

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SAN MARCOS  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**EDEX 636: Contemporary Professional Issues:  
Research and Best Practice Seminar  
Autism Spectrum Disorders  
(3 semester units)**

**Instructor: Barbara Schmidt, MA, MS**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**EDEX 636 Contemporary Professional Issues: Research and Best Practice Seminar -  
Autism Spectrum Disorder (3 semester units)**

Examines current issues, concepts, and emerging best practices and research findings related to the education of learners with autism spectrum disorders in K-12 settings.

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the School of Education Community is to collaboratively transform public education by preparing thoughtful educators and advancing professional practices. We are committed to diversity, educational equity, and social justice, exemplified through reflective teaching, life-long learning, innovative research and on-going service. Our practices demonstrate a commitment to student-centered education, diversity, collaboration, professionalism, and shared governance. (*Adopted by COE Governance Community, October, 1997*).

**AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AUTHORIZATION**

This contemporary professional issues course is specially designed to develop candidates' competence in supporting individuals with various learning and communication challenges, in particular individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). With successful completion of this course and the EDEX 637 companion course, candidates who hold or are eligible for a Preliminary Education Specialist teaching credential may be recommended for the ASD Added Authorization.

The ASD Added Authorization courses may be considered part of coursework for completing a Clear Education Specialist program.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

Candidates will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and use of current laws, procedural safeguards, and regulations regarding California public education as they pertain to instruction and support of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
2. Describe the diagnostic criteria for ASD and pervasive developmental disorders.
3. Identify the theorized etiologies and nature of ASD including the notion of autism as a movement difference and the role of genes, environment, and gene environment interaction.

4. Describe assessment instruments used for initial screening, diagnostic processes, educational planning and intervention, and curriculum-based monitoring of progress for individuals with ASD.
5. Describe the characteristics and issues surrounding autism in early childhood, including the impact of social-communicative skills, speech and language characteristics, sensory systems and sensory regulation supports, cognitive and play skills.
6. Describe the impact of ASD throughout the lifespan to adulthood including social-communicative skills, cognitive skills, neurological and sensory differences and needs, relationship development, employment, and independent living.
7. Identify current research on learning and effective curricula and teaching and support practices and curricula for students with ASD across learning environments.
8. Discuss the different interventions available for students with ASD, the appropriateness of the interventions, and the pros and cons of each. Some of the interventions included applied behavioral analysis (ABA), Floor Time, SCERTS, Pivotal Response Treatment, and TEACCH.
9. Demonstrate the ability to manage learning environments, design and structure daily classroom routines, and motivate students with autism using meaningful curriculum and positive motivational strategies.
10. Demonstrate knowledge and skill in planning and implementing social skills lessons and Positive Behavior Support plans to increase skills and teach replacement behavior using principles of reinforcement theory, motivation, stimulus control, functional analysis and assessment, functional communication training, self-management, and behavioral contracts.
11. Demonstrate the ability to select, implement, monitor evidence-based educational practices to accommodate the needs of individual students across a range of instructional settings, including the use of technology.
12. Demonstrate knowledge and skill in developing, adjusting, and implementing individually designed instructional strategies for core curriculum areas to meet the special characteristics and needs of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS, ARTICLES, DVDS, AND WEBSITES**

***Required Text:***

Kluth, P. (2010). *“You’re going to love this kid!” Teaching students with autism in the inclusive classroom* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Baltimore: Brookes.

***Required Readings:***

Grandin, T. & Barron S. (2005). *Unwritten rules in social relationships: Decoding social mysteries through the unique perspective of autism*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.

Kanner, L. (1943). Autistic disturbances of affective contact. *Nervous Child*, 2, 217-250.

Romoser, M. (2000). Malemployment in autism. *Focus on Autism and other Developmental Disabilities* 15(4), 246-247.

***Selected Additional Readings:***

Boutot, E. A., & Smith Myles, B. (2011). *Autism spectrum disorders: Foundations, characteristics, and effective strategies*. Boston: Pearson.

Donnellan, A.M., Hill, D.A., & Leary, M.R. (2010). Rethinking autism: Autism and the concept of neurodiversity, *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 30 (1).

Donnellan, A.M, Leary, M., & Robledo, J. (2006). I can't get started: Stress and the role of movement differences for individuals with the autism label. In G. Baron, J. Groden, G. Groden, & L. Lipsitt (Eds.), *Stress and coping in autism* (pp. 205-245). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kulth, P. & Chandler-Olcott, K (2008). "A land we can share"- *Teaching literacy to students with autism*. Baltimore: Brookes.

