EDCI 777 *** Research to Practice
FALL 2005
Alternate Saturdays., 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.   Innovation Hall, Room 137

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Course prerequisites: Admission to Graduate School of Education in CIMM or
CISL program. Completion of ALL other courses in these programs. Possible
exceptions: Concurrent enrollment in EDRS 590 or elective or permission of
instructor. This is the capstone course for the M.Ed. in Multilingual/Multicultural
Education and as such represents the culminating experience in this graduate
program.

Course Schedule: This course is offered each Spring and Fall Semester.

Catalog Description

        This course provides a culminating experience that synthesizes and
applies the essential elements of second language teaching and learning.
Emphasizes the teacher as a change agent through critical inquiry into practice.
Aims to promote collaboration between ESL or FL and grade-level teachers to
advance the achievement of English and second language learners and
language minority students.

*All students will obtain and use an electronic mail account with access to the Internet.
GMU makes these accounts available and provides training at no cost to students.*

Rationale

This capstone course aims to have program candidates synthesize, evaluate, and reflect on the essential elements of what they have learned in the M.Ed. program and apply these to their own teaching. If candidates are not currently in the classroom, they will be asked to collaborate with a teacher who is. A major focus of the course is the nurturing of teacher-leaders through critical inquiry into educational practices that have an impact on culturally and linguistically diverse students. This inquiry will have as its purpose to help **increase student learning and achievement** among English language learners, language minority students, and foreign language learners.

In the capstone course, candidates become part of a learning and research community by sharing with others what they have learned through applying research to practice. Teachers no longer work alone; schools have seen an increase in teacher teams working with student cohorts. ESL and FL teachers are often a part of a grade-level team and, as such, are responsible for informing general education teachers about how to help English language and foreign language learners participate in grade-level classes.

Overview of Course

Essential elements of this course include: reflection on professional growth; collaboration; Action Research through field work, problem solving and innovations in teaching; applications of technology; and presentation skills. Candidates will collaborate with peers to identify a research question in curriculum, instruction and assessment and design an Action Research Project that investigates the question. The Action Research Project and the presentation on the project should use technology to facilitate learning as well as professional development. Candidates are especially encouraged *to develop instructional and assessment models to be shared with other teachers, including general education, grade-level teachers* who are relatively unfamiliar with second language teaching approaches. Candidates will experiment with Action Research approaches that address a real-life need demonstrated by an actual group of teachers and/or students. In addition, candidates will engage in reflection and self-evaluation of their own performance through a portfolio assessment process and peer and self-assessment activities.

Course requirements consist of an **Action Research Project**, an **In-Class Presentation**, and a **Reflective Portfolio**, rather than paper/pencil examinations. Each candidate will be required to prepare a professional teaching portfolio in this course. Portfolio guidelines will be provided, and portfolios must indicate reflection on professional growth, establishment of personal goals, and evidence of leadership. Each course requirement will be evaluated using a scoring rubric.

Course Objectives

Candidates enrolled in this course will:

1. Reflect on the personal and professional change process as a result of completing this degree program;

2. Work as change agents by collaborating with ESL, FL, and grade-level teachers to make improvements in the education of English and foreign language learners and language minority students;

3. Develop professional presentation skills using technology;

4. Identify a student learning need or challenge and pose a research question for addressing the need in a classroom setting;

5. Collect, analyze, and interpret data to address the need;

6. Propose and apply innovative, research-based approaches to instruction aimed at meeting the need; and

7. Prepare a professional portfolio with evidence of reflection, goal-setting, and self-assessment.

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GSE Syllabus Statement of Expectations/Behaviors/Attitudes

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that *all students* abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional **behavior and dispositions**. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University **Honor Code**. See 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 and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with **disabilities who 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/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

Course Requirements

1. **Action Research Project***
   Steps 1-4 – Proposal   **UNGRADED** *(due Class 2-3)*

   Steps 1-7- Paper   35%   Complete Final Report *(due Class 8)*

2. **In-Class Presentation**   30%   Demonstrate presentation skills
   (due Classes 6-7), must be prepared &
   presented individually)

3. **Reflective Portfolio**
   Mid-Term Review   **UNGRADED**
        Outline, rationale, self-assessment,
        sample artifacts *(due Class 5)*
   Final Review   35%   Complete portfolio *(due Classes 7-8)*

*Action Research Project will be conducted in teams of 2 or 3 teachers. Pre-Service teachers need to work in teams with In-Service teachers.

Textbooks

Required

Sagor, R. (2000). ***Guiding school improvement with action research***.
     Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum
     Development.

Campbell, D. M., P.M. Cignetti, B.J. Melenyzer, D. H. Nettles, & R. M. Wyman,
     Jr. (2004). ***How to develop a professional portfolio: A manual for***
     teachers. 3rd Ed. Boston: Pearson Allyn & Bacon.

Class Schedule

Prepare to discuss each week's readings before coming to class.

