



**Host University: George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Division of Special Education and disAbility Research**

Fall 2013
Braille Code, 3 - Credits

- GMU – EDSE 512 6V1: Braille Code, CRN: 81304
- JMU – EXED 532: Braille Code
- ODU – SPED 533: Braille Code
- RU – EDSP 655: Braille Code
- NSU – SPE 706: Braille Code

Instructor: Dr. Holly Lawson	Meeting Dates: 8/26/2013 - 12/2/2013
Phone: 703-993-525	Meeting Day(s): Mondays
E-Mail: hlawson2@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): 4:00 pm-6:40 pm
Office Hours: via Blackboard Collaborate	Meeting Location: Off-campus, KAI 101-GMU students

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

Course Description

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

Prerequisite(s): EDSE 511 (may be taken concurrently)

Co-requisite(s): None

Advising Contact Information

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress through your program. Mason M.Ed. and Certificate students should contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703) 993-3145 for assistance. All other students should refer to their faculty advisor.

Nature of Course Delivery

Learning activities include the following:

1. Class lecture, discussion, and participation via synchronous face to face, web-conferences or videoconferences
2. Application activities, including regular class assignments
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Research and presentation activities
6. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard
7. Extensive study, practice exercises, and homework outside of 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.
- demonstrate knowledge of tactile perception skills and principles of braille reading mechanics.
- demonstrate knowledge of pre-braille and emergent literacy skills.
- identify braille reading and writing teaching methods for students with visual impairments, including students with additional disabilities.
- understand cultural and linguistic diversity related to braille literacy for students with visual impairments.
- locate specific braille materials for classroom use.
- identify methods for teaching the use of the slate and stylus.

Required Textbooks

Holbrook, C. M., D'Andrea, F., & Sanford, L. (2011). *Ashcroft's Programmed Instruction in Braille* (4th ed.). Germantown, TN: Scalars. ISBN 0-9712139-4-1

Wormsley, D. P., & D'Andrea, F. (1997). *Instructional Strategies for Braille Literacy - American Foundation for the Blind*. New York N.Y.: AFB Press. ISBN: 978-0-89128-936-4.

Recommended Textbooks

- Koenig, A. J. & Holbrook, M. C. (1993). *Learning media assessment of students with visual impairments*. Austin, TX: Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.
- Mangold, P. *Teaching the braille slate and stylus*. Castro Valley, CA: Exceptional Teaching Aids.
- Olsen, M. (1981). *Guidelines and games for teaching efficient braille reading*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.
- Rex, E. J., Koenig, A. J., Wormsley, D. P., & Baker, R. L. (1994). *Foundations of braille literacy*. New York: American Foundation for the Blind.
- Swenson, A. M. (1999). *Beginning with braille: Firsthand experiences with a balanced approach to literacy*. New York: AFB Press.
- Wormsley, D. B. (2004). *Braille literacy: A functional approach*. New York: AFB Press.

Required Resources and Materials

- Standard 8.5x11 braille transcribing paper (without tractor-feed). Students may use 11 1/2 x 11 paper IF they have access to a old Perkins writer.
- 4-line 28-cell slate with stylus (eraser), available at APH (<http://www.aph.org/>), Note: aluminum slate is more durable than plastic one.
- Perky Duck Freeware. We will be practicing braille a lot in class. In order for me to check your work while in class, I will need to view your work on the computer via Perky Duck.

The software can be downloaded from this

site: <http://www.duxburysystems.com/product2.asp?product=Perky%20Duck&level=free>.

For *Mac users*, you can download the software using Parallels or VMWare's Fusion software to run Perky Duck.

Additional Readings

All articles are posted on Blackboard. It is expected prior to class meetings that students will have read the materials on Blackboard in addition to the chapters from the book *Instructional Strategies for Braille Literacy*. PowerPoint notes in Word format for the methods lectures will be available on Blackboard under each course module.

Additional handouts and resources are also posted on the Blackboard site under the lectures for each week.

Course Relationships to Program Goals and Professional Organizations

This course is part of the Virginia Consortium for Teacher Preparation in Vision Impairment Program for teacher licensure in the Commonwealth of Virginia in the special education areas of Special Education: Visual Impairments PK-12. This program

complies with the standards for teacher licensure established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the major special education professional organization. The CEC standards that will be addressed in this class include Standard 4: Instructional Strategies.

