**EDSP 4350: Strategies to Support Diverse Learners in General Education**

**Fall 2025**

University of North Texas, College of Education

Mondays 1:00 PM to 3:50 PM

Matt 308

**Instructor:** Melissa Stalega, PhD

**Office:** Matt 322FA

**Office Hours:** Mondays and Thursdays, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

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**Course Description**

In this course we will examine the roles of various professionals in the successful inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. The focus will be on consultation models, practices and principles with an emphasis on collaboration, cooperative learning, and inclusion.

**Prerequisite(s)**

EDSP 3210 or equivalent; Admission to teacher education; Concurrent coursework for teacher prep including student teaching; Required for those seeking core subjects EC–6 certification only. See Student Teaching Program for details.

**Course Standards**

**Texas Education Administration — Special Education Specialist (EC–12 #186) Standards Met**  
*An EC–12 special education teacher must:*

1. demonstrate knowledge of all required components of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as outlined in federal and state law;
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. 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;
5. demonstrate understanding that students served through special education may also have other special populations identifiers (i.e., gifted and talented, English learner, highly mobile and at risk, and dyslexia);
6. advocate for high academic and behavioral expectations for students with disabilities;
7. demonstrate understanding that students with all support needs may also come from a different cultural background, may speak other languages than those of the dominant culture, or may come from a unique racial or ethnic group;
8. demonstrate understanding that individuals with high support needs deserve to be challenged with high expectations and provided with meaningful and inclusive participation opportunities to develop the highest possible learning outcomes.
9. demonstrate knowledge of strategies to support students' development and independence given relevant grade level expectations for academic and behavior from birth through adolescence;
10. apply a variety of evidence-based, age-appropriate classroom routines and procedures that support individual developmental and learning needs;
11. apply knowledge of evidence-based practices to identify and intervene when students are not making progress in functional, academic, or behavioral goals;
12. demonstrate the knowledge and ability to adapt instruction when students with high support needs do not meet milestones.
13. design appropriate learning and performance accommodations and modifications for students with exceptional learning needs in academic subject matter content of the general curriculum;
14. apply understanding of the subject matter TEKS, the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, and specialized curricula to inform programmatic and instructional decisions for students with high support needs;
15. apply content-specific knowledge to modify and differentiate instruction as well as provide access to instructional materials for a wide range of student performance levels;
16. demonstrate a content-specific knowledge at a level necessary for students with exceptionalities to progress in their individualized programs toward completion of appropriate graduation requirements;
17. apply content-specific knowledge to routinely collaborate, co-teach, modify, and adapt curriculum with general education teachers;
18. apply knowledge of individual learner characteristics and specialized curricula knowledge to accommodate, modify, and/or adapt the curricula across contexts;
19. demonstrate knowledge of specialized curricula that may include curriculum for social skills, life skills, transition, orientation and mobility, independence curricula, and self-advocacy;
20. demonstrate knowledge of families, culture, and community when involving paraprofessionals, general educators, and specialists, to make content and instruction accessible and challenging for students at all levels of support needs;
21. demonstrate knowledge of how to provide modified access to subject-specific instructional materials to address individual learner needs in different contexts such as center-based, home-based, and school-based classrooms, including specialized and general classrooms;
22. recognize barriers to accessibility and acceptance of individuals with high support needs and plan for ways to address those barriers through the implementation of specialized curricula.
23. use assessment results to design, adjust, plan, and inform instruction or intervention;
24. identify, recommend, and implement appropriate accommodations and/or modifications for classroom, behavior, state, and district testing or other assessments as determined by the ARD committee;
25. support students in understanding their own assessment data and using those results to self-monitor and self-regulate;
26. demonstrate knowledge of how to plan instruction according to the requirements of an IEP, including use of supplements, technology, assistive technology, and related services;
27. design instruction to meet the individual needs of a diverse group of students based on information from various types of formative and summative assessments;
28. use knowledge of the learning processes of adolescents and teenagers to select, adapt, and apply instructional strategies that meet the needs of individual students and support transition goals;
29. use explicit, scaffolded, systematic instruction to teach content, strategies, and skills;
30. design individualized instruction that adapts instructional intensity and/or intervention to build on students' strengths and accommodate students' needs;
31. create opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skill using different modalities and allow every individual to advance as they demonstrate their understanding;
32. apply knowledge of developmentally appropriate instructional strategies to engage, motivate, and promote learning specific to the needs of adolescents and teenagers with exceptionalities;
33. apply knowledge of the learning processes of adolescents and teenagers to select and use a variety of grouping strategies (e.g., whole group, small group, individual) to meet the learning needs of each student;
34. promote the generalization of concepts and skills across content areas and educational settings;
35. design visual supports to promote student mastery of curriculum, executive functioning, and classroom procedures;
36. adapt instruction and make regular changes based on data from assessments;
37. plan, adapt, and deliver learning experiences for individuals with high support needs in an inclusive manner that reflects an understanding of the continuum of instructional settings and an understanding of how to engage individuals with high support needs in inclusive, meaningful learning activities across instructional settings;
38. apply knowledge of students, content, and pedagogy to develop, implement, evaluate, and revise instruction and interventions as needed;
39. use strategies to promote active student engagement;
40. design effective and universally accessible environments and learning experiences appropriate for students in Prekindergarten- Grades 6-12;
41. create an environment in which expectations are clear and predictable and instructional routines and classroom procedures are used to support and actively engage students;
42. build positive relationships with students based on understanding of individual strengths and needs, high expectations, and mutual respect and rapport;
43. demonstrate knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the special education teacher and of other professionals who deliver special education services including related and instructional service providers;
44. effectively collaborate with general education teachers to deliver, adapt, and differentiate instruction to meet the instructional, emotional, behavioral, and social needs of students;
45. understand the strengths and limitations of various co-teaching models based on setting and the individual needs of students;
46. effectively implement co-teaching models to deliver, adapt, and differentiate instruction to meet students' instructional, emotional, behavioral, and social needs;
47. understand the reciprocal relationship with general education teachers for effective and inclusive practices;
48. coordinate with instructional and related service providers and community agencies to identify and access services, resources, and supports to meet the needs of individuals with exceptionalities;
49. engage in ongoing self-reflection to design and implement professional learning activities and advocate for improved outcomes for students with high support needs and their families, while considering the social, cultural, and linguistic diversity of students;
50. set short-term and long-term professional goals based on ongoing analysis of student learning, self-reflection, and professional standards;
51. demonstrate understanding of the barriers that exist for students with high support needs within educational settings and work with decision makers to design environments and select curriculum resources that include supports that address a range of student needs;

