This course of study outlines the sequence of learning activities to help you develop competence in the subject area of Introduction to Special Education Law and Legal Issues. Your competence will be assessed as you complete the objective exam this assessment. This course of study may take up to twelve weeks to complete depending on your educational background, work experience, and the time that you are able to dedicate to your studies. This exam is only offered in January, March, April, June, July, September and November which may impact the amount of time you can allocate for this course of study. Please make sure you are working with your mentor as you plan your assessments and set AAV for the term.

Introduction

Welcome
You will find that the field of special education indeed one that is changing to meet the education and functional needs of today’s students with disabilities. You will find that as you gain information and answers you will also develop a sense of curiosity and want to know more. Do not hesitate to ask the course mentor questions or seek feedback on the development of your competencies in this area. The course mentor is knowledgeable and has expertise in the concepts you are learning and has practical experience in the K-12 field!

Overview
This course is the first of several courses of study in Special Education and it provides the foundation on which you will build the remainder of your special education career here at WGU. The field of Special Education covers 13 disability categories, ages 3-21 and all subjects taught in grades K-12 including social, behavioral, transition, organization and other specific skills not generally taught in general education classrooms. It is a unique field, one that is constantly changing depending on the individual needs of the students and the ever changing legal mandates. To reach that goal of serving in the role of a special education teacher, you will need to gain competency in the basic foundational principles of special education. These basic principles are the focus of this course of study and form the foundation for your studies in Special Education. It is imperative that you take the time and care necessary to gain competency in each area listed on the COS.

Upon completion of this course of study, you will understand the history of special education, why the field exists separate from general education, where it is going, and how special education fits with general education and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the No Child Left Behind Act. You will understand the concepts of free, appropriate public education (FAPE) and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). You will also begin to identify the characteristics of students with specific disabilities and how those disabilities impact student assessment and learning. You will develop confidence as you master these competencies and then begin your work with students with disabilities, gaining much satisfaction in your work. More importantly, you will need to learn how to integrate and apply this knowledge into your work with students with disabilities. The area of special education has many laws, regulations, and issues; the key to knowing all of these is to gain a fundamental understanding of each and acquire the knowledge of where to find information specific to each disability and related law.
Outcomes and Evaluation
The material covered in this course of study is extensive and is designed to prepare you to apply your knowledge as you work with students who have mild to moderate disabilities in a wide variety of possible situations, all with an emphasis on cross-categorical inclusion. Regardless of the emphasis, you will need to gain an understanding of the 13 disability categories and how the basic concepts and principals of special education impact delivery of special education services to students with special needs. This course of study will help you continue to prepare for your upcoming Praxis™ ™ exam while gaining confidence and developing essential teaching skills in both general education and special education settings.

WGU occasionally uses third parties to develop, administer and score some exams. For this, and all the Special Education exams, WGU uses the PRAXIS™ Series Exams from the Educational Testing Services Company, (ETS). These exams are scheduled, administered and scored by the ETS company. The ETS names and codes for each exam are different than the codes and names that appear on your Degree Plan. The Praxis™ © exam for Introduction to Special Education Law and Legal issues assessment is called: Education of Exceptional Students: Core Content Knowledge ETS code: (0353).

To help you understand more about the nature of the exam and the interrelationship between the course of study and the 0353 Education of Exceptional Students: Core Content Knowledge Praxis™ exam, please review the ETS Test at a Glance document.

The following represent the competencies you should be able to demonstrate after completing this course of study.

Competency: Characteristics of Individuals with Exceptional Learning Needs
The graduate applies historical and philosophical foundations of special education to present content and constructional development in the identification of characteristics of students who manifest a wide range of mild/moderate disabling conditions requiring special education services, along with associated issues such as etiology; assessment; legal and ethical issues; programming options; terminology, and inclusionary practices. [353 exam content area: Understanding Exceptionalities]

Competency: Special Education Law and Ethical Issues.
The graduate applies relevant state and federal laws, and legal and ethical considerations to situations involving the operation and management of special education programs in public and private schools, and issues pertinent to special education, such as the role of special education in general education, placement practices, and distinguishing procedural and substantive rights of children with disabling conditions, and can articulate recent decisions made in special education law as to the precedents set, and utilize the tools necessary to interpret the statutory and regulatory law pertaining to the various public laws. [353 exam content area: Legal and Societal Issues and Delivery of Services to Students with Disabilities]

Competency: Policies and Procedures
The graduate utilizes state statutes, policies and procedures, and the federal regulations of IDEA in professional and ethical practices, and applies theoretical constructs to special
education in tracing the ways in which students with disabilities are served from pre-referral through post secondary and community-based options including screening, transition and record maintenance. [353 exam content area: Understanding Exceptionalities and Delivery of Services to Students with Disabilities]

Teaching Dispositions Statement
Please review the Statement of Teaching Dispositions

Preparing for Success

To successfully complete this course of study, you need the appropriate resources to help with your learning. You should prepare a calendar to schedule times devoted to your studies. It is helpful for you to design your calendar with the exam date in mind so you make sure to allow yourself enough time to adequately study. This is especially important with the exams in Special Education as they are only offered at specific times during the year. Share your calendar with family and friends so they are aware of your obligations. Students who set time aside daily for their studies, utilize all the learning resources, and remain in contact with their mentors are most successful.

Obtain Learning Resources

Arrange to obtain the learning resources listed below so there will be no delays in your studies. These items are essential for you, as this document will guide you in the use of these materials. Some of these items must be shipped to you, so be sure that your mailing address information is current. If you click your name on your Degree Plan, you can check your contact information.

Gather Your Materials

Go to the learning resource tab associated with this course of study to gain access to the resources listed below. Click on "Show Section" for each resource, and on the next screen click "Enroll Now." You will receive e-mail instructions on how to access this resource.

- Pearson course e-books
- youwillTeach.com

Textbooks: The following textbooks are available via Pearson’s e-books. Please note that the required chapters in the following textbooks will be provided to you at no cost. If you wish to have the full textbooks, you may choose to purchase them.

Engage in Learning Tools

There are many different learning tools available to you within your course of study in addition to the learning resources discussed above. Some or all of them may be very useful to you as you progress through this course of study.

**Message Boards, Study Notes, FAQs**
Message boards, study notes, and FAQs are available in every course of study. Use the "Additional Learning Tools" document to review these tools.

**Other Preparations: Create a Glossary**

Special education has a specialized vocabulary and many acronyms. While they may seem daunting at the beginning of your studies, they will become very natural to use as you progress through your studies. To facilitate this internalization, you will expand on your own "glossary of terms" throughout your studies in the Special Education degree program. As you come across new terms or acronyms, through your readings or discussions with others, add the terms to your glossary of terms. This glossary will be a great reference tool in future readings and as a study tool (blank out the definition side and provide the definition from memory), and it could be used in the future to create a document for parents who are just coming into the world of special education. Make your definitions short but meaningful. Here is an example given to get you started:

- Accommodation
- Modification
- IEP
- IFSP
- ITP
- IDEA (IDEIA)
- ADA
- Section 504
- Curriculum Based Measures
- ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis)
- Universal design
- Assistive technology

**Ongoing Activity: Create a Special Education Manual**

As you are learning about special education, you should begin to work at applying the knowledge you are gaining. A great way to start is by creating "Parent Manual" a dynamic document outlining special education and the IEP process to share with parents of students. This "Parent Manual" can be used as an additional study guide and for possible inclusion in
Appendix section of your Demonstration or Field Experiences Teacher Work Sample (TWS).

As you continue to work through other assessments you will want to add sections to this manual to create a complete document. This is a great document to showcase your ability to articulate what you know to those non special education professionals (an important skill for all special educators!)

Suggested Table of Contents:

- Section 1 Overview and Legal History
- Section 2 FAPE (definition, providing FAPE and things to consider)
- Section 3 Child Find and Students with Disabilities
- Section 4 Roles and Responsibilities of Special Educators
- Section 5 Characteristics of Students with Disabilities
- Section 6 Special Education Process
- Section 7 LRE, IEP, and Service Delivery
- Section 8 Curriculum and Instruction
- Section 9 Behavior and Discipline
- Section 10 Procedural Safeguards and Working with Parents

**Overview of Special Education**

Having a working knowledge of the historical background on special education, understanding how key landmark cases impact the development of special education over time can begin to put this complex field into context. Historical and legal of the past have helped form the key principles of special education and what it is today. If we can understand where special education began, it will be much easier to see where it going. The historical view shapes and determines the future of special education. Additionally, gaining an understanding between the different federal laws that impact citizen with disabilities through the school and community helps create a holistic view of the responsibilities communities are charged with to ensure equal access for people with disabilities throughout their lifetime, regardless of setting. Federal laws that are considered "companion laws" to Individuals with Disability Education Act IDEA are the Section 504 of Vocation Rehabilitation Act from the 1970s and the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA from the 1990s. All of the above create an Introduction of Special Education and begins the foundation up which everything else builds.

