



EEX 4202
Context & Foundations
83464 001
Fall 2026

Instructor Name

Elizabeth Doone

University Course Description

This course represents the first of five integrated instructional blocks in the ESE Program with linked field experiences. Experiences have been developed, so that teacher candidates are supported in gaining knowledge, skills and dispositions developmentally over time through scaffolded instruction. This course is designed to help teacher candidates develop a foundation of knowledge and understanding with regard to teaching and learning as a special educator.

Course Requisites

Prerequisite(s):

(EEX 4942 Minimum Grade: C-)

Corequisite(s):

Course Format

This course is a hybrid model and requires weekly preparation prior to both face-to-face and online classes. Therefore, students should interact with

the weekly content prior to class and view all videos, complete all readings and participate in all discussions, activities, and post-class reflections. All required content is posted in the weekly outline on Canvas. Students who keep up with the content and work strategically to complete their key assessments will be successful in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students will be able to:

- A. Analyze how educational policies and decisions are developed and implemented across federal, state, and local levels, with attention to their impact on special education.
- B. Explain the roles of special educators, school personnel, and educational leaders, and describe how schools function to support students with disabilities.
- C. Interpret key legislation (e.g., IDEA, Section 504, ADA) and legal rights of students with disabilities and their families, including the role of advocacy and litigation in shaping services.
- D. Describe major disability categories, their characteristics, and how disability intersects with cultural, linguistic, and individual differences.
- E. Explain typical and atypical cognitive, social-emotional, and behavioral development, and how these influence learning and school success.
- F. Examine foundational assessment concepts and practices, including interpretation of data, progress monitoring, and the use of data within problem-solving and RTI frameworks.
- G. Identify evidence-based instructional strategies, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and inclusive practices that support access to the general education curriculum.
- H. Describe the processes for identifying, evaluating, and serving students with disabilities, including service delivery models and the continuum of supports.
- I. Apply effective communication and collaboration strategies to work with families, caregivers, and interdisciplinary teams, with sensitivity to cultural and linguistic differences.
- J. Demonstrate understanding of ethical principles, professional dispositions, and the role of self-reflection in becoming an effective and equitable special educator.

Course Objectives

The overarching theme for this course is the Context and Foundations of Teaching and Learning in Special Education. Teacher candidates will enhance their understandings of the context of schools, the nature of

teaching in K-12 schools, the curriculum, characteristics and needs of students with disabilities, the nature of special education including historical perspectives, the role of the teacher, and professional behaviors including self-reflection with particular emphasis placed on special education and the role of special educators within a school-wide context. The course will also help teacher candidates explore self-awareness with regard to values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors and develop willingness to make individual choices that reflect concern for others.

Following are the guiding questions and topic areas that will be addressed in an integrated fashion throughout this and subsequent semesters. This instructional block addresses the content at a Foundational (knowledge acquisition) level and will be revisited in a scaffolded manner that is considerate of the developmental needs of teacher candidates in subsequent semesters in the program.

- i. What are K-12 schools?
 - a. How K-12 Educational Policy Decisions are made
 - b. The structure of K-12 education at the federal, state, and local levels
 - c. How schools operate on a day to day basis
 - d. Accountability
- ii. What is “teaching” in today’s K-12 schools?
 - a. Responsibilities, activities, issues, and stressors of teachers in K-12 schools
 - b. Basic pedagogical practices that occur in general education classrooms
 - c. How teachers are evaluated and how teacher evaluation methods relate to salary and other incentives
 - d. Teacher as problem-solver
 - e. Inclusive education
 - f. Characteristics and needs of culturally and/or linguistically diverse students
- iii. What should students learn and how is their learning assessed?
 - a. K-12 curriculum in: reading/literacy, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies
 - b. Assessment Practices
 - c. Social/emotional Domains
 - d. Cognitive Development and Learning Theories
- iv. Who are students with disabilities and how do they learn?
 - a. Disabilities as categorized by the IDEA

