

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE
Department of Special Education

Special Education 407

Communication, Language, and Early Literacy Development of Diverse K-12 Students
with Mild to Extensive Support Needs

Instructor:

Meeting times:

Office and office hours:

Phone:

e-mail:

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The faculty of the Michael D. Eisner College of Education, regionally focused and nationally recognized, is committed to **excellence, innovation, and social justice**. Excellence includes the acquisition of professional dispositions, skills, and research-based knowledge, and is demonstrated by the development of ethical and caring professionals—faculty, staff, candidates—and those they serve.

Innovation occurs through the leadership and commitment of faculty, and through collaborative partnerships among communities of diverse learners who engage in creative and reflective thinking.

We are dedicated to promoting social justice and becoming agents of change in schools and our communities. We continually strive to achieve the following competencies and values that form the foundation of the Conceptual Framework.

- o We value academic **excellence** in the acquisition of research-based professional knowledge and skills.
- o We strive to positively impact schools and communities. Therefore, we foster a culture of **evidence** to determine the impact of our programs, to monitor candidate growth, and to inform ongoing program and unit improvement.
- o We value ethical practice and what it means to become **ethical and caring professionals**.
- o We value **collaborative partnerships** within the College of Education as well as across disciplines with other CSUN faculty, P-12 educators and relate professionals, and other members of regional and national educational and service communities.
- o We value people from diverse backgrounds and experiences and are dedicated to addressing the varied strengths, interests, and needs of **communities of diverse learners**.
- o We value **creative, critical, and reflective thinking and** practice.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisite: None. This course focuses on the role of a special education teacher in fostering communication, language and early literacy development for students with disabilities, with mild to extensive support needs, including those who are emergent bilingual or multilingual. Students will learn about recommended and evidence based practices to assess and support students' early language use and communicative behaviors as well as strategies to promote early and emergent literacy skills.

REQUIRED TEXTS

See Course Schedule for Specific Readings (Available on-line)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After completing this course students will be able to:

1. Describe critical aspects of communication, including symbolic, nonsymbolic, form, function, and content.
2. Describe principles of language acquisition across disabilities and the lifespan and identify their applications to educational practice.
3. Recognize and practice facilitation strategies that promote emergent and early linguistic aspects of communication of students with mild to extensive support needs, including Emergent bilingual and students who are Deafblind, and reflect on their own role in promoting communication access.
4. Discuss alternatives to spoken language and identify strategies for supporting the development of alternative and augmentative communication modes for students with disabilities impacting language and communication, including the unique access needs of students with physical/orthopedic impairments.
5. Identify the unique features of Deafblindness and the impact of combined hearing and vision impairments on communications, learning, and accessing environments.
6. Identify interconnections between expressive communication, receptive communication, language and written language systems, and reading and writing.
7. Assess language use, comprehension, communication behaviors, and emerging literacy skills of students with mild to extensive support needs, using observation and informal procedures.
8. Identify critical skills to teach in the areas of communication, language development, emergent literacy, and social interaction.
9. Discuss the influence of socio-cultural factors on first and second language/literacy development, explain the advantages of multilingualism and multiliteracy, and understand the importance of transfer between languages.
10. Identify and use educational and assistive technology strategies to enhance the development of communication and emergent literacy skills, including mandated considerations for low- and high-tech augmentative and alternative communication technology for students with extensive support needs.
11. Describe and implement activities that support development of reading related behaviors and emergent literacy (e.g. vocabulary development, book handling skills, concepts about print and as appropriate phonemic awareness and invented spelling) of students with mild to extensive support needs, including English learners.

12. Identify techniques to assist family members in supporting communication/language/literacy development of students with mild to extensive support needs, including English learners and students who are Deafblind.
13. Collaborate with other disciplines to support communication/language/literacy development of students with mild to extensive support needs.
14. Foster communication-rich environments that support communication and social engagement within the context of age-appropriate, functional and meaningful activities as related to students with extensive support needs including those who are Deafblind.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignment 1: Case Study project. Complete an informal assessment of the current language and communication skills of a student who receives special education services for a disability impacting language and/or communication. Provide a written description of your assessment strategies. You will draw upon informal assessment findings to write a written description of the student’s current language and communication skills, following the provided format. Next, you will identify an educationally relevant target skill to teach based upon your knowledge of the student and their current communication needs. Finally, you will develop a plan for applying intervention strategies described in class/text to address your target skill in the context of a typical school activity.