**Historical Overview: Societal Issues, Historical Issues, Legal History and Landmark Court Cases**

The Individual with Disability Education Act began out of frustration that students with sensory, physical and mental disabilities had no federally protected right to attend public schools. While some forward thinking states and schools invited students with disabilities into the school, there was no federal law requiring this inclusion of students with disabilities into public schools. Often times, students with physical disabilities, mental and sensory (deaf, blind) would not be allowed to enroll in the public schools. Sometimes these students, who were capable of learning, were left at home, sent to institutions, or worked for family farms or businesses.

In this section you will read, participate in interactive learning modules and interact with the
message board. Additionally, you will be asked to begin creating a Special Education Manual which you can use as a study guide as you continue through the rest of your work in the Special Education Domain. You will be asked to add additional documents during your study. This manual may be included as an Appendix in the Teacher Work Sample or Portfolio you must complete at the end of your program.

History of Special Education

It is important for special educators to understand the legal history of special education, as this provides the background to help understand what and why special education practices are what they are today. Having this understanding will help when working with federal and state mandates.

Review chapters 1 and 2 in *Special Education Program Administrator's Handbook*. Pay close attention to the questions in bold and to the "Putting Theory into Practice" sections.

Development of Special Education: Historical Foundations

The history of special education in the United States began after World War II with the organization of parent advocacy groups. The American Association on Mental Deficiencies, 1947, was one of the first groups to organize. Following this organization were the United Cerebral Palsy Association, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, and John F. Kennedy's panel on Mental Retardation. During the 1960s there was an increase in access for students with disabilities. In 1975, Congress approved the "Education for All Handicapped Children Act" (Public Law 94-142). This law was passed to support the rights of and improve support for children with disabilities and became effective in 1977. This is the legislative foundation for federal funding of special education. This law required public schools to provide free appropriate public education (FAPE) for those students with disabilities such as physical handicaps, mental retardation, speech, vision and language disabilities. This law went through many changes and became the (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) IDEA in 1990. The latest update was in 2004.

You will explore the regulations that were released in this legislation, including the "Response to Intervention" (RTI) option for identification of students with Specific Learning Disabilities. Additionally, you will gain knowledge and skills regarding the following: characteristics of students with disabilities, legal issues, laws and legislation and the impact they have on delivery of special education services to students, the role of paraprofessionals, and how cultural issues may impact students and families. In exploring the cultural impact in special education, you will learn important information related to similarities and differences in how cultures view disabilities, cultural history, family values, childrearing practices and child development, and cultural courtesies cultural biases and institutional racism (how institutions and agencies support or discourage different cultures), including the over-representation of minorities in special education. You will also gain knowledge in how cultural diversity affects your work with children and adults with disabilities and their families.

Societal Issues

URL: [www.youwillteach.com](http://www.youwillteach.com)
Read through Course 1, Modules 1 and 2, in your UWillTeach Module 1: Special Education as an Evolving Discipline: Influences of the Past

This module places the history of special education in perspective, with emphasis on creating a historical context for studying contemporary issues and public policies specific to the education of children and youth with disabilities.

Pay close attention to the way society has viewed students with disabilities and special education. Also see how schools and communities have worked to integrate students with disabilities into the natural environments. Gain an understanding of "normalization" and the differences between "handicap", "disabled" and other terminology in this module.

**Legal History Landmark Court Cases**

Use Google Scholar as your search engine and research landmark cases that impacted special education.

The following legal cases were instrumental in the development of special education over time. Review them for a better understanding of how special education has evolved.

3. *Diana v. State Board of Education* (1970) Mexican American students assigned to Sp. Ed. in California based on IQ tests given in English standardized on a white, native-born American population. This required that evaluations compare students to their peers, requires non discriminatory evaluation.
4. *Mills v Board of Education* (1971) Students with variety of disabilities not all to attend Washington D.C. public schools due to non enrollment or expulsion. Required district to provide services in spite of cost, 14th amendment issue.
5. *PARC v. Commonwealth of PENNSYLVANIA* (1972) Students with MR. Required education for students with MR.
6. *Larry P. v. Riles* (1972, 1974, 1979, 1984) Similar to Diana, represents African American students disproportionately placed in special education. Required that no placement based on bias assessments were allowed. California retested retest all students in special education.
7. *Board of Education v. Rowley* (1984) LANDMARK CASE Student with deafness denied interpreter due to progress being made without the service. Decision clarified that appropriate does not mean optimal.
8. *The Independent School District v. Tatro* (1984) Student required clean intermittent catheterization to benefit from special education. This case determined that it was not a medical procedure in this situation and could therefore be required as Related Service.
compliance with regulations are serious.

Other Relevant Court Cases

- Abrahamson vs. Hershman 1983
- Smith vs. Robinson 1984
- Danny R. R. vs. State Board of Ed. 1989
- Zobrest v Catalina School District 1993
- Florence County School District vs. Carter 1993

Companion Laws: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities (ADA)

URL: [www.iriscenter.com](http://www.iriscenter.com)

URL: [www.idealindiana.com/mods.default.asp](http://www.idealindiana.com/mods.default.asp)

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 represent three attempts to improve the living conditions of those with disabilities. IDEA is an education act that provides federal financial assistance to state and local education agencies to guarantee special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities. Children ages 3-21 can be determined by an IEP team to be eligible for special education and related services.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination solely on the basis of disability in employment, public services, and accommodations.

Section 504 is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities (public and private) that receive federal financial assistance.

1. On the [www.iriscenter.com](http://www.iriscenter.com) website, read the Information Brief entitled: "Comparison of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA ’04) Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation (Section 504), The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Also known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 - NCLB ’01)"

2. Who is protected under these three acts? What are the evaluation and placement procedures for IDEA, ADA, and Section 504? What agencies enforce each of these laws.

**Key Principles in Special Education**

URL: [www.youwillteach.com](http://www.youwillteach.com)

Refer to Course 1, Modules 1.
Section 1 "Overview and Legal History" (including Key Principles and Legal History, Societal Issues, A Comparison of IDEA, Section 504 of Vocational Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA)

1. History of Special education: Begin by creating a document that outlines how special education developed from the early 1970s and then changed in 1990, was reauthorized in 1997 and then again in 2004. Provide a summary of the major principles or themes for 1974, 1990, 1997 and 2004.
2. List the key principles in special education.
3. Landmark Court Cases: Create a chart with 3 columns, NAME OF COURT CASE, PRINCIPLE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IMPACTED, SUMMARY OF IMPACT.
4. Companion Laws: Create a table that outlines the main differences between Section 504, IDEA, and ADA. Identify the differences in eligibility, services, funding and other aspects of each law. Think of examples that describe the application of each law.

Introduction to Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

During the 1960s there was an increase in access for students with disabilities. In 1975, Congress approved the "Education for All Handicapped Children Act" (Public Law 94-142). This law was passed to support the rights of and improve support for children with disabilities and became effective in 1977. This is the legislative foundation for federal funding of special education. This law required public schools to provide free appropriate public education (FAPE) for those students with disabilities such as physical handicaps, mental retardation, speech, vision, and language disabilities. This law went through many changes and became the (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) IDEA in 1990. The latest update was in 2004. You will read through definitions of FAPE, explanations of FAPE, and explore how this concept impacts all processes and procedures done in special education. You will identify considerations that must be made when determining FAPE for students, what types of controversies exist around FAPE, and why. You will look at how to meet FAPE through the use of special education processes and the IEPs.

Defining FAPE

URL: [http://www.nichcy.org/Pages/fape.aspx](http://www.nichcy.org/Pages/fape.aspx)
URL: [www.IDEAL_Indiana.com/mods/default.asp](http://www.IDEAL_Indiana.com/mods/default.asp)

According to [NICHCY](http://www.nichcy.org): "FAPE is the fundamental core of the IDEA and the IEP. The acronym stands for free appropriate public education.

