

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM**

EDSE 512: Braille Code
September 2-December 9, 2010
Thursdays 4:00 – 6:40 pm

Instructor: Kimberly Avila
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Office hours: by appointment, before and after class
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COURSE DESCRIPTION: (Co/Pre-req: EDSE 411/511: Characteristics of Students with Visual Impairments)

This course provides instruction in the development, use, and application of the Braille literary code and its implications for educational/literacy programs for students with visual disabilities. Students will develop the skills to read and write contracted and uncontracted Braille, while acquiring instructional methodologies for teaching children who are blind to read and write. Sources of Braille materials for educational purposes are identified. Delivered online and through synchronous video conferencing.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY:

Learning activities in this class will include the following:

1. Class lecture, discussion, and participation via synchronous face to face, web-conferences or videoconferences
2. Video and other relevant interactive media presentations
3. Study and independent research
4. Application activities, including regular assignments
5. Written responses to posted discussion questions on Blackboard.
6. In-depth study and work on course requirements require outside class time.

LEARNER OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history of the development of Braille.
- Read and write uncontracted literary Braille.
- Read and write contracted literary Braille.
- Identify methods for teaching Braille reading.
- Identify methods for teaching Braille writing.
- Locate specific Braille materials for classroom use.

Class Assignments:

Assignment	Points
Participation	28

Article summary/presentation	15
Weekly practice assignments (12 @ 5 points each)	60
Interim tests (2)	20
Midterm exam	35
Final exam	50
Total	208

Grading Scale:

	Points	Percent
A	197-208	95-100
A-	187-196	90-94
B+	186	89
B	176-185	85-88
B-	166-175	80-84
C	145-165	70-79
F	<144	69

Participation Criteria:

Points	Criteria
2	Student completes in class practice braille exercises and participates in activities and discussions (verbally, in writing or online when appropriate or assigned). All communication is respectful and demonstrates progress toward professional development.

Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend class. One absence may be excused and 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. 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.

Course Schedule

Subject to change depending on class needs

Date	Topic	Practice Drills, Assignments and Reading
9/2/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction and orientation to BlackBoard, PerkyDuck and WESBraille ▪ The braille cell ▪ Braille writers ▪ Lesson 1: The Braille Alphabet 	Read lesson 1; drills and reading practice Submit: Homework Assignment 1

9/9/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesson 2 Capitalization, Paragraphing and Punctuation ▪ Lesson 3: Cardinal Numbers ▪ Begin article summary presentations 	Read lessons 2 and 3; drills and reading practice Submit: Homework assignment 2
9/16/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesson 4: One-Cell and Whole-Word Contractions ▪ Organizations and support for braille, code, literacy, transcription and certification ▪ Slate & Stylus 	Read lesson 4; drills and reading practice Submit: Homework assignment 3
9/23/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interim test ▪ Lesson 5: Whole Word and Part Word Contractions 	Read lesson 5; drills and reading practice Submit: Homework assignment 4
9/30/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesson 6: Part Word Contractions ▪ Braille readiness and literacy assessments 	Read lesson 6; drills and reading practice Submit: Homework assignment 5
10/7/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesson 7: Whole and Part Word Lower Sign Contractions, Short Form Words ▪ Review for midterm ▪ Designing and implementing a braille instruction curriculum for students who have visual impairments ▪ Braille reading and writing goals 	Read lesson 7; drills and reading practice Submit: Homework assignment 6
10/14/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Midterm Exam ▪ Lesson 8: Whole Word, Part Word Contractions, More Short Form Words 	Read lesson 8; drills and reading practice Submit: Homework assignment 7
10/21/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesson 9: Initial Letter Contractions, More Short Form Words ▪ Guest Speakers: Braille Readers Panel (tentatively scheduled) 	Read lesson 9; drills and reading practice Submit: Homework assignment 8
10/28/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesson 10: Final Letter Contractions, More Short Form Words ▪ Techniques and technologies for pre-braille literacy 	Read lesson 10; drills and reading practice Submit: Homework assignment 9
11/4/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesson 11: Short Form Words, Proper Names ▪ Guest Speaker: John Bailey, NFB of Fairfax: Braille Resources Available from the NFB ▪ Techniques and technologies for braille literacy and daily braille reading/writing for students with visual impairments 	Read lesson 11; drills and reading practice Submit: Homework assignment 10

11/11/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interim test ▪ Lessons 12, 13 ▪ Reading disabilities and braille literacy: detection and intervention 	Read Lessons 12, 13 Submit: Homework assignment 11
11/18/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overview of lessons 14-20 ▪ Review for final ▪ Techniques and technologies for transcribing braille on a daily basis for teachers of students with visual impairments 	Read lessons 14-20 Submit: Homework assignment 12 All extra credit is due Last day for article presentation
11/25/10	Thanksgiving: No Class	
12/2/10	▪ Final Exam	
12/9/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Course conclusion ▪ Discuss final exam 	All make up work and projects due.

