National Evaluation Series

Test Framework

Special Education (602)

April 2022

Content Domain	Range of Competencies	Approximate Percentage of Test Score
I. Foundations of Special Education	0001–0002	20%
II. Assessment, the Learning Environment, and Individualized Planning	0003–0005	30%
III. Instruction, Social-Emotional Learning, and Communication	0006–0008	30%
IV. Collaboration and Professional and Ethical Practices	0009–0010	20%

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FOUNDATIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

0001: Understand the historical, philosophical, professional, and legal foundations of special education.

- Demonstrate knowledge of key concepts, principles, and theories relevant to the education of students with disabilities (e.g., principles of evidence-based practice, characteristics of specially designed instruction, models of inclusive practice, learning strategies approach, principles of equity and equitable access).
- Demonstrate knowledge of key legal issues in special education, including laws, regulations, and guidelines (e.g., least restrictive environment [LRE], due process, continuum of services, disproportionality, free appropriate public education [FAPE], Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA]).
- Apply knowledge of principles of universal design for learning (UDL) to meet individual student needs and promote learning.
- Apply knowledge of the major components of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), including their processes and the roles and responsibilities of members of an IEP and an IFSP team.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the types and roles of accommodations and modifications that may be used to provide students access to the curriculum, assessment, and communication, and create opportunities for students to achieve learning goals.
- Demonstrate knowledge of legal provisions, regulations, guidelines, and culturally responsive (nonbiased) practices regarding assessment of students, including students who are English learners (EL), and who use alternative methods of communication (e.g., augmentative and alternative communication [AAC] systems and devices, signed communication).

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0002: Understand human development and the diverse implications of the characteristics associated with disability on students and their families.

- Demonstrate knowledge of the stages, processes, and progressions related to human development across domains from birth through adolescence (e.g., adaptive, cognitive, social-emotional, sensorimotor, physical, communication).
- Apply knowledge of individual differences in development and factors that affect students' development, learning, communication, and behavior.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the key environmental, genetic, and biological etiologies, and characteristics of cognitive, neurological, sensory, emotional, and physical disabilities, and their influence on students' development, learning, growth, behavior, and communication.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the interrelationships among developmental domains and the significance of these relationships on students' behavior, learning, and daily living.
- Apply knowledge of types and characteristics of disorders related to auditory and visual processing, auditory and visual perceptual skills, sensory skills, language processing, and executive functioning, including implications for student development, communication, and behavior.
- Apply knowledge of diverse factors that influence development and learning, including differences related to families, languages, cultures, and communities.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the influence of stress and trauma, and the benefits of protective factors, resilience, and supportive relationships on the development of children across all domains (e.g., adaptive, cognitive, social-emotional, sensorimotor, physical, communication).
- Apply knowledge of the roles of parents/guardians as primary caregivers and informal teachers of their student, factors in the home and community that may influence the student's development and learning, and ways to support the family and the student.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the role of family dynamics in building positive, supportive relationships with students and their families, including understanding ways in which a student's disability influences the family individually and collectively.
- Demonstrate knowledge of basic health and medical information required to effectively address the individual physical and medical management of students.

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ASSESSMENT, THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, AND INDIVIDUALIZED PLANNING

0003: Understand the role of assessment in identification, evaluation, program planning, and progress monitoring to meet the diverse needs of all students with disabilities.

- Apply knowledge of basic assessment terminology (e.g., validity, reliability, percentile rank, basal, ceiling).
- Demonstrate knowledge of the specific purposes of various types and methods of formal, informal, and alternative assessments (e.g., screenings, inventories, standardized tools, formative and summative assessments, adaptive behavior assessments, anecdotal observations).
- Apply knowledge of various types, methods, and practices associated with the use and development of informal assessments (e.g., rubrics, self-assessments, portfolios, checklists, ecological assessments, task analysis).
- Apply knowledge of principles and procedures for selecting, adapting, and modifying assessments for given situations to accommodate individual abilities and needs, and the implications of modifications and accommodations on assessment results.
- Apply knowledge of processes for selecting and creating assessment instruments and methods to evaluate students' progress toward Individualized Education Program (IEP) academic or instructional goals and benchmarks.
- Interpret data and information from different types of formal or informal assessments to identify a student's instructional, academic, communication, or behavioral abilities and needs.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the various methods, types, and practices for collecting and recording relevant data (e.g., charting, anecdotal observation, antecedent-behavior-consequence recording) from a variety of sources to effectively monitor student progress in the academic curriculum and toward IEP and transition goals.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the components of a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and how to use the results of an FBA to meet individual students' needs.
- Demonstrate knowledge of strategies and methods for collaborating with other professionals as a team member in conducting assessments that respond to and respect families' priorities, concerns, and expectations, and involve family members as active participants in the assessment process.
- Apply knowledge of strategies for effectively communicating assessment results to all stakeholders, including culturally responsive strategies.

