally Responsive Teaching** | **Due:** Discussion Response |
| **Week 5** | **February 9-13** |
| **Collaboration** | **Due:** Discussion Response |
| **Week 6** | **February 16-20** |
| **Strategies for Language Acquisition** | **Due:** Discussion Response |
| **Week 7** | **February 23-27** |
| **Literacy Strategies** | **Due:** Discussion Response |
| **Week 8** | **March 2-6** |
| **Completion of the Course** | **Due:** Literature Review  
**Due:** Electronic Strategy Resource Book |
University Policies

Disability Access: Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services office (970-351-2289) as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Policy on Incompletes: An "I" is assigned due to unanticipated circumstances the last week of the term that make the student unable to complete course requirements within the allotted time (e.g. he/she missed the final examination due to sickness, an emergency in the family). The instructor must submit to the school director, a written notice of the specific coursework to be completed before the final grade is determined; a copy is kept in the school and one is provided to the student. To amend a grade of "I" with an earned grade on a student's transcript, the student must complete all incomplete course work by the last day of the next semester, including summer term. If the course requirements are not completed within the time limitation and the grade received in the Registrar's Office, the grade will be recorded on the academic record as a failing or unsatisfactory grade.

Policy on Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the act of appropriating the written, artistic, or musical composition of another, or portions thereof; or the ideas, language, or symbols of same and passing them off as the product of one's own mind. Plagiarism includes not only the exact duplication of another's work but also the lifting of a substantial or essential portion thereof (UNC definition). Regarding written work in particular, direct quotations, statements which are a result of paraphrasing or summarizing the work of another, and other information which is not considered common knowledge must be cited or acknowledged, usually in the form of a footnote. Quotation marks or a proper form of indentation shall be used to indicate all direct quotes. Regarding class projects, you are not to use as your entire presentation the completed works of faculty members, fully imported websites, or any other body of work in which you are not the author. Of course, with proper referencing, you can import portions of such works and websites to enhance and illustrate your presentation, and you can provide references to these other works for students who have an interest in pursuing a topic further.

Policy on Originality of Products: You are encouraged to build on your own previous work from other classes and programs, and to integrate material and ideas that you have learned in other classes into this class, with appropriate referencing. But projects from other classes are not to be duplicated and turned in to fulfill EDSE 679 requirements, nor can you take work that you completed in another class and simply re-configure it, or enhance it, for this class. In other words, you are expected to do original work for each project and assignment that you complete in this class.

Diversity Statement: The College of Education and Behavioral Sciences (CEBS) supports an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, appreciated and recognized as a source of strength. We expect that students, faculty and staff within CEBS will be accepting of differences and demonstrate diligence in understanding how other peoples’ perspectives, behaviors, and world views may be different.
from their own. Furthermore, as stated by UNC, “The University will not engage in unlawful discrimination in…educational services against any person because of race, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, or veteran status. It is the University’s policy to prohibit discrimination in…educational services on the basis of sexual orientation or political affiliation.” (See http://www.unco.edu/hr/AAEO_TitleIX.htm)

Please visit the CEBS Diversity and Equity Committee website for more information on our commitment to diversity (http://www.unco.edu/cebs/diversity).