WISCONSIN EXPERIENCE

UW–Madison’s vision for the total student experience, the Wisconsin Experience (https://wisconsinexperience.wisc.edu/about/), combines learning in and out of the classroom. Tied to the Wisconsin Idea (https://www.wisc.edu/wisconsin-idea/) and steeped in long-standing institutional values – the commitment to the truth, shared participation in decision-making, and service to local and global communities – the Wisconsin Experience describes how students develop and integrate these core values across their educational experience.

UW–Madison encourages students to mindfully engage in four core concepts throughout their time on campus: Empathy & Humility, Relentless Curiosity, Intellectual Confidence, and Purposeful Action (https://wisconsinexperience.wisc.edu/intellectual-confidence/).

Since its inception, the School of Education has embraced the concepts of the Wisconsin Experience, providing opportunities for students to learn in venues beyond the traditional classroom. Our students also independently seek out related activities and experiences, thus creating their own unique Wisconsin Experience.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND THE WISCONSIN EXPERIENCE

Community-Based Learning
RP & SE 300 Individuals with Disabilities includes a field-based experience where students engage in work that directly or indirectly supports a person with a disability. Hundreds of student each year are placed in a wide variety of placement sites in the Madison area. This experience allows students to gain first-hand knowledge of the contributions of, and services provided to, individuals with disabilities within the community.

Guest Speakers
RP & SE 300 Individuals with Disabilities also brings the community into the classroom. A number of guest speakers from the community provide insight regarding the range of experiences people with disabilities have while conducting their daily lives. Students also learn about the variety of community organizations engaged in the support of, and advocacy for, people with disabilities.

A wide variety of guest speakers also attend Special Education’s practicum and student teaching seminars. These guests might be school district personnel, parents and family members, teachers, or individuals with disabilities.

Field Experiences
Students in our teacher education programs have multiple field experiences in local schools during their professional sequence. A Community Based Asset Mapping exercise asks students to explore the strengths and assets of the communities in which their field placement school resides.

Clubs and Organizations
Special Education students have many opportunities to participate in clubs and organizations. Popular options include Special Olympics, Aspiring Educators, and Camp Kesem.

Additional Majors and Certificates
Many students are excited to pair their Special Education program with another major or certificate. Popular additional majors include Education Studies, Spanish, and Psychology, but students can choose from a range of majors and certificates that align with their academic and professional goals.

Community Employment
The Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education has close ties to the community. Students in the department are frequently employed in both paid and volunteer opportunities in school and community organizations serving children with disabilities and their families. Some examples include Schools of Hope Tutoring Program (https://ulg.org/volunteer/schools-of-hope-tutoring/), Madison School and Community Recreation (https://www.mscr.org/), and Gio’s Garden (https://giosgarden.org/volunteers-interns/).

Study Abroad
Special Education students are encouraged to explore opportunities for studying abroad, including the popular, short-term faculty-led summer study abroad opportunities hosted by the School of Education. The Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education is excited to begin to offer opportunities with the Disability Rights and Services in Australia (https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/program/?programId=330353) course and is currently developing additional opportunities related to special education. Students are encouraged to consider all options hosted by the School of Education (https://global.education.wisc.edu/study-abroad/).