SPCE 266 – Creating Effective Learning Environments

Ball State University

Fall 2026

Instructor Information

Dr. Kelsey Spurgin
Department of Special Education
Ball State University, Muncie, IN
kelsey.spurgin@bsu.edu
Office hours: Wednesdays 12pm-1pm. Additional meeting times available by appointment (please email).

Course Information

Course Description

Introduces evidence-based strategies for creating effective P–12 learning environments that promote student engagement and learning for students with exceptional needs. Emphasis is on Tier 1 practices and organizational methods.

Prerequisites

SPCE 201 with a grade of C or better.

Course Objectives

Course Objective	CEC Initial Standards	InTASC Standards
CO1: Explain the relationship between effective classroom organization, instructional planning, and student engagement within Tier 1 systems of support.	• 2.1 – Apply understanding of human growth and development to create developmentally appropriate, meaningful learning experiences • 5.1 – Use assessment findings to appropriately plan and guide instruction	• 3 – Learning Environments • 7 – Planning for Instruction
CO2: Identify and analyze evidence-based strategies for establishing positive classroom climates that support social, emotional, and academic	• 2.1 – Apply understanding of human growth and development to create	• 2 – Learning Differences • 3 – Learning Environments

learning for students with exceptional needs.	developmentally appropriate, meaningful learning experiences ● 5.4 – Use flexible grouping to support instruction adapted to individual and group needs	
CO3: Design and evaluate classroom routines, procedures, and environmental structures that promote safety, predictability, and active participation across diverse learners in P–12 settings.	● 5.1 – Use assessment findings to appropriately plan and guide instruction ● 5.3 – Use explicit, systematic instruction to make clear what a learner needs to do or think about	● 3 – Learning Environments ● 8 – Instructional Strategies
CO4: Examine approaches to proactive classroom management and prevention of challenging behaviors through clear expectations, reinforcement systems, and culturally responsive practices.	● 2.2 – Use understanding of diverse factors (families, languages, cultures, communities, individual differences) to plan and implement learning experiences and environments ● 6.2 – Use a range of preventive and responsive practices to support social, emotional, and educational well-being	● 2 – Learning Differences ● 9 – Professional Learning and Ethical Practice
CO5: Reflect on the role of the teacher in creating equitable, inclusive learning environments and in collaborating with colleagues, families, and students to sustain positive classroom communities.	● 6.0 – Supporting Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Growth (standard-level) ● 7.2 – Collaborate, communicate, and coordinate with families, paraprofessionals, and other professionals	● 9 – Professional Learning and Ethical Practice ● 10 – Leadership and Collaboration

Course Modality/Structure
This course has an in-person component and a field experience.

Course Time Commitment
It is expected that students will spend approximately 2 hours of study time outside of class for every one hour in class. Since this is a 3-unit class, you should expect to study an average of 6 hours outside of class each week.

Course Materials

Required Text(s):
Lane, K. L., Menzies, H. M., Bruhn, A. L., & Crnobori, M. (2025). Managing challenging behaviors in schools: Research-based strategies that work (2nd ed.). Guilford Publications.

Additional Readings:
Recommended readings and copies of articles will be provided and shared with the students as the class proceeds. Documents will be posted on Canvas.

Course Assignments and Assessments

Course Assignments
Rubrics and additional information for each assignment will be posted to Canvas. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments are to be submitted through the Assignment Tool in Canvas.

