

EDSP 4340: Classroom and Behavioral Management Strategies for Exceptional Learners Fall 2026



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Meeting Dates & Location

Location & Time: Coliseum 047, Tuesday and Thursday 11:10AM-12:30PM
 Dates: August 17th – December 11th, 2026

Course Description

This course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of concepts and issues related to effective methods of classroom and individual behavior management for students with exceptionalities. The major goal of the course is to prepare students to develop, implement, and maintain an effective classroom/behavior management system. Participants in the class will learn about effective classroom organization and how to implement research-validated behavior change interventions for special education students across the service delivery continuum. Specifically, students will become proficient in understanding and implementation of Applied Behavior Analysis techniques for classroom use. Students will also be introduced to additional strategies and models of classroom management designed to facilitate positive academic, social, and behavioral classroom performance. Additional topics that will be discussed include ethical and professional behavior of special educators, interpersonal characteristics of effective special education teachers, designing effective classroom rules, the use of positive behavioral supports, as a way of improving student performance on academic and behavioral goals, and how to implement effective behavior intervention plans.

Course Structure

This is a **face-to-face** course. Class meetings will be delivered in person on a weekly basis throughout this semester. Some activities will be done in person or online via Canvas. This course is scheduled for **Tuesday/Thursday from 11:10AM – 12:30PM in Coliseum 047**. Refer to page 5 for a detailed course calendar.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will:

- 1) Understand and implement effective individualized behavior management strategies in classrooms for students with disabilities, including individual and group behavior management interventions.
- 2) Understand, and evaluate for possible adoption, a variety of empirically-based large classroom management models.
- 3) Understand and apply the principles of applied behavior analysis, including demonstration of a thorough knowledge of the concepts, vocabulary, and implementation.
- 4) Demonstrate the ability to use principles of applied behavioral analysis in designing and carrying out behavior change programs, including: identifying appropriate target behaviors; defining, observing, and recording behaviors; charting and graphing data, and interpreting results.
- 5) Understand the importance of professional ethics as related to special education programming.
- 6) Deliver a thoroughly researched, professional presentation to peers on a model of classroom discipline and management.

Our Learning Community

In this course, every student will feel supported in sharing their unique perspectives and be treated with respect. You are an integral part of our learning community, and your insights on course topics are valuable to your fellow learners. When connecting with me and your fellow students, please keep an open mind and communicate respectfully. We don't all need to agree, but we can always learn from each other.

Contemporary, formal, and unbiased language should be used when referring to individuals with disabilities. Whenever possible, request clarification regarding whether someone prefers person-first (e.g., person with autism) or disability-first language (e.g., autistic person). Do not use language that suggests a person is suffering from or limited by a disability unless they have communicated that is the case (e.g., wheelchair user versus confined to a wheelchair, has Down syndrome versus suffers from Down syndrome). Use contemporary language, including intellectual disability rather than mental retardation.

Office Hours & Course Communication

I am happy to meet during office hours to discuss topics covered in class, individual and group assignments, fieldwork not directly related to class, thesis ideas, or other tangentially related topics. Office hours are a great opportunity to receive individualized feedback, discuss ideas, or review your progress. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of them!

Email or Canvas messages are generally the best way to reach me. I will respond within 24 business hours, and often much faster than that. If my scheduled office hours don't work for you, please reach out and we can arrange a time that fits your schedule.

Materials

Maag, J.W. (2018). *Behavior management: From theoretical implications to practical applications* (3rd ed.). Cengage. **[Required]**

Waller, R. J. (2008). *A teacher's concise guide to functional behavioral assessment*. Corwin.

[Recommended]

Additional readings are available on Canvas and can be accessed through the UNT Library System.

