



NEW JERSEY CENTER  
FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

## **SPED6280: Working with Families & Community Resources**

**Course Credit:** 3.0 NJCTL credits

### **Dates & Times:**

This is a 3-credit, self-paced course, covering 7 modules of content. The exact number of hours that you can expect to spend on each module will vary based upon the module coursework, as well as your study style and preferences. You should plan to spend approximately 15 hours per credit working online, and up to 30 hours per credit working offline.

**LMS Link:** <https://moodle.njctl.org/course/view.php?id=305>

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course provides educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to collaborate effectively with families, integrating community resources in supporting students with disabilities. Key topics include understanding the experiences of families of children with disabilities, developing relationships with families of children with disabilities, key roles of the special education teacher, identifying and utilizing education and community resources, supporting at-risk students and those in need of early intervention, fostering communication and collaborative partnerships, and planning for successful transitions.

**Prerequisite:** SPED6210, SPED6220, SPED6230, SPED6240, SPED6250, SPED6260, SPED6270

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Upon completion of the course, the student will:

1. understand and work to support the diverse needs of families of children with disabilities.
2. identify and access state and local community resources available to families.
3. develop effective strategies for collaboration, consultation, and advocacy.
4. implement transition planning and program development using available agencies and services.

## TEXTS, READINGS, INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES:

### Required Text(s):

The open-source textbook below is used throughout this program.

Lombardi, P. (2023). The Roles and Responsibilities of the Special Educator. University System of New Hampshire Pressbooks. Retrieved from <https://pressbooks.usnh.edu/edc703-803/>

This course also uses presentations and journal articles accessible within each course module. When viewing each module's PowerPoint slideshow, you should review all external links in white boxes *unless* they are denoted as optional. Other links within the slideshow and inserted into the "notes" section are for reference or further information only.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Consistent attendance in your online courses is essential for your success. Failure to verify your attendance within the first 7 days of this course may result in your withdrawal. If for some reason you would like to drop a course, please contact the Dean of Students.

Students should interact with fellow students and course instructor via the discussion boards within the course modules. These discussion boards are monitored by your course instructor, and you can post questions or thoughts on module learning here.

Online classes have assignments and participation requirements just like on-campus classes. Budget your time carefully. If you are having technical problems, problems with your assignments, or other problems that are impeding your progress, let your instructor know as soon as possible.

### GRADE DISTRIBUTION AND SCALE:

In order to receive a Passing grade, the participant must complete the following course requirements: all short answer assignments, critical thinking assignments, and the final reflection outlined in the *Assignments* section of the Class Schedule (below).

#### Grade Distribution:

Proctored Assessments	60%
Critical Thinking Assignments	30%
Short Answer Assignments	5%
Reflection Paper	5%

#### Grade Scale:

A	93 – 100
A-	90 – 92
B+	86 – 89
B	83 – 86
B-	80 – 82
C+	77 – 79

C	73 – 76
C-	70 – 72
D	60.0 – 69.9
F	59.9 or below

### **GRADING RUBRIC:**

The following rubric is used to score:

- Short Answer Assignments – 5% of grade
- Critical Thinking Assignments – 30% of grade

The minimum possible score for this rubric is 18 points, and the score will be converted to the minimum grade available in this module (which is zero unless the scale is used). The maximum score of 60 points will be converted to the maximum grade.

Intermediate scores will be converted respectively and rounded to the nearest available grade. If a scale is used instead of a grade, the score will be converted to the scale elements as if they were consecutive integers.

