



EDUC 220: Educating Exceptional & Diverse Learners

Term: Fall 2026

Credits: 3.0

Lecture Times & Location: Tuesday & Thursday 2:30–3:45 p.m., Lovell Hall 105

Modality: In-Person

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Instructor Information

- **Instructor:** Dr. Patricia Wu (Associate Professor of Teacher Education)
- **Email:** pwu@university.alkimi.ai
- **Office:** Lovell Hall 120
- **Office Hours:**
 - Monday & Thursday: 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. (In person, Lovell Hall 120)
 - Friday: 4:00–5:00 p.m. (Virtual via Zoom; link posted in Canvas)
 - Also available by appointment.

Course Description

Disability categories, special education law and the IEP process, English learners, culturally responsive teaching, differentiation, and Universal Design for Learning. EDUC 220 prepares future educators to create inclusive, equitable, and effective learning environments for students with disabilities, English learners (ELs), and culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. Students examine the legal foundations of special education—including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)—alongside the collaborative IEP team process. The course equips candidates with practical methodologies in Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiated instruction, positive behavioral supports, and culturally responsive teaching.

Prerequisites

EDUC 201.

Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of EDUC 220, students will be able to:

1. **Analyze Special Education Law and the IEP Process:** Explain the statutory mandates of IDEA, Section 504, and the ADA, deconstructing the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process from pre-referral intervention through annual review.
2. **Characterize Exceptionalities and Disability Categories:** Identify the cognitive, behavioral, communication, and physical characteristics of the 13 federal IDEA disability categories and gifted/talented learners.

3. **Apply Universal Design for Learning and Differentiation:** Design standards-based curricula utilizing UDL guidelines (multiple means of engagement, representation, and action/expression) and differentiated content, process, and products.
4. **Implement Evidence-Based Pedagogy for English Learners:** Apply WIDA English language development standards, sheltered instruction (SIOP) protocols, and scaffolded linguistic supports across general education content areas.
5. **Enact Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Pedagogy:** Examine personal biases, evaluate curricula for cultural representation, and enact instructional practices that affirm students' diverse cultural, linguistic, and familial backgrounds.

Required Course Materials & Approximate Costs

1. **Gargiulo, Richard M., and Emily C. Bouck.** *Special Education in Contemporary Society: An Introduction to Exceptionality*. 7th ed., SAGE Publications, 2021. Approx. \$90 print, \$50 digital rental.
2. **Tomlinson, Carol Ann.** *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*. 2nd ed., ASCD, 2014. Approx. \$35 print or digital.
3. **Total estimated cost:** \$85 to \$125.

Generative AI Policy (AI Level 2: AI Permitted with Disclosure for Specified Tasks)

In accordance with Alkimi University Academic Policies (Student Handbook §5.8), EDUC 220 operates under **AI Level 2**.

- **What is permitted:** You may use generative AI tools to brainstorm multi-tiered accommodation ideas, draft sample graphic organizers for diverse learners, explore UDL design guidelines, and check your written assignments for syntactic correctness and tone.
- **What is prohibited:** You may not use generative AI to draft individualized IEP present levels (PLAAFP) or annual goals for simulated case studies, generate culturally responsive teaching reflections, complete weekly quizzes, or answer examination questions. Instructional adaptations must demonstrate your own pedagogical judgment.
- **Disclosure:** All submitted lesson plans, IEP case portfolios, and project assignments must include an AI disclosure note stating which generative AI tools were used and for what specific drafting or brainstorming phase. If no AI tools were used, state: 'No generative AI tools were used in preparing this work.'

Grading Components and Weights

- **Midterm Examination 1:** 15% (In class, Thursday, October 1)
- **Midterm Examination 2:** 15% (In class, Thursday, November 12)
- **Individualized Education Program (IEP) Case Study Plan:** 20% (Due Friday, October 23 at 11:59 p.m.)
- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Differentiated Unit Plan:** 15% (Due Friday, November 20 at 11:59 p.m.)
- **Weekly Inclusive Pedagogy Canvas Quizzes:** 15% (Due Mondays at 11:59 p.m. in Canvas; lowest quiz score dropped)
- **Final Examination:** 20% (Thursday, December 17, 2026, 1:00–3:00 p.m.)

Grading Scale (Alkimi University Standard)

- **A:** 93–100% | **A-:** 90–92%
- **B+:** 87–89% | **B:** 83–86% | **B-:** 80–82%
- **C+:** 77–79% | **C:** 73–76% | **C-:** 70–72%
- **D+:** 67–69% | **D:** 60–66% | **F:** Below 60%
- **Extra credit:** No individual extra credit assignments are offered in this course.

