



## SYLLABUS

**Special Education in Mexico**

**Instructor: Lilian Durán**

**Language of Instruction: English**

**UO Credits:2**

**Contact Hours\*20:**

**Total Hours of Student Engagement (THSE) in all course activities\*: 70**

**Chacala, Las Varas, and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Students will study the current special education system in Mexico, be provided with Spanish language classes (separate course), and will teach in publicly funded school programs for students with disabilities with the support of locally hired interpreters. Before departure students will prepare lesson plans and all teaching materials necessary to implement their lesson plans in Spanish. Students will write a paper reflecting on their experience, their impressions of the school programs, and how this experience will influence their practice as an educator or related specialist in the U.S. Although it would be helpful, students are not required to speak Spanish to participate.

1 - Planning and adaptive book preparation (30h): Students will meet with the instructor for 3 class sessions lasting 2 hours prior to departure to develop thematic instructional units and adapted books.

2 - Spanish language for classroom interaction (20h as a separate course). Students will be provided with Spanish lessons from a local Spanish teacher. Lessons will include basic conversational Spanish focused on the vocabulary and greetings teachers may need when working with Spanish-speaking families and their children.

3 - Teaching practice in Mexico (40h to 1 credit): Students will teach during the first week in Mexico in a rural school for 3 days for 3.5 hours each session. During the second week in Puerto Vallarta students will teach for 6 hours a day for 5 days.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

**Instructional Goals. The course will:**

- Provide the opportunity for students to learn about contextual fit and how to adapt evidence-based strategies and practices that are common in US special education classrooms to the educational material and staffing limitations and local school culture they will encounter in Mexico.
- Include the opportunity to work with an interpreter to teach lessons and communicate with students and local professionals in the schools.
- Allow students to learn about Mexico as a dynamic and diverse country with exposure to the local culture in Jalisco and Nayarit.

- Include a review of the Mexican federal curriculum with specific content on the state of special education in Mexico and the services provided to individuals with disabilities.

Student Outcomes. Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Be prepared to work with an interpreter in the U.S. as an educational professional or in a related field.
- Understand how to use contextual fit to adapt evidence-based practices to different settings for more successful implementation and adoption of practices
- Understand the Mexican special education system and have a deeper understanding of the perspectives of families who are originally from Mexico on disability and the services provided in the US
- Learn about culturally responsive practice and have the experience of being immersed in another culture and educational setting having to adapt to local norms and customs

### **INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY**

The course will include five on campus pre-departure meetings in which students discuss readings on the state of special education in Mexico, the Mexican federal curriculum, choose lesson plan topics, and receive feedback on their lesson plans until they are finalized and ready for translation.

During the first week in Chacala they will participate in two excursions to local historical sites to learn more about the history and culture of the area. Students will spend three afternoons teaching in Las Varas during the first week in Mexico and then 5 full days of teaching while in Puerto Vallarta. Students are expected to actively participate in the practicum experience and to become involved in all aspects of the school day even when they are not directly teaching the students.

### **METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)**

Students will be graded on the following assignments

#### **Undergraduate:**

1. One thematic unit including 5 lessons
2. Two direct observations of teaching
3. A three- to five-page reflective paper submitted at the end of the experience
4. Professional dispositions while in Mexico at the schools and in the community
5. Daily journal submitted at the end of the experience.
6. Two adaptive books in Spanish (Prepared prior to program start date)

#### **Graduate: (in addition to undergraduate work)**

- A three- to five-page paper on the current state or history of special education in Mexico
- A reflection on the teaching strategies observed in the schools and a discussion of how the environmental context including the materials and staff available and local culture and views on disability might influence the strategies and practices of the teachers.
- Hour long staff inservice on evidence-based practices in special education (doctoral students only)

## COURSE OUTLINE

### COURSE READINGS

#### Readings:

##### Undergraduate:

- Cheatham, G. A. (2011). Language interpretation, parent participation, and young children with disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 31(2), 78-88.
- Fletcher, T., Dejud, C., Klingler, C., & Mariscal, I. L. (2010). The changing paradigm of Special Education in Mexico: Voices from the field. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 27(3), 409-430.
- Mount-Cors, M. F. (2014). Special Education in Mexico. University of NC School of Education. Retrieved from [www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/1911](http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/1911).
- Guiberson, M. (2009). Hispanic representation in special education: Patterns and implications. *Preventing School Failure*, 53(3), 167-176.
- American Speech and Hearing Association (2016) What is alternative and augmentative communication. Retrieved from [http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/AAC/#types\\_aac](http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/AAC/#types_aac)

\*\*Note if student is not a special education major the instructor may assign one or two more readings to cover basic information about disabilities, special education, and effective lesson planning.

##### Graduate:

##### Master Level

In addition to all of the above:

- Horner, R. H., Blitz, C., & Ross, S. W. (2014). The importance of contextual fit when implementing evidence-based interventions (ASPE Issue Brief, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Office of Human Services Policy). *Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services*.

\*Students will search for articles or other resources in order to complete their paper on the current state or history of special education or cultural or societal views on individuals with disabilities in Mexico

##### Doctoral Level

In addition to all of the above:

Doctoral students will prepare a one-hour training to be delivered to local teachers and other school staff through the use of an interpreter if necessary. The topic will be approved by the instructor and careful consideration will be given to topics that are meaningful and relevant given the local context and priorities.

### COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

#### Undergraduate:

**Thematic unit (100 Points):** Students will select a topic area that aligns with one of the content areas in the Mexican federal curriculum. Children in special education programs are expected to follow the federal curriculum and therefore it is important that the unit specifically incorporates content from the curriculum. This will also help our students model for the local teaching staff how they might adapt the curriculum for the students with moderate to severe disabilities.

**Observations of teaching (50 points):** Students will be formally observed and rated on a structured rubric while teaching by faculty twice to receive feedback on their teaching ability including behavior management, delivery of lessons, teaching interactions with students, and how well they are working with the interpreter.

**Reflective paper (25 points):** Students will write a 3- to 5- page paper reflecting on their experiences incorporating information they learned from their readings and applying that information to their experiences and observations. Students will specifically describe what they learned from their experience and how it will impact their future work in education.

**Professional dispositions (15 points):** Students will be expected to maintain professional and respectful behavior at all times. They will be graded on their daily interactions with staff in the schools, the Spanish teacher, and their interactions with community members. Dispositions will be based on the Professional Growth Assessment currently used by the department to rate a student's professionalism with some modifications to incorporate situations unique to this experience.

**Daily journal (60 points):** Students are expected to write an entry in their journal every day regarding their reflections on the events of the day and their perceptions of their experiences. They should focus on what they are learning about Mexican culture, the community and the language and how this will relate to their future work in the US.

**Two adaptive books in Spanish (30 points):** Students will select two books and will use augmentative and alternative communication principles to adapt the book with visual symbols, realia, or other materials to encourage interaction and communication during book reading.

**Graduate:** *In addition to all of the assignments above graduate students will also complete the following assignments.*

**Paper on Special Education in Mexico (50 points):** Students will develop a specific question to answer regarding the current state or history of special education in Mexico. Topics can include, but are not limited to Mexican disability law, special education law, a description of special education programs, funding mechanisms, inclusion, and the quantity and quality of services provided in either rural or urban areas. Students will search for 3 high quality reliable resources beyond those provided in class.

**Local teaching methods reflection (25 points):** Students will describe their observations in the schools and discuss how the environmental context including the materials and staff available and local culture and views on disability might influence the strategies and practices of the teachers. This assignment is not meant to judge local practitioners, but rather to illuminate how the local context influences and informs practices to provide a deeper understanding of and reflections on some of the differences they may be observing between practices in the U.S. and in Mexico.

### **Doctoral Level**

**In-Service Professional Development (50 points):** Presentation materials for a one-hour long in-service to include a powerpoint presentation, hand-outs, and other materials needed

during the training for activities such as modeling or make-and-take items needed by the participants.

**Undergraduate Grading**

Thematic Unit	100 pts
Observation of teaching	50 pts
Reflection Paper	25 pts
Professional Dispositions	15 pts
Daily Journal	60 pts
Adaptive Spanish Books	30 pts

**Total Points 280 pts**

Your final grade will determined by the number of points earned out of 280 possible points. *Please note that meeting the basic requirements of an assignment does not equal or guarantee an A. Additionally, all required assignments must be turned in to earn an A in the class.*

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Point Distribution</b>
A	252 - 280 points (90-100 %)
B	224 – 251 points (80-89.9%)
C	223 or lower points (70-79.9 %)

**Master’s Level Grading**

Thematic Unit	100 pts
Observation of teaching	50 pts
Reflection Paper	25 pts
Professional Dispositions	15 pts
Daily Journal	60 pts
Adaptive Spanish Books	30 pts
Paper on SPED in Mexico	50 pts
Teaching methods reflection	25 pts

**Total Points 355 pts**

Your final grade will determined by the number of points earned out of 355 possible points. *Please note that meeting the basic requirements of an assignment does not equal or guarantee an A. Additionally, all required assignments must be turned in to earn an A in the class.*

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Point Distribution</b>
A	320 - 355 points (90-100 %)

B	284 – 319 points (80-89.9%)
C	283 or lower points (70-79.9 %)

### Doctoral Level Grading

Thematic Unit	100 pts
Observation of teaching	50 pts
Refelction Paper	25 pts
Professional Dispositions	15 pts
Daily Journal	60 pts
Adaptive Spanish Books	30 pts
Paper on SPED in Mexico	50 pts
Teaching methods reflection	25 pts
In-Service Teaching	50 pts

### Total Points 405 pts

Your final grade will determined by the number of points earned out of 355 possible points. *Please note that meeting the basic requirements of an assignment does not equal or guarantee an A. Additionally, all required assignments must be turned in to earn an A in the class.*

Letter Grade	Point Distribution
A	365 – 405 points (90-100 %)
B	324 – 364 points (80-89.9%)
C	323 or lower points (70-79.9 %)

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- García-Cedillo, I., Romero-Contreras, S., & Fletcher, T. V. (2014). Special Education Today in Mexico. *Special Education International Perspectives: Practices Across the Globe (Advances in Special Education, Volume 28) Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 28, 61-89.*
- Horner, R. H., Blitz, C., & Ross, S. W. (2014). The importance of contextual fit when implementing evidence-based interventions (ASPE Issue Brief, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Office of Human Services Policy). *Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services.*
- Lafayette D Mente, B. (1996). *There's a word for it in Mexico: The complete guide to Mexican thought and culture.* New York: McGraw Hill.