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- d. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

CORE VALUES COMMITMENT

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. [See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>]

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>]

CONSORTIUM 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://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>
- Radford: <http://www.radford.edu/dos-web/honorcode.html>
- NSU: <http://www.nsu.edu/studentjudicial/>
- ODU: http://orgs.odu.edu/hc/pages/Honor_Code.shtml
- JMU: <http://www.jmu.edu/honor/code.shtml#TheHonorCode>

Accommodations for Disability

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the disability service center at their participating university and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. University specific information regarding eligibility, services and accommodations can be found at:

- GMU: <http://ods.gmu.edu/>
- Radford: <http://www.radford.edu/~dro/>
- NSU: <http://www.nsu.edu/disabilityservices/index.html>
- ODU: <http://studentaffairs.odu.edu/educationalaccessibility/>
- JMU: <http://www.jmu.edu/ods/>

Inclement Weather

This course has both asynchronous modules and synchronous class meetings using distance education technology. Most likely, inclement weather will not impact access to asynchronous course content. In the event that bad weather does shut down the GMU Blackboard system, the instructor may need to modify the course schedule. As for synchronous meetings, classes are cancelled at the instructor's discretion based on weather conditions and available technology services. Since students are participating

in the course across regions, you are responsible for contacting the instructor as soon as possible In case of major power outages.

Course Materials

This course gives you access to class lecture notes, handouts, and copyrighted articles. For the articles (available on Blackboard), copyright laws must be followed: print only one copy per student. The PowerPoint presentation handouts, notes, and handouts are provided on Blackboard for your convenience and to facilitate your mastery of concepts presented in this course.

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://mymason.gmu.edu>

Key Points Blackboard. Our Blackboard server has been updated from version 8.0 to 9.1. For students this means:

- Students MUST access Blackboard through <http://mymason.gmu.edu>.
- Login
 - GMU Students: Enter your Mason NetID (the first portion of your e-mail address, before the @) then enter your Password (PatriotPass credentials).
 - NON-GMU Students:
 - Username: x_firstname.lastname
 - Password: bbcommunity
- Select the “Organizations” tab to access classes.

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.

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>

Course Policies & Expectations

Attendance

Attendance **(30 points)** for all sessions is very important since many of the activities in class are planned in such a way that they cannot easily be recreated outside of the class session. Live lectures, activities, and guest speakers supplement the textbook and can only be experienced in the class sessions. Furthermore, as part of this course you are expected to be an active and respectful participant, which includes engaging in class discussions and activities. Students who miss a class will not have the opportunity to make up missed in-class assignments. Successful completion of Blackboard class activities will be tracked in the blackboard grade book. As a courtesy, please email me to let me know if you will not be in class.

Late Work.

Due to the fast paced nature of this course, *no late assignments will be accepted* unless there is a documented medical or family emergency.

TaskStream Submission

Every student registered for any Special Education course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, (NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE) (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in TaskStream. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

If you have never used TaskStream before, you **MUST** use the login and password information that has been created for you. This information is distributed to students through GMU email, so it is very important that you set up your GMU email. For more TaskStream information, go to <http://cehd.gmu.edu/api/taskstream>

Grading Scale

Assignments	Points
Homework	60
Braille Drills	30
Written Exam on Lecture Content	50
Final Exam (Proficiency Test)	30
Braille Code Exam	25
Final Project	25
Class Participation	30
Total	250

A = 95-100%

A- = 90-94%

B = 80-89%

C = 70-79%

F = 70% and below

Assignments

NCATE/TaskStream Assignments.

There is NO TaskStream assignment for this course.

Course Requirements:

- 1. Homework:** (60 points) Ten homework assignments valued at 6 points each are required for the course. Their schedule due dates are indicated below. Points are assigned as follows:

0, 1, 2 errors	6 points
3, 4 errors	5 points
5, 6 errors	4 points
7, 8 errors	3 points
9, 10 errors	2 points
11, 12 errors	1 point
13 or more errors	no credit for assignment

There will be no opportunities to resubmit homework. **All students must turn in all homework and earn at least 2 points on each in order to receive a passing grade in the course.**

Braille homework assignments will be transcribed using the Perkins braille writer. **Electronic braille will not be accepted.** Work transcribed using braille translation software is unacceptable and subject to academic honor code policies. Work must be transcribed on standard braille paper without tractor-feed holes. For an 8.5 x 11 sheet of braille paper, you should have no more than 30 braille cells per line.

