



College of Education and Human Development

Early Childhood Education Program  
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<https://gse.gmu.edu/programs/earlychildhood/>

**EDUT 513 and EDSE 557**  
**Foundations of Language and Literacy for Diverse Learners (3:3:0)**  
**Semester: Spring 2011**  
**Wednesdays, 7:20- 10:00 PM**  
**Krug Hall 253**

**Instructor:** Peg Griffin, Ph. D.

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**Office hours:** by appointment, Wednesdays 3:00 to 7:00 PM and other times as needed

**Course Description**

Examines complexity of language acquisition and literacy development. Focuses on typical and atypical language development, connections between language and literacy, and diversity of communication styles in families and cultures. Emphasizes first and second language acquisition.

**Prerequisite**

Admission to Mason graduate program

**Nature of Course Delivery**

This course requires active participation of all students. Students are expected to complete all class readings prior to each session so as to engage in active dialogue, productive learning, and critical reflection. Activities will include instructor presentation, small group discussions, student presentations, videos, and whole class discussion to support course content. In addition, a Blackboard on-line component of coursework is required.

**Learner Outcomes**

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Describe language (especially English) and the growth of vocabulary, structures (phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics), functions (pragmatics and discourse rhetoric), and acts (expressive, receptive, metalinguistic).
2. Describe social, cultural, affective, cognitive, and educational factors that play a role in language acquisition and literacy learning (reading and writing).
3. Describe reading and writing learning processes including interactions among phonological awareness (including phonemic awareness), word recognition (including phonics and decoding), reading fluency, reading comprehension, spelling (orthography and developmental), and writing.

4. Explain current research on typical and atypical language development, first and second language acquisition, literacy in various settings, as well as language and literacy assessment and instruction.
5. Describe assistive technology for early language and literacy instruction.

### **Professional Standards**

This course is aligned with the standards established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC).

### **Required Texts**

Ballenger, C. (1998). *Teaching other people's children: Literacy and learning in a bilingual classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Burns, M. S., Griffin, P. & Snow, C. E. (Eds.). (1999). *Starting out right: A guide to promoting children's reading success*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Genesee, F., Paradis, J. & Crago, M. B. (2004). *Dual language development & disorders*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Paley, V. G. (1997). *The girl with the brown crayon*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

### **Available electronically:**

Burns, M. S. & Kidd, J. K. (2010). Learning to read. In Peterson, P., Baker, E. & McGaw, B. (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Education, Volume 5* (pp. 394-400). Oxford: Elsevier.

Dyson, A. H. & Smitherman, G. (2009). The right (write) start: African American language and the discourse of sounding right. *Teachers College Record*, 111(4), 973–998.

Restrepo, M. A., Castilla, A. P., Schwanenflugel, P. J., Neuharth-Pritchett, S., Hamilton, C. E. & Arboleda, A. (2010). Effects of a supplemental Spanish oral language program on sentence length, complexity, and grammaticality in Spanish-speaking children attending English-only preschools. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 41, 3–13.

Tabors, P. O., Beals, D. E. & Weizman Z. O. (2001). "You know what oxygen is?" Learning new words at home. In Dickinson, D. K. & Tabors, P. O. (Eds.), *Beginning literacy with language: Young children learning at home and school* (pp. 93-110). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

### **Recommended Optional Texts**

August, D. & Shanahan, T. (Eds.). (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language learners*. Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bernstein Ratner, N. (2008). Atypical language development. Chapter 9, in Berko Gleason, J. & Bernstein Ratner, N. *The development of language* (7th edition). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Conn-Powers, M. Cross, A., Traub, E. & Hutter-Pishgahi, L. (2006). The universal design of early education: Moving forward for all children. *Beyond the journal: Young Children on the Web*. [<http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/ECC/SRUD-MovingForwardArticle.pdf> ]

National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). *Developing early literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel*. Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

## **College of Education and Human Development Expectations and Resources**

### *Student Expectations*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

### *Campus Resources*

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

**Note:** To determine whether the campus is closed due to inclement weather, call 703-993-1000 or go to [www.gmu.edu](http://www.gmu.edu).