Conceptually, FAPE is both the goal and the path to reaching the goal. FAPE is the entitlement of a child with a disability, as IDEA defines that term, and the individualized education program (IEP) that every student with a disability must have is the means by which this entitlement is mapped out. In terms of developing or building an IEP, the foundation is FAPE, and the apex is FAPE." ([www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org))

1. Review the FAPE document and discussion on NICHCY website. You should fully
understand FAPE in IDEA 2004 and how it has an impact on students with disabilities. Also review the information provided on the NICHCY Education Children 3-22 section, "All About the IEP" page.

2. Access the IDEAL INDIANA website and work through Module 9, "Individualized Educational Program" This will provide your first look at the IEP. This information will be used to help describe and define FAPE. Later this can be used in your manual under the chapter "IEP".

3. Discuss with a peer or colleague the history of the implementation of FAPE. How does the concept of FAPE impact schools and special educators when addressing the educational needs of students receiving special education services?

Parent Manual Section 2 "FAPE"

Section 2 "FAPE" (definition, providing FAPE and things to consider when determining FAPE).

Create a 1-2 page document that includes a definition of FAPE. Include a sample of the kinds of things special education teachers must keep in mind regarding FAPE:

- when students are referred for consideration for special education evaluation,
- during the IEP process, and
- When delivering special education to the students.

Child Find

Child Find is a mandated set of coordinated services that districts are required to provide. Districts are required to locate all students who may have a disability that results in the student being eligible for special education services. This mandate includes a coordinated set of services districts must use in order to locate all children, even infants and toddlers who may require special education. To do this, they must work with community agencies, community businesses, and even private schools. Additionally, Child Find requires that districts identify students who may need services and the refer the students for special education evaluation to determine if students are eligible for services.

Components of Child Find

IDEA requires states to develop a continuous process for locating, identifying and referring students with disabilities. This process must be comprehensive and geared towards students as early in life as possible. Students who receive special services under Part C, Early Intervention or Part B, 3-21 Special Education must meet eligibility criteria according to federal law.

While schools are considered the primary providers or "lead agency" for students ages 3-21, states may coordinate with others to provide services for Part C of IDEA Early Intervention Program. Regardless of what agencies are serving as lead, they must develop and implement a comprehensive system that includes, 1) a definition of the target population, 2) ways to increase public awareness of services that are available to children who may be eligible, 3) a system for referral and intake for evaluation, 4) screening of children, 5) eligibility determination guidelines, 6) tracking of students who are eligible, and 7) coordination between agencies or Interagency Coordination.

Locating and Identifying Students with Suspected Disabilities - Part C, Early Intervention
Part C, Early Intervention, of the federal law IDEA provides support for infants, toddlers and preschoolers from birth through age 2.

1. Read through the information on the NICHCY website, and make sure you read the overview and the section on parent participation. The process and document for early intervention is different than for school aged children, and it is important to understand the difference between an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP). The sections on writing a service plan should help clarify this for you, as will the transition to preschool section.

2. Reading the section on effective practices for Early Intervention will give you a good foundation of understanding what types of interventions are currently taking place in the field of early childhood education.

**Referring Students for Evaluation to Determine if Services Are Necessary - Part B: Preschool and School Age Students**

URL: [www.youwillteach.com](http://www.youwillteach.com)

Read Course 1 Module 2: Current Issues and Professional Practices: Still Evolving. This module covers the processes of identification of students with disabilities—from screening through referral, evaluation and placement—with attention to due-process requirements.

1. Review this previous completed module looking specifically at the Child Find activities and procedures.

2. Think about different ways schools can conduct screenings for referrals. Are there some places in your area where families of children with disabilities can be found? How can schools ensure that parents are comfortable and understand the purpose of Child find and the activities for referral?

**Parent Manual Section 3 "Child Find and Students with Disabilities"**

Section 3 "Child Find and Students with Disabilities" (special education processes, (locating students, identification, referral for special education services)

1. Create a document for parents explaining the purpose of Child Find and informing them of Child Find activities.

2. Explain early intervention services that may be available for students with disabilities, including the difference between and IEP and and IFSP.

3. Identify what and how you might conduct some Child Find activities.

**Roles and Responsibilities of Special Education Teachers**

Teaching special education is often much different than teaching general education. Special educators are responsible for managing the special education process for the students who are assigned to them through their school. Duties of the special educator can change depending on the setting in which they teach. Some special education teachers provide special education
service in the general education classroom, or inclusion setting. Others provide services in a Resource Room, or setting apart from the general education classroom, where students come from general education classrooms for a portion of the day. Others provide special education services in classroom where students are assigned all day, usually called a "self contained" classroom. Still others provide special education services in an itinerant fashion, meaning they travel from school to school (usually used in a rural or less populated setting). Regardless of setting, there are traditional duties that most special education teachers are responsible to conduct. Among these are management of documents/paperwork and processes.

### Supervising Paraprofessionals

Special educators work very closely with paraprofessionals in order to meet the needs of their students. Paraprofessionals provide support to allow full participation of students with disabilities. Special educators design the instruction delivered by paraprofessionals, supervise the implementation of this instruction, and evaluate the progress towards IEP goals. This work with paraprofessionals includes monitoring confidentiality, behavioral strategies, and planning for instruction on a regular basis. As you progress through the course of study you will be learning many things that you will need to clearly communicate to others. Practice explaining the special education process, characteristics of students with disabilities, and instructional strategies to others as a regular part of the study time.

### Roles and Responsibilities by Setting

Review the "Roles and Responsibilities of Special Educators by Setting" document, noting the differences in roles based on classroom setting.

**Collaboration and Teacher Roles**

**URL:** [http://www.iriscenter.com/resources.html](http://www.iriscenter.com/resources.html)

On the IRIS Center website, click on the Collaboration Resources and read through the following Information Briefs:

1. Collaboration Between General and Special Education: Making It Work Collaboration: A Must for Teachers in Inclusive Educational Settings
2. Improving Education: The Promise of Inclusive Schooling

As you read through these documents identify those areas of responsibilities that overlap between general education teachers and special education teachers. "Thinking like a special education teacher" will help you to visualize how these similarities and differences will manifest themselves in a classroom setting. Pay close attention to time and paperwork management issues that arise in your studies.

**Parent Manual Section 4 "Roles and Responsibilities of Special Educators"**

Section 3 "Roles and Responsibilities of Special Educators"

1. List characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of each setting listed above.
2. Prioritize the list of duties in the order that you believe to be most important to least
3. Discuss these with a seasoned special educator to compare your perception with the experience of a special educator.

Characteristics of Students with Disabilities

To be an effective special education instructor, you must understand students with disabilities and the types of learning problems that may arise when working with them. This is important, as special education teachers are often called upon to act as consultants to general education teachers and others who are working with students with special needs. A thorough understanding of mild disabilities enables you to become not only a highly qualified teacher but also one that parents and colleagues feel confident in approaching for help and information relating to disabilities.

By the end of these activities, you will be able to

- describe the characteristics of specific disabilities and three major types of disabling conditions,
- identify the legal and ethical issues associated with specific disabilities and program options,
- describe the etiology of different disabling conditions and discuss the programming implications of such disabilities, and
- speak knowledgeably about Asperger's Syndrome, ADHD, Specific Learning Disabilities, Tourette Syndrome, and both receptive and expressive language impairments.

Characteristics of Students: Cross Categorical

Students with disabilities exhibit individual qualities and unique characteristics dependent on their type of disability. As you interact with and speak about students with special needs, it is imperative to see them first as individuals and then as individuals with traits that cause disabilities. Using "people first language" helps with keeping the individual first and foremost in mind. For example, say "student receiving special education services" rather than "special education student" or "student with autism" not "autistic student". Your ability to see your students as unique individuals who happen to require special education services as a result of a disability, rather than a disabled student, will allow you to work more effectively with them in a variety of situations. As you practice using the skills and language that emphasized this, you will be recognized as a knowledgeable and respected educator to whom others will come for assistance with their own students.

As you study, consider the following questions:

- How does "people first language" influence how you and others view students with disabilities?
- Discuss how communication, social interactions and stereotyped behaviors may impact children who are diagnosed with or are suspected of having autism?
- What might a teacher expect to see or experience when teaching students who is diagnosed with emotional or social impairments? How might these characteristics impact assessment, instruction or curriculum used with these students?
● What characteristics might become evident in the classroom when working with a student with behavioral disorders? How might these influence the way adults or students interact with them?

