

**Family and School Personnel Collaboration in Special Education
University of Texas at Tyler**

Course: EDSP 5345
Semester & Year: Summer 2025
Time & Days: Online
Location: Online

Instructor: Staci Zolkoski, PhD
Associate Professor, School of Education
Email: szolkoski@uttyler.edu or via Canvas
Phone: (903) 565-5612
Zoom link:

Instructor Information

Course Catalog Description

The purpose of this course is to explore fundamental components of effective family and school collaboration including paraeducators, other educators, and service providers. Students will learn about a variety of factors that can impact collaboration among families, educators, and other professionals. Research-based strategies for building and maintaining positive relationships with families, understanding and respecting cultural diversity, conducting effective communication, and collaborating throughout the decision-making process will be explored. Students will develop a comprehensive understanding of the importance of collaboration to achieve positive outcomes for students with disabilities. Students will also understand legal and ethical considerations related to family and school collaboration.

Student Learning Outcomes

The following student learning outcomes are aligned with the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC's) Advanced Specialty Set Standard for Special Education Behavior Intervention Specialist and the State Board for Education Certification (SBEC) Standards for Special Education.

At the end of this course the student will be able to...

Student Learning Objectives	SBEC Standards and CEC Advanced Specialty Standards
<i>Understand</i> the historical, legal, and ethical considerations related to family and school partnerships.	SBEC: Standard I, II CEC: SEBIS.5.S3
<i>Identify</i> roles and responsibilities of various school personnel in special education.	SBEC: Standard III CEC: SEBIS.4.S2, SEBIS.5.S3

Understand the importance of effective family and school personnel collaboration to support the well-being and education of students with exceptionalities.	SBEC: Standard III CEC: SEBIS.4.S2, SEBIS.5.S3
Demonstrate an understanding of psychological and emotional needs of families of children with exceptionalities and develop strategies to support them.	SBEC: Standard III, VI, VII CEC: SEBIS.5.S1, SEBIS.5.S3, SEBIS.7.K1
Demonstrate an understanding of cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity within families and the impact on family and school personnel collaboration.	SBEC: Standard III, VI, VII CEC: SEBIS.6.S2
Develop skills for conducting effective communication with families including listening, asking questions, and providing needed information.	SBEC: Standard III CEC: SEBIS.6.S2, SEBIS.7.K1
Develop research-based strategies to build and maintain positive relationships with families.	SBEC: Standard III, VI, VII CEC: SEBIS.3.S1
Develop strategies for addressing and resolving disagreements in collaborative teams.	SBEC: Standard III, VI, VII CEC: SEBIS.4.S2, SEBIS.5.S3
Engage in identifying and self-reflecting personal values, beliefs, and biases in relation to family and school collaboration.	SBEC: Standard II, III CEC: SEBIS.6.S1, SEBIS.6.S2

Required Text and Related Readings

Berger, E., & Riojas-Cortez, M. (2019). *Families as partners in education: Families and schools working together* (10th ed.). Pearson.

American Psychological Association (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.).

Other readings as assigned in class.

Course Topics

- Understand historical and legal foundations of family involvement in special education
- Factors impacting family and school personnel collaboration
- Communication and problem-solving in collaborative relationships
- Considerations of families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Involving families in the special education process

Detailed assignments will be found in Canvas.

Grading is based on your accumulated score as a percent of the total cumulative score available. ***You can keep track of your grades via Canvas.*** Turnaround time for grading is one week. ***It is my policy not to discuss grades via email. If you need to discuss grade issues, please schedule a time you can visit with me in my office.***

Grading Rubric:

A (90%)	B (80%)	C (70%)	D (60%)	F (less than 60%)
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The last day to withdraw from courses is Thursday, July 10th.

Assignments and point values subject to change – Canvas will have all assignment details.

Zoom video conferences:	50 points
Chapter readings:	200 points
Article critiques:	50 points
Discussion board participation:	50 points
Case study analysis:	100 points
Reflection paper:	100 points
Parent-teacher conference simulation:	100 points

Grading is based on the total number of points accumulated by each student at the end of the semester for all evaluations including class activities and assignments.

Additional Information

You will enroll in the following:

- a) Research Pool Requirement:** Students enrolled in specified SOE courses must fulfill a research pool requirement each semester. The research requirement for these courses can be satisfied in one of two ways. First, students can satisfy the research pool requirement by volunteering to participate in approved research studies offered by the School of Education (3 credits for 30 points and up to 10 additional points for 1 more credit [total 4 credits]). Alternatively, students can satisfy the research pool requirement by completing alternative assignments equal in time and effort to the research opportunities.

Communication

To contact me via email, you may use the Canvas email. You may also email me at szolkoski@uttyler.edu. Please note this is **not** a Patriots email address. I will respond to your emails as quickly as possible; my priority is to be supportive of your work to ensure your success. I work to reply to emails within 24 hours. While I will try to respond to

emails over the weekend as promptly as possible, emails sent over the weekend might not be read until Monday morning. My preferred method of communication is **email**.

Teaching Strategies

It is expected that this class will function in a graduate seminar format. While the instructor will provide some lecture, emphasis will be on in-class discussion, presentation, assignments, and case study analysis that contributes to class discussions. The following instructional strategies will be employed during this class:

- Lecture, multimedia, and simulations
- Demonstration and case studies
- Written assignments
- Examinations

Course Policies and Guidelines

1) Assignment Submission:

For written assignments a “page” is defined as:

- 8½” x 11” paper
- Times New Roman or Arial 12-point font
- Double-spaced (unless otherwise directed)
- 1-inch margin on all sides.
- Put page numbers on the top right-hand side.
- Put the title of the assignment, centered at the top of your paper.
- **For all assignments submitted in Canvas, your name, date, class number, or any other information should NOT be included.**
- Upload written assignments on the Canvas website under the assignment tab.

