



## **Educating Students with Autism: Evidence-based Best Practice Online Participant Syllabus**

### **Course Description**

This course is designed to provide K-8 educators, paraprofessionals, and/or administrators with a widespread knowledge of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Participants will explore historical data and diagnosis statistics, characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorders, and co-morbid diagnoses. Additionally, course content will focus on implementation of classroom strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of students on the Autism Spectrum. Participants will research, analyze, and effectively select evidence-based strategies appropriate for students with Autism.

### **Course Prerequisites**

Educators enrolled in the course are required to hold a baccalaureate degree. No prerequisites for this course are required.

### **System Requirements**

- Computer with word processing software
- Internet access connection
- Online video viewing capabilities/Adobe flash player
- Software capable of reading PDF files

### **Text Books/Supplemental Reading**

There is not a required textbook for this class. However, refer to weekly reading assignments and additional materials within each milestone.

### **Global Goals of the Course**

To deepen and/or apply the content and skills of the teacher's existing professional knowledge base by meeting the following global goals of this course:

1. To examine characteristics associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder, as well as co-morbid diagnoses that can accompany the ASD diagnosis, and how the above these affect learning in the classroom (CEC 1, 2, 3; InTASC 1, 2; NBPTS 1)
2. To demonstrate an understanding of how to differentiate the learning environment to be successful for learners with ASD (CEC 3, 4, 5, 7; InTASC 1-3, 5, 7, 8; NBPTS 1, 2)

3. To develop a thorough understanding of how to select evidence-based strategies to utilize in the classroom vs. emerging strategies for the learner with ASD (CEC 4, 6, 7, 9; InTASC 1-5, 7-9; NBPTS 1-4)
4. To analyze and implement the strategies recommended to successfully educate the learner with ASD (CEC 3-6; InTASC 2-5, 7, 8; NBPTS 1-4)
5. To facilitate a positive collaboration between educators, support staff, related-services staff, and parents/caregivers of the learner with ASD (CEC 1, 2, 7, 10; InTASC 10; NBPTS 5)

### Instructional Objectives

By the conclusion of the course, each participant should be able to do the following:

1. Develop a comprehensive understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders.
  - 1.1 Understand the statistical increase via historical and diagnostic data.
  - 1.2 Explore possible causes and co-morbid diagnoses.
  - 1.3 Examine treatment/therapies chosen by parents.
  - 1.4 Reflect on personal experience and/or lack of knowledge.
2. Identify characteristics of learners with Autism Spectrum Disorders.
  - 2.1 Examine language and communication deficits.
  - 2.2 Assess behavior concerns and the causes of behavior.
  - 2.3 Identify social skill deficits.
  - 2.4 Construct plans to meet individual sensory processing needs.
  - 2.5 Explore accommodations to facilitate learning of students with ASD.
3. Develop an understanding of strategies in the classroom to support the learner with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
  - 3.1 Analyze evidence-based strategies, emerging strategies, and non-supported strategies.
  - 3.2 Decipher the difference between the strategies, as well as the importance of research.
  - 3.3 Construct a plan for implementation of research-based strategies in the classroom.
  - 3.4 Reflect on personal usage of strategies.
4. Understand IDEA Partnership, Functional Behavior Assessments, and IEP goal writing as to benefit the learner with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
  - 4.1 Utilize the resources available through the IDEA Partnership and the benefits for the learner with ASD.
  - 4.2 Identify the need for a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and understand the implementation process.
  - 4.3 Develop meaningful and measurable IEP goals to support and challenge the learner with ASD.
5. Recognize supports for positive team collaboration.

- 5.1 Address parental concerns while offering support and communication.
- 5.2 Review implementations of classroom strategies with support staff/related-services staff.
- 5.3 Identify trainings and/or professional development opportunities to maintain current educational recommendations.

### **Teaching Methodology and Delivery Model**

Teaching methodologies used in this course are specifically designed to maximize learning in a guided, graduate-level, online distance-learning model. Each course facilitator is trained and/or experienced in facilitating graduate-level online courses as well as the specific content and skills of this course.

1. Online methodologies include instructor/expert presentations, directed skill practice, asynchronous class and group discussions using threaded discussion questions, peer evaluation, self-evaluation, portfolio development, and the synthesis of new knowledge and skills in designing grade-specific lesson plans or other educational applications of knowledge and skills.
2. The course is taught in a supportive learning environment with teacher-participant interaction and feedback. Class participants interact with other professionals via the Forum area by replying to existing posts as well as creating new threads on topics of their choice.
3. Content focuses on the presentation of advanced concepts linked to instructional strategies which accommodate learning needs of a diverse student population.
4. Course content, activities, and assignments are organized into “milestones” that participants complete during the span of the course. Course content is intended to cover material equal to 45 seat hours of instructional time.
5. Class participants actively construct their own learning and make it personally relevant by acquiring and applying course knowledge/skills to their own teaching situation.

### **Learning Assessment**

Formative assessment of learning objectives for this course is conducted informally throughout the course via discussion, critiques, peer- and self-evaluations, journal entries, instructor feedback, small-group sharing and activities requiring participants to make sense of new knowledge and/or skills within their realm of teaching. Additionally, three formative assessments are embedded within the course. Summative assessment for the course occurs in the form of a final project which requires each participant to synthesize class content and apply it within the teacher’s specific teaching environment.

