



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

Fall 2017
EDSE 512: Braille Code
3 – Credits
Section DL1; CRN 73148
Section 6V1; CRN: 82490
Section 6Y1; CRN: 82489

Instructor: Dr. Kimberly Avila	Meeting Dates: 08/28/17 – 12/07/17
Phone: 703.993.5625	Meeting Day(s): Wednesday
E-Mail: kavila@gmu.edu	Meeting Time(s): 4:30 pm - 7:10 pm
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesdays from 3:30-4:30 and 7:10-8:00, virtually via Collaborate Ultra or by appointment.	Meeting Location: Online, Synchronous
Office Location: Finley 203A	Other Phone: N/A

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

Quick Links: [Assignments](#) [Course Schedule](#)

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

Co-requisite(s) None

Course Description

Provides understanding of the literary code of braille and its implications for educational/literacy programs for students with a visual disability. Enables students to better understand the Braille code and how to teach it to students with a visual disability. Notes: Delivered online. Offered by Graduate School of Education. May not be repeated for credit.

Recommended Prerequisite: EDSE 511. Concurrent enrollment is also permitted.

Registration Restrictions:

Enrollment limited to students with a class of Advanced to Candidacy, Graduate, Non Degree or Senior Plus.

Enrollment is limited to Graduate, Non-Degree or Undergraduate level students. Students in a Non-Degree Undergraduate degree may not enroll.
Schedule Type: Lecture

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 teacher candidates/students should contact the Special Education Advising Office at (703) 993-3670 for assistance. All other teacher candidates/students should refer to their faculty advisor.

Advising Tip

Have you met with an advisor? All students should make an appointment to meet with an advisor to outline a plan for completing coursework and non-course requirements such as testing. To make an appointment by phone or in person, go to <http://gse.gmu.edu/special-education/advising/>.

Course Delivery Method

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

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using synchronous format via Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on August 30, 2017.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox is required (note: Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard).

- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students will need a headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool.
- 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 course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - Windows Media Player: <https://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/downloads/windows-media-player/>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

Expectations

Course Week:

Our course week will begin on the day that our synchronous meetings take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes.

Log-in Frequency:

Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 4 times per week. In addition, students must log-in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings.

Participation:

Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.

Technical Competence:

Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.

Technical Issues:

Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.

Workload:

Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of

this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.

Instructor Support:

Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

Netiquette:

The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

Accommodations:

Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services or with the disability service office at the participating Consortium university.

Learner Outcomes

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

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the history of the development of braille.
2. Read and write uncontracted literary braille.
3. Read and write contracted literary braille.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of tactile perception skills and principles of braille reading mechanics.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of pre-braille and emergent literacy skills.
6. Identify braille reading and writing teaching methods for students with visual impairments, including students with additional disabilities.
7. Understand cultural and linguistic diversity related to braille literacy for students with visual impairments.
8. Locate specific braille materials for classroom use.
9. Identify methods for teaching the use of the slate and stylus.

Course Relationship 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, as well as those established by the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support

consortium (InTASC). The standards addressed in this class include CEC Standard 5: Instructional planning and strategies (InTASC 7,8).

Required Textbooks

1. [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.](#)
2. [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.](#)

Recommended Textbooks

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

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.

Instruction Manual for Braille Transcribing (2015). National Library Service, Washington DC.

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. (2016). *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.

Wormsley, D. P., & D'Andrea, F. (1997). *Instructional strategies for braille literacy*. American Foundation for the Blind. New York N.Y.: AFB Press.

Required Resources

- Manual braille (Perkins, Next Generation) May be checked out from the VI Consortium
- 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
- [Perky Duck Software](#): Free download from Duxbury Note that braille translation software cannot be used for assignments in this course.
- Digital camera and video recorder to upload specified assignments and tasks.

Additional Readings

Posted on Blackboard

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, Tk20, hard copy).

