

## SPA 862J: Severe Disabilities and Autism: Communication Assessment and Intervention

Spring 2002

Room: 4:00-5:50 p.m.

Location: Barkley Center, #131

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Telephone: 472-4431, office hrs TR: 2-4 pm, etc.

- 1. Course Prerequisites:** Graduate, at least one language disorders or severe disability course. Students should understand basic sequences of prelinguistic and symbolic communication development, as well as characteristics of common severe disabilities and basic principles of communication assessment and intervention. Experience in direct clinical or educational service is helpful but not required.
  - 2. Course Description:** This is a practical clinical course on the subject of communication intervention for children and adults who have severe disabilities and/or autism. Students will share in problem-solving about daily topics in class exercises and case study demonstrations, and apply information derived from readings and class experiences to individual and group assignments. The class will cover approximately 8 different topics (see schedule). Students will be expected to: read the assigned texts and readings **before** class, report on what they have learned from texts and other homework activities, attend and participate in all classes, complete the individual and group activities, review or suggest activities for other classmates, evaluate available therapy techniques including controversial methods, and develop intervention plans for at least two class case examples. The instructor's lectures will supplement the assigned readings, and students will be expected to discuss information presented in the text and classroom activities. Students should recognize that not all information from the texts will be covered during class and should be responsible for becoming familiar with the material independently.
  - 3. Course Objective:** The focus in this course will be on functional communication assessment and intervention and behavior management strategies for children and adults with autism and/or severe cognitive/multiple impairments. Particular emphasis includes client- & family-centered services, teamwork, multiple disabilities, communicative functions, behavior management, classroom and community integration, independence, and communicative interpretations of challenging behaviors. The goals are to provide practical strategies for implementing communication intervention for persons with severe disabilities and autism, and provide focused practice at applying those strategies to class and homework examples of persons with various disabilities. Specific topics addressed include: theoretical foundations of language therapy, task analysis of intervention goals & planning, matching functional communicative goals to skills, review of severe disability characteristics and behaviors, formal and informal assessment strategies, team and community interventions, partner and environmental support strategies, communicative routines, controversial therapies with autism, visual communication & scheduling strategies.
  - 4. Required Texts:** Downing, J.E. (1999). Teaching communication skills to students with severe disabilities. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.  
Ruiter, I.D. (2000). Allow me: A guide to promoting communication skills in adults with developmental delays. Toronto, ON: The Hanen Centre.
- Recommended Texts:** McLean, J. & Snyder-McLean, L. (1999). How children learn language. San Diego: Singular Publishing Group, Inc. [for students who have not had other language development coursework]  
\*\*Carr, E.G., et al. (1994). Communication-based intervention for problem behavior: A user's guide for producing positive change. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes. \*\* Had been marked as required in Summer '03.  
Downing, J. (1996). Including students with severe and multiple disabilities in typical classrooms. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.  
Hodgdon, L.A. (1999). Visual strategies for improving communication. Solana Beach, CA: Mayer-Johnson Company.  
Quill, K.A. (1995). Teaching children with autism: Strategies to enhance communication and socialization. New York: Delmar Publishers.

## 5. Class Expectations

- a. Students are expected to attend all classes. Attendance will be taken each week, and attendance records will be considered when assigning a final course grade.
- b. Daily participation in class discussions is expected. Students will contribute to each class discussion with relevant comments, questions, suggestions, or examples, related to the topic assigned.
- c. Students are responsible for all information presented in class lectures including guest lectures, the assigned readings, handouts, and other assigned information or videotapes. This information will be reflected in the classroom assignments and homework/journal activities. Students should recognize that not all information from the readings will be covered during class and should be responsible for being familiar with the material.
- d. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the professor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.
- e. Name and telephone number of at least two classmates, for class notes and handouts:  

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**6. Course Grading:** The grade for the course will be based on class participation, appropriate interaction with onsite personnel, completion of assigned weekly projects and readings prior to class, application of course content as demonstrated in class project, and midterm and final exam activities. The final exam will include a group oral presentation on your class project. The final exam will be worth 100 points, and will count for 40% of the final grade. There will be five graded weekly assignments for a maximum of 10 points each, collectively also worth 40% of the final grade. The remaining 20% of the final grade will be based on credit/no credit weekly assignments, each worth 1 point for credit. A final grade estimation sheet will be prepared for students based on these percentages several weeks before the final. Up to 5% points off the final grade may be deducted for consistently poor interactions in class or with onsite staff and individuals.

Up to 5 percentage points may be deducted from the final grade each for consistent problems with participation or attendance not resolved within the semester. You will receive two “Get out of jail free” cards that allow you to turn in any of the weekly assignments a week late (not valid for the final); any assignments more than a week late will receive no credit. No additional GOJF cards will be issued, so use them wisely, particularly early in the semester.

