SPED 5385: Independent Study
Foundations in Language Minority Special Education
Monday 4:20-6:50, ECDC 219A/Online
Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi
College of Education

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is designed to prepare special educators to address the sociocultural
and ethnolinguistic needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Particular
emphasis is placed on: understanding the influence of language and culture in the
design of instruction to prevent academic difficulty; the identification of students
who need additional instructional supports; appropriate referral, screening, and
assessment of students suspected of having disabilities; and the design of
individualized education plans for students who qualify for special education
services.

II. RATIONALE
This course is a foundations course for the M.S. in Special Education and is an
institutional degree requirement for the M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction with the
Educational Diagnostician Certificate. Given the ever-increasing diversity of Texas
and the nation, educators must be prepared to deliver culturally and linguistically
responsive programs and services. In addition, an understanding of diversity is
necessary in order to effectively advocate for equity and excellence in education for
all learners.

III. STATE ADOPTED PROFICIENCIES FOR TEACHERS
The state adopted proficiencies covered in this course include the following:

1. Equity in Excellence for All Learners. The teacher responds
appropriately to diverse groups of learners.
2. Learned-Centered Communication. While acting as an advocate for all
students and the school, the teacher demonstrates effective professional
and interpersonal communication.

IV. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
Students in this graduate program will:

- demonstrate knowledge of individuals with disabilities (SPED 5315, SPED
  5320, and SPED 5397 are linked to this student learning outcome);
• evaluate the needs of individuals with disabilities (SPED 5386 and SPED 5387 are linked to this student learning outcome);
• demonstrate knowledge of fostering learning and development for individuals with disabilities (SPED 5320, SPED 5385, SPED 5386, SPED 5387, and SPED 5397 are linked to this student learning outcome);
• demonstrate knowledge of foundations of special education and professional roles and responsibilities of the special education educator (SPED 5385, SPED 5386, SPED 5387, SPED 5388, and SPED 5397 are linked to this student learning outcome); and
• develop a behavior intervention/change plan (SPED 5380 is linked to this student learning outcome).

V. TExES Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES)
Domain I, Competency 001: The special education teacher understands and applies knowledge of the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities.
Competency 002: The special education teacher understands and interprets formal and informal assessment procedures and knows how to evaluate student competencies to make instructional decisions.
Domain II, Competency 003: The special education teacher understands and applies knowledge of procedures for planning instruction for individuals with disabilities.
Domain II, Competency 005: The special education teacher knows how to promote students' educational performance in all content areas by facilitating their achievement in a variety of settings and situations.
Competency 006: The special education teacher understands and applies knowledge of issues and procedures for teaching appropriate student behavior and social skills.
Domain IV, Competency 010: The special education teacher understands the philosophical, historical and legal foundations of special education.
Domain IV, Competency 011: The special education teacher applies knowledge of roles and responsibilities and adheres to legal and ethical requirements of the profession.
Domain IV, Competency 012: The special education teacher knows how to communicate and collaborate effectively in a variety of professional settings.
The Educational Diagnostician TeXES program competencies covered in this course include the following:
Domain III, Competency 007: The educational diagnostician understands the use of appropriate assessment, evaluation, planning and instructional strategies for developing students' behavioral and social skills.
Domain IV, Competency 009: The educational diagnostician develops collaborative relationships and demonstrates skills for scheduling, time management, and organization.
Beginning special educators demonstrate their mastery of the following standards:

**Initial Content Standard 1: Foundations**
Special educators understand the field as an evolving and changing discipline based on:
- philosophies and evidence-based principles and theories
- relevant laws and policies
- diverse and historical points of view
- human issues that influence the field and professional practice
- issues of human diversity that can impact families, cultures, and schools
- relationships of organizations of special education to the organizations and functions of schools, school systems, and other agencies

**Initial Content Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners**
Special educators:
- know and demonstrate respect for their students first as unique human beings
- understand the similarities and differences in human development
- understand how exceptional conditions can interact with the domains of human development
- use this knowledge to respond to the varying abilities and behaviors of individuals with exceptional learning needs

