

Michigan Reading Association Helen Gill Memorial Research Grant Guidelines

The Helen Gill Memorial Research Grant is intended to support teachers in conducting Action Research that focuses on the improvement of literacy instruction. Grants will be awarded up to \$1000, although priority will be given to smaller grants in order to provide support for a number of inquiry projects. Individuals or collaborative groups may apply. To be eligible for funding, the project must be conducted in an action research format with a focus on reading/writing or literacy. Upon completion, the grant awardee(s) must share the project in the form of an article, a new publication for MRA, or a presentation at the Michigan Reading Association Annual Conference.

Eligibility. All applicants must be members of the Michigan Reading Association and be active teachers with full-time or half-time teaching responsibilities. Preference will be given to classroom teachers. Applicants may submit one proposal per year. Grant recipients must wait at least three years before applying for another action research grant.

Deadline. Proposals must be postmarked by **June 15, 2007**.

Review Process. The Research Committee will review the grants and submit recommendations to the MRA Board of Directors. Recipients will be notified by August 1. The grant cycle will run from August through June.

Completion of Projects. Projects must be completed by June 15 of the following year. A progress report should be submitted to the research subcommittee mid-way through the project (January), with a final report due at its completion. Grant recipients will be recognized for their awards at the first MRA Annual Conference following the award. A report of each project will be disseminated to the MRA membership through at least one of the following channels: a presentation at the next annual conference, an article in the *Michigan Reading Journal* or *News & Views*, or a new publication for MRA.

PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Please submit the proposal in an easily accessible electronic format, or send **five hard copies**. To remain eligible for consideration, proposals must be complete, on time, and comply with the following guidelines. The completed proposal should contain five sections in the following order:

- 1. Cover Sheet**
- 2. Title and 100-word summary (do not include your name)**
- 3. Description of the proposed action research (not to exceed 5 pages) (do not include your name)**
- 4. Budget summary form (budget must not exceed US \$1000) (do not include your name)**
- 5. Reference letters**

Michigan Reading Association Helen Gill Memorial Research Grant Professional Preparation

1. **Cover Sheet.** Complete all items on the cover sheet supplied in this packet and sign it. **Do not** include your name on anything other than the cover sheet.

2. **Title and Summary.** Include the title on the first page of your proposal as it appears on the Cover Sheet. Provide a brief summary (limited to 100 words) which describes the focus of your research.

3. **Description of Research Inquiry.** This section of the proposal, not to exceed five double-spaced, typewritten pages in 12-point or larger font, should contain four components:
 - a. Background and Purpose
 - Describe your teaching role and the context of your classroom/school/group.
 - What led you to pursue this question or issue?
 - What do you already know about this question—either from your experience or from professional research? What else do you need to know?
 - What benefits do you see in conducting this research?

 - b. Research Design
 - Describe what actions you plan to take in exploring your guiding question.
 - What kinds of data will you collect and analyze to find answers to your inquiry (student writing samples, audio recordings, observation checklists, etc.)? Be specific about what you will collect and how this data is relevant to your research question.
 - Explain specifically how you will organize and make the data accessible for analysis and interpretation (charts, identifying patterns, qualitative, etc.).

 - c. Plan for Sharing
 - Explain how you will share the results of your inquiry with colleagues and members of the Michigan Reading Association (article, conference presentation, publication). Be specific.

 - d. Timeline
 - Include a timeline that illustrates the steps of your inquiry and when you expect to complete it. Provide dates for data gathering, data analysis, and reporting activities.

4. **Budget Summary Form.** Grants will be awarded up to \$1000, although priority will be given to smaller grants in order to provide support for a number of inquiry projects. Individuals or collaborative groups may apply. Grant funds will cover expenses directly related to the research. For each eligible budget line item, the following guidelines will be applied:

Personnel: Personnel costs may include funds for release time and assistance. Salaries of the researcher(s) are **not** eligible expenses.

Materials: Materials, such as audio and videotapes, paper, computer software, and books directly related to the study, are acceptable. Rental fees for equipment are acceptable. Permanent equipment, such as a computer, is **not** acceptable.

Travel: Travel expenses directly connected with the research are acceptable (such as mileage associated with data gathering or analysis). Expenses for presenting the research will be restricted to registration and travel.

Office Expenses: Office supplies and copy costs are acceptable expenses.

Clerical Support: Costs of typing materials and reports are acceptable.

Other: List additional costs for related expenses. Please provide an explanation for all “other” expenses.

Related Sources of Funding: Explain expenses that may be supported by school, school district, or other professional organizations.

5. Reference Letters. Two letters of reference must be included. One letter must be from an administrator granting permission to conduct the research. The other must be a letter of support from a professional colleague who will be available to discuss the research and offer encouragement and support. Letters should be written in the following format:

The name of the applicant should only appear in the upper right hand corner (so it can be removed for the blind review process). Use your institution’s letterhead.

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| | RE: Jane N. Doe |
| Date | |
| Body of Letter (Do not use applicant’s name in letter) | |
| Signature of Letter Writer | |

Michigan Reading Association

Helen Gill Memorial Research Grant Recipient Requirements

Recipients will be expected to file an interim report (January), giving an update on their research at the midpoint of their study. The final report, in the form of an article, a conference presentation, or a new MRA publication, must be completed no later than two years following the award date. The report should be submitted to the Michigan Reading Association Research Committee.

Disbursement of Funds

Grant awards will be disbursed in two installments of 50% each: at the beginning of the project and following submission of the final report.

Review Procedures and Evaluation Criteria

The Research Committee, along with a panel of experienced teacher researchers, will review applications. Each proposal will be assigned to three reviewers. Proposals will be blind reviewed. Recommendations for funding will be made to the Michigan Reading Association Board of Directors for final approval. Proposals will be judged on the following criteria weighted as indicated:

Background and Purpose: 50 points

Describe your teaching role and the context of your classroom/school/group.

What led you to pursue this question or issue?

What do you already know about this question—either from your experience or from professional research?

What else do you need to know?

What benefits do you see in conducting this research?

Research Design: 30 points

Describe what actions you plan to take in exploring your guiding question.

What kinds of data will you collect and analyze to find answers to your inquiry (student writing samples, audio recordings, observation checklists, etc.)? Be specific about what you will collect and how this data is relevant to your research question.

Explain specifically how you will organize and make the data accessible for analysis and interpretation (charts, identifying patterns, qualitative, etc.).

Plan for Sharing: 10 points

Explain how you will share the results of your inquiry with colleagues and members of the Michigan Reading Association (article, conference presentation, publication). Be specific.

Timeline: 5 points

Include a timeline that illustrates the steps of your inquiry and when you expect to complete it. Provide dates for data gathering, data analysis, and reporting activities.

Budget: 5 points

Include a Budget Summary Form.

Applications must be received by June 15:

Michigan Reading Association
Helen Gill Memorial Research Grant
668 Three Mile Road NW, Suite C
Grand Rapids, MI 49544

OR submit materials electronically to: mra@michiganreading.org

**Michigan Reading Association
Helen Gill Memorial Research Grant Budget Summary Form**

| Category | Description | Amount |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Personnel | | |
| Materials | | |
| Travel | | |
| Office Expenses | | |
| Clerical Support | | |
| Other | | |
| Related Sources of Funding | | |
| TOTAL | | |

**Michigan Reading Association
Helen Gill Memorial Research Grant Award Cover Sheet**

| | | | |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Person Submitting Proposal: | | | |
| Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss | | | |
| <i>Last Name</i> | <i>First Name</i> | <i>Middle Initial</i> | |
| School District: | | | |
| Position and/or Title: | | | |
| Mailing Address: | | | |
| <i>Street/P.O. Box</i> | <i>City</i> | <i>State/Province</i> | <i>Zip Code</i> |
| Telephone: | | | |
| <i>BUSINESS</i> | | <i>HOME</i> | |
| Email: | | | |
| | | | |
| Amount of Funds Requested: | | | |
| | | | |
| Title of Project: | | | |
| | | | |
| Period of Proposed Support: From | | To | |
| Signature of Applicant: | | | |
| Date: | | | |
| Signature of School Official: | | | |
| Date: | | | |
| <i>Name and Title of School Official</i> | | <i>Phone Number</i> | |