



UNSW Course Outline

EDST5458 Researching Special Education - 2024

Published on the 28 Jan 2024

General Course Information

Course Code : EDST5458

Year : 2024

Term : Term 1

Teaching Period : T1

Is a multi-term course? : No

Faculty : Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture

Academic Unit : School of Education

Delivery Mode : Online

Delivery Format : Standard

Delivery Location : Kensington

Campus : Sydney

Study Level : Postgraduate

Units of Credit : 6

Useful Links

[Handbook Class Timetable](#)

Course Details & Outcomes

Course Description

This course is designed to support you to explore and critique your chosen area of research by locating it in the context of key issues and approaches in special education and viewing it from a diversity of quantitative and qualitative perspectives. The course provides an introduction to the

impact of different epistemological and methodological approaches in quantitative and qualitative special educational research and will also encourage you to build collaboration with others in the course using self and peer review.

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CLO1 : Articulate key issues in special education research including purpose(s) of doing research, key philosophical issues, researcher/practitioner positionality/role, and the place of research in teachers' work and in education more broadly
CLO2 : Critique the methodology of published research in special education
CLO3 : Evaluate the strength and appropriateness of different research methods, including different techniques for data collection, analysis, reporting, and engaging with existing literature
CLO4 : Apply the principles of research design to a research project in special education.

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CLO1 : Articulate key issues in special education research including purpose(s) of doing research, key philosophical issues, researcher/practitioner positionality/role, and the place of research in teachers' work and in education more broadly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Reflection of Published Research • Research Methodology Case Study
CLO2 : Critique the methodology of published research in special education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Reflection of Published Research
CLO3 : Evaluate the strength and appropriateness of different research methods, including different techniques for data collection, analysis, reporting, and engaging with existing literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Methodology Case Study
CLO4 : Apply the principles of research design to a research project in special education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Methodology Case Study

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System

Learning and Teaching in this course

Rationale

Research in education is relevant to all educational contexts and to all teachers. The course will

explore an critique a variety of published research texts, and will build participants’ skills in engaging with, making use of, and critiquing existing research in special education. The development of theoretical understanding and analytical skill is a key MEd programme outcome.

But this course positions teachers as producers as well as consumers of educational research, and beyond engaging with existing research, participants will learn the relevant skills to conduct a small research project relevant to their own teaching context(s). The development of procedural as well as declarative knowledge is therefore the core outcome of the course, and is prioritized throughout.

Teaching on the course is driven by a critical engagement with readings and the core textbook. Online discussions, centred around the key readings, allow for theory and analysis to be developed but also applied, with the aim of producing active, engaged student-researchers who will subsequently be well equipped to apply the knowledge and skills developed in their own teaching/research contexts.

Teaching strategies

- Explicit teaching, including reading and/or listening to audio-visual materials to foster interest and support learning
- Structured occasions for critical reflection on issues raised in the course and on others’ ideas
- Opportunities for peer and instructor interaction via forums, message boards, and chat, allowing you the opportunity to demonstrate your capacity to communicate, to question, and to problem solve
- Completion of online modules and activities to permit flexible interaction with course materials
- Use of quizzes at the end of each module/prescribed readings for students to self-assess your understanding of key concepts.

Assessments

Assessment Structure

Assessment Item	Weight	Relevant Dates
Critical Reflection of Published Research Assessment Format: Individual	40%	Due Date: 27/03/2024 05:00 PM
Research Methodology Case Study Assessment Format: Individual	60%	Due Date: 01/05/2024 05:00 PM

Assessment Details

Critical Reflection of Published Research

Assessment Overview

Task 1 - Critical Reflection of Published Research - 2,000 words. Students will receive written feedback within two weeks of submission.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Articulate key issues in special education research including purpose(s) of doing research, key philosophical issues, researcher/practitioner positionality/role, and the place of research in teachers' work and in education more broadly
- CLO2 : Critique the methodology of published research in special education

Detailed Assessment Description

This task requires you to find and select two peer reviewed original research papers published within the last 10 years. Answer the following questions critically:

- Briefly summarise each of the two texts in terms of their topic(s) and where they 'fit' into the landscape of special education research (e.g., 'this is a paper about autism that found...')
- Briefly describe the research method used in each paper and each paper's main finding/s (e.g., 'this is a qualitative paper that used student focus groups and interpretive data analysis to show that...')
- For each paper, critique the research method used as it relates to the topic – what are the strengths and weaknesses of using this method for this research problem, what other way/s might have been better, and how might you have approached the research problem?
- Comment briefly on the writing and layout of the paper: to what extent did you find it easy or difficult (and/or interesting or not interesting!) to read? How might the writer have improved it?

