



College of Education and Human Development

Early Childhood Education Program

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<https://gse.gmu.edu/programs/earlychildhood/>

## **ECED 402 Foundations of Language and Literacy for Diverse Young Learners (3:3:0)**

**Spring 2012**

**Wednesdays, 7:20 PM to 10:00 PM**

**Thompson Hall L019**

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

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**Office hours:** by appointment on Wednesday afternoons or after shortened classes

### **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.

### **Nature of Course Delivery**

This course utilizes a distributed learning format requiring timely and active participation of all students throughout the semester. Activities to support student achievement of the learner outcomes include instructor presentations, videos, student team presentations, collaborative student work in small groups in class and in on-line discussion groups, assigned readings, and projects leading to written products. Students engage in timely critical reflection and accountable talk related to the learning activities.

### **Learner Outcomes**

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

1. Describe an overview of language covering the growth of vocabulary, structures (phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics), functions (pragmatics and discourse rhetoric), and acts (expressive, receptive, metalinguistic) while addressing diverse learners (including first and second language learners, dialect diversity and children with typical and atypical development patterns).
2. Describe the factors that play a role in language development and literacy learning.
3. Describe an overview of learning to read and write including phonological awareness (including phonemic awareness), word recognition (including phonics and decoding), reading fluency, reading comprehension, spelling (orthography and developmental), as well as writing mechanics, composition, and completion of writing tasks.
4. Describe in general the current research in language and literacy development and learning including a detailed explanation of one example.
5. Describe an example of an assistive technology for students with special needs regarding 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

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.

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

Paradis, J., Genesee, F., & Crago, M. B. (2011). *Dual language development & disorders. Second Edition*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

Resnick, L. B. & Snow, C. E. (2009). *Speaking and listening for preschool through third grade*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association. [includes DVD]

### Optional articles (*Available electronically*)

Bellon, M. L., Ogletree, B. T. & Harn, W. E. (2000). Repeated storybook reading as a language intervention for children with autism: A case study on the application of scaffolding. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities, 15*(1), 52-58.

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.

Collins, M. F. (2010). ELL preschoolers' English vocabulary acquisition from storybook reading. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 25*(1), 84-97.

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.

Leung, C.B. (2008). Preschoolers' acquisition of scientific vocabulary through repeated readaloud events, retellings, and hands-on science activities. *Reading Psychology, 29*, 165-193.

McGee, G. G. & Daly, T. (2007). Incidental teaching of age-appropriate social phrases to children with autism. *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 12*(2), 112-123.

National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). *Developing early literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel*. Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.  
<http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/NELPReport09.pdf>

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: an evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: Reports of the subgroups* (NIH Publication No. 00-4754). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.  
<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/upload/report.pdf>

Restrepo, M. A., Castilla, A. P., Schwanenflugel, P. J., Neuhaarth-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.

Roberts, T. A. (2008). Home storybook reading in primary or second language with preschool children: Evidence of equal effectiveness for second-language vocabulary acquisition. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 43(2), 103–130.

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.

Tsybina, I. & Eriks-Brophy, A. (2010). Bilingual dialogic book-reading intervention for preschoolers with slow expressive vocabulary development. *Journal of Communication Disorders*, 43, 538–556.

### **George Mason University Policies and Resources for Students**

- Academic integrity (honor code, plagiarism) – Students must adhere to guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Mason Email – 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, division, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301ge.html>].
- Counseling and Psychological Services – 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/>].
- Office of Disability Services – 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 <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- The Writing Center (Optional Resource) – 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/>].
- University Libraries (Optional Resource) – The George Mason University Libraries provide numerous services, research tools, and help with using the library resources [See <http://library.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/>].

**Core Values Commitment:** The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

### ***Collaboration***

Collaboration is an important human activity that involves shared responsibility in promoting healthy, productive lives, and educational success. We commit ourselves to work toward these goals in genuine partnerships with individuals, families, community agencies, schools, businesses, foundations, and other groups at the local, regional, national, and international levels.

### ***Ethical Leadership***

In all professions represented by the college, leadership is an essential component denoting ability and willingness to help lead professional practice to higher levels. We commit ourselves to practice ethical leadership through deliberate and systematic attention to the ethical principles that guide all leaders in a moral society.