Students with Specific Disabilities

URLs:

UWillTeach
http://www.youwillteach.com/

IRIS Center
http://www.iriscenter.com

Understanding different disabilities is essential to special education, because the federal IDEA outlines 13 different eligibility categories; these are broad categories that encompass many different disabilities. Learning about how these disabilities impact students at home, school and in society will assist you in determining what special education services may be necessary to consider.

1. Access UWillTeach course 2 ("Characteristics of Students with Disabilities"). Complete modules 1 and 2.
2. Review chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 in Characteristics of and Strategies for Teaching Students with Mild Disabilities.
3. On the IRIS Center website, find the INFORMATION BRIEFS on specific disabilities. Choose several to review, playing close attention to the following documents: Aspergers Syndrome, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Speech and Language Impairments, Communication Disorders, Emotional Disturbance, Learning Disabilities, Mental Retardation, and What is an Emotional or Behavioral Disorder.
4. Use a graphic organizer to help you understand common causes of mild disabilities. Identify similarities and differences between specific learning disabilities and developmental disabilities.
5. Take notes as you read these selections. Be sure to define any vocabulary and clarify any confusing topics in your notebook with help from the Message board.

In-depth Review of Students in Special Education

URLs:

UWillTeach
http://www.youwillteach.com/

IRIS Center
http://www.iriscenter.org

IDEALIndiana
http://www.idealindiana.com
Read Chapters 1,3,4,5,6,7,8 and 9 in the ebook *Intellectual Disabilities Across the Lifespan.* Pay close attention to definitions, child development and influences and impact of the disability across ages.

Work through Modules 32 ("Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders") and 64 ("Identifying High Ability (Gifted) Students") on the IDEALIndiana website. These outline autism spectrum disorder and giftedness.

Access UWillTeach course 2 and review modules 1 and 2.

- Module 1: This module covers definitions, classification, etiology and learning, and behavioral characteristics of learners with disabilities that are referred to in IDEA as "high incidence disability groups." These groups include learners with learning disabilities, emotional behavioral disabilities, intellectual disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD), and communication disorders. The emphasis of the module is to introduce beginning teachers to students with disabilities who can be placed in general education classrooms.

- Module 2: The purpose of this module is to introduce beginning teachers to issues concerning students who are referred to in IDEA as "low incidence disability groups." They include learners with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), hearing impairments, visual impairments, physical disabilities, and multiple disabilities. The emphasis of this module is to introduce beginning teachers to students with disabilities who may be placed in general education classrooms; however, due to their lower incidence, the teachers may not always have instructional responsibilities for students with these disabilities.

Work through modules 1 and 2 and read through the outline and notes. Watch the video that accompanies this course. You will want to work on the activities, answer the directed questions, and check your answers for course 2. When you are done, take the assessment to see how well you understand the information. Please do not submit your answers to the website or to your course mentor. You may review the answers you submitted and see a possible answer provided by UWillTeach to check your understanding. Some students find it helpful to send their answers to a peer learning partner. Pay close attention to definitions, causes, prevalence and outcomes for each disability.

On the IRIS Center website, review the INFORMATION BRIEFS on different disabilities from the [www.iriscenter.com](http://www.iriscenter.com) website that you read earlier.

Content Areas / Disabilities

1. Are there "typical" students with disabilities? Why or why not?
2. What types of reading problems you might see in students with a learning disability in reading?
3. What areas in math might be challenging for students with a learning disability in math?
4. How might information processing impact math skills?
5. What are examples of challenges in writing skills that students with disabilities might experience?
Mental Retardation

1. How are students with Mental Retardation assessed?
2. What role does adaptive behavior play with determining eligibility under the IDEA category, MR?
3. What controversies surround this eligibility category? Why?
4. What are some specific reasons students with mental retardation might not be successful in an inclusion setting?

Behavior Disorders

1. How are students with behavioral disorders assessed? Why is the assessment of behavioral disorders problematic?
2. List seven behaviors that may be of concern to teachers that may indicate a behavioral disorder? Describe how these might progress over time?
3. What are some of the characteristics of anxiety disorder? Can these characteristics be considered when determining eligibility for special education under the category BD or SED?
4. What eligibility criteria must be met in order for students to be eligible for special education under IDEA category, SED?

ADHD

1. In what category do most students with ADHD receive special education services?
2. How do the symptoms of ADHD manifest themselves as students' age? What signs of ADHD might a teacher in an elementary classroom notice? A teacher in middle school? A high school teacher?
3. What difficulties might a student with ADHD experience in a classroom? How might their experience be different in a one-on-one situation?

Autism

1. What three areas do students with autism generally have difficulties?
2. How might these be evident in the classroom?
3. What types of difficulties could a general education teacher experience in working with students with autism?
4. How could special education benefit a student with autism?

Giftedness

1. Define giftedness.
2. What areas do we look in addition to achievement to help make the determination of giftedness?
3. Are schools mandated to provide services to students who are gifted?
4. Are there strategies we should focus on when working with students who are gifted?
Chapter 5 "Characteristics of Students with Disabilities"

1. List all IDEA eligibility categories and specific information related to eligibility criteria for each category.
2. Construct a table that outlines and describes different disabilities and include the four main IDEA eligibility categories of disabilities: Mental Retardation (MR), Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED), and Specific Learning Disability (SLD) and Autism.
3. Choose four mild disabilities and prepare a document outlining characteristics of each disability including strengths, weaknesses, what teachers might see in the classroom, things to consider when designing instruction and assessment, home/family or other issues that may arise with each disability.

Special Education Process: Eligibility and Evaluation

You have read through the information about special education, such as characteristics of students with different disabilities and a basic background of how far special education has come from its early days to the more advanced techniques and resources employed currently. There is a lot to learn here, so be prepared to take notes, create diagrams and timelines, and ask questions. You may find that, while things are starting to fall into place, you may have more questions based on the new material you have learned. Engage with other students on the message board often to discuss those questions. This is a great resource where you can interact and swap ideas with other students going through this course of study who may have a different and helpful understanding of the material. By the end of these activities, you will be able to

- describe the process of the nondiscriminatory evaluation as it relates to the identification of students with exceptional learning needs,
- explain how the nondiscriminatory evaluation process is related to the over-representation of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in special education,
- explain the IEP process and document, including special considerations for LRE,
- identify the procedural due-process rights guaranteed to parents and guardians of students with disabilities by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and
- outline the process of a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and a behavioral improvement plan that comes out of the FBA.

Special Education Eligibility Process

Learning about and understanding the special education referral and evaluation process is essential to becoming a special education teacher. Evaluation determines eligibility for special education services, provides the foundation for the IEP, and helps identify instructional, curriculum, and assessment strategies for students. In order to fully understand the evaluation process, you will need to understand the roles of the student study team SST (labeled differently for different schools, but serves important purpose), school psychologist, regular education teacher, and special education teacher, related services providers, and state and district personnel.

Disproportional and Overrepresentation of Minorities in Special Education
URLs:

**IRIS Center**  
http://www.iriscenter.org

**IDEALIndiana**  
http://www.idealindiana.com

**NICHCY**  
http://www.nichcy.org/Laws/IDEA/Pages/module5.aspx

In the book *Intellectual Disabilities Across the Lifespan*, read chapter 2 including the vignettes. The "Tips for Professionals" section and the figures with graphs will extend your understanding and help your comprehension of the text.

1. Pay close attention to and take notes you read these selections. Be sure to define any vocabulary and clarify any confusing topics in your notebook with help from the message board.
2. Review Table 2-1 ("Process Checklist for Serving Children from Diverse Backgrounds"). It is a great tool for ensuring that you are addressing diversity issues.
3. Consider your own experiences serving students with diverse backgrounds. Review the list and highlight issues you may have missed or other issues you can add.
4. Approach minority students in person, in virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life), or in online chat rooms to explain the topic and to seek specific examples of diversity awareness or lack therefore. Ask for their ideas of how you as a teacher should address diversity in your classroom. Approach as many students as you would like until you get an answer that you feel is so significant that you feel committed to implement it. Also share your implementation plans if you already know them or ask your co-learners for suggestions.

On the website for the Iris Center, read the Information Brief entitled "Disproportionate Representation of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students in Special Education: Measuring the Problem."