In order to provide students with timely feedback, homework assignments will need to be submitted in class or mailed to the instructor. **Assignments that are mailed must be post-marked on the Wednesday before each due date** and should arrive by Monday. This allows two days for mailing, if it is post-marked on Wednesday. Send assignments to:

Holly M. Lawson
9668 Thackery Square
Fairfax, Virginia 22032

Due Dates for Perkins Braille Code Assignments:

DATE	HOMEWORK (Postmarked or Delivered to Grader)	Description of Homework
September 3*	Homework 1 (Chs. 1 & 2)	Self Test p. 10 & Self Test p. 27
September 9	Homework 2 (Ch. 3)	Exercise 3.5.5 p. 48
September 16	Homework 3 (Ch. 4)	Self-Test p. 86
September 30	Homework 4 (Ch. 5)	Self-Test p. 110
October 7	Homework 5 (Ch. 6)	TBD
October 15*	Homework 6 (Ch. 7)	TBD
October 28	Homework 7 (Ch. 8)	TBD
Nov. 4	Homework 8 (Ch. 9)	TBD
Nov. 11	Homework 9	Selected passage from book or magazine
Nov. 18	Homework 10 (Ch. 10)	TBD

**Due dates are extended to Tuesday due to national holidays falling on Monday.*

2. Braille Drills: (30 points) In addition to preparing homework assignments using the Perkins braille writer, you will also complete homework using 6-key entry on the computer. Each drill is comprised of 15 probes and generally takes no more than an hour to complete. You can start and stop a drill so you do not have to complete an

entire drill in one sitting. You must get 100% on each section before moving on to another section. **Drills must be completed by the Friday for each week of braille code content covered.** Drills can be accessed at:

www.nercve.org/brailler

User email: your university e-mail

Initial password: braille

- You will be prompted to customize your password on first login.
- A presentation showing how to use the online brailler can be viewed at: <http://media.umb.edu/nb>
- Use the "SDF" "JKL" keys on your computer's keyboard to braille.

Due Dates for Computer Braille Drill Assignments:

DATE	APIB Chapter	Drills
Aug. 30	Chapters 1 & 2	Lessons 1 & 2
September 6	Chapter 3	Lesson 3
September 13	Chapter 4	Lesson 4
September 27	Chapter 5	Lesson 5
October 4	Chapter 6	Lesson 6
October 11	Chapter 7	Lesson 7
October 25	Chapter 8	Lesson 8
November 1	Chapter 9	Lesson 9
November 8	Chapter 10	Lesson 10

- 3. Written Exam on Lecture Content:** (50 points) The written exam on the lecture content will be provided to you on October 14, 2013 via Blackboard. This is a take home exam and will be due on **November 4, 2013 at midnight**. The exam is to be submitted via the Blackboard.
- 4. Final Exam:** (Proficiency Test): (30 points) At the end of the course, each student must put in braille one page of literary material with 10 or fewer errors using only a contraction sheet provided by the instructor and a print dictionary to check syllabication. You must take it for the first time (and hopefully only one time) by December 2nd. **All retests must be completed by December 9, 2013.**

EXAMPLE: Sharon makes 4 errors the first time she takes the test. Her score is 26 out of 30. Ron makes 11 errors the first time he takes the test. He must retake it. On the second attempt, he makes 5 errors. He receives a score of 25 on the second

attempt, with one additional point subtracted because it is a second try. His score is 24 out of 30.

5. **Braille Code Exam** (25 points) Students will complete a 50 item multiple-choice test designed to test their knowledge of the literary braille code. The exam will be administered on **December 2, 2013** and be posted on Blackboard.

6. **Project:** (25 points) Students must complete a project related to the instruction of braille. Projects are due on **November 18, 2013**. The project may include one of the following options **OR** it may be an original project. If an original project is selected, a one page written proposal must be approved by the instructor before the project is implemented. Proposals must be turned in on or before **October 7, 2013**. Failure to get an alternative project approved may result in a low grade!
 - a. Transcribe a children's book for a braille reader. If it is for a child at second grade level or below, include tactual materials to add meaning and motivation to the brailled text. The book should be in contracted braille.
 - b. Create a learning center or instructional unit for teaching the basics of braille to students who are not braille readers. The unit should contain braille materials that you will share with the students who are not braille readers.
 - c. Write a description of an adult with an adventitious visual loss (e.g., age, occupation, interests, physical abilities) and develop a plan for instructing the individual in braille with an emphasis on functional application. Include sample materials in braille that you would use with the adult.
 - d. Interview or survey individuals who read braille regarding their concerns, challenges, and opinions related to the importance of braille in their lives and write a 3-5 page paper presenting your findings. You must include a minimum of 10 people in your survey. Include a copy of your survey with your paper.
 - e. Teach two braille lessons to a student and develop the appropriate lesson plans and associated materials. Be sure to include a means of evaluating whether the student has met the lesson's objectives. Videotape one lesson. **THIS MAY NOT BE DONE AS PART OF YOUR INTERNSHIP.**

7. **Participation and Attendance:** (30 points) Up to 30 points will be earned by students for participation. Points will be earned through the completion of in class activities, interactions with panels and with guests. Students are expected to attend class sessions, be focused and respectful of others.

