

George Mason University
Graduate School of Education

EDRD 635 School-Based Inquiry into Literacy (Section 6R1)
Spring 2012
Wednesday 4:30 – 7:10

Advanced Studies in Teaching & Learning—Master of Education Program
Arlington Cohort Group
Arlington Campus - Founders Hall 120

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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.

Course Outcomes

As a result of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify specific areas of literacy interest; plan research steps for gaining information about their interest; and begin to carry out those plans and articulate the answers derived.
2. Read and analyze literacy studies related to their research interest and write an intelligent and coherent literature review.
3. Write an opinion article advocating for an approach or issue based on their research interest in literacy.
4. Write a grant proposal to fund a project or materials to enhance her/his role as a literacy leader.
5. Make a formal presentation to their peers on a research plan and preliminary findings.

Nature of Course Delivery

This course will be conducted in a face-to-face context and taught through a combination of lecture and discussion.

Standards Addressed

NCATE Assessment #8: Teacher Inquiry and Outreach

IRA Standards: #1 (Foundational Knowledge), #2 (Curriculum & Instruction), and #6 (Professional Learning and Leadership)

IRA Elements for Reading Specialists/Literacy Coaches: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 6.2, 6.4.

Virginia State Standards:

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.

George Mason University Policies and Services***Core Values***

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to the following five values: collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/> For other information regarding the College of Education and Human Development, please visit <http://cehd.gmu.edu>

Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://www.gse.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions.

Academic Integrity

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

GMU Email Accounts

Students must activate their GMU email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. 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.

Office of Disability Services

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

Other Useful Campus Resources

WRITING CENTER located in Robinson Hall A 114 (703) 993-1200;
<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES “Ask a Librarian”

<http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380;

<http://caps.gmu.edu>

Other University Policies:

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

Program and Course Policies and Requirements***Performance-Based Assessments***

Satisfactory completion of each PBA as well as posting to TaskStream is required to complete this course. The Taskstream assessment system can be found at <https://www.taskstream.com/pub/>. Students are required to submit the designated PBA so that the assignment can be evaluated when the assignment is due. No final grades for EDRD 635 will be posted until ALL required PBAs are posted to TaskStream.

Required State Licensure Assessment

Reading for Virginia Educators: Reading Specialist (RVE for Reading Specialists)
Taking this test is a program requirement for students in the K-12 Reading Specialist Concentration, and achieving a passing score is a state licensure requirement for reading specialists. Students must scan their score sheet and post it to TaskStream by the last session of EDRD 635.

This is a new version of the test that went into effect July 1, 2011. If a student has taken the earlier version of the test, the Virginia Reading Assessment for Reading Specialists (VRA), the score on the old test will be accepted. In the Spring of 2011, The Virginia Board of Education has set passing scores for the RVE assessment. Registration information for the RVE for Reading Specialists is available on the ETS Web site <http://www.ets.org/praxis/register>. Information on the test can be found at <http://www.va.nesinc.com/>.

Graduation and Licensure

- RVE (you must have a passing score on this test before you apply for licensure). See <http://www.va.nesinc.com/> for more information.
- Meet with GMU Licensure Specialist Joanna Bosik (jbosik@gmu.edu). You will apply for your license *immediately* after you have completed the literacy coursework and master's degree. If you wait until the following term you may have to pay a fee to re-activate your file.
- Review the GMU Registrar guidelines for graduation. You must file an "Intent To Graduate" form several months prior to the end of your certificate or master's program. Note: Do NOT file for the certificate if you are going on for the master's degree. See <http://registrar.gmu.edu/gif/index.html> for more information. Students may apply for January and May graduation at the beginning of our fall semester.

Late Assignment Policy

All assignments are to be completed and delivered on their due dates. Any late assignment will have points automatically deducted at the professor's discretion.

Class Participation Policy

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and conferences. Absences may have a negative effect on performance due to missing important assignment information and guidance.

Required Text

Pappas, C., & Tucker-Raymond, E. (2011). *Becoming a teacher researcher in literacy teaching and learning*. NY: Routledge.