- b. Effect of Primary Disability Characteristics on School Success
 - c. The Lived Experience of Students with Disabilities
 - d. Diverse Students with Disabilities
- v. What is special education and how does it work?
 - a. Identification methods for service delivery
 - b. History of special education
 - c. Socio-political context of Special Education
 - d. Impact of special education on the lives of students with disabilities and their families
 - e. Technical and professional language of special education
 - f. Ethical issues in special education
- vi. Who is the special educator in today's schools and what do they do?
 - a. The roles of special education teachers in fostering positive family-school relationships
 - b. Roles of special educators for facilitating integrative practices
 - c. The problem-solving process and its relationship to effective teaching
 - d. Research-supported practices for students with disabilities that address academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and transition needs
- vii. Who am I in relation to becoming a special educator, and what do I need to achieve this goal?
 - a. Understanding self and its impact on my perspective as a special educator
 - b. Self-reflection and effective teaching
 - c. Building personal and teacher self-efficacy and resilience

Required Texts and/or Readings and Course Materials

Vaughn, Bos, Schumm (2023) Teaching Students who are Exceptional, Diverse and At-Risk in the General Education Classroom. Pearson.



TEACHING STUDENTS

Who are Exceptional, Diverse, and At Risk
in the General Educational Classroom



SHARON R. VAUGHN | CANDACE S. BOS | JEANNE S. SCHUMM

EIGHTH EDITION

Supplementary (Optional) Texts and Materials

All additional materials will be uploaded in the Canvas modules.

How to Succeed in this Course

This course is a hybrid model and requires weekly preparation prior to both face-to-face and online classes. To succeed in this "flipped classroom" students must read, view and process all course materials prior to class, so that during class they can apply the concepts through class discussions and activities that deepen their understanding of the course content. Students will complete weekly discussions/wikis directly after class and then make meaningful connections to the readings, videos, course activities and discussions that demonstrates their understanding of how the course content interconnects and is relevant when processing their weekly reflection papers. All required content is posted in the weekly outline on Canvas. Students who keep up with the content and work strategically to complete their key assessments will be successful in this course.

Grading Scale

Grading Scale	
97 - 100	A+
94 - 96	A
90 - 93	A-
87 - 89	B+
84 - 86	B
80 - 83	B-
77 - 79	C+
74 - 76	C
70 - 73	C-
67 - 69	D+
64 - 66	D

Grade Categories and Weights

Assessment Category and Percent of Final Grade	
Assessment	Percent of Final Grade
Article Reaction Papers/ Reflections	35%
Attendance and Participation	8%
Disability Presentation Project	12%
Foundations Exam *Score of 80% required to Matriculate	--- Key Assessment
Modules	15%
**Service-Learning Project	30% Key Assessment
Text Practice Quizzes	Priceless
Total	100% *

Instructor Feedback Policy & Grade Dissemination

The instructor will typically provide feedback on discussions and wikis within one week of the posted deadline, and feedback on reflection papers/projects within two weeks of the posted deadline. You can access your

scores at any time using "Grades" in Canvas. Be sure to review both the rubric and your paper for feedback and apply as appropriate to future assignments!

Major Topics and Course Schedule

Weekly Modules and Due Dates

**Weekly Modules and
Due Dates**

D at e	Topic	Assign ments Due
W e e k 1 A u g u st 2 6	ESE Progra ms Orienta tion Demon stratio n of Canvas , Review of syllabu s Service - Learni ng Project	Submit : Forms from orienta tion Purcha se Text Read: Chapte r 1 in the text.