**Initial Content Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences**
Special educators:
- know and understand the effects that an exceptional condition can have on an individual’s learning in school and throughout life
- utilize active and resourceful means in seeking to understand how primary language, culture, and familial backgrounds interact with the individual’s exceptional condition
- understand learning differences provide the foundation upon which special educators individualize instruction

**Initial Content Standard 4: Instructional Strategies**
Special educators:
- possess a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to individualize instruction for individuals with exceptional learning needs.
- select, adapt, and use these instructional strategies to promote positive learning results in general and special curricula
- modify learning environments appropriately for individuals with exceptional learning needs
- enhance the learning of critical thinking, problem-solving, and performance skills of individuals with exceptional learning needs
• promote increased student’ self-awareness, self-management, self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem
• emphasize the development, maintenance, and generalization of knowledge and skills across environments, settings, and the life span.

**Initial Content Standard 5: Learning Environments and Social Interactions**

Special educators actively:

• create learning environments for individuals with exceptional learning needs
• foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and active engagement
• foster environments in which diversity is valued
• shape environments to encourage the independence, self-motivation, self-direction, personal empowerment, and self-advocacy
• help their general education colleagues integrate individuals with exceptional learning needs in general education environments and engage them in meaningful learning activities and interactions
• use direct motivational and instructional interventions
• teach students to respond effectively to current expectations
• intervene with individuals with exceptional learning needs in crisis
• coordinate all these efforts and provide guidance and direction to paraeducators and others, such as classroom volunteers and tutors.

**Initial Content Standard 6: Language**

Special educators:

• understand typical and atypical language development
• use individualized strategies to enhance language development and teach communication skills
• are familiar with augmentative, alternative, and assistive technologies to support and enhance communication
• match communication methods to an individual's language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences
• provide effective language models and use communication strategies and resources to facilitate understanding of subject matter for individuals with exceptional learning needs whose primary language is not English.

**Initial Content Standard 7: Instructional Planning**

Individualized decision-making and instruction is at the center of special education practice. Special educators:

• develop long-range individualized instructional plans anchored in both general and special education curricula
• systematically translate these individualized plans into carefully selected shorter-range goals and objectives taking into consideration an individual's abilities and needs, the learning environment, and a myriad of cultural and linguistic factors
• emphasize explicit modeling and efficient guided practice to assure acquisition and fluency through maintenance and generalization.
• modify instructional plans based on ongoing analysis of the individual’s learning progress
• facilitate instructional planning in a collaborative context
• develop a variety of individualized transition plans from preschool to a variety of postsecondary work and learning contexts
• use appropriate technologies to support instructional planning and individualized instruction

Initial Content Standard 8: Assessment
Assessment is integral to the decision-making and teaching of special educators and special educators use multiple types of assessment information for a variety of educational decisions. Special educators use the results of assessments:
• to help identify exceptional learning needs and to develop and implement individualized instructional programs
• to adjust instruction in response to ongoing learning progress
Special educators understand:
• legal policies and ethical principles of measurement
• measurement theory and practices
• appropriate use and limitations of various types of assessments
Special educators collaborate with families and other colleagues to:
• assure nonbiased, meaningful assessments and decision-making
• conduct formal and informal assessments of behavior, learning, achievement and environments
• identify supports and adaptations required for individuals
• regularly monitor the progress of individuals
• use appropriate technologies to support their assessments.

Initial Content Standard 9: Professional and Ethical Practice
Special educators are guided by the profession’s ethical and professional practice standards to:
• to practice ongoing attention to legal matters along with serious professional and ethical considerations
Special educators view themselves as lifelong learners and regularly reflect on and adjust their practice to reflect current evidence-based best practices.

Initial Content Standard 10: Collaboration
Special educators routinely and effectively collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways and promote and advocate the learning and well-being of individuals with exceptional learning needs across a wide range of settings and a range of different learning experiences.
VI. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

The overarching objective in this course is to prepare educators to provide culturally and linguistically responsive services to students with disabilities and their families. This course is designed to enable teachers and educational diagnosticians to explore the relationship between language, culture and disability by:

1. Increasing cultural self-awareness in order to promote culturally and linguistically responsive practices in serving exceptional individuals;

2. Increasing knowledge and understanding of issues and critical concepts related to serving CLD individuals with disabilities and their families; this includes identification, assessment, placement, and culturally/linguistically responsive practices in multicultural/bilingual special education;

3. Becoming familiar with policy, law, and safeguards related to appropriate services for individuals with disabilities from CLD backgrounds;

4. Understanding of linguistic and dialectal differences including non-standard English dialects, second language acquisition, bilingualism, and language proficiency, with emphasis on implications for assessment, instruction, and related services;

5. Enhancing knowledge and understanding of factors that influence access and equity of services in general and special education, including culture and social class differences.

