

CETL Capstone Project (May 2007)
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Developing a Course Organizer To Reorganize ESSP 480 Characteristics and Assessment of Autism

For the Capstone Project, I decided to re-organize ESSP 480 class using a teaching strategy called the Course Organizer Routine. The Course Organizer Routine is one of the teaching strategies called ‘Content Enhancement Routines’ which are developed and studied by researchers at Center for Research on Learning, University of Kansas. Content Enhancement Routines are developed for those who teach content information to academically diverse students at the secondary schools and higher. The Course Organizer Routine guides teachers to think about *essential* learning and *critical* concepts (rather than covering large amount of information), organize the course contents around them, and present them in a way that students can ‘see’ the organization and keep the big ideas in mind. Field testing of these routines shows changes in teaching behaviors of teachers in the intervention group as well as learning in students of those teachers.

I chose to use the Course Organizer Routine as my Capstone Project because of the challenges that I have met while teaching at MSU. As an instructor, I found myself frequently running out of time to cover contents and having to adjust course timelines subsequently; students appeared to have difficulty in differentiating and organizing information presented in lectures and textbooks. The result is poor retention and application of core information by students, even when such information was repeatedly presented and emphasized during lectures. Therefore, reorganizing course content and accentuating core information and essential concepts seemed to be a good strategy.

The complete and effective use of the Course Organizer Routine requires teachers to implement three related steps: (a) to develop a visual device called a ‘Course Organizer’, (b) to introduce and explain the course using the course organizer to students using the specified linking steps, and (c) to prompt students to attend and use the course organizer routine throughout the course. I have completed the first step so far, and I plan to follow this up with the steps (b) and (c) in future offering of the course.

Developing the Course Organizer is like drawing a ‘Big Picture’ of the course. The completed Course Organizer contains the following 8 components:

1. **This Course:** Course title and course paraphrase
2. **Course Questions:** A set of critical course questions that every student should be able to answer by the end of the course
3. **Course Standards:** Performance standards, how they will be assessed, and point values
4. **Critical Concepts:** Critical concepts that will be emphasized in the course

5. **Content Map:** Graphic presentation of how the information in the course has been organized for learning
6. **Community Principles:** How the students will be expected to connect to or communicate with the learning community (values, ideas, general tone)
7. **Learning Rituals:** Teaching routines, learning strategies, social skill strategies, and communication systems related to learning
8. **Performance Options:** Modifications to accommodate the diversity of learners

I have attached the Course Organizer that I developed for my ESSP 480 class. Sample pages that students are expected to use for the steps (b) and (c) are also included.

Teacher(s): Dr. Ockjean Kim

Time: 9-12:20 Wednesdays

The Course Organizer

Student:

Course Dates: January -May, 20XX

○ This Course: ESSP 480 Characteristics and Assessment of Children with Autism

is
about

Understanding how to diagnose/classify autism; understanding how children with autism learn; and, evaluating evidence-based interventions used in autism

○ Course Questions:

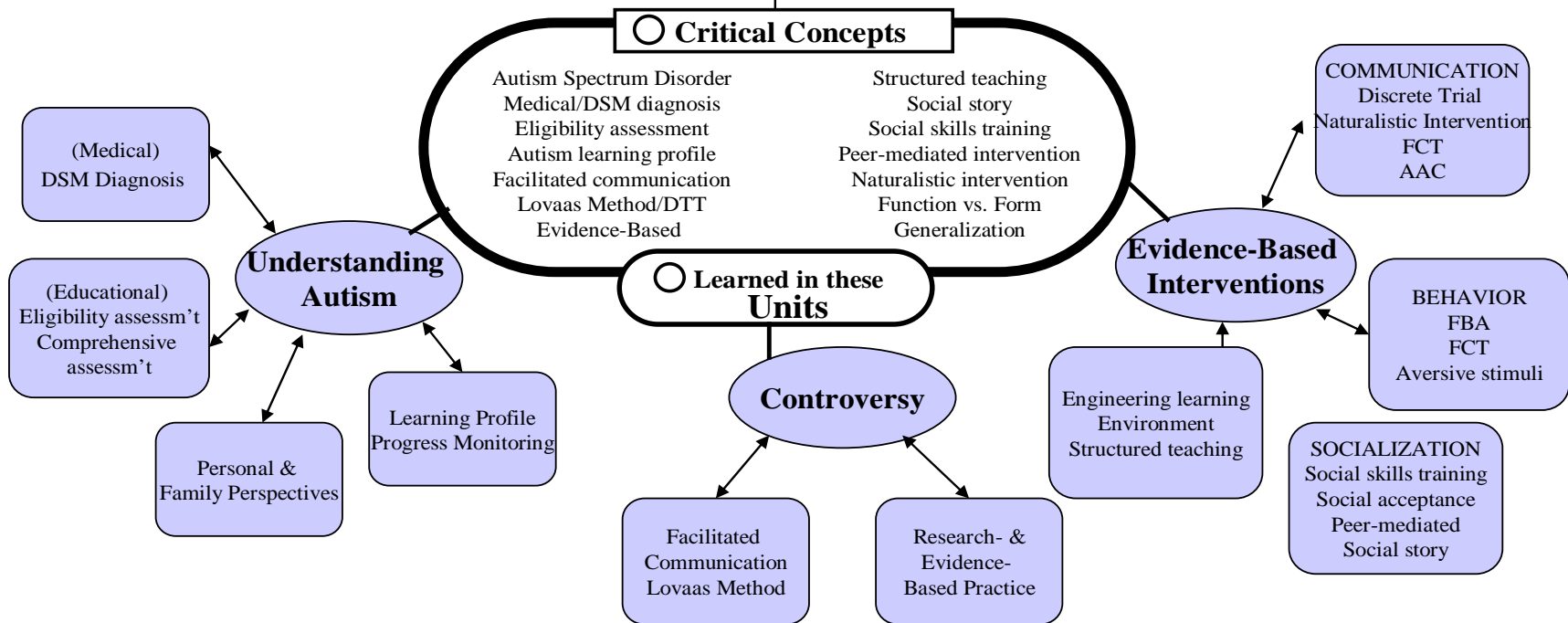
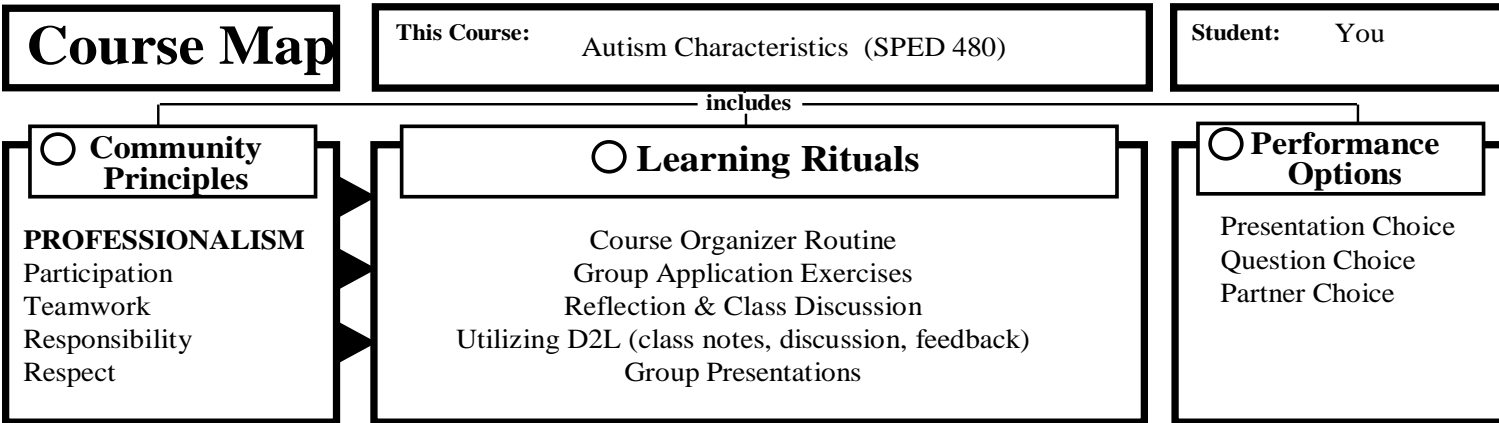
1. How is autism diagnosed by medical professionals and by educational professionals?
2. What are criteria and components of eligibility assessment required by Minnesota special education regulation in classifying a child as having autism spectrum disorder?
3. What is it like to have autism? What is it like to have a family member (e.g., child) with autism?
4. Why is the field of autism prone to accepting unorthodox and unconventional treatment options?
5. How can one evaluate evidence of effectiveness of interventions used for children with autism?
6. How can one choose and use research- and evidence-based interventions to address core deficit areas (i.e., communication, socialization, and behavior/interest) in autism?

○ Course Standards

1. Controversy Project 55 pts
2. Mid-Term Questions 40 pts
3. Final Questions 40 pts
4. Course Notebook 10 pts
5. In-class Activities & HW (varies)

Course Schedule

- Wk 1 Syllabus, characteristics, medical diagnosis
- Wk 2 Prevalence, Family Perspective
- Wk 3 Educational assessment
- Wk 4 Etiology & Medical Aspects
- Wk 5 Controversy & Facilitated Communication
- Wk 6 General Instructional Programming
- Wk 7 Midterm, Progress Monitor/Formative Assess
- Wk 8 (Catch Up week)
- Wk 9 Communication Interventions
- Wk 10 Socialization Interventions
- Wk 11 Behavioral Interventions
- Wk 12 Immersion Phase/Clinical Experience
- Wk 13 Immersion Phase/Clinical Experience
- Wk 14 Immersion Phase/Clinical Experience
- Wk 15 Inclusion, Putting it all together
- Wk 16 Final Exam



Teacher(s):
Time:

Course Organizer

Student:
Course Dates:

This Course: ESSP 480 Characteristics and Assessment of Children with Autism UNIT CONNECTIONS
Unit: Medical Diagnosis of Autism
Unit: Educational Diagnosis/Eligibility Assessment of ASD
Unit: Family Perspective of Autism
Unit: Learning Profile of Autism
Unit: Controversy: FC as an example

Teacher(s):
Time:

Course Organizer

Student:
Course Dates:

<p>This Course: ESSP 480</p> <p>Characteristics and Assessment of Children with Autism</p> <p>COURSE QUESTIONS</p> <p>1. How is autism diagnosed by medical professionals and by educational professionals?</p>
Unit:
Unit:
Unit:
Unit:
Unit: