

Educators as Guides for Engaged Learners



Visit: <http://www.coe.unt.edu/conceptual-framework>

Course Syllabus –Fall 2017 EDSP 3210-021: Educational Aspects of Exceptional Learners (3 hours) Online Course

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Disability Accommodation: The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://disability.unt.edu>. You may also contact them by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic integrity emanates from a culture that embraces the core values of trust and honesty necessary for full learning to occur. As a student-centered public research university, the University of North Texas promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic

Pronouns/Identity Recognition: In order to respect the identities and expressions of all students, I would like to offer the opportunity for students in our class to let me know the name and pronouns you use. This may be in our initial introductions or you can let me know privately. If at any time your name or pronouns change during the semester, you are most welcome to let me know if you would like

me to use a different name and/or pronouns when interacting with you. In my class, I respect the identities and expressions of all students and I expect all students in the class to show that same respect to fellow students. Some examples of pronouns include: he/him, she/her, they/them, ze/hir, per/pers, and many more.

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT): Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available online toward the end of the semester to provide you with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught.

Person-First Language: Use person-first language when referring to individuals with disabilities in class discussions and written assignments (and ideally in your professional practice). Please refer to “Guidelines for Reporting and Writing About People with Disabilities”
<http://www.lsi.ku.edu/~lsi/news/featured/guidelines.shtml>

Completion/Submission of Assignments: Read assignment instructions carefully before starting and/or submitting them to ensure accuracy. Assignments are to be submitted through the Blackboard Assignment function unless instructed otherwise. All students are responsible for paying careful attention to assignment submission deadlines.

APA Format for Assignments: Use APA 6th edition guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines: <http://www.apastyle.org/>. In particular, it is expected that you know how to paraphrase and cite information appropriately to meet both APA guidelines and to avoid plagiarism. This website provides some useful information on how to avoid plagiarism in your writing:
<http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/overview/>

In all cases, written assignments should adhere to standard usage of English grammar and be free of typographical errors.

Make-up Reading Checks: Students will be given more than one day to complete the reading checks. Therefore, there will be **NO make-up Reading Checks for this course**. It is *highly recommended that you do not wait until the last day or final hour to begin a reading check* in case an unforeseen event occurs and you are unable to complete the assessment in a timely manner. A zero (0) will be given for non-completion.

Late Assignments: Assignments should be submitted through Blackboard by 11:59 PM on the day they are due, unless other directions are provided by the instructor. Assignments turned in after the date due will be considered late. Five percent of available points for the assignment will be deducted for each day of late submission during the first week after the due date. After one week from the due date, assignments submitted will receive zero points. Thus an assignment that is three days late is able to obtain only 85% of the points for the assignment regardless of the quality of the work. The point deduction will be made after grading is complete. The date that the assignment was received by the instructor **on Blackboard or via email** will be considered the date submitted. Submitting an assignment late does not alter the due dates on other assignments and prevents timely feedback to students regarding their work that may be of

value in later assignments. Students should strive to keep up with the assignment schedule so that they will be able to have appropriate formative feedback from their instructor across the semester.

Incompletes: A grade of "Incomplete" will be granted *only if* a student has satisfactorily completed 75% or more of the course requirements with a passing grade and requests an incomplete for extreme personal or academic reasons. The professor and student will negotiate a due date and requirements for successful completion. If the student fails to complete the requirements by the agreed upon due date, the existing grade will be submitted. Students are expected to remember and submit the requirements by the due date without waiting for reminders from the professor. Low class attendance or poor grades are not good enough reasons for requesting an Incomplete.

Sample Assignments: In an effort to assist students in future sections of this course, the instructor may post assignments submitted this semester as samples. The names of authors will not be used on these samples. Please notify your instructor in writing if you do not wish your work to be used as a sample in future course sections.

Retention of Student Records: Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Blackboard online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have the right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university's policy in accordance with those mandates at the following link: <http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/ferpa.html>

Course Description:

This course provides an overview of the unique physical, cognitive, and behavioral needs of all types of exceptional learners. Identification and referral procedures and effective educational practices are examined.

Learner Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- Describe how educators and other professionals determine the difference between “normal” and “atypical” behaviors.
- Identify and describe the legal and historical development of the field of special education.
- Describe various theoretical models and perspectives in the field of special education.
- Describe research in etiological factors associated with disability areas.
- Identify social, cognitive, behavioral and academic characteristics associated with disability areas.
- Identify historical points of view and contribution of culturally diverse groups to the field of special education.

