

Speech-Language Pathology Symposium

Supporting Communication in the Face of Complex Needs

March 2, 2026

Event Information

Date: Monday, March 2, 2026

Time: 8:00 am – 3:00 pm

Location: West Village Commons, Towson University, Towson, MD 21252

ASHA CEUs Available

Directions and parking information will be provided one week prior to the event.

Registration and Attendance

Due to limited seating, advance registration is required. The symposium is offered at no cost to graduate students in Towson University's Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology programs. A registration fee applies to all other participants. Online registration is required to attend. **To register, visit: [TU SLP 2026 Symposium](#)**

Program Schedule

8:00am–8:30am	Check-in and registration Exhibitor and Employment Fair Light morning refreshments
8:30am–8:45am	Welcome remarks
8:45am–9:45am	Session 1: AAC and developmental communication considerations Bethany Frick Semmler, PhD CCC-SLP Adelphi University, Garden City, NY
9:45am–10:45am	Session 2: AAC and acquired communication considerations Devorah Gradon, CCC-SLP Mount Sinai Hospital, Baltimore, MD
10:45am–11:00am	Break & Exhibitor and Employment Fair
11:00am–11:45am	Session 3: Better Together: A Teaming Approach to AAC Kelly Coburn, PhD CCC-SLP & Ashley Lankford, ScD OTR/L Towson University, Towson, MD
11:45am–1:00pm	Lunch (provided) Exhibitor and Employment Fair
1:00pm–2:45pm	Session 4: Management of apraxia of speech: Current state of evidence for acquired and childhood apraxia of speech Edwin Maas, PhD Temple University, Philadelphia, PA
2:45pm–3:00pm	Closing remarks



Session & Speaker Information

Session 1: AAC and developmental communication considerations

Time: 8:45 am–9:45am

ASHA CEUs: 0.1

Presenter: **Bethany Frick Semmler, PhD CCC-SLP**, is an Assistant Professor in the Communication and Sciences Disorders Department at Adelphi University. She integrates clinical experience with research expertise in augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), early symbolic communication, vocabulary development, and accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Dr. Frick Semmler earned her Ph.D. in Speech and Hearing Science from The Ohio State University in 2023.

Dr. Frick Semmler's research focuses on AAC intervention design, vocabulary selection and prediction for early symbolic communicators, and strategies that support participation, literacy, and mobility access for individuals with disabilities. She has published in leading journals on topics including embedded literacy supports in AAC systems, vocabulary intervention practices, multicultural considerations in AAC, personal navigation training programs, and innovative approaches to public transportation accessibility.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion, participants will be able to-

- 1) Describe the language learning environment for AAC users.
- 2) Explain how language development contributes to overall communicative competence for AAC users.
- 3) Explore why vocabulary selection is especially important for early AAC language learners.

Financial Disclosure: Receives an honorarium from Towson University and salary as an employee of Adelphi University.

Nonfinancial Disclosure: The presenter has no non-financial relationships to disclose.

Session 2: Acquired Communication Disorders and AAC

Time: 9:45am–10:45am

ASHA CEUs: 0.1

Presenter: **Devorah Gradon, M.S., CCC-SLP, CBIS** is a practicing speech-language pathologist at Mount Sinai Hospital in Baltimore, MD. She has extensive clinical experience treating patients with neurological, swallowing, and language disorders across the lifespan. She is cross-trained in Acute Care and certified in the MBSImp. Additionally, she is a Certified Lingraphica Technological Specialist and holds her Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS) credential from the Brain Injury Association of America.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion, participants will be able to-

- 1) Explain how AAC is beneficial for individuals with acquired communication disorders.
- 2) List differences between four AAC methods/devices.
- 3) Utilize AAC devices effectively during therapy sessions.

Financial Disclosure: Receives an honorarium from Towson University and salary as an employee of Mount Sinai Hospital, Baltimore, MD.

Nonfinancial Disclosure: Serves as a member of Lingraphica

Session & Speaker Information

Session 3: Better Together: A Teaming Approach to AAC

Time: 11:00 am–11:45am

ASHA CEUs: .075

Presenter(s):

Kelly L. Coburn, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, is an Assistant Professor in the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Department at Towson University. They earned their Ph.D. from The Pennsylvania State University.

Dr. Coburn's research examines language, communication, and neurodiversity across the lifespan. They emphasize the experiences of autistic individuals, narrative language, and neurodiversity-affirming assessment and intervention practices. They have published extensively in leading journals. Their work covers self-diagnosis of autism, narrative discourse, neurobiological and behavioral markers of language and cognition, and family-centered AAC services.

