University of New Mexico’s Special Education Concentration

Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities: Studies in Educational Equity for Diverse Exceptional Learners

The faculty of the Concentration in Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities: Studies in Educational Equity for Diverse Exceptional Learners strongly advocate for educational equity, social justice, and inclusive education for individuals with disabilities. The Concentration was approved by the UNM Faculty Senate as an official emphasis within the Special Education Program in the Spring of 2001. This was preceded by several years of program development, including a coherent vision, needs assessment, the development of new courses, and faculty recruitment.

We have a collaborative team of faculty, who support a strong and vital learning community here at UNM and within our local schools:

- Ruth Luckasson, J.D., Distinguished Professor and Department Chair
- Liz Keefe, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Program Coordinator
- Nitasha Clark, M.ED, Lecturer III
- Susan Copeland, Ph.D., Associate Professor
- Veronica Moore, Ph.D., Lecturer III and Field Coordinator, Dual License Program
- Kelley Peters, Ph.D., Lecturer III and Program Manager of the APS/UNM Partnership Program in Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities
- Cathy Qi, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Concentration Coordinator
- Julia Scherba de Valenzuela, Ph.D., Associate Professor

We offer a number of exciting courses, including:

- Advocacy and Empowerment
- Applied Behavior Analysis
- Assessment for Diverse Exceptional Learners
- Brain, Mind, and Education
- Collaboration for Inclusive Education
- Cultural and Linguistic Diversity among Individuals with Mental Retardation
- Differentiating Reading Instruction in Inclusive Settings for Students with Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities
- Legal Rights of Individuals with Disabilities
- Reading Methods for Students with Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities
- Issues in Research with Individuals with Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities

06/17/2009
• Sexuality Education for Individuals with Disabilities
• Special Education Law
• Teaching Students with Intensive Communication Needs
• Teaching Students with Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities
  • The Social Construction of Disability
  • Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders
  • Research and Teaching/Intervention in Autism Spectrum Disorders
• Math Methods for Students with MR/SD
• Leadership
• Science Methods for Students with MR/SD
• Mental disorders and Students With Mental Retardation And Severe Disabilities
• Advanced Field Experience
**Rationale**

Many factors contributed to the need to rethink the UNM special education offerings in intellectual disabilities and severe disabilities. Critical directions for reshaping this program arose from new understandings about intellectual disabilities and other disabilities, new legal requirements, changes in service delivery, advocacy by individuals with disabilities and their families, focus on lifelong community supports, and educational reform efforts.

Recently, the major paradigm in intellectual disabilities has shifted from a trait-based conceptualization to thinking about intellectual disabilities as an interaction between people with significant limitations in intellectual functioning, their environments, and needed supports. This new way of thinking forces reanalysis of structures designed to assist individuals in creating for themselves satisfying lives.

One way this changing paradigm is being expressed is in the new ways individuals with intellectual disabilities are being served in the public schools of this city, greater metropolitan area, state, and nation. Systems are moving toward a unified model of service delivery and individuals with intellectual disabilities who require a range of supports are more frequently being served in their neighborhood schools. Quite often, supports are being provided within general education settings or in cross-categorical special education classes, rather than within disability-specific classrooms for students with special needs.

Significant policy changes are also reflected in the legal requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) Amendments of 2004. For example, the law mandates that states which still fund on the basis of the type of setting in which a child is served, must not violate the least restrictive environment (LRE) section of the statute. Further, if the state does not have policies and procedures to assure compliance with LRE, the state must revise its funding mechanism.

Increasingly, people with intellectual disabilities, their families, and friends demand participation and lifelong community inclusion. They urge changes in the ways in which lifelong supports are provided and call our attention to the need for a smooth transition from childhood to adolescence, adulthood, and later, aging.

Issues of autonomy and empowerment faced by students with disabilities are similar to issues faced by other historically excluded groups. Research and changes in educational models for students with intellectual disabilities can serve as a catalyst for other aspects of school reform.

It is clear that district level administrators expect personnel to be knowledgeable in addressing the needs of students with intellectual disabilities and severe disabilities who may be served in a variety of new service models. The expectation that professionals entering the profession will be capable of providing appropriate instruction for children and youth with mental retardation and severe disabilities is now being expressed by school-based leaders as well.

