

Special Education 907P:

Seminar in Severe Disabilities: Transitions in Prelinguistic Communication (Distance Education Section 708)

Spring 2001, Wednesday evenings, Distance Education broadcast to Norfolk Community Center
From 128 Mabel Lee Hall, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Credits: 2-3	

RELATIONSHIP TO KNOWLEDGE BASE

The major areas of emphasis of this advanced professional studies course related to the Scholar-Practitioner Model include:

- (a) **teaching processes**, including classroom intervention, teaching methods, and decision-making skills for communication and/or augmentative and alternative intervention;
- (b) **the profession**, as it related to the application of research and theory of best-practice communication and/or augmentative and alternative intervention, and
- (c) **the learners**, especially in the areas communication assessment and intervention.
- (d) **research processes**, including application of diverse research emphasis and orientation to practical clinical and educational settings.

GOALS

The goals of this course are that students learn to:

- (a) interpret developmental and research issues in prelinguistic communication
- (b) apply developmental and research issues to clinical and educational services
- (c) understand the value and nature of prelinguistic communication for individuals with disabilities
- (d) understand the theoretical basis for educational strategies for prelinguistic communication
- (e) expand personal repertoire of intervention strategies for improving individual’s prelinguistic communication

OBJECTIVES: Students will demonstrate the following outcomes:

- (a) read and interpret assigned readings
- (b) lead discussion that highlights research issues from assigned readings
- (c) lead discussion that highlights clinical and educational application of intervention strategies
- (d) contribute in a meaningful manner to research and intervention discussion(s) in class
- (e) produce a final project that synthesizes course content into a practical and useful product for professional use

I. Assigned Textbook

Wetherby, A, Warren, S. & Reichle, J. (1998) Transitions in prelinguistic communication. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Students are expected to complete assigned readings from this text prior to each class and to consider how clinical or educational practice can be derived from the assigned content.

II. Attendance

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.

III. Assignments and Projects

Student's progress will be assessed through a combination of leading of 1-2 topics from the assigned text, contributing meaningfully to class discussions, and producing a self-selected practical project (subject to approval of instructors).

A. Discussion Leadership:

For the topics/chapters the student is assigned to read, s/he will provide a written outline of the following content for each class member:

- Overview of the primary or most important ideas using the headings from the assigned chapter
- Description or list of practical intervention ideas derived from the assigned chapter
- Additional intervention strategies or tools that apply information from the chapter, including demonstrations or scenarios of how these strategies might be used are optional but encouraged.
- Highlights from the chapter that were most interesting or relevant to your own experience or applied to current students/clients

Instructors will copy this material for class participants if it is delivered prior to noon the day of class. If not, students are responsible for providing copies for the class.

Activity: Discussion leaders will plan one or more activities that will help the class understand and/or apply the assigned topic/chapter. These activities might include questions for small groups to discuss, demonstration or application of intervention strategies, group problem-solving about new strategies and applications to specific clients, questions to seek within the assigned materials, topics to analyze and share, etc. The use of the overhead projector is encouraged.

B. Required Project: Students will be required to complete a practical project. Examples of possible projects might include:

- series of parent handouts that explains relevant concepts from the seminar written in family-friendly language
- notebook of clinical/educational resources derived from the topics covered
- research design overview for a further exploration of a topic relevant to the seminar
- materials for application of content to individual(s) with disabilities in direct educational or clinical services
- staff inservice materials derived from course content
- personalized synthesis of course materials for own purposes

The student will self- select a preferred project and present a brief written overview to the instructor's for approval prior to Spring Break: a) Description of project, b) Purpose, c) Intended audience and/or use

C. Class participation: Students will contribute to each class discussion with relevant comments, questions, suggestions, examples, etc. as related to the topic assigned.

General guidelines for assignments

1. All written work must be typed and neatly formatted. Also, written work requires correct grammar and spelling.
2. Written work should include precise terminology and the use of the assigned readings is essential. The use of APA referencing style must be used by doctoral students and is optional for other students.
3. All referral to children and youth with disabilities must avoid stigmatizing language that uses diagnostic and prescriptive labels. For example, "student with severe disability", "young child with a dual sensory loss", "learner with multiple handicaps" should be used rather than "severely disabled student" or "multiply handicapped child". Terminology such as crippled, deformed, suffers from, the retarded, etc. are never acceptable.

4. All written work must represent student's independent work. Any portion of an assignment that is apparently copied/modified from another student (from current or past courses) will result in an automatic grade of "F" for the assignment.
5. Additional resources and references not assigned in the readings may be used (and this is encouraged). These must be cited as references in the project.
6. Reference to actual persons with disabilities must maintain confidentiality and consequently the last names should not be used.

IV. Course Grading: The grade for the course will be based on class participation, completion of assigned readings prior to class, and application of course content as demonstrated in class project.

Pass/Fail Grading Option

In order to earn a "pass" grade, students will attend classes and demonstrate that they have put a good faith effort in completing the course requirements:

1. Made an effort to prepare materials sufficient to lead a discussion.
2. Consistently contributed something relevant to discussion during class sessions.
3. Created a project that addressed the purposes specified in project plan.

Graded Option (2 credits):

Passing grades (as listed above) would correspond to a "B" for those who select a graded option. To earn an "A" students must demonstrate completion of these 3 tasks, and across the assigned tasks student's work will demonstrate accuracy, insights, relevance to course, and breadth.

Graded Option (3-Credits): Students who select a 3-credit option for the course will negotiate additional project or participatory expectations and the criteria for grading those additional responsibilities individually with instructors. This discussion should occur within the first three weeks of class meetings, and proposals for any additional projects should be included with any other project description handed in before Spring Break.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic/Chapter	Discussion Leader(s)
January 16 Week 1	Course Overview Course planning	Dr. Cress
January 23 Week 2		Dr. Cress, in Norfolk
January 30 Week 3		
February 6 Week 4		
February 13 Week 5		
February 20 Week 6		
February 27 Week 7		
March 6 Week 8		
March 13 Week 9		
March 20	No Class	Spring Break
March 27 Week 10		
April 3 Week 11		
April 10 Week 12		
April 17 Week 13		Guest: Dr. Cress out of town
April 24 Week 14		
May 1 Week 15		
May 8		Projects due Student Presentations