**Course Readings**

**Required Textbook**

Bryant, D. P., Smith, D. D., & Bryant, B. R. (2023). *Teaching in inclusive classrooms* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

*Note.* The Sage Vantage Learning Platform version of Teaching in Inclusive Classrooms is required. Many assignments and points are tied to it, and without it, you’ll miss essential resources and lose points.

**Course Assignments**

**1000 points**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Reading-Related Assignments** | **Due Date** | **Points** |
| Reading Activities | Various | 35 (5pt each) |
| Video Activities | Various | 70 (5pt each) |
| Chapter Quizzes | Various | 120\* (10pt each) |
| **Out-of-Class Assignments** | **Due Date** | **Points** |
| PLAAFPs & SMART Goals | 9/29 | 100 |
| MOCK IEP  In-Class Demo  Reflection | 10/6 | 200 |
| Case Study Analysis (A) | 10/20 | 80 |
| Case Study Analysis (B) | 10/27 | 80 |
| Poster Presentations | 12/1 | 150 |
| **In-Class Assignments** | **Due Date** | **Points** |
| Participation and Professionalism  This is an overall grade you will receive at the end of the semester. See requirements outlined in the Course Policies section. | end of the semester | 185 |

\*2 lowest scores will be dropped

For the course grade: A is 93 or above, A- is 90-92, B+ is 87-89, B is 83-86, B- is 80-82, etc.