Each graded weekly assignment will receive a score of up to 10 points, based on the following criteria. Half-completed or minimal effort responses will receive 5 points, and assignments that are not completed in the designated week without GOJF will receive a zero. Students will be expected to complete all assignments unless extenuating emergencies are clearly discussed with the instructor. Assignments will be scored 10 points if they demonstrate sufficient accuracy, insights, relevance to topic, and breadth (see attached “5 ways of thinking”). Significant gaps in any of these qualities is 1 point each off the assignment with errors such as:

- Accuracy error: Clear inaccuracies in reported facts from readings or observations (e.g. “All persons with autism produce echolalia that serves no useful purpose”). Be careful not to overstate information you find.
- Insight error: Simply reporting information from resources without comparing, applying, adapting, or otherwise responding to this information with particular relevance to your assigned task. Think “why...”
- Relevance error: Providing useful information that doesn’t directly relate to the topic or task assigned.
- Breadth error: Missing a major portion of a subtask involved in the assignment, or providing only a few pieces of information or insights that don’t reflect the complexity of the situation.

One extra credit assignment may be available during the semester, depending on the frequency of other assignments. The extra credit assignment will be scored in a fashion similar to other assignments.

### **General guidelines for written assignments**

1. Written work may be handwritten legibly, unless particular projects are requested in typewritten form.
2. Written work should include both original thought and the application of information from the assigned readings. When referring to information from the readings, make a brief note which resource you used to find this information, both to assist with accuracy checks and to help you find this information later.
3. All referral to individuals with disabilities must avoid stigmatizing language and emphasize “person first” language. For example, "student with severe disability", "young child who relies on AAC", "learner with multiple handicaps" should be used rather than "severely disabled student" or "multiply handicapped child". Terms such as “crippled, deformed, suffers from, the retarded” are never acceptable.
4. All written work must represent student's independent work for individual projects, although students are encouraged to brainstorm or collaborate with other students during your decision process for an assignment. Any portion of an individual assignment that is apparently copied/modified from another student (from current or past courses) will result in an automatic grade of "0" for the assignment. Students will complete feedback sheets for group activities that indicate whether each group member contributed meaningfully and consistently to the product submitted, and this will be considered in individual grades for group projects.
5. Additional resources and references not assigned in the readings may be used (and this is encouraged). These should also be cited in your assignments, with a more detailed reference to identify the resource.
6. Reference to actual persons with disabilities must maintain confidentiality and consequently the last names should not be used. Under no circumstances should you copy any personal records, assessments, or videotapes showing class children/adults.

### **Guidelines for working directly with individuals and facilities**

1. In the day programs where you will be working, the staff prefers that you use the term “individuals” to refer to the participants in those programs, rather than terms like “clients”. The people who work with those individuals are called “staff”. You should use these terms - this may involve practice on your part.
2. Remember that it is your responsibility to work around the schedules of the day programs and individuals with which you work, and not their responsibility to adapt to your schedule. If individuals are ill or activities changed, you need to be adaptable to the variability inherent in “real-life” interactions.
3. You should contact the director at your center as soon as possible to arrange possible times during which you and your individual can overlap in schedules. You should also check for availability before each visit - usually a call on Monday will provide information on planned outings or appointments for your individual. Many individuals are on frequent outings, and you will either participate in the outing or schedule around these. If you cannot attend a scheduled visit, you are responsible for informing the staff and rescheduling.

LEAP Program: Kristi Dougherty (director): 471-6095, 5050A Old Cheney Rd., 2 bldgs. West of Racketball club

SOAR Program: Lynn Sulley (director): 471-9222, 936 N. 70<sup>th</sup>, Meadowlane Shopping Center (north side)

4. You should conduct your interactions with your individual in their natural contexts, instead of planning pull-out activities. This will involve balancing your goals with the situational variables, and may include adapting your activities or helping with ongoing tasks (e.g. positioning, lunch). Group activities are fine.
5. Your staff member will complete a brief feedback sheet at the end of the semester to verify that you were:  
a) respectful in interactions with staff, b) appropriate in interactions with individuals, c) responsible in schedules and arrangements, and d) generally professional and courteous to everyone at these programs.

**Tentative 862J Class Schedule of Topics: Fall 2003**

Aug 28: 1. Administration, Overview, choosing individuals to work with, compare/contrast with EI, fun/hard  
Readings: Dowling: Ch.1, Hanen Ch. 1, [C/NC 1: Communication observations: Australian video]

Sept. 4: 2. Communication Overview & Functional Communication Model

Readings: D: Ch. 2, Q: Ch. 2, Hanen Ch. 2, 5 [Graded #1: Participate, Needs Assessment with Individual]

Sept 11: 3. Diagnosis Overview & Formal Assessment, CSI

Readings: Q: Ch. 1, 5, [C/NC 2: Severe Disability Synthesis Exercise – in class] [Graded#2: CSI]

Sept. 18: 4. Autism Characteristics and Assessment [**Graded 1 DUE**]

Readings: D. Ch. 3, [C/NC 3: Autism Spectrum Synthesis Exercise – in class]

Sept. 25: 5. Informal Assessments: Individual and Environment

Readings: Q Ch. 3, [C/NC 4: Informal Probes – in class] [Graded #3: AAC Checklist]

Oct. 2: 6. Functional Behavior Assessment (guest lecture Susan Lien) Models of Intervention [**Graded 2 DUE**]

Readings: Q: Ch.4, D: Ch. 6, [C/NC 5: Functional Behavior descriptions – in class]

