

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

**EDUT 413**

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

Spring 2010

7:20- 10:00 PM Wednesdays, starting Jan 20, 2010

Robinson Hall A105

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**Office hours:** Robinson A 105, e-mail for appointment class days between 1 PM and 7PM

**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 two assigned experiences out of the classroom that involve interacting with young children. All aspects of the class require active participation of all students. On some occasions, while the rest of the class takes time to work with on-line activities, students will meet with the instructor separately.

**Learner Outcomes**

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

1. Describe the developmental, social, cultural, affective, cognitive, and educational factors that play a role in oral language, reading, and writing development.
2. Describe the reading and writing acquisition processes and the interaction among phonological awareness (includes phonemic awareness), phonics, decoding, spelling, word recognition, reading fluency, vocabulary and concept development, reading comprehension, and writing.
3. Explain the current research on typical and atypical language development, first and second language acquisition, and literacy in various settings.
4. Describe the English language structure, including phonology, orthography, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.
5. Describe technology and assistive technology use for early language and literacy instruction and assessment.

**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)***

- Standard 6 Communication: 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 ELN [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 ELN whose primary language is not English.

[http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Ethics and Practice Standards&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=9105](http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Ethics_and_Practice_Standards&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=9105)

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

- Standard 1 Promoting Child Development and Learning: Well-prepared early childhood professionals understand what young children are like; understand what influences their development; and use this understanding to create great environments where all children can thrive. This standard emphasizes knowledge of the range of influences on child development—including cultural contexts, economic conditions, health status, and learning styles—and an ability to apply knowledge to improve social interactions, assessment, instruction, and more. <http://208.118.177.216/about/positions/pdf/programStandards.pdf>

### ***Virginia Professional Endorsement Competencies***

- Reading (3 of 6 credit hours) Adult education, preK-12, and secondary grades 6-12—reading in the content area: 3 semester hours. Skills in this area shall be designed to impart an understanding of comprehension skills in all content areas, including a repertoire of questioning strategies, summarizing and retelling skills, and strategies in literal, interpretive, critical, and evaluative comprehension, as well as the ability to foster appreciation of a variety of literature and independent reading.  
register.dls.virginia.gov/vol18/iss12/f8v2021.doc (Volume 18, Issue 12 Virginia Register of Regulations February 25, 2002, page 6)

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

- 2 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 Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals)

### **Required Texts (in order of use in class)**

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

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.

## **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. Attend each class session for the full time. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must e-mail the instructor and call the office (703-993-3844) to leave a message for the instructor.
3. 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.
4. Turn assignments in on time, at the beginning of the class in which they are due. Students may submit assignments electronically on the class blackboard <http://gmu.blackboard.com> 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.

### **Attendance**

Attendance in class is important to students' learning; therefore, students are expected to make every effort to attend class sessions. Absences, tardiness, and leaving early may negatively affect course grades. 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 American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition (APA) style will be followed for all written work. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word processor and 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. When in doubt, they should check the APA manual. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the GMU library web guide at <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/>. The following are important aspects of academic writing:

1. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
2. Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.
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.

### **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=5&navoid=104>.

### **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 guidelines of the University Honor Code.  
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: 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.  
For the full honor code, see <http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=410#Honor>.
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/1301gen.html>. Click on responsible Use of Computing Policy at the bottom of the screen.
- A student with a disability who needs academic accommodations should please 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.
- Other useful campus resources:
  - Writing Center: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>
  - 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)

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. Most class meetings will begin with a "preface" based on the previous readings and assignments that each student will respond to prior to discussion.
- 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 academically productive language use and critical reflective thinking during discussions and activities.

**Research-based Instruction: Article Analysis (35 points)****due Apr. 7**

Students will search databases to identify the types of studies that have been conducted on instruction about language and/or literacy on a topic that is of particular interest to them.

Students will identify one article for their in-depth study:

- The article must use evidence from teaching or intervening with a child or children between the ages of birth through eight years old (or end of grade three).
  - The student will test their understanding by piloting an instructional or assessment procedure reported in one part of one of the studies.
- Good articles can be located in peer-reviewed journals.

Students write a report about the research-based instruction they have chosen to work on. At a minimum, the student will:

- provide the *full citation* for the article, in APA (6th edition) style;
- state the *purpose(s)* of each study being reported on, including the theoretical motivation;
- summarize the empirical base including the *measures* and *methods* used in the studies;
- report on the *implementation* and *interpretation* of each study;
- identify the *major findings and conclusions* of each study;
- from the perspective of their experience in the field with a child, describe and comment on the procedures and data collection used in the article;
- discuss the relations between the articles and material from the course and draw a conclusion about the value the article has (or does not have) for research based instructional practices in early childhood education.

Good written products will normally have about 7 APA style pages. The student will provide a copy of the article along with the paper; if the article is readily available electronically from the GMU on-line library, an access URL will be sufficient.

**Assistive Technology Brochure (15 points)****due Mar. 17**

Students will work as a team of two or three to prepare and present a brochure that addresses one or more key aspects of assistive communication and/or technology. The purpose of the brochure is to support professionals' understandings of the nature of assistive technology and to support children to develop oral and/or facilitated language, reading, and writing.

