

**Midwestern State University**  
**Gordon T. & Ellen West College of Education**  
**SPED: 6943 Practicum in Special Education Diagnostician**

**Contact Information:**

Instructor: Emily N. Smith, EdD

Office Hours: Tuesday 9:30am-11:00am, Wednesday 8:00am – 10:00am, Thursday 9:30am-11:00am

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**Course/Catalog Description:** Prerequisites: 12 graduate hours of special education and consent of instructor. Field experience (90 hours) in a special educational setting specific to the candidate's career goals. May be repeated for credit.

**Required Text :**

No text required, required readings will be provided.

**Required Technology:**

All students must have internet access and word processing software. Students will also be required to upload requested documents into TK20 throughout the semester.

Usernames and password reset requests can be made by contacting Suzy McDowell at [suzy.mcdowell@msutexas.edu](mailto:suzy.mcdowell@msutexas.edu).

**Instructor Response Policy**

Please allow 24 hours response time during the semester. I prefer you email me through my MSU email account [Emily Smith](mailto:Emily.Smith@msu.edu) but I also check the email associated with this course each morning.

**WCoE Conceptual Framework**

The outcomes for graduates of professional programs are based upon knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the following elements:

- **Learner Development** - understand how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and design and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.
- **Learning Differences** - understand individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.
- **Learning Environment** - work with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

- **Content Knowledge** - understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.
- **Application of Content** - understand how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.
- **Assessment** - understand and use multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.
- **Planning for Instruction** - plan instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.
- **Instructional Strategies** - understand and use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.
- **Professional Learning and Ethical Practice** - engage in ongoing professional learning and use evidence to continually evaluate his or her practice, particularly the effects of his or her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.
- **Leadership and Collaboration** - seek appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

### Objectives

The candidate will meet the following Texas Educator Standards for special educators. These are aligned with the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) knowledge and skills standards as they apply to students with disabilities. This course provides candidates with a knowledge base of the environment in which they may work. Satisfactory completion of the course will document that students have demonstrated the ability to:

Objective	Standards
Students will review psychometric principles and issues including laws and legal issues related to the assessment of individuals with disabilities.	<p>Standard I - The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of the purpose, philosophy, and legal foundations of evaluation and special education.</p> <p>Standard II. The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of ethical and professional practices, roles, and responsibilities.</p> <p>Standard X. The educational diagnostician knows and understands appropriate curricula and instructional strategies for individuals with disabilities.</p>
Students will master the basic administration, scoring, and interpreting skills in individual achievement and intelligence testing.	Standard VI - The educational diagnostician selects, administers, and interprets appropriate formal and informal assessments and evaluations
Students will use procedures to ensure nonbiased results	<p>Standard V. The educational diagnostician knows eligibility criteria and procedures for identifying students with disabilities and determining the presence of an educational need.</p> <p>Standard VIII. The educational diagnostician knows and demonstrates skills necessary for scheduling, time management, and organization.</p>
Students will communicate assessment results through formal report writing.	<p>Standard III. The educational diagnostician develops collaborative relationships with families, educators, the school, the community, outside agencies, and related service personnel.</p> <p>Standard VI - The educational diagnostician selects, administers, and interprets appropriate formal and informal assessments and evaluations</p>
Students will report assessment findings for instructional decisions including recommendations for diverse populations; determine needs & making recommendations based on assessment results	<p>Standard IV. The educational diagnostician understands and applies knowledge of student assessment and evaluation, program planning, and instructional decision making.</p> <p>Standard VI - The educational diagnostician selects, administers, and interprets appropriate formal and informal assessments and evaluations.</p>

	Standard X. The educational diagnostician knows and understands appropriate curricula and instructional strategies for individuals with disabilities.
Students will ensure that all educational diagnostician standards are addressed through field experiences	Standard I-V

**See Appendix A for a complete list of standards/competencies**

**Dispositions** Students will demonstrate the dispositions of dependability, sensitivity, and a commitment to becoming practitioners and leaders in the profession of education who practice within the CEC Code of Ethics. Students will be prepared for their students and attend camp each day.

