



Communication
For Education

WHAT TO EXPECT

Communication for Education's course addresses **core competencies** for educators and related professionals who support **non-speaking autistic individuals**.

The course provides a solid foundation of best practices for developing a partnership between communication partners and autistic individuals by fostering understanding of **presumption of competence, apraxia, emotional and physical regulation strategies, and varied communication strategies**.

The course consists of 15 modules in which course instructors provide instruction, examples, and modeling. Each module contains contributions from **nonspeaking students** and **highly-respected experts** in the disability services field.

OUR BLENDED APPROACH OF PRERECORDED MODULES AND LIVE CLASSES PROVIDES BOTH FLEXIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

During an 8-week period, participants watch prerecorded modules each week and then participate in weekly live online sessions to receive further instruction and engage in questions and answers. Participants also interact in a discussion board.

PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE

Dr. Christy Ashby * Shelley Carnes, M.S., OTR/L * Dr. Mona Delahooke
Alison Fellowes Comly M.A., LICSW * Judith Heumann * Dr. Shagufta Jabeen
Tim Jin * Parisa Khosravi * Harvey Lavoy * Dr. Fernanda Orsati * Dr. Edlyn Peña
Dr. Barry Prizant, CCC-SLP * Tracy Thresher * Dr. Elizabeth Torres
Ingrid Ventura Ellis * Dr. Casey Woodfield



When we talk about education, it's very important that when we say "all"

we mean ALL

- Judith Heumann

WHY THIS TRAINING?

Many programs and school professionals (OTs, SLPs, AT specialists) provide training in the "how to" aspects of device use and developing communication skills.

Our training goes beyond "how to" instruction to dive into questions and issues educators frequently report needing solutions for, despite training from a school-based team.

- Why can this student communicate proficiently with one specific person, but not other support staff?
- How is this student supposed to participate in general education classes if they can't behave or control their body?
- How is this student supposed to demonstrate understanding of grade-level content when they only communicate by making choices?
- This student is developing speech. Why should we derail that by using AAC?
- What's the point of all this if the student still needs another person to support their communication?





COURSE OUTLINE

Module 1: Introduction

Key Points:

- This is not a training in one methodology; it is a framework for educators to apply in ALL teaching / support practices
- We are educators who use multiple methods to support our students' learning and communication development.
- We support students using multiple and varied means of communication.
- We fully expect educators to customize the lessons they learn in this course to meet the individual needs of their students.

Module 2: Language & Labels Matter

Objectives:

- Differentiate between person-first and identity-first language and address why more people are preferring identity-first language
- Identify the harmful effects of functioning labels
- Explore the distinction between “nonverbal” and “nonspeaking”

Module 3: Presuming Competence

Objectives:

- Recognize the differences between age-appropriate education and special education
- Distinguish between presuming knowledge and presuming competence
- Interact with your student in ways that speak to who they are on the inside
- Understand that incorrect responses may be a problem of execution (motor and sensory) not a problem of understanding (cognition)
- Learn how to re-frame language from a deficit perspective to a strengths-based perspective

Module 4: Apraxia

Objectives:

- Understand the difference between what we see and what our students intend to do
- Learn about how the brain-body disconnect affects our work with students
- Discover how our student's motivation is different from what we may have assumed
- Help your student gain control of their body by gaining a deeper understanding of apraxia
- Develop an awareness of the concept of unreliable speech

Module 5: Relationship Building

Objectives:

- Define a “balanced partnership”
- Understand the necessity of building trust with a student
- Identify power imbalances in the CP-student relationship that may impact communication
- Examine the importance of developing a relationship that extends beyond completing classwork
- Develop a toolkit of relationship-building strategies that can occur in an educational setting



COURSE OUTLINE

continued

Module 6: Mindset & Confidence

Objectives:

- Recognize the role confidence plays in an effective communication partner relationship
- Discover steps you can take to build your own and your student's confidence
- Identify the difference between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset
- Understand the importance of communication in the larger context of a student's life
- Become a supportive communication partner who exudes confidence in your student(s)

Module 7: Regulation & Dysregulation

Objectives:

- Understand multiple causes of dysregulation
- Differentiate between internal and external regulation
- Realize that "behaviors" may actually be the result of sensory/motor differences.
- Identify the impact of dysregulation on communication
- Recognize the difference between a calming stim and an interfering stim
- Grow awareness of subtle cues that your student is becoming dysregulated
- Explore the inner workings of our nervous system and discover how a dysfunctioning nervous system impacts our regulation
- Learn how the Polyvagal Theory relates to communication, connection, and learning

Module 8: Regulation Strategies

Objectives:

- Understand the role of a communication partner as a co-regulator
- Acknowledge the role of fatigue in decreasing performance
- Learn strategies to monitor fatigue and increase student stamina
- Explore a variety of strategies to be an effective regulation partner for your student
- Define trauma-informed support practices and understand their role in educational settings

Module 9: Multimodal Communication

Objectives:

- Define multimodal / text-based communication
- Demonstrate an understanding of the value of communication using multiple modalities
- Learn about response methods for students using text-based communication
- Understand strategies to scaffold communication using multiple response methods
- Discuss considerations for functional communication plans

Module 10: Prompting Strategies

Objectives:

- Understand why prompting is needed when working with apraxia
- Differentiate between different types of prompts
- Develop confidence to utilize appropriate prompts to support student communication
- Recognize appropriate times and strategies to fade prompts



COURSE OUTLINE

continued

Module 11: Communication Practice Strategies

Objectives:

- View models of varied methods of communication practice
- Learn ways to adapt classroom materials for specific communication practice
- Understand methods of scaffolding responses
- Implement learned methods into outside-the-classroom communication practice
- Analyze the function of increased prompting and use of low-demand tasks when learning new skills

Module 12: Adapting Academics

Objectives:

- Examine how complex academic tasks can be broken into component parts and made accessible for students who communicate by making choices or typing
- Identify the most important components of sample academic tasks to achieve a lesson objective
- Adapt the most important components of sample academic tasks to allow students to demonstrate understanding of that concept in a way that doesn't require large amounts of written language
- Differentiate between tasks where academic knowledge is the priority and tasks where demonstrating writing skill is the priority
- Review models of IEP goals that make age-appropriate academic goals attainable for students who spell, point, or type to communicate
- Discuss key considerations for providing CP / CRP supports in school settings
- Understand the necessity of an easy-to-use home-school communication system for assignments.

Module 13: Building Agency & Autonomy

Objectives:

- Differentiate between independence and autonomy / agency.
- Devise strategies for helping students initiate communication
- Develop skills to teach students to become self-advocates
- Understand importance of having multiple trained CPs support a student

Module 14: Communication Rights & Ethics

Objectives:

- Identify rationale behind instruction in and use of a refusal strategy
- Gain awareness of common ways CPs unintentionally restrict access to communication
- Discuss important concepts of privacy as it relates to individuals who require assistance to communicate
- Demonstrate understanding of the role of a CP as opposed to a participant in conversations

Module 15: Best Practices

Objectives:

- Recognize features of best practices for supporting communication in educational settings while using best support practices
- Demonstrate familiarity with a communication partner self-assessment checklist

contact us

STAY IN TOUCH

Have questions? Need more support?
Want to use our course with a larger group or a school system?
We can help.



www.communicationforeducation.com



info@communicationforeducation.com



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