On the IDEALIndiana website, review the material in module 65: "Addressing Minority Disproportionality of Special Education: What We Know and What We Can Do."

On the NICHCY website, work through Module 5, Disproportionality and Overrepresentation

1. Define Disproportionality.
2. Identify the difference between overrepresentation and underrepresentation.
3. Explain the implications of Disproportionality
4. Identify possible causes and solutions

**IDEA and General Education | IDEA**

**URL:**  
http://www.nichcy.org/Laws/IDEA/Pages/BuildingTheLegacy.aspx
General education and special education are intimately interrelated, however they are very different on several fronts. First of all, see how IDEA aligns with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and explore topics on general education and children with disabilities. Visit the NICHCY website and review the following modules:

- Module 6: Early Intervening Services and Response to Intervention
- Module 7: Highly Qualified Teachers
- Module 8: NIMAS

**Evaluation and Eligibility Procedures**

URL: [http://www.nichcy.org/Laws/IDEA/Pages/BuildingTheLegacy.aspx](http://www.nichcy.org/Laws/IDEA/Pages/BuildingTheLegacy.aspx)

When children have difficulty progressing in the general education environment and appear to struggle, the possibility exists that they may have a disability. The 3 modules on the NICHCY website review the evaluation process mandated by IDEA. This evaluation process is intended to determine if, indeed, there is a disability affecting a child's school progress and, if so, whether the child needs special education and related services. Visit the NICHCY website and review the following modules:

1. Module 1: Top 10 Basics of Special Education
2. Module 9: Introduction to Evaluation
3. Module 10: Initial Evaluation and Reevaluation

Read chapters 1 ("Understanding the Law") and Chapter 5 ("Dealing Effectively With Child Find") in *Special Education Program Administrator's Handbook*. In chapter 5, look at "Changes in Child Find Activities Through the IDEA 2004" and pay close attention to the requirement for consultation. Also in chapter 5, look at "Putting Principles into Practice" and "Reasons for Maintaining Awareness Strategies Over Time"; look closely at the section on proper identification of students. This relates to the over-representation addressed earlier.

Thinking like a special educator, take note of problems that may arise during these process. How can they be avoided?

- Reflect on the above readings. Be sure to define any vocabulary, clarify any confusing topics, and answer all the listed questions in your notebook with help from the message board. To guide your reflection read through the following topics with related questions.

**School District Responsibilities**

1. What are the responsibilities of the school district for screening children who live in the district but who are not currently students?
2. What information do districts need to keep on file for Child Find records?
3. When must districts obtain parent consent and what specifically must they obtain parent consent for?
4. What agencies currently work with students in your area?

School Responsibilities

1. What is a local education agency (LEA) contact?
2. Who can make a request for initial evaluation?
3. What notices must parents receive, and when must they receive them?
4. Who determines eligibility for special education services?
5. What is eligibility for special education services based on?
6. How does reevaluation differ from initial evaluation?

Special Education Processes from Evaluation to IEP

URLs: [http://www.youwillteach.com/](http://www.youwillteach.com/)

Access your UWillTeach courses. You have already worked through these modules, it time to go back and review them for specific information related to the special education processes. Review the topics in modules 1 and 2 of course 1 ("Foundations of Special Education"). Lessons 1 and 2 in module 2 cover the processes of identification from screening through referral, evaluation, and placement, with attention being given to due-process requirements. This module is of particular importance to beginning teachers, as the role of teachers is central to the identification and program-implementation processes. Emphasis is placed on the information that teachers are required to share as public policies are implemented.

1. Review lesson 1 ("Identification of Individuals with Exceptional Learning Needs as a Basis for Receiving Services"). Reflect on how this process actually works in the classroom. Determine for yourself any areas that you are unclear or have questions.
2. Go to the COS message board and review the Frequently Asked Questions as this may help put things into perspective for you. Contact the course mentor if you continue to have questions.
3. Review lesson 2 ("Implications of Due Process Requirements for Program Implementation").

After working through the above learning resources, Ask yourself the following questions to ensure that you have a good understanding of the evaluation process.

- What does a nondiscriminatory evaluation process actually look like for students in the classroom?
- What is the purpose of a nondiscriminatory evaluation, and why is it necessary to ensure that students receive a nondiscriminatory evaluation?
- What is the referring teacher's role in the nondiscriminatory evaluation process? What information can a referring teacher provide to assist in this process?

**Parent Manual Section 6 "Special Education Process"

Chapter 6 "Special Education Process" (including the purpose of evaluation- eligibility categories, consent, evaluation and eligibility procedures, and reevaluation)
Create a graphic organizer to outline the different types of evaluation and explain why evaluation is such a necessary and significant part of instruction.

**Least Restrictive Environment**

In order to meet the legal requirements for Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), after determining that a student is eligible for special education services through the use of an evaluation, the team must determine what services are needed and where (this is called placement) they will be provided. This is determined during the IEP meeting. The parents must be part of this decision.

According to IDEA the student in entitled to be educated with non disabled peers to the "maximum opportunity appropriate". This LRE decision must include academic, nonacademic, and extracurricular activities. This part of IDEA is called *Least Restrictive Environment* or LRE. IDEA's LRE provisions are primarily found at §§300.114 through 300.117.

In the law governing special education, IDEA, the Least Restrictive Environment is explained as:"...To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities . . . are educated with children who are nondisabled; and . . . special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily." [§300.114(a)(2)(i)]

IDEA goes further to clarify the team making the LRE placement decision must include the parents and others who are knowledgeable about the child, understands the meaning of the evaluation data and knows the placement options available.

**Determining Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

There are many things that must be considered when determining the least restrictive environment. Among these are services needed, impact of placement on student and others, supports that may be necessary to ensure benefit, and participation in assessments. FAPE and LRE form the backbone of special education, and it is vital that these decisions are made in a thoughtful manner.

**Considerations for LRE Determination**


On the NICHCY website, work through Module 15. Pay close attention the considerations in determining LRE, types of supports needed to enable students to benefit from special education and general education, including special education services, related services, supplementary aids and services and program modifications and supports for school personnel. Accommodations, modifications, and participation in district and state wide testing are also LRE placement decisions. These are fundamental concepts in the special education process, as well as IEP document components.

**Teaching Students in an Inclusive Classroom**

Inclusion is a movement designed to bring special education services into the general education classroom. In IDEA, Section 504, and the ADA, it is outlined that students with disabilities must
be educated in regular education settings to the maximum extent appropriate to their disabilities, and these laws prohibit the exclusion of students with disabilities unless education in that environment cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

This is background information that is important as you compare regular education, special education, and inclusion classrooms:

- Compare mainstreaming and inclusion.
- How are NCLB and inclusion linked?
- What is the difference between remediation and accommodation?
- What is the difference between collaboration and cooperation?
- Describe the difference between student-centered and teacher-centered instruction.

**Practice**

- Consider a student you may know or have read about in the any of the vignettes in Characteristics of and Strategies for Teaching Students With Mild Disabilities and discuss with a peer which educational placement would be most appropriate and why. Reviewing the continuum of placements will be advantageous to your discussion.

**Visiting an Inclusion Classroom**

Visit an inclusion classroom if you are not currently teaching in one. Interview the teacher about working in an inclusive setting; discuss planning in this type of classroom. How did this teacher prepare students to become part of the inclusion classroom? Inquire about what the teacher feels an effective inclusion program looks like. The following are additional items that may be included in the interview:

1. Benefits that inclusion has for students with or without disabilities
2. The most effective ratio of special education to general education students
3. The types of preparation schools need to create an effective inclusion program
4. Can a school or district be "full inclusion" and still comply with the law?
5. Major components necessary for successful planning for an inclusion classroom
6. The benefits as well as the disadvantages of working in an inclusion classroom
7. When you are finished with the interview, diagram how the classroom is laid out and identify what you perceive as items that affect the routine of the students with disabilities.
8. Create a graphic organizer to represent at least 3 different collaborative models. Become familiar with each of these models.

**Reflections**

Reflect on these concepts and answer the following questions.

