EDUC 598
Directed Reading, Research, and Individual Projects
Fall 2005
Tuesdays, 4:30PM-8:15PM
Centreville Elementary School

Instructor: James M. Latt
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A. Prerequisites: Completed coursework within the FCPS TL-04 Degree Program Cohort
B. General Course Description:
   This course presents various subjects and projects, principally by directed study, discussion, research, and participation under the supervision of graduate faculty member(s).

Specific Course Description:
This course provides the student opportunities to: 1. review the literature on action research and related educational topics, 2. explore both quantitative and qualitative paradigms in action research and other research formats, 3. develop basic skills in the action research methodology including: problem identification, development of a strategic action plan, implementation, evaluation of the strategic plan, and reflection on the results of the evaluation and research process. A particular focus for this cohort will be to explore practical methodologies in communicating a vision, forwarding an action plan, and engaging others as a unifying change agent.

This course will examine action research and other forms of inquiry, collaborative inquiry and leadership within the individual classroom, team, school, and/or professional learning community. Students will critically analyze problems, relate ideas relative to personal readings/research to one’s own teaching or specific educational role and leadership function. Each student will design, initiate and reflect upon an individual action research project. Full implementation and completion of a research project may not occur within the time-frame of this course. In addition, students will define and solve practical problems encountered in ‘change dynamics’ within an organizational structure.
NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY:

This course will use a variety of delivery formats including lecture, seminar-style discussion, cooperative learning, on-line activities, guest lectures, and independent research and study.

STUDENT OUTCOMES:

This course is designed to enable students to:

- research, develop, implement and present an independent project that demonstrates learning about leadership, organizations, change, teaching and learning.
- become literate in the basic concepts, principals, and techniques of educational research.
- develop and complete a systematic action research inquiry (including analysis of practices, relevant literature review, project design, implementation, collaborative planning and evaluation of outcomes).
- critically examine the role of research and its application within the contemporary educational setting.
- understand the importance of educational and action research as a change agent in educational reform
- explain the differences between action research and more traditional approaches to research.
- demonstrate competencies in planning, collaboration, leadership, communication, and empowerment within a professional learning environment.

REQUIRED TEXTS:


Additional Reference Lists and Materials will be provided by the instructor and posted on Blackboard.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA:

A. Requirements:

- Prompt and regular attendance
- Completion of readings and assignments by due dates
- Participation in class discussions, simulations, cooperative learning activities, on-line discussions, related exercises
- Completion of an action research project
B. Performance-Based Assessments

- Students will be required to develop an action research project (details provided in class and posted on Blackboard); including a Project Proposal, a 10-15 page final report, and a final report presentation (rubric and content descriptions will be provided).
- Students will be required to read and critique two examples of action research, or selected educational research (pre-approved by the instructor). A research literature critique form will be provided.
- Students will be required to participate in research simulations and exercises and provide written reflections. Individual exercises and reflections may relate directly to the student’s own action research process and constitute components of the final action research project report.
- Students will be required to complete required readings (including Text) and be prepared to discuss readings in class.

C. Criteria for evaluation

- Research literature critiques = 20% (20 points)
- Research simulations and exercises = 15% (15 points)
- Attendance and Participation = 15% (15 points)
- Final Research Project = 50% (50 points)
- Late work submissions will receive a 50% point deduction.
- Unexcused absences will be reflected in lowered ratings relative to ‘attendance and participation’.

D. Grading Scale

A = 90-100  B = 80-89  C = 70-79

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:

All students must 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.
GSE Syllabus Statements of Expectations

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

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Approved March 2004
Professional Dispositions

Professional Disposition Criteria

The Virginia Department of Education and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education promote standards of professional competence and dispositions. Dispositions are values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and all members of the learning community. The Graduate School of Education expects students, faculty, and staff to exhibit professional dispositions through a:

- Commitment to the profession
- Commitment to honoring professional ethical standards
- Commitment to key elements of professional practice
- Commitment to being a member of a learning community
- Commitment to democratic values and social justice

Commitment to the profession
- Commitment to the profession
- Promoting exemplary practice
- Excellence in teaching and learning
- Advancing the profession
- Engagement in partnerships

Commitment to honoring professional ethical standards
- Fairness
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Trustworthiness
- Confidentiality
- Respect for colleagues and students

Commitment to key elements of professional practice
- Belief that all individuals have the potential for growth and learning
- Persistence in helping individuals succeed
- High standards
- Safe and supportive learning environments
- Systematic planning
- Intrinsic motivation
- Reciprocal, active learning
- Continuous, integrated assessment
- Critical thinking
- Thoughtful, responsive listening
- Active, supportive interactions
- Technology-supported learning
- Research-based practice
- Respect for diverse talents, abilities, and perspectives
• Authentic and relevant learning

Commitment to being a member of a learning community
• Professional dialogue
• Self-improvement
• Collective improvement
• Reflective practice
• Responsibility
• Flexibility
• Collaboration
• Continuous, lifelong learning

Commitment to democratic values and social justice
• Understanding systemic issues that prevent full participation
• Awareness of practices that sustain unequal treatment or unequal voice
• Advocate for practices that promote equity and access
• Respects the opinion and dignity of others
• Sensitive to community and cultural norms
• Appreciates and integrates multiple perspectives
### Proposed Class Meeting Schedule:

Tuesday nights, 4:30PM-8:15PM  
September 13, 2005 – December 6, 2005

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPICS/EXPERIENCES</th>
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<td>Introductions, Nuts &amp; Bolts</td>
<td>Text to Page 35</td>
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<td>Defining Terms</td>
<td>Response</td>
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<td>The Research Process</td>
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<td>Components of Research</td>
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<td>Take a Breath: Reflect</td>
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<td>Project Discussions</td>
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<td>Defining the Question</td>
<td>Text to 156</td>
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<td>Session 6:</td>
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<td>Special Session at GMU</td>
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<td>Library (Sarah Sheehan)</td>
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