

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2026

ED2300: Complex Classrooms and Learners with Exceptionalities – 3 (3-0-0) 45

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR: Kim Palmer

OFFICE: E-MAIL: kpalmer@nwpolytech.ca

OFFICE HOURS: Available through E-mail

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

This course prepares pre-service teachers to inclusively support and educate children with complex learning, communication, behavioural, physical, developmental, and multiple exceptionalities in Canadian schools. Students will develop knowledge and skills in evidence-informed instructional strategies, inclusive classrooms, and trauma-informed approaches. Special emphasis is placed on supporting students with complex medical needs, emotional and behavioural disabilities, and mental health challenges. Through case studies, literature analysis, reflective activities, and practical assignments, students will acquire the tools to create inclusive, safe, and supportive learning environments that promote equitable access, participation, and meaningful learning for all students.

PREREQUISITE(S): ED2510: Introduction to the Profession of Teaching

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Textbook:

Specht, J., & Hutchinson, N. L. (2024). *Inclusion of learners with exceptionalities in Canadian schools: A practical handbook for teachers* (7th ed.). Pearson Canada.

Literature/Novels (Choose One):

Erskine, K. (2010). *Mockingbird*. Philomel Books.

Hunt, L. M. (2015). *Fish in a tree*. Nancy Paulsen Books.

Draper, S. M. (2010). *Out of my mind*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers

DELIVERY MODE(S):

Electronic Course – Platform: MyClass

Course Format: Online (Asynchronous)

Course Dates: September 2, 2026 – December 11, 2026

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

These program outcomes align with the Alberta Teacher Quality Standard (TQS) by preparing graduates to create inclusive, safe, and supportive learning environments that meet the diverse needs of all students. They emphasize building positive and effective relationships with students, families, community members, and multidisciplinary teams. Graduates will develop a strong professional knowledge base, applying evidence-informed instructional strategies and inclusive pedagogical approaches to support learners with exceptionalities, diverse backgrounds, and those requiring intensive supports. They will integrate foundational knowledge of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives, address systemic barriers, and engage in critical reflection on their practice. Graduates will also demonstrate understanding of and adherence to legal frameworks and policies within the Alberta Education System and inclusive education.

Alberta Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)

Learning Outcomes support students in beginning to demonstrate competencies and indicators of the Alberta Teaching Quality Standard.

Through the completion of ED2300, students will:

1. Develop an understanding of strategies for building positive, collaborative relationships with students, families, multi-disciplinary teams, health-care professionals, and community agencies to support learners with diverse and complex needs.
2. Identify and analyze a broad range of exceptionalities, including medical needs, mental health challenges, neurodevelopmental differences, and severe emotional and behavioural disabilities, recognizing their characteristics, strengths, and learning implications.
3. Understanding the need for trauma-informed, culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate practices in schools to create safe, predictable, and emotionally supportive classroom environments that promote well-being, regulation, and resilience.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of foundational mental health literacy, including recognizing signs of distress or dysregulation, understanding risk and protective factors, and applying classroom strategies that reduce barriers to learning.
5. Integrate foundational knowledge of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives to create inclusive, safe, and supportive learning environments that meet the diverse needs of all students.
6. Recognize inclusive pedagogical frameworks, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI), to design flexible, equitable learning experiences that address the full spectrum of student needs, including those requiring intensive supports.
7. Practice applying evidence-informed instructional strategies, assessment practices, positive behaviour interventions, and assistive technologies to

enhance learning outcomes, increase engagement, and promote independence for students with diverse and complex profiles.

8. Acquire knowledge about how to collaborate in the development and implementation of individualized plans, including IPPs, medical support plans, behaviour support plans, and transition plans, that coordinate holistic supports.
9. Analyze children's literature to gain insight into the lived experiences, perspectives, and challenges of learners with exceptionalities to inform inclusive, trauma-informed, and developmentally responsive classroom practices.
10. Demonstrate awareness of professional requirements to adhere to educational legislation, ethical standards, and safety protocols related to inclusive education, medical and behavioural safety, and the well-being of students with exceptionalities.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.alberta.ca>.

**** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability.**

EVALUATIONS:

Assignment	Weight	Date	Related Course Learning Outcomes
PowerPoint: Severe Medical and Health Needs	20%	November 15, 2026	2, 8
Reflective Practice Portfolio Assignment 8 Responses	20%	Mid-Term Submission: November 1, 2026 (4 Entries) Final Submission: December 11, 2026 (4 Entries)	Will vary depending on selection.
Inclusive Lesson Planning Assignment	20%	November 29, 2026	2, 5, 6
Children's Literature Analysis Presentation Project	20%	December 6, 2026	9

Discussion Board/Postings Participation	20%	Sept. 2 - Dec. 19, 2026 Initial Posting: Sunday Peer Response: Wednesday	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10
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GRADING CRITERIA

Please note that most institutions will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

To progress in the Bachelor of Education program, students must achieve a minimum grade of C-in all Education (ED) courses. Any grade below C- does not meet the passing requirement and will require the student to repeat the course

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines		Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100		C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94		C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84		C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79		D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76		D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72		F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE

Week	Focus / Topics/ Concepts	In-Class Learning Activities	Required Readings and Lecture Resources
Intro	Introduction to Course	. Overview of Course - Welcome from instructor - Netiquette - Discussion Board Participation Rubric & Expectations - Introductory Discussion Board Activity: <i>What's your Animal?</i>	

1	Foundations of Inclusive Education in Alberta - History and Philosophy of Inclusive Education in Canada - Alberta educational legislation and policies related to inclusion. - Safety protocols for students with exceptionalities - Evaluating inclusive practices in schools	1. Overview of Module 2. Overview of Chapter 1 3. <i>From Climbing Trees to Changing Systems: Rethinking Fairness in Inclusive Education Activity</i> 4. Professional Documents: Alberta Education Document Review & Self-Quiz 5. <i>Inclusion on Trial: Take a Stand on Equity, Policy, and Practice Activity</i> 6. Self-Quiz 7. Reflection Question 8. Review of Reflection Assignments/Assessment Due: Weeks 8 and 13	<i>Chapter 1: Inclusive Education: The Canadian Experience</i>
2	Understanding Exceptionalities - Learning Disabilities - Intellectual Disabilities - Giftedness - Characteristics, strengths, and learning implications of exceptionalities - Medical, neurodevelopmental, and emotional behavioural differences	1. Overview of Module 2. Overview of Chapter 3 3. Understanding Exceptionalities Overview 4. <i>Designing Inclusive Learning Experiences: Thinking Across Bloom and Gardner Activity</i> 5. Self- Quiz 6. <i>Student Profile Creation - Understanding Diverse Learners Activity</i> 7. Reflection Question	<i>Chapter 3: Gifted, Learning Disability, and Intellectual Disability</i>

Week	Focus / Topics/ Concepts	In-Class Learning Activities	Required Readings and Lecture Resources
Intro	Introduction to Course	. Overview of Course - Welcome from instructor - Netiquette - Discussion Board Participation Rubric & Expectations - Introductory Discussion Board Activity: <i>What's your Animal?</i>	
1	Foundations of Inclusive Education in Alberta • History and Philosophy of Inclusive Education in Canada • Alberta educational legislation and policies related to inclusion. • Safety protocols for students with exceptionalities • Evaluating inclusive practices in schools	9. Overview of Module 10. Overview of Chapter 1 11. <i>From Climbing Trees to Changing Systems: Rethinking Fairness in Inclusive Education Activity</i> 12. Professional Documents: Alberta Education Document Review & Self-Quiz 13. <i>Inclusion on Trial: Take a Stand on Equity, Policy, and Practice Activity</i> 14. Self-Quiz 15. Reflection Question 16. Review of Reflection Assignments/Assessment Due: Weeks 8 and 13	<i>Chapter 1: Inclusive Education: The Canadian Experience</i>
2	Understanding Exceptionalities • Learning Disabilities • Intellectual Disabilities • Giftedness • Characteristics, strengths, and learning implications of exceptionalities • Medical, neurodevelopmental, and emotional behavioural differences	8. Overview of Module 9. Overview of Chapter 3 10. Understanding Exceptionalities Overview 11. <i>Designing Inclusive Learning Experiences: Thinking Across Bloom and Gardner Activity</i> 12. Self- Quiz 13. <i>Student Profile Creation - Understanding Diverse Learners Activity</i> 14. Reflection Question	<i>Chapter 3: Gifted, Learning Disability, and Intellectual Disability</i>

