

# Department of Special Education

Feinstein School of Education  
And Human Development



Department of Special Education  
**M.Ed. in Severe/Profound Disabilities**  
Preparing For Internship  
Portfolio Guidelines

August 2007

**Rhode Island College  
Department of Special Education  
M.Ed. in Severe/Profound Disabilities**

**Admissions Portfolio  
(Submitted before completion of two graduate courses)**

- Letters of recommendation
- Special Education Career Commitment Essay
- B- or better in SPED 300
- Transcript with SPED courses highlighted
- G.P.A. of 3.0 or better
- Miller Analogies Test
- Evidence of candidate eligibility for Rhode Island certification in elementary or secondary education

**Special Education Preparing for Graduate Internship Portfolio  
(Submitted prior to graduate internship)**

- Case Study (300)
- Classroom Structure Project (310)
- Communication Project (525)
- Alternate Assessment (435)
- Observation, Evaluation, IEP, Unit and Lesson Plans (435)
- Curriculum Modification Project(436/526)
  
- Current transcript that documents GPA 3.0 or better **and SPED Course grades of B or better**
- Preparing for Graduate Internship Essay

**Special Education Exit Portfolio  
(Submitted upon completion of graduate internship)**

- Individual Education Plan
- Instructional Planning & Monitoring Project
- 1 Lesson Plan with reflection
- Graduate Internship Observation Report
- Professionalism Entry
- Exit Portfolio Reflection Essay

## **Introduction**

At Rhode Island College, there are three graduate programs to prepare teachers for children and youth with disabilities. The M.Ed. in Special Education Certification prepares teachers of children with mild to moderate disabilities from kindergarten through middle school and teachers of students at the middle school/secondary level. The Early Childhood Special Education Program prepares teachers of children ages birth through Kindergarten. The M.Ed. in Severe/Profound Disabilities prepares teachers of students ages 3 – 21 with severe/profound challenges.

*Students in the M.Ed. in Severe/Profound Disabilities have the following experiences as a prerequisite to their masters program:*

SPED 300: Introduction to the Characteristics and Education of Children and Youth with Disabilities

SPED 310: Principles and Procedures of Behavior Management for Children and Youth with Disabilities

*Students in the M.Ed. in Severe/Profound Disabilities have the following courses in their masters program:*

SPED 435: Assessment and Instruction of Children with Severe and Profound Disabilities

SPED 436: Assessment and Instructional Alternatives for Adolescents and Young Adults with Severe and Profound Disabilities

SPED 525: Development of Communication and Movement

SPED 526: Assessment, Curriculum, Methods for Children with Multiple Disabilities

SPED 520: Orientation to the Education of Youth and Young Adults with Severe/Profound Disabilities in Non-School Settings

*Or*

SPED 513: Orientation to the Education of Young Children with Special Needs

SPED 515: Multidisciplinary Assessment and Planning for Infants and Preschool Children with Special Needs and Students with Severe/Profound Disabilities

SPED 665: Internship in the Special Class for Students with Severe/Profound Disabilities

## The Portfolio Process

Within your special education program at the College, candidates must prepare and formally present an Admissions Portfolio, a Preparing for Internship Portfolio, and an Exit Portfolio. The Admissions Portfolio is prepared, submitted, and approved after successful completion of SPED 300 (or equivalent with approval of department chair) and prior to completion of two graduate courses. The Preparing for Internship Portfolio is prepared submitted, and approved prior to graduate internship in special education. The Exit Portfolio is submitted upon completion of the candidate's graduate internship.. This handbook provides guidelines for assembling the Preparing for Internship Portfolio.

The Preparing for Internship Portfolio includes the rubrics related to projects completed during the special education courses that precede graduate internship and a summative essay that describes the candidate's readiness to enter their graduate internship. Each course requires completion of a project. Different sections of the same course require completion of a common project. Each course project is evaluated relative to explicit criteria.

Opportunities to learn the knowledge and skill demonstrated through each project are provided through a variety of course-based learning activities. These learning activities include: assigned readings, in-class instruction and activities, interaction with peers, meetings with faculty, and clinical experiences in schools.

Course projects are aligned with the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards (RIBTS) and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Standards, embedded in instruction and explicitly evaluated. These standards identify some of the processes and skills used by excellent special educators to promote student learning for students with exceptional learning needs. Each course in the special education program addresses one or more of the following CEC standards and Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards.

### *CEC Standards:*

**1. Foundations.** Special educators understand the field as an evolving and changing discipline based on philosophies, evidence-based principles and theories, relevant laws and policies, diverse and historical points of view, and human issues that have historically influenced and continue to influence the field of special education and the education and treatment of individuals with exceptional needs both in school and society. Special educators understand how these influence professional practice, including assessment, instructional planning, implementation, and program evaluation. Special educators understand how issues of human diversity can impact families, cultures, and schools, and how these complex human issues can interact with issues in the delivery of special education services. They understand the relationships of organizations of special education to the organizations and functions of schools, school systems, and other agencies. Special educators use this knowledge as a ground upon which to construct their own personal understandings and philosophies of special education.

