

## Education of Exceptional Students: Severe to Profound Disabilities (0544)

### Test at a Glance

Test Name	Education of Exceptional Students: Severe to Profound Disabilities		
Test Code	0544		
Time	1 hour		
Number of Questions	5 constructed-response questions		
Format	Questions requiring the application of special education knowledge to teaching situations		
	Content Categories	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Examination
	I. Assessment	1–2	25–42%
	II. Curriculum and Instruction	1–2	25–42%
	III. Structuring and Managing the Learning Environment	1–2	25–42%

### About This Test

The Education of Exceptional Students: Severe to Profound Disabilities test is designed for examinees who plan to teach in a special education program for students with severe to profound disabilities at any grade level from preschool through grade 12. The questions assess the examinee's ability to apply the principles of special education to situations that a teacher is likely to encounter in teaching students with severe to profound disabilities.

The knowledge and skills that are assessed are ones that have been judged to be necessary for safe and effective practice and needed at the time of entry into the profession.

## Topics Covered

Note: Throughout, “disabilities” should be taken to refer to severe to profound disabilities, including multiple disabilities.

### I. Characteristics of Learners

- The various etiologies and medical aspects of conditions affecting individuals with disabilities
- Psychological and social-emotional characteristics of individuals with disabilities
- Medical complications and implications for student support needs

### II. Assessment

- General and exceptionality-specific assessment instruments and methods (including, but not limited to, ecological inventories, interest inventories, portfolio assessments, functional assessments, future-based assessments, and adaptive/assistive technology assessments) used with individuals with disabilities; varied assessment strategies for individuals with disabilities
- Where relevant, adaptation and modification of existing assessment tools and methods to accommodate the unique abilities and needs of individuals with disabilities, including identification of reliable method(s) of response for individuals who lack typical communication and performance abilities
- Procedures for assessing and reporting both appropriate and problematic social behaviors of individuals with disabilities
- Utilizing assessment information (e.g., modality preferences, levels of support/independence) in developing instruction for individuals with severe disabilities in both specialized and general-education settings:
  - in academic domains (e.g., mathematics, reading, writing, social studies, science, art, music, vocational)
  - in behavioral domains (e.g., social skills, listening skills, communication skills, self-care skills and activities of daily living, prevocational skills)

### III. Curriculum and Instruction

- Evaluating, selecting, and developing curriculum materials appropriate for individuals with disabilities; appropriate adaptations, accommodations, and technology (including alternative and augmentative communication systems, and adaptations related to medical management) for individuals with disabilities in both specialized and general-education settings; culturally responsive curriculum and instruction
- Integrating related services into the instructional settings of learners and coordinating activities of related-services personnel to maximize direct instruction time for individuals with disabilities
- Using community resources, family members, and caregivers to assist in programming with individuals with disabilities
- Writing appropriate IEP/IFSP goals for students with disabilities in both academic/vocational and behavioral domains
- Planning and implementing instruction based on IEP’s and IFSP’s, including developing appropriate instructional objectives and lesson plans for students and groups of students with disabilities, in both specialized and general-education settings; including task modeling, prompt systems, hierarchies, systematic instruction, selection and scheduling of reinforcement
- Planning and implementing transitions from one setting or program to another, including transitions to and from alternative environments (e.g., psychiatric hospitals, residential treatment centers) and transition to post-school adult activities
- Collaborating with other personnel and with family members and caregivers in planning and implementing instruction and transitions for students with disabilities

#### **IV. Structuring and Managing the Learning Environment**

- Developing and implementing systematic behavior management plans, using observation, recording, charting, establishment of timelines, hierarchies of interventions, and schedules of reinforcement; selecting target behaviors to be changed and identifying the critical variables affecting the target behavior
- Problem-solving, conflict resolution, and behavior crisis management
- Specialized health care practices, first-aid techniques, physical positioning and management techniques, and other medically relevant interventions (including seizure management, tube feeding, catheterization, tracheostomy tube care, and administration of medications) necessary to maintain the health and safety of individuals with disabilities in a variety of educational settings

## Sample Test Questions

*This section presents sample questions and sample responses along with the standards used in scoring the responses. When you read these sample responses, keep in mind that they will be less polished than if they had been developed at home, edited, and carefully presented. The examinee does not know what questions will be asked and must decide, on the spot, how to respond. Readers take these circumstances into account when scoring the responses. Readers will assign scores based on the following scoring guide.*

### SCORING GUIDE

**3**

- Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the topic
- Shows a thorough understanding of the most significant aspects of any stimulus material presented
  - Responds appropriately to all parts of the question
  - Where an explanation is required, provides a strong explanation that is well supported by relevant evidence
  - Demonstrates a strong knowledge of subject matter, concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question

**2**

- Demonstrates a basic understanding of the topic
- Shows a basic understanding of the most significant aspects of any stimulus material presented
  - Responds appropriately to most parts of the question
  - Where an explanation is required, provides an explanation that is sufficiently supported by relevant evidence
  - Demonstrates a sufficient knowledge of subject matter, concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question

**1**

- Demonstrates a lack of understanding of the topic
- Shows a lack of understanding or misunderstanding of the most significant aspects of any stimulus material presented
  - Fails to respond appropriately to most parts of the question
  - Where an explanation is required, provides a weak explanation that is not well supported by relevant evidence
  - Demonstrates a weak knowledge of subject matter, concepts, theories, facts, procedures, or methodologies relevant to the question

**0**

- This score is reserved for blank papers, off-topic or completely inaccurate responses, or responses that merely rephrase the question.