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0004: Understand strategies and methods for establishing a positive and productive learning environment across instructional settings for all students with disabilities.

- Demonstrate knowledge of methods for designing, adapting, or modifying the learning environment to meet the physical, cognitive, social, cultural, and communication needs of students (e.g., use of assistive technology [AT], physical arrangement of classroom, management of support services).
- Apply knowledge of strategies and activities for creating a supportive, positive, and equitable classroom and school climate that fosters respect for diversity, develops understanding, and builds relationships among all students.
- Apply knowledge of strategies, methods, and activities for developing, teaching, and reinforcing daily routines (e.g., classroom schedules, arrival and dismissal procedures, work-related tasks) and managing transitions throughout students' daily environment to promote independence and inclusion.
- Apply knowledge of methods of fostering students' active engagement and individual academic success in one-to-one, small-group, and large-group settings.
- Apply knowledge of principles of student motivation and strategies for creating a learning environment that is motivating and engaging to all students and that promotes an ownership of learning and high expectations.
- Apply knowledge of strategies, methods, and activities to effectively provide guidance and support to paraeducators to address student needs, recognize student abilities, and promote student independence and access.
- Apply knowledge of practices for physically supporting, adjusting, and positioning students and the correct uses of transfers (e.g., sitting to floor, chair to chair, floor to sitting), and of procedures for managing specialized health care needs at school or in the classroom setting.
- Apply knowledge of practices and methods for promoting students' successful transitions between activities and classes, to and from home and school, and between related-service delivery and other school-based activities.
- Apply knowledge of practices for promoting students' vocational and career awareness, work-related skills, and access to resources that support employment and postsecondary experiences and opportunities.

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0005: Understand strategies and methods of individualized programming and planning to facilitate learning and independence for all students with disabilities.

- Demonstrate knowledge of the components of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the roles and functions of IEP team members in planning and implementing IEPs.
- Apply knowledge of procedures for developing and implementing IEPs in collaboration with students, parents/guardians, general education teachers, and related service providers.
- Interpret and use information from formal and informal assessments to collaborate with the IEP team to determine student goals and objectives appropriate to the abilities and needs of the individual student.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the continuum of placement and services available for students with disabilities, including knowledge of supports students may require for integration into appropriate program placements.
- Apply knowledge of evidence-based strategies and methods of effective instructional planning and lesson design to provide direct and explicit instruction and intervention.
- Demonstrate knowledge of strategies to support students' access to, inclusion, and participation in a variety of academic and nonacademic settings and activities.
- Demonstrate knowledge of co-teaching models, including strategies for effective implementation of a co-teaching model to promote students' access to and success within the general education curriculum and setting.
- Apply knowledge of methods for integrating a variety of learning experiences into ongoing instruction (e.g., project-based, student-initiated, inquiry-based, teacher-directed).
- Apply knowledge of strategies and methods to select, design and use various types of technology, low- and high-tech materials, and digital resources to address students' individual academic and nonacademic needs, including addressing other factors that may affect accessibility.
- Demonstrate knowledge of methods to support student use and independence with maintaining and integrating augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) technologies in the classroom setting.

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INSTRUCTION, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING, AND COMMUNICATION

0006: Understand evidence-based instructional practices for providing specialized instruction to advance the learning of all students with disabilities.

- Apply knowledge of evidence-based instructional strategies, methods, and activities to develop and promote students' attention, organization, memory and retrieval, and perceptual and metacognitive skills to engage effectively with core academic content.
- Apply knowledge of effective academic accommodations, modifications, or adaptations to allow students to effectively access content in the general education curriculum, and methods for promoting students' active participation and academic success.
- Apply knowledge of evidence-based strategies for selecting and implementing evidence-based instructional methodology and approaches to differentiate lessons appropriate to the abilities and needs of the individual student, including multisensory instructional approaches, shaping, and scaffolding.
- Apply knowledge of evidence-based practices and activities for providing systematic and explicit reading and literacy instruction to all students with disabilities.
- Apply knowledge of evidence-based practices and activities for providing mathematics instruction to all students with disabilities.
- Apply knowledge of evidence-based practices and activities for providing oral and written language instruction to all students with disabilities.
- Apply knowledge of evidence-based practices and activities for providing science and social studies instruction to all students with disabilities.
- Apply knowledge of methods and activities to teach learning strategies, study skills, and other cognitive strategies that support academic and content-area learning.
- Apply knowledge of strategies for facilitating students' maintenance and generalization of skills across content areas and other environments.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the continuum of services available for prevocational and vocational training, job placement, independent living, and postsecondary education opportunities.
- Apply knowledge of strategies and activities for teaching daily living skills and procedures for evaluating students' progress and attainment of daily living skills.