**2. Development and Characteristics of Learners.** Special educators know and demonstrate respect for their students first as unique human beings. Special educators understand the similarities and differences in human development and the characteristics between and among individuals with and without exceptional learning needs (ELN)<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, special educators understand how exceptional conditions can interact with the domains of human development and they use this knowledge to respond to the varying abilities and behaviors of individual's with ELN. Special educators understand how the experiences of individuals with ELN can impact families, as well as the individual's ability to learn, interact socially, and live as fulfilled contributing members of the community.

*CEC Standards (continued)*

**3. Individual Learning Differences.** Special educators understand the effects that an exceptional condition<sup>2/</sup> can have on an individual's learning in school and throughout life. Special educators understand that the beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures can affect relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community. Moreover, special educators are active and resourceful in seeking to understand how primary language, culture, and familial backgrounds interact with the individual's exceptional condition to impact the individual's academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options. The understanding of these learning differences and their possible interactions provides the foundation upon which special educators individualize instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning for individuals with ELN.

**4. Instructional Strategies.** Special educators possess a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to individualize instruction for individuals with ELN. Special educators select, adapt, and use these instructional strategies to promote positive learning results in general and special curricula<sup>3/</sup> and to appropriately modify learning environments for individuals with ELN. They enhance the learning of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills of individuals with ELN, and increase their self-awareness, self-management, self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem. Moreover, special educators emphasize the development, maintenance, and generalization of knowledge and skills across environments, settings, and the lifespan.

**5. Learning Environments and Social Interactions.** Special educators actively create learning environments for individuals with ELN that foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and active engagement of individuals with ELN. In addition, special educators foster environments in which diversity is valued and individuals are taught to live harmoniously and productively in a culturally diverse world. Special educators shape environments to encourage the independence, self-motivation, self-direction, personal empowerment, and self-advocacy of individuals with ELN. Special educators help their general education colleagues integrate individuals with ELN in regular environments and engage them in meaningful learning activities and interactions. Special educators use direct motivational and instructional interventions with individuals with ELN to teach them to respond effectively to current expectations. When necessary, special educators can safely intervene with individuals with ELN in crisis. Special educators coordinate all these efforts and provide guidance and direction to paraeducators and others, such as classroom volunteers and tutors.

**6. Language.** Special educators understand typical and atypical language development and the ways in which exceptional conditions can interact with an individual's experience with and use of language. Special educators use individualized strategies to enhance language development and teach communication skills to individuals with ELN. Special educators are familiar with augmentative, alternative, and assistive technologies to support and enhance communication of individuals with exceptional needs. Special educators match their communication methods to an individual's language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences. Special educators provide effective language models and they use communication strategies and resources to facilitate understanding of subject matter for individuals with ELN whose primary language is not English.

**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 curricula. In addition, special educators 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. Individualized instructional plans emphasize explicit modeling and efficient guided practice to assure acquisition and fluency through maintenance and generalization. Understanding of these factors as well as the implications of an individual's exceptional condition, guides the special educator's selection, adaptation, and creation of materials, and the use of powerful instructional variables. Instructional plans are modified based on ongoing analysis of the individual's learning progress. Moreover, special educators

***CEC Standards (continued)***

facilitate this instructional planning in a collaborative context including the individuals with exceptionalities, families, professional colleagues, and personnel from other agencies as appropriate. Special educators also develop a variety of individualized transition plans, such as transitions from preschool to elementary school and from secondary settings to a variety of postsecondary work and learning contexts. Special educators are comfortable using appropriate technologies to support instructional planning and individualized instruction.

**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, as well as to adjust instruction in response to ongoing learning progress. Special educators understand the legal policies and ethical principles of measurement and assessment related to referral, eligibility, program planning, instruction, and placement for individuals with ELN, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Special educators understand measurement theory and practices for addressing issues of validity, reliability, norms, bias, and interpretation of assessment results. In addition, special educators understand the appropriate use and limitations of various types of assessments. Special educators collaborate with families and other colleagues to assure non-biased, meaningful assessments and decision-making. Special educators conduct formal and informal assessments of behavior, learning, achievement, and environments to design learning experiences that support the growth and development of individuals with ELN. Special educators use assessment information to identify supports and adaptations required for individuals with ELN to access the general curriculum and to participate in school, system, and statewide assessment programs. Special educators regularly monitor the progress of individuals with ELN in general and special curricula. Special educators use appropriate technologies to support their assessments.

**9. Professional and Ethical Practice.** Special educators are guided by the profession's ethical and professional practice standards. Special educators practice in multiple roles and complex situations across wide age and developmental ranges. Their practice requires ongoing attention to legal matters along with serious professional and ethical considerations. Special educators engage in professional activities and participate in learning communities that benefit individuals with ELN, their families, colleagues, and their own professional growth. Special educators view themselves as lifelong learners and regularly reflect on and adjust their practice. Special educators are aware of how their own and others attitudes, behaviors, and ways of communicating can influence their practice. Special educators understand that culture and language can interact with exceptionalities, and are sensitive to the many aspects of diversity of individuals with ELN and their families. Special educators actively plan and engage in activities that foster their professional growth and keep them current with evidence-based best practices. Special educators know their own limits of practice and practice within them.

