



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

Summer 2018

EDSE 534 646: Communication and Severe Disabilities

CRN: 43057, 3 – Credits

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Lauren Kravetz Bonnet	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 5/24/2018 – 7/26/2018
<b>Phone:</b> (703) 338-4522	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Thursday
<b>E-Mail:</b> Lbonnet@gmu.edu	<b>Meeting Time(s):</b> 5:00 pm - 9:30 pm
<b>Office Hours:</b> By appointment	<b>Meeting Location:</b> Off Campus
<b>Office Location:</b> Location agreed upon when setting up appointment	<b>Other Phone:</b> (703) 228-6175

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

**Prerequisite(s):** None

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

**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. Offered by Graduate School of Education. May not be repeated for credit.

**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 teacher candidates/students should contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703) 993-3670 for assistance. All other teacher candidates/students should refer to their faculty advisor.

**Advising Tip**

Are you completing a teacher licensure or non-licensure certificate program in addition to a Masters degree? Students can submit a Graduate Secondary Certificate Application (<http://registrar.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/GSCA.pdf>) to their advisor when they are ready to

add a certificate. Talk to your advisor if you have any questions about the program/s you are completing.

### **Course Delivery Method**

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, teacher candidates/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.

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

This course is part of The Virginia Consortium for Teacher Preparation in Special Education Adapted Curriculum, a grant from the Virginia Department of Education that includes George Mason University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Radford University, Norfolk State University, Old Dominion University, and James Madison University. Through the completion of the Adapted Curriculum 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, as well as those established by the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support consortium (InTASC). The

standards addressed in this class include CEC Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies (InTASC 7,8).

### **Required Textbooks**

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

### **Recommended Textbooks**

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

### **Additional Readings**

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

### **Course Performance Evaluation**

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy).

#### **Tk20 Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement**

It is critical for the special education program to collect data on how our students are meeting accreditation standards. Every teacher candidate/student registered for an EDSE course with a required Performance-based Assessment (PBA) is required to upload the PBA to Tk20 (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one-time course or part of an undergraduate minor). A PBA is a specific assignment, presentation, or project that best demonstrates one or more CEC, InTASC or other standard connected to the course. A PBA is evaluated in two ways. The first is for a grade, based on the instructor's grading rubric. The second is for program accreditation purposes. Your instructor will provide directions as to how to upload the PBA to Tk20.

For *EDSE 534*, the required PBA is (NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE). Failure to submit the assignment to Tk20 will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Teacher candidates/students have until five days prior to the University-stated grade change deadline to upload the required PBA in order to change the course grade. When the PBA is uploaded, the teacher candidate/student is required to notify the instructor so that the "IN" can be changed to a grade. If the required PBA is not uploaded five days prior to the University-stated grade change deadline and, therefore, the grade not changed, it will become an F. Please check to verify your ability to upload items to Tk20 before the PBA due date.

### **Assignments and/or Examinations**

#### **Performance-based Assessment (Tk20 submission required)**

None

### **College Wide Common Assessment (TK20 submission required)**

None

### **Performance-based Common Assignments (No Tk20 submission required)**

None

### **Other Assignments**

1. **Class Participation (27 points)** Class participation and 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. Completion of in-class activities (or online assignments) 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. **Student Introduction (5 points)** During the first week, student will complete the Student Introduction Assignment, located in the Assignments section of the course Blackboard site. Students will answer the questions to both introduce themselves to the instructor as well as help the instructor design class activities based on student interests and level of experience. Included in the introductory assignment is submission of a picture (in .jpg format). This will be used by the instructor to associate your name with your face. These photos will not be shared with others. (Due 5/31 by 5pm).
3. **Communication Board Development, Rationale, and Reflection (30 points)**. Using the strategies and procedures reviewed in class, students will create a communication board for their own use in a specific situation. Students will actually use the 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 14 by 5pm).
4. **Research Critique (15 points)**. In small groups (up to 3 people), students will read and critique an intervention research study in the area of augmentative and alternative communication for students with autism and/or intellectual disabilities. The critique should include an a) complete APA reference (6<sup>th</sup> edition); b) statement of study purpose including research questions (1-2 paragraphs); c) summary of study methods and results 3-4 paragraphs); and d) applicability of study design and results to special education and your own teaching (1-2 paragraphs; each student). See assignment rubric for further

details (Due 6/21 by 5pm).

