



VIRGINIA CONSORTIUM  
FOR TEACHER PREPARATION  
IN VISION IMPAIRMENT

**College of Education and Human Development  
Division of Special Education and disAbility Research**

Fall 2014  
3 - Credits

- GMU – EDSE 512 001: Braille Code, CRN: 77419
- JMU – EXED 532: Braille Code
- ODU – SPED 533: Braille Code
- RU – EDSP 655: Braille Code
- NSU – SPE 706: Braille Code

<b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Christina Schoch	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 8/27/2014 - 12/10/2014
<b>Phone:</b> 520-490-9795	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Wednesdays
<b>E-Mail:</b> cschoch@gmu.edu	<b>Meeting Time(s):</b> 4:30 pm-7:10 pm
<b>Office Hours:</b> by appointment or before or after class	<b>Meeting Location:</b> BB Collaborate Internet NET

***Note:** This syllabus may change according to class needs. Students will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason e-mail and/or through Blackboard.*

**Course Description**

Provides understanding of the literary code of Braille and its implications for educational/literacy programs for students with a visual disability. Practice experiences will enable students to better understand the Braille code and how to teach it to students with a visual disability. Prerequisite(s): EDSE 411. Corequisite(s): EDSE 411. Notes: Delivered online. Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week: 3 Hours of Lab or Studio per week: 0

**Prerequisite(s):** EDSE 411

**Co-requisite(s):** EDSE 411

### **Advising Contact Information**

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. Mason M.Ed. and Certificate students should contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703) 993-3670 for assistance. All other students should refer to their faculty advisor.

### **Nature of Course Delivery**

This course will be delivered online using a **synchronous** format via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before "@masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on August 18th.

### **TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:**

To participate in this course, students will need the following resources:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox. Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard;
- Consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of the course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for Pcs and Macs respectively, available for free downloading by clicking on the link next to each plug-in:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
  - Windows Media Player: <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/downloads/windows-media-player>
  - Apple QuickTime Player: [www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)
- A headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool

Learning activities include the following:

1. Class lecture and discussion
2. Application activities
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Research and presentation activities
6. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard

## **Learner Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to

- demonstrate an understanding of the history of the development of braille.
- read and write uncontracted literary braille.
- read and write contracted literary braille.
- demonstrate knowledge of tactile perception skills and principles of braille reading mechanics.
- demonstrate knowledge of pre-braille and emergent literacy skills.
- identify braille reading and writing teaching methods for students with visual impairments, including students with additional disabilities.
- understand cultural and linguistic diversity related to braille literacy for students with visual impairments.
- locate specific braille materials for classroom use.
- identify methods for teaching the use of the slate and stylus.

## **Required Textbooks**

• Holbrook, C. M., D'Andrea (2014). *Ashcroft's Programmed Instruction in Braille: Unified English Braille (1<sup>st</sup> ed)*. Germantown, TN: Scalars. <http://www.scalarspublishing.com/> ISBN **978-0-9960353-0-9**

• *Ashcroft's Programmed Instruction Companion Reader: Unified English Braille* Germantown, TN: Scalars. <http://www.scalarspublishing.com/> ISBN **978-0-9960353-1-6**

• Wormsley, D. P., & D'Andrea, F. (1997). *Instructional Strategies for Braille Literacy - American Foundation for the Blind*. New York N.Y.: AFB Press. ISBN: **978-0-89128-936-4**

## **Recommended Textbooks**

Koenig, A. J. & Holbrook, M. C. (1993). *Learning media assessment of students with visual impairments*. Austin, TX: Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Mangold, P. *Teaching the braille slate and stylus*. Castro Valley, CA: Exceptional Teaching Aids.

Olsen, M. (1981). *Guidelines and games for teaching efficient braille reading*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Rex, E. J., Koenig, A. J., Wormsley, D. P., & Baker, R. L. (1994). *Foundations of braille literacy*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.