**10. Collaboration.** Special educators routinely and effectively collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways. This collaboration assures that the needs of individuals with ELN are addressed throughout schooling. Moreover, special educators embrace their special role as advocate for individuals with ELN. Special educators promote and advocate the learning and well being of individuals with ELN across a wide range of settings and a range of different learning experiences. Special educators are viewed as specialists by a myriad of people who actively seek their collaboration to effectively include and teach individuals with ELN. Special educators are a resource to their colleagues in understanding the laws and policies relevant to Individuals with ELN. Special educators use collaboration to facilitate the successful transitions of individuals with ELN across settings and services.

## **Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards**

- Standard 1:** Teachers create learning experience using a broad base of general knowledge that reflects an understanding of the nature of the world in which we live.
- Standard 2:** Teachers create learning experiences that reflect an understanding of the central concepts, structures, and tools of inquiry of the disciplines they teach.
- Standard 3:** Teachers create instructional opportunities that reflect an understanding of how children learn and develop.
- Standard 4:** Teachers create instructional opportunities that reflect a respect for the diversity of learners and an understanding of how students differ in their approaches to learning.
- Standard 5:** Teachers create instructional opportunities to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
- Standard 6:** Teachers create a learning environment that encourages appropriate standards of behavior, positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- Standard 7:** Teachers foster collaborative relationships with colleagues and families to support students' learning.
- Standard 8:** Teachers use effective communication as the vehicle through which students explore, conjecture, discuss, and investigate new ideas.
- Standard 9:** Teachers use a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies to support the continuous development of the learner.
- Standard 10:** Teachers reflect on their practice and assume responsibility for their own professional development by actively seeking opportunities to learn and grow as professionals.
- Standard 11:** Teachers maintain professional standards guided by social, legal, and ethical principles.

## **GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING THE DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PREPARING FOR INTERNSHIP PORTFOLIO**

Each candidate is responsible for assembling and submitting a complete, acceptable Department of Special Education Preparing for Internship Portfolio. A complete portfolio includes the rubrics related to required projects, a Special Education Field Work Form, a current transcript, and an acceptable Preparing for Internship Reflective Essay.

Students who transfer to Rhode Island College and receive credit for a course or courses in a special education program must present projects completed in transferred courses to the Department Chair for consideration regarding inclusion in the Preparing for Internship Portfolio.

A candidate must include personal contact information on the front page of their Preparing for Internship Portfolio. Personal contact information should include candidate's name, address, phone number(s), e-mail address and the semester of portfolio submission. The candidate's name must also appear on the spine of the binder.

A candidate should organize the portfolio into sections. Each section must be labeled and separated from other sections by a tab or section separator. Plastic page sleeves should *not* be used.

The Preparing for Internship Portfolio in Special Education should be presented in the following sequence:

- The rubrics from all course artifacts required, signed by the course professor
- Candidate's current transcript that documents a GPA of 3.0 or better and SPED course grades of B or better in all courses following SPED 300
- Special Education Field Work Form. Identify the semester and year you took each of the courses involving field work. Describe the special education setting in which you completed field work for each course. Describe the diversity features of each setting. The footnote on the form lists diversity features that should be considered. State the name of the school and district in which field work was completed.
- Preparing for Internship Reflective Essay

**PREPARING FOR INTERNSHIP PORTFOLIO  
SUBMISSION AND RELEASE DATES**

**Submission Date:**

The Preparing for Internship Portfolio in Special Education must be submitted to the Special Education Department Secretary by noon on the last day of classes (prior to exam week). A recommendation regarding successful completion of the candidate's Preparing for Internship Portfolio will be forwarded to the Office of School Partnerships and Field Placements. Only candidates with successful completion of an approved Preparing for Internship Portfolio will be allowed to enter student teaching. *Failure to submit a complete and acceptable Preparing for Internship Portfolio will result in cancellation of the candidate's internship placement.*

**Portfolio Release:**

The Special Education Preparing for Internship Portfolio, with the faculty evaluation, can be picked up in the Special Education Department Office two weeks following the submission date. Portfolios left in the Special Education Department Office will be disposed of after one semester.

## Special Education Field Work

Candidate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Education Course	Special Education Setting & Diversity Features	School & District
<b>SPED 300</b> (4 credits) <b>Semester</b> _____ <b>Yr</b> _____		
<b>SPED 310</b> (4 credits) <b>Semester</b> _____ <b>Yr</b> _____		
<b>SPED 525</b> (3 credits) <b>Semester</b> _____ <b>Yr</b> _____		
<b>SPED 412/424/435</b> (4 credits) <b>Semester</b> _____ <b>Yr</b> _____		
<b>SPED 436</b> (4 credits) <b>Semester</b> _____ <b>Yr</b> _____		

As part of your Preparing for Internship Portfolio candidates must submit a summary of the special education settings within which you completed your field experiences. Each four credit special education course in your program requires a thirty hour field experience to complete a course project or projects. As of December 2004, students must document experiences in an urban multi-cultural setting.

