LANDMARK COLLEGE
INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH AND TRAINING

LDN:634   Social and Emotional Supports for Autistic Students

Winter Term

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This course is the part of the online professional certificate program in [Learning Differences (LD) and Neurodiversity](#), with a specialization in Autism on Campus and Online offered by Landmark College.

Course Description:

As prevalence rates increase and understanding of how to support autistic students improves at primary and middle school levels, increasing numbers of autistic students attend high schools, colleges, and universities. This course will highlight the social-emotional issues faced by autistic students in secondary and post-secondary educational settings. After a general overview of autism, including an exploration of the medical and neurodiversity models, this course will examine developmental challenges faced by autistic adolescents and young adults. The course will address programs and strategies that foster student success, including insights from Landmark College professionals working with autistic students. Specific topics covered include co-occurring conditions, identity, social-emotional support, transitions to adulthood, camouflaging, and issues specific to girls and young women. Course participants will explore practical applications of the theoretical constructs and models in autism to their own educational environments.

Format:

This is an 8-week online course. Each week is a module which includes a variety of resources, readings, online discussions, and multi-media activities designed to engage participants in the course content. The course also includes 6 weekly online Conferences (aka "synchronous sessions") scheduled primarily in the evenings (Eastern Time). We will make every attempt to accommodate individual schedules, but participants should plan on attending at least 5 of the 6 conference sessions. The course uses Canvas as its learning management system. If you're not familiar with Canvas or online course formats, there is a link to a set of tutorials on using Canvas available on the homepage of the course (once you log in).

Graduate Credit:

Three graduate credits will be awarded per course for students achieving a grade of 80% or greater.

Course Objectives:

The course objectives align with professional standards in the field of learning disabilities, specifically the standards for special educators established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). We have chosen to align to the "Advanced" set of Preparation Standards, as this higher-level set of standards more closely matches the level of content and expertise required of a graduate level course in the field. The CEC Advanced Preparation Standards are [linked here](#).

Course Learning Objectives Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to:	CEC Advanced Preparation Standard
1. Explain the different features of autism spectrum disorder and general strengths and challenges experienced by adolescents and emerging adults with this condition.	1.2, 5.2, 5.3
2. Describe the history of autism.	6.1

3. Understand the difference between a neurodiversity approach and a medical approach to autism.	7.1
4. Understand the developmental processes and concerns specific to adolescents and young adult autistics.	6.3
5. Understand issues of intersectionality that affect autistic students, (including consideration of gender differences in the presentation of autism and how cultural differences can influence understanding of autism.)	2.3, 3.2, 6.3, 7.3
6. Understand examples of support programs for autistic college and university students.	2.1, 3.3, 5.4, 7.2

Module Format

Each module will follow a similar format:

I. **Objectives** – Each Module will start by articulating the objectives for that Module. The objectives will list anticipated learning of the topics that will be addressed in each Module.

II. **Activators** [Graded] – These are designed to help to create a community of learners within this course, to understand each other's perspectives, and to engage in a discourse. Activators will be posed at the start of each module as a query or a scenario to get us thinking about the topic as a group. You will post your own insights, observations, and respond to at least two other posts.

III. **Learning Activities** –Leaning Activities serve as instructional content for the module topics. Examples of content include viewing instructor narrated PowerPoint slides, reading academic and "popular press" style articles, viewing videos from Landmark College and external experts, and more.

IV. **Conferences** [Graded] – Conferences are the synchronous meeting portion of the course. During this time, we will address queries and points to ponder for discussion with the instructor and your fellow course mates. These live discussions will be hosted via Canvas Conference tool.

V. **Challenges** [Graded]– Challenges are activities meant to synthesize what you have learned in each module and apply to your specific educational environment.

VI. **Additional Resources** – A resource repository on Social Emotional Support for Autistic Students will be created and added to by all members of this learning community. Recommendations to this forum is not graded, but regular contributions to this section can result in 5 extra grade points for the course.

In general, a new module will be made available every **Friday**; responses to the Activators prompts are due by **Wednesday** to facilitate group discussion, with Challenges to be completed by the *following* **Sunday evening** (i.e., nine days after the module opens), and. See the Course Outline and Schedule for details.

Course Assignments

Please make every attempt to complete the graded assignments by the **specified due dates in the Canvas Calendar.**

Note*:* Due to the fast-paced nature of this course, all assignments are due by midnight of the assigned date, Eastern Time. Due dates will be included on assignments. If completing assignments by Eastern Time will be difficult (based on your location), please discuss with your instructor; accommodations can likely be made if discussed at the early in the course. Late submissions of postings for assignments cannot be accepted unless the instructor is contacted, in advance, regarding extenuating circumstances.

 The final course grade is determined by the following **four categories** of assignments.

1. Activators

Most of the modules have graded **Activators**. You will **post an original response** and at least **two responses to other student posts/comments**. For full credit, each of your Activators should follow the specified directions for responses and be posted by the end of the day Wednesday of that week's module. You should plan on responding to all of the assigned Activators.

6 of (of 7) in total; worth 20% of total grade. NOTE: There will be 7 Activators, but only 6 will count towards your grade; your lowest score will be thrown out.