Swenson, A. M. (1999). *Beginning with braille: Firsthand experiences with a balanced approach to literacy*. New York: AFB Press.

Wormsley, D. B. (2004). *Braille literacy: A functional approach*. New York: AFB Press.

### **Required Resources**

- Standard 8.5x11 braille transcribing paper (without tractor-feed). Students may use 11 1/2 x 11 paper IF they have access to a old Perkins writer.
- 4-line 28-cell slate with stylus (eraser), available at APH (<http://www.aph.org/>), Note: aluminum slate is more durable than plastic one.
  1. Lightweight Aluminum Braille Slate: 28 - Catalog Number: 1-00084-00
  2. Braille Eraser, Wooden Catalog Number: 1-00270-00
  3. Braille Stylus. Flat, Large Yellow Catalog Number: 1-00121-00
- Perky Duck Freeware. We will be practicing braille a lot in class. In order for me to check your work while in class, I will need to view your work on the computer via Perky Duck.  
The software can be downloaded from this site: <http://www.duxburysystems.com/product2.asp?product=Perky%20Duck&level=free>.  
For *Mac users*, you can download the software using Parallels or VMWare's Fusion software to run Perky Duck.

### **Additional Readings**

All articles are posted on Blackboard. It is expected prior to class meetings that students will have read the materials on Blackboard in addition to the chapters from the book *Instructional Strategies for Braille Literacy*. PowerPoint notes in Word format for the methods lectures will be available on Blackboard under each course module. Additional handouts and resources are also posted on the Blackboard site under the lectures for each week.

### **Course Relationships to Program Goals and Professional Organizations**

This course is part of the Virginia Consortium for Teacher Preparation in Vision Impairment Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of Special Education: Visual Impairments PK-12. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization. The CEC standard that will be addressed in this class include Standard 4: Instructional Strategies.

## **GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:**

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- c. 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.
- d. 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/>].
- e. 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/>].
- f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g. 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/>].

## **PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

## **CORE VALUES COMMITMENT**

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. [See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>]

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

## CONSORTIUM COURSE POLICIES

### Honor Code

Each university has its own honor code and it is important for you to review the honor code at your university. However, all students taking this course, regardless of the university they are enrolled in, are expected to follow this honor code and also to pledge all assignments and their exam to indicate that they have followed the honor code. A pledge means that you have not cheated or plagiarized, nor have you given or received assistance that violated the description of how assignments are to be completed for this course. The shortened version may be used: "Pledged" followed by the date and your full name (typed "signatures" will be OK for assignments/tests submitted electronically). A complete copy of each university's Honor System document is available through

- GMU: <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>
- Radford: <http://www.radford.edu/dos-web/honorcode.html>
- NSU: <http://www.nsu.edu/studentjudicial/>
- ODU: [http://orgs.odu.edu/hc/pages/Honor\\_Code.shtml](http://orgs.odu.edu/hc/pages/Honor_Code.shtml)
- JMU: <http://www.jmu.edu/honor/code.shtml#TheHonorCode>

### Accommodations for Disability

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the disability service center at their participating university and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. University specific information regarding eligibility, services and accommodations can be found at:

- GMU: <http://ods.gmu.edu/>
- Radford: <http://www.radford.edu/~dro/>
- NSU: <http://www.nsu.edu/disabilityservices/index.html>
- ODU: <http://studentaffairs.odu.edu/educationalaccessibility/>
- JMU: <http://www.jmu.edu/ods/>

### Inclement Weather

This course has both asynchronous modules and synchronous class meetings using distance education technology. Most likely, inclement weather will not impact access to asynchronous course content. In the event that bad weather does shut down the GMU Blackboard system, the instructor may need to modify the course schedule. As for synchronous meetings, classes are cancelled at the instructor's discretion based on weather conditions and available technology services. Since students are participating in the course across regions, you are responsible for contacting the instructor as soon as possible in case of major power outages.

