

Emergent and Early Literacy for Students with Complex Language and Learning Needs

- Wednesdays, May 20 to July 8, 2009 Interactive sessions, 4:00-7:00 p.m.
- PLUS weekly on-line reading/research modules

Severe Disabilities State-wide Consortium Sites

- Radford University EDSP 660: Host site plus Roanoke Higher Education Center and at-home students
- George Mason University EDSE 557

Course Facilitators/Instructors

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Office Hours: I would be glad to talk with you outside of class. You can email me at ealtieri@radford.edu and we can arrange a time to talk over the phone. Also, I will be available after each class meeting.

Course Description

This course provides an understanding of the development of emergent and early literacy in developmentally-typical learners and learners with complex language and learning needs, and the inter-relationship of language and literacy development. Emphasis will be on identifying effective research-based strategies for promoting and enhancing emergent literacy and early reading and writing skills for children and youth with language and intellectual disabilities and English language learners with disabilities. Field experience required: Course participants must identify an appropriate target student and engage in observation and assessment activities with that student and family during the first half of the course. Final product includes the development of a literacy development plan for the student.

Nature of Course Delivery

This will be a reading-intensive course. All students will need basic literature/research search skills as well as high-speed internet access. Learning activities in this class will include the following:

1. Discussion and participation during interactive class sessions and in Blackboard
2. Software and hardware presentations
3. Group and independent class activities
4. Class presentations
5. Written papers using the American Psychological Association format (6th edition)
<http://www.apa.org/publications/>

Student Outcomes

This course is designed to enable students to:

- Describe language development and emergent literacy skills
- Describe the nature, function, and rules of language.
- Describe disorders and deviations in language and related areas.

- Demonstrate an understanding of components of literacy acquisition, including sound/symbol relationships, explicit phonics instruction, syllables, phonemes, and morphemes.
- Demonstrate an understanding of how syntax and semantics interact in the construction of meaning in literacy and its relationship to reading comprehension.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of on-going assessment and the planning of reading instruction.
 - Identify and implement a variety of early reading comprehension strategies
 - Identify and implement strategies and activities that foster an appreciation of a variety of literature and independent reading;
 - Demonstrate knowledge of best practices and strategies in reading instruction for students with severe disabilities

Relationship of Course to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

This course is part of The Virginia Consortium for Teacher Preparation in Severe Disabilities, a grant from the Virginia Department of Education that includes George Mason University, Virginia Commonwealth University, the University of Virginia, Radford University, and Norfolk State University. Through the completion of the SD Consortium program, students are eligible for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education area of Severe Disabilities/Special Education – Adapted Curriculum K-12. This program complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Virginia Department of Education. Furthermore, the SD Consortium strives to uphold the Special Education Content Standards established by the Council for Exceptional Children, the major special education professional organization.

The Virginia Licensure Regulations for School Personnel are listed on the following website:
<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Compliance/TeacherED/nulicvr.pdf>

The CEC Standards are listed on the following web site:
http://www.cec.sped.org/ps/perf_based_stds/standards.html#standards

CEC Standard 6: Language

Special educators understand typical and atypical language development and the ways in which exceptional conditions can interact with an individual's experience with and use of language. Special educators use individualized strategies to enhance language development and teach communication skills to individuals with exceptional learning needs (ELN). Special educators are familiar with augmentative, alternative, and assistive technologies to support and enhance communication of individuals with exceptional needs. Special educators match their communication methods to an individual's language proficiency and cultural and linguistic differences. Special educators provide effective language models, and they use communication strategies and resources to facilitate understanding of subject matter for individuals with ELN whose primary language is not English. Beginning special educators demonstrate their mastery of language for and with individuals with ELN through the mastery of the CEC Common Core Knowledge and Skills, as well as through the appropriate CEC Specialty Area(s) Knowledge and Skills for which the preparation program is preparing candidates.

Course specific competencies and standards are listed on the following website:
<http://kih.d.gmu.edu/sdc/competencies.html>

Course Texts:

Copeland, S.R. & Keefe, E.B. (2007). *Effective Literacy Instruction for Students with Moderate or Severe Disabilities*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing

Downing, J.E. (2005). *Teaching Literacy to Students with Significant Disabilities*. Corwin Press.

Kliewer, C. (2008). *Seeing All Kids as Readers*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing

Additional readings: Either a PDF copy of an article or a URL to link to the reading will be posted in the Assignments folder on Blackboard.

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://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>

VCU: www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/rg7honor.html.

UVA: <http://www.virginia.edu/honor/>

Radford: http://www.radford.edu/~dos-web/handbook02-03/Honor_Code.pdf

NSU: http://www.nsu.edu/student_judicial/policy.html

Attendance

Since many of the classes involve activities, videotapes, discussion, etc., regular attendance is vital to gain maximum benefit. Anyone who misses more than two classes will lose 25 points for each class missed after the second absence. Significant tardiness or early departure will count as an absence. If you know ahead of time you will not be in class, please contact me the week before the class.