Tk20 Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement

It is critical for the special education program to collect data on how our students are meeting accreditation standards. Every teacher candidate/student registered for an EDSE course with a required Performance-based Assessment (PBA) is required to upload the PBA to Tk20 (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one-time course or part of an undergraduate minor). A PBA is a specific assignment, presentation, or project that best demonstrates one or more CEC, InTASC or other standard connected to the course. A PBA is evaluated in two ways. The first is for a grade, based on the instructor's grading rubric. The second is for program accreditation purposes. Your instructor will provide directions as to how to upload the PBA to Tk20.

For EDSE 512, the required PBA is (NO ASSESSMENT REQUIRED FOR THIS COURSE). Failure to submit the assignment to Tk20 will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Teacher candidates/students have until five days prior to the University-stated grade change deadline to upload the required PBA in order to change the course grade. When the PBA is uploaded, the teacher candidate/student is required to notify the instructor so that the "IN" can be changed to a grade. If the required PBA is not uploaded five days prior to the University-stated grade change deadline and, therefore, the grade not changed, it will become an F. Please check to verify your ability to upload items to Tk20 before the PBA due date.

Assignments and/or Examinations

Performance-based Assessment (Tk20 submission required)

None

Performance-based Common Assignments (No Tk20 submission required.)

None

Other Assignments: All rubrics are posted on Blackboard

Assignment	Points	Due Date
Participation (3 points per session x 13 sessions)	39	Weekly
Homework assignments (12 @ 8 points each)	96	Weekly
How to guide: Braille and slate & stylus	20	September 27
Midterm exam	30	October 11
Graduate student project	30	November 15
Written Reflection and Essay on Braille Instruction and Current Issues	25	November 29
Final exam	50	Specified on final exam
Total	290	

Homework (12 @ 8 points each)

Homework assignments will consist of varying activities specified each week. Each homework assignment is worth 8 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 next class session. The use of transcription software is **not** permitted on assignments, tests or other products for this course.

Assignments that are mailed must be post marked by the date specified on each task. Late penalties will apply to assignments not postmarked by the required date.

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.

How to guide: Braille and slate & stylus (20 points)

Each candidate will demonstrate skills needed for proficient use of the manual braille and slate & stylus by creating a “How to Guide” for parents, teachers, or others who can benefit from learning about the use of these devices. Each candidate will prepare a video describing parts of the braille and slate & stylus, demonstrate proper paper insertion, braille, and removal. A short passage will be assigned for braille on the braille and slate and stylus, which will be mailed to the instructor.

Midterm Exam (30 points)

The midterm exam will consist of braille transcription and rule knowledge.

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

The reflection and essay will be based on lecture content and readings. This is a take home assignment and will be due by November 29, 2017 at 11:59 pm.

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 to 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 level).

Students must complete a project related to the instruction of braille. The project may include one of the following menu 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, 2017**.

Menu Options

A. Create a learning center or instructional unit for teaching the basics of braille to students who are not braille readers. (Choose and specify the target audience of your lesson plan: children, adults, parents, teachers). The unit should contain braille materials that you will share with the students who are not braille readers.

B. Describe in writing an adult with an adventitious vision loss (e.g., age, occupation, interests, 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.

C. Create a questionnaire and interview two teachers of students who are blind/visually impaired who have taught braille to students. Inquire about their perspectives teaching braille to diverse students, challenges, strategies, memories, methods for inclusion and collaboration,

transcription of materials, and other elements related to braille. In a 4-5-page paper, summarize your participants' responses and write a reflection on how their perspectives will shape your career with braille. Include a copy of your survey with your paper. Use appropriate APA formatting.

D. Design a braille instructional lesson plan and teach it to a student who is blind or visually impaired. Your lesson should include learner background information, lesson objectives, specified materials needed, evaluation procedures, and a reflection on your lesson after you have finished teaching it.

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance/Participation

Active participation in all sessions is very important, as many of the activities in class are planned in such a way that they cannot be recreated outside of the class session. Live lectures, activities, and guest speakers supplement this course and can only be experienced in the class. Furthermore, as part of this course you are expected to be an active and respectful participant, which includes engaging in class discussions and activities. Each week, participation activities for points will vary and may include, but are not limited to: discussions, surveys, quizzes, braille transcription submissions and readings, and written reflections. To earn full participation points, candidates must enter the synchronous classroom by the start of class and remain for the duration.