3	Mental Health Literacy - Foundational knowledge of mental health in school-aged children. - Identifying signs of distress or dysregulation. - Risk and protective factors for mental health. - Classroom strategies to promote student well-being - Developing toolkits/checklists to support mental health	1. Module Overview 2. Overview of Chapter 4 3. Understanding Exceptionalities Overview 4. Mental Health Literacy Overview 5. <i>Stepping into their Shoes: Understanding Mental Health and Exceptionalities Activity</i> 6. Social Emotional Learning Overview 7. <i>What is Social Emotional Learning? Activity</i> 8. SEL Self-Quiz 9. Reflection Question	<i>Chapter 4: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder, and Emotional and Behavioural Disorders</i>
4	Trauma-Informed Practice and Resilience - Trauma-informed educational practices - Promoting resilience in students - Safe, predictable, and emotionally supportive classrooms - Developmentally appropriate and culturally appropriate strategies - Grounding and self-regulating techniques for students	1. Module Overview 2. Overview of Article 3. <i>Trauma-Sensitive Classrooms to Support Students and Educators Activity</i> 4. <i>Trauma-Informed Teaching: Seeing the Child, Not the Behaviour Activity</i> 5. Self-Quiz 6. Grounding Video https://youtu.be/5a88mUAzNLk 7. Reflection Question	Assigned Reading: Developing Trauma-Sensitive Classrooms to Support Students and Educators https://ies.ed.gov/rel-appalachia/2025/01/handout-strategies-developing-trauma-sensitive-classrooms-support-students-and-educators
5	Culturally Responsive Practice - Culturally responsive teaching practices - Indigenous perspectives in - Equity and inclusion for students from diverse cultural backgrounds - Trauma-informed practices aligned with cultural responsiveness	1. Module Overview 2. Overview of Chapter 7 3. <i>Show Me Your Purpose! Activity</i> 4. <i>Seeing through Multiple Lenses: Culture, Identity, and Inclusion Activity</i> 5. Self-Test 6. Reflection Question 7. Review Children's Literature Analysis Presentation Assignment Due: Week 13	<i>Chapter 7: Climate, Community, and Classroom Management for Student Well-Being</i>
6	UDL & Differentiated Instruction - Principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) - Differentiated instruction (DI) strategies - Designing flexible, equitable learning experiences - Addressing diverse learning needs, including intensive supports	1. Module Overview 2. Overview of Chapter 8 3. Overview of UDL 4. Overview of DI 5. <i>Exploring Inclusive Education Resources Activity</i>	<i>Chapter 8: Using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI)</i>

	Sample lesson planning using UDL and DI	6. <i>Fix the Lesson: UDL & Differentiation Makeover Activity</i> 7. Self-Quiz 8. Reflection Question 9. Review PowerPoint Assignment (Severe Medical and Health Needs) Due: Week 10	
7	Assessment in Inclusive Classrooms - Modifications and accommodations - Differentiating assessment strategies - Modifications and accommodations for diverse learners - Incorporating Indigenous perspectives into assessment - Using assessment to guide instruction - Indigenous perspectives in Equity and inclusion for students from diverse cultural backgrounds	1. Module Overview 2. Overview of Chapter 6 3. Overview of Chapter 9 4. Overview of Differentiated Assessment 5. <i>More than a Story: Inclusivity through Diverse Picture Books Activity</i> 6. <i>DI Detectives: Crack the Assessment Code Activity</i> 7. Self-Quiz 8. Reflection Question	<i>Chapter 6: Teaching for Diversity: Including Indigenous Students, Students from Diverse Cultural Backgrounds, and Students at Risk</i> <i>Chapter 9: Differentiating Assessment and Using Assessment to Differentiate Teaching</i>
8	Emotional and Behavioural Disabilities - Understanding EBD in the classroom - Characteristics, strengths, and learning implications - Collaboration in developing IPPs and behaviour support plans - Holistic support approaches for students with EBD	1. Module Overview 2. Overview of Chapter 2 3. Overview of Student Support Planning in Alberta Classrooms 4. Overview of FBA/FBA Report 5. Functions of Behaviour: Self-Test: Function Flash 6. <i>Behaviour Detective Lab: Understanding before Responding Activity</i> 7. Understanding the Process for Diagnosis of Emotional/Behaviour Disability Overview 8. Self-Test 9. Reflection Question Reflective Responses Mid-term Submission (4 Entries) Due	<i>Chapter 2: The Teacher's Role in an Inclusive Classroom</i>
9	Positive Behaviour Supports - Principles of Positive Behaviour Support - Developing and implementing Behaviour Support Plans	1. Module Overview 2. Overview of Chapter 10 3. <i>Positive Behaviour Supports in Practice: Fix It and Flip It! Activity</i>	<i>Chapter 10: Enhancing Social Relations</i>