Week 2	Building Community: Developing Class as a Cohort History of Special Education Time-line Activity Developing Heuristics: • Building Community • Critical Thinking Heuristic	Read Text: Ch. 1 to apply the concepts in class. Complete Landmark Court Cases sheet and bring to class. Article Reaction Paper: <i>Beyond Bribes and Threats: How Not to Get Control of the Classroom</i> , heuristic and chapters

	Develo ping Strateg ies	
W e e k 3 S e p t e m b e r 9 C o m p l e t e O n l i n e M o d u l e	RTI Module	Read Text: C hapter 2 Submit module assign ment throug h Canvas post by Sunday

Week 4	Characteristics of Intellectual / Developmental Disabilities	Read Text: Chapter 10
Self-Portrait 16	Concept Master on Integrating Students	View: <i>Sean's Story</i>
	Task Analysis	Reaction
	Discussion on Kohn	Paper: Identify the teaching strategies and the characteristics for students with IDD that you saw in the video utilized for both Sean and Bobby <u>and</u> those mentioned
	Review Landmark Court Cases	

		ned in the chapter that you did not see utilized in the video. How would additio nal strategi es help Sean and Bobby ? Make connec tions to course content .

Week 5	Working with Families - Service Learning Project	Read Text: Ch. 3 Read: <i>Why Parents Don't Come to School</i> Reaction Paper: Write a paper or create a pamphlet for families sharing ideas you will implement to engage families, connecting your ideas with rationale from text and other readings/heuristics/videos. Review : SL
September 23	Complete Online Module	

		Project ideas Complete: questionnaire about Disability Presentation Project for week 10

Week 6	Characteristic s of LD Teaching Heurist ic: Utilize Graphi c Organi zer to Identify Teachi ng Charac teristic s of Effecti ve Instruc tional Strateg ies for Studen ts with Disabili ties Case Discus sion: What are We Going to Do?	Read Text: Chapte r 6 be prepar ed to apply concep ts in class. View: <i>F</i> <i>AT</i> <i>City</i> Compl ete: FA T City Questi ons Article Reactio n: Create or choose a graphic organiz er for use in your class.

Week 7	Characteristics of EBD and ADD/ADHD	Read Text: Chapters 5 and 8. Be prepared to apply in class.
Objectives	Executive function	
7	Emotional and Behavioral Disorders	View: <i>1. When the Chips Are Down & 2. ADD Classroom Strategies and Techniques</i>
		Article Reaction: Write a 2-pg reflection on <i>When the Chips Are</i>

		<i>Down incorp orating lesson s learned from the chapter / discus sion and videos.</i>

Week 8	Characteristics of Autism Movement for Neurodiverse Learners	Read Text: Chapter 9 View:
October 14	Communication and behavior support strategies	1. <i>Autism as a World</i>
	Linguistic Strategies	2. <i>Asperger's Syndrome</i>
		Reaction Paper: Reflect on the Characteristics of Students with Autism

		and Asperg er's from the chapter as they relate to the videos and course content 2pgs. Post: S-L Plan dues

W e e k 9	Assisti ve Techno logy Module	Read: AT: Resource Round Up
O ct o b e r 2 1		Submit module assign ment throug h Canvas post by Sunday
O nl in e M o d ul e		Compl ete or registe r for all section s of GKT

Week 10 October 28	Disability/ Content Presentations Co-teaching Collaboration	Read Text: Read Ch. 4, 7, 11 or 14, 15, 26 Present: Disability / Content Project Complete: Choose 1 Cooperative strategy and create a Lesson Idea and teaching station. Write: Scores on Summary Sheet and reflections on Self-Assessments. .

Week 11 NOV. 4	Eligibility Processes RTI IEP Processes	Read: Chapter 2 (pps 53- 66) and Ch. 15, Review : Harry Wong, Marzano and Lesson Plan Components. Submit : Deliverable or 2-page paper sharing 2 ideas from each source and how you plan to implement them in your classroom.
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Week 12	Grouping and Classroom Instructional Structures	Submit module assignment through Canvas post by Sunday	
Nov. 11			
Online Module			

