



Purdue University Northwest

Hammond

Introduction To Special Education

EDPS (NW) 26000 001

PNW Fall 2026

Course Information

Modality: In-person

Credit Hours: 3

Meeting Location: CLO 310

Meeting Information: R 12:30 PM-03:20 PM

Instructor(s) Contact Information

Name: Danielle Starks

Email: starks15@purdue.edu

Student Consultation Hours: Wednesday 11-3 and Thursday 9-11

Course Description

Credit Hours: 3.00. A survey of the field of special education: foundations, areas of exceptionality, teaching strategies, and current issues and trends. Typically offered Fall Spring Summer.

Course Learning Outcomes

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

	INTASC	CAEP	ISTE
ent Learning omes	INTASC INTASC 10 Standards.docx	CAEP 2018-caep- k-6-elementary- teacher-prepara.pdf	ISTE ISTE Standards- Students.pdf
erstand IDEA's ry and the ess for loping IEPs and			
erstand IDEA's ry and the ess for loping IEPs and .:			
erstand acteristics, es, and idual rences in lopmental /s and ilities and their ct on learning.	1, 2, 7, 9	1a, 1b, 1c	5
gnize family riences in sive settings their role in ational ning.	3, 10	1a, 1b, 1c	

	INTASC	CAEP	ISTE
t tify key ents of family- essional boration and ort child and y transitions in sive settings.	1, 2, 3, 10	1a, 1b, 1c	
y cultural and istic diversity iples to boration, sion, isment, and culum planning.	3, 5, 7, 8, 9	1a, 1b, 1c	5, 7
ge in reflective ice and use ence-based urces to ort EI/ECSE cacy and ision-making.	9,10	1a, 1b, 1c	7

ASC Standards	Measures
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Standard #1: Learner Development The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.	In-class activities Discussions
Standard #2: Learning Differences The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.	In-class activities Discussions
Standard #3: Learning Environments The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.	In-class activities Discussions Final Project
Standard #5: Application of Content The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.	In-class activities Discussions Final Project

ASC Standards	Measures
Standard #7: Planning for Instruction teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.	In-class activities Discussions Final Project
Standard #8: Instructional Strategies teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and make connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.	In-class activities Discussions
Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the impacts of his/her choices and actions on learners (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.	In-class activities Discussions
Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.	In-class activities Discussions
SEP Standards	Measures

ISC Standards	Measures
– Candidates use their understanding of how children grow, develop, and learn to plan and implement developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences within environments that take into account the individual strengths and needs of children.	In-class activities Discussions
– Candidates use their understanding of individual differences in diverse families, cultures, and communities to plan and implement inclusive learning experiences and environments that build on children's strengths and address their individual needs.	In-class activities Discussions Final Project
– Candidates work respectfully and proactively with families to gain insight into each child in order to maximize his/her development, learning and motivation.	Discussions Final Project
Technology Standards	Measures
Collaborator: Educators take time to collaborate with both colleagues and students to improve practice, discover and share resources and ideas, and solve problems.	In-class activities
Designer: Educators design authentic, learner-driven activities and environments that recognize and accommodate learner variability.	In-class activities

How to Succeed in this Course

You play an important role in the education and support of children with disabilities and their

families. To adequately explore and internalize the essential objectives of the course your active participation within and outside of class are vital. Effective participation during the semester looks like:

- **Being fully prepared to participate** thoughtfully in the various kinds of activities and discussions that will constitute the ways of learning in this course.
- **Completion of readings and assignments** for each day to fully participate in and appreciate class discussions and activities.
- In-class assignments will often involve collaboration with peers. You should maintain **positive, timely, supportive communication with peers.**
- **Maintaining communication with me** throughout the semester regarding learning, questions, and concerns. If you must be absent, let me know ahead of time via email as many assignments will be completed in class. Please plan in advance and obtain assignments, class notes, etc. from another student.

Learning Materials

Purdue University Northwest's [Instructional Materials Access \(IMA\) program](#) provides your required course materials at a flat-rate fee and gives you access on or before the first day of class. This helps ensure you are prepared and have timely access to course resources.

