

*George Mason University*  
*College of Education and Human Development*  
*Early Childhood Education Program*

**EDSE 557** (CRN 74095 - 001)

**Foundations of Language and Literacy for Diverse Learners (3:3:0)**

Fall 2010

7:20-10:00 PM Wednesdays, September 1, 2010 – December 15, 2010

Robinson Hall B 104

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

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**Office hours:** Appointments between 3:30 PM – 7 PM class days; after 8:45 PM on short class days

**Course Description**

Examines complexity of language acquisition and literacy development. Focuses on typical and atypical language development, connections between language and literacy, and diversity of communication styles in families and cultures. Emphasizes first and second language acquisition.

**Nature of Course Delivery**

The class will have lecture, discussion, and group work formats, as well as asynchronous on-line activities. There are assignments that involve interacting with young children. All aspects of the class require active participation of all students. On some occasions, while most of the class takes time to work in small group on-line activities, other students will meet with the instructor in small groups or one-to-one.

**Learner Outcomes**

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

1. Describe language (especially English) and the growth of vocabulary, structures (phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics), functions (pragmatics and discourse rhetoric), and acts (expressive, receptive, metalinguistic).
2. Describe social, cultural, affective, cognitive, and educational factors that play a role in language acquisition and literacy learning (reading and writing).
3. Describe reading and writing learning processes including interactions among phonological awareness (including phonemic awareness), word recognition (including phonics and decoding), reading fluency, reading comprehension, spelling (orthography and developmental), and writing.
4. Explain current research on typical and atypical language development, first and second language acquisition, literacy in various settings, as well as language and literacy assessment and instruction.
5. Describe assistive technology for early language and literacy instruction.

**Professional Standards**

This concentration is approved for licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia and it complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The course content has been designed to address the following standards and competencies.

***Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)***

- Initial Content 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. 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 exceptional learning needs whose primary language is not English.

[http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ProfessionalDevelopment/ProfessionalStandards/What\\_Every\\_Special\\_Educator\\_Should\\_Know\\_6th\\_Ed\\_revised\\_2009.pdf](http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ProfessionalDevelopment/ProfessionalStandards/What_Every_Special_Educator_Should_Know_6th_Ed_revised_2009.pdf) (pp. 48-9).

### ***National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)***

- Standard 1. Promoting Child Development and Learning. Students prepared in early childhood degree programs are grounded in a child development knowledge base. They use their understanding of young children's characteristics and needs and of the multiple interacting influences on children's development and learning to create environments that are healthy, respectful, supportive, and challenging for each child. <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/ProfPrepStandards09.pdf>

### ***Virginia Professional Studies Requirements***

- Early/primary preK-3 and elementary education preK-6 – language acquisition and reading: Skills listed for these endorsement areas represent the minimum competencies that a beginning teacher must be able to demonstrate. These skills are not intended to limit the scope of a beginning teacher's program. Additional knowledge and skills that add to a beginning teacher's competencies to deliver instruction and improve student achievement should be included as part of a quality learning experience. Skills in this area shall be designed to impart a thorough understanding of the complex nature of language acquisition and reading, to include phonemic awareness, concept of print, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension strategies. Additional skills shall include proficiency, in writing strategies, as well as the ability to foster appreciation of a variety of literature and independent reading. Knowledge of typical language development, components and sequence of literacy development, and the connection between language development and literacy must be evident in coursework. Knowledge and skills in specific methods by which adults elicit and foster the components of language development must be included. [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/licensure\\_regs.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/licensure_regs.pdf) (pp. 25-6)

### ***Virginia Early Childhood Competencies***

- Knowledge and Skills: Reading/English  
**Level 1:** Provide opportunities through such activities as conversation, field trips, books, and expressive arts, for children to acquire skills in: Listening and speaking; Phonological awareness and alphabetic knowledge; Print awareness and concepts; Comprehension; Early writing;  
**Level 2:** Have a wide range of skills for promoting language and literacy that are sensitive to the language spoken in the child's home and that meet the needs of individual learners  
<http://www.earlychildhood.virginia.gov/documents/Competencies.pdf> (p. 51 )

### **Required Texts**

*Books available in bookstore and on two hour reserve in the GMU library:*

Ballenger, C. (1998). *Teaching other people's children: Literacy and learning in a bilingual classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Burns, M. S., Griffin, P., & Snow, C. E. (Eds.). (1999). *Starting out right: A guide to promoting children's reading success*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Genesee, F., Paradis, J., & Crago, M. B. (2004). *Dual language development & disorders*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

