

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**EDSE 534 Section 5S1 3 credits)
Communication and Severe Disabilities
Fall 2010
Wednesdays 4:30-8:30
September 15-November 17, 2010
Kellar Annex II Room 101**

PROFESSOR

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces professionals to augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) for individuals with severe speech and language impairments. This course will address the knowledge and skills needed to assess the potential AAC user, make team decisions, develop and implement instruction, and evaluate the effects of instruction with focus on motivating, building, and expanding communication, choice-making, and social interaction.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

Learning activities in this class will include the following:

1. Class lecture, discussion, and participation
2. Software and hardware presentations
3. Group and independent class activities
4. Class presentations
5. Written papers using the American Psychological Association format (5th edition)

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify characteristics of non-symbolic and symbolic communication
2. Describe and discuss methods for assessment, identification of priorities, and monitoring progress of individuals with communication impairments.
3. Discuss and evaluate the range of augmentative and alternative communication devices and systems/assistive technology available for individuals with severe disabilities.
4. Implement assessment strategies to improve students' social interaction with peers and others.
5. Implement communication/AAC/AT assessment strategies to develop and implement individual educational planning and group instruction with students with disabilities in an adapted curriculum across the K-12 grade levels,
6. Understand and identify behaviors associated with communication.

7. Describe language development and emergent literacy skills for students who use augmentative and alternative communication devices and systems/assistive technology
8. Identify and implement strategies and activities that foster an appreciation of a variety of literature and independent reading for students who use augmentative and alternative communication devices and systems/assistive technology
9. Demonstrate knowledge of best practices and strategies in reading instruction for students with severe disabilities for students who use augmentative and alternative communication devices and systems/assistive technology

RELATIONSHIP OF COURSES TO PROGRAM GOALS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Special Education Program. This program complies with the standards for special educators established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization. The primary CEC standard that will be addressed in this class will be Standard 6: Communication

REQUIRED TEXTS

Bondy, A. & Frost, L. (2001). *A picture's worth: PECS and other visual communication strategies in autism*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

Cafiero, J.M. (2005) *Meaningful exchanges for people with autism: An introduction to augmentative and alternative communication*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

Additional readings will be assigned according to topic and will be made available by the instructor on Blackboard.

ASSESSMENT OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All assignments should be word-processed and are due at the start of class (4:30 pm) on the dates indicated including assignments submitted through Blackboard. Consult with the instructor in advance if there is a problem. In fairness to students who make the effort to submit papers on time, there will be a 10% cost reduction per day for late papers. (For example, a 20 point assignment will lose 2 points per day while a 50 point assignment will lose 5 points per day.) Please retain a copy of your assignments in addition to the one you submit. All assignments should reflect graduate-level spelling, syntax, and grammar. If you experience difficulties with the writing process you will need to document your work with your university's Writing Center during this course to improve your skills. At the instructor's discretion, students may be given the opportunity to resubmit an assignment. Resubmitted assignments are not eligible for full credit.

The signature assignment required for this course (Low Tech Case Study) must be submitted electronically to Mason's NCATE management system, TaskStream: (<https://www.taskstream.com>). **Note:** Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is required to begin submitting signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN).

NOTE: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or if you have emergency medical information to share with me or need special arrangements, **please call and/or make an appointment with me the first week of class.**

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

- Students are expected to (a) attend all classes during the session, (b) arrive on time, (c) stay for the duration of the class time and (d) complete Blackboard discussion boards and other assignments.
- During class time, computers and peripherals are to be used only for work related to the class. Students found using the computer (whether personal laptop or lab computer) for purposes other than the assigned in class activity will be asked to turn off their equipment and will not receive participation points for that class session.
- In-depth reading, study, and work on course requirements require outside class time. Students are expected to allot approximately three hours for class study and preparation for *each* credit hour weekly (a three credit hour course would require nine hours of work weekly in a 45-hour, semester course).
- Use APA guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines. <http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm>. In particular, it is expected that you know how to paraphrase and cite information appropriately to meet both APA guidelines and to avoid plagiarism. This website provides some useful information on how to avoid plagiarism in your writing. <http://www.collegeboard.com/article/0,3868,2-10-0-10314,00.html>.
- We will use person-first language in our class discussions and written assignments (and ideally in our professional practice). Please refer to “Guidelines for Non-Handicapping Language in APA Journals” <http://www.apastyle.org/disabilities.html>

Blackboard: This semester we are participating in the pilot for the Blackboard 9.1 system. To access Blackboard for this class please go to <http://mymason.gmu.edu>. Login using your GMU username and password (same as your email). Click on the “Courses” tab. Select our course listed in the Bb 9.1 Pilot Course List. Our course should say something like: “pilot.79032.201070: EDSE-534 - 5S1 | 6M4 – 201070”. Do NOT go to <http://courses.gmu.edu>. Please provide feedback throughout the semester on the new Blackboard system in the designated *Blackboard Feedback* discussion board.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Class Participation (15 points)** Attendance at all sessions is very important because many of the activities in class are planned in such a way that they cannot necessarily be recreated outside of the class session. Information, activities, guest speakers, and role plays will be presented in class that are not a part of the text and can only be experienced in the class sessions. Furthermore, as part of this course you are expected to be an active and respectful participant, which includes actively engaging in class discussions and activities. Students will complete an in-class activity each week. Students who successfully complete 9-10 in-class activities will earn 15 points, students who successfully complete 8 in-class activities will earn 5 points, while students who complete between 0-7 in-class activities will receive 0 points. Completion of in-class activities includes both active participation in the activity as well as submission of a permanent product (form, summary statement, reflection, etc.). Students who miss a class will not have the opportunity to make up missed in-class assignments. Successful completion of in-

class activities will be tracked in the blackboard gradebook. As a courtesy, please email me to let me know if you will not be in class.