### **Compliance with National Board of Professional Teaching Standards**

The National Board of Professional Teaching Standards represents the highest level of professional achievement in the continuum of teacher professional development. There are five core principles (standards) which cover five aspects of professional educational

practice: (1) commitment to students and their learning, (2) knowledge of subject matter and instructional strategies, (3) management and monitoring of student learning, (4) systematic reflection about the teaching profession to learn and grow from experience, and (5) collaborative participation in the educational learning community.

### **Compliance with Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards**

The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium's work is guided by one basic premise: An effective teacher must be able to integrate content knowledge with the specific strengths and needs of students to assure that all students learn and perform at high levels. All teachers should meet the following standards: (1) learner development, (2) learning differences, (3) learning environments, (4) content knowledge, (5) application of content, (6) assessment, (7) planning for instruction, (8) instructional strategies, (9) professional learning and ethical practices, and (10) leadership and collaboration.

### **Compliance with Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Standards**

As the recognized leader for special education professional standards, the Council for Exceptional Children continues to develop standards, ethics and practices, and guidelines to assure that individuals with exceptionalities have well-prepared, career-oriented special educators. These standards include: (1) foundations, (2) development and characteristics of learners, (3) individual learning differences, (4) instructional strategies, (5) learning environments and social interactions, (6) language, (7) instructional planning, (8) assessment, (9) professional and ethical practice, and (10) collaboration.

### **Final Projects**

In keeping with best instructional and assessment practices, this course requires participants to demonstrate synthesis and application of course knowledge in an applied final project linked to the instructional objectives of this course. Assessment of the project should not be limited to the quantity of work submitted but should carefully consider the quality and intellectual value of the work.

Final projects are due and will be submitted to the instructor within the allotted class time. Unless the instructor states otherwise, all papers are expected to be properly formatted electronically.

Participants taking courses for professional development unit (not-for-credit) must follow the same Participation Expectations as posted in the course syllabus. Participants will complete readings and tasks as outlined in the Task List. Forum Postings are also required. However, participants will be exempt from completing the Formative and Summative assignments unless otherwise noted. Proof of seat hours will be presented

to the participants after completing the state required course evaluation located on the student portal.

### Assessments and Grading

Throughout the course, participants will engage in both formal and informal formative and summative assessments. Points are assigned based on a four-point criterion rubric specifically delineated for each assessment that can be further defined as follows:

**Distinguished:** The assessment is highly imaginative; demonstrates critical thought; is unique; shows substantial application to one's own teaching or professional position; *goes above and beyond requirements*; is creative; demonstrates both breadth and depth of knowledge of transition-related subject matter; shows individual's personality; is professional in presentation and appearance; and demonstrates considerable effort. The assessment is exceptionally completed and demonstrates clear understanding of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Distinguished" on the course rubric.

**Proficient:** The assessment is well-organized and complete; is effectively and clearly presented; demonstrates clear understandings; applies what has been learned to the author's own classroom situation; clearly shows connections; is detailed; and is thoughtful and supported with ideas. A thoroughly completed assessment demonstrates that the participant shows awareness of the tasks, gives explanations, and shows how the assessment applies to a teaching/learning situation. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Proficient" on the course rubric.

**Basic:** This is the lowest passing grade. The assessment meets minimum requirements; includes general information but lacks descriptive detail; shows limited application to teaching/learning; and lacks originality. This denotes work that does not meet **all** aspects of standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Basic" on the course rubric.

**Unsatisfactory:** The assessment is missing evidence or information; is sloppy and poorly organized; demonstrates only surface understandings; shows no evidence of application to the author's own teaching situation; is poorly written; and does not meet minimum standards for academic performance in a graduate-level course. The assessment meets the specific criteria delineated in "Unsatisfactory" on the course rubric.

The assessments for this course are weighted as follows:

Participation and Reflection	30%
Formative Assessments	30%

Summative Assessments 40%

### **Academic Honesty and Integrity**

All participants are expected to maintain academic honesty and integrity by doing their own work to the best of their ability. Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, etc.) will result in the participant receiving a zero for that assignment or paper.

### **Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance**

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and The Americans with Disabilities Act, participants who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class, are encouraged to inform the Director of Academic Affairs prior to the first class session. Reasonable academic accommodations, aids, and adjustments may be made as needed to provide for equitable participation.

### **Attendance**

Participants will have specific dates to start the course and complete the required assignments. They will need to contact The Connecting Link at (888) 550-5465 should they not be able to complete the online class in the time given.

### **Late Work and Make-Up Policy**

Participants are expected to keep pace with assignments and expectations. If a situation arises in which an assignment cannot be completed, the participant is expected to make arrangements with the instructor for the timely submission of such work. Failure to complete all work in this time frame will result in an **incomplete** or a grade of **F** for the work, depending on the reason for the delay.

### **University Compliance**

Course content and instruction are bound by policies associated with the university granting academic credit for the course. Such policies include, but are not limited to: academic integrity and honor codes, institutional objectives and grade grievance procedures. These policies are located within the official academic catalogs which can be accessed through the university's official website.