

# Special Education MED (Educational Diagnostician) / Bilingual (Spanish) Educational Diagnostician Certificate / Special Education Transition Services Certificate

## G 1: Ethical and Professional Practices

### Goal Description:

The educational diagnostician candidate will demonstrate the ability to safeguard the legal rights of students and their families and model and promote ethical and professional practice. (CEC Advanced Standard 6)

### Providing Department:

Special Education MED (Educational Diagnostician) / Bilingual (Spanish) Educational Diagnostician Certificate / Special Education Transition Services Certificate

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### LO 1: Ethical and Professional Practices

#### Learning Objective Description:

Objective: Analyzes and evaluates the legal, ethical, and human rights and responsibilities of educators, staff, and individuals with exceptionalities and their families (CEC ACSI6 K1-K3)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### ICF 1: Ethics and Professional Practices

#### Indicator Description:

Candidate demonstrates knowledge of rights of individuals with exceptionalities and their families, and the moral and ethical responsibilities of educators.

#### Criterion Description:

- Analyze the legal rights and responsibilities of individuals, staff, and parents/guardians (CEC ACSI6 K1)
- Distinguish the moral and ethical responsibilities of educators (CEC ACSI6 K2)
- Appraise the human rights of individuals with exceptionalities and their families (CEC ACSI6 K3)

#### Findings Description:

### Standard 6: Professional and Ethical Practice

Candidate demonstrates knowledge of rights of individuals with exceptionalities and their families, and the moral and ethical responsibilities of educators. Course Alignment SPED 6311 SPED 5301 SPED 6304 SPED 6321.

DATA TABLES

Table 1

Comprehensive Exam Evaluations – First and Second Attempts

CEC	Fall 2021		Spring 2022		Summer 2022	
Standards	n = 10		n = 5		n = 1	
Initial/Adv.	% Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Attempt		% Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Attempt		% Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Attempt	
Specialty Set	(%Passed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Attempt)		(%Passed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Attempt)		(%Passed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Attempt)	
	Content	APA	Content	APA	Content	APA

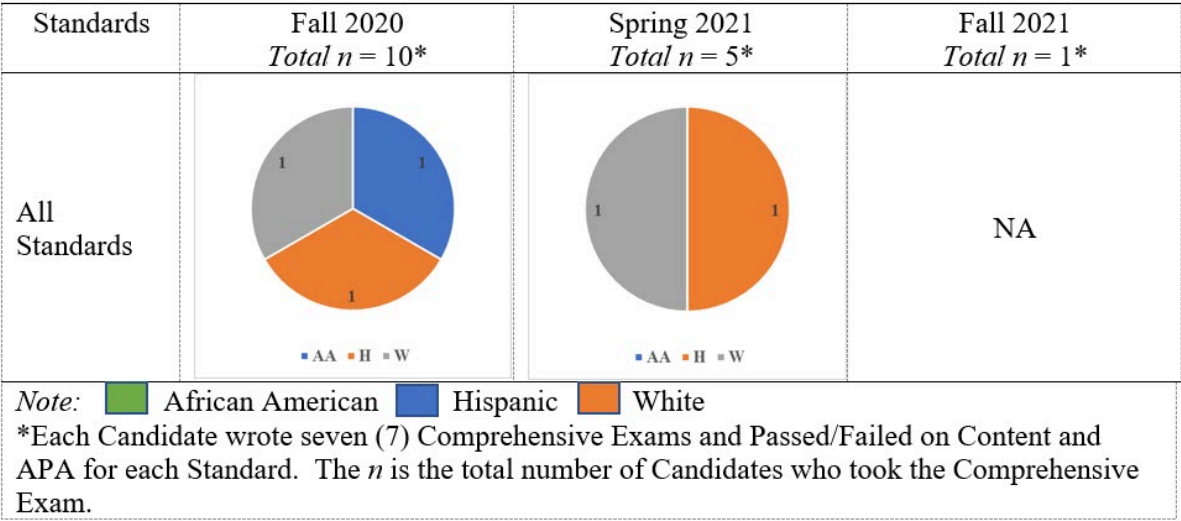
Standard 6	70(100)	90(100)	80(100)	80(100)	0(100)	100
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Scale used: Pass/Fail

Table 2

Candidates Failing Comprehensive Exam on First Attempt by Ethnicity

Candidates Failing Comprehensive Exam on First Attempt by Ethnicity



For the CEC Standard 6 (Professional and Ethical Practice), Candidates must demonstrate knowledge of rights of individuals with exceptionalities and their families, and the moral and ethical responsibilities of educators. Candidates displayed difficulties in both the content and the APA portions. Questions ranged from knowledge of why minorities were overrepresented in special education, to issues of understanding human rights affecting students with disabilities and their families.

Findings and Implications (Relation to Standard Components)

Scores for all outcomes are well within the satisfactory range and indicate that candidates are proficient in the categories of the CAEP Standards 1 and 3.5.

Content

Across the three cycles of data, all Candidates passed their Comprehensive Exams. Some Candidates needed rewrites in order to pass, while most others passed on their first attempt (Table 3). The lowest Content averages for Candidates passing on their first attempt were on Standards 2 and 6.

