



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

Fall 2018

EDSE 636 001: Supporting Communication and Literacy for Individuals with Autism  
CRN: 82030, 3 – Credits

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Grace Francis	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 8/27/2018 – 10/20/18
<b>Phone:</b> 703-993-6064	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Online
<b>E-Mail:</b> gfranci4@gmu.edu	<b>Meeting Time(s):</b> NA
<b>Office Hours:</b> By appointment	<b>Meeting Location:</b> NA
<b>Office Location:</b> 216 Finley	<b>Other Phone:</b> NA

\*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 Student Services at (703) 348-5006 (Option 2) 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 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 August 24<sup>th</sup>, 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](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](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/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)

## *Expectations*

- Course Week:  
Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will start on Monday at 11:59 and finish on Monday 11:55.  
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.
- 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 General Autism Knowledge, Environmental Structure and Visual Supports, Instructional Programming, Communication, Social Skills and Independence and Aptitude.

### **Required Textbooks**

Boutot, E.A. (2016). *Autism spectrum disorders: Foundations, characteristics, and effective strategies* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Pearson.

Quill, K.A., & Stansberry-Brusnahan, L. (2017). *Do-watch-listen-say: Social and communication intervention for autism spectrum disorder*. Baltimore: Brookes.

Hall, L. J. (2018). *Autism spectrum disorders: From theory to practice (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. New York: Pearson.

**Recommended Textbooks**

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

**Additional Readings**

Additional readings included on Blackboard.

**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	Oct 22 <sup>nd</sup> by 11:55pm

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

N/A

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

Assignment	Description	Points	Due date (all assignments due by <b>11:55pm</b> )
Discussion 1: Introductions	Provide short personal introduction and an interesting fact	10	Part 1: June 30 <sup>th</sup> Part 2: Sept 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Assignment 1: Introduction to the Literacy Unit	Preview the Literacy Unit Final Project on Blackboard and note any questions	Ungraded, questions optional	Sept 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Assignment 2: Early Literacy Assessment: Fluency	Conduct a brief fluency assessment	15	Sept 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Pre-test	Brief quiz about ASD, communication, and literacy	Ungraded, <b>required</b>	Sept 3 <sup>rd</sup>
Discussion 1: Literacy Unit Questions and Ideas	Post any questions, concerns, or ideas you develop about the Literacy Unit Final Project	Ungraded, optional	Open
Assignment 1: <b>Compare and Contrast High and Mid/Low Tech AAC Devices</b>	Explore, compare and contrast high and mid/low tech AAC devices	30	Sept 10 <sup>th</sup>
Assignment 2: <b>50 Signs</b>	Upload a video of you signing 50 terms and a rationale for the signs you selected	25	Sept 10 <sup>th</sup>
Discussion 1: <b>Description Case Study Learner and Book</b>	Share information and receive feedback related to Step 1 of your Literacy Unit Final Project	10	Part 1: Sept 13 <sup>th</sup> Part 2: Sept 17 <sup>th</sup>
Assignment 1: <b>AAC Assessment Group Activity</b>	Collaborate to complete a brief AAC assessment for a case study	30	Steps 1-2: Sept 12 <sup>th</sup> Step 3-4: Sept 14 <sup>th</sup> Steps 5-7: Sept 17 <sup>th</sup>
Assignment 1: <b>Communication Board Comparison Wiki</b>	Compare and contrast communication board features	20	Parts 1 & 2: Sept 21 <sup>st</sup> Part 3: Sept 24 <sup>th</sup>

Assignment 2: Brooke's Communication System Analysis	Evaluate and make recommendations for an AAC system	30	Sept 24 <sup>th</sup>
Midterm Feedback	Compete an anonymous midterm course feedback survey	10	Sept 24 <sup>th</sup>
Discussion 1: SMART goal	Share information and receive feedback related to Step 1 of your Literacy Unit Final Project	10	Part 1: Sept 27 <sup>th</sup> Part 2: Oct 1 <sup>st</sup>
Discussion 2: AAC System Feedback	Share information and receive feedback related to Step 2 of your Literacy Unit Final Project	10	Part 1: Sept 27 <sup>th</sup> Part 2: Oct 1 <sup>st</sup>
Assignment 1: Literacy Strategy Wiki	Share literacy resources and strategies	20	Part 2: Oct 5 <sup>th</sup> Part 3: Oct 8 <sup>th</sup>
Assignment 2: Lesson Plan #1	Develop a lesson and receive feedback related to Step 4 of your Literacy Unit Final Project	10	Oct 8 <sup>th</sup>
Discussion 1: Accommodations and Modifications	Share information and receive feedback related to Step 3 of your Literacy Unit Final Project	10	Part 1: Oct 11 <sup>th</sup> Part 2: Oct 15 <sup>th</sup>
Assignment 1: Lesson Plans #2 and #3	Develop two lessons and receive feedback related to Step 4 of your Literacy Unit Final Project	20	Oct 15 <sup>th</sup>
Discussion 1: Addressing Behavior and Social Skills	Share ideas on how to support behavior and social skills	10	Part 1: Oct 18 <sup>th</sup> Part 2: Oct 22 <sup>nd</sup>
Post-test	Brief quiz about ASD, communication, and literacy	10	Oct 22 <sup>nd</sup>
<b>Total Points for Course:</b>		<b>380</b>	

## Course Policies and Expectations

### Attendance/Participation

All coursework will be online and in an Asynchronous format.

