**George Mason University**

**College of Education and Human Development**

**EDUC 805, Sec 003: 2 credits**

**Research and Scholarship in Education**

**Meeting Day/Time/Location:** Tuesday 7:20 - 9:30 p.m, Thompson 116

**Professor:** Joan Isenberg

**Office Hours**: Before and after class and by appointment. To schedule an appointment, send an email to me ([jisenber@gmu.edu](mailto:jisenber@gmu.edu)) or Nancy Miller, my assistant [nmiller5@gmu.edu](mailto:nmiller5@gmu.edu)). Phone: 703.993.2037

**Course Description:**

***EDUC 805: Research and Scholarship in Education.*** Provides an intellectual framework for research and scholarship in education, which includes the specific scholarship of CEHD faculty that represents the range of scholarship in the educational research community.

**Objectives: As a result of this course, the students will:**

* Describe and apply the nature of CoPs and CEHD as a CoP
* Understand a significant range of faculty research and scholarship
* Organize educational research themes around the CoP construct
* Discuss meaningfully how faculty research contributes to the specific CoP that is CEHD

**Readings:**

* Selected readings related to Communities of Practice.
* St. Clair, R. (2008). Educational Research as a Community of Practice. In C. Kimble, P. Hildreth, & I. Bourdon (Eds.), *Communities of practice: Creating learning environments for educators (*pp. 21-38), Charlotte, NC: Information Publishing , Inc.
* Assigned weekly readings related to guest professors’ planned presentations

**Note:** As much as possible, readings will be available on the Blackboard site for this class at least one week before the class meeting to which it pertains.

**Course Requirements:**

* Read and apply background and framing materials related to educational research and Communities of Practice (CoP)
* Read assigned faculty material(s) and bio **before** each class.
* A journal that documents your understanding of the concepts of CoPs and learning as reflected in the readings, class discussions, and guest presentations, and other formats used in the course **(20%).**
* A final, synthesis paper for the course that addresses your insights about CoPs based upon class readings, experiences, and your own journal **(70%).**
* Participate in classroom discussions and activities **(10%).**
* Attend all class sessions on time. If an emergency prevents you from attending class, please call or e-mail the instructor in advance.

**Course Assignments**

A. Reflective Journal

A mid-term and final set of journal entries will be submitted. The *mid-term* journal submission will be for feedback only; the *final* journal submission will be graded. Students should aim to have at least one page of reflections following each class meeting. Like a diary, the journal should reflect your growing understanding of the course material. For example, “The views of the elementary faculty on communities of practice show a strong desire to … By contrast, tonight’s presentation on educational policy helps me see the role played by administrators and policy makers, which is to … When I consider both perspectives, my current view on communities of practice in education now covers … and … I look forward to the presentation on international education to see how these ideas change. Incidentally, the comment by … [student Y] really helped me see the role of communities of practice in nursing education…”

Students will be invited to share comments and insights from their journals throughout the semester. See *Guidelines for Reflective Thinking* at the end of the syllabus.

B. Final Synthesis Paper

Each student brings unique professional and life experience to this course. In the final paper, you will synthesize insights from the course (captured in your journal, for example), from the readings assigned both by the instructor and the faculty, and from other reading conducted independently by the student.

The paper should be 8-10 pages in length (not counting references), double-spaced, and should follow APA style, as outlined in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2001, 5th edition)—available from the American Psychological Association, Order Department, P.O. Box 2710, Hyattsville, MD 20784. Many websites summarize the format. The site from Purdue University is available here: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>.

**Grades:** A percentage value for each assignment is listed next to that assignment; a grading rubric is at the end of this syllabus.

**Class Schedule**

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| **Date** | **Activity** | **Comments** |
| **1/27** | Joan Isenberg | Introduction to Course Expectations and Framework |
| **2/3** | Erin Peters  Kelley Regan | Science Education  Special Education |
| **2/10** | Margo Mastropieri  Frederick Brigham | Special Education |
| **2/17** | David Anderson;  Penelope Earley | Education  and Public Health Policy |
| **2/24** | Elavie Ndura  Priscilla Norton | TBD  Instructional Technology |
| **3/3** | Group Work/Reflective Writing | CoP on Reflective Writing |
| **3/10** | Spring Break | No Class |
| **3/17** | Beverly Shaklee  and  Panel of Doctoral Students | International Education  Mid-term Reflective Journals Due |
| **3/24** | Steve White & Rebecca Fox  Nada Dabbagh | ASTL Teachers’ Professional Growth and Development  Web 2.0 and social software |
| **3/31** | Scott Bauer  Joe Maxwell  Lynne Schrum  Debra Sprague | Publishing and Presenting  Research  Education Leadership  Education Research  Elementary Education  Instructional Technology |