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Below Expectations	Limited Evidence
		<i>15 points</i>	<i>12 points</i>	<i>9 points</i>	<i>6 points</i>
<b>Requirements</b>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes all of the required components as specified in the assignments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes most of the required components as specified in the assignments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes some of the required components as specified in the assignments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes few of the required components as specified in the assignments</li> </ul>
	<i>14 to 15 points</i>	<i>13 points</i>	<i>10 to 12 points</i>	<i>7 to 9 points</i>	<i>4 to 6 points</i>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates strong or excellent knowledge of the materials; correctly includes and represents knowledge from the readings and sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates adequate knowledge of the materials; represents some knowledge from the readings and sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some significant but not major errors or omissions in demonstration of knowledge or expresses your personal experience without reference to the readings and sources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major errors or omissions in demonstration of knowledge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fails to demonstrate knowledge of the materials.</li> </ul>
	<i>19 to 20 points</i>	<i>16-18 points</i>	<i>13 to 15 points</i>	<i>9-12 points</i>	<i>5 to 8 points</i>
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates strong or excellent critical thinking and analysis of concepts and applications, integrating module materials, professional practice and real world experiences to support your thinking. This may include a more global conversation about pedagogical implications and is not limited only to their classroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates good or adequate critical thinking and analysis of concepts and applications, integrating module materials, professional practice and classroom application.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some significant but not major errors or omissions in critical thinking and analysis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major errors or omissions in critical thinking and analysis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fails to demonstrate critical thinking and analysis.</li> </ul>
		<i>9 to 10 points</i>	<i>7 to 8 points</i>	<i>5 to 6 points</i>	<i>3 to 4 points</i>
<b>Grammar, Style, and Organization</b>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project is clearly organized and well-written. Strong sentence and paragraph structure; few errors in grammar and spelling. Proper APA formatting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project is fairly well organized and written; it is in proper format (including APA). Reasonably good sentence and paragraph structure; significant errors in grammar and spelling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project is poorly organized; does not follow proper paper format (including APA). Inconsistent to inadequate sentence and paragraph development; numerous grammar/spelling errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project is not organized or well written and is not in proper format (including APA). Poor quality work; unacceptable grammar/spelling.</li> </ul>

The following rubric used to score the Final Reflection Critical Thinking assignment (5% of grade):

The minimum possible score for this rubric is 4 points, and the score will be converted to the minimum grade available in this module (which is zero unless the scale is used). The maximum score of 25 points will be converted to the maximum grade.

	<b>Meets Expectation</b>	<b>Approaches Expectation</b>	<b>Below Expectation</b>	<b>Limited Evidence</b>
	<i>7 points</i>	<i>5 points</i>	<i>3 points</i>	<i>1 point</i>
<b>Content</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates excellent knowledge of concepts, skills, and theories relevant to topic.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates fair knowledge of concepts, skills, and theories.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates incomplete or insubstantial knowledge of concepts, skills, and theories.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates little or no knowledge of concepts, skills, and theories.</li> </ul>
<b>Depth of Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content is well supported and addresses all required components of the assignment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content is partially supported; addresses most of the required components of the assignment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content contains major deficiencies; addresses some of the required components of the assignment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content is not supported and/or includes few of the required components of the assignment.</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence and Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response shows strong evidence of synthesis of ideas presented and insights gained throughout the entire course. The implications of these insights for the respondent's overall teaching practice are thoroughly detailed, as applicable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing is mostly clear, concise, and well organized with good sentence/paragraph construction. Thoughts are expressed in a coherent and logical manner. There are no more than five spelling, grammar, or syntax errors per page of writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response is missing some components and/or does not fully meet the requirements indicated in the instructions. Some questions or parts of the assignment are not addressed. Some attachments and additional documents, if required, are missing or unsuitable for the purpose of the assignment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response excludes essential components and/or does not address the requirements indicated in the instructions. Many parts of the assignment are addressed minimally, inadequately, and/or not at all.</li> </ul>
	<i>4 points</i>	<i>3 points</i>	<i>2 points</i>	<i>1 point</i>
<b>Writing Quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Writing is well-organized, clear, concise, and focused; no errors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some minor errors or omissions in writing organization, focus, and clarity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some significant errors or omissions in writing organization, focus, and clarity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Numerous errors in writing organization, focus, and/or clarity.</li> </ul>

The proctored midterm and final assessments are not scored using a rubric. These assessments are scored using percentage correct to assign a letter grade.

