

SPED 413
Teaching Adolescents with Learning Problems
Western Carolina University
Montego Bay, JA

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Students need to know that you care before they care what you know.
Unknown

Course Description:

This course is designed to explore teaching strategies and social and emotional issues for adolescents with learning problems. There are no prerequisites.

Textbooks:

Ellis, G. (2005). *For nothing at all*. Oxford, UK: Macmillan Publishers.

Minskoff, E. & Allsopp, D. (2003). *Academic success strategies for adolescents with learning disabilities & ADHD*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Additional Readings:

Dole, S. & McMahan, J. (2005). Using videotherapy to help adolescents cope with social and emotional problems, *Intervention in School & Clinic*, 40 (3), 151-155. Electronic version available on class on Blackboard and also on the Academic Search Complete in Hunter Library.

Evans, H. (2006). Improving teaching and learning. In H. Evans, *Inside Hillview High School: An Ethnography of an Urban Jamaican School* (pp. 143-154). Kingston, JA: University of West Indies Press.

Electronic version available on class on Blackboard.

Kafele, K. (2009). Developing a young men's empowerment program. In *Motivating black males to achieve in school & in life* (pp. 71-90). Alexandria, VA: ASCD. Electronic version available on class on Blackboard.

Parry, O. (2000). *Male Underachievement in high school education in Jamaica, Barbados, and the Grenadines*. Kingston, JA: Canoe Press. Electronic version available on class on Blackboard.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of the requirements of the class, students will be competent in the following knowledge and skills:

1. reflecting on their own philosophies about the individual needs of adolescents with learning problems;
2. collaborating in problem-solving activities and curriculum planning for adolescent learners;
3. discussing the reasons for male underachievement in high school in Jamaica and developing strategies to cope with this issue;
4. creating a classroom climate that is welcoming and psychologically and physically safe for all students;
5. developing strategies that enhance motivation and self-esteem in adolescents;
6. examining policies and strategies for improving the link between school and work;
7. creating an environment that encourages self-advocacy and increased independence;
8. helping their students to become active rather than passive learners by teaching them organization strategies, test-taking skills, notetaking skills, study skills, and advanced thinking skills;
9. using strategies to increase reading comprehension;
10. using strategies to improve writing mechanics and composition;
11. using concrete to abstract methods to teach both procedural and conceptual mathematics understanding;
12. demonstrating sensitivity for the culture, language, religion, gender, ability or disability, socio-economic status, and sexual orientation of individual students.

Conceptual Framework:

The mission of the professional education programs at Western Carolina University is to prepare highly effective and ethical graduates that are **inspired** to be lifelong learners, **engaged** in the community, and empowered to become leaders who strive to **transform** the future. *Teaching Adolescents with Learning Problems* incorporates several of the basic components of the conceptual framework, including the following:

- advocating for all students and recognizing and respecting the diversity that exists in Jamaican classrooms;
- supporting effective, research-based teaching and learning in today's learning environments;
- nurturing productive, responsive world citizens;
- making a positive impact beyond the classroom.

Jamaican Relevancy:

This course focuses on strategies and methods that are applicable to all adolescents with learning problems in general education classrooms in Jamaica. Particular attention is paid to the issue of underachievement of adolescent males.

Technology Requirements:

The course is a face-to-face course supplemented by the Blackboard 9 learning platform. Students will use the tools within Blackboard including Email Messages, My Grades, and the Library. They will also have access to the resources placed on the class in Blackboard. In addition, they will create documents using word processing.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Western Carolina University makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. To receive academic accommodations, students must be registered with the Office of Student Support Services. The letter received from Student Support Services should be presented as documentation to the instructor as early in the course as possible.

WCU's Academic Honesty Policy

Western Carolina University, as a community of scholarship, is also a community of honor. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students work together to achieve the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense at Western Carolina University because it

threatens the quality of scholarship and defrauds those who depend on knowledge and integrity. Academic dishonesty includes the following: cheating, fabrication, and plagiarism.

Facilitation of Academic Dishonesty

An act of academic dishonesty, including a first offense, may place the student in jeopardy of suspension from the university. A repeated violation or more serious first offense may result in expulsion. Disciplinary records for any act of academic dishonesty are retained by the Office of Judicial Affairs for at least five years from the date of final adjudication. These records are available to prospective employers and other educational institutions in accordance with federal regulations.