These changes necessitated a rethinking of our intellectual disabilities and severe disabilities program to encompass wider issues of educational equity for all diverse and exceptional learners.
Goals of the Concentration

The goals of the UNM Special Education Concentration in Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities: Studies in Educational Equity for Diverse Exceptional Learners are:

To prepare and develop teachers and other leaders, to conduct research, and to provide service, consistent with the following principles:

1. Diverse exceptional learners and their families need teachers and other support personnel with particular skills.
2. Functioning is the result of interactions between individuals with disabilities and their environments.
3. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment should be aligned.
4. Instruction, materials, and management techniques specific to mental retardation and other disabilities should be challenging, relevant, interesting, and involving, and affirm the dignity and humanity of all children.
5. The full range of intensities of supports, including intermittent, limited, extensive, and pervasive should be provided.
6. A multitude of school and community opportunities should be created and supported so that students can participate in life to the fullest.
7. Educators should advocate for students and families.
8. Individuals with disabilities should be supported in their choices to engage in all activities appropriate to their ages and participate in diverse and inclusive educational environments.
9. Individuals with disabilities are lifelong learners.
10. Individuals with disabilities should be supported in their efforts to create for themselves personally satisfying lives.
11. The multicultural environment of New Mexico is unique and valuable.
12. Educators should reflect on their own teaching and strive to provide high quality education.
13. Educators should enable the voices of all children, in all their intelligences.
14. Special education must be considered within the broader context of educational reform issues.
15. Effective schools and classrooms require collaboration and cooperation.
16. There is a critical need for collaborative networks of supports, including but not restricted to school networks.
17. Research improves educational outcomes for students, families, and their communities.
18. Research informs and is embedded in teaching practice in both undergraduate and graduate special education.
19. Research values and supports multiple perspectives in issues facing diverse exceptional learners and their families.
20. Research develops and implements improved social policy.
21. Research and teaching should be integrated in order to support educators in their role as teacher/researchers.
22. Special education should assist and create partnerships with schools and community agencies in improving education opportunities.
23. Special education should assure advocacy for diverse exceptional learners, their families, and communities.
24. Special education should enhance the voices of people with disabilities and their families in policy discussions at the local, state, and national levels.

Degree Programs & Requirements

We offer following degree and licensure programs:

- B.S.Ed. in Special Education and Elementary Education (Dual License Program)
- M.A. in Special Education
- Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) in Special Education
- Ph.D. in Special Education
- Graduate Certificate for Instruction for Students with Intensive Social, Language, and Behavioral Needs (ISLB)

Graduates of the Dual License Program receive a B.S.Ed in Special Education and Elementary Education, and are eligible for a PreK-12 license in Special Education and a K-8 license in Elementary Education. Graduates of our M.A. license program, including participants in the APS/UNM Partnership Program in Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities, are eligible for a PreK-12 license in Special Education.

For information on any of our post-baccalaureate/graduate programs, please contact Dr. Cathy Qi, Concentration I Coordinator: (505) 277-4452 or hqi@unm.edu.

For information on the Dual License Program, please contact Dr. Veronica Moore, the Dual License Academic Advisor: (505) 277-4462 or vmoore@unm.edu.

For information on the APS/UNM Partnership Program in Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities, please contact Dr. Kelley Peters, Program Manager: (505) 277-7967 or kpeters@unm.edu.

Graduate Student Advisement:
Graduate students are assigned a faculty advisor by the Concentration Coordinator on admission to the Concentration. Students accepted into the Concentration should contact their advisor and make an appointment as soon as possible to find...
out about available courses and requirements. Your faculty advisor will help you select the appropriate courses to meet State Licensure, University, and Concentration requirements.

**Requirements for the Masters:**

For those students with a special education license (or who are not pursuing a special education license AND who already have taken the prerequisites or their equivalents), the M.A. in the Concentration can be completed in a minimum of 36 credit hours. The University requires completion of a final product for the M.A., which can take the form of either: a comprehensive examination, a thesis, or a Masters project.

