



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

**EDSE 534-5S1: *Communication and Severe Disabilities***

**CRN: 73826, 3 - Credit(s)**

**Fall 2012**

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Cornelia L. Izen	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 08/29/12 - 12/05/12
<b>Office Phone:</b> 703-993-5736 <b>Office Address:</b> 203A Finley Building	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Wednesday
<b>E-Mail:</b> <a href="mailto:cizen@gmu.edu">cizen@gmu.edu</a> <b>Skype Name:</b> neiaizen	<b>Meeting Times:</b> 4:30 pm to 7:10 pm
<b>Office Hours (Face to Face and Skype):</b> Mondays 3:30 to 5:30 pm and 6:30 to 8:30 pm or by appointment (I can meet in office, via phone, or via Skype)	<b>Meeting Location:</b> KA 102

**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.

**Advising Contact Information:**

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. For assistance contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703)993-3145.

**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. (2005). *Augmentative and alternative communication: Supporting children and adults with complex communication needs* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

**Recommended Textbooks:**

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

**Required Materials:**

NA

**Additional Readings:**

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

### **Course's Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organizations:**

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Special Education Program for the Teaching Students with Autism Graduate Certificate. 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 Standards are listed on the following website:

<http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ProfessionalDevelopment/ProfessionalStandards/> The CEC standard that will be addressed in this class is Standard 6: Language. \*NOTE: NCATE Assessments (in many but not all courses) may address additional CEC standards.

### **Policies (Attendance and Late Work Policies):**

#### *Attendance Policy:*

- 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.

#### *Late Work Policy:*

**All assignments should be word-processed and are due at the start of class (7:00 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.

#### *Additional Course Policies*

- 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 6<sup>th</sup> Edition 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.plagiarism.org/plag\\_article\\_preventing\\_plagiarism\\_when\\_writing.html](http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_preventing_plagiarism_when_writing.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 Reporting and Writing about people with disabilities” <http://www.lsi.ku.edu/~lsi/news/featured/guidelines.shtml>

### **TaskStream Submission:**

For student evaluation, program evaluation, and accreditation purposes, all students are required to submit an NCATE assignment from selected Special Education courses to TaskStream. The NCATE assignment required for this course 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 submit NCATE 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/>. Students who do not submit the required NCATE assignment to TaskStream will receive a grade of Incomplete (IN) in the course. The Incomplete (IN) will change to a grade of (F) if the required signature assignment has not been posted to TaskStream by the incomplete work due date listed in the current semester’s Schedule of Classes.

### **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 (14 weeks). Students who successfully complete 13-14 in-class activities will earn 15 points, students who successfully complete 12 in-class activities will earn 8 points, students who successfully complete 11 in-class activities will earn 2 points, while students who complete between 0-10 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. Student Introduction (5 points)** During the first week students will complete the Student Introduction Assignment, located in the *Assignments* section of the course Blackboard site. Students will answer 10 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. Please, no Mardi Gras masks or substitutions of someone/something other than yourself in these pictures. The instructor

needs a simple picture of you to use for identification purposes. These photos will not be shared with others. **(Due September 5 by 4:00 pm via Blackboard)**

3. **Research Critiques (30 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 (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). Students will post their critiques on their group wiki page on Blackboard. See assignment rubric for further details. **(Critique 1 due September 19; Critique 2 due November 14 by 4:00 pm via Blackboard)**
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 October 3 by 4:00 pm via Blackboard)**
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. You will be presenting your low tech systems and explaining their relevance in class. See assignment rubric for further details. **(Due October 24 by 4:00 pm via Blackboard)**
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 (and reference) 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 November 8; Final Project due December 5 by 4:00 pm on Blackboard)**
7. **Boardmaker Assignment (extra credit: 10 points):** Following an introduction to Boardmaker, a series of tutorials will be made available to students. One set of tutorials will be for those who are new to Boardmaker. Another set of tutorials will be for those who have some experience with Boardmaker. Semesterware CDs will be distributed so that students can install Boardmaker on their computers. This extra credit assignment will consist of a

series of activities to allow you to work with Boardmaker to create AAC supports. See Blackboard assignment for details (**Due October 17 by 4:00 pm via Blackboard**)

Assignment	Due Date	Point Value
Class Participation	Each week	15
Student Introduction	9/05	5
Research Critiques	(#1) 9/19, (#2) 11/14	30
Topic Board Development, Rationale, and Reflection	10/03	30
Case Study and Low Tech AAC system development	10/24	30
Unit Plan	12/05 (proposal due 11/01)	40
<b>TOTAL POINT VALUE</b>		<b>150</b>

**Grading Scale:**

- 95 - 100% = A
- 90 - 94% = A-
- 80 - 89% = B
- 70 - 79% = C
- <70% = F

**Schedule:**

**PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE** (Schedule may change based on guest speaker availability)

Ses.	Date	Topic/Lecture	Assignment	Assignments Due
1	8/29	<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	
2	9/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Messaging, symbols, alternative access</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 2-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Introduction due by 4:00 pm on 9/05 via Blackboard</li> </ul>
3	9/12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Cases will be Distributed in Case Study Assignment</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 6-7	

4	9/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 6-7	Research Critique 1 due by 4:00 pm on 9/19 via Blackboard
5	9/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAC issues / AAC Strategies</li> <li>Symbolic versus nonsymbolic strategies</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 10-11	
6	10/03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language learning and development</li> <li>Tech Demo (speaker TBA)</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topic Board Assignment due by 4:00 pm on 10/03 via Blackboard</li> </ul>
7	10/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAC Tech Lab Night (tentative)</li> </ul>		Completed Midterm Evaluation via Blackboard
8	10/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAC and Literacy</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 13	Boardmaker activity due by 4:00 pm on 10/17 via Blackboard (extra credit; not required)
9	10/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of Cases and Low Tech Solutions</li> </ul>	Mirenda et al. (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Study and Rationale due by 4:00 pm on 10/24 via Blackboard</li> <li>Presentations of Cases and Low Tech Solutions (in class)</li> </ul>
10	10/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guest Speaker: Amy Parker Dynavox Presentation: Anne Boyle, Dynavox representative</li> <li>AAC in Educational Settings</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 14	
11	11/07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TEACCH Guest Speaker: David Lojkovic, GMU doctoral student and former teacher who uses TEACCH strategies</li> </ul>	Refer to Blackboard for Readings	
12	11/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAC and Autism: Guest Speaker, Karen Ingram, parent, and Ryan Ingram, her young adult son with autism</li> </ul>	Refer to Blackboard for Readings	
	11/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>NO CLASS Thanksgiving Break</b></li> </ul>		
13	11/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guest Speaker: Dr. Yoo Sun Chung, AAC user</li> </ul>		
14	12/05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wrap up of AAC</li> <li>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>

### GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:

*a.* Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].

*b.* Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].

- 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. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/Revised 06/25/12>

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

**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.*