EDCI 663: Understanding, Evaluating, and Using Research in School Reading Programs

Focus on understanding, critiquing, and applying reading/literacy research; reviewing research to improve practice; analyzing data at the district, school, classroom, and student levels to improve reading instruction.

Learning Outcomes
[Each outcome is followed by the appropriate International Reading Association Standard for Reading Professionals (2003)]

At the conclusion of the course, candidates will demonstrate:
1. basic knowledge of multiple approaches to literacy research and ability to articulate the impact of research on reading instruction (IRA Standards 1.2, 5.2)
2. understanding of the basics of descriptive and inferential statistics
3. ability to select, critique, integrate, and write about literacy research in order to improve literacy practice (IRA Standards 1.2, 5.4)
4. ability to interpret and present research findings for colleagues and other stakeholders in the larger school community (IRA Standard 1.2, 5.4)
5. ability to work in a collegial manner to improve professional practice and scholarly writing (IRA Standard 5.3)
6. ability to organize, analyze, and interpret data to plan, evaluate, and revise instruction (IRA Standards 3.1, 3.3, 3.4)
7. understanding of how to enhance one’s own and others’ on-going professional development (IRA Standard 5.2)

Required Reading


Resources


Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS)
http://nces.ed.gov/ecls/

Maryland Student Assessment (MSA)
http://mdk12.org/assessments/k_8/index.html

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/

NAEP Data Explorer
http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)
www.pisa.oecd.org

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)
timss.bc.edu/pirls2006/index.html

Additional readings listed below or announced in class.

Recommended Reading


Assignments and Grading

The following is a list and brief description of responsibilities and assignments that will help you meet the learning outcomes of this course. Additional information for assignments will be provided in class. Each assignment is followed by the appropriate International Reading Association Standard for Reading Professionals (2003).

Class Participation

You are expected to come to class fully prepared to discuss the required readings. You are expected to make substantive contributions to each class discussion. You should come to each class session with written notes, questions, insights, and critiques about the assigned readings. It should be clear throughout this course that you are actively relating content and issues across the various readings, as well as linking the assigned material to other sources. In addition, class activities will not only require interaction but collaboration with classmates (e.g., critiquing National Reading Panel chapters). (IRA Standard 5.3)

Discussion Leader

All class members are expected to read and study all assigned material. However, each student will take responsibility for leading a class discussion, lasting approximately 30 minutes, on one of the assigned research articles.

Although your colleagues will have read and studied this article as well, your purpose is to extend your classmates’ thinking about the article. You should encourage such processes as elaboration, synthesis, and integration across readings. As discussion leader, you will address approximately three significant issues from the research article. Significant issues can and should include concerns related to research issues, as well as literacy issues. Craft approximately three questions related to these significant issues for us to consider as part of your discussion. Depending on the study, it may be appropriate to introduce the class to the issues that you are focusing on by engaging us in some kind of activity that is interactive.

Prepare a typed handout for your classmates:
- Include your name, date, and full citation for the assigned research article.
- Provide a summary of the major points in the assigned material. [The purpose of this summary is to serve as a resource for your colleagues to use in reviewing course materials. Do NOT read this summary to the class.]
- Provide discussion questions. See specifics above.
- Edit and proofread your work. See note on writing below. (IRA Standard 5.2)

“Pillar” Assignment

For this assignment, you will select one of the so-called "five pillars of reading instruction" (see the National Reading Panel report: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension) or one of Allington's (2005) other five “pillars” (i.e., classroom organization; matching pupils and texts; access to interesting texts, choice, and collaboration; writing and reading; expert tutoring).

Locate a primary research report study for your pillar, and write a 2-3 page (500-750 words) critique of it. You should be sure to summarize the major points of the article, note strengths/weaknesses/limitations, and include a discussion of the findings in which you explain how the study has impacted or should impact reading instruction. Be sure to include your name and the full citation in APA style at the top of your critique. You will distribute your critique to the class.

You will also overview the study in a brief Power Point presentation. This presentation should reflect how you would articulate the research in a professional development session. Remember you will be hitting the highlights. Details can be in your handout. (IRA Standards 1.2, 5.2, 5.4)
Data Analysis/Instructional Improvement Plan

For this assignment, you will use Excel (or SPSS) to create a database of assessment information that you can use to plan, evaluate, and revise instruction. You may use district, school, classroom, or individual student data, depending on your role. We will discuss appropriate legal and ethical steps for maintaining confidentiality of the data before you share any information in class. You will use this database to analyze performance at the level you have selected. Your report will describe:

• the question(s) you were seeking to answer,
• your rationale for addressing the question(s),
• your data sources (measures/assessments, etc.),
• the analysis or analyses you conducted,
• the results (including charts/graphs etc.), and
• your recommendations for instructional changes.