- Alter, P., & Haydon, T. (2017). Characteristics of Effective Classroom Rules: A Review of the Literature. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 40(2), 114–127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0888406417700962>
- Ennis, R. P., Royer, D. J., Lane, K. L., Menzies, H. M., Oakes, W. P., & Schellman, L. E. (2018). Behavior-Specific Praise: An Effective, Efficient, Low-Intensity Strategy to Support Student Success. *Beyond Behavior*, 27(3), 134–139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1074295618798587>
- Gongola, L. C., & Daddario, R. (2010). A Practitioner's Guide to Implementing a Differential Reinforcement of other Behaviors Procedure. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 42(6), 14–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004005991004200602>
- Guardino, C. A., & Fullerton, E. (2010). Changing Behaviors by Changing the Classroom Environment. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 42(6), 8–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004005991004200601>
- Kern, L., & Clemens, N. H. (2007). Antecedent strategies to promote appropriate classroom behavior. *Psychology in the Schools*, 44(1), 65–75. <https://doi-org.libproxy.library.unt.edu/10.1002/pits.20206>
- Schulze, M. A. (2016). Self-Management Strategies to Support Students With ASD. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 48(5), 225–231. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040059916640759>
- Sugai, G., Lewis-Palmer, T., & Hagan-Burke, S. (2000). Overview of the Functional Behavioral Assessment Process. *Exceptionality*, 8(3), 149–160. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327035EX0803_2
- Sutherland, K. S., & Wehby, J. H. (2001). Exploring the Relationship Between Increased Opportunities to Respond to Academic Requests and the Academic and Behavioral Outcomes of Students with EBD: A Review. *Remedial and Special Education*, 22(2), 113–121. <https://doi.org/10.1177/074193250102200205>
- Vargo, K. K., & Gushanas, C. M. (2024). Considerations Before Implementing Punishment-Based Procedures in the Classroom. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 59(5), 303–311. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10534512231175158>

Summary of Assignments and Grading

Assignment	Points	Percentage of Final Grade
Exams (3 at 100 points each)	300 points	50%

Class Activities (5 at 20 points each)	100 points	17%
Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) Project	150 points	25%
Participation and Professionalism	50 points	8%
Total Possible	600 points	100%

Grade	Points Earned
A	540-600 points
B	480-539.9 points
C	420-479.9 points
D	360-419 points
F	0-359.9 points
<i>Please note: Grades are not rounded up</i>	

Exams (300 points): To help ensure a complete understanding of the course material, you will be required to take three (3) exams. Exams will consist primarily of content from the readings, lectures, and other class activities.

Class Activities (100 points): Throughout this course, you will engage in problem-solving exercises to demonstrate proficiency in selecting, implementing, and adjusting evidence-based behavior management strategies. Each activity will challenge you to connect theory to practice, justify your decisions, and reflect on possible outcomes. Five (5) activities will count toward your overall grade.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) Project (150 points): Students will work in small groups, or independently to create a BIP. This project will involve conducting a functional behavior assessment (FBA), developing hypotheses regarding behavioral functions and maintaining variables, and designing an intervention plan. A detailed description of the assignment and a rubric for evaluation will be made available to you on Canvas.

Participation and Professionalism (50 points): Your participation in activities and discussion is a critical element of the course structure. Please plan to attend all class meetings as listed on the course schedule. Points will be distributed as follows:

- 0-1 class missed = 50 points
- 2 classes missed = 30 points
- 3 classes missed = 15 points
- 4+ classes missed = 0 points

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due <i>Due 11:59pm CST</i>
8/18	Welcome, Syllabus & Introduction	Syllabus	
8/20	Introduction to Behavior	Ch. 1	

8/25	Basic Principles of Behavior	Ch.4	
8/27	Basic Principals of Behavior	Ch.4	Activity 1
9/1	Counting & Recording Behavior	Ch. 5	
9/3	Counting & Recording Behavior	Ch.5	
9/8	Graphing Behavior	Ch. 6	
9/10	BIP Project Overview		
9/15	Exam 1	Ch. 1, 4-6	
9/17	Functional Assessment of Behavior (FBA)	Ch. 7	
9/22	Functional Assessment of Behavior (FBA)	Ch. 7	
9/24	Writing Behavior Goals & Objectives		Activity 2
9/29	Preventative Approaches	Ch. 8	
10/1	Preventative Approaches	Ch. 8	
10/6	Social Skills		
10/8	Reinforcement techniques for Increasing Behavior	Ch. 9	Activity 3
10/13	Differential Reinforcement for Decreasing Behavior	Ch. 10	
10/15	Differential Reinforcement for Decreasing Behavior	Ch. 10	Activity 4
10/20	Considerations for the Classroom, Organization & Arrangement		
10/22	BIP Workday		
10/27	Exam 2	Ch. 7-10	
10/29	Punishment & Legal Considerations	Ch. 11	
11/3	Punishment & Legal Considerations	Ch. 11	Activity 5
11/5	Self-Management	Ch. 12	
11/10	Generalization	Ch. 14	
11/12	Considerations for the classroom, Schedules, Signals & Rules		
11/17	BIP Workday		
11/19	Exam 3	Ch. 11, 12 & 14	
11/23-11/29	No Class – Thanksgiving Break		
12/1-12/3	BIP workweek		
12/7-12/11	No final in this class		