W e e k 1 3 N o v. 1 8	Comm on Core Standards Lesson Planni ng and Curricu lum Maps	Article Reactio n Paper: <i>Praise that Doesn' t Demea n, Criticis m That Doesn' t Wound</i> Read Article: Curric ulum Plannin g Submit : Service - Learnin g Project Nov. 21
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W e e k 1 4	 Happy Thanks giving	Prepar e: SL Presen tation Study: Founda tions Exams- Review Quizzes
N o v. 2 5		
O n l i n e M o d u l e s		
W e e k 1 5	Service - Learni ng Plan Prese ntation s	Celebr ate: Yo ur Succes s! Registe r for the FTCE!
D e c. 2	Found ations Exam	

Community Engaged Learning

This course is designated as Community Engaged Learning (CEL). *The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching defines community engagement as the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually-beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.*

Key components are: (1) that it enhances understanding of course content and is tied to specific learning goals through consciously designed reflection, (2) that one of the learning goals is civic engagement, intended to enhance students' sense of personal responsibility to participate in the public realm to address current pressing social problems, and thus going beyond the academic or skill based goals of the course, and (3) it is based on a reciprocal relationship through which the activities are planned and implemented through collaboration with a community partner to meet the challenges identified by that partner.

Global Citizens Project

EEX 4202 is certified as a Global Citizens course and may be used to fulfill partial requirements of the Global Citizen Award upon successful completion of the course (final grade of B or higher).

USF Core Syllabus Policies

USF has a set of central policies related to student recording class sessions, academic integrity and grievances, student accessibility services, academic disruption, religious observances, academic continuity, food insecurity, pregnancy and related conditions, and sexual harassment that **apply to all courses at USF**. Be sure to review these online:

<https://www.usf.edu/provost/faculty-success/resources-policies-forms/core-syllabus-policy-statements.aspx>

Student Recordings

Florida Statute 1004.097 Free Expression on Campus

Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal, educational use (USF Policy 10-048). A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab sessions, student presentations (whether individually or part of a group), class discussion, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member is prohibited. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the USF Student Conduct Code.

Course Policies: Grades

Late Work Policy:

Late work will be accepted, although points will be deducted: a half-letter grade for work submitted 2-6 days late and a full letter grade for work submitted more than a week late. Submitting work 2 weeks beyond the due date will require approval from the course instructor and a significant reduction of the grade.

Grades of "Incomplete":

Due to the required key assessments in this course students who are unable to complete the requirements for key assessment by the end of the semester will earn an "f" in the course and will be unable to matriculate. Students with extenuating circumstances with outstanding course assignments or key assessments may meet with the course instructor and request the opportunity to complete the outstanding assignments in order to matriculate. Students who are in otherwise good standing in the course will have an opportunity to submit the missing work. The student's grade of

“f” which will be adjusted once all assignments are completed and the key assessment is loaded into Canvas.

Make-up Exams Policy:

The final exam in this course is a key assessment. If a student cannot be present for the final examination s/he should notify the instructor ASAP. A make-up exam will be given only if the student has notified the instructor in advance that s/he cannot be present for the exam. For students who do not pass the Foundations Exam the first time, a secondary exam will be schedule 1 week after the original exam.

Group Work Policy:

Teaching is a collaborative endeavor, therefore participating in group activities and projects that require communication, problem solving and sharing of ideas develops professionalism and increases effective communication skills. Teacher candidates are encouraged to participate in all class activities and group projects. On collaborative assignments, all members of a group are expected to equally participate in the group project and understand how all the components build coherence. Students will receive the same score for their project unless the student is a non-contributing member as evidenced by shared document contributions.

Grades of "Incomplete"

The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course. For undergraduate courses: An “I” grade may be awarded to a student only when a small portion of the student’s work is incomplete and only when the student is otherwise earning a passing grade. The time limit for removing the “I” is to be set by the instructor of the course. For undergraduate students, this time limit may not exceed two academic semesters, whether or not the student is in residence, and/or graduation, whichever comes first. For graduate students, this time limit may not exceed one academic semester. “I” grades not removed by the end of the time limit will be changed to “IF” or “IU,” whichever is appropriate.

