

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Literacy Program

EDRD 630.DL1 – Literacy Foundations and Instruction for Diverse Populations:
Birth through Middle Childhood
3 Credits, Spring 2021
Asynchronous, Online

Faculty

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Prerequisites/Corequisites

Admission to a graduate program in literacy, or permission of the academic program coordinator.

University Catalog Course Description

Explores literacy theory, research, and practice as it relates to younger learners. Includes teaching of reading to English Learners and language acquisition for diverse populations (including Special Education students who access the general curriculum). Addresses sociocultural, cognitive, linguistic, psychological, and developmental influences on children's literacy. Includes reading, writing, and oral communication.

Course Overview

Not Applicable

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using an asynchronous 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 January 25.

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 standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers

To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems

- 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 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://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

Expectations

- Course Week:
Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will start on Monday, and finish on Sunday.
- 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 3 times per week.
- 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 ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

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

1. Interpret major theories and empirical research that describes the cognitive, linguistic, motivational, and sociocultural foundations of reading and writing development.
2. Explain the evidence-based components of reading (e.g., concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, fluency, comprehension), writing processes, foundational writing skills (e.g., spelling, sentence construction), and components of language (e.g., language acquisition, structure of language) related to young learners.
3. Identify literacy instructional strategies and theories that address the needs of all young learners.
4. Read and analyze the scholarship of the field.

Professional Standards (aligned with standards from the International Literacy Association)

Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following Standards for Reading/Literacy Specialist Candidates from the International Literacy Association's 2017 *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals*:

Professionals:

- 1.1 Candidates demonstrate knowledge of the major theoretical, conceptual, historical, and evidence-based components of reading (e.g., concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension) development throughout the grades and its relationship with other aspects of literacy.
- 1.2 Candidates demonstrate knowledge of the major theoretical, conceptual, historical, and evidence-based aspects of writing development, writing processes (e.g., revising, audience), and foundational skills (e.g., spelling, sentence construction, word processing) and their relationships with other aspects of literacy.
- 1.3 Candidates demonstrate knowledge of theoretical, conceptual, historical, and evidence-based components of language (e.g., language acquisition, structure of language, conventions of Standard English, vocabulary acquisition and use, speaking, listening, viewing, visually representing) and its relationships with other aspects of literacy.

Virginia Standards for Reading Specialist Programs addressed in this course:

- 2a. Demonstrate expertise in the knowledge, skills, and processes necessary for teaching communication, such as speaking, listening, and media literacy.
- 2b. Demonstrate expertise in developing students' phonological awareness skills.
- 2c. Demonstrate effective strategies for facilitating the learning of Standard English by speakers of other languages and dialects.
- 2d. Demonstrate an understanding of the unique needs of students with language differences and delays.
- 2e. Demonstrate the ability to promote creative thinking and expression, such as through storytelling, drama, and choral and oral reading.
- 3a. Demonstrate expertise in explicit and systematic phonics instruction, including an understanding of sound and symbol relationships, syllables, phonemes, morphemes, decoding skills, word analysis, and word attack skills.
- 3d. Demonstrate expertise in the structure of the English language, including and understanding of syntax, semantics, and vocabulary development.
- 4b. Demonstrate expertise in systematic spelling instruction, including awareness of the purpose and limitations of "invented spelling," orthographic patterns, and strategies for promoting generalization of spelling study to writing.
- 6c. Demonstrate an understanding of the significance of cultural contexts upon language.
- 6d. Demonstrate an understanding of varying degrees of learning disabilities.
- 6k. Demonstrate knowledge of current research and exemplary practices in English and reading.
- 6l. Understanding of and proficiency in grammar, usage, and mechanics and their integration in writing.

Required Texts

Scanlon, D. M., Anderson, K. L., & Sweeney, J. M. (2017). *Early intervention for reading difficulties: The interactive strategies approach* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.

Additional readings will be made available on Blackboard and through GMU Library databases.

Recommended Texts

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

Blevins, W. (2017). *Phonics from A to Z: A practical guide* (3rd ed.). Scholastic.

OR

Blevins, W. (2017). *Teaching phonics & word study in the intermediate grades* (2nd ed.). Scholastic.

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).

Assignments and Examinations

(See Blackboard for specific guidelines and evaluation rubrics for all assignments.)

1. Online Modules (26 points)

Throughout the semester you will complete asynchronous online modules that involve an array of activities including recording your thoughts, reactions, connections, and questions related to assigned readings and content. These activities are designed to encourage you to think deeply about the materials you read/view as you critically analyze, synthesize, and reflect on the course content while applying your new understanding. Each weekly module will open on Monday. All activities and assignments due within that module must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on the following Sunday (see the class schedule for specific dates). Work submitted more than one week after the due date will not be accepted. Once each module is opened, it will remain open so that you may go back and review content from previous weeks. There are 13 online modules (each is worth 2 points).

While specific instructions and evaluation criteria will be provided for all activities, the following general criteria apply to all online activities. For each online module, you should thoughtfully and thoroughly complete all activities in the module. Your discussions and other work should reflect learning from readings, videos, and any other online content within the module.

