



**College of Education and Human Development  
Division of Special Education and disAbility Research**

Fall 2013

EDSE 534 5S1: Communication and Severe Disabilities  
CRN: 73201, 3 - Credits

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Heidi Graff	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 8/26/2013 - 12/18/2013
<b>Phone:</b> (703) 993-8036	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Wednesdays
<b>E-Mail:</b> hgraff@gmu.edu	<b>Meeting Time(s):</b> 4:30 pm-7:10 pm
<b>Office Hours:</b> Mondays 3-4 pm	<b>Meeting Location:</b> Off-campus, KAI 102

***Note:** This syllabus may change according to class needs. Students will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason e-mail and/or through Blackboard.*

**Course Description**

Introduces professionals to augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) for individuals with severe speech and language impairments. Addresses the knowledge and skills needed to assess the potential AAC user, make team decisions, develop and implement instruction, and evaluate the effects of instruction, aimed at motivating, building, and expanding communication, choice-making, and social interaction.

**Prerequisite(s):** None

**Co-requisite(s):** None

**Advising Contact Information**

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. Mason M.Ed. and Certificate students should contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703) 993-3145 for assistance. All other students should refer to their faculty advisor.

**Nature of Course Delivery**

Learning activities include the following:

1. Class lecture and discussion
2. Application activities
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Research and presentation activities
6. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard

### **Learner Outcomes**

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

- Identify characteristics of non-symbolic and symbolic communication
- Describe and discuss methods for assessment, identification of priorities, and monitoring progress of individuals with communication impairments.
- Discuss and evaluate the range of augmentative and alternative communication devices and systems/assistive technology available for individuals with severe disabilities.
- Implement assessment strategies to improve students' social interaction with peers and others.
- 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.
- Understand and identify behaviors associated with communication.
- Describe language development and emergent literacy skills for students who use augmentative and alternative communication devices and systems/assistive technology
- 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
- 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

### **Required Textbooks**

Beukelman, D. R. & Mirenda, P. (2013). *Augmentative and alternative communication: Supporting children and adults with complex communication needs* (4th ed.). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

### **Digital Library Option**

The Pearson textbook(s) for this course is available as part of the **George Mason University Division of Special Education and disAbility Research Digital Library**. The division and Pearson have partnered to bring you the Digital Library; a convenient, digital solution that can save you money on your course materials. The Digital Library offers you access to a complete

digital library of **all Pearson textbooks** and MyEducationLabs used across the Division of Special Education and disAbility Research curriculum at a low 1-year or 3-year subscription price. Access codes are available in the school bookstore. Please visit <http://gmu.bncollege.com> and search the ISBN.

- 1 year subscription \$200 ISBN-13: 9781269541411
- 3 years subscription \$525 ISBN-13: 9781269541381
- Individual e-book(s) also available at the bookstore link above or at <http://www.pearsonhighered.com/>. Search by author, title, or ISBN.

### **Recommended Textbooks**

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual* (6<sup>th</sup> ed., second printing). Washington, DC: Author.

### **Course Relationships to Program Goals and Professional Organizations**

This course is part of The Virginia Consortium for Teacher Preparation in Severe Disabilities, a grant from the Virginia Department of Education that includes George Mason University, Virginia Commonwealth University, the University of Virginia, Radford University, and Norfolk State University. Through the completion of the SD Consortium program, students are eligible for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the area of Special Education – Adapted Curriculum K-12. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization. The CEC standard that will be addressed in this class is Standard 6: Language.

### **GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:**

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- d. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].

e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].

f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

g. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

## **PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

## **CORE VALUES COMMITMENT**

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. [See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>]

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>]

## **Course Policies & Expectations**

### **Attendance.**

Understanding you are individuals with full and active lives, who have made the intellectual and financial commitment to regularly attend class, there may be an instance when you are not able to attend. If this unlikely event should occur, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to obtain notes, handouts, and lecture details from another student (it is recommended that you have two colleagues in the course for this). Students who are absent are held responsible for the material covered and assignments due as if in attendance. Please be sure to notify the classmate(s) in sufficient time for them to be of assistance for you. You are required to notify the Instructor about absences in advance or within 24 hours after an absence. Be aware any points earned for participation in class activities, during a time of absence, will not be earned and cannot be made up. If you need to miss, for any reason, more than two class sessions, contact the Instructor immediately to discuss options for withdrawing and completing the course during another semester.

### **Late Work.**

There are absolutely no “redo” and/or “retake” on assignments. Full earned credit given for assignments turned in on time by e-mailing the assignment to [hgraff@gmu.edu](mailto:hgraff@gmu.edu) (class start time for the due date, unless otherwise stated in this syllabus). Five points of the total assignment points are deducted for each 24-hour period that passes after the class start time for the due date.

