

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**EDSE 434/534 Sections 5S1 and 631 (3 credits)**

**Communication and Severe Disabilities**

**Spring 2011**

**Wednesdays 7:20-10:00**

**Kellar Annex Room 103**

**CONSORTIUM TITLES**

George Mason University: EDSE 534 Communication and Severe Disabilities \* University of Virginia: EDIS 711 Vocal and Nonvocal Communication \* Virginia Commonwealth University: MNRT 500 Language/Communication Intervention for Young Children and Individuals with Severe Disabilities \* Radford University: EDSP 667 Communication & Severe Disabilities\* Norfolk State University: SPE 643 Communication Development for Individuals with Severe Disabilities

**PROFESSOR**

Marci Kinan Jerome, Ph.D.

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Office location: Krug 110A

Classroom phone: (703) 993-7070 (if need to get me right before class)

Office hours: Wednesdays from 5:30-6:30 and by appointment

Email address: [mkinas@gmu.edu](mailto:mkinas@gmu.edu)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces professionals to augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) for individuals with severe speech and language impairments. This course will address the knowledge and skills needed to assess the potential AAC user, make team decisions, develop and implement instruction, and evaluate the effects of instruction with focus on motivating, building, and expanding communication, choice-making, and social interaction.

**NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY**

Learning activities in this class will include the following:

1. Class lecture, discussion, and participation
2. Software and hardware presentations
3. Group and independent class activities
4. Class presentations
5. Written papers using the American Psychological Association format (5<sup>th</sup> edition)

**STUDENT OUTCOMES**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify characteristics of non-symbolic and symbolic communication
2. Describe and discuss methods for assessment, identification of priorities, and monitoring progress of individuals with communication impairments.
3. Discuss and evaluate the range of augmentative and alternative communication devices and systems/assistive technology available for individuals with severe disabilities.

4. Implement assessment strategies to improve students' social interaction with peers and others.
5. 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,
6. Understand and identify behaviors associated with communication.
7. Describe language development and emergent literacy skills for students who use augmentative and alternative communication devices and systems/assistive technology
8. 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
9. 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

### **RELATIONSHIP OF COURSES 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 special education area of Severe Disabilities/Special Education – Adapted Curriculum K-12. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Virginia Department of Education. Furthermore, the SD Consortium strives to uphold the Special Education Content Standards established by the Council for Exceptional Children, the major special education professional organization.

The primary CEC standard that will be addressed in this class will be Standard 6: Communication

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Beukelman, D. R. & Mirenda, P. (2005). *Augmentative and alternative communication: Supporting children and adults with complex communication needs* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

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

### **ASSESSMENT OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**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.

**NOTE:** If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or if you have emergency medical information to share with me or need special arrangements, **please call and/or make an appointment with me the first week of class.**

### **COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

- Students are expected to (a) attend all classes during the session, (b) arrive on time, (c) stay for the duration of the class time and (d) complete Blackboard discussion boards and other assignments.
- During class time, computers and peripherals are to be used only for work related to the class. Students found using the computer (whether personal laptop or lab computer) for purposes other than the assigned in class activity will be asked to turn off their equipment and will not receive participation points for that class session.
- In-depth reading, study, and work on course requirements require outside class time. Students are expected to allot approximately three hours for class study and preparation for *each* credit hour weekly (a three credit hour course would require nine hours of work weekly in a 45-hour, semester course).
- Use APA 6<sup>th</sup> Edition guidelines for all course assignments. This website links to APA format guidelines. <http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm>. In particular, it is expected that you know how to paraphrase and cite information appropriately to meet both APA guidelines and to avoid plagiarism. This website provides some useful information on how to avoid plagiarism in your writing. <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/college-success/10314.html>.
- We will use person-first language in our class discussions and written assignments (and ideally in our professional practice). Please refer to “Guidelines for Reporting and Writing about people with disabilities” <http://www.apastyle.org/manual/related/guidelines-reporting-and-writing.pdf>

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Class Participation (15 points)** Attendance at all sessions is very important because many of the activities in class are planned in such a way that they cannot necessarily be recreated outside of the class session. Information, activities, guest speakers, and role plays will be presented in class that are not a part of the text and can only be experienced in the class sessions. Furthermore, as part of this course you are expected to be an active and respectful participant, which includes actively engaging in class discussions and activities. Students will complete an in-class activity each week (14 weeks). Students who successfully complete 13-14 in-class activities will earn 15 points, students who successfully complete 12 in-class activities will earn 8 points, students who successfully complete 11 in-class activities will earn 2 points, while students who complete between 0-10 in-class activities will receive 0 points. Completion of in-class activities includes both active participation in the activity as well as submission of a permanent product (form, summary statement, reflection, etc.). Students who miss a class will not have the opportunity to make up missed in-class assignments. Successful completion of in-class activities will be tracked in the blackboard gradebook. As a courtesy, please email me to let me know if you will not be in class.
2. **Student Introduction (5 points)** During the first week students will complete the Student Introduction Assignment, located in the *Assignments* section of the course Blackboard site. Students will answer 10 questions to both introduce themselves to the instructor as well as help the instructor design class activities based on student interests and level of experience. **(Due Feb 2 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 (6<sup>th</sup> edition); b) statement of study purpose including research questions (1-2 paragraphs); c) summary of study methods and results (3-4 paragraphs), and d) applicability of study design and results to special education and your own teaching (1-2 paragraphs; each student). Students will post their critiques on their group wiki page on Blackboard. See assignment rubric for further details. **(Critique 1 due Feb. 16; Critique 2 due April 13)**
  