**CEC Code of Ethics**

- Maintaining a high level of professional competence and integrity and exercising professional judgment to benefit individuals with exceptionalities and their families.
- Promoting meaningful and inclusive participation of individuals with exceptionalities in their schools and communities.
- Practicing collegially with others who are providing services to individuals with exceptionalities.
- Developing relationships with families based on mutual respect and actively involving families and individuals with exceptionalities in educational decision making.
- Using evidence, instructional data, research and professional knowledge to inform practice.
- Protecting and supporting the physical and psychological safety of individuals with exceptionalities.
- Neither engaging in nor tolerating any practice that harms individuals with exceptionalities.
- Practicing within the professional ethics, standards, and policies of CEC; upholding laws, regulations, and policies that influence professional practice; and advocating improvements in laws, regulations, and policies.
- Advocating for professional conditions and resources that will improve learning outcomes of individuals with exceptionalities.
- Engaging in the improvement of the profession through active participation in professional organizations.

- Participating in the growth and dissemination of professional knowledge and skills.

*Adopted by the CEC Board of Directors, January 2010*

## **Methods of Instruction**

This course will be presented in a manner that will allow you to learn independently, from each other, through the discussion board, email, and postings. While you may work somewhat at your own pace, I have found that most students appreciate the structure of due dates. Please adhere to the due dates and adjust your study schedule accordingly.

Internet courses are a convenient and effective method of learning, however they require as much work and attention as traditional instruction. The following will ensure success this semester:

1. Do not think you can do this course in your spare time. Plan, plan, and plan some more. Schedule at least 12-15 hours a week to dedicate to this course.
2. Please adhere to all deadlines and due dates-this will help you plan-you may complete assignments early but do not turn them in late.
3. Please read and re-read assignments. Get clarification as soon as can (do not wait until the night before).
4. All assignments are due Sunday night by midnight unless otherwise specified. You have two full weeks to complete your assignments; therefore, no late work will be accepted.

## **Grading Procedures**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Points</b>
Site Supervisor Paperwork	3 Documents	25
Interactive Practice Exam	Completed Exam	100
Observations	3 Observations (75 points each)	225
Time Log	Completed and Approved Log	100
Practicum Evaluation		50
Total		500

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Points</b>
A	500-490
B	489-480

Grade	Points
C	479-470
D	469-460
F	459 and below

## Important Dates

Date	Activity	Notes
08/23/2021	All site supervisor/mentor forms due to Becky Cavitt	
08/31/2021	Class Zoom	6:00pm Zoom Meeting
09/06/2021	No Classes	Labor Day
09/13/2021	Mentor Training Due	Sent to mentors via email. I will contact you if your mentor has not completed this.
09/27/2021	1 <sup>st</sup> Observation	Observations will be conducted this week.
10/18/2021	2 <sup>nd</sup> Observation	Observations will be conducted this week.
11/15/2021	3 <sup>rd</sup> Observation	Observations will be conducted this week.
11/23/2021	No Class	Thanksgiving Holidays begin 10:00pm
11/29/2021	Observations Complete and signed forms uploaded into TK20	Uploaded through D2L Links Provided
11/29/2021	Time Log Complete and Approved by Mentor  Interactive Practice Exam Scores Due	Uploaded to TK20 – Link Sent to mentors via email. I will contact you if your mentor has not completed this.  Uploaded through D2L Link Provided.
12/06/2021	Practicum Evaluation Due	Student and Mentor must complete the evaluation.

## **Assignments**

All written work should be written in a professional manner, even if it is something you complete with your mentor and do not submit for a grade. Confidentiality will be respected at all times. Reports will be written in the format of your district or the district that your site supervisor is associated with.

This course will have some core requirements with options. You will work independently on completing your time log. I have given you some due dates to keep you on track and keep you from waiting until the last minute to complete assignments.

