



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

Fall 2016

EDSE 512: Braille Code, 3-Credits

GMU Section 001; CRN: 73785

GMU Section 6V1; CRN: 82438

GMU Section 6Y1; CRN: 82439

Instructor: Dr. Kimberly Avila	Meeting Dates: 08/31/16 - 12/07/16
Phone: 703.993.5625	Meeting Day(s): Wednesday
E-Mail: kavila@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): 4:30 pm - 7:10 pm
Office Hours: By appointment	Meeting Location: Fairfax

Document Quick Links: [Assignments](#) [Schedule](#)

***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 enable students to better understand the Braille code and how to teach it to students with a visual disability.

Prerequisite(s): EDSE 511 (may be taken concurrently).

Notes: Delivered online.

Schedule Type: LEC

Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week: 3

Hours of Lab or Studio per week: 0

Prerequisite(s): EDSE 511 (may be taken concurrently)

Co-requisite(s): None

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.

Advising Tip

Have you met with an advisor? All students should make an appointment to meet with an advisor to outline a plan for completing coursework and non-course requirements such as testing. To make an appointment by phone or in person, go to <http://gse.gmu.edu/special-education/advising/>.

Nature of Course Delivery

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:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the history of the development of braille.
2. Read and write uncontracted literary braille.
3. Read and write contracted literary braille.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of tactile perception skills and principles of braille reading mechanics.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of pre-braille and emergent literacy skills.
6. Identify braille reading and writing teaching methods for students with visual impairments, including students with additional disabilities.
7. Understand cultural and linguistic diversity related to braille literacy for students with visual impairments.
8. Locate specific braille materials for classroom use.
9. Identify methods for teaching the use of the slate and stylus.

Required Textbooks

Holbrook, M. C., & D'Andrea, F. M. (2014). *Ashcroft's programmed instruction: Unified English Braille* (Fifth Edition). Germantown, TN: [Scalars Publishing](http://www.scalarspublishing.com/). ISBN: 978-0-9960353-0-9. <http://www.scalarspublishing.com/>

- Holbrook, M. C., D'Andrea, F. M., & Sanford, L. D. (2014). *Ashcroft's programmed instruction companion reader: Unified English Braille*. Germantown, TN: [Scalars Publishing](http://www.scalarspublishing.com/). ISBN: 978-0-9960353-1-6. <http://www.scalarspublishing.com/>
- 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.

Required Resources

- Manual braille (Perkins, Next Generation) May be checked out from the VI Consortium
- Braille paper (8.5x11 and 11x11.5)
- Traditional slate and stylus
- The APH student starter pack has these items, and an abacus, which is needed for the spring braille course:
https://shop.aph.org/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product_Student%20Starter%20Pack_1-00350-00P_10001_11051
- **Perky Duck Software:** Free download from Duxbury
<http://www.duxburysystems.com/product2.asp?product=Perky%20Duck&level=free&action=pur>. Note that braille translation software cannot be used for assignments in this course.

Recommended Textbooks

- Koenig, A. J. & Holbrook, M. C. (1993). *Learning media assessment of students with visual impairment*. 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. (2016). *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.

Additional Readings

Posted on Blackboard

All articles or article references are posted on Blackboard. It is expected prior to class meetings that students will have read the materials on Blackboard or accessed them from their university library in addition to the chapters from the book *Instructional Strategies for Braille Literacy*. Class notes and 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 standards that will be addressed in this class include Standard 5: Instructional planning and 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 George Mason University Disability Services and inform their instructor, in writing, as soon as possible. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor. [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>]. Students from other Consortium universities must provide their accommodation documentation to the instructor as well.

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/>]

Course Policies & Expectations

Attendance.

Students are expected to attend class. One absence may be excused only in the case of an emergency and with instructor notification. Participation points may be made up if the student submits a 200 word summary of the missed session along with a sample of the in class practice exercises or other required class participation activity. More than one absence will result in loss of the participation points for the missed session. Please consult with the instructor if you must miss more than 2 sessions, as course credit could be compromised. Students are responsible for completing and submitting exercises for missed classes as assigned in the course schedule and class.

Late Work.

Due to the nature of this course, turning in assignments on time is a necessity. Only in the case of serious family emergency or illness will late assignment submission be considered. You must communicate via email with the instructor as soon as possible if there is an emergency circumstance.

Tk20 Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit the (*NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE*) to Tk20 through Blackboard (regardless of whether the student is

taking the course as an elective, a onetime course or as part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in Tk20 through Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to Tk20 (through Blackboard) will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required Tk20 submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Grading Scale

	Points	Percent
A	272-287	95-100
A-	258-271	90-94
B+	255-257	89
B	244-254	85-88
B-	229-243	80-84
C	201-228	70-79
F	<200	69

Assignments

Performance-based Assessment (Tk20 submission required).

Performance-based Common Assignments (No Tk20 submission required).

Other Assignments.

Assignment	Points
Participation (5 points per session x 13 sessions)	65
Weekly practice assignments (12 @ 6 points each)	72
Braille and Slate & Stylus Checkpoint	20
Midterm exam	20
Written Reflection and Essay on Braille Instruction and Current Issues	30
Graduate student project	30

Final exam	50
Total	287

**Course Requirements:
Participation (30 points)**

Active participation in all sessions is very important, as 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 this course and can only be experienced in the class. Furthermore, as part of this course you are expected to be an active and respectful participant, which includes engaging in class discussions and activities.