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

*Articles available electronically (Blackboard and GMU virtual library):*

August, D., Calderón, M. & Carlo, M. (2002). Transfer of skills from Spanish to English: A study of young learners (Report for practitioners, parents, and policy makers). Center for Applied Linguistics Washington, DC. [ <http://www.cal.org/acquiringliteracy/pdfs/skills-transfer.pdf> ]

- Burns, M. S. & Kidd, J. K. (2010). Learning to read. In Peterson, P., Baker, E. & McGaw, B. (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Education, Volume 5* (pp. 394-400). Oxford: Elsevier.
- Tabors, P.O., D.E. Beals, & Z.O. Weizman 2001. "You know what oxygen is?" Learning new words at home. In Dickinson, D. K. & Tabors, P. O. (Eds.), *Beginning literacy with language: Young children learning at home and school* (pp. 93-110). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes

*Optional:*

Conn-Powers, M. Cross, A., Traub, E. & Hutter-Pishgahi, L. (2006). The universal design of early education: Moving forward for all children. *Beyond the journal: Young Children on the Web*. [<http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/styles/iidc/defiles/ECC/SRUD-MovingForwardArticle.pdf> ]

National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). *Developing early literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel*. Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

Other optional readings and web material will available to students who wish to investigate more the topics brought up in lectures and discussions about language structure and functions, dialect and culture differences, atypical language development, and spelling (including work by Ratner, Heath, Labov, Delpit, Snow, Treiman, Roeper, de Villiers, Berko-Gleason).

## Course Requirements

### General Requirements

1. Complete all readings assigned. Because the class includes discussion and small group activities, it is imperative that students keep up with the readings in order to participate in class.
2. Turn off pagers and cell phones before class begins as the university requires. Laptops and other electronic devices should not be used during class time to check email, surf the web, or communicate with people unless it is part of the instructor designed class activity.
3. Turn assignments in on time, at the beginning of the class in which they are due. Students submit assignments electronically on the class blackboard (<https://courses.gmu.edu>) or via GMU email. Students are responsible for the electronic files arriving in time and in a format that can be downloaded and opened with the content intact. Students may supply printed copies if they doubt their electronic files will arrive on time and intact. Students occasionally have serious problems that prevent work completion; if so, students should consult with the instructor in a timely fashion to negotiate a remedy.

### Attendance

Attendance in class is important to students' learning; therefore, students are expected to attend each class session. Absences, tardiness, and leaving early may negatively affect course grades. If, due to an emergency, a student will not be in class, she or he must e-mail the instructor and call the office (703-993-3844) to leave a message for the instructor. The following policy is from the university course catalog:

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an

exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

### Written Assignments

All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation as graduate-level writing. The following are important aspects of academic writing:

1. Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.
2. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
3. Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. (Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.)
4. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

Work should be proofread carefully; use spell check but not only spell check! If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work. The conventions to be followed for academic writing are those in *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition*. All written work unless otherwise noted must follow American Psychological Association (APA) style and must be completed on a word processor. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals links on the GMU library web guide at <http://infoguides.gmu.edu/style>. The University's Writing Center (Robinson A114) provides facilities for helping students with writing (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>). Students for whom English is an additional language may be interested in the Writing Center's "opt-in ESL program" <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/esl-help.php>.

### Grading Criteria

A = 95 – 100	A- = 90 – 94	B+ = 87 – 89	B = 83 – 86
B- = 80 – 82	C = 70 – 79	F = < 70	

A+ is possible if work is of exceptional high quality and includes work above and beyond that required for the course.

### Grading Policy

All CEHD undergraduate and graduate students are held to the university grading policies as described in the Academic Policies section of the catalog:

<http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=1044>

Those students enrolled in a CEHD licensure program, however, must earn a B- or better in all licensure coursework. A degree-seeking graduate student will be dismissed after accumulating grades of F in two courses or 9 credits of unsatisfactory grades (C or F) in graduate courses. A 3.0 grade point average is required for completion of the graduate degree.

### CEHD Syllabus Statements of Expectations

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the George Mason University Honor Code. Please see the University Catalog (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=1039#Honor>) for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations, including plagiarism, are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? The student responsible for a task will perform that task. When a student relies on someone else's work in an aspect of the

performance of that task, the student will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/1301gen.html> Section “IV. Responsibilities” subsection “Users.”
- A student with a disability is eligible for academic accommodations so they can perform to their full potential and contribute fully to the class. The student should see the instructor and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS (<http://ods.gmu.edu>).
- Students must activate their GMU email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. Access to the course Blackboard depends on the GMU login and password.
- Other useful campus resources:
  - University Libraries “Ask a Librarian” <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>
  - Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): (703) 993-2380; <http://caps.gmu.edu>

University Policies: The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs.

*Note:* To determine whether the campus is closed due to inclement weather, call 703-993-1000 or go to [www.gmu.edu](http://www.gmu.edu).

