

SPED 346 Introduction to Exceptional Children
Spring 2014
Web-based Sections 02W

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Office Hours:

Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 – 10:30 am; Tuesday 1:00 – 3:00 pm or by appt.

It is my desire that each of you profits from this course. Please contact me via e-mail or phone or schedule to meet with me if you need any assistance. Appointments are NOT required, but are appreciated, preferred, and given priority.

Course Description:

This course will provide a survey of populations with exceptionalities. Attention will be given to the cause of these deviations and their effect upon the individual's development. Professional roles of the special education team members as well as the policies and regulations applicable to special education programs in general will be covered.

Text:

Hallahan, D.P., Kauffman, J. M., & Pullen, P.C. (2012). *Exceptional Learners: An Introduction to Special Education (12th Ed.)*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. (ISBN # 13:978-0-13-703370-6 / 10:0-13-703370-2)

TExES Competencies Addressed:

The following are the standard course objectives: The student is expected to be able to

001	Understand and apply knowledge of the characteristics and needs of students with disabilities
004	Understand and apply knowledge of procedures for managing the teaching and learning environment, including procedures related to the use of assistive technology
010	Understand the philosophical, historical, and legal foundations of special education, and
012	Know how to communicate and collaborate effectively in a variety of professional settings.

Course Objectives: Course objectives for SPED 346 are included in Attachment # 1. Course objectives are based on the *descriptive statements* of the knowledge and skills related to the above *competencies* for Texas Special Educator Certification. As SPED 346 is an *introduction* to exceptional children, it is not expected that students will be proficient in all objectives. It is expected, however, that at the conclusion of this course, each student will be able to demonstrate a limited understanding of each course objective.

Class Requirements/Assignments/Activities/Expectations and Grading:

Getting to Know You (or “All About Me”): Students will provide a short autobiography so that your classmates and I can get to know you. You can give information about your degree sought, experience, ambitions for the future, etc. It would be helpful to provide a picture of yourself so others “get to know you”, if possible. This assignment should be completed as part of a discussion thread for week one.

GRADING: maximum 10 points

Sample Quiz:

Week #1 contains a short, sample quiz over this syllabus. This is intended to give you an opportunity to “practice” taking an on-line quiz. There are 15 questions on this quiz, worth one point each. READ THE SYLLABUS before starting this quiz. Then, just “dive in”.

Grading: maximum 15 points

Sample Drop Box:

Week # 1 requires you to make an entry into the drop box. In order to complete this assignment, you are required to watch several short video clips and react to them. The video clips will serve as an introduction to special education for those unfamiliar with special education and will be a surprise to many who do have some background in special ed. This series of videos will provide a basis for many of the topics that we will be discussing during the remainder of the semester.

For this assignment you will be required to watch 9 parts of the video, *Misunderstood Minds*. This series of videos introduces you to 5 “exceptional” children and their families. The various parts of this video will help you begin to think about aspects not generally thought of with “exceptional” children. Few people would ever think about special education when first introduced to Nathan VanHoy!

1. See more specifics about this assignment in “doc sharing”.
2. Access the videos at www.youtube.com. Search “Misunderstood Minds”
3. Watch Chapters 1 through Chapter 8.1. All are approximately 9 minutes with the exception of 8.1 which is 4:39 minutes.

Your Assignment: Write a ½ to 1 page reaction (maximum) on what you learned from watching *Misunderstood Minds*. This is to be brief, but include enough detail to show me that you watched the clips. MAXIMUM LENGTH = 1 PAGE! **Post your paper to the M.Minds drop box in week #1.**

GRADING: 25 points

Weekly Discussion Forum Participation: Students are expected to participate actively in discussions on each assigned lesson (typically weekly). For each discussion, you are to contribute at least one original thought by posting your *reflection* to a thought provoking question based on assigned readings / videos, etc. For some discussion forum, you will be required to respond to at least one posting of one of your classmates (*peer response*).

