

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE AT POTSDAM

GRDG 610 – Seminar: Literacy Research
Spring 2012 Weekends: 2/10-2/11; 3/23- 3/24; 5/11-5/12 (F 4-9; S 9-5)

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Course Description: The purpose of this seminar is to acquaint students with research methods and current topics, studies and writings in the area of literacy. The objectives of this course include preparing students to be consumers of literacy research and enhance their ability to find information, studies, and data in a variety of research journals and texts both on-line and in hardcopy. Students will explore a wide range of current literacy topics and make reports, presentations and demonstrations throughout the course.

Required Texts:

1. Allington, R. (2012). *What really matters for struggling readers: Designing research-based programs*. Boston: Pearson.
2. Mertler, C. (2006). *Action research: Teachers as researchers in the classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
3. Wood, K. & Blanton, W. *Literacy instruction for adolescents: Research-based practices*. NY: Guilford.
4. Journal articles (for class assignment & individual literature review project)

Course Requirements:

1. **Annotated Articles & Analysis (15%)** Both of our course texts are filled with references to landmark literacy research and current studies. In class, we'll discuss key ideas presented throughout these texts, and analyze them in terms of what they add to our understanding of research design and processes. To develop more depth of understanding about the practices of research, read and analyze 3 research articles related to a literacy topic that interests you. Use references from the chapters in our texts, as well as library databases, to identify articles. Following a reporting format that I provide, write an analysis of each article that shows understanding of key ideas about the research reported and research processes. You'll need to draw from research journals or research handbooks (available in Crumb Library). We'll explore these resources in our first weekend meeting. **Due: March 21** (*Note- This is the Wednesday prior to our weekend meeting on 3/23. I'd like to be able to review these before class, to build on ideas for class discussion. I'll provide an assignment upload link to use on Moodle, or you can leave me a hard copy in my mailbox)

2. **Literature Review (25%)** Based upon a literacy research question you have identified through activities in class, write a literature review that synthesizes knowledge about that topic. You'll need to use 10 research articles and 2 chapters from Allington and/or Wood/Blanton for this review. One article can be the same as the set you used for the "Annotated Articles" exercise, if appropriate to your question. You also can use a chapter from one of the research handbooks.

Each chapter in Allington and Wood/Blanton models the format of an effective, comprehensive literature review, and we will discuss in class the elements of this genre that make it work well. The aim of your literature review is to dig more deeply into the knowledge base related to a question that you pose, and to gain skill in conducting effective information searches to learn about a topic. We'll do exercises in class to help with locating credible research, annotating & analyzing articles, and pulling together a synthesis. **Due: Monday April 23**

3. **Action Research Planning Journal (20%)** The aim of this activity is to engage in the thinking and planning that goes into developing a research proposal, though you are not actually writing a full proposal for this class. Throughout the semester, you will be prompted to consider major concepts from the Mertler text as they inform the research design process, with a focus on the literacy question you are examining for your literature review. You will respond to five prompts total. For example, I will ask you to identify the types of data you might collect to investigate your question, data collection tools you could use, analysis strategies that would fit your question and what you want to learn, and more. The journal prompts will be posted on Moodle, and I'll email you with reminders to complete them so you keep up.

You'll need to complete entries #1 & #2 for our March class. Journals can be typed or handwritten, must be organized (i.e., dated) for submission, and must address the questions in the prompts thoroughly (at least a couple of pages for each entry). Bring your journal to our in-person class meetings. Submit your complete journal, with a culminating reflection, by the end of the final exam week. **Due: Journal entries 1 & 2 – March 23; Completed journal w/ reflection due May 18 (submit on Moodle or hardcopy)**

4. **Literacy Research Wiki Page: Informing Colleagues of Research Trends (10%)** Gain skill in designing public information literacy resources for specific audiences, as you are likely to do in the role of a school literacy specialist or district literacy leader. To achieve this, you will create a comprehensive Wiki page related to your research question & discoveries. I'll provide details about what you must include. The goal is to practice writing about research for multiple types of readers, in an accessible, engaging manner. **Due: May 11** (you'll have some time to work on it in class and will need to work on it outside of class, as well)

5. **Literacy Research: Electronic Poster Presentation (10%)** Create and present a comprehensive, visually appealing electronic poster that relates key information about your research question, key themes in the literature related to your question, a focused idea for a research design & data collection strategy if you were to pursue your project, and implications/dissemination ideas. While designed as a class project, you should view this poster as a resource for your professional portfolio. It will illustrate your capacity to analyze and present research-based literacy practices for school colleagues and give administrators an idea of the leadership you can provide as a literacy specialist. The poster-making process will require you to synthesize what you have explored and learned through the course. An in-class workshop will be scheduled to share strategies for creating effective research posters for professional portfolios. **Due: May 12**

6. **Quizzes (10%)** There will be two quizzes scheduled during the face-to-face meetings (**March and May**). Quizzes will focus on term identifications based on the readings from the Mertler textbook.