Kluth, P. & Schwarz, P. (2008). "Just give him the whale!" *20 ways to use fascinations, areas of expertise, and strengths to support students with autism*. Baltimore: Brookes.

National Autism Center (2009). *Evidence-based practice and autism in the schools: A guide to providing interventions to student with Autism Spectrum Disorders*. Randolph, Mass: National Autism Center.

National Research Council (2001). *Educating children with autism*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Additional required readings in class and Moodle with annotations and required reading activities. Reading materials are posted to Moodle and discussed in class.

**SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDED TEXTS, ARTICLES, DVDS, AND WEBSITES**

Bicklen, D. (2006). *Autism and the myth of the person alone*. New York: University Press.

Gray, C. (2010). *The new social story book*. Arlington, TX: New Horizons, Inc.

<http://www.autism-hub.co.uk/> (Autism Hub – The Place to Blog on autism, advocacy, science, and parenting)

<http://www.teacch.com> (TEACCH homepage)

<http://www.paulakluth.com> (free tips and resources by the author of your text)

<http://www.patrickschwarz.com> (links and inspirations by a recommended author)

## REFLECTION ON STANDARDS REQUIREMENT

The course objectives, assignments, and assessments have been aligned with the CCTC (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing) standards for the ASD added authorization (AA). ASD AA candidates are required to provide descriptions and artifacts that evidence that the three ASD AA standards listed below are addressed.

### **ASD Standard 1: Characteristics of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

The program provides opportunities for the candidate to be able to identify the unique characteristics of students with ASD. The candidate demonstrates unique knowledge of cognition and neurology and the core challenges associated with language and communication, social skills, behavior, and processing and their implications for program planning and service delivery.

### **ASD Standard 2: Teaching, Learning and Behavior Strategies for Students with ASD**

The program ensures that each candidate is able to demonstrate knowledge, skills and abilities to become proficient in implementing evidence-based and multi-faceted methodologies and strategies necessary in teaching and engaging students with ASD from acquisition to generalization.

### **ASD Standard 3: Collaborating with Other Service Providers**

The program will ensure that each candidate teaching students with ASD is able to demonstrate the ability to collaborate as a member of a multidisciplinary team with all service providers and effectively interact with families.

## SELECTED ASSIGNMENTS

### **Collaboration and Participation (30 points; 6 points case study presentation):**

For each of the 12 class sessions, a maximum of three (3) participation points are assigned based upon collaborative cooperation in class and group activities; respectful interactions with speakers classmates, and the instructor; and patience and flexibility. Students arriving late, leaving class early or coming back late from breaks will lose participation points. Please note the COE attendance policy in this syllabus.

### **ASD AA Standards (4 points):**

The course objectives, assignments, and assessments have been aligned with the CCTC (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing) standards for the ASD added authorization (AA). ASD AA candidates are required to formally address the three CCTC Standards for the Autism Spectrum Disorder Added Authorization (ASD AA) by completing the ASD AA Checklist for the EDEX 636 and EDEX 637 courses. ASD AA candidates are required to submit to the course instructor the ASD Standards Checklist with acceptable evidences noted. Granting of the ASD authorization is contingent upon submission of a completed checklist to the course instructor(s) of each of the two courses (EDEX 636 and 637).

**Specific Area of Expertise Research Paper (20 points):**

Each participant will select and develop an area of expertise in a self-selected specific area of interest related to Autism Spectrum Disorders in which you wish to develop additional professional knowledge and expertise. See the 12 course objectives above for ideas of potential topics to explore. Also see the reading list and websites suggested for additional ideas. Topics should be approved by the instructor before beginning exploration of readings, websites, and so forth. Approval should be obtained by the 4<sup>th</sup> class meeting. Each participant submits an annotated bibliography in APA Style (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) format of at least five (5) primary (e.g., journal article) sources beyond the required readings for this course. Papers will include a) an introductory page that explains the topical area and why this is of interest to the participant, b) the annotation (summary) of each of the selected articles of approximately one page in length, c) a concluding paragraph that summarizes what was learned from the five (5) articles and d) reference page presented in APA style which includes all references cited in paper. Papers are submitted as hard copies in class.

**Reading Reflections (16 points, 4 reflections at 4 points each):**

Reading reflections are based upon course readings. Prompts will be emailed and respond to the prompt(s) by the due date.