- For this assignment, you will be assigned a group. Try to post with your group as possible.
- Due dates for each reflection and each peer response will be included in each assignment. Typically, your reflection must be posted by midnight Sunday and your peer response must be posted by midnight Wednesday. However, this may not hold true for every assignment – so check the schedule and assignment carefully and frequently. Postings after the due date WILL NOT be accepted!

GRADING: Maximum 25 points per discussion for 10 lessons = 250 total available points

***If the discussion requires a peer response in addition to your personal reflection, the 25 points will be divided with your reflection being worth 15 points and your peer response being worth 10 points.**

NOTES ABOUT REFLECTIONS AND RESPONDING

These assignments are to encourage **thoughtful** reflection and expression of your views. This is a college class so postings called “drive by” postings (“that’s great”, “yea I agree”, “You go girl!”) are not welcome and will NOT receive a high grade.

- There is no minimum length or required number of words. Conversely, I don’t encourage really long answers – remember your peers have to read it and they are just as cramped for time as you are. Generally, *a few sentences or a short paragraph* is sufficient.
- In responding to another person’s post, be considerate and respectful. You may not agree – and do not have to. We all learn by being challenged to think deeper and consider more alternatives. I encourage “talking” out new ideas and perspectives. BUT, if you disagree, you are expected to express your disagreement in a respectful way.
- Typically, your grade will not be based on writing mechanics or correctness of grammar and punctuation. Good writing mechanics shows a respect for your reader, however, and allows me to score your response (and not your grammar). If your writing and grammar compromises my reading and understanding, you will not receive a high score. On this note – I don’t speak “text” very well, so don’t use text abbreviations and expect me to understand. Just, play it safe and don’t use these abbreviations.
- At times, you will need to support your opinion with “facts”. For example, “I believe ___ as the law says ___”. Facts must be correct for you to receive full credit for your post.
- Personal experience can be a great contributor to your response to the discussion question. However, personal experience should only support your answer. I must be able to see from your response that you have completed requirements of the assignment (read / watched). Your neighbor, cousin, or previous Sunday School teaching experience can all contribute to our understand. These experiences do not fully document that you read and thoughtfully processed the assigned materials, however.
- You will be assigned a discussion group. It is sometimes difficult for me to find your post if you do not post with your group. Therefore, try to post with your group, as possible.

In summary, discussion forum posts WILL be graded on:

- **Timeliness** – late postings WILL NOT be graded and will receive a ZERO
- **Thoughtfulness** - I must be able to see your original thought process based on the assignment, which can be supported by, but not solely based on, your personal experience
- **Factual correctness** – if you cite a “fact” it must be correct
- **Collaborative spirit** – you don’t have to agree with your peers, but you must phrase your disagreement in a dignified, professional, and respectful tone
- **Writing mechanics** – remember, if I can’t understand your post, I can’t grade it.

Weekly Chapter Quizzes: For each lesson (approximately weekly), you will have a quiz that will cover all information presented that week. These quizzes are intended to give you an idea of what to expect on the examinations. Typically, the quizzes will be open for the entire week, and, generally, will close on Sunday at 11:59 pm but *you are responsible* to verify the closing date / time of each quiz.

You will be allowed to take the quiz only one time unless otherwise noted. These quizzes are open book, open notes, but closed to your peers (it must be your own work). The quizzes will be timed so that you will need to have a good, general understanding of all the material *in advance* of taking the quiz in order to complete it accurately and timely.

- **GRADING: Quizzes are worth 30 points each for 12 quizzes = 360 total available points**

Disability in Society

These two assignments will allow students to analyze how society experiences “disability” as it is portrayed in film and as perceived and experienced by families in day-to-day situations with a child with a disability. Additional information on these two assignments will be posted in “doc sharing”.

- **GRADING 50 points each for a total of 100 points**
- **Due Dates: To be announced, typically around Week 11 and week 14**
- **Assignments can be turned in before the due date**

Assessments (Tests) (3 tests at 50 points each=150 points)

Three (3) tests (two during the semester and one final exam) will be scheduled during the semester to measure your comprehension and ability to apply the course content. Assessments may consist of both objective questions and/or short essay questions. All exams will be posted on-line to eCollege and taken from your home or university computer lab. Specific time periods will be allocated for each examination. Exams are closed book (no access to notes/book) unless otherwise specified.