For the CEC Standard 6 (Professional and Ethical Practice), Candidates must demonstrate knowledge of rights of individuals with exceptionalities and their families, and the moral and ethical responsibilities of educators. Candidates displayed difficulties in both the content and the APA portions in Cycle 2 as these were the lowest scores of all standards. Questions ranged from knowledge of why minorities were overrepresented in special education, to issues of understanding human rights affecting students with disabilities and their families.

APA

Some Candidates’ first encounter with the APA (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) writing style occurs at the beginning of the program, after having worked with MLA during their undergraduate years. The APA (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) style can be quite complex. For example, APA (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) not only requires individuals to pay attention to the structure of the paper including such things as correct margins, types of indentations, running heads, and page numbering, it also requires Candidates to know the difference between in-text citations and references; the correct use of parentheses; when to paraphrase and when to quote directly; and most importantly, what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.

Upon further analysis of results, it became clear that our Candidates who have a first language other than English struggled with APA (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Anecdotal evidence obtained from graduating Candidates revealed that some had experience in APA style, while others did not. This previous experience facilitated their successful passing of the Comprehensive Exams on the first attempt, as it relates to APA (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) style.

Ethnicity

When examining the Fall 2021 cycle of data, African American, Hispanic, and White Candidates were equal percentages of the initial failures. The ethnicity results were not provided for Summer 2022, due to the low *n*. This specific candidate displayed a very limited understanding writing the comprehensive exams and did not follow directions. Once an individual tutorial was conducted to review the directions, the candidate successfully completed the exams.

## **Use of Data**

### ***Areas of Improvement***

**Content.** The Comprehensive Exam provides valuable data for program improvement, leading to expanding emphasis on different program components, specifically as it relates to Standards 2 (Curricular Content) and 6 (Professional and Ethical Practice). Based on these results, a focus on research-based and instructional strategies (Standard 2) derived from assessment data and their learning outcomes was further emphasized in the program, including specific evidence-based instructional strategies or interventions that would effectively address the student's identified need and build on the student's identified strength; and a description of how a teacher could best implement and monitor the progress of the instructional strategy(ies) or intervention(s). Moreover, in the area of Professional and Ethical Practice (Standard 6), Candidates struggled to comprehensively answer ethical considerations relative to assessment for students with disabilities who are culturally and linguistically diverse. This struggle has farther-reaching effects, such as the over- and underrepresentation of individuals with cultural and linguistic diversity referred for assessment.

**APA.** Data cycles indicate a pattern of decline in the APA results. An analysis of previously submitted Comprehensive Exams founds that the most occurring errors in APA style included errors in formatting such as keeping the correct margins, font type and size, running heads, page numbers, and spacing. Other errors in APA were difficulties with in-text citations, direct quotes, wrong use of “&” or “and” inside and outside parentheses, adding first names when citing authors, and omission of the period after al in “et al.” In the reference lists, some of the most common errors included difficulties in capitalization rules of article and journal titles and the use of italics when necessary. Finally, one of the most troublesome issues in APA is that of unintentional plagiarism when Candidates use the authors’ words without citing them and without the correct use of quotation marks. Another issue emerges when Candidates directly quote large portions of text, thus limiting their voice in the paper.

## **Action and Timeline**

### ***Content - Standard 6***

To address Professional and Ethical Practice (Standard 6), a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Learning Module was created for SPED 6308 in Fall 2021. This module included a description of language acquisition concepts such as length of time to acquire a second language, behaviors exhibited by second language learners that could be misconstrued as signs of disabilities, and best practices in testing and interpretation of results for students whose native language is not English.

### ***APA***

After examining the results, consideration will be given to all Candidates, especially those whose first language is something other than English, by providing additional APA guidance. The EPP program will require documentation of APA review by the SHSU Writing Center along with their Comprehensive Exam submission.

### ***Persons Responsible***

Persons responsible for overseeing these revisions and follow up were: Mertie Gomez and Corinna Cole. Course faculty completed the revisions for SPED 5302, 5304, 5305, 6313, 6319, and 6322. It was confirmed by both and program faculty that the changes are in place.

### ***Sharing of Data***

Comprehensive exam results are shared in several ways: with the Candidate, with the program faculty, and with the stakeholders. First (and most importantly), we individually conferenced with each student about their Comprehensive Exam results and feedback. This feedback included “big ideas” that were or should have been addressed in their papers, synthesis of supporting data, and their APA writing style. Secondly, results (including analysis and trends) were shared with program faculty for further analysis and action

steps to address curricular needs. Lastly, the results (including analysis and trends) were shared with stakeholder groups. Feedback was solicited for relation to field-experiences and job requirements. Edits to Comprehensive Exam questions occurred based on feedback. For example, English Language Learner (ELL) was changed to English Learner (EL) and case studies were added to assess the Candidate’s ability to synthesize data.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

ICF 1: Ethics and Professional Practices

G 2: Mastery of CEC Knowledge and Skills - Comprehensive Exams

Goal Description:

Candidates will meet target expectations of knowledge and skills on comprehensive examinations referenced to the standards set forth by the Council for Exceptional Children’s (CEC) Knowledge and Skills for Educational Diagnosticians.

