George Mason University
College of Education & Human Development — Graduate School of Education
Advanced Studies in Teaching & Learning — Master of Education Program
EDRD 635-6P1, "School-Based Inquiry in Literacy" (3 Credits)
Spring 2012

Instructor: -Parsons, PhD, Assistant Professor
Office: 1604 Thompson Hall, Fairfax campus   Office Hours: By appointment
Phone: 703.993.5257 (o)   *Email: award12@gmu.edu *

Class meetings
Wednesdays, 4:30- 7:10 pm, Prince William Campus: Bull Run Hall rm 247. Individual and small group meeting times and/or discussion online may be required.

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.

Prerequisite(s): EDRD 630, 631, 632, 633, and 634; admission to literacy emphasis; or permission of program coordinator.

Rationale
As a required portion of the literacy specialization in the Advanced Studies in Teaching and Learning (ASTL) program, this course addresses required Virginia Department of Education and International Reading Association competencies for K-12 Reading Specialists. This course also provides an advanced, research-based study of literacy for teachers seeking master's degrees.

Nature of Course Delivery
This course uses a face-to-face seminar format based on discussion of class topics and readings as well as related experiences and assignments from the classroom-based practicum. Students are expected to complete all class readings prior to each session and to be prepared to engage in active dialogue and sharing of ideas. Activities will include small group discussions, presentations, whole class sharing, and reflection.

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.

IRA 2010 Standards: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 6.2, 6.4.
1.1: Interpret major theories of reading and writing processes and development to understand the needs of all readers in diverse contexts.
- Analyze classroom environment quality for fostering individual motivation to read and write (e.g., access to print, choice, challenge, and interests).
- Demonstrate a critical stance toward the scholarship of the profession.
- Read and understand the literature and research about factors that contribute to reading success (e.g., social,

cognitive, and physical).

1.2: Interpret and summarize historically shared knowledge (e.g., instructional strategies and theories) that addresses the needs of all readers.

Inform educators and others about the historically shared knowledge base in reading and writing and its role in reading education.

1.3: Model fair-mindedness, empathy, and ethical behavior when teaching students and working with other professionals.

- Communicate the importance of fair-mindedness, empathy, and ethical behavior in literacy instruction and professional behavior.

2.1: Demonstrate an understanding of the research and literature that undergirds the reading and writing curriculum and instruction for all pre-K–12 students.

- Develop and implement the curriculum to meet the specific needs of students who struggle with reading.
- Support teachers and other personnel in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the reading and writing curriculum for all students.
- Work with teachers and other personnel in developing a literacy curriculum that has vertical and horizontal alignment across pre-K–12.

6.2: Articulate the research base related to the connections among teacher dispositions, student learning, and the involvement of parents, guardians, and the community.

- Promote the value of reading and writing in and out of school by modeling a positive attitude toward reading and writing with students, colleagues, administrators, and parents and guardians.
- Join and participate in professional literacy organizations, symposia, conferences, and workshops.
- Demonstrate effective interpersonal, communication, and leadership skills.
- Demonstrate effective use of technology for improving student learning.

6.4: Demonstrate an understanding of local, state, and national policies that affect reading and writing instruction.

- Write or assist in writing proposals that enable schools to obtain additional funding to support literacy efforts.
- Promote effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders, including parents and guardians, teachers, administrators, policymakers, and community members.
- Advocate with various groups (e.g., administrators, school boards, and local, state, and federal policymaking bodies) for needed organizational and instructional changes to promote effective literacy instruction.

Inform other educators about major theories of reading and writing processes, components, and development with supporting research evidence, including information about the relationship between the culture and native language of English learners as a support system in their learning to read and write in English.

Virginia State Standards 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.

Satisfactory completion of each PBA as well as posting to TaskStream is required before moving to the next course. The Taskstream assessment system can be found at https://www.taskstream.com/pub/. Students are required to submit the designated PBA to each course instructor so that the assignment can be evaluated when the assignment is due. Only assignments/PBAs posted to TaskStream will be assessed. No final grades for courses 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 (changes took place July 1, 2011. (If a student has taken it earlier the score on the old test will be accepted (Virginia Reading Assessment for Reading Specialists). The Virginia Board of Education is expected to set passing scores for the RVE assessments in late spring 2011. Registration information for the new tests 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 the fall semester.

General Class 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 literacy leadership activities, 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; you will keep a reading log that includes both notes on and reactions to each reading. Class participation is a required component of your grade.

Class attendance
If, due to an emergency, you will not be in class, please contact me prior to class time. 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.

Assignments
All assignments should be turned in on the due date indicated in the schedule below via paper copy OR email attachment (by 4:30pm, whether or not you are in class that evening). Save all electronic files with your last name and assignment title (ex: WARD_Proposal.docx). All assignments must be typed, in 12-point Times New Roman font, and double-spaced with one-inch margins. 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.

General
Please see me with questions and concerns about assignments, expectations, or class activities. I am happy to clarify and lend assistance on projects and assignments, but please come to me within a reasonable timeframe. I will be available for the 15 minutes following class, by appointment, and by e-mail. I look forward to collaborating with each of you as you work toward your goals.