Course Requirements and Grading

The following course requirements will be explained in detail during class meetings:

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Grant Proposal	5/2	25
Op-Ed Piece	4/4	25
Literature Review	3/21	50
Teacher Research Project and Presentation	4/18 – 4/25	50
	Total	150

Grading Scale (Percentage of total possible points)

A	95 – 100 (150 – 142PTS)
A-	90 – 94 (141 – 135PTS)
B+	86 – 89 (134 – 129PTS)
B	80 – 85 (128 – 120PTS)
C	70 – 79 (119 – 105PTS)

Tentative Agenda

Session/Date/	Topics	Readings/Assignments Due
1 1/25/12	Course Introduction & Requirements	
2 2/1/12	Literacy Leaders as Researchers An Introduction to Teacher Research	Part 1, Chapter 1 - Pappas & Tucker-Raymond
3 2/8/12	Literacy Leaders as Researchers Writing a Literature Review	Chapters 2,3,4 - Pappas & Tucker-Raymond
4 2/15/12	Individual Conferencing on Proposed Research Projects	Research Project Proposal Due
5 2/22/12	Gathering and Interpreting Data in Teacher Research	Part 2, Chapter 5 & 6 - Pappas & Tucker-Raymond
6 2/29/12	Individual Conferencing on Research Project Literature Reviews	Draft of Literature Review for Research Project Due
7 3/7/12	Individual Conferencing on Research Project Literature Reviews	Draft of Literature Review for Research Project Due
8 3/14/12	Spring Break	
9 3/21/12	TBA	Literature Review for Research Project Due
10 3/28/12	School-Based Inquiry – Putting All the Pieces Together Presentations of Research Projects	Part 3, Chapter 10, 14, 18, 19 - Pappas & Tucker-Raymond

11	4/4/12	TBA	Op-Ed Piece Due
12	4/11/12	TBA	
13	4/18/12	Research Project Presentations	Research Project Presentations PowerPoints due
14	4/25/12	Research Project Presentations	Research Project Presentation PowerPoints due
15	5/2/12	IRA Convention - Chicago	Grant Proposal Due
16	5/9/12	Final Class Session	

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Course PBA

This Performance Based Assessment (PBA) is intended to instill a culture of outreach in coaching to support teachers in schools. Competent and effective reading specialists and literacy coaches should be prepared to investigate and understand the needs of the teachers they serve, as well as to advocate and secure resources and services for teachers and students in their schools. Therefore, the PBA for this course is comprised of three integrated parts:

- (1) Literature review
- (2) Op-ed piece, and
- (3) Grant proposal.

A detailed description of each of these three assignments is provided below with a rubric for evaluating each part. Please follow all APA guidelines to complete this assignment. The PBA is not considered to be complete unless all three parts are submitted.

Part I: *Literature Review*

Literacy specialists need to be knowledgeable of the current research in literacy. Choose a topic in the field of literacy that you think that needs to be developed in your school. Review the current (past 10 – 15 years), relevant (focused on your topic), peer-reviewed research on the topic. Also, review any seminal work and theoretical bases that would ground your topic in the research literature. Write a well-organized synthesis and critique of the research on the topic that captures what has been done and what needs to be done. Your review should conclude with a clear and insightful analysis of how your topic contributes to literacy success as well as how this knowledge can be used to address the needs of all learners.

Literature Review Rubric

IRA Standards/ Elements	Exemplary (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)	Not Met (0)
1.1c Critical stance toward the scholarship of the profession	The review offers an effective synthesis and critique of the body of literature on the topic.	The review provides only a synthesis of research on the topic.	The review provides a summary of the research on the topic.	The review is not well organized; research is not clearly summarized.
1.1d Read and understand the literature and research about factors that contribute to literacy success	The review draws original and insightful conclusions about the factors that contribute to literacy success.	The review concludes with a synthesis of factors that contribute to literacy success.	The review includes a summary of factors that contribute to literacy success.	The review does not address how factors contribute to literacy success.

