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

Spring 2014
EDSE 534 001: Communication and Severe Disabilities
CRN: 13677, 3 - Credits

Instructor: Dr. Marci Jerome	**Meeting Dates:** 01/21/14 - 05/14/14
Phone: 703-993-8295 **Annex Phone**: 703-993-7070	**Meeting Day(s):** Tuesday
E-Mail: mkinas@gmu.edu	**Meeting Time(s):** 7:20 pm-10:00 pm
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 5:00-6:00pm and by appointment	**Meeting Location:** KA 103

> *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.*

Consortium Titles

George Mason University: EDSE 534 Communication and Severe Disabilities * University of Virginia: EDIS 711 Vocal and Nonvocal Communication * Virginia Commonwealth University: SEDP 600 Communication for Students with Severe Disabilities * Radford University: EDSP 667 Communication & Severe Disabilities* Norfolk State University: SPE 643 Communication Development for Individuals with Severe Disabilities

GMU 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-requisites: 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) 993-3670 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.

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

Digital Library Option (GMU Students)
The Pearson textbook(s) for this course **may be** available as part of the **George Mason University Division of Special Education and disAbility Research Digital Library**. Please note that not all textbooks are available through this option. Visit the links below before purchasing the digital library to ensure that your course(s) text(s) are available in this format. 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. To register your access code or purchase the Digital Library,
visit: http://www.pearsoncustom.com/va/gmu/digitallibrary/education/index.html

- 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.pearsoncustom.com/va/gmu/digitallibrary/education/index.html

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.

Course Policies & Expectations

       Attendance.

       Please see *Class Participation* within the assignment section.

       Late Work.

       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.

TaskStream Submission

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, (NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE) (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

95-100% (143-150) = A	80-82% (120-123) = B-
90-94% (136-142) = A-	70-79% (105-119) = C
87-89% (130-135) = B+	< 70% (below 105) = F
83-86% (124-129) = B	

Undergraduate

95-100% (143-150) = A	77-79% (115-119) = C+
90-94% (136-142) = A-	74-76% (111-114) = C
87-89% (130-135) = B+	70-73% (105-110) = C-
83-86% (124-129) = B	60-69% (90-104) = D
80-82% (120-123) = B-	< 60% (below 90) = F

Assignments

Performance-based Common Assignments (No TaskStream submission required).

Please see *Case Study and Low Tech AAC System Development* *within* the assignment section.

Other Assignments:

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 (or online assignment) 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 7 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 (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 students will complete the Student Introduction Assignment, located in the *Assignments* section of the course Blackboard site. Students will answer 11 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 January 28 by 7 pm)**

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 (6th 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 deign 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 Feb. 11; Critique 2 due April 15)**

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 February 25)**

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 March 25**)

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 April 15; Final Project Due April 29)**

Assignment	Due Date	Point Value
Class Participation	Each week	15
Student Introduction	1/28	5
Research Critiques	(#1) 2/11, (#2) 4/15	30
Topic Board Development, Rationale, and Reflection	2/25	30
Case Study and Low Tech AAC system development	3/25	30
Unit Plan	4/29 (proposal due 4/15)	40
TOTAL POINT VALUE		150

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

Ses.	Date	Topic/Lecture	Readings	Assignments Due
1	1/21	• Overview of Course • Review Syllabus • Introduction to Augmentative and Alternative Communication • Definitions and Terminology	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 1 Russell (2008)	
2	1/28	• Messaging, symbols, alternative access	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 2-4	• Student Introduction due by 7pm on 1/28
3	2/4	• Assessment	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 5-7	
4	2/11	• Assessment • Cases will be Distributed in Case Study Assignment	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 5-7	• Research Critique 1 Due
5	2/18	• AAC issues / AAC Strategies • Symbolic versus nonsymbolic strategies	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 9, 13	
6	2/25	• Language learning and development • AAC and Literacy	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 10-11	• Topic Board Assignment Due
7	3/4	• At Home Boardmaker Plus/Studio Activity (**ONLINE**)	Instructor will provide assignment description and materials	• Boardmaker activity due by Friday March 14 via Blackboard • Completed Midterm Evaluation
	3/11	• **No Class: Consortium Spring Break**		
8	3/18	• Dynavox Presentation • AAC and Literacy	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 12	
9	3/25	• Presentations of Cases and Low Tech Solutions		• Case Study Rationale Due to Blackboard • Presentations of Cases and Low Tech Solutions (In class)
10	4/1	• AAC and Autism	Refer to Blackboard for readings	
11	4/8	• Guest Speaker: AAC User		
12	4/15	• AAC and Literacy • AAC in the Educational Setting	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 12	• Research Critique 2 Due • Make sure your Unit Plan project is approved by April 15th!
13	4/22	• AAC Tech Lab Nigh	Refer to Blackboard for readings	
14	4/29	• Legal Issues and AAC • Wrap up of AAC • Unit Plan Presentations		• Unit Plan due (Blackboard) • Unit Plan Presentations (In Class) • Completed Final Evaluation

SD CONSORTIUM SYLLABUS STATEMENTS AND POLICIES

Honor Code
Each university has its own honor code and it is important for you to review the honor code at your university. However, all students taking this course, regardless of the university they are enrolled in, are expected to follow this honor code and also to pledge all assignments and their exam to indicate that they have followed the honor code. A pledge means that you have not cheated or plagiarized, nor have you given or received assistance that violated the description of how assignments are to be completed for this course. The shortened version may be used: "Pledged" followed by the date and your full name (typed "signatures" will be OK for assignments/tests submitted electronically).
A complete copy of each university's Honor System document is available through
GMU: http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm
VCU: www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/rg7honor.html.
UVA: http://www.virginia.edu/honor/
Radford: http://www.radford.edu/~dos-web/handbook02-03/Honor_Code.pdf
NSU: http://www.nsu.edu/student_judicial/policy.html