### ***Innovation***

We have a history of creating dynamic, innovative programs, and we are dedicated to continue creating innovative approaches in all areas of our work. We commit ourselves to seeking new ways to advance knowledge, solve problems, improve our professional practice, and expand on our successes.

### ***Research-Based Practice***

The best practice in any discipline is based upon sound research and professional judgment. We commit ourselves to basing our instruction, scholarship, and policy recommendations on well-established principles that, wherever possible, emerge from research and reflection on its implications for professional practice.

### ***Social Justice***

Social justice embodies essential principles of equity and access to all opportunities in society, in accordance with democratic principles and respect for all persons and points of view. We commit ourselves to promoting equity, opportunity, and social justice through the college's operations and its missions related to teaching, research, and service.

## **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. 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. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must call the instructor and leave a message or send an email before class. 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.

3. In line with Mason's policy that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious holidays, students shall be given an opportunity to make up, within a reasonable time, any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observations in advance of the class that will be missed. Notice should be provided in writing as soon as possible.
4. During face-to-face meetings, cell phones, pagers, and other communicative devices are not allowed in this class. Students must keep them stowed away and out of sight. Laptops or tablets (e.g., iPads) may be permitted for the purpose of taking notes only, but students must submit a request in writing to do so. Engaging in activities not related to the course (e.g. gaming, email, chat, etc.) will result in a significant deduction in their participation grade.
5. 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 prior to the assignment due date (when possible). If the student does not communicate with the instructor, a late penalty will be applied.
6. Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the [Office for Academic Integrity](#) for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when responsible for a task, students will perform that task. When students rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, they will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind), students will ask for guidance and clarification.

### **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 do the following:

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      D = 60 – 69      F = < 60

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 & Literacy Project	<i>Partial:</i> March 21, 2012 <i>Full:</i> May 9, 2012	35
Research Article Analysis project	April 11, 2012	30
Brochure about Assisting Students with Special Needs (group)	May 2, 2012	20
TOTAL		100

**Attendance and Participation (15 points)**

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

- Students attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period.
- Students complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class as is evidenced by their ability to discuss and write about the concepts presented and examined in the texts as well as participate fully in related activities.

- Students are actively involved in in-class and online learning experiences as is evidenced by (1) participating in all activities, (2) engaging in small and large group discussions, (3) using laptops and other electronic devices only to support discussion and learning and not for non-academic uses during class time, (4) completing written work related to the activities, and (5) supporting the participation and learning of classmates.
- Students show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-class and online discussions, activities, and written reflections.

**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).

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

**Goal:** Review and summarize course information about language and literacy. Prepare to assist families (a) to understand the complex nature of children's language and literacy and (b) to partner with teachers for the child's benefit in the light of the non-school factors that affect the child's development.

**Audience:** Families of young children

**Content:** Topics explored throughout the semester:

- language: three acts, three categories of aspects (including subcategories for two);
- diversity related to languages and cultures and atypical language/literacy development among children with special needs: dual language development and dialect difference;
- integrated components required for accomplished reading and writing

The final product should include:

- frameworks to orient and motivate families to learn about language and literacy;
- introduction of specialized terms with examples explained
- research supported "how-to" segments (including material, procedure, and rationale) so home activities can complement school work to enhance child language and literacy.

**Resources:** Power Points and notes from class sessions, materials from small group Blackboard discussions, class textbooks, articles required and optional in the syllabus and on Blackboard, other peer reviewed books or articles. Material from Wikipedia or a general web search should be avoided unless its coherence with current scholarship is verified.

**Associated online Blackboard activities:** At least Activity 1: beyond classroom and Activity 2: child talk.

**Form:** Submit in electronic form using the Blackboard assignment tool or GMU email. Many different formats are acceptable: handbook, newsletter, series of columns or blogs, Power Points with discussion notes for bi-monthly family meetings, etc. See also the "Written Assignments" section above. The style and format should be appropriate to the family audience. Sources consulted should be indicated and families should be informed about them. Complete adherence to the APA style for articles submitted for publication is not required, but good academic writing standards should be adhered to.