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0007: Understand strategies for developing the social-emotional learning needs of all students with disabilities.

- Demonstrate knowledge of the key concepts, principles, and legal responsibilities regarding student behavior, classroom management, and behavior intervention and supports (e.g., conflict resolution, crisis prevention and de-escalation strategies, manifestation determination).
- Apply knowledge of the principles of positive behavioral interventions and supports, including multi-tiered systems of supports to address a student's assessed behaviors of concern.
- Apply knowledge of strategies and activities for promoting students' self-determination skills (e.g., self-concept, self-advocacy, self-regulation, problem-solving).
- Apply knowledge of evidence-based behavior intervention strategies and methods to explicitly teach social skills.
- Apply knowledge of evidence-based behavior intervention strategies and activities to explicitly teach replacement behaviors and coping strategies.
- Apply knowledge of how to use the data from a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) to develop a behavior intervention plan (BIP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals to address a student's needs.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the key principles of behavior reinforcement theories that support behavior intervention strategies (e.g., differential reinforcement, noncontingent reinforcement, positive/negative reinforcement, goal setting).
- Demonstrate knowledge of ways to integrate social skills instruction into the curriculum throughout the school environment.
- Demonstrate knowledge of principles for using the least intrusive behavior-support strategies consistent with the assessed needs of the student.

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0008: Understand strategies and methods for developing language skills and enhancing the communication of all students with disabilities.

- Demonstrate knowledge of the relationship between oral language development and literacy, and methods for promoting students' use of language and communication (e.g., verbal, nonverbal, written, pictorial, symbolic, gestural).
- Apply knowledge of methods and evidence-based strategies to teach oral language vocabulary and promote speaking and listening skills.
- Apply knowledge of instructional methods, resources, and activities for promoting expressive and receptive language skills (e.g., expressing wants and needs, asking and responding to questions, giving and receiving feedback).
- Apply knowledge of strategies and methods to promote pragmatic language skills and ways to integrate opportunities for students to practice pragmatic language skills to promote social skills.
- Apply knowledge of effective methods and strategies that address a broad range of individual communication modalities, methods, and needs (e.g., gestures, eye gaze, text-to-speech, picture communication systems, signed communication).
- Apply knowledge of various strategies, techniques, and methods for supporting and promoting students' verbal and nonverbal language and communication skills, including the use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) technology and devices and visual supports.

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COLLABORATION AND PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL PRACTICES

0009: Understand how to establish and engage in collaborative partnerships with stakeholders to enhance learning opportunities for all students with disabilities.

- Demonstrate knowledge of effective strategies of consultation and collaboration for working with related service providers to meet the needs of individual students.
- Apply knowledge of effective strategies and methods of consultation and collaboration for working with general education teachers to support students' access, participation, and success in the general education curriculum and setting.
- Demonstrate knowledge of strategies and methods for integrating related services and goals/objectives into students' daily routines and throughout various settings.
- Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for collaborating with Individualized Education Program (IEP) team members, including students, to plan age-appropriate transitions that encourage full participation in the school and community.
- Demonstrate knowledge of agencies, services, networks, and organizations that support programming and provide support for students with disabilities and their families.
- Apply knowledge of strategies to establish and maintain effective, ongoing communication with all families in culturally responsive ways to support students' achievement of learning outcomes and promote independence.
- Demonstrate knowledge of strategies for planning and conducting collaborative meetings with students and parents/guardians using culturally responsive approaches to facilitate understanding and respect.
- Demonstrate knowledge of strategies and activities for teaching and supporting students to become active participants on the educational team.

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0010: Understand the professional and ethical roles and responsibilities of the special education teacher.

- Demonstrate knowledge of effective strategies for engaging in reflection and self-assessment activities to identify one's professional strengths and areas needing improvement to determine goals for professional growth.
- Demonstrate knowledge of reflection and self-assessment activities to become aware of and evaluate one's biases to determine goals for growth.
- Demonstrate knowledge of resources to deepen understanding of culturally responsive practices to build stronger relationships with students and families.
- Apply knowledge of ways to advocate, model, and teach safe, legal, and ethical uses of information and technology, including laws pertaining to the rights of confidentiality and privacy.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the responsibilities of the profession, including maintaining high expectations for student learning and understanding the professional code of ethics.
- Demonstrate knowledge of activities to advance the special education profession, including ways to build one's professional leadership role.

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