EDSE 624
Communication, Sensory, and Social Skills Strategies for Working with Students with Autism
Fall 2014
3 credit hours

Instructor: P. Charlie Buckley M.S. CCC-SLP
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Class Meets: Class is Online. Video conferencing TBA

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides strategies for assessing and planning for instruction in communication, assistive technology, sensory needs and social skills for students on the autism spectrum including service delivery options, developing and implementing communication skills using evidence-based practices settings. **Major assignments require access to a student with autism in order to apply and evaluate communication and sensory interventions.**

B. PREREQUISITE/CO-REQUISITE:

None

C. RELATIONSHIP OF THIS COURSE TO THE PROGRAM KNOWLEDGE BASE:

*The faculty of the School of Special Education believe:*

- *Students with exceptionalities are part of a larger community of diverse learners;*
- *All students can learn when provided with effective instruction, advocacy, and supports;*
- *Learners with exceptionalities excel when they are held to the same high standards and expectations as all other students; and*
- *The larger mission of education is best served when special educators collaborate with families, general educators, and related services professionals.*
The School of Special Education emphasizes the development of professional dispositions that form the foundation of teaching excellence. As a result of their successful completion of the Intervention Specialist Program, learners will demonstrate dispositions in the following areas:

- Professional Commitment and Responsibility
- Intra/Inter personal skills
- Attitude Towards Learners

For a detailed description of these dispositions refer to the School of Special Education website at [http://www.unco.edu/cebs/sped/](http://www.unco.edu/cebs/sped/)

D. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

1. Participants will understand how to use specialized scientifically-based social skills interventions, and address the sensory needs of students with autism through the following practices:
   a. Identifying sensory and social needs.
   b. Using ecological tools to plan and teach social activities that are embedded in the general school context.
   c. Adapt the environment to address the sensory needs of students.
   d. Teach students to meet their own sensory needs (including self-stimulation) using self-advocacy skills.
   e. Use assessment results to teach sensory and social skills using direct instruction and other explicit teaching strategies.

2. Participants will assess and implement strategies for a variety of receptive and expressive communication systems including:
   a. Use basic manual sign (ASL or SEE) and be able to locate communication signs
   b. Instruct using the Picture Exchange Communication System
   c. Implement strategies following the principles of Verbal Behavior Analysis

3. Participants will teach students to initiate expressive communication:
   a. Identify effective reinforcers for communication instruction
   b. Instruct students to communicate a want/need using effective strategies
   c. Select highly motivating vocabulary, in collaboration with the student, parents, general education teachers, speech pathologists, to create natural situations and opportunities for using communication skills (e.g., verbal behavioral analysis, sign language; picture communication systems)
   d. Teach students to discriminate between preferred/non-preferred items when given a choice
   e. Deliver an error correction procedure when students have not learned effective communication skills
   f. Teach students to expressively communicate using multiple words/phrases
   g. Teach students to request wants and/or needs and to make social comments

4. Participants will assess communication and develop a communication intervention plan for a student with Autism.
a. Will be able to use the Communication Assessment Matrix to assess and plan for a child with autism.
b. Will use The Assessment of Basic language and Learning Skills (Revised)(ABLLS-R) for Assessing a student with autism.
c. Will be able to develop informal assessments to assess communication skills
d. Will be able to use the results of communication assessment for curriculum development by incorporating strategies into teaching learners with autism spectrum disorders.

5. Participants will understand a student’s assistive technology needs.
   a. Will be able to complete an assessment for communication, writing, reading, etc.
   b. Will be able to develop a plan to teach students how to use assistive technology
   c. Will be able to teach students how to use assistive technology in the classroom
   d. Will be able to make simple assistive devices (low tech)

6. Participants will be understand the social needs and teach strategies to address students with Asperger syndrome including:
   a. Understand the specific needs for students with Asperger syndrome
   b. Identify social skills programs effective for students with Asperger syndrome
   c. Teach students with Asperger syndrome self-advocacy skills
   d. Teach students specific skills related to the “hidden curriculum”
   e. Teach students collaborative working skills
   f. Teach students coping mechanisms including social stories, scripts, power cards, video stories, and 5-point scale

E. CONTENT OF THE COURSE

1. Understand how to use specialized scientifically-based social skills interventions, and address the sensory needs of students with autism/
   a. Identify sensory and social needs.
   b. Using ecological tools to plan and teach social activities in the general school classroom.
   c. Assess students’ sensory needs and adapt the environment to address those needs.
   d. Teach students to meet their sensory needs (including self-stimulation) through self-advocacy skills.