## Course Materials

This course gives you access to class lecture notes, handouts, and copyrighted articles. For the articles (available on Blackboard), copyright laws must be followed: print only one copy per student. The PowerPoint presentation handouts, notes, and handouts are provided on Blackboard for your convenience and to facilitate your mastery of concepts presented in this course.

## Technology Proficiencies

All students participating in this course are expected to be proficient in several technology skills. Students are expected to be proficient in using the Internet and have reliable and consistent Internet access. Students are also expected to have an active email account and to check email regularly. This course requires students to use Blackboard, which is our online course management system located at <http://mymason.gmu.edu>

Key Points Blackboard. Our Blackboard server has been updated from version 8.0 to 9.1. For students this means:

- Students MUST access Blackboard through <http://mymason.gmu.edu>.
- Login
  - GMU Students: Enter your Mason NetID (the first portion of your e-mail address, before the @) then enter your Password (PatriotPass credentials).
  - NON-GMU Students:
    - Username: x\_firstname.lastname
    - Password: bbcommunity
- Select the “Organizations” tab to access classes.

Students are expected to login to this system frequently and be proficient in using its features. Students are expected to be proficient in using the computer, which includes downloading and saving files, typing, and word processing skills. Students participating in this course are expected to use Microsoft Word for all written assignments.

Furthermore, students are expected to use Microsoft PowerPoint and Adobe Acrobat Reader for class documents located on the Blackboard website.

Adobe Acrobat Reader is a free software program used to read PDF files and can be downloaded

at: <http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/product.jsp?product=10&platform=Windows>

## Course Policies & Expectations

Attendance.

Attendance **(30 points)** for all sessions is very important since many of the activities in class are planned in such a way that they cannot easily be recreated outside of the class session. Live lectures, activities, and guest speakers supplement the textbook and can only be experienced in the class sessions. Furthermore, as part of this course you are expected to be an active and respectful participant, which includes engaging in class discussions and activities. Students who miss a class will not have the opportunity to make up missed in-class assignments. Successful completion of Blackboard class activities will be tracked in the blackboard grade book. As a courtesy, please email me to let me know if you will not be in class.

### Late Work

See Braille assignments section for late assignment policy. No other **late assignments will be accepted**. Only in the case of serious family emergency or illness with late assignment submission be considered. You must communicate via email with the instructor as soon as possible if there is an emergency circumstance.

### TaskStream Submission

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, (NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE) (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in TaskStream. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete(IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

If you have never used TaskStream before, you **MUST** use the login and password information that has been created for you. This information is distributed to students through GMU email, so it is very important that you set up your GMU email. For more TaskStream information, go to <http://cehd.gmu.edu/api/taskstream>.



## Assignment and Final Due Dates Summary

Braille Homework (10)	See due dates	60 points
Written Exam (lectures)	November 19, 2014	50 points
Braille Proficiency Test	December 1-10, 2014	30 points
Braille Code (MC) Exam	December 3, 2014	25 points
Braille Project	December 3, 2014	25 points
Braille Reading (3 total)	November 30, 2014	15 points
Participation	All classes	30 points
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>235 points</b>

### **Grading Scale**

A = 95-100%

A- = 90-94%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

F = 70% and below

### **Assignments**

#### **Performance-based Assessment (TaskStream submission required).**

There is NO TaskStream assignment for this course.

#### **Performance-based Common Assignments (No TaskStream submission required)**

#### **Other Assignments.**

#### **Course Requirements:**

- 1. Homework:** (60 points) Ten homework assignments valued at 6 points each are required for the course. Their schedule due dates are indicated below. Points are assigned as follows:

0, 1, 2 errors

6 points

3, 4 errors	5 points
5, 6 errors	4 points
7, 8 errors	3 points
9, 10 errors	2 points
11, 12 errors	1 point
13 or more errors	no credit for assignment

Any homework may be repeated to improve the score. However, one point will be subtracted for each redone homework. Therefore, there is no advantage to repeating an assignment unless 4 or fewer points have been assigned. **All students must turn in all homework and achieve a maximum of 10 errors on each homework in order to receive a passing grade in the course.**

Braille homework assignments will be transcribed using the Perkins braille writer. **Electronic braille will not be accepted.** Work transcribed using braille translation software is unacceptable and subject to academic dishonesty policies. Work must be transcribed on standard braille paper without tractor-feed holes. For an 8.5 x 11 sheet of braille paper, you should have no more than 30 braille cells per line.

