College of Education and Human Development
Division of Special Education and disAbility Research

Fall 2015
EDSE 512 6V1: Braille Code
CRN: 82532, 3 – Credits
JMU – EXED 532: Braille Code
NSU – SPE 524V: Braille Code
ODU – SPED 533: Braille Code
RU – EDSP 655: Braille Code

Instructor: Kimberly Avila	**Meeting Dates:** 9/2/2015 - 12/9/2015
Phone: 703.993.5625	**Meeting Day(s):** Wednesdays
E-Mail: kavila@gmu.edu	**Meeting Time(s):** 4:30 pm-7:10 pm
Office Hours: By appointment; virtual and in-person office hours Wednesdays 2:00 pm-4:15 pm Finley 203A	**Meeting Location:** Fairfax, Krug 208

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 UEB Braille code and its implications for educational/literacy programs for students with a visual disability. Practice experiences will enable students to better understand the Braille code and how to teach it to students with a visual disability. Prerequisite(s): EDSE 411. Corequisite(s): EDSE 411.Notes: Delivered online. Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week: 3 Hours of Lab or Studio per week.

Prerequisite(s): EDSE 511

Co-requisite(s): EDSE 511

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) 993-3670 for assistance. All other students should refer to their faculty advisor.

Learning activities include the following:
1. Class lecture and discussion
2. Application activities
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Research and presentation activities
6. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard

Nature of Course Delivery

This course will be delivered online using a **synchronous** format via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before "@masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on August 31, 2015

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

To participate in this course, students will need the following resources:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox. Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard;
- Consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of the course requirements.

  The following software plug-ins for Pcs and Macs respectively, available for free downloading by clicking on the link next to each plug-in:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: http://get.adobe.com/reader/
  - Windows Media Player: http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/downloads/windows-media-player
  - Apple QuickTime Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/
  - A headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate

web conferencing tool

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

Required Textbooks:
Holbrook, M. C., & D'Andrea, F. M. (2014). *Ashcroft's Programmed Instruction: Unified English Braille* (Fifth Edition). Germantown, TN: Scalars Publishing. **ISBN**: 978-0-9960353-0-9.http://www.scalarspublishing.com/

Holbrook, M. C., D'Andrea, F. M., & Sanford, L. D. (2014). *Ashcroft's Programmed Instruction Companion Reader: Unified English Braille*. Germantown, TN: Scalars Publishing. **ISBN**: 978-0-9960353-1-6.http://www.scalarspublishing.com/

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.

Other materials:
- Braille paper (8.5x11 and 11x11.5)
- Traditional slate and stylus

The APH student starter pack has these items, and an abacus, which is needed for the spring braille course:

https://shop.aph.org/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/Product_Student%20Starter%20Pack_1-00350-00P_10001_11051

Manual brailler (Perkins, Next Generation) May be checked out from the VI Consortium

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.

Recommended Textbooks

Koenig, A. J. & Holbrook, M. C. (1993). Learning media assessment of students with
    visual impairment. 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.

Additional Readings

All articles or article references are posted on Blackboard. It is expected prior to class meetings that students will have read the materials on Blackboard or accessed them from their university library in addition to the chapters from the book *Instructional Strategies for Braille Literacy*. Class notes and additional handouts and resources are also posted on the Blackboard site under the lectures for each week.

Digital Library

Effective summer 2015, the Division of Special Education and disAbility Research will discontinue the use of the Pearson Digital Library. No further registrations will be accepted. Students who hold current subscriptions will continue to have access to the library for the remainder of their subscription time. However, no further updates will be made to the digital library. During this time, should a textbook be revised or a new book is adopted for a class where the text is included in the digital library, Pearson will have options available to you and will provide you with an individual e-text or, if there is no e-text, a printed copy. Students, who have purchased a 3-year subscription directly through Pearson Education, will also have an option to obtain a prorated refund. However, 3-year subscription access cards purchased via the GMU

bookstore will need to speak with a George Mason Bookstore Representative. Please be aware that the issuance of a refund, in this case, is at the discretion of the George Mason bookstore. Concerns or questions may be directed to Molly Haines at Molly.Haines@pearson.com.