Providing Department:

Special Education MED (Educational Diagnostician) / Bilingual (Spanish) Educational Diagnostician Certificate / Special Education Transition Services Certificate

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

LO 2: Mastery of CEC Knowledge and Skills - Comprehensive Exams

Learning Objective Description:

Candidates will meet target expectations of knowledge and skills on comprehensive examinations referenced to the standards set forth by the Council for Exceptional Children’s (CEC) Knowledge and Skills for Educational Diagnosticians.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

ICF 2: Mastery of CEC Knowledge and Skills - Comprehensive Exams (Rubric)

Indicator Description:

The faculty developed rubric for comprehensive exams evaluates the level of competence of the foundational knowledge and skills of the Council for Exceptional Children's teacher preparation standards. One of the standards is knowledge of national and state education laws and regulations. Because this standard is critical for avoiding legal grievances and upholding the rights of stakeholders in the assessment process, the faculty believe this to be of high importance. The comprehensive exam contains seven (7) questions with each question tied directly to the CEC standards. Candidates take the exam during the last course of their program and must pass the whole test at a minimum of 80%. However, each question is also individually graded by faculty to determine the passing rates of each question. Candidates are assigned random questions from our question bank and are given three weeks to write and complete the exam. Students who fail a question or more are given one opportunity to rewrite the question(s) and resubmit after one additional week.

Criterion Description:

100% of candidates will achieve at a level 2 (accomplished) on the comprehensive exam rubric that addresses the foundational knowledge and skills of national and state education laws and regulations.

Findings Description:

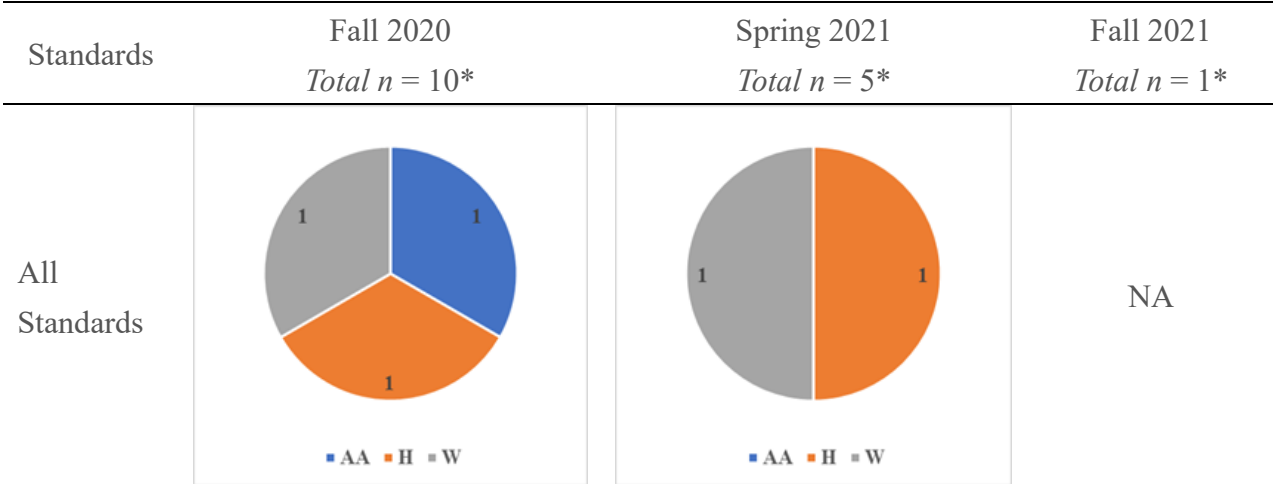
Table 3

CEC Standards	Fall 2021 <i>n</i> = 10		Spring 2022 <i>n</i> = 5		Summer 2022 <i>n</i> = 1	
Initial/Adv. Specialty Set	% Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Attempt (%Passed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Attempt)		% Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Attempt (%Passed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Attempt)		% Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Attempt (%Passed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Attempt)	
	Content	APA	Content	APA	Content	APA
Standard 1	80(100)	90(100)	80(100)	80(100)	0(100)	100
Standard 2	90(100)	80(100)	80(100)	80(100)	0(100)	100
Standard 3	70(100)	90(100)	80(100)	80(100)	0(100)	100
Standard 4	80(100)	90(100)	80(100)	80(100)	0(100)	100
Standard 5	70(100)	90(100)	80(100)	80(100)	0(100)	100
Standard 6	70(100)	90(100)	80(100)	80(100)	0(100)	100
Standard 7	70(100)	90(100)	80(100)	80(100)	0(100)	100

Scale used: Pass/Fail

Table 4

*Candidates Failing Comprehensive Exam on First Attempt by Ethnicity*



*Note:* African American Hispanic White

\*Each Candidate wrote seven (7) Comprehensive Exams and Passed/Failed on Content and APA for each Standard. The *n* is the total number of Candidates who took the Comprehensive Exam.

Findings and Implications (Relation to Standard Components)

Scores for all outcomes are well within the satisfactory range and indicate that candidates are proficient in the categories of the CAEP Standards 1 and 3.5 and the CEC Standards 1-7.

