Course Instructors: Dr. Beverly D. Shaklee, Professor
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Office Hours: Tues/Thursday, Providence 4:30

Course Description: Qualitative research attempts to describe and interpret some human phenomenon and varies according to the research paradigm, methods, and assumptions. During this course, students will identify and investigate a school-based problem related to gifted education by conducting an action research study in their local school. The major goal for this course is to provide an opportunity for students to apply inquiry, writing and research skills to a relevant issue or concern in gifted education. The final product for the course will be the development of a grant proposal, an article for publication in a professional journal, or a formal report to a local administrative body based on preliminary findings from individual projects.

Standards: This course is designed around the program standards endorsed by the National Association for Gifted Children (2001) as well as the Virginia Licensure Regulations for School Personnel (1998) and specifically addresses 8VAC 20-21-270: Gifted Education (add-on endorsement) standards. Depending upon the research questions generated by students, the class has the potential to address the following standards:

National Association for Gifted Children (Landrum, Callahan and Shaklee, 2001).
Standard 1: Curriculum and Instruction
A well-defined and implemented curriculum scope and sequence should be articulated for all grade levels and all subject areas.
Standard 6: Professional Development
All personnel working with gifted learners must be certified to teach in the area to which they are assigned, and must be aware of the unique learning differences and needs of gifted learners at the grade level at which they are teaching.
Standard 7: Student Identification
4. All student identification procedures and instruments must be based on current theory and research; student assessment data should come from multiple sources and include multiple assessment methods; student assessment data should represent an appropriate balance of reliable and valid quantitative and qualitative measures.

Virginia Department of Education: Gifted Education
2. Understanding the characteristics of gifted students including: (p 39).
   a. Varied expressions of advanced aptitudes, skills, creativity, and conceptual understandings
   b. Methodologies that respond to the affective (social emotional) needs of gifted students; and
   c. Gifted behaviors in special populations students (i.e. those who are culturally
diverse, low income, or physically disabled).

6. Understanding of contemporary issues and research in gifted education, including:
   a. The systematic gathering, analyzing, and reporting of formative and summative data: and
   b. Current local, state, and national issues and concerns

7. Understanding of and proficiency in grammar, usage, and mechanics and their integration in writing.

**Course Goals:**

Participants in this course will demonstrate their competency in the following areas:

1. Formulating an appropriate research question

2. Designing a manageable and appropriate methodology

3. Gathering data utilizing one or more formal qualitative methods

4. Analyzing the results utilizing a qualitative methodology

5. Sharing findings in a constructive format appropriate to the study


All participants will be expected to:

   a) demonstrate their knowledge of theoretical foundations of qualitative research methodologies introduced in action research through informed participation in class discussions, presentations, and products.
   b) demonstrate their competency as an action researcher through the formation, implementation, and evaluation of their projects.
   c) demonstrate their understanding of research issues in the field as they related to their own line of inquiry through a response journal

Grading Scale: 94-100 = A, 90-93 = A-, 86-89 = B+, 80-85 = B-, 70-79 = C, Below 70 = F

**Mode of Course Delivery:**

Course delivery will be through mini-lectures, experiential activities, small group discussion based on professional interests and research based questions that can be examined through action research projects, whole class discussions or student presentations. Course discussions may also take place via e-mail, chat rooms or an electronic bulletin board. Instructors will also be available for face-to-face discussions.

**Required Texts:**

Landrum, M., Callahan, C. & Shaklee, B. (2001). *Aiming for Excellence: Gifted Program*


Recommended Articles:


Selected Readings From:


Course Requirements:

**Discussion:** informed participation in class discussions, “critical friend” analysis of action research components, case studies and review of readings (additional information to be provided). All discussions will be held during class therefore the grade is calculated based on in class participation.

10%

**Due:** Weekly

**Readings/Journal Entries:** each participant will keep a critical reading log of the assigned chapters. In each entry the student will briefly summarize the chapter, reflect on salient points in regard to class discussion, other readings and their action research project.

20% = minimum 8 entries for B; maximum 16 entries for A+ (including mechanics, quality and depth of analysis)

**Due:** Thursday, February 13 and final copy due Thursday, March 13

**Action Research Project:** three components comprise the final grade for the Action Research Project.

1. Components of Action Research Proposal (20%): each section is available for discussion on the specified date and a copy of the drafted section is turned into the
instructor for review:

A = 20% (6 of 6) of drafts completed in a timely fashion ready for thoughtful discussion and critique
A- = 15% (4 of 6) of drafts completed in a timely fashion ready for thoughtful discussion and critique.
B = 10% (3 of 6) drafts completed in a timely fashion ready for thoughtful discussion and critique.
C = 5% (1-2 of 6) drafts completed in a timely fashion ready for thoughtful discussion and critique.

Due Dates: specified in attached schedule

2. Presentation of AR (25%): each participant will present their Action Research to the class and outside guests. Each presentation will use technology and consist of the following elements: Introduction, Inquiry Questions, Methodology, Findings and Implications for Practice. Each presenter will provide an executive summary and a brief list of important resources. Following the presentation the participants will engage in Questions/Answer session from the audience. The presentations will be evaluated on: communication skills, clarity, use of technology, understanding of the process of action research and articulation of the implications for practice.

Due Dates: April 29 or May 6

3. Final Action Research Paper (35%): each participant will write a report which includes the following sections – Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Analysis (with accompanying samples/examples), Findings, Implications for Practice and Reflections. (Additional information will be provided). All papers will follow APA format.

Due Date: Friday, May 7th by 5:00 p.m. in Robinson A 319

NOTE: This is an advanced graduate level course, therefore the quality of your work, attendance and informed participation are expected to be of the highest caliber. Unless it is an emergency situation, no absences are excused. Should you need to miss a class it is your responsibility to inform the instructor ahead of time, turn in your assignments, collect any notes/assignments from a colleague and do your utmost to remain current in the class. Should you need special assistance because of identified learning needs please contact the instructor immediately.

Honor Code: To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust and fairness among all member of the George Mason University and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the members of George Mason University have set forth the following code of honor. Any individual who is caught in the act of cheating, attempting to cheat, plagiarizing or stealing will be brought forth before a council of their peers. In the even that the individual is found guilty, he or she will be punished accordingly. For further information, please refer to the University Catalog or website at www.gmu.edu The Honor Code may be found outline at http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html.
**Americans with Disabilities:** This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class as identified under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This act prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the series, programs or activities of all Stat and local governments. Under ADA a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as: learning, working, walking, speaking, hearing, breathing, and/or taking care of oneself. If a student has a disability and needs course adaptations or accommodations because of that disability, it must be established with the faculty, in writing, at the beginning of the semester so that arrangements can be made. Please call the Disabilities Resource Center for required documentation (703-993-2474). The Disability Resource Center website is at [http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/)