### Late Work

Work is considered on time if it is submitted by 11:55pm 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** (traditional rounding principles apply)

- 93-100% = A
- 90-92% = A-
- 87-89% = B+
- 83-86% = B
- 80-82% = B-
- 70-79% = C
- < 69% = F

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

**Professional Dispositions**

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

**Class Schedule**

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

Module opens	Topics Covered	Required Readings <sup>1</sup>	Module Assignments
1: June 27 <sup>th</sup>	Language Development and Early Literacy	Boutot Chapter 6 Hall Chapter 7	Discussion #1 Assignments #1-2 Pre-test
2: Sept 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Communication and Forms of AAC	Boutot Chapter 11	Discussion #1 Assignments #1-2

3: Sept 10 <sup>th</sup>	Assessment	Quill Chapter 3	Discussion #1 Assignment #1
4: Sept 17 <sup>th</sup>	Developing AAC Systems		Assignments #1-2 Midterm Feedback
5: Sept 24 <sup>th</sup>	Creating Goals and Using AAC Systems		Discussions #1-2
6: Oct 1 <sup>st</sup>	Literacy Strategies	Quill Chapter 4	Assignments #1-2
7: Oct 8 <sup>th</sup>	Accommodations and Modifications	Quill Chapters 6 and 7	Discussion #1 Assignment #1
8: Oct 15 <sup>th</sup>	AAC, social skills, and behavior	Quill Chapter 2	Discussion #1 <b>Post-test</b> Final Literacy Unit

<sup>1</sup>See Blackboard for additional readings and resources.

### Core Values Commitment

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

### GMU Policies and Resources for Students

#### Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

## Campus Resources

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

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

## Appendix

### Assessment Rubric(s)

#### Literary Unit with Low Tech AAC System

	<b>Does Not Meet Expectations</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>
<b>Description of Learner, Book, and SMART goal (15 points)</b>  <b>3.1K</b>	<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>
<b>AAC System, including a Low-tech Communication Board (35 points)</b>  <b>4.2.12S</b>	<p>Candidate creates an AAC system for their case study learner to access the unit that includes a low-tech communication board and a minimum of two additional forms of communication, 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.</p>	<p>Candidate creates an AAC system for their case study learner to access the unit that includes a low-tech communication board and a minimum of two additional forms of communication 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.</p>	<p>Candidate creates an AAC system for their case study learner to access the unit that includes a low-tech communication board and a minimum of two additional forms of communication 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.</p>
<b>Unit Adaptations</b>	<p>Candidate does not create adaptations/modifications or</p>	<p>Candidate creates a minimum of two thoughtful</p>	<p>Candidate creates three or more thoughtful</p>

	<b>Does Not Meet Expectations</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>
<b>Modifications (15 points)</b> <b>3.2.11S</b>	they are not appropriate for the selected learner.	adaptations/modifications appropriate for the selected learner.	adaptations/modifications appropriate for the selected learner.  Candidate creates adaptations/modifications for environments outside of the classroom (e.g., home, community).
<b>Three Lesson Plans (30 points)</b> <b>3.2K</b>	Candidate develops two or fewer lesson plans for a single literary unit. Lessons do not include a minimum of 3 learners and all sections of the template provided, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- subject and grade</li> <li>- number of students</li> <li>- length of lesson</li> <li>- goal</li> <li>- objectives</li> <li>- lesson procedures</li> <li>- needed materials</li> <li>- accommodations/adaptations</li> <li>- evaluation procedures</li> </ul>	Candidate develops three lesson plans for a single literary unit. Lessons includes a minimum of 3 learners and all sections of the template provided, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- subject and grade</li> <li>- number of students</li> <li>- length of lesson</li> <li>- goal</li> <li>- objectives</li> <li>- lesson procedures</li> <li>- needed materials</li> <li>- accommodations/adaptations</li> <li>- evaluation procedures</li> </ul>	Candidate develops more than three lesson plans for a single literary unit. Lessons include 3 or more learners and all sections of the template provided, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- subject and grade</li> <li>- number of students</li> <li>- length of lesson</li> <li>- goal</li> <li>- objectives</li> <li>- lesson procedures</li> <li>- needed materials</li> <li>- accommodations/adaptations</li> <li>- evaluation procedures</li> </ul>
<b>Self-evaluation (5 points)</b>	Candidate does not complete a self-evaluation.	Candidate fully completes a self-evaluation.	Candidate fully and richly completes a self-evaluation.