VII. COURSE TOPICS

The major topics to be considered are the following:
- Demographic imperatives
- Culture and cultural variability
- Frameworks for culturally and linguistically responsive practice
- Culture and disability
- Legal foundations for bilingual/multicultural special education
- Linguistic and dialectic diversity
- Developing partnerships with families
- Referral, assessment and identification of CLD learners
- Design of culturally and linguistically responsive programs and services

VIII. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

The methods and activities for instruction include the following:
- Readings and discussion
- Cooperative learning
- Case studies
- Written assignments
IX. EVALUATION AND GRADE ASSIGNMENT
The final grade will be based on the following:

Quizzes (2) 60 points
Activities (7) 140 points
Cultural/Linguistic Self-Reflection Poster 100 points
Presentation and Gallery Walk* 100 points
Final Exam (at least 50% of material drawn from previously administered quizzes) 100 points

*Instructions for these major assignments will be provided online.

The letter grade equivalent for the cumulative points earned is as follows:

450-500 points = A
400-449 points = B
350-399 points = C
300-349 points = D
Below 300 = F

Online Expectations (access via the Start Here link in Blackboard)

X. REQUIRED TEXT
You will access readings via electronic reserves at the Mary and Jeff Bell Library. You will access the website at http://rattler.tamucc.edu/find/Find_CourseReserves.php.

XI. TENTATIVE SCHEDULE
8/26-8/31 Unit One—Introduction to SPED 5385
Introduction/Course overview
Unit 1 Activity
9/1-9/7 Unit Two—Diversity Matters
Demographic context for bilingual/multicultural special education
Unit 2 Activity
9/8-9/21 Unit Three—Cultural Diversity
Cultural variability and reciprocity
Framework for culturally and linguistically responsive practice
Culture and disability
Unit 3 Activity
9/14* Class Meeting
9/22-9/28 Cultural/Linguistic Self-Reflection Poster Project (posted by 25; Gallery Walk by 9/28)
Quiz 1 (must be completed by 9/28)
XI. COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in failure. See website http://judicialaffairs.tamucc.edu/.

Submission of Work
All written work turned in must be typewritten. With the exception of field journals, hand-written work will not be accepted. Late work will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made in advance with the instructor or documentation is provided of a medical or family emergency.
All online assignments must be submitted no later than 11:59 pm on the due date.

**Dropping a Class**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Check the university academic calendar website for dates related to dropping a class with an automatic grade of "W" this term. See website [http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/academic_cal.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/academic_cal.html).

**Preferred methods of scholarly citations**
Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), Sixth Edition is the preferred method for citations within papers.

**Classroom/professional behavior**
All students are expected to act in a responsible manner with consideration of fellow students and toward TAMU-CC faculty and staff members. Specific rules and information is available in the TAMU-CC Student Handbook and available through the website [http://judicialaffairs.tamucc.edu/studentcofc.html](http://judicialaffairs.tamucc.edu/studentcofc.html).

**Statement of Academic Continuity**
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Grade Appeals**
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing
the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

Disabilities Accommodations*
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in CCH 116. See website http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu/.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

*Required by SACS

XIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY
Course content is supported by the following:


**Helpful Websites:**

American Institute for Research, The Access Center  
[http://www.k8accesscenter.org/training_resources/math.asp](http://www.k8accesscenter.org/training_resources/math.asp)

Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence  

Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners  
[http://community.cec.sped.org/DDEL/homepage](http://community.cec.sped.org/DDEL/homepage)

The IRIS Center  

National Association for Bilingual Education  

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition  
[http://www.ncela.us/](http://www.ncela.us/)
Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
http://www.tesol.org/home

Texas Project First http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/