Accommodations for Disability

At all the participating universities, accommodations can be made with the instructor if a student has a disability. If this is relevant to you, please contact me on the first night of class (can be through email) and indicate both what the disability is and how your university has made accommodations for you in the past. I will discuss (via email) this further with you until we reach consensus. University specific information regarding eligibility, services and accommodations can be found at:

GMU: <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/>

VCU: <http://www.students.vcu.edu/dss/index.html>

UVA: <http://www.virginia.edu/vpsa/services.html>

Radford: <http://www.radford.edu/~dro/>

NSU: <http://www.nsu.edu/disabilityservices/index.html>

Inclement Weather

If classes are cancelled at Radford University a message will be posted on the class Blackboard site and all class members will receive an email. Because such cancellations are often at the last minute, it may be difficult to get this message prior to leaving for class. If in doubt, dial the University phone number or visit the university website. Do not email us; I will email you regarding weather as soon as it is announced. Please note, the cancellation of classes due to inclement weather is determined by the decision of the instructing university only. If the instructing university is open and operational then you are expected to attend class.

Cell Phones and Weapons

All cell phones and beepers should be deactivated while in the classroom. Also, University rules at all participating universities prohibit the possession any firearm, other weapon, or explosive. Please consult the student handbook and your university for specific information concerning this policy at your university.

Course Materials

This course gives you access to PowerPoint files, class lecture notes, handouts, and copyrighted articles. For the articles (available on Blackboard), copyright laws must be followed. Only one copy per student will be printed. The PowerPoint presentations, notes, and handouts are provided on Blackboard for your convenience and to facilitate your mastery of concepts presented in this course; PowerPoints will be available on Blackboard by noon of the class day or sooner. All of these materials should be regarded as authored materials, which if used or referred to must be fully credited through reference to the author, the class, and date. If used beyond citation, permission of the instructor/author is required.

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://blackboard.gmu.edu>. 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. Although Microsoft PowerPoint is part of the Microsoft Office Suite, students who do not have PowerPoint can download a free viewer that will allow at <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=D1649C22-B51F-4910-93FC-4CF2832D3342&displaylang=en> 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>

Students must use Microsoft Office 2007. If you are still using Microsoft Office 2003, you should download the converter that is available at www.microsoft.com

Course Facilitators

Each class will have a facilitator or assistant who will assist with the class. Learn who that person is as they will be taking role and keeping track of class participation and reporting it to me weekly. However, if you think you must miss a class, please email me ahead if at all possible. Because of the potential of

confusion caused by people speaking at the same time in this multi-site course, it will be important to raise hands before asking questions or making comments. Along with the facilitators, I will try hard to enforce this rule and to be alert to questions from the distance sites. Facilitators will also FAX in-class written tasks following class or early the next day to me. When in class assignment forms or handouts are sent the day of the class, facilitators will need to download and copy them for class members.

Blackboard Assistance

This course requires that you be a regular email user and be able to use various features of Blackboard (sign on, download materials, hand in completed assignments electronically in the drop box). You may direct your questions about Blackboard to the facilitator at the class site as well as to email Marci Kinas Jerome (mkinas@gmu.edu). She will be the best resource. We are all learning this system together and some of us will be faster than others. I know that I will also rely on Marci for assistance. Expect some snafus along the way, but please help each other out as you can. You will want to download all the required materials early in the semester or as soon as they are posted. Please note, that some handouts/readings may be given to you in class that are not posted on blackboard. Also check Blackboard for announcements. Sometimes I will place handouts for class on Blackboard and will alert you by email or in the previous class; in these cases please download and bring them to class.

Remote Site Viewing

All Consortium courses are recorded and archived on a video-streaming server. Students and faculty are welcome to view previous classes at <http://torrent.gmu.edu> and click on the link for ESDE 557 in the Public Folders link. Classes are listed by date and time. Since the Consortium includes some remote site students, all consortium classes are broadcast live via the Internet at the same website. It is the policy of the consortium that students attending classes at university sites are expected to be present at those university sites during class time. However, in instances where students would otherwise miss class (in accordance to the attendance policy) students may participate in the class via the live web stream. However, students who participate in the web-stream instead of at their university site are still subject to the response cost as outlined in the attendance policy for this course. Directions for viewing the video-stream can be found in the course Blackboard site.

GMU Students Only: TaskStream

The signature assignment required for this course must be submitted electronically to Mason's NCATE management system, TaskStream: (<https://www.taskstream.com>).