As part of your work, you will demonstrate that you can interpret the assessments appropriately, taking into account the technical adequacy of assessments, and how their adequacy may affect your conclusions. You will also demonstrate your ability to consider the other limitations of your investigation (e.g., correlation vs. causation).

Your report should communicate results to a specific audience (e.g., policymakers, public officials, community members, classroom teachers and parents). It should be written in a voice of a reading professional (i.e., not as informal correspondence among friends), and should include citations and a reference list.

Your report should provide evidence that you can apply your knowledge of both research methods and the research base in reading to collect, analyze, and use assessment data to implement and revise school reading programs.

You will present a summary of what you found to the class in brief presentation, along with a handout. (Remember you are hitting the highlights. Details can be in your handout.) (IRA Standards 3.1, 3.3, 3.4)

Final Report

You will write a final report in which you clearly demonstrate your understanding of the course readings. The report should provide evidence that you have read the assigned readings and can articulate important information related to a particular school issue or problem in reading. To accomplish this purpose, I recommend keeping a reading log in preparation for class in which you include written notes, questions, insights, and critiques about the assigned readings, and in which you integrate content and issues across the course readings and other sources.

This report should be written to a clear audience (e.g., principal, colleagues at school) and for a specific education level (e.g., elementary, secondary). The report should be written in a voice of a reading professional (i.e., not as informal correspondence among friends). The length of your report will depend on how you approach it. But most reports will be somewhere around 4-5 pages (1000 to 1,250 words) plus references. Be sure you make your report easy to read by using features such as subheadings. Your report should integrate across at least 5 different course readings. Your report should reflect the type of resource you would use to articulate research as part of a professional development program. (IRA Standards 1.2, 5.2, 5.4)

Writing

All assignments must be typed. Correct spelling and standard English grammatical usage are required. You must edit and proofread carefully so that your work reflects professional standards. Include page numbers on any material longer than one page.
All your work must follow APA conventions (but no abstract is needed). Note that everything in APA format is double-spaced (the only exception is that handouts for class leadership may be single-spaced). All sources used for your papers must be listed in a reference section and credited in the text of the paper.

You should carefully note University regulations related to plagiarism (see below).

Your work represents you as a professional. Consequently, all the work you submit must reflect high-quality writing. Your writing should be clear and well-organized, reflecting attention to detail. You should review the chapter in the APA manual on writing style and writing tip sheets on ELMs. You may also want to refer to a college English handbook to review grammar, effective writing, diction, punctuation, mechanics, etc.

It is unacceptable to turn in work that has not been carefully proofread and edited. If you know that you have difficulty writing (including proofreading and editing), you need to make arrangements to remedy the problem. Please talk with me for suggestions.

**Points for Assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Leader</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Pillar” Assignment</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis/Instructional Improvement Plan</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Report</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading Scale**

- A+ (97% to 100%)
- A (93% to 96%)
- A- (90% to 92%)
- B+ (87% to 89%)
- B (83% to 86%)
- B- (80% to 82%)
- C+ (77% to 79%)
- C (73% to 76%)
- C- (70% to 72%)
- D (60% to 69%)
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE/PARTIAL TOPIC LIST
Please bring to class the books and readings that are specified for each date.

SEPT. 2 Course overview
Legal and ethical issues in research and evaluation; CITI Human Subjects Training
Focus on information text

SEPT. 9 The role of data analysis for reading personnel
Getting started with data; Locating research useful for improving practice

- Schools and Data: Preface and Chapters 1 and 2; See application activities p. 7 (especially number 1) and be prepared to discuss your responses. Complete the application activity on page 17.
- Data Wise: Introduction & Chapter 1 (compare pages 15-16 to Schools and Data application activities p. 7)

SEPT. 16 Building background for data analysis and reading research reports on student literacy

- Schools and Data: Chap. 3 Collecting/organizing data
- Data Wise: Chapter 2 Building assessment literacy
- National Reading Panel report: Chap. 1 Introduction and Methodology

SEPT. 23 Building research background

- Schools and Data: Chap. 4 Correlation
- Schools and Data: Chap. 5 Regression
- National Reading Panel report:
  - Read all the executive summaries for Chapters 2 through 4 so that you can select one of the following sections to focus on for October 7th (see the end of the syllabus for your task for October 7th):
    - Chap. 2: Part I: Phonemic Awareness Instruction
    - Chap. 2: Part II: Phonics Instruction
    - Chap. 3: Fluency
    - Chap. 4: Part I. Vocabulary Instruction
    - Chap. 4: Part II: Text Comprehension Instruction
    - Chap. 4: Part III. Teacher Preparation and Comprehension Strategies Instruction
- Reading and understanding research: Focus on information text
- Give brief update on your Data Analysis assignment
SEPT. 30 Asking research questions on literacy

- Schools and Data: Chap. 6 Formulating research questions/comparing means
- Data Wise: Chapter 3 Creating a data overview
- Reading and understanding research: Focus on information text
  


____________________________________________________________________

OCT. 7 National Reading Panel pillars: Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension

- National Reading Panel report
  - On Sept. 23rd, you will have selected a section of the NRP to focus on. You will present your results today (see the end of the syllabus for a description of your task).

