College of Education and Human Development

Division of Special Education and disAbility Research

Spring 2021
EDSE 636 001: Supporting Communication and Literacy for Individuals with Autism
CRN: 22000, 3 – Credits

Instructor: Dr. Jodi Duke	**Meeting Dates**: 1/4/21 – 2/28/21
Phone: 703-993-6555	**Meeting Day(s)**: Online
E-Mail: jduke4@gmu.edu	**Meeting Time(s)**: NA
Office Hours: By appointment	**Meeting Location**: NA
Office Location: Finley 205B*	**Other Phone**: N/A

==*Due to COVID, I will be working from home throughout the Spring 2021 semester. During this time, the best way to get in touch with me will be email.==

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 Student Services at (703) 348-5006 (Option 2) for assistance.

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 the 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. Because asynchronous courses do not have a "fixed" meeting day, our week will start on Tuesday at 12:01 a.m. ET and finish on Monday at 11:59 p.m. ET.

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: Browser support (https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers)

  To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see: 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 will need a headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra will be used for optional office hours.
- 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/) (https://get.adobe.com/reader/)
    - [Windows Media Player](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player) (https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player)
    - [Apple Quick Time Player](www.apple.com/quicktime/download/) (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.
- 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, School of Education (SOED), 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

Boucher, J. (2017). *Autism spectrum disorder: Characteristics, causes and practical issues*.
Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA. ISBN: 9781446295670

Hall, L.J. (2018). *Autism spectrum disorders: From theory to practice (3ʳᵈ ed.)*. Pearson: London.
ISBN: 9780134461168

LaBarbera, R. (2019). *Educating students with autism spectrum disorders*: *Partnering with Families for Positive Outcomes.* Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA. ISBN: 9781506338866

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

Recommended Textbooks

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.) https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000

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, VIA, hard copy).

VIA 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 VIA (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 VIA.

For EDSE 636, the required PBA is Literary Unit with Low Tech AAC System. Please check to verify your ability to upload items to VIA before the PBA due date.

Assignments and/or Examinations
Performance-based Assessment (VIA submission required)

Assignment	Description	Points	Due
Literary Unit with Low Tech AAC System	You will develop a literary unit comprised of 3 lesson plans and a communication system for a learner with autism. More information about this assignment (including a grading rubric and resources) can be found on Blackboard. The rubric and resources should be thoroughly reviewed prior to beginning the assignment and well in advance of the due date.	100	Module 8

College Wide Common Assessment (VIA submission required)
N/A

Other Assignments

Assignment	Description	Points	Due date (all assignments due by **11:55pm**)
Discussion 1: Introductions	Provide short personal introduction and an interesting fact	10	Module 1
Assignment 1: Introduction to the Literacy Unit	Preview the Literacy Unit Final Project on Blackboard and note any questions	Ungraded, questions optional	Module 1
Assignment 2: Early Literacy Assessment: Fluency	Conduct a brief fluency assessment	15	Module 1
Pre-test	Brief quiz about ASD, communication, and literacy	Ungraded, **required**	Module 1
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: Compare and Contrast High and Mid/Low Tech AAC Devices	Explore, compare and contrast high and mid/low tech AAC devices	30	Module 2
Assignment 2: 50 Signs	Upload a video of you signing 50 terms and a rationale for the signs you selected	25	Module 2
Discussion 1: Description Case Study Learner and Book	Share information and receive feedback related to Step 1 of your Literacy Unit Final Project	10	Module 3
Assignment 1: AAC Assessment Group Activity	Collaborate to complete a brief AAC assessment for a case study	30	Module 3
Assignment 1: Communication Board Comparison Wiki	Compare and contrast communication board features	20	Module 4
Assignment 2: Brooke's Communication System Analysis	Evaluate and make recommendations for an AAC system	30	Module 4
Midterm Feedback	Compete an anonymous midterm course feedback survey	10	Module 4
Discussion 1: SMART goal	Share information and receive feedback related to Step 1 of your Literacy Unit Final Project	10	Module 5
Discussion 2: AAC System Feedback	Share information and receive feedback related to Step 2 of your Literacy Unit Final Project	10	Module 5

Assignment 1: Literacy Strategy Wiki	Share literacy resources and strategies	20	Module 6
Assignment 2: Lesson Plan #1	Develop a lesson and receive feedback related to Step 4 of your Literacy Unit Final Project	10	Module 6
Discussion 1: Accommodations and Modifications	Share information and receive feedback related to Step 3 of your Literacy Unit Final Project	10	Module 7
Assignment 1: Lesson Plans #2 and #3	Develop two lessons and receive feedback related to Step 4 of your Literacy Unit Final Project	20	Module 7
Discussion 1: Addressing Behavior and Social Skills	Share ideas on how to support behavior and social skills	10	Module 8
Post-Course Quiz	Brief quiz about ASD, communication, and literacy	10	Module 8

Total Points for Course:	**380**

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. See Academic Integrity Site (https://oai.gmu.edu/) and Honor Code and System (https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/). 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 new, original work for this course or with proper citations

Professional Dispositions
Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/ .

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

Module	Topics Covered	Required Readings[1]	Module Assignments
1	Language Development and Early Literacy	Boutot Chapter 6 Hall Chapter 7	Discussion #1 Assignments #1-2 Pre-test
2	Communication and Forms of AAC	Boutot Chapter 11	Discussion #1 Assignments #1-2

3	Assessment	Quill Chapter 3	Discussion #1 Assignment #1
4	Developing AAC Systems		Assignments #1-2 Midterm Feedback
5	Creating Goals and Using AAC Systems		Discussions #1-2
6	Literacy Strategies	Quill Chapter 4	Assignments #1-2
7	Accommodations and Modifications	Quill Chapters 6 and 7	Discussion #1 Assignment #1
8	AAC, social skills, and behavior	Quill Chapter 2	Discussion #1 Post-test Final Literacy Unit

[1]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://ds.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 either Tk20 or VIA should be directed to Assessment support (https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments/).

- Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/.

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:
- As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@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 http://cehd.gmu.edu/.

Appendix
Assessment Rubric(s)
Literary Unit with Low Tech AAC System

	Does Not Meet Expectations	**Meets Expectations**	**Exceeds Expectations**
Description of Learner, Book, and SMART goal (15 points) **3.1K**	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.
AAC System, including a Low-tech Communication Board (35 points) **4.2.12S**	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	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	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

	Does Not Meet Expectations	**Meets Expectations**	**Exceeds Expectations**
	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.	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.	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.
Unit Adaptations Modifications (15 points) **3.2.11S**	Candidate does not create adaptations/modifications or they are not appropriate for the selected learner.	Candidate creates a minimum of two thoughtful adaptations/modifications appropriate for the selected learner.	Candidate creates three or more thoughtful adaptations/modifications appropriate for the selected learner. Candidate creates adaptations/modifications for environments outside of the classroom (e.g., home, community).
Three Lesson Plans (30 points) **3.2K**	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 - subject and grade - number of students - length of lesson - goal - objectives - lesson procedures - needed materials - accommodations/adaptations - evaluation procedures	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 - subject and grade - number of students - length of lesson - goal - objectives - lesson procedures - needed materials - accommodations/adaptations - evaluation procedures	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 - 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.	Candidate fully completes a self-evaluation.	Candidate fully and richly completes a self-evaluation.