1. What makes an inclusive classroom successful?
2. What is the general education teacher’s role in an inclusive classroom? The special educator’s role?
3. Is assessment different in an inclusive classroom?
Planning for Inclusion

URL: http://www.idealindiana.com/mods/default.asp

Read chapters 6 and 7 in *Characteristics of and Strategies for Teaching Students with Mild Disabilities*. In chapter 6, look closely at the reflection questions and the section entitled "Speed Bumps" Review

1. Box 6.1 ("Special Child-Ode to My Teacher"). The figures and tables in this chapter provide a great deal of information; review these and pay close attention to the definitions provided.
2. Add vocabulary that is new or you wish to keep a definition of to your glossary.

Access the IDEAL Indiana website, access Module 55: "Meeting Individual Student Needs I: Meaningful Participation in the General Classroom," and work through this module. Use information in this module to learn how and why students with disabilities should have access to a standards based education and a rigorous curriculum, high quality instruction and appropriate accommodations.

- If you are currently working in a school, use the activities in this module to assess your schools' preparedness for inclusion and collaboration. If you are not in a school at this time, review the information on assessing schools and identify the foundational beliefs and assumptions about students with disabilities that impact the successful implementation of inclusion.

**Parent Manual Section 7 "LRE, IEP, and Service Delivery"

Section 7 "LRE, IEP, and Service Delivery"

Define LRE and identify continuum of placement options. List things the IEP team must consider when determining LRE for individual students, including the need for assistive technology.

**Individual Education Programs**

Tremendous changes have occurred over the past decade in the provision of services to students with disabilities. Federal mandates define requirements for free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. You know the eligibility criteria for special education characteristics of students with different disabilities, and have a basic background of the historical foundations of special education. You may find that, while things are starting to fall into place as you practice applying these to specific situations. Creating the Special Education Manual will help you generalize the concepts. You may have lots of questions for the message board or for the course mentor. Please make sure to use all the resources you have available to ensure that you have the competencies you need.

**Special Education IEP Process**

When the referral process evaluation leads to the conclusion that the student needs to receive special needs resources, the development of an IEP will take place. Beginning with evaluation
the team then moves to develop an IEP and determines placement for services, after the IEP document is developed, services begin as does progress monitoring which will lead to more evaluation data to develop the next IEP. This cyclical process is called the IEP process. Special educators must understand the IEP is both a process and a document. The IEP document determines what services will be provided, where the services will be provided and how those services will be measured and then reported to parents.

**IEP Document: Contents of IEP**

**URLs:**

NICHCY  
[http://www.nichcy.org/EducateChildren/IEP/Pages/IEPcontents.aspx](http://www.nichcy.org/EducateChildren/IEP/Pages/IEPcontents.aspx)

IDEALIndiana  
[http://www.idealindiana.com](http://www.idealindiana.com)

The IEP contains many required components. Present levels of performance (both academic and functional) annual goals and objectives, special education services, related services, supplementary aides and services, program modification, transition, transfer of rights at age 18, etc. are additional areas of concern that must be addressed on some IEPs, this additional content includes, supplementary aides and services, transition, accommodation in assessment and others.

Access the NICHCY website and review the information provided on the links on the IEP Contents page. Try to visualize students who may need these services and what planning might need to be done prior to the IEP meeting to meet these considerations.

Work through Module 9: "Individualized Education Program" on the IDEALIndiana website. Pay close attention to the required components, particularly present levels of performance and goals. Add a page to your Special Education Manual listing all contents of the IEP.

**Special Education Manual Documents**

To help you understand the flow of the process and the IEP document itself, make a companion handout to the evaluation document that explains the IEP process in detail. In your handout, do the following:

- Identify deadlines mandated by IDEA, required components and additional considerations that must be made.
- Provide some suggestions to make the parents feel they are part of this process and less uncomfortable with the group they may perceive as passing judgment on them, since their child has learning problems.
- Create a list of the people who must be members of the IEP team and discuss why it is so important to have the student's parents as members of this team. Identify what must occur for members to be excused from the meetings.

1. What is the goal of the IEP conference, and what are some expected outcomes from the
Curriculum, Instruction and Meeting Student Needs

During the development of an IEP, required services are identified. The types of services a student receives depends on the evaluation data, thus services that are provided may vary from student to student. Special educators need to identify the best instructional and curricular materials for each student as well as when and why those services must be delivered.

Adaptations: Accommodations, Modifications, and Specially Designed Instruction

The term adaptations is used to describe changes made to the regular education curriculum, environment or assessments. These can be implemented to allow students to access the curriculum or to show what they know without changing the learning objective (accommodations), change the learning objective (modifications) or significantly change instruction, materials and objectives (specially designed instruction). One of the terms used to describe special education is the third type of adaptation, specially designed instruction or SDI. Understanding how these adaptations are used to create an individualized education is tricky. The key is knowing what the other students are expected to do and then to develop the least restrictive or least invasive intervention to help the student access and progress in the general education curriculum.

Determining Adaptations: Specially Designed Instruction, Related Services, Supplementary Aides and Services, Accommodations and Modifications

URL: http://www.idealindiana.com

Review Module 9 on the IDEALIndiana website. Pay close attention to the required components, particularly special education services, related services, supplementary aides and services, accommodations/modifications. Identify when each service is necessary.

Special Education Manual Section 8 "Curriculum and Instruction"

Section 8 "Curriculum and Instruction"

1. Define the terms used for adaptations.
2. Write sample present levels of performance for a student in reading, math and behavior.
3. Identify instructional strategies and adaptations you would use to meet that goal.
4. Explain how you would determine what a student needs.
Classroom Management

Methods can be developed for defining, observing, and measuring behaviors, as well as for designing effective interventions. Although there are certain limits to functioning, such as temperamental or emotional influences related to ADHD or depression, all children function more effectively under the right set of rules, procedures, and consistent consequences. Managing and enforcing these consequences plays a major role in the education of all students, not just students receiving special education services.

Behavioral Management Principles

Managing behavior is mainly about managing our own behavior, meaning that we must develop rules, rituals, and procedures that assist in creating an environment that supports students. We must also be clear in our own minds about what we expect and where we will "draw the lines". Managing ourselves means being consistent, following through, and maintaining a professional attitude in spite of all that is going on around us.

As you have learned in previous classroom management courses/assessments, rules and procedure are vital. As you study, visualize and anticipate what will happen in your classroom.

Behavior Management Principles

URLs:

NICHCY
http://www.nichcy.org/Pages/behavassess.aspx

IRIS Center
http://www.iriscenter.com

Access the Iris Center website and work through the first two Behavior and Classroom Management modules, "Who's in Charge? Developing a Comprehensive Behavior Management System" and "You're in Charge! Developing Your Own Comprehensive Behavior Management Plan." These modules should be done in order because they are designed to be part of a process. While working through these modules, you will be asked to create rules and procedures of your own.

The third module, "SOS: Helping Students Become Independent Learners," describes four strategies teachers can use to help students learn to regulate their behavior. This will help them stay on task and focused in the classroom. The four strategies outlined in this module are self-monitoring, self-instruction, goal-setting, and self-reinforcement.

Read Chapter 9 in Characteristics of and Strategies for Teaching Students with Mild Disabilities. "Classroom Management" Paying close attention to instructional strategies and behavioral management strategies that will assist in managing students with the specific disabilities.

1. Give an example for each of the following:
   a. How a teacher can manage behavior the use of good rules and procedures?
b. How teacher reaction to behavior, good or bad, plays a role in the management of a classroom
2. Outline how the special education evaluation would inform the teachers’ future instruction in behavior.
3. Choose one of your examples and post it to the message board.
4. Developing the ability to handle different types of behavior within the classroom will enhance your abilities to teach and deepen your experience with different types of classroom management. If time is spent on correcting behavior, instruction time is lost.

Positive Behavior Supports

URL: [http://www.nichcy.org/Pages/behavassess.aspx](http://www.nichcy.org/Pages/behavassess.aspx)

Access the NICHCY website and read through the Behavior Assessment, Plans, and Positive Supports page. There are several pages to this section and you will want to review each one in order to gain a fundamental understanding of behavioral assessments, plans, and Positive Behavior Supports. The sections on this page are entitled: "Behavior as Communication", "Behavioral Assessment", "Behavior Intervention Plans", "Positive Behavior Support", and "Yet More Resources".

