

Course Syllabus

George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
Research to Practice
EDCI 777-002
Fall 2009

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Class meetings: Thursdays 4:30 – 7:10
Sept. 3, 2009-Dec. 17, 2009
Krug, room 205
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 7:10-8:30
or by appointment

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.

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 disciplined, critical inquiry into practice. Aims to promote collaboration between ESOL 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 a GMU Email account with access to the Internet. GMU makes these accounts available and provides training at no cost to students. Also, knowledge and access to the Blackboard management system is essential.

Note: *The syllabus for EDCI 777 reflects previous planning and course design by Drs. Rachel Grant, Jorge Osterling and Lorraine Valdez Pierce. I am grateful for their input.*

Rationale

This capstone course aims to have program candidates synthesize, evaluate, and reflect on the essential elements of what they have learned in the Multilingual/Multicultural Education 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 disciplined, 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. ESOL 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 the process and peer and self-assessment activities. Opportunity for self-assessment through portfolio activity is an additional option.

Course requirements consist of an **Action Research Project**, an **In-Class Presentation**, and **Readings and Discussions on Action Research** rather than paper/pencil examinations. Each course requirement will be evaluated using a scoring rubric. A **Reflective Portfolio** is an additional option. Pre-service candidates may wish to develop a portfolio as a tool for reflecting on their experiences in the MME program and as a resource for job interviews. In-service teachers may use the portfolio as a tool for reflection on professional growth, establishment of personal goals, and evidence of leadership. Portfolio guidelines will be provided.

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 ESOL, 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 research questions for addressing the need in a classroom setting;
5. Propose and develop an experimental treatment plan for instruction incorporating research-based approaches for responding to the research question;
6. Apply innovative, research-based approaches to instruction aimed at meeting the need;
7. Collect, analyze, and interpret data to address the need;
8. Prepare a professional portfolio with evidence of reflection, goal-setting, and self-assessment (optional);

9. Apply principles of validity and reliability to developing assessments and evaluation tools; and
10. See action research as self-reflective inquiry in order to improve the rationality and justice of their practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which these practices are carried out.

Course Delivery

The course delivery will be accomplished in a combination of ways in order to meet the needs of all learners and learning styles. Methods of instruction include:

- *Presentations* (i.e., mini-lectures assisted by PowerPoint or other visuals);
- *Independent assignments*;
- *Self-study*;
- *Self-reflection and self-evaluation*;
- *Group discussion and group/individual presentation*;
- *Performance-based assessment*;
- *Peer feedback and critique*
- *Field activities*; and
- *Small group discussions and activities*

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.

SPECIAL ATTENTION

- Please turn off cell phones and/or pagers in the classroom.
- Please activate your GMU account. All correspondence will be through your account and TaskStream.
- All notices regarding whether class will be cancelled or delayed will be posted via appropriate university sources.

- Any exception to the established guidelines for attendance, tardiness, and late assignments will be made only with pre-approval of the professor.

Attendance: Missed Classes

Due to the collaborative nature of the class sessions, the reflective nature of the course assignments, and the interrelated and cumulative sequence of activities, students are required to be present at each class. Each absence will result in a grade reduction. For example, one absence will lower a grade from an “A” to an “A-“. The second absence will lower the grade from an “A” to a “B+”. The third absence will lower the grade from a “B+” to a “C”. More than three missed classes will result in a failing grade for the course.

Tardiness:

Students are expected to arrive on time. After two late arrivals (10 minutes) to class, each subsequent late arrival will result in a grade reduction. For instance, a third late arrival will lower the grade from an “A” to an “A-“. The fourth will lower the grade from an “A-” to a “B+”; and so forth. Class attendance will be documented at each class session.

Late Assignments:

If class must be missed, when possible, prior to the absence the student must contact the professor and submit any work that is due during your absence at the next class meeting. All assignments are due on the assigned date. Late assignments will receive a 20% penalty for each missed deadline.

Collaboration:

Collaboration is a cornerstone for this course. Students are expected to participate in a lively, professional, punctual, and equitable manner in all collaborative work.

Discussions:

In class discussion of required readings contributes to your grade in the course. Featured discussants must be in attendance. Failure to attend class on your assigned discussion session will result in a 10% reduction of your grade in the course.

Inclement Weather/Emergency Policy

In case of snow, other severe weather, or security emergencies, call (703) 993-1000 or go to www.gmu.edu for information on class cancellations and university closings.