Week/ Date	Topics & Assigned Readings
1 9/3	Objectives of this course, textbooks, and requirements. What is Action Research? Rationale for engaging in Action Research. Overview of the Action Research process. Selecting a research topic. Choosing the right research questions and assessment criteria. 7 Steps of Action Research Process. ***SAMPLE ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT.*** ***Readings: Sagor, Chs. 1-5***
	Data Collection Process. Quantitative and qualitative approaches to Action Research. Clarifying theoretical basis with graphic reconstructions. Drafting the problem statement/research proposal. Using teacher records and observation data. Using checklists and rating scales. Methodological & ethical issues. Introduction to Teacher Portfolios. ***SAMPLE PORTFOLIO. DRAFT RESEARCH QUESTION.*** *Readings Sagor, Chs. 6-7, 12 ; Campbell et. al., Ch. 1*
2 9/17	Data Collection Process. Observational & non-observational techniques. Creating tools to answer research questions. Shadowing. Samples of student work. Student assessment data. Student journals and logs, surveys & interviews. Setting up a valid & reliable data collection plan – triangulation. ***Sign up for In-Class Presentations. Peer Feedback on Action Research Project Proposals, Steps 1-4. SAMPLE IN-CLASS PRESENTATION.*** *Readings Sagor, Chs. 8-9*
	Data Analysis Process. Interpreting the data results. Coding data for analysis. List of findings. Using a matrix for data analysis. Member checking. Guidelines for Assembling Your Portfolio. Making effective professional presentations. Data Collection/Analysis Question Sheet. *Readings Sagor, Chs. 10; Campbell, et.al., Ch.2*
3 9/24	Organizing Portfolios around Teaching Standards. Sample artifacts. ***Due Today: Action Research Project, Steps 1-4. Begin ARP Data Collection.*** *Readings Campbell, et.al., Chs. 4 & 6*
	Peer feedback on Reflective Portfolios.

4	10/8	**DATA ANALYSIS WORKSHOP**. Recreate raw data from written narrative. Create data tables from raw data. Create your own data tables from pre-assessment. **BRING DATA TABLES.** **Readings Sagor, Ch. 11**
		Data Analysis Process. Techniques for analyzing data. Acting on your Action Research Project.
5	10/22	Examples of collaborative Action Research. **Mid-Term Feedback Forms. Due Today: Reflective Portfolio, Mid-Term Review.** Readings Sagor, Ch. 13-14
		More on Data Analysis & Interpretation. Data Tables with Pre-Treatment Results. Writing Data Interpretation*. **Peer feedback on Action Research Project, Data Analysis.**
6	11/5	**In-Class Presentations, Part 1.**
		In-Class Presentations, Part 2.
7	11/19 (or 11/12)	**In-Class Presentations, Part 3.** **Reflective Portfolio Due: Final Review, by number.**
		In-Class Presentations, Part 4.
8	12/3	Last class. Resources and directions for professional growth. Preparing resumes/CVs. **Due Today: Final Action Research Project. Due Today: Reflective Portfolio: Final Review, by number. Course Evaluation Forms. Feedback Forms. Materials Release Forms.**

Inclement Weather/Emergency Policy
In case of snow, hurricanes, severe weather, or security emergencies, call 993-1000 or go to www.gmu.edu for information on class cancellations and university closings.

Description of Course Requirements

1. Action Research Project

       Candidates will follow the seven steps of the Action Research Process (Sagor, 2000) to improve and refine their teaching. Teachers will collaborate in teams to identify and address the learning needs of a specific target population (e.g., Grade 9, Level II Spanish class) based on research questions generated and agreed upon by a team. The educational setting will typically be at the individual teacher's classroom level. Sample learning needs may be: (1) reading strategies; (2) vocabulary development; (3) oral language development; or (4) a need for innovations in curriculum design and/or assessment approaches.

       Candidates will: find a focus; base the focus on sound theory; identify a research question; collect data to address the question; analyze the data; report the data, and establish an action plan to help improve teaching and students' learning. Teachers are encouraged to demonstrate applications of technology to their Action Research Project, such as through the use of Powerpoint slides, computer-generated instructional materials, and uses of the Internet.

2. In-Class Presentation

       Candidates will demonstrate their professional presentation skills for peer feedback and discussion in class. Candidates will make a presentation on their Action Research Project and lead a question/answer session with their classmates. ***Teachers will be evaluated on their ability to design and deliver a presentation rather than on the content of the presentation itself.*** Skills for design and delivery include: organization, use of visuals, gestures, and technology; oral language communication skills; use of humor; and engagement of the participants.

3. Reflective Portfolio

       Each M.Ed. candidate in this course will submit a professional portfolio based on the following criteria: (1) a self-assessment component that shows how the candidate has changed as a result of completing this M.Ed. program and developed as a leader and change agent in his/her own instructional setting; (2) a selective sampling of indicators of the personal change process (not to include EVERY project the candidate has ever produced) and evidence of application of research to practice; and (3) goal-setting for future professional development and change. The reflective portfolio will be submitted in a 3-ring binder, printed format. The portfolio will be evaluated through both formative (mid-term) and summative (final) assessments. Candidates are encouraged to obtain feedback on their portfolios from peers in this class as well as from the instructor.

Assessment of Student Work

Each course project will be assessed using a scoring rubric developed especially for that project. Scoring rubrics will typically be performance-based, using an analytic scoring rubric with a fixed scale from 1-4. Total scores for each project may result in decimal values, as in 3.5 or 3.8 and will be indicated on each project. The rubrics include the following criteria: (1) connection of project or work to previous course work and assigned readings; (2) depth of analysis rather than just description of research and interpretation of data; (3) application to personal experiences and change process; and (4) coherence and clarity in writing and/or other presentation format. Students will receive the scoring rubric for each project before the project is due so that they know in advance how their work will be evaluated.

Evaluation for Course Grade

Course grades will be calculated by multiplying the rating received for each project by its assigned weight on the syllabus and then tallying the subtotals for a total score. For example, if a student achieves a total score of 3.9 – 4.0 (on a 4.0 scale), he/she will receive an A . "A"s or "A minuses" will be assigned to final scores totaling 3.7 or above. *[Pluses (+) and minuses (-) are optional and may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.*] Total course scores from 3.0 -3.69 will be assigned a "B" or "B plus" and scores at 2.9 or below will receive a C.

This grading policy is based on past experience using scoring rubrics to assign course grades. Each course instructor develops his/her own grading system. GMU has no official grading policy, although it does assign numerical values to grades received in this course. However, these numerical values are in no way comparable to the scores assigned to projects using the scoring rubrics in this course.