State the special education setting in which your field work was completed for each course. Briefly describe the features of diversity evident in the setting. In addition to students and teachers, diversity features may include multicultural curricula, resources, materials and instructional strategies. Use the definition of diversity below to guide your description. State the name of the school and the school district or city/town in which your fieldwork for each course was done.

*Diversity is used to address ethnicity, race, socio-economic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual-orientation, and geographical area.*

## Department of Special Education Case Study Project (SPED 300)

### Purpose

To promote understanding of students' differences in learning and development, a case study of a student with disabilities is developed in this course. Through development of the case study, prospective special educators demonstrate an understanding of how children learn and develop and how children differ in their approaches to learning. Prospective special educators also assess their interest in working with children with disabilities.

### Standards

The Council for Exceptional Children Standards addressed through developing the student case study project:

#### **CEC Standard 2: Development and Characteristics of Learners.**

Special educators know and **demonstrate respect** for their students first as unique human beings. Special educators understand the **similarities and differences in human development** and the characteristics between and among individuals with and without exceptional learning needs (ELN). Moreover, special educators understand how **exceptional conditions** can **interact** with the domains of human development and they **use this knowledge to respond to the varying abilities and behaviors of individual's** with ELN. Special educators understand how the experiences of individuals with ELN can impact families, as well as the individual's ability to learn, interact socially, and live as fulfilled contributing members of the community.

The Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards and Indicators addressed through developing the student case study project follow.

**RIBTS Standard 1:** Teachers create learning experiences using a broad base of knowledge that reflects an understanding of the nature of the world in which we live.

- Teachers reflect a variety of academic, social, and cultural experiences in their teaching.

**RIBTS Standard 3:** Teachers create instructional opportunities that reflect an understanding of how children learn and develop.

- Teachers understand how students learn – how students construct knowledge, acquire skills, develop habits of mind, and acquire positive dispositions toward learning. (3.1)
- Teachers design instruction that meets the current cognitive, social, and personal needs of their students (3.2).

**RIBTS Standard 4:** Teachers create instructional opportunities that reflect a respect for the diversity of learners and an understanding of how students differ in their approaches to learning.

- Teachers design instruction that accommodates individual differences (e.g., stage of development, learning style, English language acquisition, learning disability) in approaches to learning (4.1).
- Teachers use their understanding of students (e.g., individual interests, prior learning, cultural experiences) to create connections between the subject matter and student experiences (4.2).
- Teachers seek information about the impact of students' specific challenges to learning or disabilities on classroom performance, and work with specialists to develop alternative instructional strategies to meet the needs of these students (4.3)
- Teachers make appropriate accommodations (e.g., in terms of time and circumstances for work, tasks assigned) for individual students who have identified learning differences or needs in an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) (4.4).

**RIBTS Standard 6:** Teachers create a learning environment that encourages appropriate standards of behavior, positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation

- Teachers use principles of effective classroom management to establish classrooms in which clear rules and standards of behavior are maintained (6.1).
- Teachers establish a safe and secure learning environment (6.2).
- Teachers communicate clear expectations for achievement that allow students to take responsibility for their own learning (6.7).

**RIBTS Standard 7:** Teachers foster collaborative relationships with colleagues and families to support students' learning.

- Teachers work collaboratively with their colleagues (e.g., other grade-level, content, special education, ESL teachers) to create a learning community that benefits all students (7.1).
- Teachers develop relationship with parents/guardians to support student learning (7.2).
- Teachers understand the role of community agencies in supporting schools (7.3).

**RIBTS Standard 9:** Teachers use a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies to support the continuous development of the learner.

- Teachers gather information about their students (e.g., experiences, interests, learning styles, and prior knowledge) from parents/guardians, colleagues and the students themselves (9.1).
- Teachers use a variety of assessment strategies and instruments, (e.g., observation, portfolio, teacher made tests, self-assessments) that are aligned with instructional content and methodology (9.2).
- Teachers encourage students to evaluate their own work and use the results of this self-assessment to establish individual goals for learning (9.3).
- Teachers use information from their assessment of students to reflect on their own teaching and to modify their instruction (9.5).

## **Product**

The primary goals of the case study are to acquaint Rhode Island College special education candidates with the range of characteristics presented by children with disabilities and the array of instructional alternatives, and program options that are provided to these children. This project is an applied learning experience that links and illuminates information discussed in class with real students and actual programs in schools. The case study is intended to provide a foundation of knowledge regarding children with disabilities and their educational programs. The field experience and the case study are also intended to assist candidates in understanding their own personal and emerging professional insights into children with disabilities and the system of special education. A format and evaluation criteria for the case study are provided. The Case Study Project Rubric (graded and signed by the professor) is included in the Preparing for Internship Portfolio.