Assignments

Assignment	Value	Due Date
ARP Draft Proposal	Ungraded draft	Sept 24, 2009
ARP Proposal	10%	Oct. 8 (via email)
ARP Final Report	40%	Dec. 10
ARP Treatment Plan (Strategy lesson plans with lesson scripts)	10%	Oct 29 (via email)

ARP Oral Presentation (must be prepared individually and collectively)	30%	Due as assigned
Lead class discussion on assigned chapter of Edge text	10%	Due as assigned

*Action Research Project (ARP) will be conducted in teams of 3-4 teachers. Pre-Service teachers need to work in teams with In-Service teachers. **Individual projects will not be permitted.**

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

Edge, J. (Ed). (2001). *Action research*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.

Sagor, R. (2005). *The action research guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Crowin Press.

Websites to learn more about Action Research

http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/themes_ed/act_research.pdf

http://www.actioneducation.com/sf_actionpracticum.htm

<http://www.nsd.org/library/publications/tools/tools2-00rich.cfm>

<http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/arihomet.html>

<http://www.jstor.org/view/0161956x/ap050349/05a00100/0>

<http://wwwunix.oit.umass.edu/~afeldman/ActionResearchPapers/FeldmanAtkin1995.PDF>

Week/ Date	Topics and assignments due *This is subject to change	Assigned readings
1/ Sept 3	Course objectives and requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection on earlier coursework • What is Action Research? What counts as research? • Professional needs assessment and determination of interests • Group dynamics: Practical aspects of collaboration, member roles • Select Edge chapters 	
2/ Sept 10	Finding Focus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting broadly, then narrowing • Mining the existing literature • Forming groups <i>DUE TODAY: Draft research questions</i>	Sagor :Ch 1, 2, 3 Edge: Ch 1, 2
3/ Sept 17	Data Collection Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Methodological and ethical issues • Creating tools to answer research questions. • Samples of student work. • Determining data resources • Validity and reliability • Finalize research teams • Sign up for presentation dates Workshop session: Research questions	Sagor: Ch. 4 Edge Ch 3, 4
4/ Sept 24	Data Analysis Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpreting the data results • Coding data for analysis • Setting up a valid & reliable data collection plan – triangulation • Organizing findings and interpreting results Workshop Session: Research teams <i>DUE: Draft ARP Proposal for feedback</i>	Sagor: Ch 5 Edge Ch 5, 6
5/ Oct 1	More Data Analysis Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizing findings and coding data • Interpreting data Workshop session: Research proposals	Sagor: Ch 6 Edge Ch 7, 8

Week/ Date	Topics and assignments due *This is subject to change	Assigned readings
6/ Oct 8 <i>Dr. Bright absent</i>	Making effective professional presentations Workshop session: Treatment plans <i>DUE: ARP Proposal</i>	Sagor: Ch 7
7/ Oct 15	Data Analysis Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreate raw data from written narrative • Using EXCEL software for data analysis • Create data tables from raw data & pre-assessment data Examples of collaborative action research	Sagor: Ch 8 Edge Ch 9, 10
8/ Oct 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing data interpretation • Data tables with pre-treatment results Workshop session for CARP and team conferences	Sagor: Ch 9 Edge Ch 11, 12
9/ Oct 29 <i>Dr. Bright absent</i>	Workshop Session for ARP-Research Teams -More on Data Analysis & Interpretation -Data Tables with Interim Data Results -Writing Data Interpretation -Peer feedback on ARP, Data Analysis <i>Due via email today: ARP Treatment Plan</i>	Sagor: Ch 10
10/ Nov 5	-Writing Data Interpretation -Acting on your Action Research Project -Developing Action Plan -Developing Portfolios around Teaching Standards -Workshop Session for ARP & Team conferences	Edge Ch 13, 14
11/ Nov 12	-Acting on your Action Research Project -Developing Action Plan -Turning ARP into conference proposals and presentations (TESOL, AERA, IRA) -Workshop Session for ARP -Team and individual conferences	*3 additional readings as assigned (these will be short action research projects similar to those in the Edge text)
12/ Nov 19	ARP Presentations	
13/ Dec 3	ARP Presentations	
14/ Dec 10	ARP Presentations Course evaluation Feedback forms Future employment opportunities Preparation of resumes/ CVs	Final ARP Document Due

Description of Course Requirements

1. Action Research Project

Candidates will follow steps of the Action Research Process proposed by Sagor (2000, 2005) 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; grade 2, Level) based on research questions generated and agreed upon by a team. The educational setting will be at the individual teacher's classroom level. Sample learning needs may be: (1) word recognition (phonemic awareness, phonics, etc.); comprehension strategies; (2) vocabulary development; (3) spelling; (4) oral language development (oral language development must be combined with another literacy area) ; (5) writing; or (6) a need for innovations in curriculum design and/or assessment approaches in literacy.

