

**Special Education Doctoral Written Comprehensive Questions (12/22/2002)**

Note: These will be the questions used for Spring, 2003. Check with your advisor for any changes for future semesters.

**Directions:**

Your graduate committee will select your written comprehensive question from the list provided. The questions will total 7 hours worth. They will be responsible for grading the questions that they select. In addition you will also be given a two-hour question on statistics from a professor of your choice in the EDPR department.

Answer each question fully, but concisely. Keep your answers to information directly asked for in the question. All responses should be referenced with accurate and current citations. The format should be in APA format (Author's last name, year). Please note that questions are allotted different amount of times for their answers. You will be given the questions one at a time to answer during two different days. This will be arranged with your advisor. For more information about the written comprehensive exam please consult the College of Education Ed. D Booklet.

1. Provide an overview of the history of Special Education from the early 1970s to the present highlighting laws, litigation, and events that have shaped this history. Select one current issue that will have significant impact on the field and elaborate on this. Project how you feel this issue will change the course of Special Education. (2 hours)
2. In order to be an effective special educator, one must have certain skills and attributes. What, according to researchers, constitutes an effective teacher in terms of teaching skills and personality? Be specific. Avoid clichés. (1 hour)
3. Family-centered programming has been shown to be of great value for schools and early childhood programs. What constitutes a family-centered program and what are the benefits of this model compared to traditional approaches? (1 hour)
4. What are the basic elements of Precision Teaching? How would you apply these elements in a Resource setting? (1 hour)
5. You are asked to design an effective transition program for Ultima High School. Ultima has 35 students with mild cognitive disabilities including 25 with learning disabilities. They also have 13 students with severe cognitive disabilities and most of these have multiple disabilities. Develop a plan for 10th and 11th graders that would insure smooth transitions from school to community. Include state-of-the-art strategies and practices. Justify your plan. (2 hours)
6. Assume that you are the teacher of a CDC class at an elementary school in town and you have been asked to speak to a group of student teachers in special education who are about to start their first placement. Outline the critical points that you would want to cover in the three hours that you have been given for your presentation. Be specific and as comprehensive as possible. (1 hour)
7. Assume you are the teacher of a middle school resource room and you have been encouraged to submit a grant proposal for obtaining up to \$3000 for use in your classroom to improve the achievement levels of your students. Based on everything that you have learned in your program, list the things that you would identify in your wish list. (1 ½ hours)

8. Given the courses that you have taken in your graduate program in Special Education, address the issue of motivation with children with developmental disabilities. List as many things as you can from your studies that directly affect the motivation of these children to learn. (1 ½ hours)
9. Several issues have arisen concerning the appropriateness of the IDEA definition of emotional disturbance. Discuss the issues related to the exclusion of students with “behavior disorders.” (1 ½ hours)
10. Describe the concepts of functional academics, adaptive behavior, and community-based instruction. Give an example of how these concepts can be used to socially and vocationally integrate individuals with mental retardation into “mainstream society” and competitive employment. (1 ½ hours)
11. Discuss the mandates related to discipline of students with disabilities. Describe the process school administrators and faculty must follow when disciplining student with disabilities. (1 ½ hours)
12. Behavior Management: Design a Behavior Intervention Plan. What type of assessment would be used? How is a child identified? When is a Behavior Intervention Plan written? (1 ½ hours)
13. Identify the various related services. Who determines what is provided? When are they identified? Who is responsible? (1 hour)
14. Functional Curriculum: What is it? What are the areas taught? How is it determined what is taught? (1 ½ hours)
15. Describe the 4 Stages of Learning: Acquisition, Proficiency, Maintenance, and Generalization – Give an example of or how a particular skill would be taught addressing or including these 4 stages. (1 ½ hours)
16. Define and give examples of Assistive Technology and Augmentative Alternative Communication that may be required when working with students with physical, language, and sensory impairments. (1 hours)  
Describe how you would assess and match specific technology to individual students. (2 hours)
17. The No Child Left Behind Act will directly affect students with disabilities. List at least 4 elements of the act dealing with this population and discuss how these might affect the way educational programming is delivered.(1 hour)
18. What is the role of the Special Educators in providing or administering medical procedures to children who have been identified as medically fragile? (1 hour)
19. Describe the procedures related to the administration of medical and medical procedures for children with disabilities. (1 hour)
20. All of the major methods of instruction for individuals with disabilities came from theories of learning and motivation. Some of these theories include: behavioral, cognitive, social learning, language, and developmental. Please describe 3 theories and then describe how they lead to different methodologies used with students who have learning disabilities. (2 hours)

