

Special Education 5610  
Practicum: Instruction for Persons with Severe Disabilities  
Spring, 2008

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This practicum builds on skills obtained in SpEd 5600 and provides field experience in working with students with severe disabilities in secondary settings. The purpose of this practicum is to provide the practicum student with exposure to persons with severe disabilities in a middle school, high school, or post high school setting and experience in observing and managing adaptive and maladaptive behavior on a regular basis. Additionally, students will become familiar with and demonstrate competency in best practices in educating persons with severe disabilities. Focus will be on meaningful assessment; vocational preparation; self-care skills; health care procedures; home, school, and community instruction; and transition.

In the field experience, students are expected to collect accurate and complete data as instructed by the cooperating teacher and university supervisor. The practicum student will develop data forms, graph the data, and make data-based decisions by request of the cooperating teacher.

Observations of the practicum students' discrete skills will be conducted on three formal observations during the semester by the university supervisor, the cooperating teacher, and also with feedback from peer observations. The student will receive feedback as to his or her skill in behavior management, use of effective teaching strategies, and appropriate/accurate data collection.

**EXPECTATIONS:**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner throughout the practicum by regularly attending the practicum site, being on time for the practicum, interacting with the teacher in a positive manner, and responding to feedback provided by the teacher and university supervisor. Detailed information is provided on the [Professional Behavior Guidelines located under "Policy" under the course content page on Blackboard.](#)

Once again observations of practicum students are based on their competency in mastering discrete skills. Each observation will measure a discrete skill addressed in courses taught. As mention of the importance of mastery, the practicum student must earn a C or better on each of the 3 formal observations. If a C- or below is earned, the practicum student will be placed on the departments At-risk for Practicum Failure.

[\*\*Refer to the Assisting Students At-Risk for Practicum Failure Policy located under "Policies" on the course content page on Blackboard\*\*](#)

## **Absences (Refer to Professional Behavior Guidelines)**

Practicum students are expected to be punctual and to attend every scheduled period. Absences are only acceptable for certain emergencies related to health, illness, or family, or for court appearance. Health impairment is a trauma requiring hospitalization, emergency attention from a physician, or emergency appointment with a physician. An illness is a debilitating health condition or communicable virus. A family emergency refers to death or hospitalization of an immediate family member. A court appearance is a court trial requiring testimony or jury duty. Excluded from the list of acceptable absences are minor health concerns, weddings or other events involving family members, health problems of family members, illness of a child (unless prior approval is provided by the cooperating teacher), attendance at court trials without subpoena, conflicts with work schedule, etc. If questions arise, contact your cooperating teacher PRIOR TO THE ABSENCE. Prior to an absence, practicum students must contact both the cooperating teacher AND the university supervisor to request the absence, describe the reason for the absence, and indicate the scheduled return date. When possible, practicum students should convey lesson plans, behavior intervention plans, or other preparations to the cooperating teacher prior to the absence (verbally or in written form). If applicable, students should contact their practicum partner to see if days can be switched to cover responsibilities on the day of absence. At minimum, practicum students will need to make up unexcused or excessive excused absences.

A practicum student is considered tardy if she/he is not present in the classroom or scheduled teaching location with the necessary teaching materials AT LEAST 5 MINUTES BEFORE INSTRUCTION BEGINS. For example, tardiness is defined as not present in the classroom with teaching materials at 10:25 for a 10:30 lesson. Cooperating teachers must immediately report tardiness and unexcused absences to the university supervisor. Practicum student not need to attend your practicum on university holidays or school district holidays. However, it is your responsibility to notify your cooperating teacher of university holidays well in advance so that other arrangements can be made for the students with whom you work.

## **EVALUATION**

1. OBSERVATIONS: Practicum students grades will come directly from the observations of their performance at their practicum site. Three 'formal' observations will be conducted by the supervisor and the cooperating teacher to obtain this score. Both the university supervisor and cooperating teacher(s) work together to provide support to the practicum student. Therefore, the cooperating teacher will have knowledge of the student's performance.

2. PEER OBSERVATIONS: Practicum students are required to observe their partner's teaching performance on three separate occasions. The first peer observation students are required to use the same data collection forms used last semester as well as their supervisors. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> observations the student will use an observation form they develop as well as use a form developed by their partner. In addition, the practicum student will need to provide your partner with written feedback for each observation that describes specific teaching strengths and areas needing improvement that you observed, using the observation comment form. Practicum students will not receive points for completing and turning in the observation data (including observation form, grade sheet, and comment sheet) but failure to do so will result in a lowering of their grade by 1/2 grade step for each of the three observation not turned in

3. EFFECTIVE TEACHING CYCLE: Practicum student must have an effective teaching cycle available for your supervisor for each observation.

4. PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE: Students are also required to complete the Practicum Experience assignment. This will require the practicum student to observe other settings (i.e., lunchroom, regular education classroom), programs (behavior programs, academic

programs), and related service providers. The checklist as well as a paragraph regarding the observation will be turned in and will count towards part of the grade.

Grades will be determined by the following scale:

3.85-4.00 = A

3.67-3.84 = A-

3.33-3.66 = B+

3.00-3.32 = B

2.67-2.99 = B-

2.33-2.66 = C+

2.00-2.32 = C

1.67-1.99 = C-

1.33-1.66 = D+

1.00-1.32 = D-

NOTE: Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities, in cooperation with the Disability Resource Center. Please contact the instructor during the first week of class to arrange such accommodations.

### **METHOD OF INSTRUCTIONAL/LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

Students are expected to take this course in conjunction with SPED 5520, Curriculum for Secondary Students with Severe Disabilities. This course will discuss methods of instruction and various curricula that are appropriate for the youth and adults with whom students will be working. This course will also provide students with instruction as to appropriate interaction routines for youth and adults with severe disabilities. Applied assignments will be given in the curriculum course, and these assignments should be completed in the practicum site. However, grades for these assignments will be reflected in the student's grade for SPED 5520, not this course. Finally, the curriculum course will provide time to discuss issues that arise in the practicum setting.

Students are expected to attend their practicum site for two hours, three days per week. Students will be partnered with another practicum student. These dyads will attend the same practicum site and work with the same individuals at the same times, but on different days. One day a week, both practicum students will be present at the practicum site. On these days, students will conduct peer observations and monitor consistency of program implementation. Students will alternate which person serves as "teacher" and as "observer" on sessions students attend together across weeks.

**CEC Standards: In Special Education, the standards we align to for beginning teachers are the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards. Secondary and Elementary Education use the INTASC standards. Information provided in this course will be tied to the standards listed below. Each SPED course will list the standards and how they are measured in that course. They are listed in the syllabus for your reference, but you will never have to do anything with them.**

<b>CEC Individualized Independence Curriculums Standard</b>	<b>Course Objectives</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
CC4S4	1. Use strategies to facilitate maintenance and generalization of skills across learning environments	Observation Evaluation
CC4S3	2. Select, adapt, and use instructional strategies and materials according to characteristics of the individual with exceptional learning needs.	Observation Evaluation
CC4S1	3. Use strategies to facilitate integration into various settings.	Observation Evaluation
CC5S6	4. Use performance data and information from all stakeholders to make or suggest modifications in learning environments.	Observation Evaluation
CC5K1	5. Demands of learning environments.	Observation Evaluation
CC5S1	6. Create a safe, equitable, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.	Observation Evaluation
CC5S9	7. Create an environment that encourages self-advocacy and increased independence.	Observation Evaluation
CC5S10	8. Use effective and varied behavior management strategies.	Observation Evaluation
CC5S11	9. Use the least intensive behavior management strategy consistent with the needs of the individual with exceptional learning needs.	Observation Evaluation
CC5S5	10. Modify the learning environment to manage behaviors.	Observation Evaluation
CC5S16	11. Use universal precautions.	Observation Evaluation
CC6S1	12. Use strategies to support and enhance communication skills of individuals with exceptional needs.	Observation Evaluation
CC7S12	13. Use instructional time effectively.	Observation Evaluation
CC7S10	14. Prepare lesson plans.	Observation Evaluation
CC7S5	15. Use task analysis.	Observation Evaluation
CC7S6	16. Sequence, implement, and evaluate individualized learning objectives.	Observation Evaluation
CC7S11	17. Prepare and organize materials to implement daily lesson plans.	Observation Evaluation
CC7S13	18. Make responsive adjustments to instruction based on continual observations.	Observation Evaluation
CC8S8	19. Evaluate instruction and monitor progress of individuals with exceptional learning needs.	Observation Evaluation

CC8S9	20. Create and maintain records.	Observation Evaluation
CC9S5	21. Demonstrate commitment to developing the highest education and quality-of-life potential of individuals with exceptional learning needs.	Observation Evaluation
CC9S2	22. Uphold high standards of competence and integrity and exercise sound judgment in the practice of the professional.	Observation Evaluation
CC9S11	23. Reflect on one's practice to improve instruction and guide professional growth.	Observation Evaluation
CC10S1	24. Maintain confidential communication about individuals with exceptional learning needs.	Observation Evaluation
CC10S8	25. Model techniques and coach others in the use of instructional methods and accommodations.	Observation Evaluation
CC10S11	26. Observe, evaluate and provide feedback to paraeducators.	Observation Evaluation
IC5S1	Provide instruction in community-based settings	Observation Evaluation
IC5S5	Teach individuals with disabilities to give and receive meaningful feedback from peers and adults	Observation Evaluation Assignment