GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

ELED 459 Sec. DL1: Problems of Practice in Elementary Education
3 Credits, Spring 2024
Wednesdays, 4:30 – 7:10 PM, Online

Instructor Name:	Dr. Debra Sprague
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Required Corequisite: ELED 490

University Catalog Course Description
Provides teacher candidates an understanding of research paradigms utilizing systematic evidence to improve practice and further skills in assessment of learning outcomes. Emphasizes linking research and practice, making instructional decisions based on an understanding of research.

Course Overview
This course is designed to help teacher candidates understand various research paradigms utilizing research literature and systematic evidence to improve teacher practice. Course emphasizes linking research and practice and making instructional decisions based on an understanding of research.

Nature of Course Delivery
This course will be delivered (76% or more) using both synchronous and asynchronous formats (designated in the **Class Schedule** section) 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.

This course includes multiple instructional strategies and formats including synchronous and asynchronous online class sessions. Individual session formats vary and may include lecture, small group/large group discussion, hands on activities, interactive work, student presentations and cooperative learning. Practical applications of theory are explored in group activities. Assignments and in-class activities are designed to support the iterative writing process and require time to prepare. Throughout the course, you will be expected to make revisions of your drafts based on peer and instructor feedback in order to improve your work.

This course has been approved by the Faculty Senate Writing Across the Curriculum Committee to fulfill the Writing Intensive requirement in the Elementary Education (BSEd) major. It does so through the writing of three papers, a minimum of 1500 words each.

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.

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.

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.

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/Instructor/Original/Getting_Started/Browser_Support

· 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 will need a headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool.

· 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:

      o Adobe Acrobat Reader: https://get.adobe.com/reader/
      o Windows Media Player: https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player
      o Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/
      Zoom – https://zoom.us/

Expectations

· Course Week:

Our course week will begin on the day that our synchronous meetings take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes.

· 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 three times per week. In addition, students must log-in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings.

· 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.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:
1. Articulate the role of systematic evidence in the improvement of teaching and learning.
2. Use educational research literature as a basis for reflecting on and improving their teaching practice.
3. Critique the quality of research studies within various paradigms.
4. Use technology to assist in locating, using, conducting research, and analyzing data.
5. Develop skills to become critical consumers of research
6. Provide research-based evidence to support assertions.
7. Use writing to explore and respond to texts or other content in ways that deepen their awareness of the field of elementary education.
8. Develop strategies appropriate to the discipline and genre for revising, reorganizing, and proofreading writing based upon feedback they receive as they engage in a recursive writing process.

Outcomes and Standards (see below)

Learning Outcomes	InTASC Standards
1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10
2	9, 10
3	6, 9
4	6,
5	6, 9
6	6, 9, 10
7	6, 9, 10
8	9, 10

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards:

INTASC

- **Standard #2: Learning Differences.** The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.
- **Standard #3: Learning Environments.** The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- **Standard #4: Content Knowledge.** The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.
- **Standard #5: Application of Content.** The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.
- **Standard #6: Assessment.** The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.
- **Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice.** The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.
- **Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration**. The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Readings are available on Blackboard.

COURSE PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS:

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor.

COURSE POLICY ON GENERATIVE AI

When explicitly stated by the instructor, Generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, are allowed on the named assignment. Students will be directed if and when citation or statement-of-usage direction is required. Use of these tools on any assignment not specified will be considered a violation of academic integrity. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Tools should be used following the fundamental principles of the Honor Code. This includes being honest about the use of these tools for submitted work and including citations when using the work of others, whether individual people or Generative-AI tools.

- https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/ai-text-generators/

For the purpose of this course, Generative AI tools can be used to provide an outline for the three papers required for this course.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Attendance and Participation Expectations *(20 points)*

This course operates with the assumption that knowledge is socially constructed and the most meaningful learning opportunities are those where you have the opportunity to offer and explore diverse perspectives with peers. To do **this it is expected that you attend all scheduled classes** outlined within the syllabus. Absence from class to observe a religious holiday, to serve jury duty, or to participate in required military service, and medical emergencies are exceptions to the above policy. If you anticipate being absent for any of these reasons, please make arrangements at least 48 hours in advance. In addition, **you are expected to be on time to class** each week unless advance notice has been provided to the instructor.

You are expected to contribute to both class and online discussions and activities as well as genuinely listen to peers as they do the same. In addition, **you are expected to be prepared for each class**, which means having completed all assigned readings and tasks for that class.

When you are using cell phones, laptops, etc., *please be respectful of your peers and your instructor and do not engage in activities that are unrelated to class*. Such disruptions show a lack of professionalism and may affect your participation grade.

You must actively check the course Blackboard site and your GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least twice a week.

All written papers are expected to be double-spaced, with 1" margins, and in 12-point font

(Times New Roman, Calibri, or Arial). APA format is expected. If you do not have a 7th Edition APA manual, the OWL at Purdue is an excellent resource. https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/index.html

Please Note: The GMU Writing Center offers online support via email. They will provide feedback on your writing within one hour. Professional writing can be difficult; I encourage you to take advantage of this service. http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/?page_id=177

Assignments should be submitted electronically via Blackboard and are due by class time on the date indicated in an appropriate format (i.e., Word or PDF document). It is expected that all class assignments will be submitted on time to the correct location; therefore, **late assignments will not receive full credit.** Assignments turned in late or in an inappropriate format will be eligible for only 50% of the available points. If there is an emergency, contact me as soon as possible.

