

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

Summer 2024

EDSE 636 Supporting Communication and Literacy for Individuals with Autism

Section: 001; CRN: 42029 Section: 002; CRN: 42030 3 – Credits

Instructor: Dr. Linn Jorgenson	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 5/10/24 - 6/27/24
Phone: 703-419-0694	Meeting Day(s): N/A
E-Mail: ljorgen2@gmu.edu	<b>Meeting Time(s):</b> N/A; Asynchronous
Office Hours: By appointment	Meeting Location: N/A; Online
Office Location: Krug Hall, Rm 111	Other Phone: N/A

Note: This syllabus may change according to class needs. Teacher Candidates/Students will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason e-mail and/or through Blackboard.

Prerequisite(s): None Co-requisite(s): None

# **Course Description**

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

#### **Advising Contact Information**

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. Mason M.Ed. and Certificate teacher candidates/students should contact Student Services at 1-844-306-1785, mason@support.edu.help 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 Patriot Pass password. Because asynchronous courses do not have a "fixed" meeting day, our week will start on Friday at 12:01 a.m. ET and finish on Thursday 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: <u>Browser support</u> (<a href="https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting\_Started/Browser\_Support#supported-browsers">https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting\_Started/Browser\_Support#supported-browsers</a>)

To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see: <u>Tested devices</u> <u>and operating systems</u> (<a href="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</a>)

- 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/)
  - o <u>Windows Media Player (https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player)</u>
  - o Apple Quick Time Player (www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)
- Technical Support 24/7

o chat: <a href="https://support.edu.help">https://support.edu.help</a>

o call: 1-844-306-1785

o e-mail: <u>Mason@support.edu.help</u>

### **Expectations**

#### • Course Week:

Because asynchronous courses do not have a "fixed" meeting day, our week will start on Friday at 12:01 am ET and finish on Thursday at 11:59 pm ET.

# • 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.

# • <u>Instructor Support:</u>

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 reread their responses carefully before posting them, so that 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 ensure 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: No textbook assigned – selected readings only. It is very important that you read each posted reading in the Modules. Do not complete quizzes or assignments before completing the assigned readings and videos.

#### **Recommended Textbooks**

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

# Additional readings included on Blackboard.

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
Final AAC	The purpose of this assignment is for you to	145	Module 7/8
System, Literacy	apply your knowledge of low tech alternative or		
Plan, and	augmentative communication (AAC) systems,		
Communication	assessment, and literacy to provide meaningful		
	school, home, and community access to an		
	individual with ASD. More information about		

Assignment	Description	Points	Due
	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.		

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

# **Other Assignments**

### **Student Evaluations of Teaching:**

The student evaluation of teaching, or SET, is an online course survey. You are strongly encouraged to complete this form for each course as this feedback helps instructors and administrators improve your class experiences. Towards the end of the course, you will receive email and Blackboard notifications when the evaluations open. Your anonymous and confidential feedback is only shared with instructors after final grades have been submitted.

# **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 11:59 pm ET 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.

#### **Total Points Earned: 345**

Grading (traditional rounding principles apply)

93-100% = A

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

(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 <a href="https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/">https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/</a>.

#### **Class Schedule**

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

Module	Topics Covered	<b>Module Readings</b>	Module Assignments /Due
			dates and point value
1:5/10-	Language, Literacy, and		Discussion Board: Class
5/16	Communication		Introductions (10pts)
	Development		Due date: Original post 5/13 by
			11:59pm; responses to post by
			5/16 11:50pm
			Pre-Course Quiz- (0pts)
			Ungraded, however, must
			complete. If you do not take this,
			then you will not be allowed to
			take the final graded quiz in
			Module 7.
			Due Date: By 5/16 11:59pm.
			Read through entire fiinal
		See Blackboard	project: AAC System, Literacy
		for all Required	Plan and Communication Plan.
		and	(0pts). Due Date: By 5/16
			11:59pm. Nohing to submit.