For each module, your engagement with the online activities will be scored using the following rubric:

Criteria for Evaluation	Meets Expectations	Partially Meets Expectations	Below Expectations
Timeliness & Completeness	Online activities are complete AND submitted on time. (0.5 points)		Online activities are incomplete OR submitted late. (0 points)
Quality of Responses	Responses reflect thoughtful contemplation of ideas and demonstrate a clear understanding of course content. (1.5 points)	Responses demonstrate a basic understanding of course content, though some confusion or inaccuracies may exist. (1 points)	Responses demonstrate little or no understanding of course content OR no responses are submitted. (0 points)

2. Small Group Online Article Discussions (4 points)

The objective of this assignment is to explore within an ongoing small group the early literacy content and writing craft of selected research-based reading. You will also make connections between class content, personal experiences, and assigned reading while developing leadership skills within a small group of peers.

You will work within a fixed small group of peers to be assigned in the first weeks of the course. Each of you will take turns leading synchronous online discussions (to be held at times scheduled by your group) using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. On the date of submission for your assigned research article critique (see below), if you are the discussion leader, you will start a new discussion board thread for the group containing an attachment of your critique and at least 3 questions to be discussed during the conversation. This will help your group members better prepare for the discussion. Then, at the time designated by the group, all group members must join the Collaborate session and participate in a 15- to 20-minute online discussion. You will need to turn your video and microphone on as you participate. During the online conversation, if you are the discussion leader, you are responsible for facilitating the conversation, using prepared discussion questions and topics to keep the conversation going. The leader is also responsible for recording the Collaborate session and posting a brief summary of the group's conversation along with lingering questions for the instructor about the article to the group's discussion board.

Each person is responsible for leading 2 article discussions and participating in 4 of the other article discussions within your group. The discussion leader role is worth 1 point for each article (total of 2 points), and your participation in your group's article discussions are worth a total of 2 points (0.5 points per discussion). Your participation will be assessed in terms of quality. Thoughtful responses that synthesize readings and course topics will earn full points.

3. Research Article Critiques (7.5 points each, 15 points total)

The objective of this assignment is to read research in the field of early literacy, and to learn to provide effective critique regarding the research foundation, content, and impact of the piece. You will be assigned two articles (denoted by an *) from the assigned readings to summarize and critique. The critiques are due on Blackboard on the date listed in the course schedule. You will also discuss and critique the articles with a peer group (see Small Group Online Article Discussions above) in the week that follows.

In each two-page critique, include the purpose of the article, main points of the article, critical comments/reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the research, and your own brief reflection on the article (based on your previous knowledge or experience).

4. Theory Map (10 points)

The objective of this assignment is to blend theories with classroom application. You will create a visual or written representation of literacy practices occurring in your classroom (may include photographs, drawings, or other materials). You may also include aspirational literacy practices or strategies that you hope to include in your literacy instruction in the future. Once you have identified these practices, you will identify the primary educational/literacy theories (behaviorism, constructivism, social learning theory, etc.) discussed throughout the course that are aligned with each practice. You will need to be specific about what aspects of the instructional approach reflect the theories learned and be specific in your identification of theories. Note that many instructional practices draw from more than one theory. Once you complete your map, if needed, create a brief written description explaining how it demonstrates your understanding of the connections between your practice and theory.

5. Annotated Bibliography (15 points)

An annotated bibliography is a collection of source references about a specific topic. The goal of an annotated bibliography is to provide researchers interested in a specific problem or topic with information about a source's contents and usefulness. You will research a literacy topic addressing the literacy needs of diverse learners in the birth to grade 4 range. You will locate and read at least 5 related, peer-reviewed, high-quality research articles and provide annotated bibliographic information for each. You will also create a brief synthesis of the research reviewed, explaining the overall message in the articles and how they relate to and support each other.

6. Midterm Exam & Final Exams (15 points each, 30 points total)

There will be one midterm and one final exam (*not* comprehensive). Material will be based on assigned readings and class notes. The exams will include multiple choice questions. You may use your readings or notes as you complete the timed exam. The purpose of this assignment is to help prepare you for the licensure exam you must complete at the end of your program in order to be licensed as a reading specialist.

Other Requirements

Assignment Guidelines

All assignments and online tasks are due by 11:59 p.m. on the date listed in the class schedule. Unless arrangements have been made beforehand with your instructor, 10% of the total points will be deducted from assignments for *each* day they are submitted late.

Assignments should follow APA (7th ed.) formatting (including 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with one-inch margins). Writing quality (including mechanics, organization, and content) is figured into the overall score for each assignment, so proofread carefully and use formal, academic writing. Be sure to use APA format (7th ed.) when providing citations for relevant research. (See Blackboard for resources.) When submitting electronic files, please name the files using your first and last name and assignment title (ex: JOHNDOEResearchCritique1.docx).

Graduate level writing is expected for all assignments in this course. If you find that you need support, the University Writing Center (<https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>) is available to you. They offer one-to-one consultations at any stage of the writing process. You can schedule in-person or video appointments with writing tutors on Mason's Fairfax and Arlington campuses. You can also use their Online Writing Lab (OWL) to receive written feedback on drafts of your writing if you are not able to meet during the Center's hours of operation.