- To access your materials, log in to Brightspace and select Instructional Materials Access from your course homepage. From there, you will be able to access your course materials.
- All required materials for this course are also listed below for your reference.
- Participation in IMA is automatic each semester; however, you may choose to opt out within seven (7) days of the start of the course. If you opt out, you are responsible for obtaining all required materials independently.

Academic Program Solutions

Authors: Campus Store

Publisher: CafeCustom

CHANGE! A Student Guide to Social Action

ISBN: 9781000839708

Authors: Myerslipton

Publisher: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC

Edition: 2nd

Brightspace Learning Management System

This course is supported through [Brightspace](#), PNW's learning management system. In Brightspace, you'll find important course content including announcements, assignment information, grades, and additional resources to support your learning. Checking

Brightspace regularly will help you stay informed, organized, and engaged throughout the semester. For any technical issues contact the [PNW Customer Service Center](#).

Assignments

Assignments are **due by 11:59pm** on the dates listed on the calendar. It is the student's responsibility to meet these deadlines. Check the course web page for grading rubrics. In-class assignments/Exit Tickets are due at the end of that class period unless otherwise stated. Grades will be posted on Brightspace typically within a week of assignment due date.

Late Assignments Policy

Late Assignments Policy

In the event that you cannot turn in an assignment by the due date, there is a two-day grace period with a point reduction that is reflected on the grading rubric. Assignments turned in more than two days late without approval will not be graded. A pattern of repeated late submissions may result in a dispositional referral or administrative removal from the course. Contact the instructor about issues that interfere with completing assignments on time before the assignment is due.

Assignments will not be accepted after **December 11th (11:59 pm)** and assignments not turned in by that date/time will result in zero points for that assignment. No extra credit, alternative assignments, or rewrites accepted for any assignment. An incomplete grade will only be approved if, for documented reasons beyond the student's control (e.g., extended hospitalization) and the student was in good standing prior to the situation (any required work that has not been completed by the end of the term may be considered late depending on the reason for not completing the work prior to the end of the semester).

Determination of Course Grade

- **Class Preparation and Participation (5 points each week):** I highly value your preparation and participation in our class. Active learning means you come to class prepared and that you participate in our classroom discussions. Each week, you will complete a self-assessment sheet telling me how many points you earned that week. You can earn points by sharing what you learned in the readings, asking questions, or sharing how the content applies to your own experiences with the class. You will not be able to make up participation points if you are not present in class.
- **My Point of View Introduction (10 points):** You will interview a classmate about their experiences and initial views about working with students with disabilities. You will present your interview in a newspaper article format.
- **In Class Activities (10 points each):** Each week you will participate in an in class activity that correlates with the topic for the week.

- **Social Action Project (30 points):** Using information from class content and outside research, students will identify current themes or trends in special education and action steps needed to create equitable classrooms and systems.

Attendance Policy

Attendance and Participation Policy

Attendance and active participation are important components of this course. Each week, students will complete a **Weekly Self-Assessment**, which is worth **5 participation points**.

To provide flexibility, each student is allowed **two "freebie" absences** during the semester. Students may still earn the 5 participation points for those two absences by completing the Weekly Self-Assessment.

Beginning with the **third absence**, participation points cannot be earned for the missed class session. However, students remain responsible for all course content, assignments, readings, and activities due that week. Absences do not excuse students from completing required coursework or meeting assignment deadlines.

Course Schedule

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Week/Date	Topics	Readings	Assignment Due
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August 27	Introduction to Special Education Course Introduction – Syllabus review Assignment outlines and resources Introduction Activity	Review Syllabus Riccomini et al. (2017) Big Ideas in Special Education Spread-the-Word_- Specially-Designed-Instruction-SDI High-Leverage Practices (HLP)	Learning Preferences Survey
2 – September 3	The Disabilities Movement Create a Timeline Indiana Disability History Project Fishbowl Activity New Teacher Tik Tok Trend	Textbook ch 1 and 3 Yell_1998_The Legal History of Special Education What a Long	Disability Rights Timeline My Point of View Interview Newspaper Article
3- September 10	People First Language Words Matter_ People First Language small group discussion Euphemism Public Service Announcement	Snow (2001)-People First Language Liebowitz (2015)-I am Disabled: On Identity-First Versus People-First Language	Euphemism PSA