Reflection Journal: “Building Confidence in Behavior Support” (Part 1 of 2)	**10 pts**
Course Synthesis Reflection (Part 2 of 2)	**10 pts**
Quiz: Tiered Systems & the Six-Step Response Process	**10 pts**
Explicit Instruction & Feedback Observation	**20 pts**
Curriculum Accessibility Audit	**20 pts**
Single Lesson Transitions and Pacing	**20 pts**
Routines & Procedures Plan	**20 pts**
Field Experience Log (4 entries × 20 pts)	**80 pts**
Foundational Teacher Behaviors Video Analysis	**20 pts**
Social Skills Lesson Plan (Tell & Show)	**20 pts**
Case Study Response: Designing a Behavior Contract	**20 pts**
Progress-Monitoring Tools	**20 pts**
Operational Definition Assignment	**20 pts**
Data-Informed Decision-Making Worksheet	**20 pts**

Cultural Gaps Reflection	**10 pts**
Participation	**30 pts**
Final Exam	**100 pts**
Total	**450 pts**

Course Grading Scale

Your final grade in this course is calculated as the percentage of your total number of points out of the total points possible. The following scale will be used to assign final grades.

Letter Grade	Range
A	100% - 94%
A-	93% - 90%
B+	89% - 86%
B	85% - 82%
B-	81% - 80%
C+	79% - 76%
C	75% - 72%
C-	71% - 70%
D+	69% - 66%
D	65% - 62%
D-	61% - 60%
F	59% - 0%

University Policies and Statements

University Statement

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse.

Disability Statement

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Freedom of Expression

In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball

State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's ***Statement on Freedom of Expression***, the resources on Ball State's ***Freedom of Expression webpage***, and ***Ball State's Beneficence Pledge.***

Title IX

Ball State University is committed to maintaining an educational environment free from sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, and stalking. Students who experience or witness conduct that may violate University policy are encouraged to seek support and assistance. The Title IX Office can provide information about reporting options, supportive measures, and available resources. Contact the Title IX Office at 765-285-1545 or ***titleix@bsu.edu***.

Please Note: **As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter. If you disclose information to me about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, I am required to notify the Title IX Coordinator.** The Title IX Office will reach out to discuss available resources, supportive measures, and reporting options. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, you may contact the Counseling Center or the Center for Survivor Support.

Pregnancy and Related Conditions

Ball State University provides reasonable modifications for students affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. Students seeking academic, housing, or other modifications are encouraged to contact the Title IX Office as early as possible to discuss available options and support. For assistance, contact the Title IX Office at 765-285-1545 or ***titleix@bsu.edu***.

University Grade Appeal Policy

If you believe you received a final course grade that does not reflect your performance due to fairness or a procedural issue, you have the right to file an appeal within 5 school days after final grades are posted by the ***Office of the Registrar***. Review the ***University Grade Appeal Policy and Process***.

Student Academic Ethics Policy

Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Visit the VPAA's ***academic integrity website*** (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. To learn about BSU's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University ***Student Academic Ethics Policy***.

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself.

Check with me if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty. Examples of academic integrity violations include but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the faculty member (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books)
- Using a generative AI system or a person to complete academic assignments such as response papers, discussion posts, essays, or any other assignment when such use is not explicitly permitted by the assignment instructions or the instructor.
- Utilizing another person or a generative AI system to take a quiz, examination, or similar evaluation in place of oneself.
- Using a generative AI system for research, creative work, theses/dissertations, grant proposals, IRB-regulated work, or publication-bound work in violation of university AI policies, funder/publisher rules, IRB requirements, or discipline-specific standards.
- Presenting as one's own work the ideas, representations or words of another person or of a GenAI system without customary and proper acknowledgment of sources or of the AI tool(s) used.
- Using generative AI systems to analyze data, conduct research, or generate content that is included in an assignment (images, graphs, charts, tables, etc.) without proper documentation, citation, and attribution of this AI use.
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).
- Without the instructor's written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.
- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing)
- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

The Learning Center

The Learning Center offers free Tutoring and Academic Coaching for many courses at Ball State. Students can make appointments for online (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit myballstate.bsu.edu and click on "Navigate" in the Academic Tools section, or just go directly to ***bsu.navigate.eab.com***.

Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are available for students who have received the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Tests may be administered in the Learning Center.

Supplemental Instruction is available in select courses. If you have an SI leader for your course, that person will provide students with information the first week of school regarding weekly study sessions. For more information about Learning Center programming, visit ***bsu.edu/learningcenter*** or call 765-285-1006. Follow us on Instagram: ***BallStateLC***.