2. Use assessment results to teach sensory and social skills using direct and explicit teaching.
   a. Assess social and sensory needs
   b. Teach students social skills interventions
   c. Adapt the environment to address sensory needs of students.
   d. Teach self-advocacy to meet sensory needs of students
   e. Teach specific sensory and social skills strategies (e.g., social stories, social scripts) within natural environments.
3. Participants will assess students with communication needs and implement effective intervention strategies.
   a. Manual sign (ASL & SEE)
   b. Picture Exchange Communication System
   c. Verbal Behavior Analysis
   d. Augmentative/alternative communication systems
   e. Other systems (e.g., concrete object systems)

4. Participants will teach students to initiate expressive communication:
   a. Reinforcer identification
   b. Selection of highly motivating communicative vocabulary
   c. Communication of basic wants/needs
   d. Discrimination between preferred/non-preferred items
   e. Error correction procedures and errorless learning
   f. Communication of multiple words/phrases
   g. Requests and comments

5. Functional communication assessment
   a. Communication needs
   b. Informal assessments
   c. Communication Assessment Matrix
   d. *The Assessment of Basic language and Learning Skills (Revised)* (ABLLS-R)
   e. Use of assessment results for instructional planning

6. Assessment for assistive technology.
   a. Assistive technology assessment
   b. Assistive technology for communication devices
   c. Assistive technology in the classroom for academics
   d. Use of switches to access learning

7. Social needs for students with Asperger syndrome including:
   a. Specific needs for students with Asperger syndrome
   b. Social skills programs
   c. Self-advocacy and friendship skills
   d. The “hidden curriculum”
   e. Collaborative and cooperative skills
Coping mechanisms including social stories, scripts, power cards, video stories, and 5-point scale

F. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
   A. Participation: Participation is a critical part of the way course content is delivered.
      Students are expected to fulfill requirements by participating online several times each week, participating in discussions, and completing application assignments for each unit (Ocali Modules, Discussion Boards). 120 Points

   B. Required Assignments:
1. Participants will develop an assessment plan for assessing a student’s communication needs (including assistive technology), complete the assessment, and develop goals based on the results of the assessment, implement communication goals and track progress for 4 data collection points. 200 points

2. Social or sensory project: Select one of the following:
   a. Participants will assess a student’s social skills, develop an implementation plan, teach and monitor progress of one student for at least 4 data points 100 points or
   b. Participants will assess a student’s sensory needs, develop an implementation plan, teach and monitor progress of one student for at least 4 data points. 100 points

3. Writing Assignments: 2-3 page review and reflection papers will be required on the following topics; 1) Communication strategies 2) Sensory and social skills strategies (50 points each) 100 points.

Each assignment will be developed using APA format and will include references from peer-reviewed journal articles or professional resources. Detailed information and rubrics will be provided in class.

G. GRADING CRITERIA:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Assessment plan</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social or sensory project</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing assignments</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Total points 520 points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentile</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>A</td>
<td>494-520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93 - 94</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>483-493</td>
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<td>91 - 92</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>88 - 90</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>457-472</td>
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<tr>
<td>86 – 87</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>447-456</td>
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<tr>
<td>84 – 85</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>436-446</td>
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<tr>
<td>80 – 83</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>416-435</td>
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<tr>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>405-415</td>
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<tr>
<td>76 – 77</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<td>374-394</td>
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<tr>
<td>70 – 71</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>364-373</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 70</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-363</td>
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The following are the guidelines for determining final grades:

A (93-100% of points): A final grade of A means that the student has performed all or most in-class assignments and projects at an advanced and/or exceptional level and has
done so in a timely manner and he/she is well prepared for class with notes about reading topic and participates in class discussions. He or she has missed no more than 1 class.

**B** (86-92% of points): A final grade of B means that the student has shown "good graduate work" in his or her performance by being prepared to complete in-class assignments and discussions. He/she also has turning in required projects on time and met most of the grading criteria. He or she has missed no more than 2 classes.

**C** (73-85% of points): A final grade of C means that the student has completed all or most course assignments and projects but has not always met criteria. A grade of C is assigned when a student (a) completes required projects and is sometimes prepared for class but often does not participate in class discussions; (b) turns in projects that are inadequate based on documented grading criteria; and/or (c) is absent from class more than twice.

**D or F** (less than 76% of points): A grade of D or F means that the student has not satisfactorily completed the course assignments, completed required readings, or participated in class discussions. A grade of D or F is assigned when the student loses a significant amount of points (a) through excessive absenteeism, (b) by not coming to class prepared or (c) by not completing projects.

**H. READINGS**

**REQUIRED:**


Additional readings based on current issues may be assigned on a unit basis.

**RECOMMENDED READINGS:**


SUGGESTED READINGS:


**I. Accommodations Statement**

Students who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services, voice/TTY (970) 351-2289, or fax (970) 351-4166, or visit [www.unco.edu/dss](http://www.unco.edu/dss) as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

**J. Inclusivity Statement**

The College of Education and Behavioral Sciences (CEBS) supports an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, appreciated, and recognized as a source of strength. We expect that students, faculty, administrators and staff within CEBS will respect differences and demonstrate diligence in understanding how other peoples’ perspectives, behaviors, and worldviews may be different from their own.

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