



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

Fall 2019
EDSE 412: Braille Code
Section DL1 CRN: 80489
Section 6V1 CRN: TBD
3 – Credits

Instructor: Dr. Kim Avila	Meeting Dates: 08/28/2019 – 12/07/2019
Phone: 703.993.5625	Meeting Day(s): Wednesday
E-Mail: kavila@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): 4:30 pm – 7:10 pm
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 3:00-4:30; 7:10-8:00pm (virtual) or by appointment	Meeting Location: On-line
Office Location: Finley 203a	Other Phone: N/A

Quick Links

[Assignments](#) [Class Schedule](#)

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

Prerequisite(s): EDSE 311 Concurrent enrollment is also permitted

Co-requisite(s): EDSE 311

Course Description

Provides understanding of the literary code of Braille and its implications for educational/literacy programs for students with a visual disability. Enables students to better understand the Braille code and how to teach it to students with a visual disability.

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 teacher candidates/students should contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703) 993-3670 for assistance. All other teacher candidates/students should refer to their faculty advisor.

Advising Tip

Did you know you may be able to take graduate Special Education courses now that you can later apply to your graduate degree program? For more information on taking special education coursework for Reserve Graduate Credit, talk with an advisor: <http://gse.gmu.edu/special-education/advising/>.

Course Delivery Method

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

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using a synchronous format via the Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on August 27, 2019.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers

To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems

- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students will need a headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool.

- 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 course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - Windows Media Player: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

Expectations

- Course Week:
Our course week will begin on the day that our synchronous meetings take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes.
- Log-in Frequency:
Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week. In addition, students must log-in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings.
- Participation:
Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- Technical Competence:
Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- Technical Issues:
Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- Workload:
Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- Instructor Support:
Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students

should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

- **Netiquette:**

The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

- **Accommodations:**

Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services or with their consortium university disability accommodation office.

Learner Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, teacher candidates/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.

Professional Standards

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. The goal of the special education programs is to improve the lives, productivity, and education of persons with disabilities. Courses within the special education programs align with the standards established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major international special education professional organization, and the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC). Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards: CEC Standard 1: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences (InTASC 2); CEC Standard 3: Curricular Content Knowledge (InTASC 4); CEC Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies (InTASC 7, 8).

Required Textbooks

1. [Holbrook, M. C., & D'Andrea, F. M. \(2014\). *Ashcroft's Programmed Instruction: Unified English Braille \(Fifth Edition\)*. Germantown, TN: Scalars Publishing. ISBN: 978-0-9960353-0-9.](#)
2. [Holbrook, M. C., D'Andrea, F. M., & Sanford, L. D. \(2014\). *Ashcroft's Programmed Instruction Companion Reader: Unified English Braille*. Germantown, TN: Scalars Publishing. ISBN: 978-0-9960353-1-6.](#)

Available from Mason's Electronic Library (you do not need to purchase)

Swenson, A. (2016). *Beginning with Braille: Firsthand Experiences with a Balanced Approach to Literacy* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: AFB Press.

Recommended Textbooks

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Required Resources

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.

Instruction Manual for Braille Transcribing (2015). National Library Service, Washington DC.

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.

Wormsley, D. P., & D'Andrea, F. (1997). *Instructional strategies for braille literacy*. American Foundation for the Blind. New York N.Y.: AFB Press.

Additional Readings

Posted on Blackboard

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy).

Tk20 Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement

It is critical for the special education program to collect data on how our students are meeting accreditation standards. Every teacher candidate/student registered for an EDSE course with a required Performance-based Assessment (PBA) is required to upload the PBA to Tk20 (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one-time course or part of an undergraduate minor). A PBA is a specific assignment, presentation, or project that best demonstrates one or more CEC, InTASC or other standard connected to the course. A PBA is evaluated in two ways. The first is for a grade, based on the instructor's grading rubric. The second is for program accreditation purposes. Your instructor will provide directions as to how to upload the PBA to Tk20.

For EDSE 412, the required PBA is (NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE). Please check to verify your ability to upload items to Tk20 before the PBA due date.

Assignments and/or Examinations

Performance-based Assessment (Tk20 submission required)

N/A

College Wide Common Assessment (TK20 submission required)

N/A

Performance-based Common Assignments (No Tk20 submission required)

N/A

Other Assignments

Assignment	Points	Due Date
<u>Participation (3 points per session x 13 sessions)</u>	39	Weekly
<u>Homework assignments (12 @ 8 points each)</u>	96	Weekly

Assignment	Points	Due Date
<u>How to guide: Braille and slate & stylus</u>	20	September 25
<u>Midterm exam</u>	30	October 9
<u>Written Reflection and Essay on Braille Instruction and Current Issues</u>	25	November 27
<u>Final exam</u>	50	Specified on final exam
Total	260	

Homework (12 @ 8 points each)

Homework assignments will consist of varying activities specified each week. Each homework assignment is worth 8 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.