All assignments must be typed. The APA format for clear and excellent written language and technical aspects for citations and formatting must be used. Refer to the APA Publication Manual 6<sup>th</sup> edition. A final grade of Incomplete will be considered only due to extreme extenuating circumstances; please contact the Instructor.

### **TaskStream Submission**

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, Low Tech Case Study to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in TaskStream. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete(IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

If you have never used TaskStream before, you **MUST** use the login and password information that has been created for you. This information is distributed to students through GMU email, so it is very important that you set up your GMU email. For more TaskStream information, go to <http://cehd.gmu.edu/api/taskstream>

### **Grading Scale**

#### Graduate

100-93 = A	80-82 = B-
90-92 = A-	70-79 = C
86-89 = B+	< 70 = F
83-85 = B	

#### Undergraduate

100-90 = A	70-75 = C
86-89 = B+	60-69 = D
80-85 = B	< 60 = F
76-79 = C+	

### **Assignments**

#### **NCATE/TaskStream Assignments.**

1. **Case Study and Low Tech AAC System Development (20 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. You will be presenting your low tech systems and explaining their relevance in class. See assignment rubric for further details.

## **Common Assignments.**

### **Other Assignments.**

2. **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 (or online assignment) each week. Students will earn approximately one point per class session. Students who miss a class will not have the opportunity to make up missed in-class assignments.
3. **Research Critiques (20 Points).** In assigned small groups, 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. Each critique should include an a) complete APA reference (6<sup>th</sup> edition); b) statement of study purpose including research questions; c) summary of study methods; d) results; and e) applicability of knowledge to special education and your own teaching. Students will present their critiques in a power point format in class. See assignment rubric for further details.
4. **Topic Board Development, Rationale, and Reflection (20 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 present on his or her experiences and impressions. See assignment rubric for further details.
5. **Literacy Unit Plan (25 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 all the 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 developed resources, and discussion of the communication/literacy theory, tools and strategies considered in the unit plan development. Unit development must incorporate (and reference) at least two contemporary (2008 or newer) research-based AAC interventions/strategies. See assignment rubric for further details.

Assignment	Due Date	Point Value
Class Participation	Each week	15
Research Critiques	(#1) 2/12, (#2) 4/16	20
Topic Board Development, Rationale, and Reflection	2/26	20
Case Study and Low Tech AAC system development	3/26	20
Unit Plan	4/30 (proposal due 4/16)	25
<b>TOTAL POINT VALUE</b>		<b>100</b>

## Schedule

**Proposed Class Schedule** (Schedule may change based on guest speaker availability)

Ses.	Date	Topic/Lecture	Readings	Assignments Due
1	8/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of Course</li> <li>Review Syllabus</li> <li>Introduction to Augmentative and Alternative Communication</li> <li>Definitions and Terminology</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 1 Russell (2008)	
2	9/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Messaging, symbols, alternative access</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 2-4	
3	9/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment</li> <li>Cases will be Distributed in Case Study Assignment</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 5-7	
4	9/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment</li> <li>Research Critique Presentations</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research Critique 1 Due</li> </ul>
5	9/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAC issues / AAC Strategies</li> <li>Symbolic versus nonsymbolic strategies</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 9, 13	
6	10/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language learning and development</li> <li>AAC and Literacy</li> <li>Topic Board Presentations</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topic Board Assignment Due</li> </ul>
7	10/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boardmaker Plus/Studio Activity</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 11	
8	10/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAC and Literacy</li> <li>AAC in the Educational Setting</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 12	
9	10/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations of Cases and Low Tech Solutions</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 14-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations of Cases and Low Tech Solutions</li> </ul>
10	10/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guest Speaker: AAC User: Dr. Yoosun Chung</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure your Unit Plan project is approved by October 30th!</li> </ul>

11	11/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAC and Autism (<b>ONLINE</b>)</li> </ul>	Instructor will provide assignment description and materials	
12	11/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dynavox Presentation</li> <li>• AAC and Literacy</li> <li>• Legal Issues and AAC</li> <li>• Research Critique Presentations</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Critique 2 Due</li> </ul>
13	11/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAC Tech Lab Night</li> <li>• Begin Unit Plan Presentations</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit Plan due</li> <li>• Unit Plan Presentations</li> </ul>
14	11/27	Thanksgiving Break		
15	12/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wrap up of AAC</li> <li>• Final Unit Plan Presentations</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit Plan due</li> <li>• Unit Plan Presentations</li> <li>• Completed Final Evaluation</li> </ul>

## Appendix