- Describe the role of families in the educational process.
- Describe past, present, and future models of assessment and intervention, including use of innovative technology.
- Discuss issues and trends in special education, including legislation and litigation, and use of innovative technology.
- Examine ethical considerations for the treatment of all children.

Nature of Course Delivery:

Learning activities include the following:

1. Online lecture and discussion
2. Application activities
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Research and writing activities
6. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard

Required Textbooks and Materials:

1. Hallahan, D., Kauffman, J., & Pullen, P. (2015). *Exceptional learners: An introduction to special education* (13th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
2. Additional articles and readings may be required to be read by all students. These readings will be available on Blackboard.

Recommended:

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). New York: Author.

Performance Evaluation:

1. **Performance-based Assessment: Modules 2 and 3 Wikis** (*Tk20 submission required*): The Module 2 and the Module 3 assignments are also required assignments that must be uploaded to Tk20. UNT's College of Education uses Tk20 CampusTools™ as a comprehensive online data management system for all student activities in programs leading to certification for teachers or other school personnel. **Students enrolled in certification programs or who are planning to enroll are required to subscribe to Tk20 to complete course assignments and to facilitate evaluations for courses, field experiences, and student teaching or internship/practicum.** Student subscriptions will be effective for seven years from the date of purchase. Key assignments must be uploaded into the Tk20 system for instructors to assess. **Please go to the following link for directions on how to purchase Tk20.** Announcements regarding Tk20 will also be

posted on this website: <http://www.coe.unt.edu/tk20>.

Students who are not enrolled in a certification program in the College of Education and do not plan to enroll in one are not required to subscribe to Tk20.

2. **Distance Learning Survey** (25 points): A brief survey must be completed by all students taking online courses at UNT. This survey can be accessed at: <https://www.coe.unt.edu/webforms/distance-learning-form> You must complete this survey before beginning work on this course. You must also notify your instructor via email of form completion to receive credit for this assignment.
3. **Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Online Training Module**: (25 points): All students must complete the online Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting training module available at <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/training/reporting/> If you have already completed the training module, you will just need to post your certificate to Blackboard. Further information about submission of your Certificate of Completion can be found at the beginning Module 1 on Blackboard.
4. **Reading Checks** (16 at 25 points each/400 points): At the end of *each lesson*, there is a reading check assignment. The reading checks will consist of 5 to 10 multiple choice, true/false, or short answer questions on assigned chapters. Students will be able to retake multiple choice and true/false reading checks up to three times if they would like to improve their scores. For a list of computer labs available on campus, check www.gacl.unt.edu/locations.php. Reading Check questions/answers will not be released to students to prevent/minimize academic dishonesty.
5. **Module Assignments** (4 at 150 points each/600 points; *all directions and rubrics posted in Blackboard*): Module assignments are a combination of independent and group work. Modules 1 and 4 require students to write papers individually. The paper in Module 1 is a personal philosophy statement. It also requires you to choose two activities from a list of school and community-based options. You will include a summary of the activities in your paper. In Module 4, students must review a book chosen from a list of books pertaining to individuals with disabilities.

Assignments for Modules 2 and 3 are slightly different. Once you complete the Module lessons, you will choose a disability area from the Module and post your choice to the Discussion Board. (The number of students allowed choice of each disability area will be limited. If one group is full, you will need to choose another disability area). Once you have completed your worksheets for the Module, you will post them to your disability area Wiki. After posting your worksheets, choose two DIFFERENT disability areas and read over at least one Wiki in each area, and comment on the information provided.
6. **Revision to Original Philosophy Statement** (25 points): At the end of Module 4, you will have the opportunity to revise your Philosophy Statement submitted at the end of Module 1. This revision will be based on your learning in the course. It will be a 1-3 paragraph statement that summarizes changes, additions, or clarifications regarding your original philosophy. It will not be a rewrite of your entire original paper.

7. **Beyond the Modules Activities** (100 points): Responsiveness to emails or messages, and posted activities is essential for your success in this course; therefore, points are earned for completion of requested tasks that extend your learning beyond the modules. Examples of the *Beyond the Modules Activities* requiring your attention include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) Engage with instructor from UNT email or via messages on Blackboard (your instructor will note preference for contact), (b) Ask the Instructor Discussion Board, (c) Introductory Discussion Board, (d) Peer Interactions in Discussion Boards and Wikis, (e) Module 3 and 4 Wikis posted to Tk20 (if in teacher certification track) and (f) Midpoint and Final Feedback Surveys in Blackboard. All of these items are already part of the course (see course calendar). This is your opportunity to earn points for your effort across all components of the course.
8. **Evaluation:** Assignments are evaluated according to rubrics. Students can find the assignment description and rubrics in Blackboard. For all assignments, the instructor will grade the assignment and post the score students earned and comments to the Grade Center (My Grades in the left side navigation bar) on Blackboard. Students can read the comments by clicking on the grade. If you have difficulty with an assignment, either in understanding or completing it, please contact your instructor immediately to discuss this. The course point breakdown is:

Performance Items for Evaluation		Points
Reading Checks (16 at 25 points each)		400
End of Module Assignments (4 at 150 points each)		600
Revision to Original Philosophy Statement		25
Distance Learning Survey		25
Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Online Training		25
Beyond the Module Assignments		100
Total Points for Course		1175

Grades	
Reading Checks	35%
End of Module Assignments	52%
Beyond the Module Assignments (including Child Abuse Recognition & Training Module and Distance Learning Survey)	13%
Total	100%

Grading Scale	
90-100% (1035-1150 points)	A
80-89% (920-1034 points)	B
70-79 % (805-919 points)	C
60-69% (690-804 points)	D
Below 60% (below 690 points)	F

Course Policies and Requirements:

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Attendance: Understanding you are individuals with full and active lives, who have made the intellectual and financial commitment to regularly attend class, there may be an instance when you are not able to attend. If this unlikely event should occur, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student. Students who are absent are held responsible for the material covered and assignments due as if in attendance. Please be sure to notify the classmate in sufficient time for them to be of assistance to you. Please notify your instructor by email in advance if you will not be able to attend class, and arrange for a classmate to pick up handouts/provide notes. Most handouts will be on Blackboard and all PowerPoint slides will be on Blackboard for each class session.

Acceptable Student Behavior: Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <http://deanofstudents.unt.edu>.

Completion/Submission of Assignments: Read assignment instructions carefully before starting and/or submitting them to ensure accuracy. Assignments are to be submitted through the Blackboard Assignment function unless instructed otherwise. All students are responsible for paying careful attention to assignment submission deadlines.

- **Written Assignments:** All written assignments must be presented in typewritten form, using appropriate APA format, if relevant. Assignments should be turned in on the date announced.
- **APA Format for Assignments:** Use APA 6th edition guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines: <http://www.apastyle.org/>. In particular, it is expected that you know how to paraphrase and cite information appropriately to meet both APA guidelines and to avoid plagiarism. This website provides some useful information on how to avoid plagiarism in your writing: <http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/overview/>

In all cases, written assignments should adhere to standard usage of English grammar and be free of typographical errors.

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Late Assignments: Assignments should be submitted through Blackboard by 3:00 PM on the day they are due, unless other directions are provided by the instructor. Assignments turned in after the date due

will be considered late. Five percent of available points for the assignment will be deducted for each day of late submission during the first week after the due date. After one week from the due date, assignments submitted will receive zero points. Thus an assignment that is three days late is able to obtain only 85% of the points for the assignment regardless of the quality of the work. The point deduction will be made after grading is complete. The date that the assignment was received by the instructor **on Blackboard, in hand, or via email** will be considered the date submitted. Submitting an assignment late does not alter the due dates on other assignments and prevents timely feedback to students regarding their work that may be of value in later assignments. Students should strive to keep up with the assignment schedule so that they will be able to have appropriate formative feedback from their instructor across the semester.

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Sample Assignments: In an effort to assist students in future sections of this course, the instructor may post assignments submitted this semester as samples. The names of authors will not be used on these samples. Please notify your instructor in writing if you do not wish your work to be used as a sample in future course sections.

Academic Integrity and Dishonesty: Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students, who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to, a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes but is not limited to: a. the work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

EagleConnect: All UNT students should activate and regularly check their EagleConnect (e-mail) account. EagleConnect is used for official communication from the University to students. Many important announcements for the University and College are sent to students via EagleConnect. For information about EagleConnect, including how to activate an account and how to have EagleConnect forwarded to another e-mail address, visit <https://eagleconnect.unt.edu>. This is the main electronic contact for all course-related information and/or material.