Assignment 2: Demonstration activities. Using Words their way: Word study for phonics, vocabulary, and spelling instruction, prepare two instructional activities for readers in the emergent stage. One activity should be designed to support vocabulary development and the other an understanding of the alphabetic principle. As a part of your planning make explicit what you want your learners to be able to do after completing the activity, linking objectives with aspects of communication and language. Identify what makes your instructional materials engaging and in preparation for a demonstration in front of your peers, what you will say while implementing the activity.

Assignment 3: Responses to the readings. You will complete six short reading reflections throughout the semester to demonstrate understanding of key concepts within assigned readings, and make connections between readings and your own experiences.

Assignment 4: Final Exam. Students will respond to case study descriptions and make relevant suggestions.

COURSE EVALUATION

Assignment	Points
Assignment 1: Case Study Project	40
Assignment 2: Demonstration Activities	30
Assignment 3: Responses to Readings (6 @ 5 points each)	30
Assignment 4: Final Exam	25
Total	125

GRADING SCALE

Total points earned for the Case Study project, Demonstration activities, Responses to readings and the Final Examination will be divided by the total number of possible points to achieve a percentage.

Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage	Grade	Percentage
A	93-100%	B+	86-89%	C+	76-79%	D+	66-69%
A-	90-92%	B	83-85%	C	73-75%	D	63-65%
		B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	D-	60-62%

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

- A. Personal characteristics
Possesses integrity, accepts responsibility, is highly motivated, evidences high academic achievement, displays perseverance, takes initiative, exhibits self-control, shows maturity of judgment, is punctual and reliable, demonstrates warmth and advocacy for children, presents a professional appearance and demeanor.
- B. Interpersonal characteristics
Establishes rapport with others, assumes appropriate roles in the collaborative process, works well with others and communicates respectfully, demonstrates effective communication skills, values teamwork, demonstrates a respectful appreciation for diverse perspectives, demonstrates a commitment to achieving team goals, seeks to develop and maintain professional workplace relationships.
- C. Commitment to professional growth
Responds appropriately to supervision, reflects on/evaluates strengths and areas for improvement, accepts constructive criticism and suggestions, displays interest and curiosity in the learning process, uses suggestions to improve skills and understanding, values life-long learning, strives to achieve competence and integrity, is a self-directed learner.
- D. Commitment to diversity and social justice
Demonstrates cultural respect and understanding, believes in equal educational/vocational opportunity, displays sensitivity to ethnically, linguistically, cognitively, physically, socially diverse groups and individuals, advocates high and appropriate expectations for all students, treats all people equally. Believes all individuals can learn, despite severity of disability, and is committed to serving students with diverse needs, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and developmental levels.
- E. Commitment to ethical practices
Maintains confidentiality, displays ethical behavior, is honest and trustworthy, abides by legal mandates and ethical responsibilities, uses sound, informed judgment. Committed to ethical professional activities that benefit individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