<sup>\*</sup>Note: The George Mason University Honor Code will be strictly enforced. See <u>Academic Integrity Site</u> (<a href="https://oai.gmu.edu/">https://oai.gmu.edu/</a>) and <a href="https://oai.gmu.edu/">Honor Code and System</a>

		Recommended Readings, in	
2:5/17- 5/23	Assessing Literacy	addition to Supplemental Resources	Impact on Literacy Checklist for Students with ASD Assessment (20 pts) Due Date: By 5/23, 11:59pm
			Final Assignment Brainstorming Document (Part 1) (10 pts) Due Date: By 5/23, 11:59pm
3 : 5/24- 5/30	Augmentative and Alternative Communication		WATI assessment forms (20 pts) Due: By 5/30, 11:59pm
	Assessing Communication		Final Assignment Brainstorming Document (Part 2) (10 pts) Due: By 5/30, 11:59pm
4 : 5/31- 6/6	Communication Boards		AAC Device Comparison (20 pts) Due: By 6/6, 11:59pm  Final Assignment Brainstorming Document (Part 3) 10 pts Due: By 6/6, 11:59pm
5 6/7- 6/13	Literacy Skills and Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction		Discussion- Final Assignment Brainstorming and Feedback(10 pts) Due: By 6/13, 11:59pm  Final Assignment Brainstorming Document (Part 4) (10 pts) Due: By 6/13, 11:59pm
6 6/14-6/20	Communication Skills and Evidence-Based Communication Instruction		Discussion- AAC System Show and Share (10 pts) Original Post due 6/18, 11:59pm Responses to post due 6/20, 11:59pm Final Assignment Brainstorming Document (Part 5) (10 pts) Due: By 6/20, 11:59pm

7 6/21-	Evaluating Communication	
6/27	and Literacy Plans and	AAC System Evaluation (30 pts)
*Please note that you will access moduel 7 and 8 on Blackboard to complete the work required this week.	Current Issues in AAC: Current Issues in AAC: Facilitated Communication	Post-Course Quiz: ASD: Facts vs Myths (10 pts) Due: By 6/27, 11:59pm  Discussion: Questions about Facilitated Communication (10pts) Due: Original post due by 6/21, 11:59pm and responses to posts due by 6/27, 11:59pm.  Final AAC System, Literacy Plan, and Communication due by 6/27, 11:59pm (145ps)

#### **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: <a href="http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/">http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/</a>

#### **GMU Policies and Resources for Students**

#### **Policies**

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <a href="https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/">https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/</a>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <a href="http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/">http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/</a>).
- 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 <a href="http://ds.gmu.edu/">http://ds.gmu.edu/</a>).

• 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 <a href="https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/">https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/</a>.

# Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Non-Confidential Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per <u>University Policy 1202</u>. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as the <u>Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC)</u> at 703-380-1434 or <u>Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)</u> at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures 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 <a href="http://cehd.gmu.edu/">http://cehd.gmu.edu/</a>.

# **Appendix**

#### **Assessment Rubric(s)**

AAC System, Communication & Literacy Plan

	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Part 1: Description of a Focus Individual with ASD (15 Points)	Candidate identifies 4 or fewer internal and external characteristics of the	Candidate identifies and robustly describes 5 or more internal and external characteristics	Candidate identifies and robustly describes 6 or more internal and external characteristics
Skill Competency 1.1.1S: Explains the defining characteristics of autism (e.g., communication, patterns of stereotypical behavior, socialization and social skill development) and the impact on the individual.	focus individual.	of the focus individual.	of the focus individual and describes how those characteristics influence the individual.

	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Part 2: Communication and Literacy Assessment (40 points)  Skill Competency 8.1.2S: Uses informal and formal tools to assess and analyze social and communication; functional and life skills related to caring for self, caring for home, participating in the community, and employment; academic skills (e.g., literacy, math, science, and social studies); cognitive skills and learning profiles (e.g., attention, processing, organization, problem solving).  Skill Competency 3.1.2S: Identifies and uses appropriate informal assessment tools to evaluate the individual's strengths, needs, interests and learning style.	Candidate does not complete each component of the literacy and 5 communication assessments.	Candidate completes each component of the literacy assessment:  1. Characteristics of ASD 2. Settings 3. Personalize 4. AAC  In addition to each component of the 5 communication assessments:  1. Communication Form and Function, 2. WATI Form- Section 1 3. WATI Form- Section 4 4. AAC User Snapshot 5. Relevance to Communication Plan	Candidate completes each component of the literacy assessment and 5 communication assessments, in addition to other other forms of assessments (e.g., observations, interviews).
Part 3: Multimodal AAC System (30 points)  Skill Competency 4.1.3S: Determines the form of communication (e.g., verbal, gestures, visuals) and assesses the need for augmentative communication options that are based on individual needs and strengths.  Skill Competency 4.2.1S: Designs a meaningful communication program that crosses all life settings and is based on individual assessment.	Candidate does not use assessment data to develop a tailored AAC system for the focus individual.  The AAC system includes fewer than 3 meaningful forms of communication relevant across settings.  Candidate does not include an image or video of each form of AAC.  Candidate does not	Candidate uses assessment data to develop a tailored AAC system for the focus individual.  The AAC system includes a minimum of 3 meaningful forms of communication relevant across settings.  Candidate includes an image or video of each form of AAC.  Candidate describes each form of AAC, including (a) the design	Candidate uses required and supplemental assessment data to develop a tailored AAC system for the focus individual.  The AAC system includes 4 or more meaningful forms of communication relevant across settings.  Candidate includes an image or video of each form of AAC.  Candidate describes each form of AAC
	describe each form of AAC, including (a)	of the AAC, (b) the purpose of the AAC,	each form of AAC including (a) the design of the AAC, (b) the

