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

Summer 2017
EDSE 636 D01: Supporting Communication and Literacy for Individuals with Autism
CRN: 42209, 3 – Credits

Instructor: Dr. Grace Francis	**Meeting Dates**: 5/22/2017 – 7/29/2017
Phone: 703-993-6064	**Meeting Day(s)**: Asynchronous
E-Mail: gfranci4@gmu.edu	**Meeting Time(s)**: Asynchronous
Office Hours: by appointment	**Meeting Location**: Online
Office Location: Finley 216	**Other Phone**: N/A

*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
Surveys the characteristics of communication and literacy, as well as the design and implementation of communication systems for individuals with autism spectrum disorder across their lifespans. Explains methods for assessment, identification of priorities, and monitoring progress of communication and literacy instruction in order to improve behavior, academic skills, and social interactions in various environments.

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
Did you know that students in "quick admit" and non-degree status are restricted in the number of classes they can take, and later apply to a program? Students planning to complete a program should apply as soon as possible. Apply at http://cehd.gmu.edu/admissions/steps.

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

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using an asynchronous format via Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on May 19th.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:
- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox is required (note: Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard).
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: https://get.adobe.com/reader/
  - Windows Media Player: https://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/downloads/windows-media-player/
  - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

Expectations

Course Week:
Because asynchronous courses do not have a "fixed" meeting day, our week will **start** at 12:00am (midnight) on Tuesday, and **finish** at 11:59 pm on Monday nights (all assignments are due on Monday by 11:59).

Log-in Frequency:
Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week.
Participation:
Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
Technical Competence:
Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
Technical Issues:
Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
Workload:
Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
Instructor Support:
Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
Netiquette:
The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words*. Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.
Accommodations:
Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services

Learner Outcomes
Upon completion of this course, candidates will be able to:
1. Compare and contrast characteristics of communication for individuals with autism across ages and developmental phases.
2. Analyze age- and developmentally-appropriate methods for assessment, identification of priorities, and monitoring progress of individuals with autism.

3. Discriminate between and evaluate the range of augmentative and alternative communication devices and systems/assistive technology/instructional technology available for individuals with autism across their lifespans.
4. Apply current theory (e.g., Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory) to literacy and communication skills across the lifespan.
5. Review age- and developmentally-appropriate communication/augmentative and alternative communication devices/assistive technology assessment and instructional strategies to facilitate peer interactions, individual educational planning, functional-based career and independent living literacy skills.
6. Consider and develop examples of behaviors associated with communication for individuals with autism.
7. Distinguish between various research-based methods for building communication systems to support language and literacy among individuals with autism across their lifespans.
8. Explain and apply language development, emergent literacy skills, academic literacy skills, and functional literacy skills for individuals with autism.
9. Develop a plan for developmentally appropriate, evidence-based literacy instruction for individuals with autism at the early childhood, school age, adolescent, and/or adulthood age levels.

Course 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 Autism Spectrum Disorders Graduate Certificate. This program complies with the Skill Competencies for Professionals and Paraprofessionals in Virginia Supporting Individuals with Autism Across the Lifespan established by the Virginia Autism Council. The competencies are listed on the following website: https://vcuautismcenter.org/documents/va_skill_competencies.pdf The competencies that will be addressed in this class are Standard 1: General Autism Knowledge, Standard 2, Environmental Structure and Visual Supports, Standard 3, Instructional Programming, Standard 4: Communication, Standard 5: Social Skills, and Standard 8: Independence and Aptitude.

Required Textbooks
None. All required readings are on Blackboard.

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

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 636, the required PBA is Literary Unit with Low Tech AAC System. 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)

Assignment	Description	Points	Due date
Literary Unit with Low Tech AAC System	Literary unit including 3 lesson plans and a communication system for a learner with autism	100	11:59pm

Performance-based Common Assignments (No Tk20 submission required.)

Assignment	Description	Points	Due date
Discussion board #1	Introduction activity	15	11:59pm
Literacy Padlets	Find images related to language and literacy	25	11:59pm
AAC exploration	Explore AAC devices and features	10	11:59pm
Assessment Group Activity	Collaborate to complete assessment forms on case study learner	20	11:59pm
Check-in	Make appointment for an individual check-in with the instructor	10	11:59pm
Discussion board #2	Book and SMART goal for literary unit	10	11:59pm
Discussion board #3	Question/bright idea	10	11:59pm
Discussion board #4	Description of unit communication board	10	11:59pm
Discussion board #5	Unit presentation	40	11:59pm

Total: 250

Course Policies and Expectations
Attendance/Participation
With the exception of one scheduled 1:1 check-in with the instructor, all coursework will be online and in an Asynchronous format.

Late Work
Work is considered on time if it is submitted by 11:59pm on the date that it is due. *Ten percent of the available points* for the assignment will be deducted each day for late submissions during the first week after the due date. *After one week* **from the due date, assignments will not be accepted.** Thus an assignment that is three days late is able to obtain only 70% of the points for the assignment regardless of the quality of the work. After one week, the assignment will no longer be accepted and a score of zero will be entered into the grade book for that assignment.

The date that the assignment was received by the instructor **via email or Blackboard** will be considered the date submitted. Submitting an assignment late does not alter the due dates of the other assignments and prevents timely feedback to students regarding their work that may be of value in later assignments. Strive to keep up with the assignment schedule so that you will be able to have appropriate formative evaluation and feedback from your instructor across the semester.