## Assignments

### Attendance and Participation (15 points)

**throughout**

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

- Students attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period.
- Students complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class as is evidenced by their ability to discuss and write about the concepts presented and examined in the texts as well as participate fully in related activities. Students also review prior course work before class begins so that learning is cumulative and gaps or misunderstandings are handled along the way. In general for graduate and upper division courses, students can expect to devote three hours of work outside of class for every hour of scheduled class time. Most class meetings will begin with a “preface” based on previous home and class work.
- Students are actively involved in class learning experiences as is evidenced by (1) participating in all activities, (2) engaging in small and large group discussions – face to face or on-line, (3) completing written work related to the activities, and (4) supporting the participation and learning of classmates.
- Students show evidence of accountable talk and critical reflective thinking during discussions and activities.

### Brochure about assisting students with special needs (15 points)

**due October 20**

The purpose of the brochure is to help fellow teachers’ understand some aspect of assistive technology (AT) or Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and how it can be used to support children to overcome difficulties with language, reading, or writing. Students work as a team. Each

team will focus on a specific topic/device/approach, explore available research, prepare a brochure, distribute it to their classmates, and act as a panel to answer questions from peers.

The research activity on-line will contribute to this work; in addition, a brochure online activity will be made for each team. Team members will choose a specific focus for their work. The team will gather information to address the following about their chosen focus:

- What does the focus AT/UDL look like and how does it work?
- How does one identify children who need it and are likely to be helped by it?
- Which area/s of language and/or literacy is it helpful for?
- How is it used by children and teachers?
- How is it used to support specific curricular goals in language and/or literacy?
- What theories and empirical evidence support the use of the AT/UDL?

At two points in the team's work, the team will negotiate with the instructor. The choice of focus will be negotiated by the instructor in part governed by the need to avoid too much duplication and to encourage a wide range of topics in the class. The team will ask for instructor feedback on an outline of what they will include in their brochure.

See also the "Written Assignments" section above. Complete adherence to the APA style is not required in the brochure, but good academic writing standards should be observed. The style and format should be appropriate to the teacher audience for the brochure. Sources consulted will be indicated and teacher colleagues will be informed about how they can follow up on the information.

### **Research-based Instruction: Articles Analysis (35 points)**

**due November 17**

Students will report on the research base for language and/or literacy instruction among young children, focusing on a topic that is of particular interest to them.

1. Each student identifies a topic and an article about it. The topic and article choice will be negotiated with the instructor who will also identify a second article for the student to use in the project.
  - a. The article the student chooses must report on evidence from a study of teaching or intervening for language or literacy growth with a child or children between the ages of birth through eight years old (or end of grade three).
  - b. Good articles can be located in peer-reviewed journals. The research activity on-line will contribute to this work; the choices will be negotiated with the instructor.
  - c. The student works on understanding the data by engaging with at least one child using an instructional procedure reported in one part of one of the studies. This is the hands-on part of the project.
2. Students write a report about the research-based instruction topic they have chosen to work on. At a minimum, the student will:
  - a. introduce the topic, stating how each of the two articles address it (including the purpose(s) of each article and summarizing the theoretical motivation and background literature);
  - b. comment on the articles as research
    - i. describe the empirical base, including design, measures and methods used in each study;
    - ii. from the perspective of hands-on experience based on one of the articles, describe and comment on the materials, procedures and outcomes;
    - iii. from the perspective of the class research on-line activity, comment on the quality of the work in terms of standards for research (quantitative or qualitative);

- c. comment on the articles as contributions to knowledge about young children's language/literacy growth,
    - i. report on the implementation, major findings, interpretation, and conclusions of each study;
    - ii. discuss the relations between the articles and draw a conclusion about the value they do (or do not) have for research based instructional practices in early childhood education.
  - d. use complete APA style, including page conventions, references and in-text citations.
3. Good written products will normally have about 12 APA style pages. (See also "Written Assignments" section above.)
  4. The instructor must consult each student's article as part of the negotiation and assessment. If the article is readily available electronically from the GMU virtual library, it will be sufficient to supply a complete APA reference; otherwise students will provide a printed copy of the article.