Oct. 9: 7. No class – NSLHA Conference

Readings: D: 4, 7, Hanen 3, 4, 7, [C/NC 6: Theory Chart for Tx Models – at home, instead of class]

Oct. 16: 8. Social/Comm. Intervention: Individual and Environmental [Hanen] [**Graded 3 DUE**]

Readings: Q 10-12, [C/NC 7 – Plan Graded #4: Social/Comm Due WED 22nd NOON]

Oct. 23: 9. Behavior Intervention: Functional Behavior Management [Ellin Siegel Guest Lecture]

Readings: Q Ch. 7, 9, Hanen 6

Oct. 30: 10. Social/Comm. Intervention: Specific Applications

Readings: D: Ch. 5 [C/NC 8: Asperger's adaptations for activities – in class]

Nov. 6: 11. Language/Cognitive Intervention: Individual and Environment [**Graded 4 DUE**]

Readings: Q: Ch. 6, 8, PECS Intro [C/NC 9: Plan language interv. – Due MON 10th NOON]

Nov. 13: No class - ASHA

Nov. 20: 12. Language/Cognitive Intervention: Specific Applications [Discuss Final Project Instructions]

Readings: ABA readings [C/NC 10: Problem-Solving Tree – in class]

Nov. 27: No class - Thanksgiving

Dec. 4: 13. Behavior Intervention: Contemporary ABA [Susan W.] [**Graded 5 DUE: Lang/Cog**]

Readings: D Ch. 8, Wetherby Article (Ch. 8)

Dec. 11: 14. Integration, Teamwork, & Community Planning

Readings: Handouts for group presentations, D. Ch. 9

Dec. 16: Final Group Presentations: Controversial Therapies

Facilitated Communication, Sensory Integration, Auditory Integration, Discrete Trial ABA, Fast ForWord, Individual portion: Tips and CSI for LEAP/SOAR Individual]

**Annotated 862J Class Schedule of Topics: Fall 2003**

Aug 28: 1. Administration, Overview, choosing individuals to work with, compare/contrast with EI, fun/hard  
Readings: Dowling: Ch.1, [C/NC 1: Communication observations: Australian video]

Sept. 4: 2.Communication Overview & Functional Communication Model

Readings: D: Ch. 2, Q: Ch. 2, [Graded #1: Participate, Preference/Needs Assessment with Individual]

Sept 11: 3.Diagnosis Overview & Formal Assessment, CSI

Readings: Q: Ch. 1, 5, [C/NC 2: Severe Disability Synthesis Exercise – in class] [Graded#2: CSI]

Sept. 18: 4. Autism Characteristics and Assessment [**Graded 1 DUE**]

Readings: D. Ch. 3, [C/NC 3: Autism Spectrum Synthesis Exercise – in class]

Sept. 25: 5. Informal Assessments: Individual and Environment

Readings: Q Ch. 3, [C/NC 4: Informal Probes – in class] [Graded #3: AAC Checklist]

Oct. 2: 6. Functional Behavior Assessment (guest lecture) [**Graded 2 DUE**]

Readings: Q: Ch.4, D: Ch. 6, [C/NC 5: Functional Behavior descriptions – in class]

Oct. 9: 7. Models, Theories, and Forms of Intervention

Readings: D: 4, 7 [C/NC 6: Problem-Solving Tree for Own Tx – in class]

Oct. 16: 8. Social/Comm. Intervention: Individual and Environmental [Hanen] [**Graded 3 DUE**]

Readings: Hanen books (reserve), Q 10-12, [C/NC 7 – Plan Graded #4: Social/Comm Due WED 22nd NOON]

Oct. 23: 9. Behavior Intervention: Functional Behavior Management [Ellin Siegel Guest Lecture]

Readings: Q Ch. 7, 9

Oct. 30: 10. Social/Comm. Intervention: Specific Applications: FLOOR TIME, ASPERGER’S, SCERTS, CO-ACTIVE MOVEMENT

Readings: D: Ch. 5 [C/NC 8: Asperger’s adaptations for activities – in class]

Nov. 6: 11. Language/Cognitive Intervention: Individual and Environment [Prelinguistic/Tangible symbols]

Readings: Q: Ch. 6, 8, PECS Intro [C/NC 9: Plan language interv. – Due MON 10th NOON] [**Graded 4 DUE**]

Nov. 13: No class - ASHA

Nov. 20: 12. Language/Cognitive Intervention: Specific Applications: PECS, TEACCH [Discuss Final Project]

Readings: ABA readings [C/NC 10: PECS – in class]

Nov. 27: No class - Thanksgiving

Dec. 4: 13. Behavior Intervention: Contemporary ABA [Susan W.] [**Graded 5 DUE: Lang/Cog**]

Readings: D Ch. 8, Wetherby Article (Ch. 8)

Dec. 11: 14. Integration, Teamwork, & Community Planning

Readings: Handouts for group presentations, D. Ch. 9

Dec. 16: Final Group Presentations: Controversial Therapies

Facilitated Communication, Sensory Integration, Auditory Integration, Discrete Trial ABA, Fast ForWord,