Candidates will: find a focus related to ESOL/ELL needs; base the focus on sound theory; identify research questions (one primary and at least two secondary questions); develop a treatment plan to provide instruction; collect data to address the questions; analyze and interpret the data; share all stages of the action research process including data and findings during ongoing class discussion; write a formal report about the project; make a professional oral presentation; and establish a comprehensive action plan to help improve teaching and students' learning. In addition, teachers must 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.

- **Draft of Research Questions**- will include your initial researchable questions
- **Final Research Questions with Problem Statement**-will include your refined primary research question, at least two secondary research questions, and a statement of the problem to provide a rationale for the importance of addressing this topic
- **ARP Proposal** will include STEPS 1-4 of the action research process
- **ARP Treatment Plan** will include explicit details of how the assessments were administered and how instruction for each strategy was carried
- **ARP Action Plan** will include recommendations for future instruction based on the data analysis and results in response to the research questions
- **ARP Final Report** will include steps indicated in the syllabus. Also, see rubrics and checklists for specific evaluation criteria.

2. Oral Presentation of ARP

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 entertain audience questions about their assessment instruments, research methodology, and findings. **Teachers will be evaluated on their ability to design and deliver a clear, well-organized presentation and respond to questions from the audience about the action research project.** Skills for design and delivery include: organization, use of visual and graphic devices, nonverbal and oral communication skill, use of linguistic devices including volume, tone, vocal inflections, and transitions; knowledge of digital literacy and use of technology; and use of engagement devices (e.g. humor) to involve the audience.

3. Featured Discussant on Action Research

This is a discussion structure that will allow you to share perspectives about readings from Edge: *Action Research*. This text was selected because it allows you to read about real-world

teachers and their experiences with action research. For each discussion session, the process is simple and will demonstrate your understanding of the research and engage the audience.

Discussants: 1) Read the chapter; 2) Prepare a 10 minute oral overview of the chapter (rationale/need for the project, research questions, subjects or issues addressed, procedure followed, analysis conducted, conclusions); 3) Prepare 2-3 questions for the audience to frame a 10-15 minute discussion of the chapter.

Audience: 1) Prepare for the discussion by reading the featured chapter; and 2) respond to discussant questions

4. Research Team Discussions

To prepare you for the oral presentation of your ARP and help you to refine your skill in the art of making professional presentations, you and the members of your research team will discuss your evolving ARP by presenting each component of the project as it is developed. This means the following components will be shared: research questions and problem statement, assessments and triangulation matrix, treatment plan, preliminary data analysis, and your action plan. During this process you will become familiar with technology, as well as critique and provide useful feedback to other research teams.

5. Self-Reflection and Peer Evaluation

Each team will develop a peer evaluation to provide feedback on the oral presentation of your ARP oral presentation. Based on review of the video tape of your ARP presentation and peer feedback you will submit a self-reflection on your oral presentation.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF REQUIREMENTS

Assessment of Student Work

Each assignment for the course will be evaluated and feedback will be provided to you. Evaluation tools will typically be performance-based, using an analytic scoring rubric or checklist with rating scale with a fixed range from 1-4. Total scores for each project may result in a whole number or 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 correct use of APA reference style. The checklist with rating scale will monitor and serve as a roadmap for your plans to implement instruction during the data collection process. Students will receive the assessments 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

About your Current Teaching Status

To fulfill the requirements of this course, you will need direct access to students and instructional and assessment materials in classroom settings. There should be at least 5 students in this classroom. Working with fewer than 5 students is not likely to yield meaningful information on your research. Here are some possible scenarios:

1. **You are currently teaching in an ESOL/FL/Immersion** classroom on a part- or full-time basis. You can work with these students to meet course requirements.
2. You are currently teaching in a classroom, but **not with ESOL/FL/Immersion students**. You will need to talk with me regarding your individual situation.
3. **You are NOT currently teaching in a classroom** with 5 or more students. You will need access to curriculum and assessment materials and students. You can team up with someone in this course who is willing to share his/her students with you.