NOTE: This schedule is subject to change given unusual circumstances and professor discretion. Students will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact this class. See [the Campus Closures Policy \(https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006). Readings, assignments, discussion postings, and other course information are available on Canvas.

Course Policies

Submission Guidelines

Read all assignment instructions carefully before beginning and before submitting your work to ensure accuracy. Please verify your submissions successfully post to Canvas. Statements such as “I thought I submitted it” or “my internet wasn’t working” are not acceptable excuses for late work. To avoid computer or connectivity issues, plan ahead and allow extra time.

Late Assignments:

Assignments should be submitted through Canvas 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-to-twenty percentage points will be deducted for assignments turned in late (5% for 1-2 days; 10% for 3-4 days; 15% for 5-6 days; 20% for 7 days). Unless previous written discussion and agreement occurs between the instructor and student, assignments submitted more than one week late will receive zero points. The date that assignments are received by the instructor in Canvas will be considered the date submitted.

Grade Disputes:

You are required to wait 24 hours before contacting me to dispute a grade. Within that time, you will review the assignment details and reflect on the quality of the work you turned in. If you would still like to meet, email me to schedule a meeting (I cannot discuss grades over email or discuss a classmates' grade). You should come to our meeting with specific examples demonstrating that you earned a higher grade than you received. You forfeit your right to a grade dispute if you miss your scheduled meeting. If you do not contact me to schedule a meeting within seven days of receiving your grade, you also forfeit your right to a grade dispute.

Use of Artificial Intelligence:

In this course, I want you to engage deeply with the materials and develop your own critical thinking and writing skills. For this reason, and in accordance with the UNT Honor Code, unauthorized use of GenAI tools for assignment completion (beyond grammatical and spelling correction) is *prohibited* and will be addressed according to the Student Academic Integrity policy (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>). Using GenAI content without proper credit or substituting your own work with GenAI undermines the learning process. Tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini generate responses based on large amounts of information from the internet and other sources. *They do not check whether that information is accurate.* In some subject areas, such as autism intervention, available information may be conflicting or inaccurate, and AI tools may repeat these problems. You don't know what you don't know... so do the work and learn from peer-reviewed, research-based sources.

APA Guidelines:

Use APA 7th edition guidelines for all written assignments. Refer to the [APA Website](#) for APA format guidelines. It is expected that you know how to paraphrase and cite information appropriately to meet both APA guidelines and to avoid plagiarism.

Student Evaluation of Teaching

Your feedback is important to me! Throughout the semester, I will solicit feedback about your experiences in this class. This feedback will allow me to adjust my teaching and better support your learning as the semester progresses. Additionally, at the end of the semester, the Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) evaluation instrument will open. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to confidentially evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey, they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been

submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

Educator Preparation Standards

This course addresses the following **Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Initial Preparation Standards**:

- 2.0: Beginning special education professionals create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments so that individuals with exceptionalities become active and effective learners and develop emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and self-determination.
- 2.2. Beginning special educational professionals use motivational and instructional interventions to teach individuals with exceptionalities how to adapt to different environment.
- 2.3. Beginning special education professionals know how to intervene safely and appropriately with individuals with exceptionalities in crisis.
- 6.0: Beginning special education professionals use foundational knowledge of the field and their professional ethical principles and practice standards to inform special education practice, to engage in lifelong learning, and to advance the profession.
- 6.1. Beginning special education professionals use professional ethical principles and professional practice standards to guide their practice.