	• Collaborative planning: IPPs, medical support, and transition plans • Enhancing social relations in the classroom	4. Overview of Enhancing Social Peer Interactions & Relationships 5. Overview of Positive Behaviour Support Plan (PBSP) & Self-Test 6. Understanding the Escalation Cycle in the Classroom Overview & Self-Test 7. <i>IPP Detectives: Cracking the Code of Inclusion Activity</i> 8. Reflection Question 9. Review Inclusive Lesson Planning Assignment Due: Week 12	
10	Students with Physical & Medical Needs • Communication exceptionalities • Physical exceptionalities • Chronic health conditions • Collaborative planning with health professionals • Adaptations and accommodations for physical and medical needs	1. Overview of Module 2. Overview of Chapter 5 3. Overview of Individual Health Plan/Student Medical Plan 4. <i>Individual Health Plan Scavenger Hunt Activity</i> 5. <i>Post PowerPoint Presentation & Review Peers' PowerPoints</i> 6. Reflection Question PowerPoint Presentation: Severe Medical and Health Needs Due	Chapter 5: Communication Exceptionalities, Physical Exceptionalities, and Chronic Health Conditions
11	Assistive Technology & Communication • Evidence-informed strategies for assistive technology (AT) • Communication supports for diverse learners • Increasing engagement and independence through AT • Researching and presenting AT tools	1. Overview of Module 2. Overview of Assistive Technology in K-12 Classrooms 3. Overview of Article 4. <i>Discussion Board: Article Review Activity</i> 5. <i>Making Learning Accessible: Choosing Assistive Technology for the Classroom Activity</i> 6. View and Post/Survey <i>Assistive Technology: Balancing Benefits & Challenges</i> 7. Reflection Question	Reading: Navas-Bonilla, C. R., Guerra-Arango, J. A., Oviedo-Guado, D. A., & Murillo-Noriega, D. E. (2025). <i>Inclusive education through technology: a systematic review of types, tools and characteristics</i> . <i>Frontiers in Education</i> , 10, 1527851. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2025.1527851

12	Collaboration and Team-Based Practice Building collaborative relationships with families, teams, and agencies	1. Module Overview 2. Overview of Collaboration and Team-Based Practice	No Assigned Reading
	- Strategies for effective communication - Problem-solving in multi-disciplinary teams - Challenges and strategies for collaboration.	3. <i>Collaboration in Inclusive Classrooms Activity</i> 4. Overview of Roles and Responsibilities in Collaborative Inclusive Classrooms & Self-Test 5. <i>Case Study: Everyone has a Piece of the Puzzle Activity</i> 6. Reflection Question Inclusive Lesson Planning Assignment Due	
13	Individual Planning & Transitions - Individual planning and transitions - Collaboration across medical, educational, and behavioural supports - Supporting holistic students' needs during transitions - Evaluating and enhancing individual plans	1. Module Overview 2. Overview of Chapter 11 3. <i>Transition Design Challenge Activity</i> 4. Roles and Responsibilities in Transition Meetings for Students with Exceptionalities Overview & Self-Quiz 5. Reflection Question Reflective Responses (4 Entries) Due	Chapter 11: Enhancing Transitions
Final Project	Lived Experience Through Literature - Using children's literature to explore experiences of learners with exceptionalities - Promoting empathy and understanding through storytelling - Inclusive, trauma-informed, and developmentally responsive practices - Reflection on lived experiences of diverse learners	1. Understanding Lived Experience in Inclusive Education Overview 2. Overview of Novels 3. <i>Post Children's Literature Analysis Presentation and Read Classmate's Presentations</i> Literature Review Project Due	Novels: Out of My Mind Mockingbird Fish in a Tree

Discussion Board Expectations:

Weekly discussion board submissions and initial posts are due by **Sunday at 11:59 p.m.** each week. Posting deadlines are structured to provide students with adequate time to review classmates' work and engage meaningfully in collaborative discussion activities.