5. **Midterm Course Evaluation (3 points)**

Evaluation is important to ongoing course quality and feedback for me on how you view your learning and growth in this course. I take them seriously. At the mid-point in the semester I'd like to know how we are making progress and if there are ways that I can better help you learn the material. The midterm evaluation will be anonymous. (Due 6/24 by 5pm).

6. **Case Study and Low Tech AAC System Development (30 points).** Students will be given a case individuals 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. (Due 7/12 by 5pm).

7. **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. Student 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 song boards, 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 (and reference) at least two researched-based AAC interventions/strategies. Students will also submit electronic copies of the 5 curriculum materials to Blackboard. See assignment rubric for further details (Proposals due 7/5 by 5pm; Final project due 7/26 by 5pm).

## **Course Policies and Expectations**

### **Attendance/Participation**

Please see *Class Participation* within the assignment section.

### **Late Work**

**All assignments should be word-processed and are due at the start of class (4:00pm) 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 assignments on time, there will be a 10% cost reduction per day for late papers for up to 5 days (for example, a 20 point assignment will lose 2 points per day, while a 50 point assignment will lose 5 points per day). After 5 days, students will earn a 0 for the missed assignment. 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 the GMU 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.

### **Grading Scale**

Graduate

93-100% = A

90-92% = A-

87-89% = B+

80-86% = B

70-79% = C

<70% = F

\*Note: The George Mason University Honor Code will be strictly enforced. Students are responsible for reading and understanding the Code. "To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." Work submitted must be your own or with proper citations (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).

### **Professional Dispositions**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

### **Class Schedule**

\*Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Ses.	Date	Topic/Lecture	Readings	Assignments Due
1	5/24	Overview of course Review Syllabus Introduction to Augmentative and Alternative Communication Definitions and Terminology	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 1	
2	5/31	Messaging, Symbols, and Alternative Access	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 2-4  Barbara Cannon	<b>Student Introduction due by 5pm</b>  Lab activity: Boardmaker
3	6/7	Assessment, SETT Process	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 5-7 Joy Zabala – SETT worksheets  Bonnet (2015) – ASHA Leader Article	In Class activity: Communication Matrix and WATI
4	6/14	Guest Speaker Supporting Participation and Communication for Beginning Communicators and Individuals with Developmental Disabilities, Educational inclusion of Students with Complex Communication Needs Boardmaker Lab	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 8-9, 13	<b>Communication Board due by 5pm</b>  Lab activity: Goal planning using core vocabulary for play/leisure activity  In Class activity: Masking a low tech communication board
5	6/21	Guest Speaker: AAC User (TBD) High Tech AAC Device Exploration? Language learning and development AAC and Literacy	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 10-11	<b>Research Critique due by 5pm</b>  In Class activity: Blooms Taxonomy activity (literacy)  Competent communicators, core, language development, color coding,

6	6/28	Guest Speaker: Lisa Givens AAC and Literacy AAC in the Educational Setting	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 12	<b>**Midterm Eval due 6/24 by 5pm**</b>  Lab activity: Speech- generating communication devices  In Class activity: Wordless books
	7/5	<b>No Class: GMU Break for July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday</b>		<b>Unit Plan Proposals due 7/5 by 5pm</b>
7	7/12	Grand Rounds: Presentations of case studies and low tech solutions Standards-based lesson planning		<b>Case Study Rationale and Presentation due by 5pm (Blackboard)</b>  In Class activity: SOL lesson planning
8	7/19	Guest Speakers: Autism Practitioners Panel AAC and Autism		In Class activity: Core Word video
9	7/26	Legal Issues and AAC Wrap up of AAC <b>Unit Plan Presentations</b>		<b>Unit Plan Final Project due by 5pm (Blackboard)</b> Unit Plan presentations (in class) Completed Final Evaluation

### Core Values Commitment

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

### GMU Policies and Resources for Students

#### Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/> ).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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.

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

### **Campus Resources**

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/>.**

### **Appendix**

#### **Assessment Rubric(s)**

All rubrics will be posted on Blackboard.