Grading Scale
Students are expected to complete all assignments and, consistent with university policy, will be graded according to the following scale:

Grade	Percentile
A	100.-90.
B+	89.99-88.
B	87.99-80.
C	79.99-70.
F	69.99 and below

*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 <u>must</u> be your own or with proper citations (see http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/).

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

Class Schedule

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

Module opens	Topics Covered[1]	Module Assignments
1: May 22nd	Introduction and characteristics of ASD	Discussion board #1
2: May 29th	Language development Early literacy	Literacy Padlets ***deadline extended to (Wed)
3: June 5th	Forms of communication Range of devices	AAC exploration
4: June 12th	Tool matching	Assessment Group Activity
5: June 19th	Evidence-based literacy practices	check-in with instructor
6: June 26th	Writing Accommodations and modifications Communication and literacy goals	Discussion board #2
7: July 3rd	Teaching with AAC and data collection	Discussion board #3 ***deadline extended to (Wed)
8: July 10th	AAC and social skills instruction	Discussion board #4
9: July 17th	AAC and behavior Unit presentations	Discussion board #5
10: July 24th	Wrap-up	Literary Unit with Low Tech AAC System

[1]All course materials (including required readings) are included in each Module folder on Blackboard

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 http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/).

- 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 follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/.

- The 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/).

- The 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/).) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance (see http://caps.gmu.edu/).

- The Student Support & Advocacy Center staff helps students develop and maintain healthy lifestyles through confidential one-on-one support as well as through interactive programs and resources. Some of the topics they address are healthy relationships, stress management, nutrition, sexual assault, drug and alcohol use, and sexual health (see http://ssac.gmu.edu/). Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone at 703-993-3686. Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to http://ssac.gmu.edu/make-a-referral/.

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

Assessment Rubric(s)

	Does Not Meet Expectations	**Meets Expectations**	**Exceeds Expectations**
Description of Learner, Book, and SMART goal (15 points)	Candidate's book selection is not grade- or age-appropriate. Candidate's goal does not meet SMART goal criteria.	Candidate selects a grade- and age-appropriate book. Candidate creates a SMART goal for the literacy unit that documents how student progress will be measured.	Candidate selects a grade- and age-appropriate book that is typically used in a general education setting. Candidate creates a SMART goal that is detailed documents how student progress will be measured.
Book Adaptations/Modifications (15 points)	Candidate does not create adaptations/modifications or they are not appropriate for the selected learner.	Candidate creates thoughtful adaptations/modifications appropriate for the selected learner.	Candidate creates thoughtful adaptations/modifications appropriate for the selected learner. Candidate creates adaptations/modifications for environments outside of the classroom (e.g., home, community).
Low tech communication board (35 points)	Candidate creates a low tech communication board, but it does not reflect the characteristics of the student, the student's needs/abilities. It does not appear meaningful for the unit, nor does it include both core and fringe vocabulary related to the book.	Candidate creates a low tech communication board and provides a brief explanation as to how it reflects the characteristics of the student and the student's needs/abilities. Candidate describes how the board is appropriate for the unit and includes both core and fringe vocabulary related to the book.	Candidate creates a low tech communication board and provides a comprehensive explanation as to how it reflects the characteristics of the student and the student's needs/abilities. The candidate also provides a detailed explanation regarding the appropriateness of the board, the core and fringe vocabulary related to the book, and how the fringe vocabulary may change over time.
Three Lesson Plans (30 points)	Candidate develops two or fewer lesson plans for a single literary unit. Lessons do not include all sections of the template provided, including - subject and grade - number of students - length of lesson - goal	Candidate develops three lesson plans for a single literary unit. Lessons include all sections of the template provided, including - subject and grade - number of students - length of lesson - goal - objectives	Candidate develops more than three lesson plans for a single literary unit. Lessons include all sections of the template provided, including - subject and grade - number of students - length of lesson - goal

	Does Not Meet Expectations	**Meets Expectations**	**Exceeds Expectations**
	- objectives - lesson procedures - needed materials - accommodations/adaptations - evaluation procedures	- lesson procedures - needed materials - accommodations/adaptations - evaluation procedures	- objectives - lesson procedures - needed materials - accommodations/adaptations - evaluation procedures
Self-evaluation (5 points)	Candidate does not complete a self-evaluation.	Candidates fully completes each aspect of the self-evaluation rubric.	Candidates completes each aspect of the self-evaluation rubric and provides rich information related to each component.
Unit Presentation (40 points)	Candidate fails to create a video presentation about their literary unit. Candidate fails to respond to two or more peer video presentations.	Candidate creates a 5-minute presentation about their unit that includes the following: (a) rationale for book selection, (b) demonstration of the adapted book, (c) demonstration of the communication board, and (d) a strength and area of need statement. Image and audio of video is of good clarity. Peer responds to two peer video presentations with thoughtful questions, constructive suggestions, and/or comparative statements.	Candidate creates a 5-minute presentation about their unit that includes the following: (a) rationale for book selection, (b) demonstration of lesson activities and adaptations/modifications, (c) demonstration of extension activities, (d) demonstration of communication board, (e) demonstration of your SMART goal and data collection techniques and (f) strength and area of need statement. Image and audio of video is of good clarity. Video includes interesting graphics and links to relevant websites related to the unit. Peer responds to three or more peer video presentations with thoughtful questions, constructive suggestions, and/or comparative statements. Response also includes helpful resources such websites or the names of articles.