Homework: (72 points: 12 assignments at 6 points each)

Homework assignments will consist of varying activities specified each week. Each homework assignment is worth 6 points. The manual braille writer, Perky Duck, and the slate & stylus will be used to submit assignments and exercises; word processors and the discussion board or other Blackboard or online programs may also be used. Each assignment is due before the next class session. The use of transcription software is **not** permitted on assignments, tests or other products for this course.

Assignments that are mailed must be post marked by the date specified on each task. Late penalties will apply to assignments not postmarked by the required date.

Send assignments to:
Kimberly Avila
George Mason University
MSN: 1F2
4400 University Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

NOTE: Additional Assignments may be added depending on the needs of the students.

Braille and Slate & Stylus Checkpoint (20 points)

Each candidate will demonstrate skills needed for proficient use of the braille and slate & stylus. This includes inserting and removing paper, brailleing, formatting, and use/terminology used with these devices. Candidates will complete this task via video conference and/or a recording that will be submitted to the instructor.

Written Reflection and Essay on Braille Instruction and Current Issues: (30 points)

The reflection and essay will be based on lecture content and readings. It will be provided to you on November 16, 2016 via Blackboard. This is a take home assignment and will be due by November 30, 2016 at 11:59 pm.

Midterm Exam (20 points)

The midterm exam will consist of braille transcription and rule knowledge.

Final Exam: Proficiency Test (50 points)

All students will complete a braille transcription exam at the end of the course. Students must find a proctor who will administer the exam for them and are responsible for ensuring confidentiality of the test, adhere administration procedures and mail it according to instructor directions.

Graduate Student Project (30 points)

This project is only required for those enrolled in the graduate section of this course (500 or above level).

Due: November 16, 2016

Students must complete a project related to the instruction of braille. 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 approved no later than **October 28, 2016**. 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 using UEB formats.

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 vision 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 3 people in your survey. Include a copy of your survey with your paper. Use appropriate APA formatting.

E. Teach a braille lesson 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.

Schedule

Subject to change based on class needs.

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments
August 31, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction and orientation ▪ Blackboard ▪ Braille and the braille cell ▪ Braille writers ▪ Perky Duck ▪ Lesson 1: The Braille Alphabet 	<p>Read: Ashcroft: Introduction and Chapter 1 Submit: Student information card and Assignment 1 by Sept 7.</p>
September 7, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 2: Alphabetic Wordsigns, Capitalization and Punctuation • Practical research: ABC Braille Study overview and discussion groups 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 2 Research articles posted on Blackboard Submit: Assignment 2 by Sept 14</p>
September 14, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 3: Numbers, punctuation continued • Strong contractions • Slate and stylus • Organizations and support for braille, code, literacy, transcription and certification 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 3 Wormsley & D'Andrea: Ch 1 Bring your slate and stylus to every class! Submit: Assignment 3 by Sept 21</p>
September 21, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 4: Contraction groupings, shortform words, punctuation cont'd • Emergent literacy and braille readiness • Braille and Slate & Stylus Checkpoint 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 4 Wormsley & D'Andrea Ch 2 Submit: Checkpoint 1 by date specified Assignment 4 by September 28</p>

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments
September 28, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 5: Initial letter contractions • Designing and implementing a braille instruction curriculum for students who have visual impairments 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 5 Wormsley & D'Andrea Chs 3&4</p> <p>Submit: Assignment 5 by October 5</p>
October 5, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 6: Part word contractions • Review for midterm • Considerations for students with other disabilities and those whose primary language is not English • Braille reading and writing goals 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 6 Wormsley & D'Andrea Chs 5&6</p> <p>Submit: Assignment 6 by October 12</p>
October 12, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 7: Shortform, partial and whole word contractions • Midterm exam 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 7</p> <p>Submit: Midterm exam by date specified on the test Assignment 7 by October 19</p>
October 19, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 8: Initial letter contractions and more shortform words • Guest Speakers: Braille Readers Panel (tentatively scheduled) 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 8</p> <p>Submit: Assignment 8 by October 26</p>
October 26, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 9: Lower word signs • Braille literacy assessments 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 9 Wormsley & D'Andrea Ch 7</p> <p>Submit: Assignment 9 by November 2</p>

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments
November 2, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 10: Lower groupings and more shortform words • Techniques and technologies for braille literacy and daily braille reading/writing for students with visual impairments 	Read: Ashcroft Chapter 10 Submit: Assignment 10 by November 9
November 9, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 11: Final letter groupings • Applying research to practice: article discussions • Reading disabilities and braille literacy: detection and intervention 	Read: Ashcroft Chapter 11 Research articles on Blackboard Assignment 11 by November 16
November 16, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 12: Additional symbols • Final exam review 	Read: Ashcroft Chapter 12 Submit: Assignment 12 by November 23 Graduate project for graduate students only
November 23, 2016	No class meeting: Thanksgiving Break	Submit: Written reflection and essay by November 30
November 30, 2016	Final Exam	Submit: Final exam due by December 7, 2016
December 7, 2016	Final exam and assignment comments and discussion	