## **Site Supervisor Paperwork**

The first step in your practicum process is for us to collaboratively choose a site supervisor/mentor for your practicum experiences. It is important that you choose a site supervisor/mentor that you will work well with and can provide you with the guidance necessary to promote learning in your field. The minimum requirements for the site supervisor/mentor are:

1. Current Certification in the Candidate's Field
2. Minimum of 3 Years' Experience in the Candidate's Field

Once you have determined who you would like to serve as your site supervisor/mentor, you should contact them and ask if they would be willing to do so. Then, you will complete the attached form and return it to me at [Rebecca Cavitt](#) with the required documentation listed on the form.

## **Interactive Practice Exam**

Students will complete an interactive practice exam designed to stimulate their testing experience for the certification exam. Information on accessing the practice exam will be posted to D2L. The exam must be completed and your score report uploaded into D2L for a grade. It is also a program requirement that this is completed and passed (score of 80% or better) before the student will be released to take their certification exam.

## **Observation**

You will have one observation with me during the semester. This will occur virtually and will be scheduled on an individual basis through an agreed upon meeting platform. The meeting will be at least 45 minutes in length. This meeting will be an observation of your ability to master one of the educational diagnostician standards. Observation forms will be emailed to you. You are to print, sign, and upload this form into D2L by the due date. A one page reflection of the observations will also be uploaded with the signed forms. In order to receive credit for this course, these documents must be signed and uploaded into TK20 by the due date. No exceptions will be given.

## **Time Log**

A time log of activities you complete to address each educational diagnostician standard must be kept in this course. The link for logging your hours is posted in the "Time Logs" folder in D2L. You will also find a file with step-by-step instructions in that folder. In order to receive credit for this course, all required hours must be uploaded into TK20 and approved by your mentor by the due date. No exceptions will be given.

This semester, you have a requirement of 180 hours. You will need to document everything you do. Any assessments can be counted towards your 180 hours. Make sure you document everything you do. For example, if you spent 1 hour collaborating with a parent, document it. You will need to document start and stop times for each activity (ex. 2:00-3:00pm). You will not be able to document overlapping times. Make sure you are meeting each standard in your portfolio. As you progress through each course, you may see areas that you have not addresses or met and will need to spend some time working on these particular areas. You do have to address every standard by the end of Practicum. A suggestion for documenting hours is posted in D2L for your review. You do not have to complete this form, it is simply an example. You may choose to keep a log then enter hours through the TK20 link or you can log each activity after it occurs. It is up to you, just make sure you are meeting the required hours and have met each standard by the end of your Practicum course.

#### Activity Suggestions:

1. Administer, score, and interpret additional assessments beyond what is required.
2. Observe a diagnostician go through the process of data analysis of eligibility decisions.
3. Attend ARDS where the diagnostician goes over testing and MDRs.
4. Ask if you can go through a few folders of students who did not qualify for special education and find out why and the thought process behind it.
5. Ask to review any assessments that were bilingual or had some other special circumstance.
6. Administer, score, and interpret, brief report additional assessments to “non-students”. You may either use kits at your school or let me know and I will send you kits of tests that you have not used if I have them available.
7. If you attend a professional development at an ESC that meets the standards, you may use some of those hours.
8. You may count hours you spend studying for the exam- [Test Preparation Materials](#) also the Interactive Practice Exam.

**\*\*Note:** You are responsible for asking your field supervisor/mentor to approve your time log hours **BEFORE** the due date. A help guide for your site supervisor is posted in D2L. You may print or email it to your site supervisor if they have questions about the process. If all 180 hours are not approved before the due date, you will not receive credit for the course.

Reminder - You must have 180 hours total and hours that address every standard by the end of this semester.

### **Practicum Evaluation**

A final practicum evaluation will be completed at the end of the semester. This is an opportunity to reflect on strengths and weaknesses by the student and get explicit feedback from the professor and site supervisor.



