

George Mason University  
College of Education & Human Development — Graduate School of Education

EDRD 635, “School-Based Inquiry in Literacy”

Fall 2010 (Prince William 2009 Cohort)

Instructor: Betty Sturtevant, PhD, Professor  
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Mail: George Mason University, College of Education and Human Development, MSN 4B3, Fairfax, VA 22030

Class meetings

Mondays, 4:30-7:10, Occoquan Building Room 204.

Course Overview

**Course Description:** Capstone course in literacy emphasis, focusing on research-based inquiry related to literacy in school settings. Includes review of literature and teacher inquiry project.

Prerequisites: EDRD 630, 631, 632, 633, 637, and 634; admission to literacy emphasis; or permission of program coordinator.

IRA/NCATE competencies addressed in this course

- IRA 1.2 Demonstrate knowledge of reading research and histories of reading
- IRA 5.2 Continue to pursue the development of professional knowledge and dispositions
- IRA 5.4 Participate in, initiate, implement, and evaluate professional development programs

Virginia State Standards (2007) addressed in this course:

- 6i. Demonstrate effective communication skills in working with a variety of groups, including parents, teachers, administrators, community leaders, etc.
- 6j. Demonstrate knowledge of current research and exemplary practices in English/reading.

General Requirements

Readings and participation

The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities pertaining to school inquiry in literacy, it is important to keep up with the readings and to participate in class. It is your responsibility to come to class with insights, questions, comments, and concerns from the readings. I suggest that you keep a reading log that includes both notes on and reactions to each reading. Class participation will influence your grade.

Class attendance

If, due to an emergency, you will not be in class, please contact me prior to class time; it's best to do so via email ([esturtev@gmu.edu](mailto:esturtev@gmu.edu)). You are expected to email assignments to me regardless of your class attendance on the day that the assignment is due. Students are responsible for obtaining information given during class discussions despite attendance. Attendance will influence your grade.

All assignments should be turned in on the due date indicated in the schedule below. All projects must be typed, in 12-point font, with one inch margins, double-spaced, in Times New Roman font. Writing quality (including mechanics, organization, and content) is figured into the overall points for each writing assignment, so please proofread carefully. Late papers and projects will not be accepted without penalty, excepting extraordinary circumstances.

#### TaskStream Artifacts

- Your final **teacher research paper** is the performance-based assessment for this course; it is required that you upload this paper to the TaskStream website at the end of the course.
- Your **Virginia Reading Assessment** score is also a required portfolio artifact that you will upload to the TaskStream system. The ASTL/Literacy program advises you to take the VRA sometime between the end of EDRD 633 and the end of EDRD 635; information on the VRA can be found at <http://www.va.nesinc.com/>. You are required to take the VRA in order to complete the reading specialist program at Mason. All ASTL/Literacy program students must submit a VRA score before receiving credit for EDRD 635.

#### Required Texts

Mills, G. E. (2011). Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher, fourth edition. Boston: Pearson. ISBN-10: 0-13-704952-8

Additional articles will be assigned and available electronically.

Coping With Stumbling Blocks in Teacher Research

<http://www.reading.org/Publish.aspx?page=bk463-8-Eldridge.pdf&mode=retrieve&D=10.1598/9780872074637.8&F=bk463-8-Eldridge.pdf&key=CF0535BE-6B86-49BE-9757-4FA1BB56415A>

For your current or future professional development leadership, check out free IRA podcasts: <http://www.reading.org/General/Publications/Podcasts.aspx>

<b>Course Requirements</b>	
A. Professional development project: Present either a study group or a workshop and write an analysis of the results (You may use the workshop plan developed in EDRD 634). Share your analysis in class.	20 Due last class in October
B. Attend a reading-related conference and write a summary and analysis. The conference cannot take place in your own school, and must be at least a half day. (You may use information from the Teacher Researcher Conference if you attended in the spring/however, if possible, attend the GWRC fall conference – Nov. 4 and encourage others to do so). See <a href="http://www.gwrc.net">www.gwrc.net</a> .	10 Due last class in September
C. Teacher research project: Design and conduct a teacher researcher project (you may use pilot data given the short time frame) and write up the results. [You are also encouraged to apply to participate in the Teacher Research conference in May 2011. You will receive an outline for this project as well as due dates for various components.	40 (see outline in back of this syllabus) Drafts of components due (see schedule). Last day to turn in revised final paper Dec. 15
D. Create a PowerPoint with about 10 slides and share with others. (The slides should include at least one slide for every section of the paper.	10 (December – presentation day)
E. Class attendance and participation – attend every class; participate actively; complete reading assignments as scheduled. Participate actively on Blackboard when assigned. Support colleagues in their efforts as a member of a teacher-researcher group.	20 You must email instructor if you will be absent or late. These must be only for emergency situations.