This course addresses the following **TEXES #186 Standards**:

- Standard 1. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of the major state and federal legislation (e.g., IDEA, Section 504, ADA, ADAAA) that has affected knowledge and practice of the education of individuals with high support needs;
- Standard 2. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of the history of exclusion of and discrimination against people with disabilities;
- Standard 3. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of IDEA 2004 eligibility categories;
- Standard 4. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of all required components of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as outlined in federal and state law;

Standard 5. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of all sections of the special education legal folder and where to store required documentation;

Standard 6. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of the legal responsibility of all school staff to fully implement an IEP;

Standard 7. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of the legal responsibility of all teachers and school staff to protect the confidentiality and dignity of students with disabilities;

Standard 8. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of the special education teacher's roles and responsibilities regarding Child Find;

Standard 9. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of the special education teacher's roles and responsibilities in creating and implementing the IEP with fidelity, including monitoring student IEP goal progress, implementing data collection of IEP goal progress, and reporting progress to the student and parents/guardians throughout the IEP year;

Standard 10. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of how to use a variety of assessment data to write annual measurable goals and present levels of academic achievement and functional performance and identify appropriate accommodations (academic, behavior, state, and district testing) and modifications based on individual student needs, and contribute to drafting the IEP;

Standard 11. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of how to maintain student legal folders and store ongoing documentation according to local education agency (LEA) requirements and keep records to document receipt of the IEP by all required school staff;

Standard 12. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of how to audit student class schedules to ensure compliance with least restrictive environment and schedule of services in the IEP;

Standard 13. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of the role and responsibilities of the special education teacher in preparing for an Admission, Review, Dismissal (ARD) committee meeting, including collecting required data, interpreting the results of progress monitoring and classroom assessment data, and visually representing and interpreting data to show student progress;

Standard 14. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the required members of an ARD committee;

Standard 15. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of the required components of a typical ARD committee meeting agenda;

Standard 16. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of how to interpret the results of a variety of assessment data (i.e., classroom, state and district transition assessment) in plain language to explain present levels of student academic achievement and functional performance, student progress on annual IEP goals, and mastery of grade level TEKS to the ARD committee members;

Standard 17. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of how to prepare and support students in leading ARD committee discussion regarding progress on IEP goals, mastery of grade level TEKS, appropriate accommodations (academic, behavior, state and district assessment), transition needs and goals, and other supplements as needed;

Standard 18. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate the understanding of how to apply knowledge of individuals served through special education as well as special education laws and policies to facilitate and advocate for families' full participation in the education of their students;

Standard 19. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate understanding that students served through special education may also have other special populations identifiers (i.e., gifted and talented, English learners, highly mobile and at risk, dyslexia);

Standard 20. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of how to advocate for family and student participation in the IEP, ARD meetings, and transition plan;

Standard 21. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of how to foster and support students in their development of self-reliance and self-advocacy;

Standard 22. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate knowledge of how to advocate for high academic and behavioral expectations for students with disabilities;

Standard 23. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate understanding that individuals with high support needs deserve to be challenged with

high expectations and provided with meaningful inclusive participation opportunities to develop the highest possible learning outcomes;

Standard 24. The Early Childhood-Grade 6 special education teacher must demonstrate foundational knowledge of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

Additional Policies and Resources

As part of the support system at UNT, here are some additional resources that are mostly FREE of charge. **If at any point in the semester you are struggling physically, emotionally, or academically, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.** I am happy to connect you with the appropriate resources.

Counseling Center: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/studentcounseling>

UNT Well: <https://hps.unt.edu/rhs/untwell>

Food Pantry: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/food-pantry>

Substance Abuse Center: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/rise/programs/sure-program>

Student Health and Wellness Center: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>

Money Management Center: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-money-management-center>

Legal Services: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legalservices>

Career Center: <https://careercenter.unt.edu/>

Student Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences

All students are expected to adhere to UNT's Academic Integrity Standards (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003>). Please read and follow this important set of guidelines for your academic success. Academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and/or sabotage. An academic integrity violation could result in loss of points, a failing grade for the assignment or course, suspension or even expulsion depending on the severity. If you have questions about this policy, feel free to ask questions.

ADA Accommodations

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities. Students needing a reasonable academic accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the student will request their letter of accommodation. ODA will provide faculty with a reasonable accommodation letter via email to begin a private discussion regarding a student's specific needs in a course. Students may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable 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 reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty regarding their accommodations during office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the

privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>).

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students 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). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.