Grading Rubric: 10 points each:
6 points – Well thought-out response and rationale for your position;
2 points – Thoughtful response to someone else's posting
2 points – Editing for organization (logical flow of ideas), grammar, and spelling.

NOTE: Activators are meant to be collaborative discussions. Responses should be a minimum of one paragraph in length, but no more than three paragraphs.

2. Conferences

During Conferences (synchronous meeting via video conferencing) we will discuss questions and comments presented by course participants and instructors. Participants will receive a maximum of 12 points for each of the Conference sessions. In these sessions, we are looking for your active participation and thoughtful engagement. Please make every attempt to attend the live session, but we understand schedules and time zones don't always make this possible; an alternative assignment of watching a recording of the session and follow-up discussion is available.

5 (of 6) in total; worth 20% of total grade. NOTE: There will be 6 Conferences, but only 5 will count towards your grade; your lowest score will be thrown out.

Grading Rubric: 12 points each:

6 points – Well thought-out response and rationale for your position. Inclusion of references supporting your responses.
3 points – Thoughtful response to someone else's comments.
3 points – Demonstrates collaborative approach through respect for the contributions of others.

3. Challenges

These assignments will follow each of the modules and require students to think critically about what they've learned in the module and apply it to a hypothetical, or real work/life situation.

6 (of 7) in total; worth 30% of total grade. NOTE: There will be 7 Challenges, but only 6 will count towards your grade; your lowest score will be thrown out.

Challenge responses may be posted, with student's permission, on the course Canvas site to serve as a resource for other course participants.

Grading Rubric: 15 points each:
6 points – Adequately addresses issues raised by challenge prompts
6 points – Draws explicit links between learning activities and your response, including inclusion of supporting references
3 points – Editing for organization (logical flow of ideas), grammar, and spelling

4. Final Project – Implementation Project

This is the final project of the course and is intended to be relevant to your current or future professional role. The goal of this assignment is to apply the cumulative knowledge from this course to create an item of value to you in your job.

Examples of the final project include: (1) presentation slides and associated transcript, YouTube video, text document, or other format intended for students, parents, or professional colleagues (2) a sample lesson plan with a specific intervention, (3) a tip sheet for parents at your institution, (4) a student guide for using a specific academic support strategy (5) student orientation program or workshop sequence for addressing EF challenges, (6) a case study detailing a plan of action with a particular student, or (7) other project of your choice. These are just examples, creative ideas for projects that tie directly to your professional work will be considered. Please consult with the instructor about your choice of projects no later than Module 6.

Worth 30% of total grade.
This assignment must be completed by the end of the course**.** *Projects may be posted, with student's permission, on the course Canvas site to serve as a resource for other course participants.*

Grading Rubric: 90 points
40 points – Accuracy and effectiveness of content
20 points – Scope and relevance of topic and audience

20 points – Clear, effective format, layout, use of graphics (if appropriate)
10 points – Current and scholarly sources correctly cited

Final Course Grading

Your final course grade will be the weighted point total for each assignment type, as follows:

Assignment Type	Count	Points - each	Points - Total	Percentage
Activators	6 (of 7)	10	60	20%
Conferences	5 (of 6)	12	60	20%
Challenges	6 (of 7)	15	90	30%
Final Project	1	90	90	30%

Final letter grades for this course are determined based on the following scale:

Letter Grade	Grade Scale	Definition
A	95-100	Superior performance in all requirements of the course
A-	90-94	Excellent
B+	85-89	Very good; high level of achievement in some phases of the course
B	80-84	Fair; basic understanding of subject has been demonstrated
C	75-79	Minimal mastery **but not sufficient to award credit, cannot be applied toward earning the certificate**
F	0-74	Failure

Course Outline and Schedule:

The following provides and outline of the course modules (weeks) and sub-topics within each module, along with key dates.

Module 1:	**Introductory Matters And General Overview Of Autism** • Self-introductions by students and instructor(s) • What is autism? • History, prevalence, risk factors • Understanding "the spectrum" • Using language Activator 1 due Challenge 1 due
Module 2:	**Theories, Diagnosis, and Co-occurring Conditions** • Diagnosis • Co-occurring conditions • Three theories – the positive triad

	Activator 2 due Conference Week 2 Challenge 2 due
Module 3:	**Social and Emotional Challenges** • Social challenges and differences • Monotropic mindset • Pragmatics Activator 3 due Conference Week 3 Challenge 3 due
Module 4:	**Transition to Adulthood & Identity Development** • Theories of identity development • Autism and identity • Creating a supportive environment Activator 4 due Conference Week 4 Challenge 4 question due
Module 5: Extended to accommodate for the holidays	**Intersectionality and Gender** • Issues related to gender • Intersectionality • Relationships Activator 5 due Conference Week 5 Challenge 5 question due
Module 6:	**Transition to College** • Autism and anxiety • The changing role of parents • Orientation • Case vignettes

	Activator 6 due, 1/6 Conference Week 6 Challenge 6 question due
Module 7:	**Community Standards and Controversies** • Code of Conduct • Conflict resolution • Restorative justice • Case vignettes • Controversies Activator 7 due Conference Week 7 Challenge 7 due
Module 8:	**Wrap-up and Future Directions** • Future directions • Work on Final Projects • Course Evaluation Final Project due