The Writing Center

All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center to get additional feedback on your writing. The Writing Center can help you at any stage of the writing process, whether you're just getting started and need help brainstorming or when you're wrapping up a project and just want a second set of eyes. We work with writers from all disciplines and with all kinds of writing, including essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts.

You can choose from three appointment types: getting started on a new project (Planning appointment), discussing an existing draft (Feedback appointment), or scheduling time to work, with a tutor on hand to keep you motivated (Accountability appointment). To schedule a free appointment, go to ***bsu.edu/writingcenter***. We offer online appointments any time we're open, or you can meet a tutor face-to-face in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays and Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings. Make sure you plan ahead, because appointments book quickly!

The Basic Needs Hub

If you are having difficulty affording enough food, do not have a safe and reliable place to sleep, and/or experiencing an emergency or crisis, help is available through the ***Basic Needs Hub***. The Basic Needs Hub has information, resources, and provides individualized support to students. To talk with a supportive staff member about your experience, receive one on one assistance, or learn more about resources, you can submit a ***Basic Needs Assistance Form***.

The Counseling Center

The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). The Crisis Line is a mental health resource for those who are struggling with any mental health concerns, including thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide.

At the Ball State Counseling Center, we see students for a variety of reasons, some of which include homesickness, relationship concerns, anxiety, and depression. At your first appointment, you will work with a therapist to create a plan that will connect you with resources that best fit your needs. We assist students with getting connected to therapy at our Center as well as connecting students to self-help resources, other on-campus resources, and community-based resources. All Ball State students also have access to several on-demand, self-help resources through a variety of different platforms. All of these resources, including a direct link to our website, can be found ***here***.

The Speaking Center

The ***Speaking Center*** is a free resource available to all members of the BSU community wanting to improve their public speaking abilities. We offer personalized coaching designed to help you become a more confident and effective speaker. Our trained coaches provide

constructive feedback and support throughout the entire speech preparation process, whether you are in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and organizing your thoughts, or you need to practice your delivery and refine your message.
The Center is in the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, room 302. To schedule an appointment, please access us through your Navigate app or use this ***direct link*** to sign up for a time**.** Appointments are available both in person and on Zoom. Appointments are available in person, on Zoom, and in virtual reality (VR) for those interested in practicing in an immersive speaking environment.

Canvas Accessibility

Canvas provides a user experience that is easy, simple, and intuitive. Special attention has been paid to making Canvas screen-readable. The Rich Content Editor encourages users to create accessible content pages (i.e. text formatting is accomplished using styles). Canvas is designed to allow limited customization of colors and schemes to be accessible for all users. The National Federation of the Blind granted Canvas the Gold Level Web Certification in 2010. Find more information by visiting the **Canvas Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT)**.

FERPA and Privacy

As a student, your educational records are considered confidential. Under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), your records are confidential and protected. Under most circumstances, your records will not be released without your written and signed consent. However, some directory information may be released to third parties without your prior consent unless a written request to restrict this is on file. You can learn more about student rights to privacy by reading **Ball State's FERPA and Privacy and Protection**.

Plagiarism Detection

The campus subscribes to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service, through Canvas. You may need to submit written assignments to Turnitin. Student work will be used for plagiarism detection and for no other purpose. The student may indicate in writing to the instructor that he/she refuses to participate in the plagiarism detection process, in which case the instructor can use other electronic means to verify the originality of their work.

Course Expectations and Policies

Participation Policy

This course is designed around weekly activities, discussion, and regular collaboration, both in class and outside of it. Engaging in dialogue with your classmates and instructor during class is what makes this a strong learning community, and like most things, you'll get out of it what you put into it!

Attend class regularly and come prepared to participate actively in discussion and collaborative work. Check your official Ball State email account daily to view announcements and prepare for class.