Content

Across the three cycles of data, all Candidates passed their Comprehensive Exams. Some Candidates needed rewrites in order to pass, while most others passed on their first attempt (Table 3). The lowest Content averages for Candidates passing on their first attempt were on Standards 2 and 6.

For the CEC Standard 2 Comprehensive Exam (Curricular Content), Candidates must demonstrate knowledge of characteristics of exceptionalities and current research-based interventions for working with students with exceptionalities. These results are baffling because the Candidates in the program are experienced, certified teachers who should be well versed in curricular content. Clearly, Candidates need further development on how students’ disabilities impact their progress through the curriculum. Additionally, an understanding of the impact of cognitive abilities on the acquisition of core content would facilitate the utility of educational diagnosticians on their campus.

For the CEC Standard 6 (Professional and Ethical Practice), Candidates must demonstrate knowledge of rights of individuals with exceptionalities and their families, and the moral and ethical responsibilities of educators. Candidates displayed difficulties in both the content and the APA portions in Cycle 2 as these were the lowest scores of all standards. Questions ranged from knowledge of why minorities were overrepresented in special education, to issues of understanding human rights affecting students with disabilities and their families.

## ***APA***

Some Candidates' first encounter with the APA (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) writing style occurs at the beginning of the program, after having worked with MLA during their undergraduate years. The APA (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) style can be quite complex. For example, APA (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) not only requires individuals to pay attention to the structure of the paper including such things as correct margins, types of indentations, running heads, and page numbering, it also requires Candidates to know the difference between in-text citations and references; the correct use of parentheses; when to paraphrase and when to quote directly; and most importantly, what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.

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## ***Ethnicity***

When examining the Fall 2022 cycle of data, African American, Hispanic, and White Candidates were equal percentages of the initial failures. The ethnicity results were not provided for Summer 2022, due to the low *n*. This specific candidate displayed a very limited understanding writing the comprehensive exams and did not follow directions. Once an individual tutorial was conducted to review the directions, the candidate successfully completed the exams.

## **Use of Data**

### ***Areas of Improvement***

**Content.** The Comprehensive Exam provides valuable data for program improvement, leading to expanding emphasis on different program components, specifically as it relates to Standards 2 (Curricular Content) and 6 (Professional and Ethical Practice). Based on these results, a focus on research-based and instructional strategies (Standard 2) derived from assessment data and their learning outcomes was further emphasized in the program, including specific evidence-based instructional strategies or interventions that would effectively address the student's identified need and build on the student's identified strength; and a description of how a teacher could best implement and monitor the progress of the instructional strategy(ies) or intervention(s). Moreover, in the area of Professional and Ethical Practice (Standard 6), Candidates struggled to comprehensively answer ethical considerations relative to assessment for students with disabilities who are culturally and linguistically diverse. This struggle has farther-reaching effects, such as the over- and underrepresentation of individuals with cultural and linguistic diversity referred for assessment.

**APA.** Data cycles 1 and 2 indicate a pattern of decline in the APA results in all standards. An analysis of previously submitted Comprehensive Exams founds that the most occurring errors in APA style included errors in formatting such as keeping the correct margins, font type and size, running heads, page numbers, and spacing. Other errors in APA were difficulties with in-text citations, direct quotes, wrong use of "&" or "and" inside and outside parentheses, adding first names when citing authors, and omission of the period after al in "et al." In the reference lists, some of the most common errors included difficulties in capitalization rules of article and journal titles and the use of italics when necessary. Finally, one of the most troublesome issues in APA is that of unintentional plagiarism when Candidates use the authors' words without citing them and without the correct use of quotation marks. Another issue emerges when Candidates directly quote large portions of text, thus limiting their voice in the paper.

## **Action and Timeline**

### ***Content - Standard 2***

For Fall 2022, Interpretive Reports and Case Study assignments in SPED 6304, 5302/6322, and 5305/6319 (see Syllabi) were revised to reflect the strengthened resources and instructional focus on research-based instructional strategies. Added instructional content (SPED 6313 - Summer 2022) and resources include *High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms* (CEC, 2019), *Essentials of Evidence-Based Academic Interventions* (Wendling & Mather, 2009), and *Essential of Planning, Selecting, and Tailoring Interventions for Unique Learners* (Mascolo, Alfonso, & Flanagan, 2014). For Fall 2022, Inclusion of recent research-based effective

instructional strategies and its impact on student learning were added to the Interpretive report assignments located in SPED 5302/6322 and SPED 5305/6319 (Mascolo et al., 2014; Wendling & Mather, 2009) and the Components of Reading Module (SPED 6313).

***Content - Standard 6***

To address Professional and Ethical Practice (Standard 6), a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Learning Module was created for SPED 6308 in Fall 2022. This module included a description of language acquisition concepts such as length of time to acquire a second language, behaviors exhibited by second language learners that could be misconstrued as signs of disabilities, and best practices in testing and interpretation of results for students whose native language is not English.

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After examining the results, consideration will be given to all Candidates, especially those whose first language is something other than English, by providing additional APA guidance. The EPP program will require documentation of APA review by the SHSU Writing Center along with their Comprehensive Exam submission.