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 or other required class participation activity. 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 will late assignment submission be considered. You must communicate via email with the instructor as soon as possible if there is an emergency circumstance.

Grading Scale

	Points	Percent
A	275-290	95-100
A-	261-274	90-94
B+	258-260	89
B	246-257	85-88
B-	232-245	80-84
C	203-231	70-79
F	<203	69

*Note: The George Mason University Honor Code will be strictly enforced. Students are responsible for reading and understanding the Code. "To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." Work submitted must be your own or with proper citations (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).

Professional Dispositions

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

Class Schedule

*Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments
August 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 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: Student information card and braille participation

September 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 2: Alphabetic Wordsigns, Capitalization and Punctuation • Practical research: ABC Braille Study overview and discussion groups 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 2 Research articles posted on Blackboard</p> <p>Due: Assignment 1</p>
September 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 3: Numbers, punctuation continued • Strong contractions • Slate and stylus • Organizations and support for braille, code, literacy, transcription, and certification 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 3 Readings posted on Blackboard</p> <p>Bring your slate and stylus to every class!</p> <p>Due: Assignment 2</p>
September 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 4: Contraction groupings, shortform words, punctuation cont'd • Emergent literacy and braille readiness 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 4</p> <p>Braille Readiness Grid</p> <p>Readings posted on Blackboard</p> <p>Due: Assignment 3</p>
September 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 5: Initial letter contractions • Designing and implementing a braille instruction curriculum for students who have visual impairments 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 5</p> <p>Perkins Podcast: Teaching Braille Reading and Writing Existing Curricula Building on Patterns UEB Too Mangold</p> <p>Readings posted on Blackboard</p> <p>Due: How to Guide: Braille and Slate and Stylus</p>

		Assignment 4
October 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 6</p> <p>Readings posted on Blackboard</p> <p>Due: Assignment 5</p>
October 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 7: Shortform, partial and whole word contractions • Midterm exam 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 7</p> <p>Readings posted on Blackboard</p> <p>Submit: Midterm exam by date specified on the test</p> <p>Due: Assignment 6</p>
October 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 8: Initial letter contractions and more shortform words • Guest Speakers: Braille Readers Panel (tentatively scheduled) 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 8</p> <p>Readings posted on Blackboard</p> <p>Due: Assignment 7</p>
October 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson 9: Lower word signs • Braille literacy assessments 	<p>Read: Ashcroft Chapter 9</p> <p>Assessment of Braille Literacy Skills: UEB and EBAE</p> <p>Readings posted on Blackboard</p>

		Due: Assignment 8
November 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson 10: Lower groupings and more shortform words Applying research to practice: article discussions 	Read: Ashcroft Chapter 10 Research articles on Blackboard and Conroy, P., & Collins, P. (2012). Mnemonic Devices for Braille Instruction Due: Assignment 9
November 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson 11: Final letter groupings Techniques and technologies for braille literacy and daily braille reading/writing for students with visual impairments 	Read: Ashcroft Chapter 11 AFB Braille Technology TSBVI Braille Technology Readings posted on Blackboard Assignment 10
November 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson 12: Additional symbols Final exam review 	Read: Ashcroft Chapter 12 Readings posted on Blackboard Due: Assignment 11 Graduate project for graduate students only
November 22	No class meeting: Thanksgiving Break	Due: Assignment 12
November 29	Final Exam	Due: Written reflection and essay
December 6	Final exam and assignment comments and discussion	

Core Values Commitment

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

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services or with the disability service office at the participating Consortium university. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://courseessupport.gmu.edu/>.
- The 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/>).
- The 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/>.) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance (see <http://caps.gmu.edu/>).
- The Student Support & Advocacy Center staff helps students develop and maintain healthy

lifestyles through confidential one-on-one support as well as through interactive programs and resources. Some of the topics they address are healthy relationships, stress management, nutrition, sexual assault, drug and alcohol use, and sexual health (see <http://ssac.gmu.edu/>). Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone at 703-993-3686. Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to <http://ssac.gmu.edu/make-a-referral/>.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/>.