Tentative exam schedule: week 4 and week 10, final exam week 16

Any student with an “A” average on all previously submitted materials will be exempt from taking the final exam.

Course Evaluation & Grading:

“Getting to Know You” Post	10
Sample Quiz	15
Misunderstood Minds Discussion	25
Discussion Forum 10 @ 25 points	250
Chapter Quizzes 12 @ 30 points	360
Disability in Society	
- Analysis of Film	50
- Analysis of Family Interview	50
Examinations 2 @ 50	<u>100</u>

Total possible points without final **860**

Final Exam **50**
Total possible points WITH final **910**

Point Distribution:

A = 90%
 B = 80%

C = 70%
 D = 60%
 F = < 60%

Communication & Support:

If you have a question that others in the class may also be having, please post those questions to my Virtual Office in eCollege. Please consult Virtual Office to see if a question has already been answered before sending me an e-mail. *** (see 3 before me rule below). Responses to Virtual Office questions & emails will be made Monday through Friday within 48 hours unless out-of-office notification has been provided. Please note that I will not guarantee response to Virtual Office posts or emails during weekends, holidays, or in the evenings. If you have any questions or need clarifications on any aspect of the course, please post early in the week.

A Note About the Virtual Office: The Virtual Office is a public forum. Everyone else in the class can read everything you write there. If you need to contact me about something of a personal nature, feel free to e-mail me.

Three Before Me Rule: The 3 before me rule simply means, before you e-mail me with a question, (when is an assignment due, how do I turn it in, how many points is it worth, etc.), you are to attempt 3 times to find the answer your question. What are some suggested ways you can do this? You could: read your syllabus, review Virtual Office to see if someone else has asked this question, post a question for your peers in the Virtual Office, or contact other members of your discussion group, etc.

As a student enrolled at Texas A&M University-Commerce, you have access to an email account via MyLeo. ALL class emails from your instructor WILL GO TO YOUR MyLeo ACCOUNT. Please be sure to check this email account frequently and regularly.

Technology Requirements:

This is a totally on-line course that will be conducted within eCollege (the class will NOT meet face-to-face). eCollege works best within a Microsoft Windows environment, and requires a high speed internet connection (not dial-up). This means you should use a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0 or 8.0). The course will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari (2.0 or better). eCollege also supports the Firefox/Mozilla (3.0 or better) on both Windows and Mac operating systems. It is strongly recommended that you perform a "Browser Test" prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login to eCollege, click on the "myCourses" tab, and then select the "Browser Test" link under Support Services. To get started with the course, go to: <https://leo.tamu-commerce.edu/login.aspx>. You will need your CWID and password to login to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903-468-6000 or helpdesk@tamu-commerce.edu.

Contacting eCollege for Technical Support:

The following support options are available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week

- Help: Click on the "help" button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege (i.e., "How do I submit to dropbox?", "How do I post to discussion board?", etc.
- Chat Support: Click on the "Live Support" on the toolbar within your course to chat with an eCollege representative.

- Phone: 1-866-656-5511 (toll free) to speak with an eCollege Technical Support Representative
- Email: helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with eCollege Technical Support Representative

Other Important Notes:

- 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 have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:
 Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
 Texas A&M University-Commerce
 Gee Library, Room 132
 Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
 Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu
- All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*)
 - All students are expected to display professional behaviors (dispositions) expected of educators and to demonstrate these behaviors in their interactions with K-12 students, families, your colleagues, the professor, and communities at all times. These professional behaviors consist of such behaviors as professional responsibility, professional and personal integrity, collegiality, and commitment to learning. Failure to display professional behaviors can result in counseling by the professor and result in lowering of the course grade.
 - Academic Dishonesty. To be successful in this class, you must invest time for study. Honesty is expected. Academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, collusion) will NOT be tolerated and will result in a grade of zero (0) for the assignment. A second infraction will result in automatic failure of the class. Dishonesty is defined as (i) the use of unauthorized materials, (ii) any communication with peers during quizzes, (iii) representing another's work as one's own (i.e. plagiarism) or (iv) fabricating information. The professor reserves the right to determine occurrences of cheating.
 - Plagiarism occurs at any time that another's ideas or words are used as your own without attribution. Direct quotations must be cited and set off from other text by quotation marks (".."). Paraphrasing of another's ideas must also be cited (although this does not require quotation marks). Copying from other students and two or more students who work together and turning in the exact same work (unless it's an assigned group project) also constitute plagiarism.
 - For many assignments, students are encouraged to work together. However, if individual submission of the assignment is required, the final product must be your own work.

- All assignments must be turned in on the assigned due date. *Unexcused assignments turned in after the due date will be returned ungraded.*
 - **Please note:** Late postings to the discussion board will not be graded, regardless of the circumstance. The purpose of discussion items is to stimulate thought and discussion, which is compromised if postings are not timely.
 - **A note about timeliness:** The timelines for this course are not negotiable. I realize that on occasion “life happens” – children get sick, cars break down, and thunderstorms occur. For these reasons and many more, it is highly advised that you DO NOT wait until the deadline for turning in an assignment. If you wait until 11:00 pm to turn in an assignment due at midnight and the electricity goes out, you have missed the deadline and will NOT get credit for the assignment.
- Ensure that the assignment guidelines presented in the syllabus and assignment handouts are followed. It is important that all assignments are organized according to headings and subheadings delineated in the assignment. *Failure to do so will result in an ungraded assignment or a lower evaluation.*
- **Make/Up exam.** There will be NO make-up exams for this course unless a true emergency exists. Students are expected to submit relevant documentation (e.g. doctor’s note, funeral notice, etc.) when requesting a make/up examination.
- **Written Assignments.** Written assignments MUST be typed using double spaced lines, include your name, and have page numbers. In addition, work submitted should reflect a professional quality in terms of scope, depth, writing mechanics, and appearance that would be expected of students at a prestigious university. Proofread all assignments as only materials with minimal or no errors will receive high scores.
- **Person First Language:** Our language is a reflection of our attitudes. Always refer to persons with disabilities with respect. *Degrading terminology will not be tolerated.* In this class we will strive to use “people first” language at all times. “People First” language always refers to the person first and not as a label or a category. For example, refer to “a student with autism” and not “an autistic” or “students with disabilities” and not “disabled students”. In addition, avoid such stigmatizing terminology as “confined to a wheelchair” (say “uses a wheelchair” instead.).
- *If you have suggestions, comments, questions, or concerns about the class or the assignments, please call or see the instructor. Please do not save your suggestions for the course evaluation at the end of the term when it is too late to implement your suggestions.*

Attachment # 1

Course Objectives

Course objectives are based on the *descriptive statements* of the knowledge and skills related to the above *competencies* for Texas Special Educator Certification. As SPED 346 is an introduction to exceptional children, it is not expected that students will be proficient in all objectives. It is expected, however, that at the conclusion of this course, each student will be able to demonstrate a limited understanding of the following objectives. Course objectives include, but are not limited to, the following.

Competency 001

1. Characteristics of individuals with different types of disabilities, including individuals with different levels of severity and multiple disabilities across eligibility categories, and analyzes the impact of various disabilities on learning and experiences.
2. How the developmental, academic, social, career and functional characteristics of individuals with disabilities relate to levels of support needed and applies knowledge of human development and disabilities to plan and implement appropriate curriculum
3. Theoretical explanations for behavioral disorders and analyzes the varied characteristics of behavioral disorders and their effect on learning
4. The different ways that students with and without disabilities learn
5. Knowledge of human development and the effects of various types of disabilities on developmental processes in order to identify the needs of individuals with and without disabilities
6. The effects of cultural and environmental influences (e.g., linguistic characteristics, socioeconomic issues, abuse/neglect, substance abuse) on the child and family.
7. Normal, delayed and disordered communication patterns, including nonsymbolic communication, and the impact of language development on the academic and social skills of individuals with disabilities.
8. Aspects of medical conditions affecting individuals with disabilities, including the effects of various medications on behavior and functioning and the implications of medical complications for student support needs (e.g., seizure management, tube feeding, catheterization, cardiopulmonary resuscitation [CPR]).
9. Ways in which physical disabilities and health impairments relate to development and behavior, and knows the etiologies and effects of sensory disabilities and other conditions affecting individuals with disabilities.