Dr. Coburn serves on the editorial board of the *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology* and participated in the ASHA Convention Topic Committee for Considerations for Autistic Populations.

Financial Disclosure: Receives a salary as an employee of Towson University

Nonfinancial Disclosure: The presenter has no non-financial relationships to disclose.

Ashley Lankford, ScD, OTR/L, ATP, is an Assistant Professor in the Occupational Therapy & Occupational Science Department at Towson University. Dr. Lankford holds a Doctor of Science in Occupational Science from Towson University. Her academic and clinical work centers on school-based practice, assistive technology, and the support of students with disabilities.

Dr. Lankford's research examines collaborative interprofessional education, school-based OT practices, and experiences of assistive technology users in educational settings. She has presented her research and practice insights at professional conferences. Her focus includes interprofessional practice, AAC use, and best practices in school-based occupational therapy.

Financial Disclosure: Receives a salary as an employee of Towson University.

Nonfinancial Disclosure: Member of the American Occupational Therapy Association; Member of the RESNA Professional Standards Board

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion, participants will be able to-

- 1) Describe the roles and value of SLPs and OTs on an interprofessional AAC team.
- 2) Identify the benefits of interprofessional SLP and OT service for an AAC user represented in a case study.
- 3) Develop strategies that could enhance interprofessional teaming in their own practice to support AAC needs from evaluation through intervention

Session & Speaker Information

Session 4: Management of apraxia of speech: Current state of evidence for acquired and childhood apraxia of speech

Time: 1:00pm–2:45pm

ASHA CEUs: .175

Presenter: Edwin Maas, PhD, is clinical researcher and Associate Professor in Communication Sciences and Disorders at Temple University. His translational and clinical research centers on speech disorders, in particular apraxia of speech in children and adults (with collaborative research on other speech and language disorders). Edwin's main research program includes two research lines motivated by two major clinical challenges (diagnosis and treatment).

The first research line focuses on improving diagnosis of apraxia of speech, in particular differential diagnosis. This translational research line encompasses studies to characterize the nature of speech disorders in terms of underlying processes and mechanisms, and studies to identify sensitive and objective measures that may differentiate speech disorders (including possible subtypes) and predict treatment response and long-term outcomes (prognosis).

The second research line, most pertinent to this presentation, focuses on improving treatment outcomes for children and adults with apraxia of speech. This line involves clinical trials research (single-case experimental designs and randomized controlled trials) to (a) determine efficacy, (b) optimize treatment parameters, and (3) identify predictors of treatment response to facilitate personalized, optimally targeted intervention.

The long-term goals of this research are to improve diagnostic tools and intervention methods and thereby improve the communicative quality of life and well-being of individuals with apraxia of speech.

Edwin has published over 50 peer-reviewed articles, and his research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council, Apraxia-Kids, and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion, participants will be able to-

- 1) Describe the principles of at least 3 approaches to treatment for apraxia of speech.
- 2) Describe the level of evidence for at least 3 approaches to treatment for apraxia of speech.
- 3) Identify gaps in the evidence base of treatment for apraxia of speech.
- 4) Describe considerations for selecting and implementing different approaches to treatment of apraxia of speech.

Financial Disclosure: Receives a salary as an employee of Temple University and grant support from the National Institutes of Health (NIDCD) and Apraxia Kids.

Nonfinancial Disclosure: Serves on the Professional Advisory Council for Apraxia Kids; is a member of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and the Academy of Neurological Communication Disorders and Sciences (ANCDS); serves as a member (2021–present) and past chair (2021–2023) of the Pediatric Motor Speech Disorders Evidence-Based Clinical Research Group; and serves on the Research Advisory Council for the PROMPT Institute.

Continuing Education Information



ASHA CE
APPROVED PROVIDER

Towson University, Department
of Speech-Language Pathology
and Audiology

Satisfactory completion of this course for ASHA CEUs requires submission of a course evaluation that prompts learners to reflect on what they learned and how they plan to apply this knowledge in their practice. Towson University is pending approval by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association to offer ASHA CEUs for this event. The program is worth a maximum of **0.45 CEUs**. Academy approval of this continuing education activity is based solely on course content and does not imply endorsement of the content, specific products, clinical procedures, or adherence to the ASHA's Code of Ethics. Any views presented are those of the presenter or CE provider and not necessarily those of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.