Assessment Length

2000 words

Assessment information

RUBRIC/FEEDBACK SHEET

EDST5458 UNSW SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Assessment Task 1: Critical Reflection of Published Research

Specific Criteria	Fail ----- > High Distinction
Understanding of the question or issue and the key concepts involved <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding of the task and its relationship to relevant areas of theory, research, and practice• Summaries of texts• Representations of writers' arguments and methods• Understanding of and issues with research methodologies used	
Depth of analysis and critique in response to the task <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depth of discussion of texts• Depth of analysis and critiques of journal articles• Clarity and depth of implications/recommendations	
Familiarity with and relevance of professional and/or research literature used to support response <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Range of research and professional literature on special education; resources are current and relevant	
Structure and organisation of response <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriateness of overall structure of reflection paper• Clarity and coherence of organisation, including use of section headings and summaries to enhance readability	
Presentation of response according to appropriate academic and linguistic conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarity, consistency, and appropriateness of writing conventions• Clarity and consistency in the format of the plan• Clarity and appropriateness of sentence structure, vocabulary use, of spelling, punctuation, and word length• Clarity and consistency of use of APA style	
General comments/recommendations for next time:	
Lecturer: Recommended: /20 (FL PS CR DN HD)	Date: Weighting: 40%
NB: The ticks in the various boxes are designed to provide feedback to students; they are not given equal weight in determining the recommended grade. Depending on the nature of the assessment task, lecturers may also contextualise and/or amend these specific criteria. The recommended grade is tentative only, subject to standardisation processes and approval by the School of Education Learning and Teaching Committee.	

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Hurdle rules

A hurdle requirement or hurdle rule is a course requirement that must be fulfilled in order to pass the course. In all courses within the School of Education, all assessments (regardless of their weighting) are hurdle requirements. That is, all assessments in a course must receive a pass mark in order to pass the course. Where a student has failed to meet the requirements of an assessment, they may still be deemed to have met the hurdle requirement if the failure was due to a late penalty and if the overall mark for the course is still greater than 50.

Research Methodology Case Study

Assessment Overview

Task 2 - Research Methodology Case Study - 4,000 words

Students will choose 4 case studies from a list of 10. They will write a methodology section for each that includes:

1. Research questions
2. Participants (if applicable): a. Who would you include in the study? Age? Disability? - Criteria for who is included or excluded from participating b. How many participants would you need? *Justify with research
3. Setting
4. Instruments/Data collection: a. What kind of data are you collecting? (quantitative or qualitative) b. How would you collect it? c. Describe any specific measurement instruments you are using (if applicable)
5. Analysis: Describe how you will analyse the data *Justify with research
6. Ethics a. Does the study require ethics approval? b. Why or why not? c. If yes, what institution(s) would you need to seek approval from?

Students will receive written feedback within two weeks of submission. This is the final assessment.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Articulate key issues in special education research including purpose(s) of doing research, key philosophical issues, researcher/practitioner positionality/role, and the place of research in teachers' work and in education more broadly
- CL03 : Evaluate the strength and appropriateness of different research methods, including different techniques for data collection, analysis, reporting, and engaging with existing

literature

- CLO4 : Apply the principles of research design to a research project in special education.

Detailed Assessment Description

Your list of research case studies for assessment 2:

- You want to measure the effectiveness of video modelling compared to traditional paper-based social stories.
- Your school has traditionally had high rates of student absences and suspensions. To address this, the principal is leading the implementation of a new program on trauma-informed teaching that is being implemented this year. How could you measure its effectiveness?
- You want to determine if the practice of using mobile technology to support students with disability has an evidence base, and in what areas the practice has been shown to be effective.
- You use an iPhone and transportation app to teach mobility skills to 3 adults with intellectual disabilities. You accompany each of them on their journeys over 4 weeks and prompt them when they need assistance. You want to know if this is an effective way to teach these 3 adults to get from point A to point B.
- Your school has committed to developing and implementing transition plans with strong student input for students with disability. You are interested in finding out how the students and their families feel about the instructional program you used to increase their participation.
- You have recently been assigned to teach in a special education unit in a mainstream school. Your class will consist of high school students with autism. How would you discover what the literature suggests are the best practices for teaching communication?
- You are interested in discovering what types of sexual education for students with intellectual disabilities exist in your city/school district/state, and how they are perceived by teachers, parents, and students.
- How would you determine if there was a relationship between students' level of school connectedness and the number of their absences and suspensions?
- You want to know how students with autism perceive their well-being while they are in school.
- Your school has committed to implementing UDL to support its diverse learners. Your principal wants to determine if this approach is better than what has been done to include all students. Design a study where you compare the implementation of UDL principles to your school's existing approach.