Communication

Email is my preferred form of communication, so please check your GMU email account daily, as that will be the account I use to contact you. I am always available via email, but please allow a 24-hour response time for replies during the week, and 48 hours during weekends and holidays. If you have not heard from me within 48 hours, please email me again. I will also host regular online office hours throughout the semester or will meet with you by phone or online at other times by appointment.

Advising

Advising information is located on Blackboard, including timeline, program of study tracking, course sequencing, RVE registration information, graduation information, and program updates. To access, (a) login to Blackboard, (b) click on the *Organizations* tab in the main menu, and (c) go to the Literacy Program Advising and Information Organization to find all documents. You are responsible for regularly checking the advising organization to maintain your program of study and desired program completion timeline.

Grading

Grade	Range
A	= 94 – 100%
A-	= 90 – 93%
B+	= 85 – 89%
B	= 80 – 84%
C	= 75 – 79%
F	= below 75%

Literacy students must re-take any course in which they receive a grade of C or lower. Incompletes must be cleared before moving to the next course in the instructional sequence.

Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

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 <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://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. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices 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 <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

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

Class Schedule

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

Articles marked with * should be used for the Research Article Critique assignment.

**As assigned. See the schedule on your Online Discussion group's page for details.

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments Due
Module 1 Jan. 25 – 31	Reading & Understanding Literacy Research	– Duke & Martin, 2011	– Module 1 activities
Module 2 Feb. 1 – 7	Theoretical & Historical Perspectives on Literacy Development & Instruction	– Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016 – Tracey & Morrow, 2017	– Module 2 activities
Friday, February 12 – Last Day to Drop (100% tuition refund)			
Module 3 Feb. 8 – 14	Theoretical & Historical Perspectives on Literacy Development & Instruction (cont.)	– Scanlon et al., Ch. 1, 3 – Cartwright & Duke, 2019 – Gabriel, 2020	– Module 3 activities
Tuesday, February 16 – Last Day to Drop (50% tuition refund)			
Module 4 Feb. 15 – 21	Supporting the Literacy Development of Young English Learners	– Hill & Miller, 2013 – Martínez, 2019 – Mohr et al., 2019 – Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016	– Module 4 activities – Theory Map
Module 5 Feb. 22 – 28	Oral Language Development	– *Boyd, 2015 – Hadley et al., 2020 – Wasik & Hindman, 2018 – Zucker et al., 2020	– Module 5 activities – Research Article Critique for Boyd**
Monday, March 1 – Last Day to Withdraw (no tuition refund)			
Module 6 March 1 – 7	Print Awareness Concept of Word Phonological Awareness	– Scanlon et al., Part II Intro., Ch. 4, 5 – Bowling & Cabell, 2019 – *Mesmer & Williams, 2015	– Module 6 activities – Small Group Online Discussion for Boyd** – Research Article Critique for Mesmer & Williams** – Topic for Annotated Bibliography
Module 7 March 8 – 14	Alphabetics Phonics	– Scanlon et al., Chs. 6-11 – *Jones & Reutzel, 2012 – Stahl et al., 1998	– Module 7 activities – Small Group Online Discussion for Mesmer & Williams** – Research Article Critique for Jones & Reutzel** – Reference List for Annotated Bibliography

Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments Due
Module 8 March 15 – 21	Midterm Exam		
Module 9 March 22 – 28	Spelling Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bear, 2019 – *Raynolds et al., 2013 – Vines et al., 2020 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Module 9 activities – Small Group Online Discussion for Jones & Reutzel** – Research Article Critique for Raynolds**
Module 10 March 29 – April 5* (note date change)	Word Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Scanlon et al., Part III Intro., Ch. 12, 13 – Helman & Burns, 2008 – *Lee & Schmitt, 2014 – Miles et al., 2017 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Module 10 activities – Small Group Online Discussion for Raynolds et al.** – Research Article Critique for Lee & Schmitt** – 1 Annotated Bibliography Entry Draft for instructor feedback
Module 11 April 5 – 11	Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Scanlon et al., Part IV Intro., Ch. 14 – *Davis et al., 2018 – Kuhn et al., 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Module 11 activities – Small Group Online Discussion for Lee & Schmitt** – Research Article Critique for Davis et al.**
Module 12 April 12 – 18	Vocabulary & Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Scanlon et al., Ch. 15, 16 – Kuhn et al., 2017 – *Wright & Neuman, 2014 – Zoski & Erickson, 2016 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Module 12 activities – Small Group Online Discussion for Davis et al.** – Research Article Critique for Wright & Neuman**
Module 13 April 19 – 25	Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ILA, 2020 – *Jones, 2015 – Choose 2 articles from the folder on Bb. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Module 13 activities – Small Group Online Discussion for Wright & Neuman** – Research Article Critique for Jones**
Module 14 April 26 – May 2	Supporting Young Students Experiencing Difficulties with Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Scanlon et al., Ch. 2, 17 – Hruby, 2019 – Johnston, 2019 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Module 14 activities – Small Group Online Discussion for Jones** – Annotated Bibliography
Module 15 May 3 – 9	Final Exam		