**Submission dates:** Make rough drafts made while reviewing the material addressed each week and refine it into a partial submission by **March 21, 2012** so feedback can be provided as needed for revising and completing the project. The final complete project is due on **May 9, 2012**.

**Research-Based Instruction: Article Analysis Project (30 points)**

**Goal:** Experience with the professional research literature that informs early childhood educators about good practices for promoting children's language and literacy. Choose a topic about language or literacy growth among young children (birth to end of grade 3). Analyze a peer reviewed article that reports a study of an attempts to improve child learning or development.

**Audience:** Early childhood education academic colleagues

**Content:** The project and written paper includes the following:

- introducing a topic and the article, including a summary of the author's theoretical motivation and the background research literature the study is developed from;
- describing the empirical base for the study, including the design, materials, implementation, the major findings, interpretations, and conclusions;
- draw a conclusion about the value the article has (or does not have) for research-based instructional practices in early childhood education.

There is a hands-on part of the project, intended to enable and demonstrate deep understanding of the instruction implemented in at least one of the articles. It is not a replication of a study. It calls for using materials like those used in the study being analyzed, trying to implement the instruction with the assistance of at least one child confederate and making a record of the hands-on experience. A section of the final paper will describe the hands-on part, explain how it was carried out, describe the results and comment on how it relates to the analysis of the study it is based upon.

**Resources:** One article from a professional journal which reports on a study of instructional research on the language or literacy growth of young children related to a topic of special interest to the student. The article is chosen from a list provided by the instructor. The articles on the list are taken from those listed as optional articles for the class. The instructor gives feedback and suggests alternatives to the student choice if needed.

**Associated online Blackboard activities:** At least Activity 3: the search for research activity.

**Form:** Submit in electronic form using the Blackboard assignment tool or GMU email. Good written products will generally have about 8-11 APA style pages. Students will use the complete APA style expected for papers submitted for publication, including page conventions, references and in-text citations. (See also "Written Assignments" section above.)

**Submission dates:** An e-mail about the student's choices is due by **March 28, 2012**. It should include the topic and the APA references for the article the student has chosen. (Do not send a copy of the articles.) The instructor consults the article as part of the negotiation as well as during the evaluation of the final paper. The final complete paper is due on **April 11, 2012**.



### **Brochure about Assisting Students with Special Needs in Language and Literacy(20 points)**

**Goal:** Learn about the special language and literacy needs that challenge some children in early childhood. Explore the assistance available for teachers to use— from no technology, to low-, mid- and high-technology. Collaborate within a team to contribute to peer professional development.

**Audience:** Early childhood education practitioner colleagues

**Content:** Students work on small teams. Teams focus on needs encountered in early childhood related to language or literacy and on the assistance that can ameliorate difficulty encountered by children experiencing those needs. The choice of focus will be negotiated with the instructor to avoid too much duplication and to encourage diversity of focus for the class. The team will explore provided materials ranging from manuals to research to the standards of language and literacy learning that young children meet. They will prepare a brochure designed to help teachers understand the needs and the assistance available. Their work will be distributed to their classmates and the team will act as a panel to answer questions from peers.

The team will gather information to explain the following topics about their chosen focus:

- how to identify children in need likely to be helped by the assistance described;
- which area of language and/or literacy is helped and how teachers use the assistance for specific curricular goals in language and/or literacy;
- which theories and empirical evidence support use of assistance for this need;
- examples of the assistance, including its use in practice.

**Resources & Associated online Blackboard activity:** Activity 4: Special needs and assistance includes resources and detailed directions for this project. Parts of activities 2 and 3 may help.

**Form:** Submit as a team in electronic form using the Blackboard assignment tool or GMU email. The style and format should be appropriate to the teacher audience for the brochure. While a six panel tri-fold is a common format for this project, different pamphlet shapes and sizes may be used. Appendices can be used as well. Sources consulted must be indicated and peers will be informed about how they can check on and pursue the information provided. 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. . (See also “Written Assignments” section above.)

The team presentation to the class may have details or demonstrations not included in the written form and may use a Power Point and/or videos if the team desires.