Assessment Length

4000 words

Assessment information

RUBRIC/FEEDBACK SHEET

EDST5458 UNSW SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Assessment Task 2: Research Methodology Case Study

Specific Criteria	Fail ----- > High Distinction
Understanding of the question or issue and the key concepts involved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the task and its relationship to relevant areas of theory, research, and practice • Extent to which each of the components was addressed adequately • Coordination and cohesion between sections, particularly research questions and research design 	
Depth of analysis and critique in response to the task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depth of understanding of research methodology, methods, and underlying issues • Adequacy of consideration of ethical issues 	
Familiarity with and relevance of professional and/or research literature used to support response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of research and professional literature on special education; resources are current and relevant 	
Structure and organisation of response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of overall structure • Clarity and coherence of organisation, including use of section headings and summaries to enhance readability 	
Presentation of response according to appropriate academic and linguistic conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity and consistency of use of APA (7th ed.) style • Clarity and consistency in the format of the report • Clarity and appropriateness of sentence structure, vocabulary use, of spelling, punctuation, and word length 	
General comments/recommendations for next time:	
Lecturer: Recommended: /20 (FL PS CR DN HD)	Date: Weighting: 60%
NB: The ticks in the various boxes are designed to provide feedback to students; they are not given equal weight in determining the recommended grade. Depending on the nature of the assessment task, lecturers may also contextualise and/or amend these specific criteria. The recommended grade is tentative only, subject to standardisation processes and approval by the School of Education Learning and Teaching Committee.	

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Hurdle rules

A hurdle requirement or hurdle rule is a course requirement that must be fulfilled in order to pass the course. In all courses within the School of Education, all assessments (regardless of their weighting) are hurdle requirements. That is, all assessments in a course must receive a pass

mark in order to pass the course. Where a student has failed to meet the requirements of an assessment, they may still be deemed to have met the hurdle requirement if the failure was due to a late penalty and if the overall mark for the course is still greater than 50.

General Assessment Information

Students are required to follow their course convenor's instructions when submitting their work for assessment. All assessment task/s are to be submitted online via Moodle by 5pm. Students are also required to retain all drafts, original data, and other evidence of the authenticity of the work for at least one year after submission/examination. For more detailed information about submission, late penalties, special consideration, and the like, visit the School of Education website on policies and procedures: [SED Policies and Procedures \(unsw.edu.au\)](https://www.unsw.edu.au/school-of-education/policies-and-procedures).

Grading Basis

Standard

Course Schedule

Teaching Week/Module	Activity Type	Content
Week 1 : 12 February - 18 February	Online Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to special education research: conducting a literature search, APA style, journal article format • Ethical issues in special education: conducting research with vulnerable populations • *UNSW Students: National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, UNSW HREC • Principles of Research: research questions, variables, hypotheses, identifying and recruiting participants
Week 2 : 19 February - 25 February	Online Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to special education research: conducting a literature search, APA style, journal article format • Ethical issues in special education: conducting research with vulnerable populations • *UNSW Students: National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, UNSW HREC • Principles of Research: research questions, variables, hypotheses, identifying and recruiting participants
	Seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to research • Quantitative research
Week 3 : 26 February - 3 March	Online Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to special education research: conducting a literature search, APA style, journal article format • Ethical issues in special education: conducting research with vulnerable populations • *UNSW Students: National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, UNSW HREC • Principles of Research: research questions, variables, hypotheses, identifying and recruiting participants
Week 4 : 4 March - 10 March	Online Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effect size and meta-analysis: effect size, meta-analysis, systematic reviews, PRISMA • Evaluating and composing research articles: Selecting a journal, identifying the basic format, reviewing the literature, presenting evidence, getting feedback, making revisions, determining the author's motivation, identifying the contribution to knowledge, theory, or practice, importance of research design and methodology, assessing the findings, conclusions, writing and layout of the article
	Seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of assignment 1 • Systematic reviews
Week 5 : 11 March - 17 March	Online Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effect size and meta-analysis: effect size, meta-analysis, systematic reviews, PRISMA • Evaluating and composing research articles: Selecting a journal, identifying the basic format, reviewing the literature, presenting evidence, getting feedback, making revisions, determining the author's motivation, identifying the contribution to knowledge, theory, or practice, importance of research design and methodology, assessing the findings, conclusions, writing and layout of the article
Week 6 : 18 March - 24 March	Online Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative Research: epistemologies, paradigms, qualitative research methods, methods of collecting and analysing empirical materials, trustworthiness, and validity in qualitative research, presenting qualitative research
	Seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative research
Week 7 : 25 March - 31 March	Online Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative Research: epistemologies, paradigms, qualitative research methods, methods of collecting and analysing empirical materials, trustworthiness, and validity in qualitative research, presenting qualitative research
Week 8 : 1 April - 7 April	Online Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative Research: screening and cleaning your data, graphing your data, normal distributions, correlation, regression, comparing means, non-parametric tests, categorical data analysis
	Seminar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of assignment 2 • Single subject research design
Week 9 : 8 April - 14 April	Online Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative Research: screening and cleaning your data, graphing your data, normal distributions, correlation, regression, comparing means, non-parametric tests, categorical data analysis
Week 10 : 15 April - 21 April	Online Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small n Designs: ABA, multiple baseline designs