In order to provide students with timely feedback, homework assignments will need to be mailed to the instructor. **Assignments that are mailed must be post-marked on the Tuesday before each class date.** Late penalties will apply to assignments not postmarked by Tuesday. Send assignments to:

**Dr. Christina Schoch  
8491 North Redstone Place  
Tucson, Arizona 85743**

**Due Dates for Braille Code Assignments:**

<b>DUE DATE</b>	<b>HOMEWORK (Postmarked )</b>	<b>Description of Homework</b>
September 10	Homework 1 (Chs. 1 & 2)	Self test pg. 10 & Self Test pg. 27
September 17	Homework 2 (Ch. 3 )	Ex. 3.3.5 pg. 48
October 1	Homework 3 (Ch. 4)	Self test pg. 86
October 8	Homework 4 (Ch. 5)	Self test pg. 110

October 15	Homework 5 (Ch. 6)	TBD
October 22	Homework 6 (Ch. 7)	TBD
November 5	Homework 7 (Ch. 8)	TBD
November 12	Homework 8 (Ch. 9)	TBD
November 19	Homework 9 (Ch. 10)	Restaurant menu using Perky Duck
November 26	Homework 10 (Ch. 11)	Self selection passage

**2. Braille Reading:** (3 readings at 5 point each, 15 points total) Due date November 30<sup>th</sup>. You will have braille reading every week from the Ashcroft's Programmed Instruction Companion Reader: Unified English Braille. One time monthly in September, October and November I will have you read to me based on a passage I choose from the Companion Reader. We can complete this a number of ways: by video, by phone call, facetime, google hangout or BB Collaborate. I will schedule each student individually.

**3. Written Exam on Lecture Content:** (50 points) The written exam on the lecture content will be provided to you on November 5, 2014 via Blackboard. This is a take home exam and will be due on **November 19, 2014 at 11:59 PM**. The exam is to be submitted via the D2L drop box. Five points per day will be subtracted for late exams. **NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS!**

**4. Final Exam:** (Proficiency Test): (30 points) At the end of the course, each student must put in braille one page of literary material with 10 or fewer errors using only a **contraction sheet provided by the instructor and a print dictionary to check syllabication**. All students will take the test on **December 1-5<sup>th</sup>**. Those who do not pass will **retake the test by December 10, 2014**. If students need a third testing this will be individually arranged. I will need to arrange proctors to administer this exam. ***All retests must be completed by December 10, 2014.***

EXAMPLE: Sharon makes 4 errors the first time she takes the test. Her score is 26 out of 30. Ron makes 11 errors the first time he takes the test. He must retake it. On the second attempt, he makes 5 errors. He receives a score of 25 on the second attempt, with one additional point subtracted because it is a second try. His score is 24 out of 30.

5. **Braille Code Exam** (25 points) Students will complete a 50 item multiple choice test designed to test their knowledge of the literary braille code. The exam will be due by on **December 3, 2014**.

6. **Project:** (25 points) Students must complete a project related to the instruction of braille. Projects are due on **December 3, 2014**. The project may include one of the following options **OR** it may be an original project. If an original project is selected, a one page written proposal must be approved by the instructor before the project is implemented. Proposals must be turned in on or before **October 15, 2014**. Failure to get an alternative project approved may result in a low grade! Five points per day will be subtracted from the final grade for late projects.

A. Transcribe a children's book for a braille reader. If it is for a child at second grade level or below, include tactual materials to add meaning and motivation to the brailled text. The book should be in contracted braille.