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 1: Learner development and individual learning differences; Standard 3: Curricular content knowledge; Standard 4: Assessment; Standard 5: Instructional planning and 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/the-mason-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/]. Students from other Consortium universities must provide their accommodation documentation to the instructor as well.

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/

Course Policies & Expectations
Attendance

Students are expected to attend class. One absence may be excused only in the case of an emergency and with instructor notification. 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.

Late Work

Due to the nature of this course, turning in assignments on time is a necessity. Only in the case of serious family emergency or illness with late assignment submission be considered. You must communicate via email with the instructor as soon as possible if there is an emergency circumstance.

Blackboard 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*) to Blackboard (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

Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to Blackboard will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete(IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required Blackboard submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Grading Scale

	Points	Percent
A	272-287	95-100
A-	258-271	90-94
B+	255-257	89
B	244-254	85-88
B-	229-243	80-84
C	201-228	70-79
F	<200	69

Assignment	Points
Participation (5 points per session x 13 sessions)	65
Weekly practice assignments (12 @ 6 points each	72
Checkpoints (2: 10 points each)	20
Midterm exam	20
Written Reflection and Essay on Braille Instruction and Current Issues	30
Graduate student project	30
Final exam	50
Total	287

Assignments

Performance-based Assessment (Blackboard submission required).
There is **NO** Task Stream assignment for this course. Please refer to Blackboard submission section

Performance-based Common Assignments (No Blackboard submission required).

Course Requirements:
Participation (30 points)

Active participation in all sessions is very important, as 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 this course 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. Successful completion of Blackboard class activities will be tracked in the Blackboard grade book.

Homework: (72 points: 12 assignments at 6 points each)

Homework assignments will consist of varying activities specified each week. Each homework assignment is worth 6 points. The manual braille writer, Perky Duck, and the slate & stylus will be used to submit assignments and exercises; word processors and the discussion board or other Blackboard or online programs may also be used. Each assignment is due before the day before the next class session at 11:59 pm. The use of transcription software is **not** permitted on assignments, test or other products for this course.

Assignments that are mailed must be post marked on the Tuesday before each class date. Late penalties will apply to assignments not postmarked by Tuesday.

Send assignments to:
Kimberly Avila
George Mason University
MSN: 1F2
4400 University Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

NOTE: Additional Assignments may be added depending on the needs of the students.

Checkpoints (20 points: 2 at 10 points each)
These "quizzes" are designed to evaluate progress toward braille transcription and other concepts studied in this course. Each checkpoint is customized to specific class needs and may require electronic and/or paper braille submissions. Paper braille work is to be post marked by the date specified on the checkpoint.

Written Reflection and Essay on Braille Instruction and Current Issues: (30 points)

The reflection and essay will be based on lecture content and readings. It will be provided to you on November 11, 2015 via Blackboard. This is a take home assignment and will be due by November 24, 2015 at 11:59 pm. The exam is to be submitted via Blackboard.

Midterm Exam: (20 points)

The midterm exam will consist of transcription and braille rules, along with other concepts discussed in this course.

Final Exam: Proficiency Test (50 points)

All students will complete a braille transcription exam at the end of the course. Students must find a proctor who will administer the exam for them and are responsible for ensuring confidentiality of the test, adhere administration procedures and mail it according to instructor directions.

Graduate Student Project (30 points)

This project is only required for those enrolled in the graduate section of this course (500 or above leve).s

Due: November 18, 2015

Students must complete a project related to the instruction of braille. **Projects are due on November 18,** 2015. 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 approved no later than **October 28, 2015**. Failure to get an alternative project approved may result in a low grade! Five points per day will be subtracted from the final grade for late projects.

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 using UEB formats.

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 no braille readers.