Note: Every student registered for any EDSE course as of the Fall 2007 semester is required to begin submitting signature assignments to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective or part of an undergraduate minor). TaskStream information is available at <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/sped/>. Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream may result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN).

Assignments

A description of each assignment appears below. A detailed explanation will be posted in the appropriate unit in Blackboard and explained during the appropriate class time.

On-line learning modules 70 points - There will be a total of seven on-line learning modules related to course topics. These will be reading-intensive assignments with a writing/discussion component. Each will be worth up to 10 points each. Submissions will show strong evidence of comprehension and application of key concepts contained in each set of readings, as well as integration with other skills and concepts gained across the course. Directions will be posted in Blackboard each week.

Literacy Case Study 130 points - This is a signature assignment for our program. You will earn up to 50 points for your PowerPoint presentations on your target student and 75 points for your literacy plan. Select a target student for your literacy case study.

1. **PPT presentations:** For each class session, the week's assignment is to apply the content of our class meeting and readings to the student you have selected.
 - a. Each week you will write a reflection on the class material, keeping your student in mind. Apply any knowledge earned during any observations of the student, our class meetings and from your readings. You do not turn in this reflection but are using it as a way to use writing to learn and synthesize. You will also use these note to develop your PowerPoint presentations for class the next week.
 - b. By class time the following week, you will submit to Blackboard a brief PPT presentation on your student which includes the connections you have made for your student with the previous class topic and highlights of your written reflection. Use bullets and a maximum of 4-6 slides.
 - c. During class, all students will give a brief oral presentation on their case study and some will be selected to do their PPT. (This will depend on the amount of time in each class meeting set aside for PPTs.) Specifics for each week's assignment will be posted on BB.
 - d. **You will complete a total of 5 Powerpoint presentations** on your target student. Each will be worth up to 10 points each. PPTs will show strong evidence of comprehension and application of key concepts contained in each set of readings to your target student.
 - e. The final PowerPoint (PPT #5) will be an overview of your literacy plan (see more information below).

2. **Literacy Case Study:** Using actual observations of your student, readings from class, class lectures, and your weekly reflections and PPTs, describe your target student and their literacy history and develop a literacy plan. Write up this case study in an 8-10 page paper (minimum) using APA formatting and referencing. On the last night of class, you will present Part II The literacy plan in a final PPT presentation.

The case study should specifically address each major component from lectures and readings. These include:

Part One: Literacy History

- a. Literacy experience and FAPE- barriers to literacy for your student and the impact of literacy/lack of access to literacy and literacy instruction on your student's life and educational history (5 pts.)
- b. Literacy and communication - the relationship between literacy and communication and how this has impacted your student's life. (5 pts.)
- c. A summary of your student's literacy skills using the literacy assessment framework. (5 pts.)

Part Two: Literacy Plan

- a. Identify a range of literacy activities you will put in place in your classroom and for your student for the next school year. (25 pts.) Use the three components described by Browder:
 - i. Access/engagement with a range of literature (include titles of the some of the texts you will introduce/use)
 - ii. Functional reading/writing within chronologically age appropriate functional activities
 - iii. Instruction in reading and writing skills - potential vocabulary to be taught, and how you will address phonological awareness and phonics, comprehension and fluency, and writing
- b. Create a literacy goal for your student and include specific instructional strategies you intend to use during literacy instruction. (20 pts.)
- c. Evaluating progress- How will you evaluate the progress of your student? Be sure to link your evaluation to the IEP and VAAP. (10 pts.)
- d. AT- What assistive technologies will you incorporate into your literacy instruction for your student? (10 pts.)

Grading: Total points possible 200.

A (94-100%) = 188-200; A- (91-93%) = 181-187; B+ (88-90%) = 175-180; B (84-87%) = 168-174; B- (81-83%) = 161-167; C+ (78-80%) = 155-160; C (74-77%) = 147-154; C- (71-73%) = 142-146; D (61% and below) = 141 or less

Course grades will be calculated by summing the points earned on assignments along with a consideration of the average and range of performance of others in class. All written products must be edited before submission. **No submission with significant problems with writing quality and/or errors in writing mechanics will be eligible to receive the grade of A.** The average and range of performance of others in class may also be considered in determining the need for a grading curve. By the third class, you will be able to access your current standing in class on Blackboard. There will be a penalty of one letter grade for assignments submitted after the due date. However, I will work with you if there are extenuating circumstances – You must contact me in advance of the due date to **contract** for an extension. Any incomplete grades need to be completed within six weeks following the end of the course or final grades will be reduced a grade for each additional month delay.