If you are in Teaching Category 2 or 3 above, *let me know by email as soon as possible (but no later than the 2nd class session)* the names of the teachers with whom you will be collaborating or the arrangements you have made for access to students.

If you are in Teaching Category 1 above, please consider inviting teachers from this class who are in Categories 2 and 3 to work with you or with your students.

Guidelines for Working in Teams

*The Action Research Project may be conducted in a team with 1 or 2 others in this course (3 team members). In rare exceptions four individuals may be allowed to form a team, however, **GROUPS WITH 4 MEMBERS MUST BE APPROVED BY ME.***

1. Teachers who want to work together as a team must discuss carefully each team member's role in the project. **Each of you should take a lead role**, but you should not proceed without getting feedback from your team members and informing them of your progress and consulting them for ideas. Taking a lead role means that you will be the person primarily responsible for a particular task; it does not mean that you will be working alone. In some cases, team members may decide to take two lead roles each. Draft an agreement specifying each team member's lead role and how and when each person will contribute to the team, and **submit your proposal to me by email on or before our fourth class session.**

Lead roles may include:

- ✓ presenting theoretical models to the team for feedback;
- ✓ identifying outside readings that can inform your project and sharing them with the team;
- ✓ presenting a data collection plan
- ✓ presenting ideas on how to address issues of validity and reliability;
- ✓ identifying a school site and making arrangements for data collection;
- ✓ drafting an outline of the project and developing the treatment plan;
- ✓ planning the data analysis or drafting the data tables; and
- ✓ preparing the initial draft of the written report.

2. **Make sure at least one teacher on your team is currently in a classroom setting and has two or more years of full-time teaching experience.**

Team Process Assessment

To provide your team and this instructor with feedback on your perceptions of how the team functioned as a unit, you will be asked to **complete and submit a Team Process Assessment form**. With this form, you will indicate how each team member fulfilled his/her lead role as well as how you feel about how your participation contributed to the success of the group. The Team Process Assessment form assures individual accountability of each team member and provides the instructor with insights as to how you perceive teammates' contributions. This information will be confidential. Your self-assessment and the assessment of teammates will be used to inform the rating assigned to each team member and/or the team.

Rating Options

Members of each team will inform the instructor as to whether they prefer to receive a team rating or individual ratings.

CAVEAT: *At any point of your working together, if you realize that your team members are not carrying their own weight, please let me know. You may be able to work on a different team.*

However, I will not approve of anyone working on the ARP alone. Do this as early in the semester as possible and inform me of your decision.

ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT-ORAL PRESENTATION and FINAL REPORT

STEP 1: FOCUS FOR YOUR RESEARCH

- What process did your group implement to arrive at the focus of your action research project? Consult the Sagor text for information regarding the interview process. See Blackboard model for wording and length of this section.

STEP 2: CLARIFY THEORIES

Provide an overview of the most critical research that has addressed the topic focus of your research. What are the most important findings from this research? What are the most important variables of interest in the research? What are the results of this research regarding English Language Learners? Students with Limited English Proficiency? Language minority students?

STEP 3: IDENTIFY RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- What is the primary research question?
- What are the secondary research questions? (at least two)
-
- STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
 - Why is it important to conduct research to address this topic?

STEP 4: DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

- Describe the following:
 - Population
 - Proposed Timeline
 - Data Sources-Describe each data source
 - Data Source #1
 - Data Source #2
 - Data Source #3
 - Data Source #4
 - Data Source #5
 - Data Source #6
- Triangulation Matrix
- Validity
- Reliability
- Threats and Limitations

STEP 5: TREATMENT PLAN-DESCRIBE THE INSTRUCTION AND PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE TREATMENT

- What did you do to implement your treatment or instructional plan?
- How did you carry out the instruction to address your research question(s)?

STEP 6: ANALYZE THE DATA AND INTERPRET FINDINGS

REPORT THE FINDINGS:

- Present the findings from each pre-test and post-test data source
- Present graphs, tables, percentages or other relevant statistics of the findings
- INTERPRET THE RESULTS OF THE PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST DATA SOURCES

STEP 7: ACTION PLAN

- What are the specific recommendations for instruction or other action?

- What strategies or instructional practices, based on the findings, would be most appropriate to implement?
- How might the strategies or instructional practices need to be adapted?
- How would you initiate the process for improving instruction?