The Special Education Program uses plagiarism prevention software to ensure students have not plagiarized an assignment. Faculty, also, recommend that students take the Plagiarism Self-Test at <http://www.wcu.edu/11869.asp>. Many professors require this as an assignment within specific courses. WCU instructors reserve the right to use plagiarism prevention software (such as SafeAssignment.com), as well as Google, Yahoo, and/or other Internet search engines to determine whether or not student papers have been plagiarized. With plagiarism prevention software, instructors may upload student papers into the searchable database or teach students how to upload their own work as part of the course requirements. It is recommended that students read WCU's Academic Integrity Policy to ensure understanding of consequences related to academic integrity violations. The Academic Integrity Policy is overviewed above, but can be found in detail at <http://catalog.wcu.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=231#honestypolicy>.

Code of Student Conduct

Western Carolina University deems sexual harassment to include conduct constituting sexual harassment under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The University Code of Student Conduct Policy is located at:

<http://www.wcu.edu/24861.asp>.

Clinical or Field Experience Component:

Students will conduct an interview with an adolescent or young adult with learning problems and write a reaction paper.

Additional Reading:

As students move through their program they should be assembling a reference bibliography. Please include the following titles in your reference list.

Fiction:

Dawes, N. (2009). *The last enchantment*. Kingston: Caribbean Modern Classics.

Set in Jamaica in the racial politics of the 1950s and 60s, this is the story of a young man trying to find himself in a society divided by class.

McCauley, D. (2010). *Dog-heart*. Leeds, UK: Peepal Tree.

The story of a boy from a Kingston ghetto living in abject poverty and the attempts of a middle class single mother to help him.

Nonfiction:

Brown, A. & Meyers, M. (2008). Bringing in the boys: Using the theory of Multiple Intelligences to plan programs that appeal to boys. *Children and Libraries*, 4-9.

Cash, R. M. (2011). *Advancing differentiation: Thinking and learning for the 21st century*. Book and CD Rom. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Press.

Evans, H. (2006). *Inside Hillview High School: An ethnography of an urban Jamaican high school*. Kingston, JA: University of West Indies Press.

Heacox, D. (2002). *Differentiating instruction in the regular classroom*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Press.

Tomlinson, C. A. & Strickland, C. A. (2005). *Differentiation in practice: A guide for differentiating curriculum, grades 9-12*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Winnebrenner, S. (2006). *Teaching kids with learning difficulties in the regular classroom*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Press.

Student Responsibilities:

- Students are expected to demonstrate professionalism by attending all classes, arriving on time, and staying for the entire class. Class attendance is figured into the participation grade, the rationale being that if you are not in class you are not participating.
- Students are to observe professional decorum in class discussions by actively listening to the speaker, by not interrupting the speaker, by not speaking out without being called upon, and by giving classmates a chance to express themselves, even if you disagree with them.
- Assigned readings are critical to understanding the course content and are to be done before the class meets. Students are required to actively participate in class discussions and activities. Participation counts in the final grade. Assignments are to be turned in on time. Points will be deducted for late assignments.
- 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 course.
- Any student with a documented disability requiring accommodations to complete course requirements should make an appointment with instructor as soon as possible.

Course Requirements:

“Me Bag”

Adolescence is a critical time in a child’s life as that is the time when identities are formed. Prepare a “Me Bag” to share with the class that demonstrates your identity. Fill the bag with articles that represent who you are as a person (family, career, interests, etc.) Be creative! Be ready to share your “Me Bag” on the first day of class. Sharing of “Me Bags” will be limited to 10 minutes for each person.

For Nothing at All

Please read the novel before class begins on June 2nd and be ready to discuss it in class. Be prepared to discuss the following questions:

- What was your overall impression of the book?
- What do you think that the title means?
- Is the story realistic? Why or why not?
- Why do you think that the author used a flashback technique to tell the story?
- Describe the main characters.
- Comment on the statement that Wesley made that “Those who

ignored school would have seen me as an example of what they could have become if they had followed the rules, behaved themselves, and stayed out of trouble.”

Adolescent Interview and Reaction Paper

You are to interview an adolescent or young adult with learning problems, at risk of dropping out of school, or has already dropped out of school and write a reaction paper. Interview questions should be concerned with the following:

- School life (for example, Do you attend school every day? Why or why not? What do you like best about school? If you could change something about school, what would you change? What are the academic standards that you set for yourself?)
- Curriculum (for example, What subject do you like best? Why? What is it about the subjects that you don't like that make you not like them? Do you think that what you are learning will help you later in life? Why or why not? Is much of what you are learning relevant or important to your life?)
- Teachers and Teaching (for example, What do you expect from your teachers? If you could describe an ideal teacher, how would you describe him or her? How do you learn best? How could teachers better meet your needs? If you were to teach your classes for a week, what kinds of things would you do and/or have your students do?)
- Career goals (for example, What do you plan to do after you finish school? How are you preparing for this? What is the school doing to help you prepare for your career?),
- Life goals (e.g., What will your life be like 10 years from now? How will you achieve these goals? How do you plan to overcome any obstacles to achieving your goals?).

