

## **ED 704: Contemporary Issues in Literacy Research**

The course is designed to critically examine current perspectives on literacy policy and research in terms of theoretical frameworks, research methods, and implications for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Professor Susan B. Neuman  
615-4655  
Wed. 1-4:00  
Spring Semester  
Room 2334

Office Hours  
Wed. 9-12:00 (by appointment)

- A. Key contemporary issues in literacy research: A policy perspective. (What are major concerns about 'reading' in policy circles? What are the causes of concern? The political contexts?)

### **January 7: The Political Context: Course introduction and Overview**

1. Shonkoff, Science, policy, and practice: Three cultures in search of a shared mission.
2. Definition of Science in NCLB
3. Stanovich's Using Research and Reason
4. Pressley, A few things reading educators should know about instructional experiments
5. (Optional) National Research Council, Scientific Research in Education

- B. What is science in reading reform? The next two sessions focus on the current definition of science and its implications for research and research-based practice.

**January 14: Science in Reading Research** (How might we differentiate science from advocacy and practice? What is the current definition of scientifically-based reading research? Why this definition?)

1. National Reading Panel Report (Summary)
2. Put Reading First
3. Pressley, Effective Beginning Reading Instruction
4. Shanahan, Reading Teacher piece
5. Garan, Beyond the smoke and mirrors

**January 21: Science in Reading Practice (What does the definition of SBR mean for practice?)** Consider the implications of this definition in state, district and local practice. Provide more than anecdotes.

1. Guidance, Reading First (www.ed.gov)
2. Smith, Unspeakable acts
3. What Works Clearinghouse

C. Once again, policies in reading are framed against this classic debate between progressive and skill-based approaches. These readings should be examined alongside the Reading First and Early Reading First legislation and guidance.

**January 28: Progressive Education vs. Skill-based approach (a replay?)**

1. Chall, Academic achievement challenge
2. Ravitch, Left Behind (optional)
3. Smith, Unspeakable acts

**February 4: Examining Early Intervention: The case of Reading Recovery**

1. Juel, Learning to read and write
2. Shanahan and Barr, Reading Recovery
3. Chapman, Tunmer, & Prochnow, A longitudinal study

**February 11: The case for Early Literacy in Head Start**

1. Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, Mann
2. Campbell & Ramey, Cognitive and School Outcomes
3. Schweinhart & Weikart
4. School Readiness Act of 2003: Head Start Reauthorization and Program Improvements
5. Good Start Grow Smart, The White House Initiative,  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/earlychildhood/toc.html>

D. High school and adolescent readers are not highly visible in the current political context. The question then becomes:

**February 18: What to do with Struggling Readers?**

1. Alliance for Excellent Education: [www.all4ed.org](http://www.all4ed.org)
2. NICHD position papers: <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/crmc/cdb/cdb.htm>  
(adolescent literacy working documents).

E. The practice of reading will be influenced by changes in Title I under NCLB. We will first examine the implications of standards and assessments. We will then focus on

accountability, and accountability systems in states, and how they will affect entrepreneurial activities in reading education.

**February 25: Title 1: Standards-based Reform, Assessment & Accountability**

1. H.R. 1: (Summary) Standards, assessment, and accountability
2. J. David and P. Shields, When theory hits reality: Standards based reform in urban districts  
<http://www.sri.com/policy/cep/pubs/pew/pewfinal.pdf>
3. Elmore and Rothman, Testing, Teaching, and Learning  
check website education commission of the states  
www.ecs.com

Vacation Week

**March 10: (Continued)** Students will select a state and be prepared to describe their testing and accountability system.

**March 17: Accountability (continued)**

**March 24: Supplemental Service Providers**

H.R. 1 (reread section on ssp).  
Guidance on SS providers  
Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, and Moody  
Wasik, and Slavin

F. Finally, we will examine reading as a profession, looking at Title II, Higher Education reauthorization, and professional development.

**March 31: Teacher Professional Development**

Moats, Teaching Reading is Rocket Science  
Meeting the Highly Qualified Teacher Challenge (www.ed.gov)  
New Brunswick, Preparing our teachers  
Title II guidance (in NCLB)  
Higher Education Reauthorization

**April 7 (Teaching as a profession, continued) April 21 Final Reports**

Course Expectations

Students will be expected to attend class, do the readings, participate in weekly discussions, and write an analytic paper on assigned topics. I will have office hours on Wednesday morning, by appointment. Please use email ([sbneuman@umich.edu](mailto:sbneuman@umich.edu)) to make appointments and deal with other matters that do not require an appointment.

## References

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Strickland, D., & Snow, C. **Preparing our teachers**. Washington, D.C.: John Henry Press.

Wasik, B., & Slavin, R. (1993). Preventing early reading failure with one-to-one tutoring: A review of five programs. **Reading Research Quarterly**, 28, 179-200.