Attendance Requirements

The School of Education has a minimum attendance requirement of 80% for classes, including lectures, tutorials, seminars, and other learning activities – irrespective of delivery mode. The attendance requirement is a minimum threshold for engagement and ensures that programs meet the requirements of external accreditation authorities (i.e., NESAs), and for a range of programs (e.g., initial teacher education programs and other accredited postgraduate coursework specialisations). Students must register their attendance according to the course convenor's directions.

General Schedule Information

This course outline sets out the description of classes at the date the outline is published. The nature of classes may change during the term after the course outline is published. Moodle should be consulted for up-to-date class descriptions. If there is an inconsistency in the description of activities between the University timetable and the course outline (as updated in Moodle), the description in the course outline on Moodle applies.

Course Resources

Prescribed Resources

All students are expected to access the course's LMS on a regular basis for course materials, information, and announcements.

Required reading:

- Rumrill, P. D., Cook, B. G., & Wiley, A. L. (2011). *Research in special education: Designs, methods, and applications*. Charles C Thomas Publishers. (Available as a free eBook through the Leganto link on the course's Moodle site).

Further reading:

- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th Ed.). London: SAGE.
- Field, A. (2015). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics*. London: SAGE.
- Pallant, J. (2016). *SPSS survival manual*. Sydney, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. London: SAGE.

Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
Convenor	Kean Poon		Ground Floor Morven Brown Building, Room G12		Email for an appointment	No	Yes

Other Useful Information

Academic Information

Due to evolving advice by NSW Health, students must check for updated information regarding online learning for all Arts, Design and Architecture courses this term (via Moodle or course information provided).

Please see: <https://www.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/student-life/resources-support/protocols-guidelines> for essential student information relating to:

- UNSW and Faculty policies and procedures;
- Student Support Services;
- Dean's List;
- review of results;
- credit transfer;
- cross-institutional study and exchange;
- examination information;
- enrolment information;
- Special Consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;

And other essential academic information.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

- Copying: Using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This includes copying materials, ideas

or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement.

- Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original information, structure and/or progression of ideas of the original without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.
- Collusion: Working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student for the purpose of them plagiarising, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.
- Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.
- Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): Submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

The UNSW Academic Skills support offers resources and individual consultations. Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study. One of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items. UNSW Library has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW, but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time
- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Use of AI for assessments

As AI applications continue to develop, and technology rapidly progresses around us, we remain committed to our values around academic integrity at UNSW. Where the use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, has been permitted by your course convener, they must be properly credited and your submissions must be substantially your own work.

In cases where the use of AI has been prohibited, please respect this and be aware that where unauthorised use is detected, penalties will apply.

[Use of AI for assessments | UNSW Current Students](#)

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au

Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin, you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support, you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone, you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, alternative submission details will be stated on your course's Moodle site. For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

Late Submission Penalty

UNSW has a standard late submission penalty of:

- 5% per calendar day,
- for all assessments where a penalty applies,
- capped at five calendar days (120 hours) from the assessment deadline, after which a student cannot submit an assessment, and
- no permitted variation.

Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines and to request [Special Consideration](#) as early as possible before the deadline. Support with [Time Management is available here](#).

School-specific Information

Policies and Procedures

For more detailed information about School of Education policies and procedures visit the following website: [SED Policies and Procedures \(unsw.edu.au\)](https://www.unsw.edu.au/education/policies-procedures).

School Contact Information

School of Education. Arts, Design and Architecture. Ground Floor, Morven Brown Building (Map Reference F20).

- T: +61 2 93851977
- E: education@unsw.edu.au
- W: <https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/education>