**Department of Special Education**  
**Classroom Structure Project (SPED 310)**

**Purpose**

Behavior that signifies students' social and academic learning is the focus of this project. Prospective special educators learn about, describe, and come to understand factors in the social context of the special and general education settings that influence student behavior and consequently their social and academic learning. They identify situational factors that adversely affect students' learning. Prospective special educators propose an alternative design of classroom factors and develop an evaluation process for determining the effectiveness of their redesign.

**Standards**

The classroom structure project relates most directly to the following Council for Exceptional Children and Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standard and Indicators:

**CEC Standard 5: Learning Environments and Social Interactions**

Special educators actively **create learning environments** for individuals with ELN that foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and **active engagement** of individuals with ELN. In addition, special educators **foster environments in which diversity is valued** and individuals are taught to live harmoniously and productively in a culturally diverse world. Special educators shape **environments to encourage the independence**, self-motivation, self-direction, personal empowerment, and self-advocacy of individuals with ELN. Special educators **help their general education colleagues integrate individuals** with ELN in regular environments and engage them in meaningful learning activities and interactions. Special educators use **direct motivational and instructional interventions** with individuals with ELN to teach them to respond effectively to current expectations. When necessary, special educators can safely **intervene with individuals with ELN in crisis**. Special educators coordinate all these efforts and provide **guidance and direction to paraeducators and others**, such as classroom volunteers and tutors.

**RIBTS Standard 1:** Teachers create learning experience using a broad base of general knowledge that reflects an understanding of the nature of the world in which we live

- Teachers use a broad knowledge base to create interdisciplinary learning experiences (1.2).

**RIBTS Standard 3:** Teachers create instructional opportunities that reflect an understanding of how children learn and develop.

- Teachers understand how students learn – how students construct knowledge, acquire skills, develop habits of mind, and acquire positive dispositions toward learning (3.1).

**RIBTS Standard 6:** Teachers create a learning environment that encourages appropriate standards of behavior, positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

- Teachers use principles of effective classroom management to establish classrooms in which clear rules and standards of behavior are maintained (6.1).
- Teachers establish a safe and secure environment (6.2).
- Teachers organize and allocate the resources of materials and physical space to support active engagement of students (6.3).
- Teachers provide and structure the time necessary to explore important concepts and ideas (6.4).
- Teachers help students establish a classroom environment characterized by mutual respect and intellectual risk taking (6.5).
- Teachers create learning groups in which students learn to work collaboratively and independently (6.6).

**Product**

In the classroom structure project, candidates describe the following features of the special education setting in which they are doing field work: (1) the arrangement of the physical environment; (2) comprehensive educational programming; (3) teachers use of their time and deployment of teacher assistant(s); (4) scheduling and time allocations which facilitate student learning; and classroom rules and behavioral limits. The influences of these classroom features on student learning and behavior are indicated. Recommendations for redesigning the special education setting so as to maximize student academic and social learning are presented. A format and evaluation criteria for the structure project are provided by the instructor.

The Classroom Structure Project Rubric (graded and signed by the professor) is included in the Preparing for Internship Portfolio.

**Department of Special Education  
Communication Project (SPED 525)**

**Purpose**

To promote the understanding of diversity of language and the effect on communication and learning, an analysis of the communication and learning environment of a student with diverse language is produced.

**Standards**

This communication project relates most directly to the following Council for Exceptional Children and Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standard and Indicators:

**CEC Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences.**

Special educators understand the effects that an exceptional condition<sup>2/</sup> can have on an individual's learning in school and throughout life. Special educators understand that the beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures can affect relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community. Moreover, special educators are active and resourceful in seeking to understand how primary language, culture, and familial backgrounds interact with the individual's exceptional condition to impact the individual's academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options. The understanding of these learning differences and their possible interactions provides the foundation upon which special educators individualize instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning for individuals with ELN.

**CEC Standard 6: Language.**

Special educators understand **typical and atypical language development** and the ways in which exceptional conditions can interact with an individual's experience with and use of language. Special educators use individualized strategies to **enhance language development** and **teach communication skills** to individuals with ELN. Special educators are familiar with **augmentative, alternative, and assistive technologies** to support and enhance communication of individuals with exceptional needs. Special educators match their communication methods to an individual's language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences. Special educators provide **effective language models** and they use communication strategies and resources to **facilitate understanding of subject matter for individuals with ELN whose primary language is not English.**

**RIBTS Standard 3:** Teachers create instructional opportunities that reflect an understanding of how children learn and develop.

- Teachers understand how students learn – how students construct knowledge, acquire skills, develop habits of mind, and acquire positive dispositions toward learning (3.1).
- Teachers design instruction that meets the current cognitive, social, and personal needs of their students (3.2).

**RIBTS Standard 5:** Teachers create instructional opportunities to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

- Teachers make instructional decisions about when to provide information, when to clarify, when to pose a question, and when to let a student struggle to try to solve a problem (5.3).
- Teachers use tasks that engage students in exploration, discovery, and hands-on activities (5.5).

## Communication Project

### Product

Observe a child who has a suspected or identified language/communication impairment. The child should have an approximate communication age of less than 2 years old.