Participation is worth 30 points of your final grade. You're allowed two absences over the semester with no explanation needed. Use them for illness, emergencies, or just an off week, whatever you need. Beyond that, each additional absence deducts 5 points from your participation grade. If you're accumulating absences, I'll reach out to check in. My goal is to understand what's going on and help you get back on track, not to penalize first and ask questions later.

Complete all assignments, quizzes, tests, and any other activities by the stated due dates.

Please pay attention to upcoming assignments and readings, and ask any questions at least 24 hours prior to when the assignment is due.

Feedback Policy

I will respond to emails from your official Ball State email address within 24 hours during weekdays (Monday-Friday) and within 48 hours on the weekend.
I will read every discussion post, but I will not always personally comment on posts.
I will grade your quizzes, assignments, and discussions within one week of submission.
Contact me directly if you have questions or concerns about your performance in class.

Late Assignment Policy

All assignments are due by midnight (EST) on the due dates indicated in Canvas.
In an effort to provide some flexibility for the curveballs we all experience in life, there is a 24-hour “no questions asked” grace period. If you are submitting an assignment late, but within this grace period, you do not need to notify me.
If you have extenuating circumstances that prevent submitting an assignment on time or within the grace period, please contact your instructor directly to discuss an extension.
Priority concerns are: you not falling behind (stressful!) and doing quality work.
Canvas will not accept assignments for grading after 11:59 pm on the final day of class.

Policy on Grammar and Writing Conventions in Assignments

This course and instructor recognize and celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity of the students enrolled, including the many ways that we develop expressive language and our own unique linguistic repertoires. This policy seeks to provide the language resources and supports in order to empower teacher candidates to recognize and flexibly use appropriate language for various purposes and audiences.

The courses in this degree program are designed to prepare you to become an effective and successful teacher. As future teachers, it is imperative that you are able to show proficiency in the use of formal writing. Teachers collaborate and communicate with various professionals and parents on a daily basis. Clear and appropriate communication is a fundamental skill for effective teaching and professional credibility. Proper grammar will be a component of the grading rubric for assignments in which formal writing would be appropriate. Informal assignments such as discussion boards will not have grammar-specific grading criteria.
See the information on accessing the Writing Center above. Your instructor is also available to assist with writing needs related to this course!

Tip: AI can help you effortlessly maintain formal English conventions (when appropriate) by downloading the Grammarly extension for **free**. LINK

Generative AI Statement

Within this class, you are welcome to use foundation models (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, etc.) as a tool to help you be more productive and resourceful in a shorter amount of time (This constitutes the explicit permission referenced in the Academic Ethics Policy above). Teacher burnout is very real, and I believe that these tools are our future (and our helpers!) However, keep in mind that all large language models still have a tendency to produce incorrect facts, fake citations, and lifeless language. This technology is still very new and it's up to you to recognize inaccuracies and add **your unique voice**. Image generation models can occasionally generate highly offensive products. You will be responsible for any inaccurate, biased, offensive, or otherwise unethical content you submit regardless of whether it originally comes from you or a foundation model. If you use a foundation model, its contribution must be acknowledged in the assignment submission; you will be penalized for using a foundation model without acknowledgement. Having said all these disclaimers, the use of foundation models *is encouraged*, as it may make it possible for you to submit assignments with higher quality, in less time! Bottom line – don't be afraid to use (and then cite) AI models like ChatGPT. But! Also keep in mind that AI can only take your work so far. It's up to you to revise, add, and *humanize* your work for the sake of your own identities as a future teacher and professional, and the sake of your future students.

How to cite AI-generated text with APA: https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt
Using AI in the Classroom: Tips and Tricks from Two Teachers
7 AI Tools That Help Teachers Work More Efficiently

Course Schedule

To support a learning experience that is responsive to the needs, interests, and pace of our class community, the course schedule may shift over the semester. The most current version of the schedule will always be available on Canvas. I encourage you to check Canvas regularly for updates and contact me if you have any questions.

Subject to Change Statement

This syllabus is subject to change. All changes will be communicated to students via Canvas.