PERSON-CENTERED AND PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE: The CSUN Department of Special Education believes that a person is more important than a disability. Accordingly, use of Person-First Language is the norm for both speaking and writing, for students and faculty. For example, “children with learning disabilities” is considered more appropriate than “learning disabled children.” However, the important principle in consideration of language is not using a correct formula, but rather respectful acknowledgement that personhood is valued above disability. This includes learning what the preferred language is for a particular person, and using language that aligns with how they self-identify. Many people prefer to self-identify other ways, and it is more important to respect each person’s self-identification than to over-apply a standard when it is not wanted. Thus, we are moving toward a “person-centered” framework at CSUN rather than exclusively “person-first.” Please see this article for more on person-centered language: <https://radicalcopyeditor.com/2017/07/03/person-centered-language/>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students with disabilities must register with the [Disability Resources and Educational Services \(DRES\)](#) and complete a services agreement each semester or the [National Center on Deafness \(NCOD\)](#). Staff will verify the existence of a disability based on the documentation provided and will approve accommodations. More importantly, I strive to make my teaching and course materials as broadly accessible as possible, according to the principles of Universal Design for Learning. I appreciate all honest and respectful feedback from students regarding the accessibility of my course (materials, pedagogy, and ways to demonstrate learning). Please communicate with me in person or via email regarding any accommodations or supports that you know are helpful. I am not only committed to providing equal access as required by federal law, but also am interested in developing strategies for your success in this course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Topics, Evidence Based Practices & Class Activities		Assignments & Readings DUE (by class time)
1	<p>COURSE OVERVIEW & SYLLABUS</p> <p>What is communication? Communication and language are not the same thing Communication access is a social justice issue</p>	
2	<p>COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE</p> <p>Difference between communication and language. Forms of communication and language Function of communication and language Assessment of current forms and functions of communication and language</p>	<p>Weitzman & Greenberg, Learning Language and Loving It, Chapter 2: The Stages of Language Development: Talking Takes Time.</p> <p>Downing, J. (2009). Assessment of Early Communication Skills, in Soto & Zangari (eds). Practically Speaking</p>
3	<p>SYMBOLIC AND NONSYMBOLIC COMMUNICATION</p> <p>Aided and Unaided forms Intentional and Unintentional forms Range of symbolic communication</p>	<p>Beukelman & Mirenda (2013). Chapter 3: Symbols and Rate Enhancement. In Beukelman & Mirenda (Eds). Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Supporting Children and Adults with Complex Communication Needs.</p>
4	<p>LINGUISTIC COMMUNICATION AND ACQUISITION</p> <p>What is language? Elements of language Language Development</p>	<p>MacWhinney, B. (2017). First Language Acquisition in Aronoff & Rees-Miller (Eds). The Handbook of Linguistics</p> <p>Hoff, Language Development Chapter 10: Language in the School Years</p>
5	<p>ATYPICAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Instructional implications for students with a range of support needs, from mild to extensive</p> <p>Unique considerations for Deaf/Blind students</p>	<p>Hoff, Language Development Chapter 11: Language Development in Special Populations</p> <p>Damen, Saskia, & Vervloed, Mathijs P. J. (2015). Language and Communication in People Who Are Deafblind. In The Oxford Handbook of Deaf Studies in Language (Vol. 1)</p>
6	<p>EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES</p> <p>Factors that influence second language acquisition</p> <p>BILINGUAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION</p>	<p>Hoff, Language Development Chapter 9: Childhood Bilingualism</p> <p>Kangas S.E.N. (2019) English Learners with Disabilities: Linguistic Development and Educational Equity in Jeopardy. In: Gao X. (eds) Second Handbook of English Language Teaching.</p>
7	<p>BEGINNING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH EXTENSIVE SUPPORT NEEDS</p> <p>Modeling language/AAC Light technological communication devices High tech communication/speech-generating devices</p>	<p>Kent-Walsh & Binger (2009). Addressing the communication demands of the classroom for beginning communicators and early language users. In Soto & Zangari (eds). Practically Speaking</p> <p>Beukelman & Mirenda (2013). Instruction to support linguistic and social competence. In Beukelman & Mirenda (Eds). Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Supporting Children and Adults with Complex Communication Needs.</p>

8	BEGINNING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH EXTENSIVE SUPPORT NEEDS (Cont) Social communication Manual signs and systems	Hunt, Doering, Meier, & Mintz (2007). Strategies to support positive social development and friendships for students who use AAC. In Soto & Zangari (eds). Practically Speaking Bruce & Borders (2015). Communication and language in learners who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing with disabilities: Theories, research, and practice. American Annals of the Deaf
9	LANGUAGE AND LITERACY Language as the foundation of literacy The evolution of written language The history of English orthography	Why Study Language? Moats Speech to Print Chapter 1 Origins of written language https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkeXaqoXDYQ History of the alphabet https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NrTrBzC6dk The Rosetta Stone https://www.khanacademy.org/computing/computer-science/informati/ontheory/info-theory/v/rosetta-stone-196-b-c-e Moats, Speech to Print Chapter 4: The Structure of English Orthography
10	PROMOTING EARLY LITERACY Interacting with print Print concepts – the structure of print Reading to children – the language of print Vocabulary development Language play – sound awareness	Wolf, Proust and the Squid Chapter 4: The Beginnings of Reading Development, Or Not. Bear, et al., Words Their Way Chapter 4: Word Study for the Emergent State
11	EMERGENT LITERACY Interactive read-alouds and dialogic reading Print knowledge Alphabet knowledge Phonological awareness Alphabetic principle/Letter-sound knowledge	Bear, et al., Words Their Way Chapter 4: Word Study for the Emergent Stage McKeown, & Beck. “Encouraging Young Children’s Language Interactions with Stories” Yopp & Yopp, “Phonological Awareness is Child’s Play”
12	SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION AND ADAPTED TEXTS	Soto, G. (2007). Academic adaptations for students with AAC needs. In Soto & Zangari (eds). Practically Speaking
13	WORKING TOGETHER AS A TEAM TO SUPPORT COMMUNICATION SKILLS	Robinson, N. & Solomon-Rice, P. (2007). Supporting collaborative teams and families in AAC. In Soto & Zangari (eds). Practically Speaking
14	DEMONSTRATE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITY	Students will present instructional activities
15	FINAL EXAM	

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