## Course Requirements

### General Requirements

1. The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities, it is imperative that students keep up with the readings and participate in class.
2. Class attendance is important. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must call the instructor and leave a message.
3. The university requires that all pagers and cell phones be turned off before class begins. All in-class usage of electronic devices, which includes telephones, laptops, etc., must have approval of course instructor. Laptops and other electronic devices are to be used for educational and learning purposes only and should not be used during class time to check email, surf the web, or communicate with people outside of the class unless part of the class activity.
4. It is expected that assignments will be turned in on time (the beginning of the class in which they are due). However, it is recognized that students occasionally have serious problems that prevent work completion. If such a dilemma arises, students should speak to the instructor in a timely fashion.

### Attendance

Attendance in class is important to students' learning; therefore, students are expected to make every effort to attend class sessions. Absences, tardiness, and leaving early may negatively affect course grades. The following policy is from the university course catalog:

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

### Written Assignments

All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation. The American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition (APA) style will be followed for all written work. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. (Use spell check!) If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work. When in doubt, they should check the APA manual. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the Mason library web guide at <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/>. Students may consult the Writing Center for additional writing support.

Students will

1. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
2. Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.

3. Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. (Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.)
4. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

### Grading Criteria

A = 95 – 100      A- = 90 – 94      B+ = 87 – 89      B = 83 – 86  
 B- = 80 – 82      C = 70 – 79      F = < 70

A+ is possible if work is of exceptional high quality above and beyond that required for the course.

### Grading Policy

All CEHD undergraduate and graduate students are held to the university grading policies as described in the Academic Policies section of the current catalog, which can be accessed at <http://catalog.gmu.edu>. Those students enrolled in a CEHD Licensure Graduate Certificate program, however, must earn a B- or better in all licensure coursework. A degree-seeking graduate student will be dismissed after accumulating grades of F in two courses or 9 credits of unsatisfactory grades (C or F) in graduate courses. A 3.0 grade point average is required for completion of the graduate degree.

### Specific Course Assignments

Assignments	Due Dates	Points
Attendance & Participation	Ongoing	15
Family Language and Literacy Handbook	March 23, Part 1 May 11, Part 2	35
Research-Based Instruction: Articles Analysis	March 30, Choice April 13, Final	35
Brochure About Assisting Students With Special Needs (Group)	April 6, Choice; April 27, Final	15
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>

### Attendance and Participation (15 points)

Because active participation and engagement are imperative for optimal learning, preparation for and participation in activities will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Students attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period.
- Students contribute to each on-line activity for the period of its operation.
- Students complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class and on-line activities as is evidenced by their ability to discuss and write about the concepts presented and

examined. Students participate fully during class and on-line activities. Students review readings and activities as is evidenced by their ability to integrate materials and concepts in subsequent classes, on-line activities, and projects.

- Students are actively involved in class learning experiences as is evidenced by (1) participating in all activities, (2) engaging in small and large group discussions, face-to-face and on-line (3) completing group and individual written projects related to the activities, and (4) supporting the participation and learning of classmates.
- Students show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-class and online discussions, activities, and written reflections.

### **Family Language and Literacy Handbook (35 points)**

Students will produce a language and/or literacy handbook that can be used by families as a resource for understanding the complex nature of children's language and literacy development, and for obtaining materials and activities that can enhance a child's language or literacy development. The handbook will reflect a synthesis of students' understanding of the topics explored throughout the semester. Examples from the child talk on-line activity will be used to illustrate the technical terms. The handbook will include "how-to" segments for several family-friendly and research supported experiences that families can engage to support children's learning and development. Material from the class plus on-line activity as well as work on the brochure and the instructional research analysis can contribute to the experiences. Three main topics will be addressed:

1. language:
  - a. the acts of language (expressive, receptive and meta-linguistic), the aspects of language (vocabulary, structures -- phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics -- and functions language -- pragmatics and rhetoric) including typical milestones and benchmarks;
  - b. dual (and additional) language acquisition, including simultaneous and second language learning as well as dialect differences;
  - c. atypical language development among children with special educational needs;
2. literacy:
  - a. the development of emergent literacy including diverse genres and practices and foundations for conventional literacy such as phonemic awareness and language facility;
  - b. conventional reading including comprehension, printed word identification (with phonics/decoding) and fluency;
  - c. writing including diverse genres, development of mechanics (with spelling);
3. the influence of family and culture on language and literacy development, including diversity in classroom and community as well as partnership of family and teacher.