Course Schedule (Fall 2026)

Week	Dates	Topics & Readings	Assignments & Deadlines
Week 1	Aug 27	Foundations of Special Education and Inclusion: Evolution of special education from institutionalization to inclusion, person-first language, and philosophical models of neurodiversity. <i>Reading: Gargiulo & Bouck, Ch. 1</i>	<i>First day of classes: Wed Aug 26.</i>
Week 2	Sep 1, 3	Special Education Legislation and Judicial Mandates: IDEA principles, FAPE, LRE continuum of services, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, ADA, and Endrew F. Supreme Court standard. <i>Reading: Gargiulo & Bouck, Ch. 2</i>	<i>Wed Sep 2: Add/section change deadline.</i>
Week 3	Sep 8, 10	Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and RTI: Tier 1 universal screening, Tier 2 targeted small-group interventions, Tier 3 intensive supports, and progress monitoring data systems. <i>Reading: Gargiulo & Bouck, Ch. 3</i>	<i>Mon Sep 7: Labor Day (no classes). Wed Sep 9: Census date (last day to drop without a W).</i>
Week 4	Sep 15, 17	The IEP Process: Multidisciplinary Team and Governance: Components of an IEP: PLAAFP statements, measurable annual goals, accommodations versus modifications, related services, and transition plans. <i>Reading: Gargiulo & Bouck, Ch. 3</i>	—
Week 5	Sep 22, 24	Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD): Prevalence, characteristics of dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia; evidence-based structured literacy and cognitive learning strategies. <i>Reading: Gargiulo & Bouck, Ch. 6</i>	—
Week 6	Sep 29, Oct 1	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): Inattentive, hyperactive-impulsive, and combined presentations; executive functioning deficits, 504 plans, and behavioral interventions; Midterm Examination 1 in class. <i>Reading: Gargiulo & Bouck, Ch. 8</i>	Midterm Examination 1 (in class).
Week 7	Oct 6, 8	Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD): Internalizing and externalizing behaviors, functional behavioral assessment (FBA), Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP), and trauma-informed care. <i>Reading: Gargiulo & Bouck, Ch. 9</i>	—
Week 8	Oct 15	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): Social communication differences, sensory processing variations, restricted/repetitive patterns, visual schedules, and social narratives. <i>Reading: Gargiulo & Bouck, Ch. 10</i>	<i>Oct 12–Oct 13: Fall break (no classes). Fri Oct 16: Midterm grades due.</i>
Week 9	Oct 20, 22	Intellectual, Developmental, and Sensory Disabilities: Down syndrome, fragile X, adaptive behavior skills, deaf/hard of hearing, visual impairment, assistive technology, and augmentative communication. <i>Reading: Gargiulo & Bouck, Ch. 5, 12, 13</i>	Individualized Education Program (IEP) Case Study Plan due Fri Oct 23 at 11:59 p.m.
Week 10	Oct 27, 29	Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework: CAST principles: multiple means of engagement (the 'why'), representation (the 'what'), and action/expression (the 'how') to eliminate barriers. <i>Reading: CAST Guidelines; Tomlinson, Ch. 1–2</i>	—
Week 11	Nov 3, 5	Differentiated Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms: Differentiating content, process, product, and learning environment according to student readiness, interest, and learning profile. <i>Reading: Tomlinson, Ch. 3–5</i>	<i>Fri Nov 6: Last day to withdraw (W) or elect Pass/No Pass.</i>
Week 12	Nov 10, 12	Educating English Learners: WIDA and Language Development: Stages of second language acquisition (BICS vs CALP), WIDA language standards, and scaffolding linguistic demands; Midterm Examination 2 in class. <i>Reading: Gargiulo & Bouck, Ch. 4</i>	Midterm Examination 2 (in class).
Week 13	Nov 17, 19	Sheltered Instruction and Content-Based Language Supports: SIOP model, content and language objectives, comprehensible input, sentence frames, interactive word walls, and dual-language immersion models. <i>Reading: Gargiulo & Bouck, Ch. 4</i>	Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Differentiated Unit Plan due Fri Nov 20 at 11:59 p.m.