2. **Introduction Email (5 points)** Sometime during the first week of class (before our second class), send me an email at mkinas@gmu.edu. In the email, please tell me (a) a little bit about yourself; (b) include any specific topic areas that you hope to have covered in this course; and (c) share any past experiences with augmentative and alternative communication that you have had. See assignment rubric for further details. **(Due Sept. 22 by 4:30 pm)**
3. **Research Critiques (30 Points)**. Students will read and critique two intervention research studies in the area of augmentative and alternative communication for students with autism and/or intellectual disabilities. Within each critique, students will provide a summary of the study as well as a critical review of the study's importance, strengths and weaknesses, and application to the field of AAC. Each critique should be at least three pages. See assignment rubric for further details. **(Critique 1 due Sept. 29; Critique 2 due Oct. 20)**
4. **Topic Board Development, Rationale, and Reflection (30 points)** Using the strategies and procedures reviewed in class, students will create a topic board for their own use in a specific situation. Students will actually use the topic board for conversation for a minimum of one hour (in an identified setting) and will then write a reflection on his or her experiences and impressions. See assignment rubric for further details. **(Due Oct. 6)**
5. **Case Study and Low Tech AAC System Development (30 points)** Students will be given a case individual for whom they are expected to develop a low tech communication system. A rationale for why such a system was created is expected. Students will be present their low tech systems and explain their relevance in class. See assignment rubric for further details. **(Due Oct. 27)**
6. **Literacy Unit Plan (40 points)** Students will choose and design a unit on a specific topic of their choice. The unit must be centered around a piece of literature, whether a published children's book or personally authored story. Students will adapt the story for students with significant disabilities using communication/literacy tools and strategies discussed in class. Furthermore, students will develop at least 3 additional supplemental resources related to the story that also incorporate communication theory and strategies discussed in class. These resources could include songboards, worksheets, games, crafts, etc. Students will also design a communication board for use during the unit. Students will present their rationale for the unit development and physically show the 5 curriculum materials during a class presentation. Students will submit a 3-4 page rationale describing the topic and target population for the unit plan, description of the 5 developed resources, and discussion of the communication/literacy theory, tools and strategies considered in the unit plan development. Unit development must incorporate at least two research-based AAC interventions/strategies. Students will also submit electronic copies of the 5 curriculum materials to Blackboard. See assignment rubric for further details. **(Proposal Due Oct. 27; Final Project Due Nov. 17)**

Assignment	Due Date	Point Value
Class Participation	Each week	15
Introduction Email	9/22	5
Research Critiques	9/29, 10/20	30 (15 pts. Each)
Topic Board Development, Rationale, and Reflection	10/6	30
Case Study and Low Tech AAC system development	10/27	30
Unit Plan	11/17 (proposal due 10/27)	40
TOTAL POINT VALUE		150

GRADING SCALE

94-100% (141-150) = A	80-82% (120-123) = B-
90-93% (135-140) = A-	70-79% (105-119) = C
87-89% (130-134) = B+	< 70% (below 105) = F
83-86% (124-129) = B	

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS (GMU)

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://www2.gmu.edu/dpt/unilife/ods/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.

PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE (Schedule may change based class needs and guest speaker availability)

Date	Topic/Lecture	Reading Assignment	Assignments Due (by 4:30pm)
9/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Course • Review Syllabus • Introduction to Augmentative and Alternative Communication • Definitions and Terminology • Messaging, symbols, alternative access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cafiero Chapters 1-3 • Article: Hourcade et al (2004) • Bondy & Frost Chapter 5 	
9/22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cafiero Chapters 3-4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Introduction Due
9/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language learning and development • Behavior and Communication • Cases will be distributed in Case Study Assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bondy & Frost Chapters 1-4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Critique 1 Due
10/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAC and Literacy • Visual Supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: Light & Drager (2007) • Article: Olgletree (2007) • Bondy & Frost Chapter 8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Board Assignment Due
10/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAC Interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PECS • Pivotal Response • Functional Communication Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bondy & Frost Chapters 6-7 • Additional readings provided by instructor 	
10/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Home Boardmaker Plus Activity (No Class) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor will provide assignment description and materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Critique 2 Due • Boardmaker Activity due by Friday Oct 22 via Blackboard
10/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AAC Technology Lab • Dynovox Presentation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Study Rationale Due to Blackboard • Unit Plan Proposal Due
11/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Speaker: AAC User • AAC in the Family and in the Home • Presentations of Cases and Low Tech Solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article: Mirenda et al (2002) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations of Cases and Low Tech Solutions (In class)
11/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Speaker: TEACCH Approach • Guest Speaker: ABA Approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional readings provided by instructor/guest speaker 	
11/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Issues and AAC • Wrap up of AAC • Unit Plan Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cafiero Chapter 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit Plan due • Unit Plan Presentations • Completed Final Evaluation