	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
	the design of the AAC, (b) the purpose of the AAC, and (c) how each AAC reflects the individual's needs and preferences.	and (c) how each AAC reflects the individual's needs and preferences.	purpose of the AAC, and (c) how each AAC reflects the individual's needs and preferences.
Part 4: Literacy Plan (30 points)  Skill Competency 3.2.1S: Identifies instructional and environmental goals that allow for high expectations and access to quality learning experiences.  Skill Competency 3.3K: Understands and implements evidence-based strategies, promising practices, and supports to address an individual's goals.  Skill Competency 3.3.12S: Provides access to needed adaptive equipment and assistive technology options allowing full participation in home, educational, work and community activities (e.g., communication devices, visual supports, voice to text, text to speech, low to high tech options).	and preferences.  Candidate describes fewer than 2 meaningful and functional literacy skills to focus on with the individual.  Candidate describes fewer than 2 strategies to teach literacy skills to the focus individual.  Candidate describes how literacy would be integrated into fewer than 2 settings for the case study individual.  Candidate fails to describe how they would personalize literacy activities to increase motivation and engagement for their case study individual.  Candidate describes fewer than 3 ways the individual can use their AAC system across environments and activities to enhance their literacy.	Candidate describes a minimum of 2 meaningful and functional literacy skills to focus on with the individual.  Candidate describes a minimum of 2 strategies to teach literacy skills to the focus individual.  Candidate describes how literacy would be integrated into a minimum of 2 settings for the case study individual.  Candidate describes how they would personalize literacy activities to increase motivation and engagement for their case study individual.  Candidate describes 3 ways the individual can use their AAC system across environments and activities to enhance their literacy.  Candidate describes how they will evaluate their literacy.	Candidate describes 3 or more meaningful and functional literacy skills to focus on with the individual.  Candidate describes 3 or more strategies to teach literacy skills to the focus individual.  Candidate describes how literacy would be integrated into 3 or more settings for the case study individual.  Candidate describes how they would personalize literacy activities to increase motivation and engagement for their case study individual in a high level of detail.  Candidate describes 4 or more ways the individual can use their AAC system across environments and activities to enhance their literacy.  Candidate describes how they will evaluate the plan to determine if it effectively supports
	Candidate fails to describe how they will evaluate the plan	how they will evaluate the plan to determine if it effectively supports	it effectively supports the literacy of the focus individual in a high level of detail.

	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
	to determine if it effectively supports the literacy of the focus individual.	the literacy of the focus individual.	
Part 5: Communication Plan (20 points)  Skill Competency 3.2.1S: Identifies instructional and environmental goals that allow for high expectations and access to quality learning experiences.  Skill Competency 3.3K: Understands and implements evidence-based strategies, promising practices, and supports to address an individual's goals.  Skill Competency 3.3.12S: Provides access to needed adaptive equipment and assistive technology options allowing full participation in home, educational, work and community activities (e.g., communication devices, visual supports, voice to text, text to speech, low to high tech options).	Candidate does not describe how the focus individual can use their AAC system across home, school, and/or community environments.  Candidate does not describe the steps they will take to teach the individual to use each AAC component across home, school, and community environments.  Candidate describes how they will evaluate the plan to determine if it effectively supports the communication of the focus individual.  Candidate describes 3-5 considerations for how the individual AAC system may change as the individual ages.	Candidate describes how the focus individual can use their AAC system across home, school, and community environments.  Candidate describes the steps they will take to teach the individual to use their AAC system across home, school, and community environments.  Candidate describes how they will evaluate the plan to determine if it effectively supports the communication of the focus individual.  Candidate describes 3-5 considerations for how the individual AAC system may change as the individual ages.	Candidate describes how the focus individual can use their AAC system across home, school, and community environments.  Candidate describes the steps they will take to teach the individual to use their AAC system across environments, as well as detailed steps on how they will make accommodations to the individual's environments to facilitate communication.  Candidate describes how they will evaluate the plan to determine if it effectively supports the communication of the focus individual, with the support of the focus individual.  Candidate describes more than 5 considerations for how the individual AAC system may change as the individual ages.