***Persons Responsible***

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Comprehensive exam results are shared in several ways: with the Candidate, with the program faculty, and with the stakeholders. First (and most importantly), we individually conferenced with each student about their Comprehensive Exam results and feedback. This feedback included “big ideas” that were or should have been addressed in their papers, synthesis of supporting data, and their APA writing style. Secondly, results (including analysis and trends) were shared with program faculty for further analysis and action steps to address curricular needs. Lastly, the results (including analysis and trends) were shared with stakeholder groups. Feedback was solicited for relation to field-experiences and job requirements. Edits to Comprehensive Exam questions occurred based on feedback. For example, English Language Learner (ELL) was changed to English Learner (EL) and case studies were added to assess the Candidate’s ability to synthesize data.

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3**

**ICF 2: Mastery of CEC Knowledge and Skills - Comprehensive Exams (Rubric)**

**G 3: Mastery Of SBEC Knowledge and Skills**

**Goal Description:**

Students in the Special Education Diagnostician Program must successfully pass the State Certification exam (SBEC) after completion of our Master level program to be acting diagnosticians. The SBEC test includes four domains: (1) Students with disabilities, (2) Assessment & Evaluation, (3) Curriculum & Instruction, (4) Foundations and Professional Roles and Responsibilities.

**Providing Department:**

Special Education MED (Educational Diagnostician) / Bilingual (Spanish) Educational Diagnostician Certificate / Special Education Transition Services Certificate

**RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----**

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1**

**LO 3: Mastery of SBEC Knowledge and Skills**

**Learning Objective Description:**

Graduates will demonstrate competencies in assessment and evaluation as set forth by the State Board of Education Certification (SBEC) for diagnostician certification.

ICF 3: Mastery of SBEC Knowledge and Skills

Indicator Description:

When master degree candidates complete the diagnostician program, they apply to take the SBEC exam. If they pass the exam they can then apply for certification as a diagnostician through the Texas State Board for Educator Certification. The exam has four different domains that include (1) knowledge of students with disabilities, (2) assessment and evaluation of students with disabilities, (3) curriculum and instruction for students with disabilities, and (4) foundations and professional roles and responsibilities for educational diagnosticians.

Criterion Description:

90% of candidates will pass Domain II of the TExES, a measure of knowledge of Assessment and Evaluation skill of the SBEC. While our program assesses and address all of these domains, the special education faculty are most concerned with the candidates’ knowledge and skills related to actual testing of students at risk and/or those with suspected disabilities. Past scores indicated that scores in this domain were lower than other domain areas.

Findings Description:

ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE (DESCRIPTION FOR CANDIDATES)

The TExES Educational Diagnostician (253) exam is designed to assess whether a Candidate has the requisite knowledge and skills that an entry-level educator in this field in Texas public schools must possess. The 90 selected-response questions and the 1 constructed-response question are based on the Educational Diagnostician exam framework. Questions on this exam range from grades EC–12. The exam may contain questions that do not count toward the score.

Free Write Instructions

Analyze the information provided in the exhibits and, citing specific evidence from the exhibits, write a response of approximately 400 to 600 words in which you:

- identify one area of academic strength and one area of academic need for the student based on a review of the formal and informal diagnostic assessment data provided;
- describe a specific evidence-based instructional strategy or intervention that would effectively address the student's identified need and build on the student's identified strength; and
- describe how a teacher could best implement and monitor the progress of the instructional strategy or intervention (TEA, 2020)

DATA TABLES

Table 7

TExES 253 (2021-2022)

TExES 153/253 Domain	2021-22
	<i>n</i> = 36
	% Correct
Domain I	84
Domain II	74
Domain III	83
Domain IV	77
	Total Score
	% Passed
Total Score	267
	100

Note. Scale score for passing is 240.



## FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND USE OF DATA

Table 7 shows the results of the 36 candidates in our M.Ed. in Special Education program who participated in the State Certification Exam (TExES 253) assessment over a three-semester period. Overall, candidates demonstrated proficiency on the State Certification Exam, since 100% of candidates *Passed* on their first attempt.

### Remediation Plan

#### *Evidence of Effective Support for Candidates Falling Behind*

Of the advanced educator candidates participating in the exam, all 36 candidates passed the certification exam on their first attempt. If candidate(s) did not pass the state certification exam on the first attempt, the special education diagnostician faculty members would implement the remediation plan, which includes:

1. Reviewed and disaggregated TExES 253 results with program faculty and Advanced Educator Candidate.
2. Remediation Plan was developed based on Domain and Competency results.
3. The plan included dates and times of remediation sessions and the Domains and Competencies to be addressed.
4. The student was required to develop an individual study plan to address deficient Domains and Competencies.
5. The Remediation Plan was reviewed by the Program Faculty and the Advanced Educator Candidate.
6. The Remediation Plan was implemented which included twice weekly Zoom remediation sessions at three hours per session for four weeks (eight three-hour sessions).
7. Upon completion of the remediation Plan, the Advanced Educator Candidate was administered the TExES 253 Representative Exam (a practice exam).
8. Upon achieving 85% or higher on the TExES 253 Representative Exam (practice exam), the Advanced Educator Candidate took the TExES 253 Certification Exam.

