



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

Summer 2018

EDSE 636: Supporting Communication and Literacy for Individuals with Autism

3 – Credits

Section B01; CRN: 42953

Section 611; CRN 43058

Instructor: Dr. Catherine Creighton Thompson	Meeting Dates: 6/4/2018 - 7/28/2018
Phone: 703-314-6105	Meeting Day(s): N/A
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Office Hours: By appointment	Meeting Location: On-line
Office Location: Virtual	Other Phone:

*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. 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

Did you know you can order an official transcript through Patriotweb? Logon to Patriotweb. Select Student Services. Select Student Records. Select Order Official Transcript.

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 June 5, 2018 **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 standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers

To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems

- 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://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-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 on 12:00 am (midnight) on Tuesday, and finish on Monday nights.** Our course week will begin on the day that our synchronous meetings take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes.
- 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. In addition, students must log-in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes.
- 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. Identify characteristics of communication for individuals with autism spectrum disorder.
2. Describe and discuss methods for assessment, identification of priorities, and monitoring progress of individuals with autism spectrum disorder.
3. Discuss and evaluate the range of augmentative and alternative communication devices and systems/assistive technology/instructional technology available for individuals with autism spectrum disorder.
4. Design assessment and instructional strategies to improve individuals' social interactions with peers and others.
5. Design communication/AAC/AT assessment and instructional strategies to develop and implement individual educational planning and group instruction with individuals with autism spectrum disorder.
6. Identify behaviors associated with communication for individuals with autism spectrum disorder.
7. Describe methods of building communication systems to support language and literacy in individuals with autism spectrum disorder.
8. Describe evidence-based literacy practices for individuals with autism spectrum disorder.
9. Describe language development and emergent literacy skills for individuals with autism spectrum disorder.
10. Describe and plan quality pre-literacy and literacy instruction for individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

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 developed by the Virginia Autism Council. The competencies addressed in this class include Environmental Structure and Visual Supports, Instructional Programming, Communication, Social Skills and 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.

Additional Readings

Refer to Blackboard for additional course readings and resources.

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	102	July 26 th due by 11:59pm

College Wide Common Assessment (TK20 submission required)

None

Performance-based Common Assignments (No Tk20 submission required)

Assignment	Description	Points	Due date (all assignments due by 11:59pm)
Discussion board #1	Introduction activity	15	Part 1: June 8 th Part 2: June 10 th Part 3: June 11 th
Literacy Padlet # 1	Find images related to language and literacy	10	June 11 th

AAC Device Investigation Template/Exploration	Explore AAC devices and features	10	June 18 th
Case Study Learner	Description of unit case study learner	10	June 18 th
Literacy Padlet # 2	Share resources and/or strategies related to literacy skills	10	June 25
Discussion board #2	Book and SMART goal for literary unit	10	Part 1: June 28 th Part 2: June 30 rd
Discussion board #3	Description of case study learner's AAC system	10	Part 1: July 2 nd Part 2: July 6 th (holiday extension)
AAC across environments	Description of how potential use of case study learner's AAC system in a minimum of three environments	10	July 9
Discussion board #4	Question/Bright Idea	10	Part 1: July 12 th Part 2: July 15 th
Unit adaptations	Description of unit adaptations	10	July 16
Discussion board #5	Unit presentation	10	Part 1: July 23 st Part 2: July 25 th
Literary Unit with Low Tech AAC System	Literary unit including 3 lesson plans and a communication system for a learner with autism	Points noted above under performance-based common assessments	July 26 th due by 11:59pm
Total Points		/237	

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 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.

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

Module opens	Topics Covered ¹	Module Assignments
1: 6/1	Introduction and characteristics of ASD Language development Early literacy characteristics of ASD	Discussion board #1 Literacy Padlets #1
2: 6/12	Forms of communication Range of devices Tool matching	AAC exploration Case study learner description
3: 6/19	Evidence-based literacy practices Writing Communication and literacy goals and Accommodations and modifications	Discussion board #2 Literacy Padlets #2
4: 6/26	Teaching with AAC	Discussion board #3
5: 7/3	AAC and social skills instruction AAC and behavior	AAC Across Environments Discussion board #4
6: 7/10	Writing	Description of unit accommodations or modifications
7: 7/17	Family Partnerships	Discussion board #5
8: 7/24	Wrap-up	DUE: Literary Unit with Low Tech AAC System due 11:59 pm ET 7/26

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1All 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 <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 or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>
- 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/students/>.

Appendix

Assessment Rubric(s)

	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Description of Learner, Book, and SMART goal (15 points)	<p>Candidate's book selection is not grade- or age-appropriate.</p> <p>Candidate's goal does not meet SMART goal criteria.</p>	<p>Candidate selects a grade- and age-appropriate book.</p> <p>Candidate creates a SMART goal for the literacy unit that documents how student progress will be measured.</p>	<p>Candidate selects a grade- and age-appropriate book that is typically used in a general education setting.</p> <p>Candidate creates a SMART goal that is detailed documents how student progress will be measured.</p>
Book Adaptations/Modifications (15 points)	<p>Candidate does not create adaptations/modifications or they are not appropriate for the selected learner.</p>	<p>Candidate creates thoughtful adaptations/modifications appropriate for the selected learner.</p>	<p>Candidate creates thoughtful adaptations/modifications appropriate for the selected learner.</p> <p>Candidate creates adaptations/modifications for environments outside of the classroom (e.g., home, community).</p>
Low tech communication board (35 points)	<p>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,</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>

	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
	nor does it include both core and fringe vocabulary related to the book.	appropriate for the unit and includes both core and fringe vocabulary related to the book.	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)	<p>Candidate develops two or fewer lesson plans for a single literary unit. Lessons do not include all sections of the template provided, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - subject and grade - number of students - length of lesson - goal - objectives - lesson procedures - needed materials - accommodations/adaptations - evaluation procedures 	<p>Candidate develops three lesson plans for a single literary unit. Lessons include all sections of the template provided, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - subject and grade - number of students - length of lesson - goal - objectives - lesson procedures - needed materials - accommodations/adaptations - evaluation procedures 	<p>Candidate develops more than three lesson plans for a single literary unit. Lessons include all sections of the template provided, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - subject and grade - number of students - length of lesson - goal - 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)	<p>Candidate fails to create a video presentation about their literary unit.</p> <p>Candidate fails to respond to two or more peer video presentations.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Image and audio of video is of good clarity.</p>	<p>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</p>

	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
		Peer responds to two peer video presentations with thoughtful questions, constructive suggestions, and/or comparative statements.	<p>collection techniques and (f) strength and area of need statement.</p> <p>Image and audio of video is of good clarity.</p> <p>Video includes interesting graphics and links to relevant websites related to the unit.</p> <p>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.</p>