Campus Free Expression

It is fundamental to the University of South Florida’s mission to support an environment where divergent ideas, theories, and philosophies can be openly exchanged and critically

evaluated. Consistent with these principles, this course may involve discussion of ideas that you find uncomfortable, disagreeable, or even offensive.

In the instructional setting, ideas are intended to be presented in an objective manner and not as an endorsement of what you should personally believe. “Objective” means that the idea(s) presented can be tested by critical peer review and rigorous debate, and that the idea(s) is supported by credible research.

In this course you may be asked to engage with complex ideas and to demonstrate an understanding of the ideas. Understanding and engaging with an idea does not require you to believe it or to agree with it.

Course Policies: Technology and Media

Email: Students with questions and concerns on course assignments between course sessions should email the course instructor through the USF email (edoone@usf.edu). The instructor will respond within 24 – 48 hours. Response time on the week may be 48 – 72 hours.

Canvas: This course will be offered via USF's learning management system (LMS), Canvas. If you need help learning how to perform various tasks related to this course or other courses being offered in Canvas, please view the following videos or consult the Canvas help guides. You may also contact USF's IT department at (813) 974-1222 or help@usf.edu.

Laptop Usage: Students are encouraged to bring their laptop to class as there will be opportunities to complete activities or research information which require access to a laptop. Students using their laptop for reasons beyond the course topics will be asked to close their laptops and refrain from inappropriate use in the future. Professional use of technology is a course expectation.

Phone Usage: There may be an occasion in class when cell phones will be utilized to complete an assessment or survey through Kahoot or Slido. Students using their phones during class for texting or surfing the Internet

will be prohibited from accessing phones in class. If cell phones become a problem, we will create a cell phone break.

Course Discussion: Each week after class students will reflect on their learning by connecting the course activities, discussions, readings with their personal ah ha's to add to their knowledge base' of Exceptional Student Education. The course discussion board/ Wiki then becomes a repository of all the class information, for the semester and can provide insights on one's learning at the end of the semester. Weekly responses on the discussion board should include the following: What I learned, connections to all the weekly content, how I can apply this content, and questions I still have, in addition to any weekly prompt.

Course Policies: Student Expectations

Health and Wellness

Your health is a priority at the University of South Florida. We encourage members of our community to look out for each other and to reach out for help if someone is in need. If you or someone you know is in distress, please make a referral at www.usf.edu/sos so that the Student Outreach & Support can contact and provide helpful resources to the student in distress. A 24-hour licensed mental healthcare professional, offered through the counseling center, is available by phone at 813-974-2831, option 3. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, please dial 9-1-1.

Title IX Policy

USF is committed to fostering a safe and respectful learning environment, free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment, in accordance with Title IX and USF Policy 0-004. If a student shares an experience of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, or relationship violence with a USF employee (including faculty), that employee will notify the Title IX Office. This allows the Title IX Office to send the student an email with information about support resources and options—if it is safe to do so. Students are not required to respond to this email. The Title IX Office is a private resource. Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis to provide students with support measures. To speak to a

confidential resource, students may contact USF Center for Victim Advocacy at 813-974-5757. Confidential resources do not notify the Title IX Office unless the student requests it. For more information about Title IX, available resources, or to make a report, please visit www.usf.edu/title-ix.

Course Hero / Chegg Policy

The USF Policy on Academic Integrity specifies that students may not use websites that enable cheating, such as by uploading or downloading material for this purpose. This does apply specifically to Chegg.com and CourseHero.com – almost any use of these websites (including uploading proprietary materials) constitutes a violation of the academic integrity policy.

Professionalism Policy

Per university policy and classroom etiquette; mobile phones, iPods, etc. must be silenced during all classroom and lab lectures. Those not heeding this rule will be asked to leave the classroom/lab immediately so as to not disrupt the learning environment. Please arrive on time for all class meetings. Students who habitually disturb the class by talking, arriving late, etc., and have been warned may suffer a reduction in their final class grade.