Peer responses, feedback, and discussion replies are due by **Wednesday at 11:59 p.m.** following the initial submission deadline. As part of the discussion process, students are expected to thoughtfully read and respond to **one to three classmates' posts each week**, as outlined in the specific requirements for each weekly assignment or activity.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Students are expected to:

1. Be prepared each week by completing assigned readings, lecture materials, videos, and activities.
2. Participate respectfully in discussion boards and collaborative learning experiences.
3. Complete weekly learning activities and self-quizzes by the stated deadlines.
4. Contribute to discussion boards according to the course participation expectations and rubric.
5. Complete and submit assignments by the specified due dates.
6. Review course materials regularly and monitor announcements, deadlines, and feedback.
7. Demonstrate professional communication, including respectful language, appropriate netiquette, and confidentiality when discussing children, families, peers, or educational settings.
8. Apply inclusive, strengths-based, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed perspectives when completing course activities and discussing learners with exceptionalities.
9. Seek clarification and support when needed by communicating with the instructor in a timely and professional manner.
10. Review instructor feedback and use it to improve future learning and assignments.
11. Maintain academic integrity by submitting original work and appropriately acknowledging sources.
12. Take responsibility for their own learning, including managing time, meeting deadlines, and staying engaged throughout the course.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/polytechnic-leadership/policies-directory>.

****Note:** all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

USING PROCTORU:

This course uses ProctorU Live for online exams. To utilize this service, you are required to complete the following steps:

- Create a ProctorU account by clicking the ProctorU link in the course.
- Download and install the Guardian Web Browser, Google Chrome, and the ProctorU extension.
- Schedule each exam at least 3 days (72 hours) in advance. If you miss this deadline, you cannot take the exam.
- Pay for the proctoring service. The fees are exclusively your responsibility and in no event shall be the responsibility of Northwestern Polytechnic.

For more detailed instructions [click here](#), and for video instructions [click here](#).

Before each exam, you must complete a room scan with your web camera, during which you will show your surroundings to a live proctor.

The invigilator will ask to view (but not collect or store) your student identification to verify your identity and will remotely access your computer to unlock the exam. When monitoring your actions via video streaming, the invigilator may possibly record your actions if they suspect academic integrity behavioural issues. You will be verbally notified if/when recording begins.

The personal information collected through ProctorU is collected under the authority of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* (s. 65) and the *Protection of Privacy Act* (ss. 4(a) & (c)). This information is used to verify your identity, monitor exam conditions, and address potential academic integrity concerns during your online exam.

NWP may input the collected personal information into automated systems to fulfill the purposes stated above. This may include activities such as flagging potential academic integrity concerns for review.

Questions regarding the collection of this personal information can be directed to:

The Office of the Vice-President Academic – Northwestern Polytechnic – VPAR@NWPolytech.ca

Records Retention: Any video records of you created by ProctorU will be kept by ProctorU for a maximum of 7 days in order to make a decision about any possible academic integrity infraction, after which time it shall be permanently deleted. All other personal information collected and stored by ProctorU within your profile account will be permanently deleted if the account has not been used after one year.

Consent to Store Personal Information Outside Canada

ProctorU is an American company. An agreement is in place between ProctorU and Northwestern Polytechnic by which ProctorU will take reasonable steps to protect your personal information from unauthorized access and disclosure. Information about how ProctorU protects your privacy can be found in their [Privacy Policy](#).

By using the ProctorU service via Northwestern Polytechnic, you consent to the storage of and access to your personal information outside of Canada.

This consent is in effect from the day you register with ProctorU and expires one year after completion

of your exam.

Additional privacy and liability information regarding the use of ProctorU is available on the NWP website