C. Describe in writing an adult with an adventitious vision loss (e.g., age, occupation, interests, physical abilities) and develop a plan for instructing that individual in Braille with an emphasis on functional application. Include sample materials in Braille that you will 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 3 people in your survey. Include a copy of your survey with your paper. Use appropriate APA formatting.

E. Teach a braille lesson 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.

Schedule
Subject to change based on class needs

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments
September 2, 2015	▪ Introduction and orientation ▪ Blackboard ▪ Braille and the braille cell ▪ Braille writers ▪ Perky Duck ▪ Lesson 1: The Braille Alphabet	**Read:** Ashcroft: Introduction and Chapter 1 **Submit: S**tudent information card and Assignment 1 by Sept 8.
September 9, 2015	• Lesson 2: Alphabetic Wordsigns, Capitalization and Punctuation • Practical research: ABC Braille Study overview and discussion groups	**Read:** Ashcroft Chapter 2 Research articles posted on Blackboard **Submit:** Assignment 2 by Sept 15
September 16, 2015	• Lesson 3: Numbers, punctuation continued, • Strong contractions • Slate and stylus • Organizations and support for braille, code, literacy, transcription and certification	**Read:** Ashcroft Chapter 3 Wormsley & D'Andrea: **Ch** 1 **Bring your slate and stylus to every class!** **Submit:** Assignment 3 by Sept 22
September 23, 2015	• Lesson 4: Contraction groupings, shortform words, punctuation cont'd • Emergent literacy and braille readiness • **Checkpoint 1**	**Read:** Ashcroft Chapter 4 Wormsley & D'Andrea Ch 2 **Submit:** Chickpoint 1 by date specified Assignment 4 by

		September 29
September 30, 2015	• Lesson 5: Initial letter contractions ▪ Designing and implementing a braille instruction curriculum for students who have visual impairments	**Read:** Ashcroft Chapter 5 Wormsley & D'Andrea Chs 3&4 **Submit:** Assignment 5 by October 6
October 7, 2015	• Lesson 6: Part word contractions ▪ Review for midterm ▪ Considerations for students with other disabilities and those whose primary language is not English ▪ Braille reading and writing goals	**Read:** Ashcroft Chapter 6 Wormsley & D'Andrea Chs 5&6 **Submit:** Assignment 6 by October 13
October 14, 2015	• Lesson 7: Short form, partial and whole word contractions • **Midterm exam**	**Read:** Ashcroft Chapter 7 **Submit: Midterm exam by date specified on the test** Assignment 7 by October 20
October 21, 2014	• Lesson 8: Initial letter contractions and more shortform words • Guest Speakers: Braille Readers Panel (tentatively scheduled)	**Read:** Ashcroft Chapter 8 **Submit:** Assignment 8 by October 27
October 28, 2015	• Lesson 9: Lower word signs • Braille literacy assessments	**Read:** Ashcroft Chapter 9 Wormsley & D'Andrea Ch 7 **Submit:** Assignment 9 by November 3
November 4, 2015	• Lesson 10: Lower groupings and more shortform words • Techniques and	**Read:** Ashcroft Chapter 10 **Submit:** Assignment 10 by November 10

	technologies for braille literacy and daily braille reading/writing for students with visual impairments	
November 11, 2015	• Lesson 11: Final letter groupings • Applying research to practice: article discussions • Reading disabilities and braille literacy: detection and intervention • **Checkpoint 2**	**Read:** Ashcroft Chapter 11 Research articles on Blackboard **Submit:** Checkpoint 2 by date specified Assignment 11 by November 17
November 18, 2015	• Lesson 12: Additional symbols • Final exam review	**Read:** Ashcroft Chapter 12 **Submit:** Assignment 12 by November 24 **Graduate student project for graduate students only**
November 25, 2015	No class meeting: Thanksgiving Break	**Submit:** Written reflection and essay by November 24
December 2, 2015	**Final Exam**	**Submit:** Final exam by December 5, 2015

Appendix
N/A