Braille Practice Assignments

Homework assignments will consist of varying activities specified each week. Each homework assignment is worth 5 points. WESBraille, Perky Duck, braille writers and the slate & stylus will be used to submit assignments and exercises and word processors and the discussion board may also be used. Each assignment is due before the next class begins. The use of transcription software is **not** permitted on assignments and tests unless specified by the instructor.

Late Braille Practice Assignments:

All assignments are due before the next class begins. Late assignments will be docked .5 points for each day late, up to 3 days, after which the assignment will be unacceptable. Error deductions are still applicable.

Late Assignment Policy for Class Project:

Projects will receive a 10% deduction from the original points possible for each day it is late.

Class Project

Article Summary and Presentation

Students will select an article about braille or literacy topics for students with visual impairments and will lead a discussion summarizing the article for the class. Articles may come from a peer-reviewed journal or other valid professional resource or students may choose a chapter of a book for teachers of students with visual impairments. Students will provide the class with notes or a slideshow presentation for peers to reference.

Students must sign up on BlackBoard for a separate date to present.

Students must include the name of the chosen article, publication and

publication date to avoid multiple students presenting on the same article. Last day to present is November 18.

Article summaries must:

- Discuss the relevance and importance of the article to literacy or braille learning for students with visual impairments
- Discuss article strategies or points of interest that promote best practices in teaching literacy and braille to students with visual impairments; and/or limitations present in the article
- Provide information on methods and techniques teachers can use to implement or expand upon article information

Article Discussion Rubric: 15 points

Item	Exemplary 5 pts	Satisfactory 3-4 pts	Unsatisfactory 0-2 points
Article selection	Student chose an ideal article, chapter or other resource from a valid source	Student chose an article, chapter or resource that is limited in substance or slightly outdated for the topic	Student chose an article, chapter or resource from an inappropriate or invalid resource
Presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Article relevance and importance ▪ Strategies, points of interest, best practices and/or limitations ▪ Implementation and expansion 	Presentation thoroughly summarized the article and was well organized and prepared. Presentation was approximately 10 minutes in length	Presentation had minor limitations, but overall provided summary and organization that was adequate, but not optimal. Presentation was less than 10 minutes in length	Presentation lacked organization and/or was poorly prepared; summary lacked adequate information and key elements were excluded. Presentation was well under 10 minutes in length.

Notes provided	Student provided class with article notes or a slide show presentation with summary and key points; notes are organized and free from mechanical errors; student provided APA reference of article	Student provided notes or slide show presentation, but some minor limitations are present and/or contain minor mechanical errors; student provided APA reference of article	Student did not provide notes or a slide show presentation for the class; or, multiple mechanical errors are present or no APA reference to the article is present
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Keep Products from This Course for Future Use in Your Professional Portfolio! TaskStream and Signature Assignments:

For student evaluation, program evaluation, and accreditation purposes, students will be required to submit a signature assignment from each of their Special Education courses to Taskstream, an electronic portfolio system. In addition, students completing Midpoint and Final Portfolio courses will use Taskstream to create a full portfolio of their work based on assignments completed throughout their program. For this reason, students will need to retain electronic copies of all course products to document their progress through the GSE Special Education program. In addition to the signature assignment, products from this class can become part of your individual program portfolio used in your portfolio classes that documents your satisfactory progress through the GSE program and the CEC performance based standards. Grades will not be submitted at the end of the semester unless TaskStream requirement has been fulfilled.

Required Texts and Materials:

- Computer access to the internet and corresponding technology
- Access to peer reviewed journal source, article database and books/resources for teachers of students with visual impairments
- Ability to access www.wesbraille.org and Perky Duck

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.

Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. (2000). *Drills reproduced in Braille: Supplement to the instructional manual for braille transcribing* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. Available at http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Braille_Transcribing.asp?SnID=1397549713

Risjord, C., Wilkinson, J., & Stark, M. L. (2000). *Instruction manual for Braille transcribing* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Library of Congress, National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Available at http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Braille_Transcribing.asp?SnID=1397549713

Other Supplies:

- 300 3x5 blank note cards to make braille flashcards and a container to hold note cards
- Student Starter Kit from APH: contains braille paper, slate & stylus and Cramer abacus. www.aph.org
- Braille on labels: Available from APH
- Blindfold
- Braille cell, either a 1/2 dozen muffin pan with tennis balls or 1/2 dozen egg carton with plastic eggs.

Recommended Reference Materials:

1. Braille Authority of North America (2002). *English Braille American edition* (rev'd). Louisville, KY: American Printing House for the Blind. Available at <http://www.loc.gov/nls/bds/bana/index.html>.
2. Burns, M. F. (1992). *Burns braille transcription dictionary*. New York: AFB Press.
3. Koenig, A. J., & Holbrook, C. M. (2001). *The Braille enthusiast's dictionary*. Germantown, TN: Scalars Publishing.