### Use of Data (Areas of Improvement, Action, Timeline, and Who's Responsible)

In summary, candidates demonstrated proficiency across all assessed domains and aligned CEC and CAEP Advanced standards. State licensure data were analyzed and shared at the Program Faculty Meeting. Results were discussed and action steps were deliberated.

**Areas of Improvement.** Consistently, students scored the lowest on Competencies 1, 6, and 8. Due to the relatively low results on Competency 1, understanding and applying knowledge of federal and state disability criteria and determining the presence of an educational need, Federal/State Regulations and a corresponding assignment for Candidates to locate and explain disability criteria was added to SPED 5301 for Summer 2022, going forward. Candidates struggled (but passed) test items related to Competency 6 (curricula and instructional strategies for students with disabilities). This result was rather confounding, as the prerequisite for acceptance into the program is to have a minimum of three (3) years of creditable teaching experience and state teaching certificate. This underlines a need to focus on instructional recommendations for students with disabilities, based on evaluation information and research-based interventions. Each of the Interpretive Reports, which include a Recommendations section, will have more guidance (instruction and resource links) about from where to obtain relevant recommendations (SPED 5302/6322, 5305/6319, and 6310). The average of Competency 8 over three cycles of data, indicates that Candidates need to better understand and apply knowledge of professional practices, roles and responsibilities and the philosophical, legal and ethical foundations of evaluation related to special education. Due Process rights and school responsibilities are largely addressed in SPED 5301 and 6311; however, given this result, embedding content related to informed consent, continuum of services, eligibility, and state and federal monitoring will be included in a newly created SPED 6308 learning module, entitled “Procedural Safeguards” and “Parent Guide to the ARD Process”.

**Action and Timeline.** As special education “Recommendations” are driven by data, both cognitive profiles and academic proficiency, a better understanding of how to leverage the cognitive strengths to address the academic weaknesses of students with disabilities is critical for educational outcomes. Thus, a focus on instructing Candidates on from where “Recommendations” are derived, and the location of these resources will be made to SPED 5302, 5305, 6310, 6319, and 6322. This was completed in Spring 2022.

**Who's Responsible.** Drs. Mertie M. Gomez and Corinna Cole, Program Coordinators, are responsible for this coordination, syllabi updates and Interpretive Report template updates. Dr. Cole is responsible for editing course content to facilitate a better understanding of Competency 6 and 8 in SPED 6319 and 6322. Dr. Gomez is responsible for editing course content to facilitate a better

understanding of Competency 1, 6, and 8 SPED 5302, 5305, and 6310.

**Sharing of Data**

The TExES exam results are shared in several ways: with the student, with the program faculty, and with stakeholders. First (and most importantly), we individually conferenced with each student about their TExES Exam results. Secondly, we create a program update document and share this document with the program faculty. Lastly, we share this program update document with our stakeholder groups (Stakeholder Group Minutes). The Stakeholder group explained that Candidates need to understand the Texas Dyslexia Handbook and its impact on evaluation and identification (Competency 1).

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3**

**ICF 3: Mastery of SBEC Knowledge and Skills**

**G 4: Mastery of Writing Skills**

**Goal Description:**

Students in the Special Education Diagnostician Program must successfully demonstrate their competence in written communication for purposes of professional reporting and dissemination of research based practices.

**Providing Department:**

Special Education MED (Educational Diagnostician) / Bilingual (Spanish) Educational Diagnostician Certificate / Special Education Transition Services Certificate

**RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS** -----

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1**

**LO 4: Mastery of Writing Skills**

**Learning Objective Description:**

Students in the Special Education Diagnostician Program will successfully demonstrate their competence in written communication for purposes of professional reporting and dissemination of research based practices.

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2**

**ICF 4: Mastery of Writing Skills**

**Indicator Description:**

The faculty developed rubric for comprehensive exams evaluates the level of competence of the foundational knowledge and skills of the Council for Exceptional Children's teacher preparation standards. It also evaluates candidates' proficiency in writing. The writing standard is critical to the success of diagnosticians in writing effective and comprehensible assessment reports and for the dissemination of research practices to school faculty, parents and staff. The special education faculty at SHSU believes this skill to be of high importance. Candidates take the exam during the last course of their program and must pass the whole test at a minimum of 80%. However, each question is also individually graded by faculty to determine the passing rates of each question. Candidates are assigned random questions from our question bank and are given three weeks to write and complete the exam. Students who fail a question or more are given one opportunity to rewrite the question(s) and resubmit after one additional week.

**Criterion Description:**

100% of candidates will pass the writing skill standard on the comprehensive exam rubric at the accomplished level (2).