1.2a Interpret and summarize historically shared knowledge that addresses the needs of all learners	The review draws original and insightful conclusions about knowledge from the field that can be used to address the needs of all learners.	The review provides a synthesis of knowledge from the field that can be used to address the needs of all learners.	The review provides a summary of knowledge from the field that can be used to address the needs of all learners.	The review does not provide a view that addresses the needs of all learners.
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Part II: *Op-Ed Piece*

Literacy specialists are well-educated professionals. Accordingly, they are in a position to advocate for the education profession. For this assignment, you are to write an opinion piece or a letter to policy makers based on the information that was developed in the literature review (Part I). The piece should include ideas for organizational change, professional development, or other recommendations to those who are in a position to effect change.

The opinion piece should be about 500 – 750 words and should include the following characteristics: (a) is tightly focused on one issue; (b) the topic is presented clearly in the first paragraph; (c) the information is credible and well researched – based on the literature reviewed; (d) the issue is timely, can be controversial, but is not offensive; (e) the piece has a clear point of view; (f) the piece makes reference to other points of view, where applicable; (g) the piece concludes with a ‘next steps’ or a ‘call to action’ that suggest what can be done.

The letter should be sent to the District Office, the School Board, or a local newspaper or journal. Evidence that the piece has been submitted is required for successful completion of Part II.

Op-Ed Rubric

IRA Standards/ Elements	Exemplary (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)	Not Met (0)	Score
1.2b Inform educators and others about the historically shared knowledge base in literacy and its role in literacy education	Provides accurate and credible (indicates source of facts) information based on research and professional knowledge	Provides accurate information on the topic based on research and professional knowledge but does not indicate source of facts	Provides information on the topic based on professional knowledge and opinion	Does not provide information on the topic or bases information on opinion only	
1.3 b Communicates the importance of fair-mindedness, empathy, and ethical behavior in literacy instruction and professional behavior	The piece provides a strong yet positive message and very strongly models fair mindedness and ethical principles	The piece provides a strong yet positive message and strongly models fair mindedness and ethical principles	The piece provides a generally positive message but does not model fair mindedness and	The piece does not provide a positive message nor does it model ethical	

			ethical principles	principles	
6.4a Demonstrate an understanding of local, state, and national policies that affect literacy instruction	Provides an accurate and well-connected tie between the topic relevant policies that affect literacy instruction	Provides accurate information about relevant policies that affect literacy instruction	Provides information about relevant policies, but the information is not completely accurate	Does not address policy issues	
6.4c Promote effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders	The piece provides a well-reasoned next steps or call to action that is within the purview of readers to do	The piece provides a next steps or call to action that is well-reasoned but not within the purview of most readers	The piece provides a next steps or call to action that is not well reasoned	The piece does not provide a next steps or call to action	
6.4d Advocate with various groups for needed organizational and instructional changes to promote effective literacy instruction	The piece provides clear and purposeful direction for members of various groups regarding changes that would promote effective literacy instruction	The piece provides clear direction for members of various groups regarding changes that would promote	The piece indicates that various groups should promote effective literacy instruction but does not provide direction	The piece does not address changes that could be implemented by various groups to promote effective literacy instruction	

Evidence that letter was submitted? Yes/No

Part III. Grant Proposal

Literacy specialists are in a position to procure funding to create, support, or develop literacy programs or instruction within the school. Based on the topic of the literature review conducted in Part I and the opinion piece in Part II, locate a small grant opportunity that addresses your school's needs and interests. You will write the proposal based upon the instructions for that particular grant and submit the grant within the grantor's deadline for submission. Your proposal should follow all of the guidelines suggested by the funding agency and include all of the necessary permissions and attachments required to submit the grant application. Therefore, you must submit the grant proposal guidelines with your proposal. Evidence that the piece has been submitted is required for successful completion of Part III.