Competency 004

10. Procedures for ensuring a safe, positive and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued and how to address common environmental and personal barriers that hinder accessibility for and acceptance of individuals with disabilities.
11. How to use instructional time efficiently and effectively for individuals with disabilities.
12. How to design, structure and manage daily routines, including transition time, for students in a variety of educational settings and procedures for monitoring behavior changes across activities and settings.
13. Knowledge of basic classroom management theories, methods, and techniques for individuals with disabilities, research-based best practices for effective management of teaching and learning and management procedures that are appropriate to individual needs.

14. Ways in which technology can assist in managing the teaching and learning environment to meet the needs of individual students.
15. Various types of assistive technologies, devices, services and resources and their role in facilitating student's educational achievement, communication, positioning, mobility and active participation in educational activities and routines.
16. How to make informed decisions about types and levels of assistive technologies, devices and services for students with various needs, collect and analyze information about a student's environment and curriculum to identify and monitor assistive technology needs and support the use of assistive technologies, devices and services.
17. Procedures for participating in the selection and implementation of assistive technologies, devices and services for students with various needs.
18. Procedures for coordinating activities of related services personnel and directing the activities of paraprofessionals, aids, volunteers and peer tutors.
19. Knowledge of appropriate body mechanics to ensure student and teacher safety in transfer, lifting, positioning, and seating.

Competency 010

20. The historical foundations of special education, major contributors to the literature, major legislation relevant to knowledge and practice in the education of individuals with disabilities and current issues and trends in special education.
21. Knowledge of models, theories and philosophies that provide the basis for special education practice.
22. Current educational terminology and definitions regarding individuals with disabilities, including professionally accepted classification systems and current incidence and prevalence figures.
23. Issues relating to definition and identification procedures for individuals with disabilities, including individuals from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
24. Factors that influence the overrepresentation of culturally and/or linguistically diverse students in programs for students with disabilities.
25. Various perspectives (e.g., medical, psychological, behavioral, educational) regarding definitions and etiologies of disabilities.
26. Cultural variations in beliefs, traditions and values and their effects on the relationships among child, family and school.
27. Knowledge of the continuum of placement and services for individuals with disabilities.

Competency 012

28. The collaborative roles of students, parents/guardians, teachers and other school and community personnel in planning and implementing an individualized program and effective strategies for working collaboratively in various contexts.
29. Knowledge of factors that promote effective communication and collaboration with students, parents/guardians, teachers, paraprofessionals and other school and community personnel.
30. How to foster respectful and beneficial relationships between families and professionals in the school and community.
31. Typical concerns of families of individuals with disabilities and appropriate strategies to support families in dealing with these concerns.

32. Knowledge of strategies for encouraging and assisting parents / guardians in their role as active participants in their children's education and procedures for planning and conducting collaborative conferences with parents / guardians.
33. Knowledge of effective communication in various professional contexts and ethical practices for confidential communication regarding individuals with disabilities.
34. The types of information generally available from parents/guardians, school officials, the legal system and community service agencies.
35. Knowledge of the collaborative and consultative roles of special education teachers, paraprofessionals and other school personnel in integrating individuals into general education settings.
36. How to collaborate with teachers in the general educational setting and other school and community personnel to integrate individuals with disabilities into various learning environments.
37. How to serve as a resource person for families, general education teachers, administrators and other school personnel regarding the characteristics and needs of individuals with disabilities.