*Directions: Two constructed-response questions follow. CAREFULLY READ AND FOLLOW THE SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS FOR EACH QUESTION. If the question has more than one part, be sure to answer each part of the question. At a test administration, you will write your answers to constructed-response questions in the space provided in the answer book.*

## Question 1 (Suggested time—15 minutes)

### Teaching Scenario

Steven is a child in a small, urban middle school life-skills program. He has cerebral palsy and mental retardation; he cannot speak, and he travels in an adapted wheelchair. Steven's cerebral palsy is athetoid, which means that he makes many involuntary movements and is in constant motion. Because the school has no lunchroom, Steven has been learning to eat in the classroom, using a specially adapted spoon with an adapted cuff and handle. He can now feed himself with assistance at his elbow, although his movements and the fact that he becomes distracted easily make control of the spoon difficult. Next year Steven will be in the high school building and will be eating in the noisy, crowded cafeteria.

### Task

Design an ongoing community-based training experience that could be implemented to help Steven practice and generalize eating skills learned in the classroom. Be sure to explain what the teacher needs to consider in making the plan and what ecological, curricular, and consequence strategies will be used.

### Sample Response That Received a Score of 3:

Steven will practice eating outside of the classroom. He (and other life-skills classmates) could go into the community to a restaurant once a week to develop skills. The teacher will make arrangements with the restaurant (planning transportation) and be sure the building and the tables are accessible. Steven and the teacher will bring along the special spoon Steven needs. The teacher needs to consider how to start this when the restaurant is almost empty and gradually go when it's busier. A weekly trip to the high school cafeteria could replace this when Steven's skills are better. Then the teacher will have to plan in the same way as for the restaurant + figuring out logistics of cafeteria schedule, alerting high school staff.

Ecological strategies (a lot are already in the planning) also include reasonable food to order, facing Steven so that there are few distractions on first few visits. Helping Steven develop his eating skills by modeling and training in the classroom in such a way that he's ready to try a restaurant or cafeteria is the overall curricular strategy. Make a list of steps in eating to practice; also of things that usually distract him. Try out steps. Build in a few distractions for him to try to ignore. Also do hand to mouth games or exercises when food is not involved—for extra practice. Consequence strategies will be rewards for improvement in eating skills and re-teaching if necessary. Think of ideas like, if having the same menu for several times in the restaurant helps him get used to steps, do that and then use a different food as one reward idea and as a test of whether he's generalizing.

### Sample Response That Received a Score of 1:

Steven can start of with basic hand-mouth coordination. He can practice extending his hand from the table to his mouth. This will enhance Steven's fine motor skills. Also he can practice picking up small objects to enhance his concentration. As far as Steven moving on to High School I don't see a problem, but I think his eating environment should remain the same. He's been eating in an isolated area with little or no noise this far, I think it should continue to stay the same until he has adjust to High-School first. You don't want to subject him to too much change all together. Allow him to ease himself into it.

## Question 2 (Suggested time—10 minutes)

### Teaching Scenario

Susan is a 16-year-old student with severe cognitive and physical disabilities. When Susan entered high school, her parents asked that she be placed in all general-education classes. The high school multidisciplinary team concluded that Susan would be better served in a self-contained classroom. Although believing that the inclusion setting was critical to Susan's social development, the parents reluctantly agreed to Susan's being placed in a self-contained class for a nine-week trial period. The teacher wants to build communications with the parents that will help create a good educational atmosphere for Susan and help all involved to make good use of the nine-week period.

### Task

Describe three methods that the teacher of the self-contained class can use to foster positive communications with the parents. Be sure that your description is detailed enough to make clear your reason for suggesting each method.

### Sample Response That Received a Score of 3:

1. The teacher can schedule an appointment with parents and give them an overview of what the program is about including the class schedule, activities and materials used in class. Teacher could ask parents to be involved in interactive homework with Susan.
2. The teacher can invite the parents to pay a visit to her classroom where they can observe what is done in class. They can see what it is like for Susan to have direct instruction and they can evaluate the encouragement of social development.
3. The teacher can also foster positive communication with parents through daily notes home and a weekly progress report about their daughter Susan. Parents can be invited to send notes back or comment on progress report.

### Sample Response That Received a Score of 1:

1. Send written information home daily.
2. Use a dialog journal.
3. Make sure the parents have your phone numbers.



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