Turnitin.com

In this course, turnitin.com may be utilized. Turnitin is an automated system which instructors may use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you may be expected to submit all assignments in both hard copy and electronic format. After the assignment is processed, as instructor I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process visit <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Netiquette Guidelines

- Act professionally in the way you communicate. Treat your instructors and peers with respect, the same way you would do in a face-to-face

environment. Respect other people's ideas and be constructive when explaining your views about points you may not agree with.

- Be sensitive. Be respectful and sensitive when sharing your ideas and opinions. There will be people in your class with different linguistic backgrounds, political and religious beliefs or other general differences.
- Proofread and check spelling. Doing this before sending an email or posting a thread on a discussion board will allow you to make sure your message is clear and thoughtful. Avoid the use of all capital letters, it can be perceived as if you are shouting, and it is more difficult to read.
- Keep your communications focused and stay on topic. Complete your ideas before changing the subject. By keeping the message on focus you allow the readers to easily get your idea or answers they are looking for.
- Be clear with your message. Avoid using humor or sarcasm. Since people can't see your expressions or hear your tone of voice, meaning can be misinterpreted.

Email and Discussion Board Guidelines

- Use the subject line effectively by using a meaningful line of what your email or discussion is about.
- Keep your emails and postings related to the course content. You should not post anything personal on a discussion board unless it is requested by the instructor.
- Any personal, course or confidential issues should be directly communicated to the instructor via email. The discussion boards are public spaces; therefore, any issues should not be posted there.

End of Semester Student Evaluations

All classes at USF make use of an online system for students to provide feedback to the University regarding the course. These surveys will be made available at the end of the semester, and the University will notify you by email when the response window opens. Your participation is highly encouraged and valued.

Food and Drink Policy (for in-campus sessions only).

Please adhere to the firm policy of no beverages (other than bottled/capped water), food, tobacco products, or like items in the classroom. Your understanding of the necessity for this policy and cooperation will be greatly appreciated. This policy will be strictly enforced.

Learning Support and Campus Offices

Academic Accommodations

Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in order to receive academic accommodations. For additional information about academic accommodations and resources, you can visit the SAS website.

[SAS website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout site.](#)

[SAS website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Academic Support Services

The USF Office of Student Success coordinates and promotes university-wide efforts to enhance undergraduate and graduate student success. For a comprehensive list of academic support services available to all USF students, please visit the [Office of Student Success website.](#)

Canvas Technical Support

If you have technical difficulties in Canvas, you can find access to the Canvas guides and video resources in the “Canvas Help” page on the homepage of your Canvas course. You can also contact the help desk by calling 813-974-1222 in Tampa or emailing help@usf.edu.

[USF IT Services](#)

Center for Victim Advocacy

The [Center for Victim Advocacy](#) empowers survivors of crime, violence, or abuse by promoting the restoration of decision making, by advocating for their rights, and by offering support and resources. Contact information is available online.

Counseling Center

The Counseling Center promotes the wellbeing of the campus community by providing culturally sensitive counseling, consultation, prevention, and training

that enhances student academic and personal success. Contact information is available online.

[Counseling Center website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout site.](#)

[Counseling Center website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Tutoring

The Tutoring Hub offers free tutoring in several subjects to USF undergraduates. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information, email asctampa@usf.edu.

[Tutoring website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout site.](#)

[Tutoring website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Writing Studio

The Writing Studio is a free resource for USF undergraduate and graduate students. At the Writing Studio, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you, at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, email: writingstudio@usf.edu.

[Writing studio website for the Tampa campus and Sarasota-Manatee Teachout Site.](#)

[Writing studio website for the St. Pete campus.](#)

Student Ombuds Office

Florida Statute 1006.51 and Florida Board of Governors Regulation 6.011 require that all public institutions provide ombuds services to students. The Student Ombuds Office at USF is a confidential, impartial, informal, and independent resource for students experiencing challenges related to the university. Ombuds can help students safely explore options, clarify processes, and consider next steps. [Learn more or make an appointment at usf.edu/student-ombuds.](https://usf.edu/student-ombuds)