**Findings Description:**



Table 3

CEC	Fall 2021		Spring 2022		Summer 2022	
Standards	<i>n</i> = 10		<i>n</i> = 5		<i>n</i> = 1	
Initial/Adv.	% Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Attempt		% Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Attempt		% Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Attempt	
Specialty Set	(%Passed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Attempt)		(%Passed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Attempt)		(%Passed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Attempt)	
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Standard 2	90(100)	80(100)	80(100)	80(100)	0(100)	100
Standard 3	70(100)	90(100)	80(100)	80(100)	0(100)	100
Standard 4	80(100)	90(100)	80(100)	80(100)	0(100)	100
Standard 5	70(100)	90(100)	80(100)	80(100)	0(100)	100
Standard 6	70(100)	90(100)	80(100)	80(100)	0(100)	100
Standard 7	70(100)	90(100)	80(100)	80(100)	0(100)	100

Scale used: Pass/Fail

Table 4

Candidates Failing Comprehensive Exam on First Attempt by Ethnicity

Standards	Fall 2020 <i>Total n</i> = 10*	Spring 2021 <i>Total n</i> = 5*	Fall 2021 <i>Total n</i> = 1*
All Standards			NA

*Note:* African American Hispanic White

\*Each Candidate wrote seven (7) Comprehensive Exams and Passed/Failed on Content and APA for each Standard. The *n* is the total number of Candidates who took the Comprehensive Exam.

Findings and Implications (Relation to Standard Components)

Scores for all outcomes are well within the satisfactory range and indicate that candidates are proficient in the categories of the CAEP Standards 1 and 3.5 and the CEC Standards 1-7.

Content

Across the three cycles of data, all Candidates passed their Comprehensive Exams. Some Candidates needed rewrites in order to pass, while most others passed on their first attempt (Table 3). The lowest Content averages for Candidates passing on their first attempt were on Standards 2 and 6.

For the CEC Standard 2 Comprehensive Exam (Curricular Content), Candidates must demonstrate knowledge of characteristics of exceptionalities and current research-based interventions for working with students with exceptionalities. These results are baffling because the Candidates in the program are experienced, certified teachers who should be well versed in curricular content. Clearly, Candidates need further development on how students’ disabilities impact their progress through the curriculum. Additionally, an understanding of the impact of cognitive abilities on the acquisition of core content would facilitate the utility of educational diagnosticians on their campus.

For the CEC Standard 6 (Professional and Ethical Practice), Candidates must demonstrate knowledge of rights of individuals with exceptionalities and their families, and the moral and ethical responsibilities of educators. Candidates displayed difficulties in both the content and the APA portions in Cycle 2 as these were the lowest scores of all standards. Questions ranged from knowledge of why minorities were overrepresented in special education, to issues of understanding human rights affecting students with disabilities and their families.

APA

Some Candidates' first encounter with the APA (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) writing style occurs at the beginning of the program, after having worked with MLA during their undergraduate years. The APA (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) style can be quite complex. For example, APA (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) not only requires individuals to pay attention to the structure of the paper including such things as correct margins, types of indentations, running heads, and page numbering, it also requires Candidates to know the difference between in-text citations and references; the correct use of parentheses; when to paraphrase and when to quote directly; and most importantly, what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.

Upon further analysis of results, it became clear that our Candidates who have a first language other than English struggled with APA (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Anecdotal evidence obtained from graduating Candidates revealed that some had experience in APA style, while others did not. This previous experience facilitated their successful passing of the Comprehensive Exams on the first attempt, as it relates to APA (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.) style.

### ***Ethnicity***

When examining the Fall 2022 cycle of data, African American, Hispanic, and White Candidates were equal percentages of the initial failures. The ethnicity results were not provided for Summer 2022, due to the low *n*. This specific candidate displayed a very limited understanding writing the comprehensive exams and did not follow directions. Once an individual tutorial was conducted to review the directions, the candidate successfully completed the exams.

### **Use of Data**

#### ***Areas of Improvement***

**Content.** The Comprehensive Exam provides valuable data for program improvement, leading to expanding emphasis on different program components, specifically as it relates to Standards 2 (Curricular Content) and 6 (Professional and Ethical Practice). Based on these results, a focus on research-based and instructional strategies (Standard 2) derived from assessment data and their learning outcomes was further emphasized in the program, including specific evidence-based instructional strategies or interventions that would effectively address the student's identified need and build on the student's identified strength; and a description of how a teacher could best implement and monitor the progress of the instructional strategy(ies) or intervention(s). Moreover, in the area of Professional and Ethical Practice (Standard 6), Candidates struggled to comprehensively answer ethical considerations relative to assessment for students with disabilities who are culturally and linguistically diverse. This struggle has farther-reaching effects, such as the over- and underrepresentation of individuals with cultural and linguistic diversity referred for assessment.

**APA.** Data cycles 1 and 2 indicate a pattern of decline in the APA results in all standards. An analysis of previously submitted Comprehensive Exams founds that the most occurring errors in APA style included errors in formatting such as keeping the correct margins, font type and size, running heads, page numbers, and spacing. Other errors in APA were difficulties with in-text citations, direct quotes, wrong use of "&" or "and" inside and outside parentheses, adding first names when citing authors, and omission of the period after al in "et al." In the reference lists, some of the most common errors included difficulties in capitalization rules of article and journal titles and the use of italics when necessary. Finally, one of the most troublesome issues in APA is that of unintentional plagiarism when Candidates use the authors' words without citing them and without the correct use of quotation marks. Another issue emerges when Candidates directly quote large portions of text, thus limiting their voice in the paper.