- Schools and Data: Chap. 7 Independent-samples t tests

- Reading and understanding research: Focus on information text
  

____________________________________________________________________

OCT. 14: Other pillars: classroom organization; matching pupils and texts; access to interesting texts, choice, and collaboration; writing and reading relationship; expert tutoring


- Schools and Data: Chap. 8 Analysis of variance
- Data Wise: Chapter 4 Digging into data

- Reading and understanding research: Focus on information text
  


- Give brief update on your Data Analysis assignment
OCT. 21 Introduction to NAEP research reports on student literacy performance; Use of NAEP public access data tools

- Schools and Data: Chap. 9 Analysis of variance: Repeated measures
- Data Wise: Chapter 5 Examining instruction

- You will receive more detailed information on the following task:
  - Download and read the *Nation’s Report Card: Reading 2009* [complete report at http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2010458] [Or see ELMS.]
  - You will use the NAEP Data Explorer [http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/] to examine NAEP data.

OCT. 28 Research reports on student literacy

- Data Wise: Chapter 6 Developing an action plan
- Data Wise: Chapter 7 Planning to assess progress

- Reading and understanding research: Focus on information text

- Present “Pillar” assignment to class: GROUP 1

NOV. 4 Research reports on student literacy

- Schools and Data: Chap. 10 Two-way analysis of variance
- Data Wise: Chapter 8 Acting and assessing
- Data Wise: Chapter 9 Roles for the district central office

- Reading and understanding research: Focus on information text

- Present “Pillar” assignment to class: GROUP 2

NOV. 11 Research reports on student literacy

- Schools and Data: Chap. 11 Chi-square

- Reading and understanding research: Focus on information text

- Present “Pillar” assignment to class: GROUP 3

NOV. 18 Analyzing and interpreting data to inform team decision making about instruction
• Schools and Data: Chap. 12 Qualitative research and Chap. 13 Putting it all together

• Reading and understanding research: Focus on information text


• Present Data Analysis/Instructional Improvement Plan

---

**NOV. 25**  University Holiday

---

**DEC. 2** Literacy Research Association/National Reading Conference: No class meeting. Refine final report.

---

**DEC. 9** Analyzing and interpreting data to inform team decision making about instruction

• Present Data Analysis/Instructional Improvement Plan
• Final report due
University Policies

Individual Needs Accommodation. The University is legally obligated to provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. In order to ascertain what accommodations may need to be provided, students with disabilities should inform the instructors of their needs at the beginning of the semester. The instructor will then consult with Disability Support Services (301-314-7682). DSS will make arrangements with the student to determine and implement appropriate academic accommodations. In addition, sometimes students will encounter psychological problems that hamper their life on campus; should that condition pertain you, you are encouraged to consult with the Counseling Center (301-314-7651) for expert help. If you are experiencing difficulties in keeping up with the academic demands of this course, contact the Learning Assistance Service, 2201 Shoemaker Building, 301-314-7693. Their educational counselors can help with time management, reading, note-taking, and exam preparation skills.

Code of Academic Integrity. The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. The Code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html

The University of Maryland Honor Pledge, proposed by the Student Honor Council and approved by the University Senate, reads:

“I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination.”

Unless you are specifically advised to the contrary, the Pledge statement should be handwritten and signed on the front cover of all major papers, projects, or other academic assignments submitted for evaluation in this course. Students who fail to write and sign the Pledge will be asked to confer with the instructor. Failure to adhere to the code may result in the grade of XF – failure due to academic dishonesty.

Religious Observance. The University System of Maryland policy “Assignments and Attendance on Dates of Religious Observance” provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs: students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time, any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance. Notice should be provided as soon as possible but no later than the end of the schedule adjustment period. Acknowledged religious observances include, but are not limited to: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Good Friday, Passover.

Course Evaluation. Your participation in the evaluation of courses through CourseEvalUM is a responsibility you hold as a student member of our academic community. Your feedback is confidential and important to the improvement of teaching and learning at the University as well as to the tenure and promotion process. You will receive an email to let you know when CourseEvalUM opens toward the end of semester. You can go directly to the website (www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete your evaluations. By completing all of your evaluations each semester, you will have the privilege of accessing the summary reports for thousands of courses online at Testudo.