Special Education Manual Section 9 "Behavior and Discipline"

Section 9 "Behavior and Discipline"

1. Consider a student you currently have or one from your readings for use in the development of behavior information for the classroom. Identify what the student may be trying to communicate through their behavior, how you asses this, and then develop a plan for how you apply the principles of positive behavior supports for that student. As you develop this plan, consider all behaviors, including externalizing and internalizing behaviors.
2. Create a table with verbal and nonverbal interventions -- add as many as you can think of to this table.
3. For your Special Education Manual develop a document that provides the key principles in behavior modification. Define contingency contracts, token economy, time out, functional behavioral assessment, positive and negative reinforcement and behavioral regulation. Conclude this document with a short summary of the pitfalls of behavior modification.

IDEA Student Discipline

Discipline for students with disabilities can be tricky. The law is clear and contains provisions that protect students with disability from unjust disciplinary actions due to their disability and loss of special education services. Schools must balance the need for discipline with the special needs a student may have because of their disability. Having a thorough understanding of the regulations and practices in special education and how they related to discipline can avoid costly litigation, hard feelings and loss of services to students.

General Guidelines

Things schools must consider when disciplining students with disabilities include: eligibility for
the protections, type of offense committed, disciplinary actions previously implemented, the need for a manifestation determination, and whether or not service continuation is required. As you study, watch for definitions and explanations of the above considerations.

**IDEA Discipline Guidelines**

**URLs:**

**NICHCY**  

**IDEALIndiana**  
www.IDEAL_Indiana.com/mods/default.asp

Special educators must understand how IDEA views discipline of students with disabilities. AT issue is how disciplinary actions can impact special education placement and service delivery decisions.

Access the NICHCY website and review page Applying Discipline Rules to Students with Disabilities. Read through the first two links; Placement and School Discipline and Discipline, in Detail. and then look over the third link, the actual wording the IDEA law. Pay close attention to the special situations, the definitions of serious bodily injury and interim alternative placement.

**Special Education Manual Section 9 "Behavior and Discipline" (cont.)**

Create a flowchart for the steps outlined in IDEA for discipline.

Describe the scope of the hearing officer duties as they relate to discipline.

1. Outline in your study notes what must occur during a short-term suspension.
2. Describe an interim alternative educational setting.
3. What constitutes a change of placement?
4. What is a manifestation determination and when must it be completed?

**Due Process, Mediation Dispute Resolution, and Parental Rights and Partnerships**

IDEA provides an extensive set of procedural safeguards to make sure students with disabilities are being identified, evaluated, and served properly. These safeguards outline explicit rights. Schools are required to develop IEPs for all students with disabilities, and parents must be given an opportunity to participate in the development of that IEP. Compliance with procedures in special education is especially important because the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that noncompliance with IDEA procedures can result in an educational program that does not meet the free and appropriate public education (FAPE) requirements of the law. In this section, you will learn what triggers due process, what the procedural safeguards are, and when parents must be informed of their rights. Additionally, you will learn some ways to avoid due-process
issues, how to handle mediation, and how to meet both legal and ethical obligations of the IEP process.

By the end of these activities, you will be able to

- identify the emotional stages a family may experience when given a diagnosis of intellectual disability
- understand that the adjustment process is not linear and that each stage is revisited
- describe effective ways to provide information to parents regarding the disability
- identify community supports within your community and nationwide
- identify ways for schools to connect with parents
- identify future directions for this field
- identify the procedural safeguards
- describe ways to protect the IEP process
- describe areas in the evaluation process that are prone to errors
- identify key points when parental notice must be made
- reflect on and describe in your journal any new terms.

**Procedural Safeguards and Working with Parents**

Avoiding compliance issues is extremely important. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that an educational program is not appropriate if procedural errors have been made. This means that procedural errors may mean no FAPE has been provided that involves parents in their student's classroom in one area. Schools, districts, and states participate in a process known as "focused monitoring" which provides information for enforcement of IDEA. State and federal monitoring occurs on a regular basis, comparing performance against a set of indicators of performance. Teachers and parents need to be actively involved with and knowledgeable about this state and federal monitoring and enforcement of IDEA. Due to this monitoring for example, we know that especially in minority families, meeting notifications to parents are often received too late for parents to be involved in meetings, IEP and evaluation data are not always aligned, and service delivery to students with disabilities needs improve overall. Special education regulations require that parents be allowed the opportunity to be active participants in the process and have a right, in fact a responsibility, to provide or to deny consent for special education services.

Parents have a right to know what is happening with their child in today's classrooms. Including parents in all evaluation, eligibility, and placement decisions for special needs students is not only required by law, it brings about a positive relationship with parents. Think about these questions:

- What are the rights of parents in the IDEA?
- How would a teacher bring about compliance to this act within the classroom?
- As an educator, do you agree or disagree with the IDEA. Explain why, especially in the area of parental rights.

**Procedural Safeguards- Understanding Due Process**

**URLs:** [http://www.nichcy.org/laws/idea/pages/subparte.aspx](http://www.nichcy.org/laws/idea/pages/subparte.aspx)
Access the NICHCY website and work through modules 17, 18, and 19 on the Theme E: Procedural Safeguards. Review the information related to prior written notice, informed written consent, access to records, just a few of the critical safeguards in IDEA for families and schools. Also do an internet search for the special education due process in the state in which you live. As you research keep in mind how this impacts your work with special education students.

**Procedural Safeguards and Due Process- Protecting Student and Parent Rights**

Read chapter 3 ("Preparing for Due Process Hearing and Mediation") in *Special Education Program Administrator's Handbook*. Pay close attention to the “Putting Principles into Action” section. The "Tips for Avoiding Due Process Hearings" section is essential, as is the "Tips for Protecting the IEP Process" section.

The following questions, concepts, and ideas will guide your reading of the information about due process. Be sure to define any vocabulary and clarify any confusing topics in your journal or note section with help from the message board.

1. List and describe procedural safeguards.
2. Create a table with tips for avoiding due process hearings.
3. Describe ways to protect the IEP team process.
4. Discuss why the authors have two interventions for "when all else fails."
5. List and describe the top 10 ways to guarantee a due process hearing.
6. Define the following terms and provide an explanation of each:
   a. Informed Consent -- when is informed consent required?
   b. Written Notice -- when must parents receive written notice?
   c. Confidentiality -- what laws govern confidentiality in special education?
   d. Independent Educational Evaluations - IEE -- what is it and how do they impact special education services?

**Building Family Partnerships**

The parent-professional partnership is critical in meeting the needs of a child with a disability. When schools and families work together to support learning, everyone benefits, including in the following ways:

- Students do better in school and in life
- Parents become empowered
- Teacher morale improves
- Schools get better
- Communities grow stronger

Developing strategies to use when involving parents will be beneficial to the student. Strategies include having a conversation rather than an interview with parents, sharing power by letting the family do the talking, focusing on family member's; strengths, asking open-ended questions, and encouraging expression of different viewpoints. Be aware of the impact that culture has on the student and student activities. Create a guide for teachers on creating positive relationships with parents. Use information you find in the next two sections, "Understanding Families" and
"Welcoming Families." Include the following in your guide: good first steps in establishing a relationship with parents needs of the parents of special needs students outline of the strategies that would be beneficial to parental involvement in a classroom or with the educational system their child is in

**Understanding Families**

Read chapter 12 in *Intellectual Disabilities Across the Lifespan*. Look closely at the core concepts. "Tips for Professionals" contains tips for sharing information with parents.

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas as you read chapter 12. Be sure to define any vocabulary, clarify any confusing topics, and answer all of the listed questions in your journal or note section with help from the message board.

- Post your thoughts on working with parents to help them understand due process on the "due process" discussion thread.
- Describe the process parents may go through when learning a student has a disability, from awareness to acceptance.
- Reflect upon a family you know with a child with a disability. Try to understand what they may be experiencing.
- How could you as a professional support this family, and how is that different from how you would support a family if you were a personal rather than a professional connection?
- List the tips for providing information to parents.
- Compare and contrast two ways families may try to seek causes for their child's disability.

**Welcoming Families**

Read chapter 11 in *Characteristics of and Strategies for Teaching Students with Mild Disabilities*. While you are reading, pay close attention to the reflection questions and the speed bumps. The figures and tables in this chapter provide a great deal of information; review these and focus on the definitions provided.

Pay close attention to and take notes on the following questions, concepts, and ideas as you read these selections. Be sure to define any vocabulary and clarify any confusing topics in your journal or note section with help from the message board.