21. Assistive Technology has been used to allow peoples with disabilities access to computers. Please give examples of input and out put devices, software, and utilities that will allow a person with visual, cognitive and/or motor impairments access to computers. (1 hour)
22. Discuss several issues influencing the incidence and prevalence of students identified as having learning disabilities. Include in your discussion the debate about the definitions of learning disabilities, the factors contributing to over or under identification of students with learning disabilities, and the different state discrepancy formulas to determine eligibility for learning disabilities. (1 ½ hours)
23. What are the major federal legislations affecting special education and the rights of individuals with disabilities in the workplace? Name at least 3 laws and their impact on education and employment of individuals with disabilities. (1 hour)
24. What were 3 major court cases that impacted how Americans work with individuals with disabilities? Please list the court case name and approximate year it was resolved as well as changes made to the field and everyday practices as a result of the court case. (1 hour)
25. There are several assessment measures used to evaluate individuals with disabilities in the schools. Please give examples of standardized/norm referenced tests, criterion referenced tests, curriculum based assessments, and alternative assessments. Also describe the pros and cons of each type of assessment. (1 ½ hours)
26. What are the major laws impacting transition of individuals with disabilities into the workforce. What rights do they guarantee? (1 hour)
27. Describe the transition planning process for students during secondary school to prepare them for post-secondary life. Include processes for a person's complete life, not just vocational skills. (1 ½ hours)
28. What are ways for teachers to use the computer for education? Describe the tools available, educational software and uses of the Internet. (1 hour)
29. Describe appropriate modifications and accommodations for students with disabilities. If given a particular disability describe the adaptations a teacher can make in the areas of: classroom, schedule, materials, curriculum, instruction, management, assessment, and evaluation. (1 hour)
30. You have just met with the principal of a school to discuss changes in the upcoming school year. Next year, the school will offer an inclusive kindergarten option to the parents of young children with disabilities. You have been asked to assist in the preparation of teachers, parents, and children.
- Discuss the benefits of including young children with disabilities in general education classrooms.
  - Based on the research, what are specific strategies that can be utilized by general education and special education teachers, parents, and students to ensure the successful inclusion of children with disabilities.
  - What issues would you anticipate as you create an inclusive kindergarten program and implement the strategies you discussed in "b".(1 hour)

31. When assessing young children with disabilities there are many variables that may influence the test situation and outcome of testing. Discuss the following variables that warrant considerations: a) Child variables, b) Examiner variables, c) Instrument variables, d) Issues related to diversity. (1 hour)

32. The field of early childhood special education has been shaped by the research of many early pioneers in education such as Froebel, Montessori, Dewey, Bijou and Baer. Discuss the contributions of each of these researchers with regard to its influence on the field of Early Childhood Special Education. (1 hour)

33. What is Activity Based Intervention? Discuss the historical and contemporary influences that have laid the foundation and provided support for an Activity Based Intervention approach in Early Childhood Special Education. Provide an example of its application at school and home. (1 hour)

34. What is general case instruction? Explain the rationale for using it in early childhood special education? Provide an example of the application of general case instruction and explain how it differs from traditional educational objectives. (1 hour)

35. As a new faculty member of your University, you are invited to assist schools in training teachers who will work together in a new inclusive kindergarten. For example, one kindergarten class will have 2 girls with mild mental retardation (Down syndrome), 1 boy with cerebral palsy, 1 boy with spina bifida and 15 typically developing children. You have been asked to assist in the preparation of teachers, parents, and children. As you prepare training modules for the school, address the following questions.

A. What are the general characteristics associated with young children with mild mental retardation, cerebral palsy, and spina bifida.