Reflection #1 (Definition of Autism): Read Leo Kanner's *Autistic Disturbances of Affective Contact* and Chapter 1 of the Kluth text. Based upon these readings, how has our definition and understanding of autism changed over the past 7 decades?

Reflection #2 (Lived Experience): Explore the Autism Hub and/or view a film on and by individuals with ASD posted on Moodle. Based on your "lived experience," compose a reflection about something you learned about individuals with ASD, specifically referring to what you saw, with whom you interacted, and/or what you read that taught or reminded you of your learning.

Reflection #3 (Social Thinking Perspective): Read the chapter, *ACT ONE - Two Perspectives on Social Thinking*. First read Temple Grandin's *Scene 1: My World is What I do*. Then read Sean Barron's *Scene 2: A Different Perspective on Social Awareness*. Compare and contrast their perspectives on social thinking in ASD.

Reflection #4 (Transition and Employment): Read Romoser, M. (2000). Malemployment in Autism. *Focus on Autism and other Developmental Disabilities* 15(4), 246-247. What is your opinion on Romoser's perspective? What are his key pieces of advice that are "take aways" for you.

**Best Practice Application Case Studies (24 points -2 case studies of 12 points each):**

In order to evidences the application of the knowledge and skills required of the three ASD AA standards, each candidate develops two case studies, each of which involves an application with one or more students with ASD. Each of the two applications may be with the different students or with the same student. Each case study has the three component parts described below. Pseudonyms must be used to protect confidentiality. You will be asked to present one of your case studies at the last class meeting. Case studies must be submitted in class.

## ***Case Study Components***

***Part 1.*** Profile of Student with ASD: Summary of Strengths and Challenges Along the Dimensions Described in the Standards Checklist Inclusive of Any Assessment Approaches Used to Learn More about a Student (Standard 1 & Standard 2.1) - 3 points

***Part 2.*** Academic, Social, Communication, Behavior, and Self-Regulation Supports and Strategies Description (Standard 2 &/or 3) – 3 points

Select and describe two applications (one per case study) that allow you to enhance/refine your delivery of current academic, social, communication, behavioral and/or self-regulation supports and strategies. Be sure to emphasize why this type of strategy/support is appropriate for the student you are working with and how you will personalize this support/strategy. If you wish to focus upon an application that is not listed or covered in the list below, we encourage you to do so and propose it to your instructor as soon as possible in the semester so that you can get going with developing and implementing the practice.

Academic Supports: Using fascinations, areas of expertise, and strengths to connect a student to the curriculum and meet the unique needs of a student with ASD (Standard 2.2)

Fostering Social Interactions and Building Communication Skills (Standard 2.3)

Positive Behavior Support Plan and/or Behavior Intervention Plan (Standard 2.4)

Classroom Structure, Organization and Self-Regulation Support Systems (Standard 2.5)

Advancing Inclusive and Natural Peer Supports in General Education Through Collaborating with Others (Standards 2 and 3)

Your Proposed Application Based Upon Course Objectives and ASD AA Standards

***Part 3.*** Academic, Social, Communication, Behavior, and Self-Regulation Supports and Strategies Application (Standard 2 &/or 3) – 3 points

Describe and document the application process of your selected support/strategy. Data collection, work samples, etc. belong in this section.

***Part 4.*** Reflection on Implementation of Part 2 Supports and Strategies: “What I learned; what went well; what could be improved for the future; next steps.” - 3 points

## GRADING SCALE AND POINT DISTRIBUTION

**93% = A      90% = A-      87% = B+      83% = B      80% = B-      77% = C+**

Points below 77 = F. A grade of C+ or better is required for a course to count toward a credential or added authorization.

### **Course Points**

Collaboration and Participation	36
ASD AA Standards Reflection	4
Specific Area of Expertise Research Paper	20
Reading Reflections	
Reading Reflection 1	4
Reading Reflection 2	4
Reading Reflection 3	4
Reading Reflection 4	4
Case Studies	24
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS</b>	<b>100</b>