**Calendar**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Date** | **Topic(s)** | **Reading(s)** | **Out of Class Assignments** |
| 1 | 8/18 | * Introductions * Syllabus/Canvas * Introduction and overview of educational considerations for exceptional learners |  |  |
| 2 | 8/25 | * Low and high incidence disabilities | * Bryant Chapters 5, 6 and 8 | * Chapter quizzes |
| **---- NO CLASS 9/1 / LABOR DAY ----** | | | | |
| 3 | 9/8 | * Assessment and data based decision making | * Bryant Chapter 9 | * Reading activities * Video activities * Chapter quiz |
| 4 | 9/15 | * Promoting positive behavior and facilitating social skills * Visual supports for executive function & classroom routines | * Bryant Chapter 10 | * Reading activities * Video activities * Chapter quiz |
| 5 | 9/22 | * RTI & MTSS in the classroom | * Bryant Chapter 2 | * Chapter quiz |
| 6 | 9/29 | * IEP Review: PLAFFS & SMART Goals | * Bryant Chapter 1 | * Chapter quiz * **PLAFFS & SMART Goals** |
| 7 | 10/6 | --- In-Class Mock IEP --- | | * **Mock IEP & Reflection** |
| 8 | 10/13 | * Teaching reading IMRA Texas curriculum | * Bryant Chapter 11 | * Reading activities * Video activities * Chapter quiz |
| 9 | 10/20 | * Teaching writing IMRA Texas curriculum | * Bryant Chapter 12 | * Reading activities * Video activities * Chapter quiz * **Case Study A** |
| 10 | 10/27 | * Teaching math IMRA Texas curriculum | * Bryant Chapter 13 | * Reading activities * Video activities * Chapter quiz * **Case Study B** |
| 11 | 11/3 | * Facilitating content-area instruction and study skills | * Bryant Chapter 14 | * Reading activities * Video activities * Chapter quiz |
| 12 | 11/10 | * Differentiating instruction * ADAPT framework | * Bryant Chapter 7 | * Reading activities * Video activities * Chapter quiz |
| 13 | 11/17 | * Unwrapping the standards & TEKS |  |  |
| **---- NO CLASS 11/24 / THANKSGIVING BREAK ----** | | | | |
| 14 | 12/1 | ---- In-Class Poster Presentations ---- | | * Differentiation poster presentation |

**Course Policies**

**Communication**

I will use office hours and Canvas, instead of email, for all non-personal communication. For content-related questions, please post your question to CONTENT QUESTIONS forum. For non-content questions, such as questions related to policies, due dates, assignments, class times, etc., please use ADMIN QUESTIONS forum. If a question has not already been answered by another student, I will try to respond to questions within one business day (24 hours, except on weekends). Please use e-mail only for questions of a personal nature. If you email me a non-personal question, I will redirect your question to the appropriate forum. Office hours are held in-person in my office (Matt 322FA) on Mondays and Thursdays 9:00AM to 12:00PM. For other appointments, please email me at least 24 hours prior to the requested date and time.

My general philosophy is, if you keep an open line of communication, I am willing to work with you to ensure that you are successful in this course. If you anticipate not being able to make a class or due date, please email me beforehand. Requests for an extension the night before an assignment is due will not be considered, however.

**Attendance**

Attendance to all in-person classes is required. Please contact me as soon as possible if there are extenuating circumstances for missing more than one class. Information about the University of North Texas’ Attendance Policy may be found at: <http://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-2-5>.

Students are expected to attend face to face class meetings regularly and to abide by the attendance policy established for the course. It is important that you communicate with the professor and the instructional team prior to being absent, so you, the professor, and the instructional team can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your attainment of course learning goals. Please inform the professor and instructional team if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community. We have in class group work that may include assigned participation points on a weekly basis. If you miss more than two classes (which is equivalent to almost 6 instructional hours), you will receive a failing grade unless agreed upon circumstances between you and the university allow it (allowed absences are described in the link above). Students who miss more than a half-hour of class will be considered absent from that class meeting. Chronic tardiness or early departure (arriving more than 15 minutes late or leaving more than 15 minutes early) will result in the lowering of a final grade at my discretion. Please note: it is your responsibility to drop this course, if necessary.

