



EEX 4242

**Enhancing Expertise in Teaching & Instructional
Decision Making**

83466 001

Fall 2026

Instructor Name

Hope Zikpi

University Course Description

This course represents the fourth of five integrated instructional blocks in the program of study with linked field experiences. Experiences have been developed, so that students are supported in gaining knowledge, skills and dispositions developmentally over time through scaffolded instruction. The course is designed to build on the knowledge developed during the previous semester. The over-arching theme and focus for this semester is Enhancing Expertise in Teaching and Instructional Decision-Making. Teacher candidates will continue to apply their understandings of course competencies (i.e., the context of schools, the nature of teaching in K-12 schools, the curriculum, characteristics of students with disabilities, the nature of special education including historical perspectives, the role of the special education teacher, and professional behaviors including self-reflection) within a variety of school contexts. Over the course of subsequent semesters teacher candidates will build upon this knowledge and apply their understanding to solve problems, apply them in practice, and engage in critical reflection of themselves and their role as special educators. Particular emphasis will be placed on students learning how to apply course competencies

Course Requisites

Prerequisite(s):

(EEX 4241 Minimum Grade: C-)

Corequisite(s):

Course Format

This instructional block will be closely integrated with the Level IV Practicum where students will be placed in a classroom context and will be engaged in assuming increasing levels of responsibility for instructional planning, implementation of instruction, and using data to make instructional decisions. Explicit linkages will be made between students' practicum experiences and course content.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand School Structures and Roles Apply knowledge of the organizational structure, daily operations, and responsibilities of school personnel—including special educators—to support safe and effective learning environments across K–12 settings.
2. Implement Responsive Curriculum and Instruction Design and evaluate instructional strategies and curriculum materials across core content areas (e.g., literacy, mathematics, oral/written expression), with attention to the varied learning needs of students, including those receiving specialized support.
3. Use Assessment to Guide Instructional Decisions Interpret and apply a range of assessment tools and data sources to inform instructional planning and problem solving within school-based support frameworks such as ProblemSolving/Response to Instruction (PS/RTI).
4. Support Learners Through Developmental and DisabilityAwareness Demonstrate understanding of developmental stages, learning theories, and the characteristics of students with disabilities, and apply this knowledge to promote academic and social growth in classroom settings.
5. Collaborate Effectively with Families and Caregivers Develop and apply communication strategies that foster constructive relationships with families and caregivers, recognizing the influence of language, background, and life experiences on family-school interactions.
6. Design Accessible Learning Environments and Support Models Implement research-based practices, instructional accommodations, and collaborative teaching approaches that provide students with meaningful

access to the general education curriculum and support positive learning outcomes.

7. Reflect on Professional Practice and Educator Identity Engage in ongoing self reflection to examine personal beliefs, attitudes, and professional responsibilities, and demonstrate a commitment to continuous growth and effective service as a special educator.

Course Objectives

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7. Reflect on Professional Practice and Educator Identity Engage in ongoing self reflection to examine personal beliefs, attitudes, and professional responsibilities, and demonstrate a commitment to continuous growth and effective service as a special educator.

Required Texts and/or Readings and Course Materials

There are no required textbooks for this course. Required readings are posted in Canvas. Unless otherwise indicated, all materials in Canvas are required.

Supplementary (Optional) Texts and Materials

Additional Resources: RTI

http://www.florida-rti.org/educatorResources/MTSS_Book_ImplComp_012612.pdf

The Learning Toolbox

<https://coe.jmu.edu/learningtoolbox/studentstart.htm>

This site provides students, teachers, and parents important information about how to evaluate strategy instruction needs for students with learning disabilities and ADHD and teaching academic success strategies.

CAST Universal Design for Learning

<http://www.cast.org/research/udl/index.html>

National Center on Student Progress Monitoring

<http://www.studentprogress.org/>

National Center on Response to Intervention

<http://www.rti4success.org>

RTI Action Network

<http://www.rtinetwork.org/>

Doing What Works: Research-Based Education Practices Online

http://dww.ed.gov/topic/?T_ID=2312

This site includes recommended practices for reading and literacy for working with primary and adolescent students, along with informational briefs on reading.

National Center on Response to Intervention

http://www.rti4success.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)

<http://www.nichcy.org>

Grading Scale

A+ = 97%-100%

A = 93% - 96%

A- = 90%- 92%

B+ = 87%-89%

B = 83%- 86%

B- = 80%-82%

C+ = 77%-79%

C = 73%-76%

C- = 70%- 72%

D = 65%-69%

F = below 65%

*A satisfactory level of proficiency in written work is expected and a grading component for all assignments will include the quality of written expression: proper spelling, punctuation, syntax, format presentation, and effective use of APA. Excessive problems with written expression, or submission of unprofessional projects will result in a lower grade on the assignment. Plagiarized assignments will result in receiving a failing grade on individual written assignments and possibly the class.

The following rubric will be used at the instructor's discretion, when rubrics are not specifically included in an assignment in canvas. Depending on the points in each assignment, the instructor may use the following rubric for grading:

100% = demonstrates exceptionally thoughtful and thorough connections to class reading or reflection on the entire assignment (including making multiple connections to prior classes or recent class sessions, content, readings, AND teaching etc.).