Blackboard
Our course website (still under development at http://www.mymasonportal.gmu.edu/) will include information and resources important to your successful completion of the course. These will include the course syllabus, an announcement page, notes and class presentations, assignment descriptions and rubrics, and a bibliography of course readings and web resources. We will also hold discussions via Blackboard.

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

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 more information regarding the Graduate School of Education, please visit http://gse.gmu.edu/. For more about the College of Education and Human Development, please visit http://cehd.gmu.edu

George Mason University Policies and Services

Academic integrity (honor code, plagiarism) – Students must adhere to guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/].

Mason Email – 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, division, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301ge.html].

Counseling and Psychological Services – 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/].

Office of Disability Services – 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 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.

The Writing Center – 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/].

University Libraries – The George Mason University Libraries provide numerous services, research tools, and help with using the library resources [See http://library.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.

Our Class Structure

The class will be structured around discussion and small group activities. It is critical for you to keep up with the readings and to participate in class. Instructor- and student-generated questions related to course readings and assignments/projects will often be the focus of group discussions. Be prepared to discuss the content of the required reading and its relation to your teaching experiences, course assignments and projects, and to ask questions for clarification, exploration, or to promote discussion. In general, we will engage in three types of activities:

1. Mini-lectures, activities, and discussions related to literacy assessment & instructional activities
2. Discussions of the week's readings
3. Pair and small group meetings in which you will provide feedback and support for each others' literacy assessment activities

Required Texts

Bean, R.M. & Dagen, A.S.. (Eds.) (2012). *Best practices of literacy leaders: Keys to school improvement.* New York, NY: Guilford.

Additional readings will be made available on-line or on electronic reserve.

Course Requirements and Evaluative Criteria

Class Participation (10%)

Daily attendance and consistent, thoughtful participation will earn you the full 10 points for class participation. For each session you are (unexcused) absent, 5 points will be deducted from your class participation points up to the total of 10 points. Attendance will be taken beginning on the first class session. Two tardies are equivalent to one absence, and missing 30% or more of our class sessions will result in automatic failure of the class.

Teacher Inquiry and Outreach Project: 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.

Directions to Candidates

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 A: Literature Review (30%).

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.

Part B: Op-Ed Piece (30%).
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	Provides accurate and credible (indicates source of facts) information based on research	Provides accurate information on the topic based on research and professional	Provides information on the topic based on professional knowledge and	Does not provide information on the topic or bases	

literacy education	and professional knowledge	knowledge but does not indicate source of facts	opinion	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 ethical principles	The piece does not provide a positive message nor does it model ethical 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 (30%)

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	The proposal presents a well-researched and	The proposal presents a well-defined theoretical	The proposal presents a theoretical base,	The proposal does not present a theoretical base	

writing processes and development to understand the needs of all readers in diverse contexts	well-defined and well-connected theoretical base to support the work to be funded	base but it is not well connected to the work to be funded	but it is not well defined	for the work to be 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	

Grading Scale
A   =   94%-100%
A- =   90%-93%
B+ =   87%-89%
B   =   80%-86%
C   =   75%-79%

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. Literacy Research Association (LRA) (an international literacy research organization): www.nrconline.org
5. National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE): www.ncte.org

Tentative Schedule

Date	Topic	Assignment due	Reading
Jan 25	• Syllabus overview • Reflect on program experiences • The role of the reading specialist in policy & advocacy	• Begin considering literacy topics that resonate with you and your school's needs (browse text for ideas)	
Feb 1	• Beginning the literature review process • Research techniques, Zotero • Critical Friends groups	• Bring 2-3 possible topics to research in class	• Bean & Dagen Chs 1-2
Feb 8	• Evaluating literature for relevance and validity/reliability • Narrowing your topic	• Read and bring at least 3 peer reviewed research articles that support your topic (e-copies ok)	• Kucan
Feb 15	• Drafting and Writing Literature reviews • Creating a logic chain	• Outline of literature review • Summary of 5 articles (min.)	
Feb 22	• Becoming a Leader: Elementary & Secondary Coaching	• Be prepared to relate chapter info to your school experiences in class discussion	• Bean & Dagen Chs 3, 4 , 8

Date	Topic	Assignment due	Reading
Feb 29	• Op-Ed writing • Choosing an outlet • Choosing a position	• Lit review draft for critical friends	* Read editorials and op-ed pieces in newspapers and magazines; analyze the craft
Mar 7	• Becoming a Leader: Working with other school leaders	• Literature review due	• Bean & Dagen Chs 5- 6
Mar 14	• No class- GMU spring break		
Mar 21	• Becoming a Leader: Targeting instruction	• Op-Ed outline/draft due for critical friends	• Bean & Dagen Chs 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 (choose 3)
Mar 28	• Researching and analyzing grant announcements • Matching school needs		• Bring 2-3 grant announcements to class for discussion/possible use
Apr 4	TBA	* Op-Ed paper due	

Apr 11	• Becoming a Leader: Policy decisions • Grant writing: Needs assessment	•	* Bean & Dagen Ch 17-18 • Maxwell
Apr 18	• No class: Instructor at AERA conference		
Apr 25	• Grant writing: Project narrative & and budget		• Nutt • Stinson
May 2	• Grant writing: Streamlining the logic chain & revising for clarity	• Proposal draft due for critical friends	
May 9	• Project debrief Course evaluation	• Final grant proposal due • All PBA assignments must be posted to Taskstream	