**Assignments**

For all assignments: Remember it is KEY to keep confidentiality in place (e.g., do not include or discuss the student’s name, etc.) with your instructor, classmates, family members, etc. All assignments must be submitted electronically using Canvas as a WORD document. Most assignments are due on Sundays at 11:59 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

*Late Assignments*

Assignments should be submitted through Canvas by 11:59PM CST 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. *Please note that quizzes do not receive any points if late.* The date that assignments are received by the instructor in Canvas will be considered the date submitted. The final assignment is exempt from the late assignment allowances (so please turn it in on time!) because final grades must be submitted to the University.

*Grading*

Unless I have made a calculation error, I do not engage in conversations regarding changing grades. If you believe I have made a calculation error, you may email me within one week of receiving a grade to discuss. If you are concerned about your performance and want to work to improve your grade on future assignments, I am happy to speak with you during office hours.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Your credibility as a writer and student relies on both generating your own ideas in your own words and giving attribution (credit) to sources. Al is increasingly available and will undoubtedly be part of your career. Therefore, understanding its uses without depending on it, is an essential skill. That distinction, and strong writing itself, relies on critical thinking and employing strategies to develop ideas and assess arguments. So, while some assignments may invite the use of online tools to get things started, or to review grammar, etc., the core expectation for our class is that the work you submit is your own original writing. Using the work of someone else including Al, and without citing it, is a form of cheating/plagiarism.

Again, you may use AI to: help you start an outline, start a sentence, start a paragraph, or check grammar (grammarly), but outside of that, you need to be doing your own writing. I will reach out to you if your AI use is over a certain percentage!

**APA Guidelines**

As a professional disposition for teachers, educational researchers, and other educators, our field follows the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines for writing and publishing in the social and behavioral sciences. Therefore, it is a requirement in this class for you to use APA style when writing for any assignment. The APA guidelines can be found in the APA manual 7th edition (http://www.apastyle.org). All assignments will be graded with these guidelines in mind.

**Self-Care During Class**

You should always feel free to take care of yourself, as needed in class. This includes snacks, drinks, bathroom breaks, and just standing and stretching. You can also ask for a class short class stretch break at any time.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Please see me individually within the first two weeks of class if you have any special needs or require any special accommodations as the result of a documented disability. The Office of Disability Access (ODA) can help you document your disability (<http://www.unt.edu/oda>).

**University Policies**

**Succeed At UNT**

UNT endeavors to offer you a high‐quality education and to provide a supportive environment to help you learn and grown. And, as a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. Here’s 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 <http://success.unt.edu/>.

**Academic Dishonesty**

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that particular assignment or exam and an Admissions, Retention, & Review form will be completed and submitted to the College of Education. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students, who May impose further penalties. 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 knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; 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.

**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>.

**Access to Information – Eagle Connect**

Your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs at http://www.my.unt.edu. All official communication from the university will be delivered to your Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward your e‐mail: <http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/>.

**ADA Statement**

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (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. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty 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 (http://www.unt.edu/oda). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

**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 Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

**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 Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have a 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>.

**Student Evaluation of Teaching**

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course. This short survey will be made available toward the end of the semester to provide you with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught.

**Other Resources**

**As part of the support system at UNT, here are some additional resources that are mostly FREE of charge. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me at any time. Thank you.**

Counseling Center: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-counseling>

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>

COVID-19 Information: <https://healthalerts.unt.edu/>

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

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

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

**UNT IT/Canvas Support**

Please contact CLEAR support if you have any difficulties. Note that there is support contact information on your Canvas login screen. This also extends to technology difficulties during the course.

Email: [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu)

Live Chat: <https://it.unt.edu/helpdesk/chatsupport>

Phone: 940-565-2324

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 330

For additional support, visit Canvas Technical Help