- a. Document the language experience by fully completing the communication matrix form provided in class. (40 communication acts)
- b. In paragraph form, define, describe, graph, and summarize the child's communication in regards to:
  - variety and dominance of different pragmatic intents (include a graph/map)
  - variety and dominance of semantic function (include a graph)
  - mean length of utterance (include the formula used)
  - nonverbal, verbal, and vocal behaviors (include a graph)
  - summary of antecedents/consequences which facilitate communication attempts
- c. Estimate the child's general communication age using the stages provided in class, compare/contrast this information with the child's MLU and support by examples from your observation.
- d. Provide short-term expectations: What you might expect the child to achieve over the next year?
- e. Describe possible age-appropriate instructional strategies, communication systems, or intervention techniques with related resources on best-practices that could facilitate this child's language/communication growth in both receptive and expressive communication.
- f. Identify 3 articles related to best practice as it applies to this student

The Communication Inventory Project Rubric (graded and signed by the professor) is included in the Preparing for Internship Portfolio.

**Planning, Action, Reflection; Professional Ethics; PEDAGOGY: Theory & Practice; KNOWLEDGE: Human Learning & Dev.; DIVERSITY: Cultural Diversity & Special Needs; PEDAGOGY: Technology & Assessment; Standards: (RIBTS: 2.3, 3.1-3.3, 4.1, 4.3; 8.1-8.4; 9.2)**

**Department of Special Education**  
**Alternate Assessment Project (SPED 435)**

**Purpose**

The primary purpose of the Assessment Project is for candidates to become acquainted with the process of developing a data system to understanding and analyzing student performance in standards-based work.

**Standards**

The Alternate Assessment Project relates most directly to the following Council for Exceptional Children and Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standard and Indicators:

**CEC 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, as well as to adjust instruction in response to ongoing learning progress. Special educators understand the **legal policies and ethical principles of measurement and assessment** related to referral, eligibility, program planning, instruction, and placement for individuals with ELN, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Special educators understand **measurement theory and practices** for addressing issues of validity, reliability, norms, bias, and interpretation of assessment results. In addition, special educators understand the appropriate **use and limitations** of various types of assessments. Special educators collaborate with families and other colleagues to assure **non-biased, meaningful assessments and decision-making**. Special educators conduct **formal and informal assessments** of behavior, learning, achievement, and environments to design learning experiences that support the growth and development of individuals with ELN. Special educators use assessment information to **identify supports and adaptations** required for individuals with ELN to access the general curriculum and to participate in school, system, and statewide assessment programs. Special educators **regularly monitor the progress** of individuals with ELN in general and special curricula. Special educators **use appropriate technologies** to support their assessments.

**RIBTS STANDARD 4:** Teachers create instructional opportunities that reflect a respect for the diversity of learners and an understanding of how students differ in their approaches to learning.

- Teachers seek information about the impact of students' specific challenges to learning or disabilities on classroom performance, and work with specialists to develop alternative instructional strategies to meet the needs of these students (4.3).
- Teachers make appropriate accommodations (e.g., in terms of time and circumstances for work, tasks assigned) for individual students who have identified learning differences or needs in an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) (4.4).

**RIBTS STANDARD 7:** Teachers foster collaborative relationships with colleagues and families to support students' learning.

- Teachers develop relationship with parents/guardians to support student learning (7.2).
- Teachers understand the role of community agencies in supporting schools (7.3).

**Department of Special Education**  
**Alternate Assessment Project (SPED 435) - continued**

**RIBTS STANDARD 9:** Teachers use a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies to support the continuous development of the learner.

- Teachers gather information about their students (e.g., experiences, interests, learning styles, and prior knowledge) from parents/guardians, colleagues and the students themselves (9.1).
- Teachers use a variety of assessment strategies and instruments, (e.g., observation, portfolio, teacher made tests, self-assessments) that are aligned with instructional content and methodology (9.2).
- Teachers encourage students to evaluate their own work and use the results of this self-assessment to establish individual goals for learning (9.3).
- Teachers maintain records of student learning and communicate student progress to students, parents/guardians, and other colleagues (9.4).
- Teachers use information from their assessment of students to reflect on their own teaching and to modify their instruction (9.5).

**RIBTS STANDARD 11:** Teachers maintain professional standards guided by legal and ethical principles.

- Teachers maintain standards that require them to act in the best interests and needs of students (11.1).
- Teachers follow school policy and procedures, respecting the boundaries of their professional responsibilities, when working with students, colleagues, and families (11.2).
- Teachers follow local, state, and federal law pertaining to educational and instructional issues, including regulations related to students' and teachers' rights and students' and teachers' responsibilities (11.3).
  
- Teachers interact with students, colleagues, parents, and others in a professional manner that is fair and equitable (11.4).
- Teachers are guided by codes of professional conduct adopted by their professional organizations (11.5).

**Product**

In class completion of an Alternate Assessment Portfolio – refer to the Rhode Island Alternate Assessment (which will be distributed in class).