**Submission dates:** After the team has completed the early tasks in the on-line activity, they will negotiate the final topic (both needs and assistance) with the instructor by e-mail. The negotiation should be settled by **April 18, 2012**. The final copy of the brochure is due in electronic form on or before **May 2, 2012**. The team as a panel will present their work to the whole class on **May 9, 2012**.

**Draft Course Schedule and Topics**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings &amp; Other Assignments</b>
Class 1 1/25	Introduction to course: language, reading, & writing for children with varying language & cultural backgrounds, and diverse abilities. Overview of acts & aspects of language. Introduction to on-line activities.	Begin two small group on-line activities: (1) child talk (random assigned) (2) beyond classroom (select)
Class 2 2/1	Language acts: expressive, receptive meta-linguistic. Language Aspect - Functions 1 & 2: Pragmatics & Rhetoric/discourse genre.	Paradis et al., 2011, Chap. 1, 2, 3 Resnick & Snow, 2009, pp. 1-16 & skim more per child talk activity
Class 3 2/8	Language aspects -Vocabulary Diverse language/culture: translation equivalents, cognates. Graduate student voicing: Tabors et al., 2001; Tsybina & Eriks-Brophy, 2010.	Paradis et al., 2011, Chap. 4, 5, 6
*Class 4 2/15	Language Aspects –Structure 1: Phonology. Diverse ability: Hearing or Speech.	Paradis et al., 2011, Chap. 4, 5 & 6
Class 5 2/22	Language Aspects –Structure 2: Morphology. Diverse language/culture: dialect. Graduate student voicing: Dyson & Smitherman, 2009; Restrepo, et al., 2010.	Paradis et al., 2011, Chap. 8
*Class 6 2/29	Language Aspects –Structures 3 & 4: Syntax & Semantics. Diverse ability: Intellectual Disability (ID).	Paley, 1997
Class 7 3/7	Fundamentals: identify, interpret, evaluate & apply valid research about oral language, reading, & writing. Discuss Paley. Discuss Paradis et al. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8.	Close posting on first two small group activities. Begin two new small group on-line activities: (3) search for research (4) special needs and assistance.
<i>Closed for Spring Break</i>		<i>3/14</i>
Class 8 3/21	Foundations of reading comprehension: from language & early emergent literacy to conventional reading, including motives & narrative & expository forms. Diverse ability: Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Graduate student voicing: Burns & Kidd, 2010; McGee & Daly 2007.	<b>Part 1 Family Language &amp; Literacy Project due</b> Begin Burns et al., 1999, pp. 5-60

Date	Topic	Readings & Other Assignments
Class 9 3/28	Foundations of printed word recognition: phonemic awareness, sound-symbol relations, decoding skills (phonics, word attack, patterns of syllable & morphology), sight vocabulary. Diverse ability: Specific Language Impairment (SLI).	Research article analysis topic & article choice negotiations Paradis et al., 2011, Chap. 9
*Class 10 4/4	Foundations of reading fluency: from pretending to read & read-alouds to independent reading fluency in different academic domains. Diverse ability: Reading Impairment.	Paradis et al., 2011, Chap. 10 Finish Burns et al., 1999, pp. 61-145
Class 11 4/11	Foundations of spelling: purpose & limits of estimated (invented) spelling, orthographic patterns & strategies for spelling study. Diverse language/culture: Graduate student voicing Roberts, 2008; Leung, 2008.	<b>Research Article Analysis project due</b>
Class 12 4/18	Foundations of writing, for memory, planning, communication and creative expression.	Brochure <b>choice settled</b>
*Class 13 4/25	Developmental, social, cultural, affective, cognitive, & educational factors in oral language, reading, & writing development. Interdependence & collaboration of families, caregivers & school professionals. Discuss Burns et al., 1999.	
Class 14 5/2	Implications of literacy foundations for assessment and instruction, including student comments and queries from hands-on experiences and readings.	<b>Brochure about Assisting Students with Special Needs due.</b> Close posting on last activities.
Exam substitute 5/9	(7:30-10:15) Student presentations of brochures about assistive technology to support language, reading, and writing among children with special need. <b>Part2 Family Language &amp; Literacy Project due.</b>	

\* These classes with asterisks are potentially shortened classes, finishing 1 hour early. The time can be used for 1-1 or small group appointments with the instructor.