Grant Proposal Rubric

IRA Standards/ Elements	Exemplary (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)	Not Met (0)	Score
1.1a Interpret major theories of reading and writing processes and development to understand the	The proposal presents a well-researched and well-defined and well-connected theoretical base	The proposal presents a well-defined theoretical base but it is not well connected to the work to be	The proposal presents a theoretical base, but it is not well defined	The proposal does not present a theoretical base for the work to be funded	

needs of all readers in diverse contexts	to support the work to be funded	funded			
1.1d Read and understand the literature and research about factors that contribute to reading success	The proposal presents a concise and well-researched treatment of the current and relevant knowledge of topic for the work to be funded	The proposal presents current and relevant knowledge of the topic for the work to be funded	The proposal includes a review of research that is relevant to the work to be funded	The proposal does not include a review of research on the topic	
2.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the research and literature that undergirds the reading and writing curriculum for all students	The proposal demonstrates a very strong understanding of the research and literature that undergirds the reading and writing curriculum for all students	The proposal demonstrates a strong understanding of the research and literature that undergirds the reading and writing curriculum for all students	The proposal demonstrates a moderate understanding of the research and literature that undergirds the reading and writing curriculum for all students	The proposal demonstrates a limited understanding of the research and literature that undergirds the reading and writing curriculum for all students	
6.2d Demonstrate effective interpersonal, communication, and leadership skills	The proposal demonstrates a very strong understanding of audience and professionalism in communication	The proposal demonstrates a strong understanding of audience and professionalism in communication	The proposal demonstrates a moderately strong understanding of audience and professionalism in communication	The proposal demonstrates a weak understanding of audience and professionalism in communication	
6.4b Write proposals that enable schools to obtain additional funding to support literacy efforts	The plan for using the funds is well organized and presents a clear picture of how the funds will support literacy efforts in the school as well as who will be involved in executing the plan and how the plan will be evaluated	The plan for using the funds is well organized and presents a clear picture of how the funds will support literacy efforts in the school. EITHER involved personnel OR evaluation of the plan are discussed, but not both	The plan for using the funds is well organized and presents a clear picture of how the funds will support literacy efforts in the school. NEITHER involved personnel NOR evaluation of the plan are discussed	The plan for using the funds is not clearly organized	

Teacher Research Project and Presentation

Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you the opportunity to make a formal (approximately 15 minutes) PowerPoint presentation to your peers on the teacher-research project you conducted.

Completion Procedures for the Research Project

1. Identify an issue/aspect of literacy to research

This could be an area of concern/interest you have at the present time that has evolved out of your teaching experience, or it may be something that has piqued your interest from the course readings. It could also be related to your new/future identity as a reading specialist or coach. Consequently, the proposed research might be classroom based or school/district based.

2. Seek Knowledge

This is your Literature Review. There are many sources for acquiring information about your research concern. Consult journals, books, yearbooks, etc.

3. Plan and Implement Research

Based on your research concern, plan specific steps to carry out with groups of students or individuals. To refine your plan, it's helpful to pose questions that the research might answer.

Your research might involve trying out strategies, meeting with students, teachers, administrators for interviews, gathering verbal reports, administering interest and attitude scales, and/or observing students or other teachers within genuine learning contexts.

4. Analyze Research Results

In this phase you should gather all the data related to your research concern and make interpretations relative to your research questions. All interpretations and assertions should be supportable by the data.

Presenting the Project

The teacher research project presentation should be organized in the following way and include the following information:

- **A Rationale for the Teacher Research Concern**

Include a clear description of your research concern. Discuss the relevance of the concern to the classroom, school, or district. Describe why the concern is important to you and what you expected your research would help you learn.

- **Key Findings from the Relevant Literature**

Briefly discuss of the important supporting professional literature related to your concern. This should come from your literature review.

- **Summary of Research Methods**

Describe how you implemented your research. Include (1) a description of participants (i.e., students, teachers, administrators); (2) what you did with the participants (i.e., interviewed, observed, taught strategies, assessed); (3) the timeframe of the research (i.e., when, how often).

- **Discussion of Preliminary Findings**

Indicate what you found as a result of your preliminary data gathering. Focus on results that are related to your research concern.

- **Professional/Personal Reflections**

Reflect on the findings of your research and discuss what they might mean to you as a teacher researcher. Focus your discussion on implications relative to the advancement of your professionalism as a literacy leader.

- **Exhibits/Artifacts**

Share appropriate materials, including, if relevant, any questionnaires, inventories, assessments, sample student work, etc.

Evaluation

The presentation will be evaluated based on how it reflects a meaningful attempt to conduct teacher research and how succinctly and adequately all key aspects of the research project were covered. An evaluation rubric will be provided and explained in advance.