- (a) Documentation of Standards Based Instruction
- (b) Four data points for three IEP objectives
- (c) Analysis of student progress, independence, and accuracy.
- (d) Analysis of portfolio using Rhode Island Alternate Assessment Scoring Rubric.

Pedagogy: Assessment; IC3 K1-2 S1-3; IC5 S4 (RIBTS: 9.3-9.5)

The Alternate Assessment Project Rubric (graded and signed by the professor) is included in the Preparing for Internship Portfolio.

**Department of Special Education**  
Curriculum Modification Project (SPED 435)

**Purpose**

Candidates are prepared to educate students with severe disabilities in two curriculum and methods courses. The Curriculum Modification Project provides candidates the opportunity to demonstrate skills in formal and informal assessment, ecological inventory, and observation of individual styles of learning. From these assessments and observation, an individual education program (IEP) and a “unit” that supports the needs of a child with severe disabilities are developed.

**Standards**

The SPED 435 Curriculum Modifications Project relates most directly to the following Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Standards and Rhode Island Beginning Teacher (RIBTS) Standards and Indicators:

**CEC Standard 3: Individual Learning Differences.**

Special educators understand the effects that an exceptional condition<sup>2/</sup> can have on an individual’s learning in school and throughout life. Special educators understand that the beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures can affect relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community. Moreover, special educators are active and resourceful in seeking to understand how primary language, culture, and familial backgrounds interact with the individual’s exceptional condition to impact the individual’s academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options. The understanding of these learning differences and their possible interactions provides the foundation upon which special educators individualize instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning for individuals with ELN.

**RIBTS Standard 1:** Teachers create learning experience using a broad base of general knowledge that reflects an understanding of the nature of the world in which we live.

- Teachers exhibit a commitment to learning about the changes in their disciplines and in our world that models a commitment to lifelong learning for students (1.3).

**RIBTS Standard 3:** Teachers create instructional opportunities that reflect an understanding of how children learn and develop.

- Teachers understand how students learn – how students construct knowledge, acquire skills, develop habits of mind, and acquire positive dispositions toward learning (3.1).
- Teachers design instruction that meets the current cognitive, social and personal needs of their students (3.2).
- Teachers create lessons and activities that meet the variety of developmental levels of students within a class (3.3).

**RIBTS Standard 4:** Teachers create instructional opportunities that reflect a respect for the diversity of learners and an understanding of how students differ in their approaches to learning.

- Teachers design instruction that accommodates individual differences (4.1).
- Teachers make appropriate accommodations for students who have identified learning differences or needs in an Individual Education Program (4.4).

**Department of Special Education**  
Curriculum Modification Project (SPED 435) - continued

**RIBTS Standard 9:** Teachers use a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies to support the continuous development of the learner.

- Teachers gather information about their students from parents/guardians, colleagues and students themselves (9.1).
- Teachers maintain records of student learning and communicate student progress to students, parents/guardians, and other colleagues (9.4).

**Product**

A 30-hour field experience designed to explore various aspects of educational programs for elementary and middle-level students with severe disabilities is required. During this field experience, candidates develop a project that demonstrates their ability to: engage in meaningful assessment including observation – evaluation, task analysis and criterion referenced evaluation; the preparation of an Individualized Education Program including a technology plan that is based on the assessment; and the development of a curriculum unit and lesson plans.

The Curriculum Modification Project Rubric (graded and signed by the professor) is included in the Preparing for Internship Portfolio.

**Department of Special Education**  
Curriculum Modification Project (SPED 436)

**Purpose**

The Curriculum Modification Project developed in SPED 436 is the second of two curriculum and methods projects that prepare candidates to educate students with severe disabilities. Candidates demonstrate skills in designing a curriculum for an adolescent or young adult with severe disabilities in the SPED 436 Curriculum Modifications Project.

**Standards**

The SPED 436 Curriculum Modifications Project relates most directly to the following Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Standards and Rhode Island Beginning Teacher (RIBTS) Standards and Indicators:

**CEC 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 curricula. In addition, special educators 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. Individualized instructional plans emphasize **explicit modeling** and **efficient guided practice** to assure acquisition and fluency through maintenance and generalization. Understanding of these factors as well as the implications of an individual's exceptional condition, guides the special educator's selection, adaptation, and creation of materials, and the use of powerful instructional variables. Instructional plans are **modified based on ongoing analysis of the individual's learning progress**. Moreover, special educators facilitate this instructional planning in a **collaborative context** including the individuals with exceptionalities, families, professional colleagues, and personnel from other agencies as appropriate. Special educators also develop a variety of **individualized transition plans**, such as transitions from preschool to elementary school and from secondary settings to a variety of postsecondary work and learning contexts. Special educators are comfortable using **appropriate technologies** to support instructional planning and individualized instruction.

**RIBTS Standard 4:** Teachers create instructional opportunities that reflect a respect for the diversity of learners and an understanding of how students differ in their approaches to learning.

- Teachers use their understanding of students to create connections between the subject matter and student experiences (4.2).
- Teachers seek information about the impact of students' specific challenges to learning or disabilities on classroom performance and work with specialists to develop alternative instructional strategies to meet the needs of these students (4.3).