Note: I reserve the right to add, alter, or omit any assignment as necessary during the course of the semester. You will always receive advanced notice of any modifications.

2. Paper #1: Researching Popular Resources *(25 points)*

Students will choose an education topic of interest. Students will identify at least 10 practitioner resources, such as teacher journals, blogs, Wikis, newspapers, social media, that provide information on their topic. They will analyze these resources and write a paper about their topic. The paper should be at least 1500 words in length. References should be in APA style. The paper should include the following information:

    a. Description of the education topic.

    b. Level of effectiveness of the strategy (what works, what does not).

    c. Who benefits from the strategy and who does not.

    d. Recommendations.

Students will have the option to revise this paper and resubmit after receiving feedback from the instructor and critical friends.

3. Paper #2: Researching Peer-Reviewed Resources *(25 points)*

Students will keep the same educational topic used in *Paper #1*. For this paper, students will identify at least 10 peer-reviewed journal articles. They will analyze these resources and write another paper about their topic. The paper should be at least 1500 words in length. References should be in APA style. The paper should include the following information:

    a. Description of the education topic.

    b. What the research says about the effectiveness.

    c. Who benefits from the strategy and who does not.

    d. Recommendations.

Students will revise this paper and resubmit after receiving feedback from the instructor and critical friends.

4. Paper #3: Researching a New Topic *(30 points)*

Students will choose a new educational topic. Students will choose 10 -12 reliable and valid resources. At least half of these resources should be from peer-reviewed articles. They will analyze these resources and write a paper about the new topic. The paper should be at least 1500 words in length. References should be in APA style. The paper should include the following information:

a. Description of the education topic, noticing differences and similarities between the definition in the peer-reviewed articles and the one identified in the practitioner resources.

b. Level of effectiveness of the strategy (what works, what does not) and note how the peer-reviewed articles compares with the practitioner resources.

c. Who benefits from the strategy and who does not and note how the peer-reviewed articles compares with the practitioner resources.

d. Recommendations based on both the peer-reviewed articles and the practitioner resources.

e. Analysis of the two sources of information and which one provides the most reliable and valid information for the effectiveness of strategies.

Students will have the option to revise this paper and resubmit after receiving feedback from the instructor.

Course Outcomes	Assignments	Points	Due Date
1, 2, 3, 4, 7	Paper #1: Researching Popular Resources	25	2/7
1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8	Paper #2: Researching Peer-Reviewed Resources	25	3/13 Revision – 4/3
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	Paper #3: Researching a New Topic	30	4/17 Revision – 5/1

Grading Scale

Grade	Grading Scale	Interpretation
A+	97-100	Represents mastery of the subject through effort beyond basic requirements
A	93-96	
A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	Reflects an understanding of and the ability to apply theories and principles at a basic level
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77 – 79	
C	73 – 76	
C-	70-72	Denotes an unacceptable level of understanding and application of the basic elements of the course. Grade does not meet the minimum requirement for licensure courses.
D	60-69	
F	<59	

In order to receive an A+ in this course all participation, assignments (written and oral) as well as discussion must be at the very highest level and represent the highest level of discourse in the Elementary Education program.

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

See https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. (See Elementary Education Program Handbook).

COURSE SCHEDULE

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

Date	Readings (To be completed prior to class)	Topic and Activities	Assignment Due
1/17	Module 1 Synchronous	Introductions and Syllabus Choosing a topic Q-Sort Methodology	
1/24	Module 2 Synchronous	Identifying critical friends. Locating practitioner resources.	Finalize topic for Papers 1 and 2.
1/31	Module 3 Synchronous	Analyzing practitioner resources. Working with critical friends.	
2/7	Module 4 Synchronous	What are peer-reviewed resources? Locating peer-reviewed research Guest Speaker: GMU Librarian	Paper 1 Due
2/14	Module 5 Asynchronous	Analyzing quantitative research – making sense of the research data.	
2/21	Module 6 Synchronous	Analyzing qualitative research – making sense of the research data.	
2/28	Module 7 Synchronous	Working with critical friends to interpret resources located.	
3/6		**Spring Break – No Class**	
3/13	Asynchronous	Meet with professor individually to address research issues/questions.	Paper 2 Due
3/20	Module 8 Asynchronous	Working with critical friends to revise paper #2.	
3/27	Module 9	Comparing practitioner resources with peer-	

	Asynchronous	reviewed research.	
4/3	Module 10 Synchronous	Choosing a new educational topic. Locating resources.	Paper 2 Revisions Due Finalize topic for Paper 3.
4/10	Module 11 Asynchronous	Working with critical friends to interpret resources located.	
4/17	Asynchronous	Meet with professor individually to address research issues/questions.	Paper 3 Due
4/24	Asynchronous	Finalize the final paper.	
5/1		No Class Work on revisions of final paper	Paper 3 Revisions Due

CORE VALUES COMMITMENT

Core Values Commitment: The College of Education & 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 VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/.

- For information on student support resources on campus, see https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/knowing-mason-students/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/ .