Students will research various aspects of assistive communication and/or technology (low or high) and summarize the information into a brochure. In a special closed section of the class blackboard (for online activity three), the student teams must identify and discuss their topics, summarizing their planned outline to get the instructors feedback prior to creating the brochure. The brochure should include, but is not limited to, the following:

- a description of the assistive technology, including ways it is used by children;
- description of children who might need this type of assistive technology;
- specification of the area/s of oral language, reading, and writing for which the technology is appropriate;
- examples of how this assistive technology is used to support a range of curricular goals.

Students will present the results of their work to the class, including a copy of the brochure for each student in the class. The topic choices approved by the instructor will be in part governed by the need to avoid too much duplication and encourage a wide range of topics in the class.

**Family Language and Literacy Handbook (35 points)****due April 28**

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
- obtaining materials and activities that can enhance their own children's language or literacy development.

The handbook will be a synthesis of students' understanding of topics explored throughout the semester. The student will choose four from the following six categories to focus on:

1. the influence of family and culture on language and literacy development;
2. expressive, receptive and meta-linguistic acts of language in terms of vocabulary as well as the structures -- phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics -- and functions of language -- pragmatics, and rhetoric;
3. (As directed in on-line activity four, the students will engage with young children in order to document and comment on child language from a hands-on perspective using the concepts and terms developed in the course.)
4. first, simultaneous, and second language acquisition;
5. typical and atypical language development; and
6. emergent literacy, reading and writing development.

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

Undergirding this handbook will be the student's comprehension of

- class readings, lectures, and discussions (face to face and on-line)
- assignments, on-line activities, optional readings,
- sources identified by the individual student.

Students will use a style and format appropriate to the family audience for the handbook. However, the sources used will be cited and families will be informed about how they can get more information.

**Draft Course Schedule and Topics**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings &amp; Assignments Due</b>
Week 1 Jan. 20	Introduction to oral language, reading, and writing for all children, including children with varying abilities, languages, and cultural backgrounds.	
Week 2 Jan. 27	Fundamentals of identifying, interpreting, evaluating, and applying valid research about oral language, reading, and writing. Introduction to Research-based Instruction: Articles Analysis. In lieu of class time for last hour, students will undertake online activity 1 (find research articles about instruction focus on replicable implementation and assessment procedures). The last hour of class time will be available for consultation with the instructor for 400 level students.	DLD&D pp. 1-25 optional: Ballenger 82-99; excerpts from: WWC & NELP
Week 3 Feb. 3	Developmental, social, cultural, affective, cognitive, and educational factors that play a role in oral language, reading, and writing development.	DLD&D pp. 27-60
Week 4 Feb. 10	Interdependence and collaboration of families, caregivers, and school professionals. In lieu of class time for last hour, students will undertake online activity 2 (following a web trek for resources for teachers and families beyond the classroom walls). The last hour of class time will be available for student appointments with the instructor for 500 level students	SOR pp. 127-145 DLD&D 155-189 On-line activity 1 closes
Week 5 Feb. 17	Foundations of oral language development, including an overview of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and rhetoric. Introduction to online activity 4.	DLD&D pp.63-115 milestones and benchmark handouts.
Week 6 Feb. 24	Phonology (and phonological and phonemic awareness) and morphology including typical and atypical development and first- and second-language acquisition.	DLD&D pp.193-213 Online activity 2 closes
Week 7 Mar. 3	Vocabulary and concept development, syntax, and semantics and, including typical and atypical development and first- and second-language acquisition. In lieu of class time for last hour, students will undertake online activity 3 (following a web trek for assistive technologies and universal designs for learning). The last hour of class time will be available for student appointments with the instructor.	DLD&D 117-153; 193-213
Mar. 10	spring break week	

Week 8 Mar. 17	pragmatics (including self-regulatory speech) and rhetoric, including typical and atypical development and first- and second-language acquisition	Ballenger pp. 1-40 Online activity 3 closes
Week 9 Mar. 24	Assistive technology to support oral language, reading, and writing; student presentations of Assistive Technology Brochures. In lieu of class time for last hour, students will undertake online activity 4 (steps to document and comment on short segment of a child's language use.).	<b>Assistive Technology Brochure due</b> Ballenger pp. 41-81
Week 10 Mar. 31	Foundations of phonics instruction, including sound-symbol relationships, word recognition in context, syllables, phonemes, morphemes, decoding skills, and word attack skills.	SOR pp. 5-60
Week 11 Apr. 7	Foundations of spelling, including awareness of the purpose and limitations of invented spelling, the connection between stages of language acquisition and spelling, orthographic patterns, and strategies for promoting generalization of spelling study.	continue SOR pp 5-60 <b>Research-based Instruction: Articles Analysis</b>
Week 12 Apr. 14	Foundations of writing, for memory, planning, communication and creative expression.	SOR 61-124
Week 13 Apr. 21	Foundations of reading comprehension – from early emergent literacy to conventional reading, including narrative and expository forms. In lieu of class time for last hour, students will continue online activity 4.	
Week 14 Apr. 28	Foundations of reading fluency, from pretending to read and read-alouds to the child's own independent reading fluency in different academic domains.	<b>Family Language and Literacy Handbook</b> Online activity 4 closes
Week 15 May 5 7:30 – 10:15	Integration of oral language, reading, and writing for all children, including children with varying abilities, languages, and cultural backgrounds	