**Requirements for the APS/UNM Partnership Program in Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities:**

The Albuquerque Public Schools (APS)/UNM Partnership Program in Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities is designed to support teachers entering the field of special education who do not hold a special education license. Intern teachers receive a stipend of at least $15,450 for their first year of teaching and up to 45 hours of paid tuition to complete an MA in Special Education in the Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities Concentration in a two year period. Interns also receive direct support in their classroom for two years through the Program, in addition to the opportunity to participate in APS new teacher support and staff development. Intern teachers are eligible for a K-12 License in Special Education in New Mexico by program completion and agree to teach in APS for two years after the completion of licensure requirements.

For more information on New Mexico State requirements for licensure, please contact the New Mexico Public Education Department.

**Mailing address:**

New Mexico Public Education Department  
Professional Licensure Bureau  
Attn: Licensure  
300 Don Gaspar  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Check application status: (505) 827-6587 (Telephone)  
Live person: (505) 827-5821 (Telephone)  
(505) 827-4148 (Fax)  
Email: licensureunit@state.nm.us  
Website: http://sde.state.nm.us/Licensure/index.html

For more information about any of the programs described above, please contact us:
Mental Retardation and Severe Disabilities: Studies in Educational Equity for Diverse Exceptional Learners
Department of Educational Specialties, MSC05 3040
1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-0001
Email: hqi@unm.edu
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prerequisites (6 hrs)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPCD 501 Psych of Exceptional Persons’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPCD 520 Nature and Needs of Students with MR’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MA Requirements (36 hrs min.)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Behavioral Support (3 hrs)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPCD 519: ABA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Inclusive Education (3 hrs)** |  |  |
| SPCD 507: Collaboration for Inclusive Education |  |  |

| **Research (3 hrs)** |  |  |
| SPCD 505: Issues in Research in Sp Ed (or other advisor-approved graduate level research class, such as LLSS 502, EDUC 500, or EdPsych 500) |  |  |

| **Law (3 hrs)** |  |  |
| SPCD 510: Special Education Law |  |  |

| **Social Justice (3 hrs)** |  |  |
| SPCD 511: Social Construction of Disability |  |  |
| SPCD 525: Legal Rights |  |  |
| SPCD 524: Advocacy & Empowerment |  |  |

| **Assessment (3 hrs)** |  |  |
| SPCD 527: Assessment for Diverse Exceptional Students* |  |  |

| **Methods (9 hrs)** |  |  |
| SPCD 552: Teaching Students with MR/SD* |  |  |
| SPCD 586: Reading in Inclusive Settings* |  |  |
| SPCD 587: Reading Methods for MR/SD* |  |  |
| Other: |  |  |

| **Advanced Development (9-12 hrs)** |  |  |
| SPCD 528: Sexuality Education |  |  |
| SPCD 523: Mental disorders and Students With MR/SD |  |  |
| SPCD 526: Motor Assessment |  |  |
| SPCD 559: Cultural & Ling Diversity among Indiv with MR |  |  |
| SPCD 582: Teaching Stds with Intensive Communication Needs |  |  |
| SPCD 583: Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) |  |  |
| SPCD 584: Research and Teaching/Intervention in ASD |  |  |
| SPCD 585: Math Methods for Students with MR/SD |  |  |
| SPCD 588: Leadership |  |  |
| SPCD 593: Science Methods for Students with MR/SD) |  |  |
| SPCD 593: Ed Diag: Multidisciplinary Collaboration for Diagnosis Assessment |  |  |
| SPCD 593: Ed Diag: Diagnostic Assessment of Young Children |  |  |
| SPCD 593: Ed Diag: Intro to Assess for Eligibility for SPED |  |  |
| SPCD 595: Advanced Field Experience |  |  |
| SPCD 619: Application of ABA to Academic Research in the Classroom |  |  |
| **Classroom** |  |  |
| Other: |  |  |

| **Comps or MA Project or Thesis** |  |  |

| Practicum (for licensure ONLY) (3 hrs. with B or better) |  |  |
| SPCD 504: Practicum in MR/SD* |  |  |

* Courses required for New Mexico Standard Licensure in Special Education.