How to guide: Braille and slate & stylus (20 points)

Each candidate will demonstrate skills needed for proficient use of the manual braille and slate & stylus by creating a “How to Guide” for parents, teachers, or others who can benefit from learning about the use of these devices. Each candidate will prepare a video describing parts of the braille and slate & stylus, demonstrate proper paper insertion, braille, and removal. A short passage will be assigned for braille on the braille and slate and stylus, which will be mailed to the instructor.

Midterm Exam (30 points)

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

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

The reflection and essay will be based on lecture content and readings. Questions will range from policies governing braille usage and implementation, to case studies IEP goal development, data collection, and reporting and instructional planning for braille literacy.

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 to administration procedures, and mail it according to instructor directions.

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance/Participation

Active participation in all sessions is very important, as many of the activities in class are planned in such a way that they cannot 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. Each week, participation activities for points will vary and may include, but are not limited to: discussions, surveys, quizzes, braille transcription submissions and readings, and written reflections. To earn full participation points, candidates must enter the synchronous classroom by the start of class and remain for the duration.

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.

Grading Scale		
	Points	Percent
A	247-260	95-100
A-	234-246	90-94
B+	231-233	89
B	221-230	85-88
B-	208-220	80-84
C	182-207	70-79
D	156-181	60-69
F	<156	69

*Note: The George Mason University Honor Code will be strictly enforced. Students are responsible for reading and understanding the Code. “To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.” Work submitted must be your own or with proper citations (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. In the College of Education and Human Development, dispositions are formally and separately evaluated in at least two points in each student’s program – a self-evaluation at the start of their program, and a university supervisor’s evaluation during internship. In special education licensure programs, the self-evaluation is an online survey distributed via email upon program entry, and the internship evaluation is completed by instructors in EDSE 783, EDSE 784, and EDSE 785. When dispositions are assessed, it is important that for areas where a positive disposition is ‘occasionally evident’ or ‘rarely evident,’ the student takes steps to grow as an educator. See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/eпо/candidate-dispositions>.

Class Schedule

*Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments
August 28	<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</p> <p>Submit: Student information card and braille participation</p>
September 4	<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</p> <p>Due: Assignment 1</p>
September 11	<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 Readings posted on Blackboard</p> <p>Bring your slate and stylus to every class!</p> <p>Due: Assignment 2</p>
September 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 4: Contraction groupings, shortform words, punctuation cont'd • Emergent literacy and braille readiness 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 4</p> <p>Braille Readiness Grid</p> <p>Readings posted on Blackboard</p> <p>Due: Assignment 3</p>
September 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 5: Initial letter contractions • Designing and implementing a braille instruction curriculum for 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 5</p> <p>Perkins Podcast: Teaching Braille Reading and Writing Existing Curricula</p>

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments
	students who have visual impairments	Building on Patterns UEB Too Mangold NLS Curriculum: Chapter 12 Readings posted on Blackboard Due: How to Guide: Brailer and Slate and Stylus Assignment 4
October 2	<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 	Read: Ashcroft Chapter 6 Readings posted on Blackboard Due: Assignment 5
October 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 7: Shortform, partial and whole word contractions • Midterm exam 	Read: Ashcroft Chapter 7 Readings posted on Blackboard Submit: Midterm exam by date specified on the test Due: Assignment 6
October 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 8: Initial letter contractions and more shortform words • Guest Speakers: Braille Readers Panel (tentatively scheduled) 	Read: Ashcroft Chapter 8 Readings posted on Blackboard Due: Assignment 7

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments
October 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 9: Lower word signs • Braille literacy assessments 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 9</p> <p>Assessment of Braille Literacy Skills: UEB and EBAE</p> <p>Readings posted on Blackboard</p> <p>Due: Assignment 8</p>
October 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 10: Lower groupings and more shortform words • Applying research to practice: article discussions 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 10</p> <p>Research articles on Blackboard and Conroy, P., & Collins, P. (2012). Mnemonic Devices for Braille Instruction</p> <p>Due: Assignment 9</p>
November 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 11: Final letter groupings • Techniques and technologies for braille literacy and daily braille reading/writing for students with visual impairments 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 11</p> <p>AFB Braille Technology</p> <p>TSBVI Braille Technology</p> <p>Readings posted on Blackboard</p> <p>Assignment 10</p>
November 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 12: Additional symbols • Final exam review 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 12</p> <p>Readings posted on Blackboard</p> <p>Due: Assignment 11</p>

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments
November 20	Final Exam	Due: Assignment 12
November 27	No class meeting: Thanksgiving Break	Due: Written reflection and essay
December 4	Final exam and assignment comments and discussion	

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: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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 with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services or with their consortium university disability accommodation office. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/>.