**ACADEMIC STANDING:**

NJCTL has established standards for academic good standing within a student's academic program. Students enrolled in any NJCTL online course must receive an 80% or higher to successfully complete a course and receive credit for that course. An 80% is equivalent to a GPA of 2.7 or B-. Additionally, students in an endorsement program must receive a cumulative GPA of 3.0 for all courses combined in order to successfully complete the program.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of the course. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, plagiarism, reusing /repurposing your own work, unauthorized possession of academic materials, and unauthorized collaboration.

**CITING SOURCES WITH APA STYLE:**

All students are expected to follow proper writing and APA requirements when citing in APA (based on the APA Style Manual, 6th edition) for all assignments. Resources for doing so can be found [here](#).

**DISABILITY SERVICES STATEMENT:**

We are committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability requesting academic accommodations should contact the Dean of Students, Melissa Axelsson, for additional information to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities ([melissa@njctl.org](mailto:melissa@njctl.org)).

**NETIQUETTE:**

Respect the diversity of opinions among the instructor and classmates and engage with them in a courteous, respectful, and professional manner. All posts and classroom communication must be conducted in accordance with the student code of conduct. Think before you push the Send button. Did you say just what you meant? How will the person on the other end read the words?

Maintain an environment free of harassment, stalking, threats, abuse, insults or humiliation toward the instructor and classmates. This includes, but is not limited to, demeaning written or oral comments of an ethnic, religious, age, disability, sexist (or sexual orientation), or racist nature; and the unwanted sexual advances or intimidations by email, or on discussion boards and other postings within or connected to the online classroom.

If you have concerns about something that has been said, please let your instructor know.

**READING SCHEDULE:**

Required readings are available within each module by clicking the links where materials are listed under the "Required readings:" tab. Many modules in this course offer choice. The list of readings, podcasts, and videos are inclusive. Students have significant choice in their supplementary materials as noted in the module's PowerPoint.

Module	Assignments
<b>1 – The Practical Guide to an Individualized Education Program (IEP)</b>	<p><b>Short Answer (Q&amp;A):</b>  The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is a crucial document in special education that requires careful consideration and development. Based on the information provided in the presentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Choose one component of the IEP (either Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance [PLAAFP], Annual Goals, or Progress Monitoring) and explain its importance in creating an effective and legally compliant IEP.</li> <li>2. Describe a potential challenge that a special education teacher might face when developing or implementing this component of the IEP. How would you address this challenge?</li> <li>3. The presentation mentions the use of Generative AI tools for IEP goal writing. Discuss the potential benefits and risks of using such tools in IEP development. How can educators ensure they're using these tools responsibly and effectively?</li> </ol> <p><b>Critical Thinking:</b>  Write an essay (600–700 pdf submission) that critically examines the IEP process by addressing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Historical &amp; Legal Context:</b> Briefly summarize the evolution of IEP standards and key legal decisions (e.g., Endrew F.) that shape today's requirements.</li> <li>• <b>Component Analysis:</b> Choose one key IEP component (PLAAFP, Annual Goals, or Progress Monitoring). Describe its role in creating a legally compliant and effective IEP and identify challenges teachers face when using this component.</li> <li>• <b>Technology Integration:</b> Evaluate how digital tools (cloud systems, automated data collection, Generative AI) are transforming IEP development. Discuss both the benefits and potential risks (e.g., privacy issues, overreliance on technology).</li> <li>• <b>Recommendations:</b> Propose actionable strategies to improve the IEP process based on your analysis of legal, practical, and technological factors.</li> </ul> <p><b>Proctored Exam</b></p>

## **2 - Understanding the Experiences of Families of Children with Disabilities**

### **Short Answer (Q&A):**

Reflecting on the presentation "Understanding the Experiences of Families of Students with Disabilities," discuss how the challenges faced by families—such as emotional stress, isolation, and the complexities of navigating legal rights under IDEA and state laws—impact the educational experiences of their children.