7. **Participation (10%):** While participants meet on weekends, there is work to be done in between face-to-face meetings, including reading & research; completing and submitting assignments; and conferencing with the instructor to support your progress & success (in-person meeting; email/online; phone; Skype are all vehicles for conferencing!). Students must stay on top of the readings and assignments in order to complete assignments in a timely manner. Students are expected to exercise professional dispositions by reading (and abiding by) course policies and course documents. Above all, share with our class an attitude of curiosity, respect for others, responsibility for your actions, and an open mind.

Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance is essential for successful participation in the course. Students are expected to attend all face-to-face meeting dates. From time-to-time, individual conferences, independent research, and meetings with teacher study groups will be conducted during scheduled face-to-face meeting times. See course calendar for details.

Participating in a weekender course requires students to adhere to deadlines and to check campus email regularly for announcements. Being prepared for class requires being ready when class begins, doing the assigned readings, and completing all assignments for class on or before the day they are due. A pattern of absences, tardiness, early departure, and/or lack of preparation will affect the participation grade. Only documented absences will be excused.

Cell Phones/Text Messaging: Cell phones may only be on during class in cases of emergency. Students should communicate ahead of time should such a need arise. Text messaging is forbidden during class. Students who choose to text in class will be excused from class.

Assignments & Grading Policy Assignments will be graded on a 4.0 scale. Written work must conform to APA style and be free of surface errors. All assignments must be typed (12 point font - double spaced) and stapled, unless otherwise indicated. Be sure to include page numbers on all written work. Students are encouraged to visit the College Writing Center, Carson 106, cwc@potssdam.edu, x3059, for assistance and support for writing assignments. All assignments must be turned-in to receive any credit in the course. An Incomplete will not be given without prior consultation and only for emergencies.

Documented Disabilities Any student who believes that he/she may need academic adjustments or accommodations based on a documented disability should make an appointment with the professor. Students needing an Accommodation Plan should see Sharon House, Coordinator of Accommodative Services in Sisson Hall 112 (x3267) or ssc@potssdam.edu.

Plagiarism Representing any part of another's work as one's own is equivalent to fraud. Disciplinary action may include grade reduction, a failing grade, or suspension or dismissal from the College. See the Potsdam College catalog for specific Codes of Conduct policies, prohibitions and penalties.

***Components of course requirements are subject to change in accordance with the needs of this class.

Calendar: Readings & Assignments

DATE	READINGS DUE	ASSIGNMENT DUE
Weekend I: Fri 2/10-Sat 2/11	1. Mertler: “Introduction to Action Research”; “Overview of the Action Research Process”; “Planning for Action Research” 2. Allington: Ch 1 3. Wood & Blanton: Introduction; Chs 1 & 2	1) See ‘610 Instructions Wkend 1’ sheet – emailed to you & posted on Moodle under “Course Announcements” 2) *Bring your books! We’ll use them in class and we’ll do a jigsaw reading from Mertler (“Developing a Research Plan”) in class.
Wednesday March 21		DUE: Annotated Articles assignment
Weekend II: Fri 3/23 - Sat 3/24	1. Mertler: “Collecting Data”; “Analyzing Data” 2. Albert (in press): “New learning, new youth? Policy, literacy, and the subjects of reform in risk society” (*On Moodle; hard copies will be available on request) 3. Wood & Blanton (ALL): Ch. 12, “Research-Based Instructional Literacy Practices: Challenges & Opportunities” 4. Allington & Wood/Blanton: Select chapters for in-class exercise (see “Assignment Due” column)	1) <u>In-Class: Problem-Based Literature Review.</u> For our second weekend of meetings in March, students will read select chapters from Allington & Wood/Blanton, and will work together to present insights for others in class. In our first weekend mtg., you’ll choose chapters from a list provided. During our March class, you’ll meet in interest groups to discuss ideas; apply insights as a group to a case study that I provide for you; and present to others in class. 2) <u>Action Research Planning Journal:</u> Entries 1 & 2
Mid-March – Mid-April	Individual Conferences & Consultations – to support your process of literature review development	
Monday April 23		DUE: Literature Review
Weekend III: Fri 5/11- Sat 5/12	1. Mertler: “Developing an Action Plan”; “Sharing & Reflecting”; “Writing Up Action Research” 2. Online resources to be assigned (school-based websites; literacy research websites; visual design tutorials – to support your work on the poster & Wiki page)	1) <u>Action Research Planning Journal:</u> Entries 3-4
Friday May 18		DUE: Action Research Planning Journal & Reflection (5 entries + reflection)