Extra Credit: You have 3 options for extra credit this year, each will earn you up to 5 points. **Extra credit must be submitted by November 18th, 2013.**

- a. Make a deck of braille playing cards. A quarter point will be subtracted for each error.
- b. Select a magazine or newspaper article and transcribe it into braille. You must turn in the first **2 braille pages**. Submit the print article and your 2 pages of braille. You may not do this assignment until we have covered the material in Lesson 8. A quarter point will be subtracted for each error. Please mark on the top of the page which lessons we have covered at the time of your braille (e.g., 1-8, 1-10) so I only count off for contractions covered to that date.
- c. Develop a set of flashcards for practicing your braille. Based on the accuracy and completeness of your flashcard set you'll earn up to 5 points.

Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Literary Braille Code</u>	<u>Methods</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Aug .26	How to use the braille writer, Chapters 1 & 2	History of Braille	W & D Ch. 1 & 2
Sept. 2 Online class only	Chapter 3	Agencies and Resources	W & D Ch. 3
Sept. 9	Chapter 4	Tactile Perception	W & D Ch. 4 Wright, Wormsley & Kamei-Hannan, 2009
Sept. 16	Review Week	Pre-Braille and Emergent Literacy	Lewis, & Tolla, 2003
Sept. 23	Chapter 5	Beginning Braille Literacy Using a Functional Approach	W & D Ch. 5 Wormsley, 2011 Campbell, 2011
Sept. 30	Chapter 6	Beginning Braille Literacy Using a Functional Approach Braille Assessment	W & D Ch. 6
Oct.7	Chapter 7	Teaching Reading Through Braille (Methods & Curricula)	W & D Ch. 7 Holbrook, 2008
Oct. 14	Review Week	Slate and Stylus	
Oct. 21	Chapter 8	Braille for Second Language Learners	W & D Ch. 8
Oct. 28	Chapter 9	Technology Overview	W & D Ch. 9 Cooper & Nichols, 2007
Nov. 4	Chapter 10	Slate & Stylus Practice Braille for Adults	W & D Ch. 10 Kamei Hannan, 2006 Written exam due
Nov. 11	Review Week	Braille Users Panel	
Nov. 18	Final Projects Presentations		
Nov. 25	THANKSGIVING BREAK—NO CLASS		
Dec. 2	On-line braille code exam		
Dec. 2-3	Proficiency Test—time TBD		

Testing Out of the Braille Code:

Individuals who are braille readers or who have had previous training in the braille literary code have the option of testing out of the braille code requirements of the course

(10 Perkins homeworks, braille computer drills, and online braille code exam). In order to test out of the braille code part of the course the individual must do the following:

Take the proficiency test (final exam) before August 26, 2013. Obtain a grade of 25 or higher on the braille proficiency exam. A grade of 24 or lower necessitates you taking the code part of the course with the other students.

Once you “test out” of the code part of the course you must...

1. Develop an alternative project to be completed and turned in no later than November 18th.
2. Turn in a one page proposal of what your project will be **no later than September 9th** for instructor approval.
3. Meet with Dr. Lawson if necessary to finalize your proposal / have it approved.

Some possible ideas include:

- a. Volunteer to teach braille to an adult. Keep **detailed** records of the individual’s progress, samples of materials you develop, sample of work done by the student, data sheets etc. Write a 4 to 6 page paper summarizing your experience and the student’s progress. (This is not an acceptable assignment if you routinely teach braille to adults as part of your paid employment).
- b. Write a 12 to 15 page **research paper** in APA style on a topic related to braille literacy, instructional strategies etc.
- c. Develop a **comprehensive** resource notebook (containing materials from a **variety** of sources) and write a paper describing how you will use the notebook in your own teaching.
- d. Develop a comprehensive assessment instrument related to some aspect of braille instruction and assess a child or adult with your instrument. Alternatively you may use an instrument shared in class. Administer the instrument to a braille reader. Generate a report on the individual’s strengths and needs as measured by the instrument. (This is not an acceptable assignment if you routinely assess individual’s braille skills as part of your paid employment.).
- e. Develop and administer a survey related to some aspect of braille instruction for consumers, families, or professionals. (If you select this option you cannot complete Project Option D.) You must have a minimum of 15 people complete your survey. Write a paper detailing your study findings including a section in which you review relevant literature, a methods section, a results section, and a discussion of your findings.