Emergency Notification & Procedures: UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages

(and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty, staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at <http://www.my.unt.edu>. Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas in the buildings where your classes are held, 2) determine how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and 3) identify where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Blackboard Learn: Visit the course (EDSP 4340) website for updates on course content, quizzes, assignments, and general announcements. Please make it a point to check the website the day before each class for important information and announcements that may be relevant to the next class. Go to the following website to access our course on Blackboard: <https://learn.unt.edu/>

Retention of Student Records: Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Blackboard online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have the right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university's policy in accordance with those mandates at the following link: <http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/ferpa.html>

Professionalism: Enhancing professionalism and ethical behavior is an underlying goal of all courses in UNT's Programs in Special Education, as well as a foundational topic of this course. Thus, at all times, students are expected to conduct themselves in a highly responsible and respectful manner. In addition to those guidelines addressing student conduct established by the university and addressed in the undergraduate catalog and student handbook (e.g., cheating, plagiarism), professionalism includes the following:

- establishing and maintaining positive relationships and interactions with peers, colleagues, and instructors;
- attending respectfully to others who are sharing information (or asking questions) with the class;
- being flexible and understanding in response to unforeseen changes in the syllabus;
- maintaining attention and alertness, and refraining from engaging in any activity not directly related to this class during class hours;
- making only positive comments and gestures directed toward others in the class.
- ensuring that cell phones are turned off prior to entering the classroom, as phone calls during class time are disruptive to the instructional activities of the course (especially for those of us who are highly distractible);
- using personal computers is encouraged for those students who prefer this medium for note taking, however, professionalism dictates that students use their computers for class-related activities only during class time;
- all assignments, unless otherwise noted, are expected to be completed individually. In

addition, no work completed and turned in for this course should be turned in at a later time (without significant changes or additions) to fulfill requirements for other courses, or shared with other students for the purpose of completing course work in special education courses of this or other instructors.

Succeed at UNT: UNT endeavors to offer you a high-quality education and to provide a supportive environment to help you learn and grow. And, as a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. Here is how to succeed at UNT: Show Up, Find Support, Get Advised, Be Prepared, Get Involved, Stay Focused. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can achieve success, go to <http://success.unt.edu/>.

Course Schedule		
Date	Event/Assignment	Expectation
8/28	Course is opened in Blackboard	Students review the syllabus, the website, and begin work on Discussion Board items.
8/28 – 12/7	Completion of all course components may be at own pace. You can complete the entire course before any of the deadlines noted below.	Students review Blackboard website and work on all course components at their own pace. Deadlines below must be met.
9/1	Introductory activities (e.g., Distance Learning Survey, Engage with Instructor, Ask the Instructor, Introduce Self to Classmates)	Due by 11:59 PM
9/22	Module 1 (includes Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting online module, all reading checks, field experience activities,* and paper posted to Blackboard) *It would be best to start arranging Field Experience Activities ASAP (i.e. in first week of class)	Due by 11:59 PM
10/13	Module 2 (includes all reading checks, selection of high-incidence disability area, completion of research worksheets, posting/comments on wiki); Midpoint Survey	Due by 11:59 PM
11/3	Module 3 (includes all reading checks, selection of low-incidence disability area, completion of research worksheets, posting/comments on wiki, posting of wikis Modules 2 and 3 combined to Tk20 if in certification track)	Due by 11:59 PM
12/1	Module 4 (includes all reading checks,**completion of Book Review, Completion of update on Philosophy Statement); Final Survey) **Be sure to look at the Exploratory Activity Reading Check for Lesson 3 in this Module. Some planning/time will need to be set aside to complete this activity.	Due by 11:59 PM

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to make schedule changes given unusual circumstances and/or at my discretion. She expects students to adapt to changes with equanimity.

UNT Administrative Deadlines for Fall (2017)

August 28, 2017	First Class Day at UNT
Sept. 12	Instructor's written consent to drop course required starting on this date
Oct. 6	Last day to withdraw with grade of W
Oct. 7	Instructors may drop students with a grade of WF for nonattendance
Nov. 6	Last day to drop a class with either W or WF
Nov. 22	Last day to Withdraw (drop all classes)
Nov. 13	Can Begin to Request Incomplete
Dec. 7	Last Day of Class at UNT
Dec. 9-15	Final Exams (there is no final exam for this course)

Competency Goal Statements:

The competencies for this course are taken from the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) Professional Ethics and Standards (7th edition).

I. Initial preparation Standard 1: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences

ICSI.1.K8 Similarities and difference of individuals with and without exceptionalities.

ICSI.1.K10 Effects of learners' academic and social abilities, attitudes, interests, and values on instruction and career development.

II. Initial Preparation Standard 2: Learning Environments

ICSI.2.K Teacher attitudes and behaviors that influence behavior of individuals with exceptionalities.

ICSI.2.S Create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.

VI. Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

Initial Common Specialty Items (ICSI).6.K2: Laws, policies, and ethical principles regarding behavior management planning and implementation.