Week/Date	Topics	Readings	Assignment Due
4 – September 17	Social Action Project Introduction to Social Action & Disability Rights Issue Selection & Group Formation	Chapters 1 & 2 <i>Change!</i>	
5- September 24	Autism Social Action Project Root Cause Analysis	Sensory-Why do you repeat certain actions again and again? The Concept of Neurodiversity Is Dividing the Autism Community Neurodiversity and the Benefits of Autism Change! Chapter 3	Autism Case Study

Week/Date	Topics	Readings	Assignment Due
6 –October 1	Learning Disabilities Social Action Project Research & Evidence Gathering	Criteria for SLD What are some signs of learning disabilities? 5 Ways to Leverage A.I. for Student Supports and Scaffolds How I Planned a Project Using ChatGPT Change! Chapter 4	Learning Disability Activity
7-October 8	Traumatic Brain Injury Social Action Project Power Mapping & Stakeholder Analysis	Enhancing and Practicing Executive Function Skills with Children-from Infancy to Adolescence Brain Injury in Children and Youth A Manual for Educators Change! Chapter 5	Traumatic Brain Injury Activity

Week/Date	Topics	Readings	Assignment Due
8 – October 15	Cognitive Disabilities Work From Home Class Social Action Project Goal Setting & Action Planning	Ted Talk on Cognitive Disabilities A Landmark Lawsuit Aimed to Fix Special Ed for California's Black Students. It Didn't. Change! Ch. 7	Ted Talk Discussion Board Heuristica AI mind map
9 –October 22	Hearing and Vision Impairments Center Activities Social Action Project Tactics for Disability Advocacy	Change! Ch 8	
10 – October 29	Developmental Delay Social Action Project Coalitions & Partnerships	Retention vs. Special Education in Kindergarten Indiana Early Learning Foundations Change! Ch. 9	Developmental Delay Activity
11-November 5	Emotional Disabilities Social Action Project Implementation Work Session	Walker & Barry (2018) Assessing and Supporting Social Skill Needs for Students with High-Incidence Disabilities	Emotional Disabilities Activity

Week/Date	Topics	Readings	Assignment Due
12-November 12	Other Health Impairment Social Action Project Action Day / Mini-Implementation		OHI Activity
13- November 19	Terminology and Other Odds and Ends AI and Special Education	Demystifying Disabilities ch 2,4,5	Terminology Posters I Have, Who Has? Mix and Match Jigsaw
December 3	Social Action Project Evaluation & Reflection Odds and Ends	Change! Ch 10	
15- December 10	Social Action Presentations		Social Action Project
16- December 17	Finals Week – No Class		

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Level 2: Guided AI Use

AI may be part of the learning process, but it needs to be used thoughtfully and transparently. Some assignments may invite you to use AI. Others may limit or prohibit it. The key is to follow the directions for each assignment.

AI might be allowed to help you:

- Create an outline
- Get feedback on writing you have already drafted
- Practice with a chatbot as a study partner
- Compare an AI response to what you are learning in class
- Generate examples that you then evaluate or improve

AI should not be used to:

- Write full paragraphs or drafts
- Complete assigned problems for you
- Create major parts of something you submit
- Replace your own analysis, interpretation, or argument

Your responsibility:

You are still the author and decision-maker. You need to check the AI's work, correct errors, cite sources when needed, and explain how AI helped you if your instructor asks. You are responsible for verifying the accuracy and relevance of AI-assisted content and ensuring that your submitted work reflects your own understanding and engagement with course material. Unauthorized use of AI outside assignment-specific directions may be treated as a violation of academic integrity.

AI Use Disclosure

When requested by your instructor, use the following format:

I used [name of AI tool] to help with [specific task].

I asked it to [briefly describe your prompt or question].