See also the "Written Assignments" section above. Complete adherence to the APA style for articles submitted for publication is not required, but good academic writing standards should be observed. The style and format should be appropriate to the family audience. Sources consulted will be indicated and families will be informed about how they can check on and pursue the information provided.

***Part 1 – language – is due in electronic form on or before March 23. Part 2 is due in electronic form on or before May 11. Part 3 may be submitted with either part.***

### **Research-Based Instruction: Articles Analysis (35 points)**

This project is about the research base for language and/or literacy instruction among young children. The focus will be on a topic that is of particular interest to the student and the paper produce will be effective for communicating with an academic audience.

1. Each student identifies a relevant topic and an article about it. The research on-line activity will contribute to this work.
  - a. The article the student chooses must report on evidence from a study of teaching or intervening for language or literacy growth with a child or children between the ages of birth through eight years old (or end of grade three).
  - b. Good articles can be located in peer-reviewed journals.
  - c. ***Choice of topic and article is due in e-mail to the instructor by March 30.***
2. The topic and article choice will be negotiated with the instructor who will also identify a ***second*** article for the student to use in the project. The student will analyze both articles.
3. There is a hands-on part of the project, intended to enable and insure the student's deep understanding of the articles. The student will engage with at least one child using an instructional procedure reported in one part of one of the articles the student is analyzing.
4. Students write a report about the research-based instruction topic they have chosen to work on. ***The final paper is due in electronic form on or before April 13.*** In the paper, the student will:
  - a. introduce the topic, stating how each of the two articles address it, including the purpose(s) of each article, a summary of the theoretical motivation and the background literature;
  - b. analyze and comment on the articles as research including details about the empirical base (design, measures and intervention methods) as well as how the articles meet the standards of quantitative or qualitative research explored in class and in the research on-line activity;
  - c. analyze and comment on the articles as contributions to knowledge about young children's language/literacy growth relevant to the topic including details about the implementation, materials, major findings, interpretation, and conclusions of each study;
  - d. describe the hands-on part of the project – how it was carried out and its results in terms of the specific participants as well as results about the student's analysis in (b) and (c) above.
  - e. discuss the relations between the two articles and draw a conclusion about the value they do (or do not) have for research based instructional practices in early childhood education.
5. Good written products will generally have about 12-15 APA style pages. (See also "Written Assignments" section above.) Students will use the complete APA style expected for papers submitted for publication, including page conventions, references and in-text citations.

The instructor must consult each student's article as part of the negotiation of article and topic choice as well as assessment of the final paper. Usually it will be sufficient to supply a complete APA reference so the instructor can access the article via the GMU virtual library.

### **Brochure about Assisting Students with Special Needs (15 points)**

The purpose of the brochure is to develop understanding of and help fellow teachers to understand some aspect of assistive technology (AT) or Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and how it can be used to support children with a special difficulty effecting growth in language,

reading, or writing. Students work as a small team. Each team will focus on a specific type of need and AT that ameliorates difficulty encountered by children with that need. The choice of focus will be negotiated with the instructor, in part governed by the need to avoid too much duplication and to encourage diversity of focus for the class. The team will explore available research, prepare a brochure, distribute it to their classmates, and act as a panel to answer questions from peers.

The brochure on-line activity will be the site of the team work in which the team and the instructor can participate. The research on-line activity will also contribute to this work.

***Consensus on the team focus must be arrived at and posted in the team's brochure on-line activity on or before April 6.*** Throughout the on-line activity, the team will gather information to address the following about their chosen focus:

- how to identify children with this type of need who are likely to be helped by this AT;
- what the focus AT/UDL looks like and how it works;
- which area/s of language and/or literacy is it helpful for and how is it used by children and teachers to support specific curricular goals in language and/or literacy;
- the theories and empirical evidence that support use of the AT.