TESOL/NCATE* Standards for the Accreditation of PK-12 ESL Teachers (2002)**

Domain 1: Language

- Standard 1.a. Describing language
- Standard 1.b. Language acquisition & development

Domain 2: Culture

- Standard 2.a. Nature and role of culture
- Standard 2.b. Cultural groups and identity

Domain 3: Planning, Implementing, & Managing Instruction

- Standard 3.a. Planning for standards-based ESL and content instruction
- Standard 3.b. Managing & implementing standards-based ESL and content instruction
- Standard 3.c. Using resources effectively in ESL and content instruction

Domain 4: Assessment

- Standard 4.a. Issues of assessment
- Standard 4.b. Language proficiency assessment
- Standard 4.c. Classroom-based assessment for ESL

Domain 5: Professionalism

- Standard 5.a. ESL research & history
- Standard 5.b. Partnerships & advocacy
- Standard 5.c. Professional development & collaboration

TESOL HAS 13 STANDARDS. ORGANIZE YOUR PORTFOLIO BY EACH OF THE 13 STANDARDS, NOT BY THE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (1.a.1, 2.a.3, 4.c.2).

***NCATE** = National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

****Accreditation** = determines that teacher education programs meet demanding standards for preparation of teachers and assures that universities produce qualified teachers who have acquired the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to help all students learn.

WHERE TO FIND NCATE STANDARDS

Obtain NCATE Teacher Preparation Program Standards at:

On the TESOL web site,

<http://www.ncate.org/documents/ProgramStandards/tesol.pdf>

Note: The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) now **requires PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT** (a new requirement) in teacher education programs, and this is one reason why this program is requiring a reflective portfolio in its exit course, EDCI 777 - Research to Practice, the capstone course for the M.Ed. in Curriculum & Instruction with a concentration in Multilingual/ Multicultural Education.

Reference:

Campbell, Cignetti, Melenyzer, Nettles, & Wyman (2004). How to develop a professional portfolio: A manual for teachers.. 3rd Ed. Boston, Ma: Pearson Allyn & Bacon.

Action Research Project-Final Written Report

Assumptions

1. That familiarity with effective pedagogical approaches is not enough to make a good teacher;
2. That trying out innovative approaches to instruction and assessment can improve student learning;
3. That reflecting on the implementation process can improve teaching;
4. That teachers, like their students, learn by doing.

Purpose

To see what works in the classroom in order to refine and improve teaching

Format

Form groups of 2-3 teachers to investigate a topic of common interest to the group. Each group will choose a different topic. Considerations: The smaller the group, the easier it may be to get things done quickly. The closer group members live and/or work to each other, the easier it will be to get together to work on this project.

Tasks

Teachers will work collaboratively (in teams of 2 or 3) to examine the effects of a research-based instructional innovation on 1 or 2 groups of students (up to 3 teachers per team, 2 classrooms of students per project). Apply technology to your project to the extent possible. Follow the 7 steps of the Action Research Process as described in Sagor (2000). Turn in a narrative of Steps 1-4 to me for feedback before collecting any data or spending any time in observation. **The Steps of the Action Research Project are:**

Components of Written Report

Organize the report according to the following components the Action Research Report, and identify each step. Prior to preparing your report, get feedback from peers in this class on your work. Avoid plagiarism (copying directly from our texts) and follow APA guidelines for with-in text citations, references, headings, and preparing tables and graphs.

Parts 1-4

Abstract. Write a brief abstract or executive summary. The abstract will highlight the essential elements including: population, focus of the research and the most important finding or result of the research. The abstract should range from between 100-150 words. Low ratings will be given for exceeding maximum length.

Part 1: Find a focus for your research (e.g., oral language development, reading strategies, vocabulary development, or writing skills). Your focus will address how to improve learning and achievement for English or foreign language learners. Make a strong attempt to work with or otherwise involve non-ESOL /EFL teachers in this project. Describe how you arrived at your focus area

Part 2: Clarify theories. Explore theoretical bases regarding your focus topic. Which researchers have studied your topic? Report their findings. What variables or factors are involved? Include graphic organizers used to identify research questions.

Part 3: Primary and Secondary Research Questions and Statement of the Problem. Generate one primary and at least two secondary (related) research questions that you explored through your research. Example: *What is the relationship between student*

participation in Literature Circles and reading comprehension? (See Sagor)

Part 4: Data Collection and Assessment Tools. Plan for 8-10 weeks of data collection activities.