Appendix

Assessment Rubric(s)

Task	Master	Proficient	Unsatisfactory	Points earned/points possible
Demonstrates use of manual braille and slate & stylus; provides directions and instruction on device use.	10 Candidate provides clear and accurate directions and demonstration for loading and removing paper and brailleing. Correct position and accurate use of braille and slate & stylus parts are used. Candidate gives meaningful and clear instructions on accurate use of braille that can be easily followed by a novice braille user. Clear and accurate terminology with	8-9 Candidate provides accurate directions and demonstration for loading and removing paper and brailleing; Correct position and accurate use of braille and slate & stylus parts are used. Correct terminology and parts of the equipment are identified. Directions for use are clear.	0-7 Candidate provides limited, incomplete, and/or inaccurate descriptions of each device. Directions and demonstration for use are incorrect, not sequenced properly, and/or erroneous. Demonstration documents unsatisfactory use of devices and terminology used is incorrect or limited.	/10

Task	Master	Proficient	Unsatisfactory	Points earned/points possible
	<p>explanations is provided with descriptive information on parts of each device.</p> <p>Instructional use strategies are practical and optimal for target population and demonstrate mastery of use.</p>			
<p>Braille sample for the manual brailer.</p>	<p>5 Assignment 1: completion (1pt) and quality/accuracy (4pts).</p> <p>Sample is brailled in its entirety, is clear and formatted correctly with embossing quality that is consistent and even and contains no erasures.</p> <p>No contraction, misbrailled characters, or other errors are present in the transcription.</p>	<p>4 Assignment 1: completion (1pt) and quality/accuracy (3pts).</p> <p>Sample is brailled in its entirety. Braille quality is mostly clear and formatted correctly. Embossing quality is mostly consistent and even and contains fewer than 2 erasures.</p> <p>No more than two contraction, misbrailled characters, or</p>	<p>0-3 Assignment 1: completion (1pt) and quality/accuracy (2pts).</p> <p>Sample is not brailled in its entirety. Braille quality is not clear and/or not formatted correctly. Embossing quality is inconsistent and uneven, and/or contains more than 2 erasures.</p> <p>More than two contraction, misbrailled</p>	<p>/5</p>

Task	Master	Proficient	Unsatisfactory	Points earned/points possible
	Paper is correctly oriented.	<p>other errors are present in the transcription.</p> <p>Paper is correctly oriented.</p>	<p>characters, or other errors are present in the transcription.</p> <p>Paper is not correctly oriented.</p>	
<p>Braille sample for the slate & stylus</p>	<p>5 Assignment 2: completion (1) and accuracy (4)</p> <p>Sample is brailled in its entirety, is clear and formatted correctly with embossing quality that is consistent and even and contains no erasures.</p> <p>No contraction, misbrailled characters, or other errors are present in the transcription.</p> <p>Paper is correctly oriented.</p> <p>Slate is optimally positioned for</p>	<p>4 Assignment 2: completion (1) and accuracy (3)</p> <p>Sample is brailled in its entirety. Braille quality is mostly clear and formatted correctly. Embossing quality is mostly consistent and even and contains fewer than 2 erasures.</p> <p>No more than two contraction, misbrailled characters, or other errors are present in the transcription.</p> <p>Paper is correctly oriented.</p>	<p>0-3 Assignment 2: completion (1) and accuracy (2)</p> <p>Sample is not brailled in its entirety. Braille quality is not clear and/or not formatted correctly. Embossing quality is inconsistent and uneven, and/or contains more than 2 erasures.</p> <p>More than two contraction, misbrailled characters, or other errors are present in the transcription.</p>	/5

Task	Master	Proficient	Unsatisfactory	Points earned/points possible
	level transcription and aligned.	Slate is positioned for level transcription and aligned.	Paper is not correctly oriented. Slate is not positioned for level transcription and aligned.	
	Total			/20