Submit your questions to the instructor for feedback before you conduct the interview. Write your reaction to the interview in a 3-4-page paper (double-spaced).

Paper should include the following:

- a description of the interviewee (do not use real name),
- a short summary of the responses to the questions and your reaction to them;
- what you learned from the interview that you can apply to your teaching of adolescents, and;

- the interview questions at the end of the paper (Interview questions are not included in the 3-4 pages.).

Do not use the student's real name in your written paper; use a pseudonym. If you want to conduct your interview before class begins on June 2nd please email your questions to the instructor for approval before conducting your interview. Be sure to obtain written permission from the person you interview or permission from a parent if the child is under 16.

Group Project

Working in groups, you will develop an interactive presentation to instruct the class on one of the following topics (instructor will do test taking):

- Organization
- Study Skills
- Notetaking
- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Advanced Thinking

Information for your group presentation can be taken from the textbooks for this course and previous courses as well as from additional sources from Hunter Library. Group presentations will be limited to 30 minutes each.

Quiz on Group Projects

You will have one quiz that will be based on the information presented in the group projects.

Bibliotherapy/Videotherapy Lesson Plan

You will select one book or video vignette to use as the focus of a bibliotherapy or videotherapy lesson with a group of adolescents or young adults. Your product, a lesson plan, will include the following:

1. the objective of the lesson;
2. the grade level and classroom setting;
3. a synopsis of the story or video;
4. themes explored in the book or video;
5. introductory activities;
6. a minimum of 6 discussion questions to help students explore the issues (this is the most important part of the lesson);

1. follow-up activities from which future lessons can be drawn.

An electronic article on videotherapy that includes a sample lesson plan can be downloaded from Hunter Library and will also be available on the class on Blackboard. You will give a brief description of your bibliotherapy/videotherapy lesson plan in class as well as turn in a written copy.

Written Assignments

Students are expected to consult multiple sources for major research assignments (class presentations and final exam case studies) and to use APA Style for all citations and references. There is information on APA style in the Library tab in Blackboard and on the Course Menu in Blackboard.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

“Me Bag”	25 points
Class Attendance and Participation	100 points
Group Project	75 points
Quiz on Group Projects	25 points
Bibliotherapy/Videotherapy Lesson Plan	100 points
Adolescent Interview and Reaction Paper	100 points
TOTAL	425 points

A = 90% or greater A = 383 or greater*

B = 80-89% B = 341-382

C = 70-79% C = 298-340

D = 60-69% D = 255-297

F = less than 60% F = less than 297

*Pluses and minuses will be used for the upper and lower ranges.

Tentative Class Schedule

Date	Reading Assignments/Activities
Monday, June 2	Course Overview and Introductions Share your “Me Bag” with classmates. Read Ellis book <i>before course begins</i> and be ready to discuss it the first 2 days of class. Interview questions due (may be emailed to

	instructor before course begins)
Tuesday, June 3	<p>Continue discussion of Ellis book. Read Dole & McMahan article on videotherapy on class on Blackboard. Read Chapters 1 and 2 in Minskoff and Allsopp text. Check out Learning Tool website that goes with text: http://coe.jmu.edu/learningtoolbox Log on to the class on Blackboard and check out the resources. Work on group presentations</p>
Wednesday, June 4	<p>Read <i>Male Underachievement in High School Education</i> and <i>Developing a Young Men's Empowerment Program</i> on Blackboard and be prepared to discuss.</p>
Thursday, June 5	<p>Read Chapters 3 and 4 in Minskoff & Allsopp textbook.</p>
Friday, June 6	<p>Read Chapter 5 in Minskoff & Allsopp textbook. Zigsaw activity based on handouts on cooperative learning (on Blackboard)</p>
Monday, June 9	<p>Read Chapter 7 in Minskoff & Allsopp. Instructor presentation on test taking</p>
Tuesday, June 10	<p>Read Chapters 6, 8, and 9 in Minskoff & Allsopp. Presentations on Organization, Study Skills, and Notetaking</p>
Wednesday, June 11	<p>Read Chapters 10, 11, and 12 in Minskoff & Allsopp. Presentations on Reading, Writing, and Math Interview reaction paper due</p>
Thursday, June 12	<p>Read Chapter 13 in Minskoff & Allsopp. Presentation on Advanced Thinking</p>
Friday, June 13	<p>Quiz on Group Presentations Bibliotherapy/videotherapy lesson plans due Monday, June 16 Share lessons learned from interview reaction papers in class.</p>