## CLASS SCHEDULE, TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due Date
01/ 24/ 2012	Overview of Course & ASD	Kluth Ch. 1	
01/31/2012	Overview of ASD Characteristics		
02/07/2012	Overview of ASD Screening and Assessment		Reading Reflection #1 Due
02/14/2012	The Lived Experience of Autism – NO FORMAL MEETING	WATCH A FILM/VIDEO	
02/21/2012	Theoretical Basis for Intervention and Evidence-Based Practices		
02/28/2012	Sensory and Movement Differences, Organization and Regulation	Kluth Ch. 5	Reading Reflection #2 Due
03/06/2012	Foundational Supports and Academic Planning	Kluth Ch. 10, 11	
03/13/2012	Social Skills, Relationships, Friendships, and Belonging; Building Communication Skills	Kluth Ch. 6 Kluth Ch. 7	Reading Reflection #3 Due
03/20/2012	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK CSUSM		
03/27/ 2012	Positive Behavior Supports	Kluth Ch. 9	
04/03/2012	NO FORMAL MEETING – work on research paper		
04/10/2012	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK		Research Paper Due
04/17/2012	Working with Families; Collaboration in Schools & Community Transition and Adulthood; Employment	Kluth Ch. 4, 12	Reading Reflection #4 Due
04/24/2012	Putting It All Together: Self-Assessment, Sharing of Case Studies, & Course Evaluation		Case Studies Due ASD AA Standards Due



## **PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

1. Attend all class sessions as points are earned for each class session attended. Given that professional and personal conflicts can happen, each student will be allowed one absence without point deduction if make-up work is submitted. Subsequent absences will result in point deduction. *Please be on time*, call the instructor when unable to attend or when arriving late.
2. “Person-first” language (e.g., “Student with learning disabilities” rather than “Autistic student, or SDC student.”) State “Johnny, who happens to have a learning disability” rather than “my RSP” student.”) This must be used throughout all written and oral assignments and discussions. Never, ever, ever, ever use the word “management” to describe supporting students with troubling behavior.
3. Word process all written documents, unless requested otherwise. Keep a copy of all of your work. You will want these copies for your records and for future use as professional portfolio entries.
4. Complete and hand in all assignments on the due dates for full credit. Late assignments will receive a two point deduction. If you have extraordinary circumstances that impact completion of your assignments, please let the instructor know. Any time that you have questions or concerns, please contact the instructor immediately.
5. Participate in class discussions and group activities and demonstrate positive interpersonal skills with classmates and guests. This includes the professional courtesies of keeping your phone on “vibrate,” restricting the use of lap top computers to note-taking (no surfing the web, e-mailing, or working on assignments) and keeping side conversation to a minimum.
6. Select a class “buddy” to ensure that you receive handouts and information when you must miss class.  
Buddy: E-Mail:  
Telephone: Fax:

## **ALL UNIVERSITY WRITING REQUIREMENT**

Every course at the university is required to have a writing requirement of at least 2500 words. In EDEX 636 this requirement is met via the written assignments and portfolio reflection paragraphs.

## **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**

Students must be approved for services by providing appropriate and recent documentation to the Office of Disable Student Services (DSS). This office is located in Craven Hall 4300, and can be contacted by phone at (760) 750-4905, or TTY (760) 750-4909. Students authorized by DSS to receive reasonable accommodations should meet with their instructor during office hours or, in order to ensure confidentiality, in a more private setting.

## ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

### **School Of Education Attendance Policy:**

Due to the dynamic and interactive nature of courses in the School of Education, all students are expected to attend all classes and participate actively. At a minimum, students must attend more than 80% of class time, or s/he may not receive a passing grade for the course at the discretion of the instructor. **Individual instructors may adopt more stringent attendance requirements.** Should the student have extenuating circumstances, s/he should contact the instructor as soon as possible. *(Adopted by the COE Governance Community, December, 1997).*

### **CSUSM Academic Honesty Policy:**

“Students will be expected to adhere to standards of academic honesty and integrity, as outlined in the Student Academic Honesty Policy. All written work and oral assignments must be original work. All ideas/materials that are borrowed from other sources must have appropriate references to the original sources. Any quoted material should give credit to the source and be punctuated with quotation marks.

Students are responsible for honest completion of their work including examinations. There will be no tolerance for infractions. If you believe there has been an infraction by someone in the class, please bring it to the instructor’s attention. The instructor reserves the right to discipline any student for academic dishonesty in accordance with the general rules and regulations of the university. Disciplinary action may include the lowering of grades and/or the assignment of a failing grade for an exam, assignment, or the class as a whole.”

If in doubt as to whether your work is paraphrased or plagiarized, see the Plagiarism Prevention for Students website, <http://library.csusm.edu/plagiarism/index.html>.

- All work in this course must be original work. Plagiarism of any type will result in a failing grade.
- Scanning of work via Turn it In™ software may be used to verify student authorship and accurate citation of copyrighted materials.
- Unauthorized copying of copyrighted materials or microcomputer software will result in a failing grade.