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

**due December 1**

Students will compile a language and/or literacy handbook that can be used by families as a resource for understanding the complex nature of children's language and literacy development, and for obtaining materials and activities that can enhance a child's language or literacy development. The handbook will reflect a synthesis of students' understanding of the topics explored throughout the semester. An outline of the language parts of the handbook will be submitted in class 9 (October 27, 2010). The child talk on-line activity, the plus classroom on-line activity as well as work on the AT/UDL brochure and the research analysis can all be made use of when writing the handbook. The broad categories will include the following:

1. the influence of family and culture on language and literacy development
  - a. partnership of family and teacher
  - b. diversity in classroom and community
2. language acquisition
  - a. describing the acts of language (expressive, receptive and meta-linguistic), the aspects (vocabulary, structures -- phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics -- and functions language -- pragmatics and rhetoric) including typical milestones and benchmarks
    - i. examples from the children talk on-line activity will be used to illustrate the concepts
  - b. the similarities and differences among monolingual and dual language acquisition (simultaneous and second language);
  - c. atypical language development
3. literacy learning
  - a. the development of emergent literacy (foundations and practices, including phonemic awareness and language growth)
  - b. conventional reading (printed word identification, including phonics, comprehension, fluency)
  - c. writing (genres, development of mechanics, including spelling)

Each section of the handbook should include family-friendly examples of experiences that families can engage in that support children's learning and development. The examples should be research-based activities.

See also the "Written Assignments" section above. Complete adherence to the APA style is not required in the handbook, but good academic writing standards should be observed. The style and format should be appropriate to the family audience for the handbook. Sources consulted will be indicated, however, and families will be informed about how they can get more information.

## Draft Course Schedule and Topics

Date	Topics	Readings, Activities & Assignments
Class 1 Sept 1	Introduction to oral language, reading, and writing for all children, including children with varying abilities, languages, and cultural backgrounds. Fundamentals of identifying, interpreting, evaluating, and applying valid research about oral language, reading, and writing	Begin research activity
Class 2 Sept 8*	Foundations of oral language development, including an overview of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and rhetoric; considering expressive, receptive and metalinguistic acts & assessment	Start DLD&D (1-60); Begin child talk activity
Class 3 Sept 15	Phonology: first- and second-language acquisition and dialect differences; typical development and development of children with Hearing or Speech difficulties	Continue DLD&D; Begin brochure activity
Class 4 Sept 22	Morphology: first- and second-language acquisition; typical development and development of children with Specific Language Impairment (SLI)	Continue DLD&D (63-187); Brochure <b>choice</b> ; Close research activity
Class 5 Sept 29*	Syntax & semantics: first- and second-language acquisition	Finish DLD&D (193-212); August et al.
Class 6 Oct 6	Vocabulary & concept development: first- and second-language acquisition; typical development and development of children with Intellectual Disability (ID)	Tabors et al.; Brochure <b>outline</b>
Class 7 Oct 13	Pragmatics (including self-regulatory speech) and discourse/rhetoric: first- and second-language acquisition: typical development and development of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)	Start Ballenger
Class 8 Oct 20	Developmental, social, cultural, affective, cognitive, and educational factors that play a role in oral language, reading, and writing development. Interdependence and collaboration of families, caregivers, and school professionals	Finish Ballenger; <b>Brochure due</b> ; Close brochure activity; Begin plus classroom activity
Class 9 Oct 27	Assistive technology to support language, reading, and writing; student presentations of Assistive Technology Brochures	Begin SOR (5-60); Research article <b>choice</b>
Class 10 Nov 3*	Foundations of reading comprehension: from early emergent literacy to conventional reading, including narrative and expository forms	Continue SOR; Burns & Kidd; <b>outline due</b> language part of handbook



Class 11 Nov 10	Foundations of printed word recognition: phonemic awareness, sound-symbol relationships, decoding skills (phonics instruction as well as word attack using syllable and morphological patterns), sight vocabulary evolution	Finish SOR 61-145
Class 12 Nov 17*	Foundations of reading fluency: from pretending to read and read-alouds to the child's own independent reading fluency in different academic domains	Begin Paley; <b>Research Article paper due</b>
<b>Thanksgiving Holiday no class November 24</b>		
Class 13 Dec 1	Foundations of spelling: including purpose and limits of estimated (invented) spelling, orthographic patterns, and strategies for promoting generalization of spelling study	Finish Paley
Class 14 Dec 8	Foundations of writing, for memory, planning, communication and creative expression	<b>Family Language &amp; Literacy Handbook</b> Close child talk activity Close plus classroom activity
Exam equivalent Dec 15 4:30-7:15	Whole group discussion: Hope & fears about language, reading, and writing instruction for all children, including children with varying abilities, languages, and cultural backgrounds	

\*shaded days indicate when full class meeting will be shortened to allow for smaller group and one-to-one work

Readings abbreviations:

DLD&D: *Dual language development & disorders.*

August et al.: Transfer of skills from Spanish to English: A study of young learners

Tabors et al.: "You know what oxygen is?" Learning new words at home.

Ballenger: *Teaching other people's children: Literacy and learning in a bilingual classroom.*

Burns & Kidd: Learning to Read.

SOR: *Starting out right: A guide to promoting children's reading success.*

Paley: *The girl with the brown crayon.*