### Grading Scale

#### Grading Scale

- A+ = 99-100
- A = 94%-98%
- A- = 90%-93%
- B+ = 88%-89%
- B = 80%-87%
- C = 75%-79%

## Selected Resources

GMU Library

<http://library.gmu.edu/>

### Articles

- Cochran-Smith, M., Lytle, S. L. (1999). The teacher research movement: A decade later. *Educational Researcher*, 28(7), 15-25.
- Richardson, L. (1998). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (volume 2). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Rogers, R., et al. (2005). Professional development for social transformation: The literacy for social justice research group. *Language Arts*, 82(5), 347-358.

### Books

- Arhar, J., Holly, M. & Kasten, W. (2001). *Action research for teachers: Traveling the yellow brick road*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Bell, J. (1993). *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education and social science*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Burnaford, G., Fischer, F. & Hobson, D. (1996). *Teachers doing research: Practical possibilities*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hopkins, D. (1993). *A teacher's guide to classroom research*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Hubbard, R. & Power, B. (1999). *Living the questions: A guide for teacher researchers*. NY: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Falk, B. & Blumenreich, M. (2005). *The power of questions: A guide to teacher and student research*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Freeman, D. (1998). *Doing teacher research: From inquiry to understanding*. Toronto, Canada: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- IRA. (2004). *Preparing reading professionals: A collection from the International Reading Association*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Macintyre, C. (2000). *The art of action research in the classroom*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- MacLean, M. & Mohr, M. (1999). *Teacher-researchers at work*. Berkeley, CA: National Writing Project.
- Mills, G. (2000). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Nieto, S. (2003). *What keeps teachers going?* New York: Teachers College Press.
- Sagor, R. (1993). *How to conduct collaborative action research*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Toll, C. (2005). *The literacy coach's survival guide: Essential questions and practical answers*. International Reading Association: [www.reading.org/publications/bbv/books/bk565/](http://www.reading.org/publications/bbv/books/bk565/)

### Teacher Research Websites

- [http://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/tr\\_action/](http://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/tr_action/) (GMU teacher research site)
- <http://www.accessexcellence.org/LC/TL/AR/> (teacher research site)
- <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ntrp/> (UK teacher research site)
- <http://www.teacherresearch.net/> (International teacher research site)

### Professional Organizations

1. Greater Washington Reading Council: [www.gwrc.net](http://www.gwrc.net)

2. Virginia State Reading Association: [www.vusra.org](http://www.vusra.org)
3. International Reading Association (IRA) (organization for educators/ and researchers) [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)
4. National Reading Conference (NRC) (an international literacy research organization): [www.nrconline.org](http://www.nrconline.org)
5. National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE): [www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)

## GSE Syllabus Statements of Expectations

### GSE Syllabus Statements of Expectations

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See [gse.gmu.edu](http://gse.gmu.edu) for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See [http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC\\_H12](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12) for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See <http://www2.gmu.edu/dpt/unilife/ods/> or call 703-993-2474 to access the ODS.

### Assistance/Opportunities for Students

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See [www.gmu.edu/student/drc](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc) or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.
- Students should be aware that all GMU students have access to free university counseling services (<http://caps.gmu.edu/>) as well as many other university services and opportunities ([www.gmu.edu](http://www.gmu.edu))
- The Writing Center provides in person and online help to students and faculty at all campuses: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

**Schedule: Fall 2010 (subject to updates; any modifications will be in writing)  
As of August 30**

Date/Class	Central Question	Assignments due
Class 1 August 30	Review of course goals  What is Teacher Research (ppt)?  Thinking like a researcher (we will use: <a href="http://www.nfb.ca/film/ted_barylucks_grocery">http://www.nfb.ca/film/ted_barylucks_grocery</a>	*Make sure to register for the VRA (Sept or Nov). *Make sure to file an “Intent to Graduate” (program completers). *Note that a GMU certificate and state teaching license are not the same (more details in class).
Class 2 (Sept 6 is Labor Day) <b>September 13</b>	Developing a purpose statement  Understanding published research articles/differences quantitative /qualitative research.  PowerPoint of Chapter 1 (all ppts will also be posted to BB). .	*Text: Chapter 1 *Use the GMU library website to locate one article on your topic. Read it and bring it to class. Highlight important parts. Be prepared to discuss it. *Bring 2-3 photos of your school and classroom activities to class (if you are teaching).
Class 3 September 20	Ethical issues/role of researcher and participants	Text: Chapter 2  <i>Article On BB: Coping with the Stumbling Blocks in Teacher Research (Eldridge, Stein, Wasko, &amp; Pena, 2008).</i>
Class 4 September 27 Class On-Line	Class will be on-line (asynchronous)  Developing a research question	On line discussion related to developing research questions.  Read, p. 20-32 (Chiseri-Strater & Sunsein – on BB)  **Turn in conference report.