Emergent and Early Literacy for Students with Complex Language and Learning Needs

Class Schedule with Readings and Assignment Due Dates Summer 2009

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
5/20 Class	Overview of class, syllabus and assignments, goals for semester What is emergent and early literacy?	Browder, D. et al (2008). Literacy for students with severe developmental disabilities: What should we teach and what should we hope to achieve? Johnson, D. & Sulzby, E. (1999). Critical issue: Addressing the literacy needs of emergent and early readers	
	On-line Module #1	Read the introductory chapters to the Art of Teaching Reading and the Art of Teaching Writing by Lucy Calkins.	Blackboard posting and response to three peers
5/27	Development of early and emergent literacy in typical learners and learners with complex needs, Assessment strategies and resources for typical learners at the emergent/early literacy levels	Copeland & Keefe, Ch. 1 The power of literacy & Ch. 3 The role of language and communication as the basis for literacy Downing, Ch.1 Literacy and a free public education & Ch. 2 Literacy and communication	Bring notes to class for discussion with key concepts and be prepared to answer questions about the relevant ideas and strategies you will apply to your target students
	On-line Module #2	Read 1 st half of Kliewer, "Seeing All Kids as Readers"	Reader Response Journal in BB
6/3	Student Sharing: Ties to last week's readings and class Assessment Strategies (continued) – Using the Literacy Assessment Framework	Downing, Ch. 3 Planning Literacy Activities Copeland & Keefe, Ch. 2 Creating Rich Literacy Learning Environments for All Students. From the book, <i>Teaching Early Literacy: Development, Assessment and Instruction</i> , Ch. 2 Exploring developing literacy and Ch. 3 Developing literacy and English Language Learners	PPT #1 due
6/3	On-line Module #3	Read 2 nd half of Kliewer, "Seeing All Kids as Readers"	Reader Response Journal in BB
6/10	Student Sharing: Ties to last week's readings and class Program Description: Early Literacy Skill Builders program	Downing, Ch. 4 Teaching Literacy Skills	PPT#2 due
6/10	On-line Module #4	Read 2 nd half of Kliewer, "Seeing All Kids as Readers"	Reader Response Journal in BB
6/17	Student Sharing: Ties to last week's readings and class Program Descriptions: Start-to-Finish Literacy Starters and Star Reporter Hands-on lab with programs	Copeland & Keefe, Ch. 4 Word Recognition Instruction, Ch. 5 Fluency, Ch. 6 Reading Comprehension, Ch. 7 Vocabulary Development ASOL/ VAAP Instructional Resources http://www.ttaonline.org/staff/assessment/vaap_res_assess.asp? http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Elem_M/Foundati onBlocks.pdf	PPT#3 due Bring lap-tops and report to either GMU or RU site for opportunity to engage in hands-on work and interaction with programs.
6/17	On-line Module #5	Extended dialogue around starting points for literacy plan and stumbling blocks.	BB threaded discussion in small cross-site groups

6/24	<p>Student Sharing: Ties to last week's readings and class</p> <p>Guest lecturer: Dr. Liz Lanter. Working with SLPs - language and literacy development for children with communication handicaps, esp. autism spectrum disorders.</p> <p>Program Description: Meville to Weville.</p>	<p>Copeland & Keefe, Ch. 8 Written Communication, Ch. 10 Organizing Literacy Instruction, Ch. 11 Literacy for Life</p>	PPT#4 due
6/24	On-line Module #6	Summarize and critique a research study or research-based program that targets specific literacy instructional strategies for students with complex needs.	BB threaded discussion in small cross-site groups based on school level of target student. Share summary and critique, discuss applications for your target students
7/1	<p>Student Sharing: Ties to last week's readings and class</p> <p>Assistive Technology in Literacy Assessment, Instruction and Data Collection</p>	<p>Thoroughly explore the website and all links at the Center for Literacy and Disability website.</p> <p>Copeland & Keefe Ch. 9 Supporting Literacy development with Assistive Technology</p> <p>Bring low-tech, high-tech tools to class to share</p>	Using readings, choose one Assistive Technology tool that will support literacy assessment, instruction and/or data collection for your target student. Do web search for information about how to purchase and use that tool. Post entry in discussion board with links.
7/5	On-line Module #7	<p>Learn about how to create easy-to-read accessible books</p> <p>Digital books http://tarheelreader.org/ http://bookbuilder.cast.org/ Remnant Books http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/files/how-to-handouts/RemnantBooks_000.pdf Tactile and tactual books http://www.afb.org/Section.asp?SectionID=6&TopicID=97&DocumentID=1258 http://www.tactilebooks.org/making/index.html http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/resources/tactual-book-kit-directions/</p>	Create a simple book for your target student and share in Blackboard (make sure to reference and discuss in your literacy plan). Due July 5
7/8	Presentation of Literacy Case Studies	Downing , Ch. 5 Evaluating Progress	Final PPT due on Literacy Plan Paper Due – Literacy Case Study