***The final copy of the brochure is due in electronic form on or before April 27.***

***The team as a panel will present their work to the whole class on May 11, explaining and augmenting the brochure and answering questions.***

See also the "Written Assignments" section above. Complete adherence to the APA style for articles submitted for publication is not required in the brochure, but good academic writing standards should be observed. The style and format should be appropriate to the teacher audience for the brochure. Sources consulted will be indicated and peers will be informed about how they can check on and pursue the information provided.

### Draft Course Schedule and Topics

Date	Topic	Readings & Assignments
Class 1 Jan 26	Introduction to course: language, reading, & writing for all children, including children with varying abilities, languages, & cultural backgrounds. Foundations of oral language development, overview of acts & aspects (vocabulary, structures, functions).	Begin child talk on-line activity. Begin class plus on-line activity. Begin Genesee et al., 2004, pp. 1-60.
Class 2 Feb 2	Language Functions: pragmatics (& self-regulatory speech) & discourse/rhetoric. Language/culture diversity focus: code switching & dialect difference. Ability diversity focus: children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD).	More Genesee et al., 2004, pp. 1-60. Dyson & Smitherman, 2009.
Class 3	Language Vocabulary & concept development in diverse settings.	Begin Genesee et al., 2004, pp. 63-



Feb 9	Language/culture diversity focus: translation equivalents, cognates. Ability diversity focus: children with Intellectual Disability (ID).	187. Tabors et al., 2001.
Class 4 Feb 16	Language Structure: Phonology. Language/culture diversity focus: dialect difference. Ability diversity focus: children with Hearing or Speech difficulties.	More Genesee et al., 2004, pp. 63-187.
Class 5 Feb 23	Language Structures: Morphology. Language/culture diversity focus: dialect difference. Ability diversity focus: children with Specific Language Impairment (SLI).	Finish Genesee et al., 2004, pp. 193-212.
Class 6 Mar 2	Structures: Syntax & semantics.	Restrepo et al., 2010. Close child talk on-line activity & class plus on-line activity.
Class 7 Mar 9	Fundamentals of identifying, interpreting, evaluating, & applying valid research about oral language, reading, & writing.	Begin research on-line activity Begin Paley, 1997.
Spring Break NO Class March 16		
Class 8 Mar 23	Developmental, social, cultural, affective, cognitive, & educational factors play a role in oral language, reading, & writing development. Interdependence & collaboration of families, caregivers & school professionals.	<b>Part 1 Family Language &amp; Literacy Handbook due</b> Finish Paley, 1997. Begin brochure on-line activity Begin Ballenger, 1998.
Class 9 Mar 30	Foundations of reading comprehension: from early emergent literacy to conventional reading, including narrative & expository forms.	Begin Burns et al., 1999, pp. 5-60. Research article analysis topic & article <b>choice due</b> .
Class 10 Apr 6	Foundations of printed word recognition: phonemic awareness, sound-symbol relationships, decoding skills (phonics as well as word attack using syllable & morphological patterns), sight vocabulary evolution.	More Burns et al., 1999, pp. 5-60. Burns & Kidd, 2010. Brochure <b>choice due</b>
Class 11 Apr 13	Continue class 10. Foundations of reading fluency: from pretending to read & read-alouds to the	<b>Research Article Analysis paper due</b>

	child's own independent reading fluency in different academic domains.	Finish Burns et al., 1999, pp. 61-145.
Class 12 Apr 20	Foundations of spelling: including purpose & limits of estimated (invented) spelling, orthographic patterns & strategies for promoting generalization of spelling study.	Finish Ballenger.
Class 13 Apr 27	Foundations of writing, for memory, planning, communication and creative expression.	<b>Brochure about Assisting Students with Special Need due.</b>
Class 14 May 4	Implications of literacy foundations for assessment and instruction, including student comments and queries from hands-on experiences and readings.	
7:30-10:15 Exam equiv. May 11	Student presentations of brochures about assistive technology to support language, reading, and writing among children with special needs.	<b>Part2 Family Language &amp; Literacy Handbook due</b>