Accommodations for Disability
At all the participating universities, accommodations can be made with the instructor if a student has a disability. If this is relevant to you, please contact me on the first night of class (can be through email) and indicate both what the disability is and how your university has made accommodations for you in the past. I will discuss (via email) this further with you until we reach consensus. University specific information regarding eligibility, services and accommodations can be found at:
GMU: http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/
VCU: http://www.students.vcu.edu/dss/index.html
UVA: http://www.virginia.edu/vpsa/services.html
Radford: http://www.radford.edu/~dro/
NSU: http://www.nsu.edu/disabilityservices/index.html

Inclement Weather
If classes are cancelled at George Mason University, a message will be posted on the class Blackboard site and all class members will receive an email. Because such cancellations are often at the last minute, it may be difficult to get this message prior to leaving for class. If in doubt, dial the University phone number (703-993-1000) or visit the university website (www.gmu.edu). Do not email us; I will email you regarding weather as soon as it is announced. Please note, the cancellation of classes due to inclement weather is determined by the decision of the instructing university only. If the instructing university is open and operational then you are expected to attend class.

Cell Phones and Weapons
All cell phones and beepers should be deactivated while in the classroom. Also, University rules at all participating universities prohibit the possession any firearm, other weapon, or explosive. Please consult the student handbook and your university for specific information concerning this policy at your university.

Course Materials
This course gives you access to PowerPoint files, class lecture notes, handouts, and copyrighted articles. For the articles (available both on Blackboard and on a class CD), copyright laws must be followed: print only one copy per student. The PowerPoint presentations, notes, and handouts are provided on Blackboard for your convenience and to facilitate your mastery of concepts presented in this course; PowerPoints should be available on Blackboard by noon of the class day or sooner. If you plan to print copies of PowerPoint slides, this must be done before class begins (before 4 pm or 7:20 pm) and using a 3 or more slides per page handout format (do not print full slide pages). All of these materials should be regarded as authored materials, which if used or referred to must be fully credited through reference to the author, the class, and date. If used beyond citation, permission of the instructor/author is required.

Technology Proficiencies
All students participating in this course are expected to be proficient in several technology skills. Students are expected to be proficient in using the Internet and have reliable and consistent Internet access. Students are also expected to have an active email account and to check email regularly. This course requires students to use Blackboard, which is our online course management system located at http://mymason.gmu.edu

NON GMU Students: Your login for Blackboard Organizations is: *x_first name.last name* For example John Smith's username would be: x_john.smith Your password is: *bbcommunity*

Students are expected to login to this system frequently and be proficient in using its features. Students are expected to be proficient in using the computer, which includes downloading and saving files, typing, and word processing skills. Students participating in this course are expected to use Microsoft Word for all written assignments. Furthermore, students are expected to use Microsoft PowerPoint and Adobe Acrobat Reader for class documents located on the Blackboard website.

Course Facilitators
Each class will have a facilitator or assistant who will assist with the class. Learn who that person is as they will be taking role and keeping track of class participation and reporting it to me weekly. However, if you think you must miss a class, please email me ahead if at all possible (or later if need be). Because of the potential of confusion caused by people speaking at the same time in this multi-site course, it will be important to raise hands before asking questions or making comments. Along with the facilitators, I will try hard to enforce this rule and to be alert to questions from the distance sites. Facilitators will also FAX in-class written tasks following class or early the next day to me. When in class assignment forms or handouts are send the day of the class, facilitators will need to download and copy them for class members.

Blackboard Assistance
This course requires that you be a regular email user and be able to use various features of Blackboard (sign on, download materials, hand in completed assignments electronically in the drop box). You may direct your questions about Blackboard to the facilitator at the class site as well as to email Marci Kinas Jerome (mkinas@gmu.edu). She will be the best resource. We are all learning this system together and some of us will be faster than others. Expect some snafus along the way, but please help each other out as you can. You will want to download all the required materials early in the semester or as soon as they are posted. Please note that some

handouts/readings may be given to you in class that are not posted on Blackboard. Also check Blackboard for announcements. Sometimes I will place handouts for class on Blackboard and will alert you by email or in the previous class; in these cases please download and bring them to class.

All Consortium courses are recorded and archived on a video-streaming server. Students and faculty are welcome to view previous classes at http://torrent.gmu.edu and click on the link for [SDC PBS] in the Public Folders link. Classes are listed by date and time. Since the Consortium includes some remote site students, all consortium classes are broadcast live via the Internet at the same website. It is the policy of the consortium that students attending classes at university sites are expected to be present at those university sites during class time. However, in instances where students would otherwise miss class (in accordance to the attendance policy) students may participate in the class via the live web stream. However, students who participate in the web-stream instead of at their university site are still subject to the response cost as outlined in the attendance policy for this course. Directions for viewing the video-stream can be found in the course Blackboard site.

Student may also view the PowerPoints, communicate with the instructor, and interact with other at home students using Adobe Connect. Each consortium class has their own Adobe Connect website. To get to your Adobe Connect course site go to:
- Teaching Strategies: http://webcon.gmu.edu/teaching/
- Teamwork: http://webcon.gmu.edu/teamwork/
- Communication: http://webcon.gmu.edu/communication/

You will login with the guest username (sdcguest@gmu.edu) and password (sdcsite).
The first time you use Adobe Connect you may be prompted to download a plug in, it only takes a few seconds to install.

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURES 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.

GMU 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/]