Professional Standards:

Course's Relationship to Program Goals and Professional Organization

This course is part of the George Mason University, Graduate School of Education (GSE), Special Education Program. This program complies with the standards for special educators established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization.

The CEC Standards are listed on the following web site: <http://www.cec.sped.org> Look in the second column on the left, and click on "Professional Standards." On this page, to the right, there is a red book pdf document titled "What Every Special Educator Must Know." The CEC Standards are located in this document. The primary CEC standard that will be addressed in this class will be:

Special Education Content Standard #4: Instructional Strategies

Special educators possess a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to individualize instruction for individuals with ELN. Special educators select, adapt, and use these instructional strategies to promote positive learning results

in general and special curricula^{3/} and to appropriately modify learning environments for individuals with ELN. They enhance the learning of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills of individuals with ELN, and increase their self-awareness, self-management, self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem. Moreover, special educators emphasize the development, maintenance, and generalization of knowledge and skills across environments, settings, and the lifespan.

Beginning special educators demonstrate their mastery this standard 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 program is preparing candidates.

CEC Performance-Based Standard #4 for Visual Impairment:

- VI4K1 *Knowledge:* Strategies for teaching Braille reading and writing.
- VI4S2 *Skills:* Prepare adapted or modified materials in Braille
- VI4S3 *Skills* Transcribe, proofread, and interline materials in Braille
- VI4S4 *Skills* Use braillewriter, slate and stylus, and computer technology to produce Braille materials.
- VI4S5 *Skills* Prepare individuals with visual impairments to access information and services from the community.

This course provides instruction in a fundamental literacy mode (Braille) that provides students with visual impairments access to the general education curriculum. An introduction to methodology for teaching Braille reading and writing of school-aged students as well as for special populations such as non-literary readers is included.

**College of Education and Human Development Statement of Expectations:
All students must abide by the following:**

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://www.gse.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Office of Disability Services or participating consortium university disability accommodations office and inform the instructor, in writing, in a timely manner. Visit <http://ods.gmu.edu/> or call 703.993.2474.

Course Expectations:

George Mason University Email: <http://mail.gmu.edu/>

From this link, follow the directions for activating an email account. Every student is required to establish a GMU email account. Course email correspondence and other important university emails will be sent to GMU email accounts.

George Mason Blackboard: <http://mymason.gmu.edu/> Blackboard will be used to post important information for this course (and others) and in completing some course assignments. Materials, resources, dialogues, notes, and other types of information will be housed on this course's Blackboard web site.

George Mason Patriot Web: <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>
This is a self-service website for students, faculty, and staff of George Mason University. There is a wealth of useful links, information, and online forms on this website including program of studies details, application for graduation, request for transfer of credit, and internship application.

Recommended Websites to Explore:

NOTE: Internet and web resources are not the same as peer-reviewed professional journal articles. Web sites will be posted on the course Bb that contain information that your Instructor recommends out of the millions of websites on reading on the internet! Be sure that you distinguish, however, between peer-reviewed professional journals and web resources. More about this distinction (as well as distinguishing professional journals from magazines) will be discussed in class.

Writing Resources and Support:

One type of writing support during this course is your use of relevant parts of the APA manual. As you're completing writing assignments, you may find it helpful to review parts of the APA manual, such as: For example:

- Chapter 2 on writing style (2.01 to 2.05)
- Chapter 2 on grammar (2.06 to 2.12)
- Chapter 2 on guidelines to reduce bias in language (focus on 2.16)
- Chapter 3 on punctuation, spelling, capitalization, italics, or abbreviations (3.01 to 3.29)
- Chapter 3 on quotations (3.34 to 3.41) Paraphrase, please (refer to other information on plagiarism in the APA manual as well as other resources and notes in this syllabus)
- Chapter 3 on reference citations in text (3.94 to 3.103)
- Chapter 4 on Reference list (4.01 to 4.16)

APA Formatting Guidelines are also available at <http://www.psywww.com/resource/apacrib.htm>

This website is offered as a companion to the APA style manual. *However, it should not be considered a substitute for directly consulting the APA manual, 5th edition for standard of procedures for applying APA style.* Additional APA help URLs are available on the GSE library URL and may be available on the course

Blackboard site. Caution with using web sites or resources other than the APA manual because some may have erroneous information on them.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple listing of books and articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting.

Advising:

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. You may wish to contact Jancy Templeton, GMU Special Education Advisor, at jtemple1@gmu.edu or 703 993-2387. Please be prepared with your G number when you contact her.

Cell Phones

All cell phones and beepers should be silenced during class.

Weapons

All universities participating in the consortium prohibit the possession firearms, any weapon, or explosive. Please consult the student handbook and your university for specific information concerning this policy at your location.