80% = demonstrates thoughtful and thorough reading or reflection on the entire assignment (including making connections to class or content or teaching etc.)

.70% = demonstrates superficial reading or reflection on the entire assignment OR thoughtful reading of only part of the assignment.0= demonstrates superficial reading of only part of the assignment (no thoughtful reflection or connections made).

Grade Categories and Weights

Course grade weights

Assignment	Percentage of course grade
Project Monitoring Project	40%
Family Communication and Engagement Checklist	10%
IEP Checklist	10%
Weekly assignments and class participation	20%
Differentiated lesson plan and implementation	10%
Module assignments	10%

Instructor Feedback Policy & Grade Dissemination

*Key Assessment:

The Key Assessment for the Special Education Undergraduate Program during this semester is the Progress Monitoring Project. This assessment is aligned with the Council for Exceptional Children Knowledge and Skill Standards, the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices, the Florida Department of Education Exceptional Student Education Competencies and Skills, and the College of Education Conceptual Framework. The Special Education Program has identified a series of Key Assessments throughout the program of study that will be assessed by faculty to determine if the teacher candidate is progressing toward competency in the standards listed above. Candidates must demonstrate competency by performing satisfactorily on all indicators within each Program Key Assessment. Satisfactory performance constitutes a score of 3 or above on each indicator in the Key Assessment Rubric. If the candidate does not achieve competency on the first attempt, the Key Assessment must be re-submitted with appropriate revisions by the date designated by the course instructor. Failure to do so will affect your ability to matriculate in the program. Scores for the first

submission to achieve mastery on the Key Assessment will be used in computation of the final grade of the course. A complete description and rubric for the course is posted in Canvas.

E-Portfolio: All tasks designated as key assessments must be completed with a score of 3 or above on each criterion in order to pass the course. An assignment that receives a score of below 3 on any criterion must be resubmitted until a score of 3 or better is achieved and that score will be entered into the Assignment E-portfolio system, CampusFolio. However, the original grade on the assignment will be the score used to compute the final grade for the course. All revisions must be completed before the last class meeting. Once Key Assignments are uploaded, the system emails a link to the course instructor who then inputs your rubric scores. Your critical assignment will need to be uploaded to the e-portfolio system on the date that the assignment is due. Therefore, you upload your Key Assessment to Canvas and to the e-portfolio system. Please see your course syllabus calendar of assignment due dates. Failure to upload the assignment to eportfolio can result in a grade of Incomplete "I" and prevent matriculation into your final internship.

FERPA Statement: Student information is protected under the Family Educational Right and Privacy Act (FERPA). The College of Education at the University of South Florida wants to ensure that students' records are protected and that teachers and potential teachers have the most appropriate training opportunities. Candidates must adhere to the FERPA statute that can be found at: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

This project has been approved through the Hillsborough County Public School Research Review process. Note that individual student information is protected under FERPA. When referring to students in the written or oral assignment, reference should be made to the student(s) by a pseudonym. Audio recordings, video recordings, and/or images should not be posted or stored on any electronic medium that has the potential to be viewed by any individuals other than those for whom they were intended in order to complete the assignment. Media may not be used for professional presentations, bulletin boards, Facebook, YouTube, or any nonsecure, non-password protected web

site and/or venue that will violate students' privacy without student and parental written permission.

Student Information (K-12) collected for this task will NOT include information that identifies the individual student and any student identifiable information/data collected will NOT be retained (e.g., videos with students in them, copies of student work, audio recordings of student interviews, etc.) past the completion of the course and the assignment of a grade by the instructor/professor.

Family Engagement/Communication Checklist: (10% of grade)- Students will complete four activities related to family communication including a letter of introduction, a newsletter or webpage, a parent teacher conference, a family/parent contact to discuss student success and development of future plans for family engagement. Mentor teachers should sign off on each completed experience. The signed sheet will be uploaded to Canvas at the end of the semester. Each experience is worth 10 points with a total of 40 points for this assignment. It will be due the same day as the Key Assessment.

IEP Checklist (10% of grade)- Students will work with mentor teachers to gain experiences for various aspects of the IEP process. A checklist of experiences can be found in Canvas. Seven of the fourteen should be completed this semester. The mentor teacher will sign off on each experience and the form will be uploaded at the end of the semester. Each experience is worth 10 points with a total of 70 points for the assignment.

Module assignments (10% of grade)- posted in Canvas. Throughout the course, various IRIS modules will be assigned. Students will complete modules and turn in questions as described in the assignment. Points will be awarded for correct answers.

Differentiated Lesson Plan (10% of grade)- Students will plan and implement a differentiated lesson plan that meets the learning needs of all students in the instructional group. For lesson plans to be submitted in the **differentiation section** of the reading binder, leveled texts must be used.

Participation and weekly class preparation assignments (10% of grade/ 10 points per class)- Students are expected to be present and actively participate in all class activities. Weekly assignments posted in Canvas and are intended to prepare students for class discussions and activities. To earn full points for each class, students must be present, engaged, and prepared by submitting assignments ahead of time.