Week	Dates	Topics & Readings	Assignments & Deadlines
Week 14	Nov 24	Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Pedagogy: Geneva Gay's CRT tenets, Ladson-Billings' cultural competence, funds of knowledge, dismantling deficit mindsets, and affirming racial/ethnic identities. <i>Reading: Selected articles on culturally responsive teaching</i>	<i>Nov 25–Nov 27: Thanksgiving break (no classes).</i>
Week 15	Dec 1, 3	Co-Teaching and Interprofessional Collaboration: Six co-teaching models (one teach/one observe, station, parallel, alternative, teaming, one teach/one assist); working with paraprofessionals and families. <i>Reading: Gargiulo & Bouck, Ch. 15</i>	—
Week 16	Dec 8	Inclusive Educator Professional Identity and Synthesis: Ethics of inclusion, professional advocacy for students with disabilities, transition to student teaching, and comprehensive final exam review. <i>Reading: Course review packet</i>	<i>Wed Dec 9: Last day of classes. Thu Dec 10: Reading Day.</i>
Finals	Dec 17	Final Examination: Thursday, December 17, 2026, 1:00–3:00 p.m., Lovell Hall 105.	Comprehensive examination on special education law, disability categories, UDL, differentiation, and English learner instruction.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Consistent attendance and proactive participation in seminar simulations are required. We engage in collaborative IEP team role-plays, case problem-solving, and lesson differentiation workshops that rely upon the active contributions of every candidate. If an illness or unforeseen emergency occurs, notify Dr. Wu before class. More than two unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your final grade. Students who miss the first two class meetings without notifying the instructor may be dropped. Students may miss class for religious observance without penalty if they notify the instructor in writing within the first two weeks of the semester (by Wednesday, September 9, 2026). Absences for university-sponsored activities (athletics, performances, conferences) are excused with a letter from the sponsoring office at least one week in advance.

Late Work Policy

Written projects and case study assignments submitted late will incur a 10% penalty per calendar day up to three days. Submissions after 72 hours will receive a grade of zero. Canvas reading quizzes close on Monday at 11:59 p.m. and cannot be reopened.

School of Education Gateway Requirement

Undergraduate teacher candidates must earn a minimum grade of C+ in EDUC 220 to satisfy teacher preparation program requirements. A grade of C or below requires repeating the course.

Final Exam Policy

The final examination (Thursday, December 17, 2026, 1:00–3:00 p.m.) is scheduled by the University Registrar and can't be moved without the Dean's written approval (Faculty Handbook §5.5). A student with three or more final exams on the same calendar day may reschedule one of them. Requests go to the instructor of the middle exam by the last day of classes. For this term, send the request by Wednesday, December 9, 2026 (Student Handbook §6.4).

Academic Integrity

Alkimi University is an academic community devoted to rigorous scholarship, open intellectual inquiry, and uncompromising ethical conduct. All students are subject to the regulations of the Alkimi University Academic Integrity Policy. Academic dishonesty—including plagiarism, cheating on examinations,

unauthorized collaboration, fabrication of empirical data, and unauthorized submission of academic work generated by artificial intelligence—undermines the integrity of the university and carries severe disciplinary sanctions. Sanctions range from a failing grade on an assignment or exam to an administrative course failure recorded as an 'XF' on the official transcript, academic suspension, or expulsion. Suspected violations are formally investigated and resolved through the Office of Academic Integrity in accordance with Faculty Handbook §6. For detailed information, consult the Office of Academic Integrity, Lovell Hall 315, (555) 555-0163, integrity@university.alkimi.ai.

Accessibility Services

Alkimi University is committed to providing equitable educational access and reasonable accommodations for all students with documented disabilities, including physical, sensory, psychological, learning, and chronic health conditions. Students requesting academic accommodations must formally register with the Office of Accessibility Services, Harlan Hall 204, (555) 555-0155, access@university.alkimi.ai. Once approved, students will receive an official Faculty Accommodation Letter detailing approved accommodations. Students should present this letter to the instructor as early in the semester as possible, and at least one week prior to any exam or assignment requiring accommodation. Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively.

Student Wellness and Mental Health

Your physical health, psychological well-being, and mental health are essential to your academic success. If you experience heightened stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, personal trauma, or academic burnout, free, confidential counseling and medical care are available through the Hollis Health & Counseling Center, located in the Hollis Center. Routine appointments are available Monday–Friday 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. and Saturday 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. during the semester by calling (555) 555-0190 or emailing health@university.alkimi.ai. Urgent, 24/7 crisis psychological counseling is accessible immediately at (555) 555-0199.

Campus Student Support Services

- **Academic Advising Center:** Lovell Hall 101 | (555) 555-0158 | advising@university.alkimi.ai
- **Writing Center:** Whitcombe Library 3rd Floor | Free consultations on papers, reports, and research projects at any stage.
- **Whitcombe Library:** Whitcombe Library, Main Floor | (555) 555-0170 | askalibrarian@university.alkimi.ai
- **Hollis Health & Counseling Center:** Hollis Center | (555) 555-0190 | 24/7 Counseling Line: (555) 555-0199 | health@university.alkimi.ai
- **Inclusive Pedagogy & UDL Consultation Hours:** Lovell Hall 120 | Curriculum differentiation support, IEP case simulation guidance, and English learner resource advising with Dr. Wu.