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| **4/7** | TBD | TBD |
| **4/14** | CEHD Doctoral Students | Conducting Your Own Research and Writing Your Dissertation |
| **4/21** | Susan Burns  Julie Kidd  Ilham Nasser | Early Childhood Education  STEP Research Project |
| **4/28** | Kristien Zenkov  Peter Barcher | Literacy  Research and External Funding |
| **5/5** | Joan Isenberg | Synthesis Activity and Discussion  Synthesis Paper Due  Final Journal Due |

The College of Education and Human Development expects all students to abide by the following:

* Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See [www.gse.gmu.edu](http://www.gse.gmu.edu/) for a listing of these dispositions.
*     Students must know and follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See [http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC\_H12](http://www,gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12) for the full Honor Code.
*      Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See [http://mail.gmu.edu](http://mail.gmyu.edu/) and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.
*       Students with disabilities to seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See [www.gmu.edu/students/drc](http://www.gmu.edu/students/drc) or call 703-003-2474 to access the DRC.

Reflective Thinking Guidelines

Reflective thinking is critical to meaningful learning; it can be either intentional (planned and systematic) or informal (unplanned, sporadic, occasional). *Intentional reflection* heightens one’s focus on problem posing, is visible, and can be made public for discussion, sharing, debate, and purposeful educative conversation. As professionals engage in more intentional reflective thinking, they contribute to the understanding and growing respect for the complexity of education.

**Levels of Reflective Thought**

1. **Description: Describes** what is. Tells what or which.
2. **Analysis, Application, Interpretation: Analyzes and interprets** “what is.” Tells how or why It concerns motives, reasons, and meaning-making to oneself. . This level of reflection connects back to Level 1, description.
3. **Synthesis, Evaluation, and Reflection:** Coherently puts together ideas from the general to the particular; carefully examines the ideas; and considers seriously the influence of these ideas on oneself, one’s actions, and one’s beliefs. Tells what one might do differently, what one might need to think about and re-consider, and how this may or may not impact a person. Answers the question, “So what?”

**Suggested Readings and Resources**

Websites for Communities of Practice

<http://www.ewenger.com/theory/index.htm>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etienne_Wenger>

<http://www.infed.org/biblio/communities_of_practice.htm>

Books

Kimble, C., Hildreth, P., & Bourdon, I. (Eds.). (2008). *Communities of practice: Creating learning environments for educators*, Volume 1*.*Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc*.*

Wenger, E. (2008). *Communities of practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. New York:

Cambridge University Press.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W. 2002. *Cultivating communities of practice*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

**Grading Rubric: EDUC 805 Research and Scholarship in Education**

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| **Grade/Points** | **Group Work** | **Class Papers** |
| A  A- | Outstanding. Participates in and promotes conversation focused on the topic. Comments demonstrate a high level of understanding.  Above the average doctoral student; actively advances the intellectual level of the discussion. | Exceeds Expectations: Journal & final paper demonstrate deep reflection, analysis and synthesis. Written work is error free.  Above average doctoral student: Journal & final paper demonstrate reflection, analysis and synthesis. Written material is primarily error free. |
| B+  B  B- | Reliable participant in discussions; questions and comments reveal some thought and reflection.  Doesn’t contribute often, but generally reveals some thought and reflection. Follows rather than leads group activities.  Few meaningful contributions to class discussions. Little evidence of participation. | Journal & final paper demonstrate some reflection, analysis and synthesis. Grammar or spelling errors on written materials do not distract the reader.  Journal & final paper demonstrate some reflection, analysis and synthesis but key points are missing. Analytic work is generally sound but may have some gaps in logic. Grammar or spelling errors on written materials do not distract the reader.  Although there is evidence of work, writing is generally not objective or complete; multiple key points are not covered or are misrepresented. Grammar or spelling errors on written materials distract the reader. |
| C | Weak or minimal participation; passive; often sidetracks group. | Multiple key points are not covered or are misrepresented and reflection, analysis, and synthesis are not evident. Written materials are unclear. |
| F | No constructive participation; destructive; demeaning toward other points of view. | Assignments are not done or are significantly incomplete. |