\*\*Please refer to the handbook for information on practicum evaluations that result in a candidate not be recommended for certification. Students MUST be recommended by the university and site supervisor in order to receive a recommendation for certification.

### **Extra Credit**

Extra credit assignments will not be given in this course.

### **Late Work**

Late will only be accepted in extreme circumstances (death in the family, illness, etc). I must be contacted prior to the assignment due date and appropriate documentation must be provided.

### **Make Up Work/Tests**

Make up work will only be accepted in extreme circumstances (death in the family, illness, etc). I must be contacted prior to the due date and appropriate documentation must be provided.

### **Important Dates**

Last day for term schedule changes: August 26th

Deadline to file for graduation: September 27th

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" October 25<sup>th</sup>

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Voids](#)

### **Desire-to-Learn (D2L)**

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. Although in general students are graded on intellectual effort and performance rather than attendance, absences may lower the student's grade where class attendance and class participation are deemed essential by the faculty member. In those classes where attendance is considered as part of the grade, the instructor should so inform students of the specifics in writing at the beginning of the semester in a syllabus or separate attendance policy statement. An instructor who has an attendance policy must keep records on a daily basis. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to being dropped from the class. Instructor's records will stand as evidence of absences. A student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor. Any individual faculty member or college has the authority to establish an attendance policy, providing the policy is in accordance with the General University Policies.

## **Online Computer Requirements**

Taking this class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ***Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.***

Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. **Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!** There are many places to access your class! Our classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

## **Change of Schedule**

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

## **Refund and Repayment Policy**

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. **HOWEVER**, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

## **Services for Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

## **Student Handbook**

Refer to: [Student Handbook-2019-20](#)

### **Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures**

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

### **College Policies**

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

### **Smoking/Tobacco Policy**

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

### **Alcohol and Drug Policy**

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

### **Grade Appeal Process**

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

### *Notice*

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

### **References/Scientifically-Based Research/Additional Readings:**

Gomez, M., Blackwell, W. H., Cole, C. V., & Young, C. (2020). Examining the Preparedness of Educational Diagnosticians in Texas. *Journal of Human Services: Training, Research, and Practice*, 6(1), 6.

Alfonso, V. C., & Flanagan, D. P. (2018). *Essentials of specific learning disability identification* (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

McLeskey, J., Council for Exceptional Children, & Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform. (2017). *High-leverage practices in special education*. Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Sattler, J. M. (2008). *Assessment of children: Cognitive foundations* (p. 796). San Diego, CA: JM Sattler.

## **Appendix A: Standards/Competencies**

[Texas Educational Diagnostician Standards](#)  
[Exam Competencies](#)  
[High Leverage Practices](#)

WCOE Standards (InTASC):

The outcomes for graduates of professional programs are based upon knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the following elements:

- Learner Development - understand how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and design and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.
- Learning Differences - understand individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.
- Learning Environment - work with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- Content Knowledge - understand the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.
- Application of Content - understand how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.
- Assessment - understand and use multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.

- **Planning for Instruction** - plan instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.
- **Instructional Strategies** - understand and use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.
- **Professional Learning and Ethical Practice** - engage in ongoing professional learning and use evidence to continually evaluate his or her practice, particularly the effects of his or her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.
- **Leadership and Collaboration** - seek appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

### **Appendix B: Note about COVID**

Scientific data shows that being fully vaccinated is the most effective way to prevent and slow the spread of COVID-19 and has the greatest probability of avoiding serious illness if infected in all age groups. Although MSU Texas is not mandating vaccinations in compliance with Governor Abbott's executive orders, we highly encourage eligible members of our community to get a vaccination. If you have questions or concerns about the vaccine, please contact your primary care physician or health care professional. Given the recent rise in cases, individuals are also strongly encouraged to wear facial coverings when indoors among groups of people, regardless of vaccination status. Although MSU Texas is not currently requiring facial coverings, they have been an effective strategy in slowing the spread.