ICSI.6.K4 Rights and responsibilities of individuals with exceptionalities, their families, teachers, and other professionals, and schools related to exceptionalities.

ISCI.6.K Issues in definition and identification of individuals with exceptionalities, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

ICSI.6.S Demonstrate sensitivity for the culture, language, religion, gender, disability, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation of individuals.

VII. Initial Preparation Standard 7: Collaboration

ICSI.7.K2 Roles of individuals with exceptionalities, families, and school and community personnel in planning of an individualized program.

ICSI.7.K3 Concerns of families of individuals with exceptionalities and strategies to help address these concerns.

ICSI.7.K4 Culturally responsive factors that promote effective communication and collaboration with individuals with exceptionalities, families, school personnel, and community members.

3.0 Competency Goal Statements/ State of Texas Standards (as measured by the TExES EC-12 examination of Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR), #160:

Domain 1—Designing instruction and assessment to promote student learning.

Competency 001: The teacher understands human developmental processes and applies this knowledge to plan instruction and ongoing assessments that motivate students and are responsive to their developmental characteristics and needs.

E. Recognizes factors affecting the social and emotional development of students in early childhood through adolescence) e.g., lack of affection and attention, parental divorce, homelessness) and knows that students' social and emotional development impacts their development in other domains (i.e., cognitive, physical).

G. Understands that development in any one domain (i.e., cognitive, social, physical, emotional) impacts development in other domains.

H. Recognizes signs of developmental delays or impairments in students in early childhood through grade 4.

Domain I: Competency 002: The teacher understands student diversity and knows how to plan learning experiences and design assessments that are responsive to differences among students and that promote all students' learning.

A. Demonstrates knowledge of students with diverse personal and social characteristics (e.g., those related to ethnicity, gender, language background, exceptionality) and the significance of student diversity for teaching, learning, and assessment.

B. Accepts and respects students with diverse background and needs.

Domain 1: Competency 004: The teacher understands learning processes and factors that impact student learning and demonstrate this knowledge by planning effective, engaging instruction and appropriate assessments.

D. Recognizes how characteristics of students at different developmental levels (e.g., limited attention span and need for physical activity and movement for younger children; importance of peers, search for identity, questioning of values and exploration of long-term career and life goals for older students) impact teaching and learning.

M. Incorporates students' different approaches to learning (e.g., auditory, visual, tactile, kinesthetic) into instructional practices.

P. Applies knowledge of the implications for learning and instruction of the range of thinking abilities found among students in any one grade level and students' increasing ability over time to engage in abstract thinking and reasoning.

Domain II: Competency 005: The teacher knows how to establish a classroom climate that fosters learning, equity and excellence and uses this knowledge to create a physical and emotional environment that is safe and productive.

A. Uses knowledge of the unique characteristics and needs of students at different developmental levels to establish a positive, productive classroom environment (e.g., encourages cooperation and sharing among younger students provides middle-level students with opportunities to collaborate with peers; encourages older students' respect for the community and the people in it).

Domain IV: Competency 011: The teacher understands the importance of family involvement in children's education and knows how to interact and communicate effectively with families.

- B. Engages families, parents, guardians and other legal caregivers in various aspects of the educational program.
- C. Interacts appropriately with all families, including those that have diverse characteristics, backgrounds, and needs.
- D. Communicates effectively with families on a regular basis (e.g., to share information about students' progress) and responds to their concerns.

Competency Goal Statements/ State of Texas Standards (as measured by the TExES EC-12 examination of Special Education content, #161:

- 1.1k The historic foundations, classic studies including the major contributors, and major state and federal legislation that has affected knowledge and practice of the education of individuals with disabilities;
- 1.3k Current educational terminology and definitions of a variety of disabilities, including professionally accepted classification systems and current incidence and prevalence figures;
- 1.4k Issues in definition and identification procedures for individuals with disabilities, including individuals from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- 1.7k The continuum of placement and services available for individuals with disabilities
- 1.8k Assurances and due process rights related to assessment, eligibility, placement, and services;
- 2.1s Practice within the standards and policies of the profession, including the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Code of Ethics;
- 2.4s Respect the culture, gender, and personal beliefs of individual students and families;
- 2.9s Safeguard confidentiality with regard to students with disabilities (e.g., by maintaining the confidentiality of electronic correspondence and records; ensuring the confidentiality of conversations; training related parties, such as parents/guardians and consultants, to maintain confidentiality);
- 3.5s Communicate and collaborate effectively with paraprofessionals and other school and community personnel to deliver special education services
- 3.6s Encourage and assist parents/guardians to become active participants in their children's education