

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

EDRD 635, *School-Based Inquiry in Literacy*

Spring 2011 (Arlington Campus)

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Class meetings

Thursdays, 4:30-7:10, Arlington campus

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 (akennedy@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. Use APA style manual. 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*, 4th edition. Boston: Pearson. ISBN-10: 0-13-704952-8

Action Research: A Guide for the Teacher Researchers (w/MyEducational Lab)

Additional articles will be assigned and available electronically.

Coping With Stumbling Blocks in Teacher Research

[http://www.reading.org/Publish.aspx?page=bk463-8-](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)

[Eldridge.pdf&mode=retrieve&D=10.1598/9780872074637.8&F=bk463-8-](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)

[Eldridge.pdf&key=CF0535BE-6B86-49BE-9757-4FA1BB56415A](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>

Course Requirements

Activity	% of grade	Submission Dates*
1. Professional Development Project (p. 8): Present either a study group or a workshop; write an analysis of the results. You may use the workshop plan developed in EDRD 634. Share your analysis in class. (20 points)	10%	February 24
2. Conference Report (p. 9): 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. (20 points). See <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Reading and Instructional Issues Conference at GMU (Fairfax campus) on Saturday, March 5, 2011 (http://www.gwrc.net); • VSRA in Richmond on March 17-19 (http://www.vsra.org/) 	10%	March 24
3. Teacher Research Project (p. 10): Design, conduct, and write the results of a teacher researcher project. There are six sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A. Introduction (10 points) • B. Literature Review (20 points) • C. Methodology (20 points) • D. Analysis of Preliminary Data (10 points) • E. Future Considerations (10 points) • F. References & Appendices (10 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of Teacher Research Project (40 points) 	A. 5% B. 10% C. 10% D. 5% E. 5% F. 5% 20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A. March 3 • B. March 10 • C. March 31 • D. April 7 • E. April 21 • F. April 28 May 5 or May 12
4. Teacher Research Project Presentation: Create a presentation of your project with about 10 slides. The slides should include at least one slide for every section of the paper. (20 points)	10%	May 5 or May 12
5. Class attendance and participation: Attend every class; participate actively in class and on Blackboard; complete reading assignments as scheduled. Support colleagues in their efforts as a member of a teacher-researcher group. (20 points)	10%	(akennedy@gmu.edu) if you will be absent or late. These must be only for emergency situations.

* These dates are flexible, and meant to be considered guidelines.

You are encouraged to apply to participate in the Teacher Research conference in May 2011 (<http://www.fcps.edu/plt/tresearch.htm>).

Grading Scale

Points	Percentage	Grade
198-200	99%-100%	A+
188-197	94-98%	A
180-187	90-93%	A-
175-179	88-89%	B+
160-174	80-87%	B
150-159	75-79%	C

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/

Teacher Research Websites

- 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
2. Virginia State Reading Association: www.vsra.org

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

Schedule: Spring 2011

Date/Class	Central Question	Assignments due
Class 1 January 27	Review of course goals What is Action Research? Thinking like a Researcher: Mills, Chapter 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Register for the VRA (March or May). • File “Intent to Graduate” (program completers). • Note that a GMU certificate and state teaching license are not the same.
Class 2 February 3	Ethical issues: The role of researcher & participants Understanding research articles Differences: Qualitative & Quantitative research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Mills, Chapter 2 • Use http://library.gmu.edu/ to locate one article on your topic. Prepare to discuss in class. • Bring 2-3 photos of your school and classroom activities to class (if you are teaching).
Class 3 February 10	Developing a research question GMU Library: Research instruction session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Mills, Chapter 3 • Article on BB: <i>Coping with the Stumbling Blocks in Teacher Research</i> (Eldridge, Stein, Wasko, & Pena, 2008). • Article on BB: <i>Legwork: Pursuing Multiple Sources of Data</i> p. 20-32 (Chiseri-Strater & Sunstein)
Class 4 February 17	Looking for Related Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Mills, Chapter 4 • Bring the 2 best articles on your topic (1 copy) <p>DUE: Purpose Statement & Proposed Research Question</p>
Class 5 February 24	Collecting Data Writing a Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text: Mills, Chapter 5 • Article on BB: <i>Legwork: Pursuing Multiple Sources of Data</i> p. 68-82 (Chiseri-Strater & Sunstein) <p>DUE: Workshop Report (suggested)</p>

Class 6 March 3	Analyzing Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Mills, Chapter 6 <p>DUE: Introduction</p>
Class 7 March 10	Planning for Educational Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Mills, Chapter 7 <p>DUE: Literature Review (5 pages; 10 sources)</p>
Class 8 March 17	Spring Break (no class)	
Class 9 March 24	What's Working? What's Not Working? Writing Your Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Mills, Chapter 8 <p>DUE: Conference Report</p>
Class 10 March 31	Evaluating Action Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Mills, Chapter 9 <p>DUE: Methodology</p>
Class 11 April 7	Implementing Action Research in Your School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Mills, Appendix A <p>DUE: Analysis of Preliminary Data</p>
Class 12 April 14	Developing Your Final Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring a draft of your paper (Sections A, B, C, D); prepare to discuss in small group. Highlight in the paper the parts you will include on your Presentation.
Class 13 April 21	Developing Your Final Report	<p>DUE: Future Considerations</p>
Class 14 April 28	Displaying Data Visually in Text and Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Mills, Appendix C <p>DUE: References & Appendices</p>
Class 15 May 5	Presentation Day	<p>DUE: Presentations</p> <p>Papers may be submitted on this date or May 12 (hard copy and TaskStream)</p>
Class 16 May 12	Presentation Day	<p>DUE: Presentations</p> <p>Papers must be submitted (hard copy and TaskStream)</p>

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

Professional Development Project—Report

Assignment description: *Professional 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. Suggested due date: February 24, 2010.*

Student's Name _____

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.

4 Outstanding 3 Competent 2 Needs Improvement 1 Unsatisfactory

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

4 Outstanding 3 Competent 2 Needs Improvement 1 Unsatisfactory

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

4 Outstanding 3 Competent 2 Needs Improvement 1 Unsatisfactory

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?

4 Outstanding 3 Competent 2 Needs Improvement 1 Unsatisfactory

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

4 Outstanding 3 Competent 2 Needs Improvement 1 Unsatisfactory

Total points earned for this assignment: ____/20 (= 10% of grade)

Conference Report

Assignment description: *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. Due March 24, 2010.*

Student's Name _____

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.

4 Outstanding 3 Competent 2 Needs Improvement 1 Unsatisfactory

F. References – use APA format (5th or 6th edition). At least 10 references. See <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/> for format;

Appendices. Data chart, sample of your data, instruments you created (if you use one you did not create, put a citation for it in the methodology section).