B. What are specific strategies that can be utilized with

1) teachers (both general education and special education teachers), 2) parents, 3) children.

C. What specific issues would you anticipate as you implement the strategies? (2 hours)

36. There are several perspectives that have shaped the best practices in Early Childhood Special Education including: developmental perspective, behavioral perspective and an ecological perspective. For each of these perspectives, discuss the underlying assumptions about learning and development, the implications for assessment and, the implications for intervention. (2 hours)

37. There is a broad based rationale for Early Intervention with theoretical arguments, empirical evidence and societal needs forming a strong support for intervening early in the lives of children born at-risk or with disabilities. Discuss this each of the following areas that demonstrate the need for early intervention: a) research documenting the importance of early learning environments b) prevention perspective, c) needs of families, d) benefits to society. (2 hours)

38. Social Competence in Early Childhood Special Education

A. Define social competence. (What are the range of elements or components of social competence.)

B. Why is the promotion of social competence important for a young child with disabilities?

C. In spite of its importance, there are issues related to promoting social competence. Discuss these issues as they relate to the definition of social competence, family and cultural issues, training issues in early childhood special education.

D. Describe the characteristics that may be associated with each of these children and their family that might place the child at risk for problems with social development:

1. A seven-year-old girl of Asian descent with autism
  2. A nine-year-old boy with significant learning disability who is from an affluent family (both parents are “Ivy League” education)
  3. An infant with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome from a single parent household (parent has a grade school education and is on welfare)
- E. What are the research-based strategies that you could recommend to teachers and/or parents that would support the development of each of the components of social competence (delineated in your response form Question IA). (2 hours)

39. Generalization in Early Childhood Special Education

- A. Define generalization and explain why strategies that promote generalization are necessary within special education.
- B. Explain general case instruction with specific examples of IEP objectives that illustrate differences in objectives that are written for generalizations and more traditional objectives (that do not promote generalization).
- C. Define Activity Based Intervention. Identify the strengths and issues with this strategy. Explain how this strategy may address the issue of generalization.
- D. Define Milieu Language Strategies. Identify the strengths and issues with this strategy. Explain how this strategy may address the issue of generalization. (2 hours)

40. One indicator of successful inclusion of young children with disabilities is whether the child is socially accepted by their classmates. Haring (1991) refers to this as social integration.

- A. Based on current literature, are children with disabilities typically accepted or rejected by their classmates? and, what discrepancies have been found with regard to gender? (include references)
- B. In recent literature, acceptance has been measured using perception interview, sociometric status, and global measure (such as the Acceptance Scale for Kindergarten, Revised). Describe each of these methods and the findings related to each type of measure, with references for each methodology.
- C. Within the context of the attitude construct, discuss why a child may have different perception (or levels of acceptance) generated using different methodology. Discuss the strengths and issues associated with each method when used with younger children.
- D. What method or combination of methods would you choose to examine the acceptance of young children with disabilities by their classmates? Provide a rationale for your choice. (2 hours)

41. A great deal of research is available in support of or in opposition to full inclusion. 1) Define the concept of full inclusion and describe its origins. 2) Discuss the rationale either for or against full inclusion, providing references of research in support of your discussion. (1 hour)

42. You are implementing the LRE provision of IDEA in your school with many students who have mild to moderate disabilities. 1) Describe the process that would be used for implementation. 2) Identify the factors that may impact upon the: a) classroom teacher, b) general education students, c) exceptional learner, d) parents. (2 hours)

43. Describe the impact that federal laws have had on services for exceptional learners in schools. Give specific laws and the effects that they have had on the education that exceptional learners receive in today’s schools. Please prioritize these laws, beginning with the one that you believe to be most important, and justify your sequence in terms of the impact on the learners. (1 hour)

44. Explain the difference between accommodations and adaptations for students with special needs attending general education classes. Provide 4 examples of each these that might be used with students with learning disabilities or mild mental retardation. (1 hour)

45. Discuss the variables related to the overrepresentation of minorities in special education and provide suggestions for "fixing" the problem (if you feel there is a problem).