B. Create a learning center or instructional unit for teaching the basics of braille to students who are not braille readers. The unit should contain braille materials that you will share with the students who are not braille readers.

C. Describe in writing an adult with an adventitious visual loss (e.g., age, occupation, interests, physical abilities) and develop a plan for instructing that individual in braille with an emphasis on functional application. Include sample materials in braille that you will use with the adult.

D. Interview or survey individuals who read braille regarding their concerns, challenges, and opinions related to the importance of braille in their lives and write a 3-5 page paper presenting your findings. You must include a minimum of 10 people in your survey. Include a copy of your survey with your paper.

E. Teach two braille lessons to a student and develop the appropriate lesson plans and associated materials. Be sure to include a means of evaluating whether the student has met the lesson's objectives. Videotape one lesson. **THIS MAY NOT BE DONE AS PART OF YOUR INTERNSHIP.**

7. **Participation:** (30 points) Up to 30 points will be earned by students for participation. Points will be earned through the completion of in class activities. Students are expected to attend class sessions, be focused and respectful of others. I will be doing reviews and ask questions of current chapter we are on. I will subtract points if you are not prepared.

8. **Extra Credit:** You have 3 options for extra credit this year, each will earn you up to 5 points. **Extra credit must be submitted by December 3, 2014.**

A. Make a deck of braille playing cards. A quarter point will be subtracted for each error.

B. Select a magazine or newspaper article and transcribe it into braille. You must turn in the first **2 braille pages**. Submit the print article and your 2 pages of braille. You may not do this assignment until we have covered the material in Lesson 8. A quarter point will be subtracted for each error. Please mark on the top of the page which lessons we have covered at the time of your brailing (e.g., 1-8, 1-10) so I only count off for contractions covered to that date.

C. Develop a set of flashcards for practicing your braille. Based on the accuracy and completeness of your flashcard set you'll earn up to 5 points.

D. Complete braille using slate and stylus. You need to do enough braille where you have moved slate three times. Please send me print copy of what you have brailled.

You have the option of mailing your extra credit to me or taking pictures and putting in a power point.

## Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Literary Braille Code</u>	<u>Methods</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Aug .27	How to use the braille writer, Chapters 1 & 2	History of Braille	W & D Ch. 1
Sept. 3	Chapter 3	Agencies and Resources	
Sept. 10	Chapter 4	Tactile Perception	W & D Ch. 2 Wright, Wormsley & Kamei-Hannan, 2009
Sept. 17	Review Chapters 1-4	Pre-Braille and Emergent Literacy	W & D Ch. 3 Lewis, & Tolla, 2003
Sept. 24	Chapter 5	Beginning Braille Literacy Using a Functional Approach	W & D Ch. 5 Wormsley, 2011 Campbell, 2011
Oct. 1	Chapter 6	Beginning Braille Literacy Using a Functional Approach Braille Assessment	
Oct. 8	Chapter 7	Teaching Reading Through Braille (Methods & Curricula	W & D Ch. 7 Holbrook, 2008
Oct. 15	Chapter 8	Technology Overview	Technology Overview
Oct. 22	Review Chapters 5-8	Braille for Second Language Learners	W & D Ch. 6
Oct. 29	Chapter 9	Slate & Stylus	
Nov. 5	Chapter 10	Slate & Stylus practice Practice Braille for Adults	W & D Ch. 4 Kamei Hannan, 2006
Nov. 12	Chapter 11 Chapter 12		
Nov. 19	Review Chapters 9-11		<b>Written exam due On lectures</b>
Nov. 26	<b>Final Projects Presentations</b>	Or Review	
Dec . 3rd	<b>Final Projects Presentations</b>	<b>GRAD Students only</b>	<b>ONLINE Braille Code exam</b>
Dec. 1-Dec. 10th	<b>Code Test / Individually scheduled Proficiency Test</b>	If you need to take a second exam, we will need to schedule this individually. Needs to be completed by December 10 <sup>th</sup> .	

## Appendix NA