Class 5 October 4	Looking for related research  Library session (TBA)	Chapter 3  <b>Turn in your purpose statement and proposed research question (in class, paper copy)</b>
Class 6 Class On Line (Monday is Columbus Day)	Summarizing related research	Read three examples of teacher research w/literature reviews (TBA). Participate actively in on-line discussion.
Class 7 October 18	Collecting Data  Writing a literature review	Chapter 4  <b>Bring the 2 best research articles on your topic that you have found to class (just one copy of each).</b>
Class 8 October 25	Collecting Data	Read p. 68-82 (Chiseri-Strater & Sunsein – on BB)  **Turn in workshop report.
Class 9 November 1	Analyzing Data	Chapter 6  Turn in a draft of your introduction, a list of all data you have/will have collected, and a two paragraph explanation of how you will analyze these data.
Class 10 November 8	Analyzing Data Report on GWRC	Work on your literature review
Class 11 November 15	Writing your report Discussion on workshops	Chapter 8 Turn in a draft of you literature review (5 pages/10 sources). Compare and contrast the articles according to themes.
Class 12 November 22	Implementing Action Research in Your School	Website readings (TBA) Chapter 7
Class 13 November 29	Developing your final report and presentation	Bring a draft of your paper (parts a, b, c, d) to share with your small group. Highlight in the

		paper the parts you will include on your PowerPoint.
Class 14 December 6	Presentation Day	PowerPoints are due and will be presented (15 min). Papers may be turned in this date or next week (hard copy and TaskStream)
Class 15 Dec 15	End of program celebration	*Final date to turn in paper. *You also must post your VRA score to TaskStream by this date.

EDRD 635/Summer 2010/Sturtevant  
Fairfax 09 Cohort

### Capstone Assignment: Teacher Research Project

#### Outline of Finished Project

[Use the seven topics (in bold) below for the section headings in the paper]

- a. **Introduction** – brief description of overall topic, why it is important, and a clear purpose statement (“this purpose of this study is...”). About one or two paragraphs.
- b. **Literature Review** (Compare/contrast at least 10 sources in an essay format – be sure to have an introduction and conclusion to this section - more detail below). About 5 pages. It is very important to cite sources appropriately and consistently throughout the paper. (Rule of thumb – most paragraphs in the literature review will have more than one citation). Include your research question(s) at the end.
- c. **Methodology** (Details of what data you collected and how you analyzed it). About a page. Can include a chart in the appendix (refer to the chart in the text). Also include in the appendix and instruments you developed (e.g., survey, questionnaire, behavioral observation tool, etc.)
- d. **Analysis of Preliminary Data** (pilot test at least one of your data collection methods and describe what you did and what you learned from this). (About 2 pages; must include a data sample in the appendix).
- e. **Next steps** --A narrative explaining what you will do next with this research project (Will you carry it out as planned? When and where? Will you modify your original plan in some way?). (About one page).
- f. **References** – use APA format (5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> edition). At least 10 references (see below). See OWL at Purdue for format.
- g. **Appendices**. Data chart (see #1 below), sample of your data, instruments you created (if you use one you did not create, put a citation for it in the methodology section).

### Scoring Sheet for Workshop Report

Assignment description (from syllabus): **Staff development project: Implement either a study group or a workshop and write an analysis of the results (You may use the workshop plan developed in EDRD 634). Write an analysis of what you learned. Further instructions will be provided.**

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Total point earned for this assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Workshop or study group was related to reading/literacy and was presented to a teacher audience; report began with a general overview of the conference including title, location, and audience.

Excellent (5) High Competence (4) Medium Competence (3) Developing (2)... Needs Improvement (1)

2. Report effectively analyzed what went well /not so well in the presentation

Excellent (5) High Competence (4) Medium Competence (3) Developing (2)... Needs Improvement (1)

3. Report provided reflection on what was learned about teachers, the topic, and self as a presenter.

Excellent (5) High Competence (4) Medium Competence (3) Developing (2)... Needs Improvement (1)

4. Report addressed next steps – what are the next steps with this particular group of teachers in terms of their professional learning in relation to this or related topics?

Excellent (5) High Competence (4) Medium Competence (3) Developing (2)... Needs Improvement (1)

5. Writing was well organized with few, if any, editing problems and is between 3-4 pages.

Excellent (5) High Competence (4) Medium Competence (3) Developing (2)... Needs Improvement

### Scoring Sheet for Conference Report

Assignment description (from syllabus): Attend a reading-related conference and write a summary of what you learned. Discuss whether you would like to present at this conference in the future and why. The conference cannot take place in your own school, and must be at least a half day.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Total point earned for this assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Conference was related to reading/literacy and was at least a half day; report gave a general overview of the conference including title, location, name of organizer, and audience.

Excellent (5) High Competence (4) Medium Competence (3) Developing (2)... Needs Improvement (1)

2. Report effectively and succinctly summarized one session attended (Presenters, purpose, etc.)

Excellent (5) High Competence (4) Medium Competence (3) Developing (2)... Needs Improvement (1)

3. Report provided reflection – what was learned that was useful to participant and participant's thoughts on attending and presenting at this conference in the future.

Excellent (5) High Competence (4) Medium Competence (3) Developing (2)... Needs Improvement (1)

4. Writing was well organized with few, if any, editing problems and is between 3-4 pages.

Excellent (5) High Competence (4) Medium Competence (3) Developing (2)... Needs Improvement