### **Action and Timeline**

#### ***Content - Standard 2***

For Fall 2022, Interpretive Reports and Case Study assignments in SPED 6304, 5302/6322, and 5305/6319 (see Syllabi) were revised to reflect the strengthened resources and instructional focus on research-based instructional strategies. Added instructional content (SPED 6313 - Summer 2022) and resources include *High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms* (CEC, 2019), *Essentials of Evidence-Based Academic Interventions* (Wendling & Mather, 2009), and *Essential of Planning, Selecting, and Tailoring Interventions for Unique Learners* (Mascolo, Alfonso, & Flanagan, 2014). For Fall 2022, Inclusion of recent research-based effective instructional strategies and its impact on student learning were added to the Interpretive report assignments located in SPED 5302/6322 and SPED 5305/6319 (Mascolo et al., 2014; Wendling & Mather, 2009) and the Components of Reading Module (SPED 6313).

*Content - Standard 6*

To address Professional and Ethical Practice (Standard 6), a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) Learning Module was created for SPED 6308 in Fall 2022. This module included a description of language acquisition concepts such as length of time to acquire a second language, behaviors exhibited by second language learners that could be misconstrued as signs of disabilities, and best practices in testing and interpretation of results for students whose native language is not English.

*APA*

After examining the results, consideration will be given to all Candidates, especially those whose first language is something other than English, by providing additional APA guidance. The EPP program will require documentation of APA review by the SHSU Writing Center along with their Comprehensive Exam submission.

*Persons Responsible*

Persons responsible for overseeing these revisions and follow up were: Mertie Gomez and Corinna Cole. Course faculty completed the revisions for SPED 5302, 5304, 5305, 6313, 6319, and 6322. It was confirmed by both and program faculty that the changes are in place.

*Sharing of Data*

Comprehensive exam results are shared in several ways: with the Candidate, with the program faculty, and with the stakeholders. First (and most importantly), we individually conferenced with each student about their Comprehensive Exam results and feedback. This feedback included “big ideas” that were or should have been addressed in their papers, synthesis of supporting data, and their APA writing style. Secondly, results (including analysis and trends) were shared with program faculty for further analysis and action steps to address curricular needs. Lastly, the results (including analysis and trends) were shared with stakeholder groups. Feedback was solicited for relation to field-experiences and job requirements. Edits to Comprehensive Exam questions occurred based on feedback. For example, English Language Learner (ELL) was changed to English Learner (EL) and case studies were added to assess the Candidate’s ability to synthesize data.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

ICF: Mastery of Writing Skills

G 5: Reliable Assessment Practices

Goal Description:

Special education specialists will use valid and reliable assessment practices to minimize bias. (CEC Standard 1)

Providing Department:

Special Education MED (Educational Diagnostician) / Bilingual (Spanish) Educational Diagnostician Certificate / Special Education Transition Services Certificate

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

LO 5: Knows and Understands Key Features of Evaluation Process

Learning Objective Description:

Knows and understands the key features of the evaluation process, including methods of assessment and determining eligibility for services (CEC ACSI1 K1-K4)

File Library

## RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### ICF 5: Reliable Assessment Practices

#### Indicator Description:

- Describes achievement assessment measures (SEDS1 K7)
- Summarizes cognitive assessment measures (SEDS1 K8)
- Explains language assessment measures (SEDS1 K9)
- Describes motor skills assessment measures (SEDS1 K10)
- Summarizes social, emotional, and behavior assessment measures (SEDS1 K11)
- Identifies vocational and career assessment measures (SEDS1 K12)

#### Criterion Description:

100% of candidates will pass the assessment instrument skill test out for the KTEA-3, WJIV ACH and COG, WISC-V, and Bateria-IV ACH and COG.

## RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

### ICF 5: Reliable Assessment Practices

#### Action Description:

To address Candidates' struggles to administer norm-referenced test kits according to standardized procedures, Drs. Cole and Gomez created test kit administration videos for each subtest of each standardized test kit. These videos were uploaded to the Learning Management System (LMS) used by the EPP, which is Blackboard. This allowed Candidates to real-time access demonstrations of appropriate procedures, such as seating, pointing, and use of language. In addition, Drs. Cole and Gomez created scoring videos, which demonstrated the correct acquisition of basals, ceilings, reversals, and queries. This was implemented in 2021-22. An additional test kit administration videos were added for Spring 2022, the KAC-BII. Additionally, three Saturday test kit administration trainings per semester were added to the schedule. These are eight (8) hour trainings that include test kit administration, practice, and test out proficiency.

## Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

### Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

A 2020-2021 PCI was not created for this plan.

### Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

Program faculty will continue to support candidate success on the TExES 253 exam through the requirement of study plan submission and test preparation "boot camps." Both Drs. Cole and Gomez provide monthly remediation sessions to target specific domains and competencies related to the 253.

Recent CEC approved rubrics will be uploaded in the SPA and CAEP assessments in Tk20 by the end of Fall 2022.

## New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

### Closing Summary:

The M.Ed. in Special Education with educational diagnostician certification recently received CEC accreditation. The recently CEC approved rubrics will be uploaded in SPA and CAEP assessments in Tk20 by the end of Fall 2022. This will ensure a focus on field specific standards and quality assurance. During 2021, all Candidates passed the TExES 253 certification exam on the first attempt. SHSU should be proud of the 2021-22 outcomes. The program continues to revise content and delivery to meet Candidates' needs based on data.