**Department of Special Education**  
Curriculum Modification Project (SPED 436) - continued

**Product**

Through a 30-hour field experience, aspects of educational programs for adolescents and young adults with severe disabilities are explored. During this field experience, prospective special educators demonstrate their ability to analyze school culture, learning opportunities for all students, and develop a curriculum (based on the general education curriculum) that meets the educational needs of adolescents and young adults with severe disabilities.

The Curriculum Modification Project Rubric (graded and signed by the SPED 436 professor) is included in the Preparing for Internship Portfolio.

**Department of Special Education**  
Preparing for Internship Reflective Essay

This essay requires an analysis of each candidate's preparation and readiness for special education student teaching. The analysis includes a review of each special education course prerequisite to student teaching. The candidates must describe the major themes of each course and the knowledge, skills and dispositions acquired through it. The content of all required courses is then synthesized into a description of the principles and practices to be applied while teaching students with disabilities. This essay will be evaluated consistent with dimensions of the scoring rubric on the next page.

**Preparing the essay**

Candidates for special education internship should review the following information for each course required in their special education program.

The syllabus for each special education course

Instructional materials and class notes for each course

Quizzes, exams and other assignments

Field experiences associated with each course

Interaction with faculty and classmates

Course papers and projects including the common course projects that are presented in this portfolio (i.e., course artifacts)

**Product**

Based on this review, the major points of learning for each course must be summarized and briefly described. The following format should be used in the summary of each course.

State the course number and title.

Describe the major points/themes of the course.

Indicate the knowledge, skills and dispositions acquired in preparation for special education student teaching.

Following a description of all required courses, the candidate indicates his/her readiness for special education student teaching by describing the principles and practices to be applied while teaching students with disabilities. Principles and practices must be illustrated using specific examples from course field work with students experiencing disabilities.

**Standard**

Teachers reflect on their practice and assume responsibility for their own professional development by actively seeking opportunities to learn and grow as professionals.

**Special Education Department  
Preparing for Internship Reflective Essay  
Scoring Rubric**

Candidate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Assess the extent to which the candidate has demonstrated his/her knowledge of the following Rhode Island Beginning Teaching Standards and Council for Exceptional Children Standards in the Readiness for Special Education Student Teaching Essay. Rate the candidate's performance from 1 (an area of weakness) to 4 (an area of strength) for each Standard or set of Standards.

	Below Standard	Approaches Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
Major points/themes of each course are accurately and thoroughly described. (RIBTS 2; CEC 1)	1	2	3	4
The essay demonstrated an understanding of the major points/themes of courses prerequisite to special education student teaching. (RIBTS 1; CEC 1)	1	2	3	4
The essay demonstrated an understanding of how students with exceptional learning needs learn and develop. (RIBTS 3; CEC 2)	1	2	3	4
The essay demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of an effective learning environment for students with exceptional learning needs. (RIBTS 6; CEC 5)	1	2	3	4
The essay reflected the importance of using formal and informal assessment strategies for understanding student learning. (RIBTS 9; CEC 8)	1	2	3	4
The essay demonstrated an understanding of how students with exceptional learning needs differ in their approaches to academic and social learning. (RIBTS 4; CEC 3)	1	2	3	4
The essay demonstrated the development of critical thinking and problem solving. (RIBTS 5; CEC 4)	1	2	3	4
The candidate clearly described the principles and practices to be applied while teaching students with exceptional learning needs. (RIBTS 2 and 10; CEC 7 and 9)	1	2	3	4
The essay was clearly written. (RIBTS 7 and 8; CEC 6 and 10)	1	2	3	4

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<b>Total Evaluation</b> _____/36	Below Standard	Approaches Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Evaluated by \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PREPARING FOR INTERNSHIP PORTFOLIO REVIEW**

Candidate's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Product		Product and Completed Rubric Present				Major Course Project Graded Present	Project Identified Instructor & Grade stated
		Below Standard	Approaches Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard		
Case Study: (SPED 300)	CEC 2						
Structure Project: (SPED 310)	CEC 5						
Communication Inventory: (SPED 525)	CEC 3						
	CEC 6						
Alternate Assessment Project: (SPED 435)	CEC 8						
Curriculum Mod. Project: (SPED 435)	CEC 3						
Curriculum Mod. Project: (SPED 436)	CEC 7						
Preparing for Internship Reflective Essay	Essay Score						_____/36

Special Education Field Work Form submitted

Number of Placements	Urban Core/Urban Ring	Suburban	Rural

This candidate has submitted a Preparing for Internship Portfolio that:

- Below Standard     
  Approaches Standard     
  Meets Standard     
  Exceeds Standard

**Transcript Review**

This candidate has successfully completed the Department prerequisites for special education graduate internship. Transcript indicates a GPA of 3.0 or better; SPED Courses have grades of B or better

This candidate has not met the following Department prerequisites for special education graduate internship:

\_\_\_\_\_

**Review completed by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_