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 March 2)**
  
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 23)**
  
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 13; Final Project Due May 4)**

Assignment	Due Date	Point Value
Class Participation	Each week	15
Student Introduction	2/2	5
Research Critiques	(#1 )2/6, (#2) 4/13	30
Topic Board Development, Rationale, and Reflection	3/2	30
Case Study and Low Tech AAC system development	3/23	30
Unit Plan	5/4 (proposal due 4/13)	40
<b>TOTAL POINT VALUE</b>		<b>150</b>

## GRADING SCALE

### Graduate

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

## CONSORTIUM COURSE 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](http://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](http://www.radford.edu/~dos-web/handbook02-03/Honor_Code.pdf)

NSU: [http://www.nsu.edu/student\\_judicial/policy.html](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](http://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 will 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 Community 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. Although Microsoft PowerPoint is part of the Microsoft Office Suite, students who do not have PowerPoint can download a free viewer that will allow at <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=D1649C22-B51F-4910-93FC-4CF2832D3342&displaylang=en> Adobe Acrobat Reader is a free software program used to read PDF files and can be downloaded at <http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/product.jsp?product=10&platform=Windows>

Students using Microsoft Office 2007 are expected to save and submit assignments in the Microsoft Office 2003 format, as all universities have not yet made the transition to Office 2007.

### TaskStream Submission

TaskStream ([www.taskstream.com](http://www.taskstream.com)) is an electronic portfolio and assessment management tool that the SD Consortium is utilizing in part to meet accreditation requirements for the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) as well as for student portfolio evaluation purposes. EVERY student taking this course at EVERY university IS REQUIRED to upload and submit the signature assignment for this course to TaskStream for evaluation by the end of the semester. Directions for creating an account in TaskStream and submitting assignments are available on Blackboard in the *TaskStream* folder within the *Syllabus* section.

The signature assignment(s) for this class is: *Low Tech Case Study Rationale*

### 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](mailto: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 [Communication] 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.



## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS (GMU)

### *Student Expectations*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- 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/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- 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.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

### *Campus Resources*

- 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/>].
- 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/>].

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

Ses.	Date	Topic/Lecture	Assignment	Assignments Due
1	1/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of Course</li> <li>Review Syllabus</li> <li>Introduction to Augmentative and Alternative Communication</li> <li>Definitions and Terminology</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 1 Russell (2008)	
2	2/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Messaging, symbols, alternative access</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 2-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction Email due by 7pm on 2/2</li> </ul>
3	2/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment</li> <li>Cases will be Distributed in Case Study Assignment</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 6-7	
4	2/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 6-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research Critique 1 Due</li> </ul>
5	2/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAC issues / AAC Strategies</li> <li>Symbolic versus nonsymbolic strategies</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapters 10-11	
6	3/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language learning and development</li> <li>Tech Demo (Marci)</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topic Board Assignment Due</li> </ul>
	3/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>No Class: Spring Break</b></li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed Midterm Evaluation</li> </ul>
7	3/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAC and Literacy</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 13	
8	3/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations of Cases and Low Tech Solutions (First Group)</li> <li>Tech Lab Part 1</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Study Rationale Due to Blackboard</li> <li>Presentations of Cases and Low Tech Solutions (In class)</li> </ul>
9	3/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations of Cases and Low Tech Solutions (Second Group)</li> <li>Tech Lab Part 1</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations of Cases and Low Tech Solutions (In class)</li> </ul>
10	4/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dynavox Presentation</li> <li>AAC in the Educational Setting</li> </ul>	Beukelman & Mirenda Chapter 14	
11	4/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guest Speaker: AAC User Dr. Yoosun Chung</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research Critique 2 Due</li> <li>Make sure your Unit Plan project is approved by April 13<sup>th</sup>!</li> </ul>
12	4/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At Home Boardmaker Plus/Studio Activity (<b>No Class</b>)</li> </ul>	Instructor will provide assignment description and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boardmaker activity due by Friday April 22 via Blackboard</li> </ul>
13	4/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAC and Autism</li> </ul>	Refer to Blackboard for readings	
14	5/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal Issues and AAC</li> <li>Wrap up of AAC</li> <li>Unit Plan Presentations</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unit Plan due</li> <li>Unit Plan Presentations</li> <li>Completed Final Evaluation</li> </ul>