- a) **Criteria for all assignments** will be available in class and posted online unless otherwise notified by the instructor.

Canvas. Students will access class notes, assignments, grades, and course information through Canvas. Any changes to the course schedule, schedule of assignments, or any special assignments will be posted on Canvas. Students are expected to regularly check Canvas for updates and to download any class handouts.

- b) **Late work:** It is expected that assignments and projects be submitted on time. **An assignment will be considered late if it is not turned in the day it is due.** You may turn in your assignment early. Late assignments are not accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Assignments and due dates are posted in Canvas.

- c) **Plagiarism.** Students need to use their own words when completing all assignments. A zero will be given for any assignment that is detected as being plagiarized. Students are subjected to a disposition or a failing grade in the course.

- d) **AI.** Some assignments in this course will permit using artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT or Copilot. When AI use is permissible, it will be documented in the assignment description, and all use of AI must be appropriately acknowledged and cited.

When using AI tools for assignments, add an appendix showing (a) the entire exchange (e.g., prompts used), highlighting the most relevant sections; (b) a description of precisely which AI tools were used, (c) an explanation of how the AI tools were used (e.g. to generate ideas, elements of text, etc.); and (d) an account of why AI tools were used (e.g. to save time, to surmount writer's block, to stimulate thinking, to experiment for fun, etc.). Using AI tools without appropriate acknowledgment and citation violates UT Tyler's Honor Code, constitutes plagiarism, and will be treated as such.

TurnItIn is a tool that will be used to check a document for plagiarism and AI use. The tool provides feedback as to whether the text in a document is a close match with other documents on the Internet, in journal databases, and submitted to Canvas. If a student is caught plagiarizing, a grade of zero will be given as well as a disposition for cheating. Once you submit an assignment, you will get a report where you can see plagiarism detection and grammatical errors.

- 2) **Zoom etiquette.** During any zoom sessions, you will need to be on time and have your video on. You will need to be an active participant in the class by listening (focused on class content and not on other things) and answering questions. Please make sure you are in a quiet area. You will need to make sure you are in an area where you have a stable internet connection. ***Class participation points will be deducted for not following zoom etiquette.***

- Zoom Conference Expectations:
- Be on time for class.
- Your video should be on.
- Be in a quiet location that is free from distraction. Our zoom class should be treated like you are in person. It will help to avoid being in a room with other people.
- Be an active participant and active listener.

- 3) **You are responsible** for all information given in class, online, and in the syllabus.

- 4) **Person First Language.** Our language reflects our attitudes. Always refer to persons with disabilities with respect. Degrading terminology will not be tolerated. In this class we will strive to always use "people first" language. "People First" language always refers to the person first and not as a label or a category. For example, refer to "a student with autism" and not "an autistic".

- 5) **Safe Zone.** The professor considers this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect as a human being - regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national

origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided you can agree to disagree. It is the professor's expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.

- 6) Dispositions.** All students in the UT Tyler Teacher Preparation Program must adhere to the professional behaviors outlined in the U.T. Tyler School of Education Dispositions. Information on dispositions can be found under the attachments of the Course Information Page.

According to The University of Texas at Tyler Office of the President, UT Tyler is committed to student success by providing a uniquely balanced student experience in an environment of innovative teaching shaped to serve and advance the educational, economic, technological, and public interests of East Texas and beyond. We aspire to be the primary educational and economic driver of East Texas. <https://www.uttyler.edu/president/missionstatement.php>

Excellent teachers must aspire to encourage and engage students with a wide range of abilities, interests, and personalities. UT Tyler has the responsibility of guiding and evaluating teacher candidates' effectiveness, knowledge and skills, and professional habits using many instruments and methods to ensure the highest quality of teacher performance in the complex classrooms of the 21st century.

A professional disposition includes principles or standards reinforcing teacher candidates' success in school and in the classroom. Professional dispositions include values, professional ethics, honesty, responsibility, and social justice. These beliefs and attitudes shape how an educator interacts with colleagues, students, and families. Each semester student dispositions are evaluated by course instructors and field supervisors in consultation with mentor teachers.

College of Education and Psychology (CEP) Vision and Mission

Vision: The College of Education and Psychology is nationally recognized and respected for its academic programs and opportunities. It is a center of academic excellence, scholarly inquiry, and public service. The College prepares leaders to meet the critical challenges of the 21st Century through productive contributions to local and global communities and toward individual and cultural equity.

Mission: The mission of the College of Education and Psychology is to provide a positive environment that fosters the acquisition of knowledge and skills. The mission is individually and collectively realized through a community of scholars that contributes to knowledge through scholarly inquiry; organizes knowledge for application, understanding and communication; and provides leadership and service. We affirm and promote global perspectives that value individual and cultural diversity to enhance learning, service, and scholarship.

UT TYLER'S SCHOOL OF EDUCATION STANDARDS FOR EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Texas Education Standards: The School of Education are committed to teaching and implementing the Texas Educator Standards at the highest level. The School of Education faculty use the Texas Education Standards, along with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards used by educator preparation programs throughout the United States.

The list of [Texas Education Standards](#) can be accessed [here](#).

Access the [Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators](#).