

Dr. David Reinking

Tuesday, November 12

11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Erickson Room: 116 H



Can Designing Good Instruction Save our Literacy Research Souls?

A theatrical title? Maybe. But, I will use a religious analogy to argue that the longstanding gap between education research and its influence on practice is the original sin of researchers, not of inattentive or recalcitrant practitioners. We (I contritely include myself) have unwittingly sold our souls to methods and theories that serve more to advance our academic careers than to provide realistically useful guidance to practitioners. We can be partially forgiven because of the relatively low esteem of education in the academy, and thus the temptation to elevate our status by worshipping theories and methods from more highly regarded disciplines (see Labaree, *The Trouble With Ed Schools*, and Lagemann, *An Elusive Science: The Troubling History of Education Research*). Further, because findings from literacy research are often positioned as prescriptive truths (e.g., best practice), rather than tentative recommendations subject to contextual variation, they become false gods that risk denigrating the professional judgment of teachers. Drawing on personal conversion experiences, I will argue evangelically for design-based research as a path to salvation.



Dr. David Reinking is an Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Education, having held positions at Rutgers University, the University of Georgia, and Clemson University. He has been a visiting distinguished professor at Johns Hopkins University (2011-12) and at the Università degli Studi della Tuscia in Viterbo Italy (2013). His work focuses on technological aspects of literacy, including how the affordances of digital texts affect literacy and its development in schools. His co-authored book entitled *On Formative and Design Experiments* (Teachers College Press) is a widely used and often-cited resource for conducting design-based research. He has served as editor of the *Journal of Literacy Research* and co-editor of *Reading Research Quarterly*. He is a past-president of the Literacy Research Association and is an elected member of the Reading Hall of Fame. His research has attracted substantial funding from the U.S. Department of Education and has been published in leading journals. Although retired from his university positions, he remains active in the field, currently with a courtesy appointment at the University of Georgia. He lives with his wife Sharon in Athens, Georgia, where they enjoy the company of their four grandchildren and the natural surroundings of their cabin retreat in the Appalachian Mountains.