Major Topics and Course Schedule

Course assignments

Date	Topic	Practice and Graded Assignments
Week one Module one	Read course syllabus Orientation	Key Assessment Review Cite sources quiz
Week two Module two	Introduction to MTSS	FLDOE BEES-MTSS INTRO PD COURSE
Week three Module three	RTI and Progress Monitoring MTSS	Before Class: Jayden Case Study Review and Notes for activity in class
Week four Module four	(Jayden) Identifying student learning needs and developing intervention targets	Exit Ticket Identify focus student Intensive Intervention Module
Week 5 Module 5	Principles of Effective Instruction 6 characteristics of effective instruction Evidence based practices	Progress Monitoring Plan Part One Due Sign up for individual conferences Checklist of IEP experiences Family and community communication
Week 6 Module 6	No face to face class: Individual meetings	Preparation assignments in Canvas for week 7 Differentiation Modules

Week 7 Module 7	Differentiated Instruction Base Planning Application and Practice	Instructional strategies for differentiation Content Differentiation
Week 8 Module 8	Differentiated Instruction through the use of Technology	Instructional strategies for differentiation content differentiation
Week 9 Module 9	Differentiated Instruction Implementation Analysis	Peer Review 2 lesson plans/Make adjustments as needed before class Teach differentiated lesson plan this week Read developing quality IEPS Watch one video of choice Discussion Board
Week 10 Module 10	IEP process and development	Transition Coalition assignment
Week 11 Module 11	Transition Planning State requirements for transition	Student Assignment: Neural Branching
Week 12 Module 12	Facilitating Higher Order Thinking Growth Mindset	Complete PMP project part 2 forPeer review
Week 13 Module 13	Taking your teaching to the next level Innovative teaching Peer Review of Project with Rubric Project wrap up and refinement	Sign up for individual conferences Prepare PowerPoint - PMP results IEP Checklist of experiences
Week 14 Module 14	No class-individual meetings	Family Communication and Engagement Checklist
Week 15 Module 15	Presentation of PMP Project Results	
Week 16 Module 16	Presentation of PMP ProjectResults- if needed	Winter Break

Course Schedule

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

First Day Attendance Policy

Complete the syllabus review and the citation quiz for first day attendance.

Late Work Policy:

There are no make-ups for essays, quizzes, the midterm, or the final exam. Essays turned in late will be assessed a penalty: a half-letter grade if it is one day late, or a full-letter grade for 2-7 days late. Essays will not be accepted if overdue by more than seven days.

Make-up Exams Policy: Offer specifics about your policy on exam make-ups.

If a student cannot be present for an examination for a valid reason (validity to be determined by the instructor), 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. Make-up exams are given at the convenience of the instructor usually on Fridays at 10 am.

Extra Credit Policy:

There is no extra credit. Assignments with revisions may result in extra points awarded.

Rewrite Policy: Offer specifics about your policy on rewrites.

Rewrites are entirely optional; however, only the formal essay may be rewritten for a revised grade. Note that an alternate grading rubric will be used for the rewrite, featuring an additional column that evaluates the changes made specifically.

Exam Retention Policy: Describe how long you will keep graded work.

Example: After exams are graded, the instructor will review the examination with the class and collect all exams. The exams will be retained for one semester following the current one, and then they will be destroyed.

Essay Commentary Policy: Offer specifics about your policy on essays.

Commentary on essays will be delivered in written format, at the end of the essay. However, upon request, an alternate delivery method can be used. If desired, instructor comments will be made verbally and delivered to the student as an mp3 through Canvas. This approach yields far fewer written comments, but much more commentary in general is delivered, due to the speed and specificity of speech. Those requesting mp3 feedback must state so when the essay is turned in.

Group Work Policy: Offer specifics about your policy on group work.

Everyone must take part in a group project. All members of a group will receive the same score; that is, the project is assessed and everyone receives this score. However, that

number is only 90% of your grade for this project. The final 10% is individual, and refers to your teamwork. Every person in the group will provide the instructor with a suggested grade for every other member of the group, and the instructor will assign a grade that is informed by those suggestions. The grading criteria are the same as the group project. Once formed, groups cannot be altered or switched, except for reasons of extended hospitalization.

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

This course is 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 consult the [Canvas Student Guides](#). You may also contact USF's IT department at (813) 974-1222 or help@usf.edu. In this class, software will be used to record

live class lectures and discussions. As a student in this class, your participation in live class discussions will be recorded. These recordings will be made available only to students enrolled in the class, to assist those who cannot attend the live session or to serve as a resource for those who would like to review content that was presented. Students who prefer to participate via audio only will be allowed to disable their video camera so only audio will be captured. Please discuss this option with your instructor.

The use of laptops is encouraged for note taking and reviewing assignments. Students are expected to use them for academic uses only while in class.

Cell phone use should be kept to a minimum particularly during group work and class discussions. Cell phone use is encouraged during breaks and as needed for educational collaboration and games.

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)