I used the response to [explain how it helped].

I reviewed and revised the work by [explain what you checked, revised, or decided on your own].

Academic Integrity

PNW Honor Code:

Purdue University Northwest promotes a culture of integrity, where academic dishonesty is incompatible with the mission of the University. By upholding academic integrity,

students foster a respectful and productive learning environment that supports the academic credibility of the university. We strive to inspire excellence among ourselves and our peers while empowering each other to serve as honest leaders in our communities.

PNW Honor Pledge:

I pledge to maintain the highest standards of accountability, integrity, and professionalism and hold our PNW Community to the same standards.

For more information, see the [Academic Integrity Webpage](#).

Resources and Support for Academic Success

University students may encounter personal, academic, or unexpected challenges during their time at PNW. Support is available, and seeking assistance early can help you stay on track and achieve your goals. Additional resources for wellness, academic success, and student support can be found on the [Student Resources website](#). If you are experiencing an immediate crisis, contact the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#) by calling or texting 988.

Need Help?

Not sure where to start? The Office of the Dean of Students can help connect you with campus and community resources and support you in navigating challenges that may affect your success at Purdue University Northwest. Student Advocates can assist with issues such as absences related to medical concerns, grief, pregnancy, military service, jury duty, and other circumstances, as well as help you understand university policies and procedures and explore available options.

Contact the Dean of Students at dos@pnw.edu or (219) 989-4141 (Hammond) or (219) 785-5230 (Westville). Visit the [Dean of Students website](#) for more information.

Accessibility

Purdue University Northwest is committed to making learning experiences accessible. If you anticipate or experience physical, academic/learning, mental health challenges, pregnancy complications, or other medically related barriers to your PNW experience, you are encouraged to contact the PNW Accessibility Center (PAC) at: pac@pnw.edu or by phone: (219) 989-2455. **The PAC is committed to protecting your privacy.** Any disability, diagnosis, or medical information you share with the PAC remains confidential, and instructors receive information only about approved accommodations—not your

diagnosis or disability. Visit the [PAC website](#) for more information.

For information about pregnancy related accommodations, visit the [Office for Civil Rights website](#) or complete this [Request for Pregnant/Parenting Title IX Supportive Measures form](#).

Mental Health/Wellness Statement

Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Purdue University Northwest's Counseling Center provides confidential mental health services to currently enrolled students at no additional cost.

If you or someone you know is struggling with the transition to college, relationship challenges, stress, anxiety, depression, or other mental health concerns, support is available. To schedule an appointment, call (219) 989-2366. The Counseling Center is located at the Riley Center, Suite 104, on the Hammond campus and in LSF 131 on the Westville campus. For additional support, visit the [Counseling Center website](#), where you can access a variety of resources, including free mental health apps and podcasts.

Basic Needs Security

Any student who faces challenges securing food, housing, or other basic needs is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support at dos@pnw.edu or (219) 989-4141 (Hammond) or (219) 785-5230 (Westville). [Food pantries](#) are available in Hammond (SULB 307) and Westville (DSAC 1021). Visit the [Dean of Students website](#) for more information.

Veterans

Purdue University Northwest is a Tier 1 Indiana Purple Star University committed to creating a community of support for veterans, active-duty service members and their families. Visit the [Veterans Services website](#) for more information.

Academic Support

All PNW students have access to academic support services for free.

- **Student Success Hub** - Connects students to campus resources and services while providing coaching, peer mentoring, and structured support to help students succeed academically. Visit the [Student Success Hub website](#) for more information.

- **Tutoring** - Tutoring is available by appointment or during walk-in hours for most major subjects. Visit the [Tutoring website](#) for more information.
- **Writing Center** - Get help with any writing task from trained peer consultants; assistance available in-person or virtually. Visit the [Writing Center website](#) for more information.

Student-Related Policies

As a student, it is important for you to understand these [university policies](#), including non-discrimination, academic integrity, and others relevant to your educational experience.

This syllabus is subject to change. You will be notified of any changes as far in advance as possible via an announcement on Brightspace. Monitor your PNW email daily for updates.