- Describe barriers to school and family communications and the ways schools can work to overcome them.
- Create a table of different tools that schools can use to communicate with parents of students with disabilities.
- List reasons why parents might be reluctant or unable to work with schools.
- Make a chart outlining the emotional impact that having a child with a disability may have on a family with more than two children, then with a single parent, then with extended family obligations.
- Make a flowchart of due-process rights for parents in the evaluation stage of special education.
Reflect on your own response to having to make a home visit. How might you feel if teachers visited your home regularly?

Special Education Manual Section 10 "Procedural Safeguards and Working with Parents"

Section 10 "Procedural Safeguards and Working with Parents"

1. Make a list outlining the steps in the process when procedural safeguards must be given to parents.
2. Summarize the safeguards in a family friendly manner.
3. List a sample of places in your state where parents could go to get help for different issues related to special education.

Final Review

In your studies, you have learned foundational concepts that will help you throughout your WGU coursework and in the workplace. Congratulations on this accomplishment! As you complete these last remaining activities, please think about the different ways this information can be applied to your personal and professional life. Special education teachers' work takes them to myriad settings. You are preparing yourself to be the best special education teacher possible, not just to pass an exam. Remember, you are taking the first of many steps towards becoming a special educator.

Review of Major Points

Introduction to Special Education Law and Legal Issues, covers the most important concepts you need to understand in order to be an effective special education teacher. First you learned the history of special education including a legal and historical view which provided you a good look at where special education came from and where it may be going.

Learning about how schools locate and identify students who may be eligible for special education services lead you into learning about the characteristics of students with disabilities, including characteristics that you may see in their physical, social, and academic development. Through your studies and learning resources, you have experienced family stories, read student and teacher vignettes. No doubt you realized that there is no typical special education student.

You also learned the basics of special education law, policies, and procedures. You also focused on what types of teaching and learning settings are effective with students who have disabilities. You began to delve into behavioral management issues, collaboration, and ways to avoid compliance problems while wading through the rules and regulations. You not only learned the steps of the process, but you also reviewed why the process exists and what to do to avoid problems with the process.

Finally, you learned about creating family partnerships and how to welcome parents into the special education process. You have accomplished quite a bit! You should be very proud of this.

Transfer and Application to Work

Everything you have learned during your studies will be valuable to you during your teaching career as either a special education teacher, general education teacher, or in any other capacity in the educational field. Understanding students with disabilities, the laws governing their
education, and the policies that shape the public will help you connect with students, families, and co-workers wherever you may be living or working. Additionally, the foundation you have gained in this course of study will serve you greatly as you move forward in your WGU special education program.

**Accessing Objective Assessments**

It is important to note that the ETS name and code for this exam is different than the WGU name and code. When referring to this exam on the [http://www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org) website you will use the test code **0353 Education of Exceptional Students: Core Content Knowledge**. Other important information is noted as follows:

The 0353 Education of Exceptional Students Core Content Knowledge exam is scheduled on Saturdays (typically only 7 Saturdays a year, January, March, April, June, July, September and November), therefore it is important to stay in contact with your mentor and pay close attention to the scheduling of your exams and the Degree Plan. WGU requires that students refer for this exam no later than approximately 6 weeks prior the testing date. For this reason, it is imperative that you work with your mentor at the beginning of each term to determine your testing schedule.

You will refer for this exam using a different referral process than you would use for WGU created and administered exams or assessments. Please make sure you follow directions in this document, on the course of study, and you can ask your mentor if you have questions. You can also find instruction for referring for this exam in the DOCUMENTS section of the SPECIAL EDUCATION LEARNING COMMUNITY. Please discuss this referral with your mentor. There are special procedures you and your mentor must follow if you are referring for a Praxis™ exam that is outside of your term. If you register for a Praxis™ exam and pay for it yourself, WGU will reimburse you the fees, but this reimbursement will not occur until after the scores have been reported. Please make sure you are working closely with your mentor as he/she will be able to direct you in the fee reimbursement process.

Competencies covered by this Praxis exam include but are not limited to the following:

**UNDERSTANDING EXCEPTIONALITIES**

- Human Development
- Social-Emotional, Language, Behavioral, and Cognitive Development
- Physical and Adaptive Behaviors
- Characteristics of Students with Disabilities
- Types of Exceptionalities, including Giftedness, Definitions and Classifications, Incidence and Prevalence, Causes and Prevention
- Behaviors of Students with Disabilities

**LEGAL AND SOCIETAL ISSUES**

- Federal Laws, IDEA (IDEIA), ADA, Section 504, FERPA and HIPPA
- Issues of Family, School and Community, Advocacy, Parent Participation and Roles,
Public Attitudes, Cultural and Community Influences
- Interagency Agreements for Meeting the Needs of Students with Disabilities
- Historical Movements and Trends including Community Based Practices, Inclusion, Application of Technology, Transition, Accountability

DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
- Conceptual Approaches: Cognitive, Constructionist, Psychodynamic, Behavioral, Sociological, Ecological, Therapeutic, Medical
- Placement and Program Issues: Early Intervention, IEP Team, Continuum of Services, Least Restrictive Environment, Related Services, Accommodations
- Due Process
- Integrating Best Practices/Research/Literature
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Behavior Management
- Structuring and Managing the Learning Environment, Managing Paperwork, Supervising Paraeducators
- Working with Parents and Confidentiality Issues

Creating an ETS Profile and Referring for Praxis™ Exams Through Your Degree Plan

URL: www.ets.org

On the main Praxis™ page on the ETS website linked above, use the left hand sidebar to register online.

1. Click on REGISTER ONLINE box.
2. Click REGISTER ONLINE for paper based test.
3. New Users may sign up for a free account by clicking on SIGN UP.
4. Create your profile by filling in the required information and then click SUBMIT.
5. MAKE SURE YOU WRITE DOWN YOUR PASSWORD AND USERNAME!

To refer for an exam on your Degree Plan, click on the assessment you are referring for your Degree Plan. This will take you to the Assessment Detail Page. Click on the tab labeled ASSESSMENT REFERRAL and follow the directions below:

There are 3 steps to filling out your referral. Make sure that you fill out information for all 3 steps and review them before submitting the referral. If any step is incomplete, your referral will be denied and sent back to you to fill out all over again!

**Step 1: Identifying Preferred Site**
In the box where it says NAME--- type in the NAME and CODE NUMBER for your first choice Praxis™ Testing Site.

In the box where it says PHONE: type in YOUR home phone number-not the number for the testing site.
Click on CONTINUE at the bottom of the screen.

**Step 2: Entering Dates**
For POSSIBLE DATE 1, type in the time and date for the Praxis™ exam. For POSSIBLE DATE 2 and 3, type in the next two (2) consecutive dates. (Example. if the exam is July 26, the 3 possible dates would be 07/26/2009, 07/27/2009, and 07/28/2009). **You will be registered for your first listed test date, but the computer requires 3 dates to continue.**

For TIME 1, 2, and 3, just list 7:45 a.m. **Praxis™ test times are assigned by exam session and will be automatic.**

Click on CONTINUE at the bottom of the screen.

**Step 3: Entering Required Information:** **You will need to have your ETS PROFILE and 3 TEST CENTERS/CODES available for this step.**
In the OTHER CONSIDERATIONS box, you will need to type in the following information:

- Type in the Code for the Exam (ex. 0353)
- Your Name
- Your ETS user name
- Your ETS password (make sure this is still active, update if needed)
- Your Date of Birth
- Your Social Security Number
- Your Current Mailing Address
- Your Current Phone Number
- **Three PRAXIS™ TEST CENTERS and CODES**
- Click SEND REFERRAL.

You referral will be reviewed and approved by your mentor if filled out correctly. The Assessment Scheduling Office will use the information in Step 3 to register and pay for your test fees. You can expect an Admission Ticket via email when the process is complete. **Save your Admission Ticket to take with you to your exam.**

**Feedback**

WGU values your input! If you have comments, concerns, or suggestions for improvement of this course, please submit your feedback using the following form:

- [Course Feedback](#)

**ADA Policy**

Western Governors University recognizes and fulfills its obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and similar state laws. Western Governors University is committed to provide reasonable accommodation(s) to qualified disabled learners in University programs and activities as is required by applicable law(s). ADA Support Services serves as the principal point of contact for students seeking accommodations and can be contacted at [ADASupport@wgu.edu](mailto:ADASupport@wgu.edu). Further information on WGU?s ADA policy [here](#).
and process can be viewed in the student handbook at the following link:

- Policies and Procedures for Students with Disabilities