

MEET AET VOLUNTEER

Cindy Schulmeister, BA



Level of AET membership:

Associate Member

Type and location of practice:

Orinda, CA

Leadership roles held in AET:

Program Committee/San Francisco Study Group and currently working on the 2025 Conference Committee as Proposals Chair and Presenter Liaison

How long have you been an educational therapist?

I have been an ed therapist for 20+ years following graduation from the UC Berkeley Educational Therapy Certification program.

What brought you to educational therapy?

Educational therapy has been a second career, following decades in the legal field. For the last 40 years, I have been an advocate for my sister, who was diagnosed with an intellectual disability in early childhood. I attended the UC Berkeley Ed Therapy Certification program and was immediately drawn to this field of study. I volunteered at an elementary school providing play therapy and personally experienced the need for one-to-one remediation. I was drawn to students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and had the pleasure of working with this population at Orion Academy as the school's Ed Therapist for 17 years.

Areas of expertise:

I have Slingerland and MakingMathReal training, and work with students using these and other programs to assist students with reading, writing and math skills. As mentioned above, I also taught algebra at Orion Academy at the high school level for many years, incorporating many of the MakingMathReal strategies to teach algebra skills for a population of students who struggled with math and executive function skills.

What is the best career advice you can give to new ETs?

Attend a Study Group and meet other ed therapists in your area. I began attending the San Francisco Study Group as a student decades ago, and I benefited from the group's expertise and experience. These monthly meetings with accomplished colleagues helped guide me in the first years of practice. I learned about billing policies, marketing, and collaboration with allied professionals. It remains an important part of my professional growth.

Describe a challenge you have faced as an educational therapist:

The challenges I have encountered in my practice generally involve parent expectations. I find that often parents struggle to understand that inappropriate behavior at home is not always intentional, but is a manifestation of a student's anxiety and struggles with academic demands. Parent communication is an important element in our practice and often takes more time and effort than anticipated.

Describe a highlight of your educational therapy career:

I am always touched by the gratitude my students share with me and was always so appreciative when high school students asked me to present them at their graduation, a tradition at Orion Academy.

What do you think the future of the educational therapy profession will look like?

I "hope" the future of educational therapy is one that extends to students of all cultures and not limited to those families who are able to financially provide this support for their children.

How have you benefited from your membership in AET?

Again, as I have shared, my association with the San Francisco Study Group has been instrumental to my success as an Ed Therapist, offering learning opportunities, collaboration and a platform to share concerns and ideas over the years.

Hobbies/Leisure Activities:

I enjoy cooking, canoeing and camping with my husband and friends. We live close to Tilden Park and take advantage of the fabulous hiking trails and views of the Bay each weekend. I am always reading, usually a number of books at one time, and enjoy the camaraderie my book club friends afford each month.