### **Critical Thinking:**

#### **Case Analysis and Family Support Action Plan**

Using the presentation "Understanding the Experiences of Families of Students with Disabilities" as your primary resource, you will assume the role of a special education coordinator tasked with strengthening family-school partnerships. Your goal is to identify challenges families face and to develop a practical, evidence-based action plan that supports these families. (see Moodle for additional instructions)



**3 – Strategies for Building Relationships with Parents & Families**

**Short Answer (Q&A):**

Reflect on the strategies outlined in the "Strategies for Building Relationships with Families of Students with Disabilities" presentation. Please address the following: Identify one or two high-leverage practices (HLPs) mentioned in the presentation that you find essential for fostering strong educator-family partnerships. Explain how these practices—such as consistent, clear communication or the use of the Sandwich Method—contribute to building trust and promoting active family involvement in the IEP process.

**Critical Thinking:**

Create a 10–15 slide PowerPoint presentation plus a 300–400 word reflection that together detail a culturally responsive, evidence-based family engagement strategy. Choose to target either colleagues (educating them on best practices) or families (directly sharing supports and rights). (See Moodle for additional instructions)

**Proctored Exam**

**4 – Identifying  
Community  
Resources for  
Students with  
Disabilities**

**Short Answer (Q&A):**

Reflect on your own experiences or observations. Which resource or strategy from the presentation resonates with you the most, and why? How might you apply this resource or strategy in your professional practice to bridge gaps and support the diverse needs of students with disabilities?

**Critical Thinking:**

Overview:

Create a one-page information sheet that lists key community resources for students with disabilities. Then, write a 300–400 word reflection discussing the importance of these resources and how they can support students and families. (See Moodle for additional instructions)

<b>5 – Identifying Community Resources for At-Risk Students</b>	<p><b>Short Answer (Q&amp;A):</b> What obstacles have you faced or do you anticipate in connecting at-risk students and their families with community supports? Based on your experiences, what strategies or approaches have you found effective (or would like to try) to bridge any gaps between school and community services?</p> <p><b>Critical Thinking:</b> In this assignment, you will reflect on a real or hypothetical case from your professional practice involving an at-risk student. Drawing from the "Identifying Community Resources for At-Risk Students" presentation, you will analyze the risk factors, your role as an educator (including mandated reporting), and the community resources available to support the student. Your analysis should blend your personal experiences with evidence-based strategies from the presentation. (See Moodle for additional instructions)</p>
<b>6 – Creating School-Based Programs to Connect Families with Community Resources</b>	<p><b>Short Answer (Q&amp;A):</b> Outline one effective strategy presented to overcome barriers (e.g., scheduling conflicts, transportation, childcare, language differences) that hinder family participation. Explain how this strategy can be adapted or improved based on your professional experience or insights.</p> <p><b>Critical Thinking:</b> Write a 500-word reflection paper (submitted as a pdf) that examines how school-based programs connect families with community resources, connecting to this module. (See Moodle for additional instructions)</p>
<b>7 - Transition Planning &amp; Program Development</b>	<p><b>Short Answer (Q&amp;A):</b> How does employing a student-centered approach (as outlined by Kohler's Taxonomy) influence the quality and effectiveness of transition planning? In what ways can documenting student interests, measurable goals, and personal needs in the IEP lead to improved postsecondary outcomes?</p> <p><b>Critical Thinking:</b> For this assignment, you will write a 600–700 word critical reflection that connects the evidence-based strategies from the "Transition Planning &amp; Program Development" presentation with your personal professional experiences and local context. You will integrate a case study analysis—choosing from one of the provided case study options or using a case from your own practice—to ground your reflection in real-world application. (See Moodle for additional instructions)</p> <p><b>Proctored Exam</b></p>

**8 - Final Reflection  
Module****Final Critical Thinking:**

Write a 600–700 word reflection paper that brings together the key ideas you learned in this course. Your paper should explain how inclusive classroom practices, family engagement strategies, and effective transition planning work together to support students with disabilities.