Prepare a triangulation matrix showing your three data sources and a timeline indicating pre- and post-data collection dates and weekly teaching activities. Describe the student population and instructional setting. Examples of data collection tools include learning logs, rating scales and rubrics, performance assessments, tests, and student interviews or questionnaires (avoid using self-assessments for this project as they may be unreliable). **Attach sample assessment tools including writing prompts, reading texts, and comprehension questions.** Check methodological and ethical issues involved in data collection. Address how you ensured validity and reliability in the data collection process. You can ensure reliability by collecting data before and after your intervention (pre/post) for each data source (See the Sagor text)

STOP! Parts 1- 4 of the final report represent the ARP proposal (including your data collection timeline) and must be reviewed by me for feedback BEFORE collecting any data.

Parts 5-10

Part 5: Treatment Plan-Describe how you implemented the treatment (instruction) to the subjects

Provide in detail your treatment plan. What did you do? For how long? Provide an outline or lesson plan for the instruction. See lesson plan outline.

Part 6: Data Analysis. Present findings from all data sources including the pre- and post-tests. Include all tables, graphics, and diagrams used to represent the data. You can begin to analyze your data as soon as you have completed your pre-assessment data collection with your three data sources. Report only the facts. Prepare a list of the findings. What patterns emerge from your data? Use both quantitative and qualitative data analyses. Statements of results are non-evaluative and nonjudgmental. Use percentages and/or other basic statistics, but **avoid averaging student scores.** Show the data results using graphs and bar charts, but do not expect these graphics to be self-explanatory. Graphs, tables, and charts should be fully described in your narrative and included as Appendices at the end of your report. Graph results based on categories being measured rather than on individual student results.

CHECKPOINT: Do NOT attempt FINAL data analysis until pre- & post-data have been collected for EACH data source. Once all pre- & post-data are collected, you can begin to look for patterns of change in the data.

Part 7: Interpretation of Findings. Explain the change from pre- to post-data collection. How did your students handle the instructional approach you presented them? Tell the story of your data. Discuss the validity and reliability of your inferences.

Part 8: Conclusions. What are the implications of your research? What did you learn about your teaching? What will you do differently? What have you learned from this Action Research Project about your students, yourself and your teaching?

Part 9: Action Plan. What are the implications for instruction based on your findings? What are your recommendations for instruction? Provide recommendations for at least three

instructional strategies and provide rationale for each by linking the strategy to the data. Be specific!!

Part 10: References. Follow APA guidelines. For a report of this magnitude I expect you to have 8-10 reference sources.

Part 11: Appendix. The Appendices will include all data collection tools, student work samples, tables, charts, graphs. Use 1" margins all around, size 12 font or larger (use Arial or Universe).

Page Limit: 15-20 narrative ((this is a guideline and does not include appendix);

Due Dates: Steps 1-4 - ARP Proposal (**see schedule**) (5-7 pages)

Complete Action Research Project (**see schedule**)
(15-20 pages max, please!)

NOTE: If collecting data in 2 or more classrooms conducted by 2 or more teachers, you need to report the data for each group separately, and compare groups.

Action Research Project: Sample Research Questions

A. Choose a question that you may have about how students learn based on the coursework you have completed in this program. Your research question must already have research to support it. Your job is to see how *existing research* applies to your case. You are NOT doing basic research (applying untested theories to new contexts).

B. Make sure that the instructional approach you choose to investigate is *appropriate for the language proficiency level of your target student population.*

1. To what extent does the use of Anticipation Guides for teaching pre-reading strategies affect reading comprehension?
2. To what extent does instruction in pre-reading strategies affect the reading proficiency of emergent readers?
3. How does teaching during-reading strategies affect the reading comprehension of intermediate ESOL students?
4. What effect does using specific cooperative learning structures (name them) have on beginners' oral language skills or attitudes?
5. What effect does instruction in self-assessment have on the writing of intermediate ESOL students?

Rather than use YES/NO questions, formulate open-ended questions that allow for a range of answers.

Watch Out for Serious Threats to Validity

1. Collecting different pre- and post-data
2. Not collecting pre- and post-data for ALL data sources
3. Collecting data at different times for different students in the same group
e.g., Week 1 for some students, Week 3 for others
4. Reading aloud to students to assess reading comprehension
5. Not accounting for intervening variables (some students received the instructional intervention, others did not)
6. Collecting data from 2 different classroom groups and reporting all data as one group, without disaggregating data and comparing group results.

In-Class Presentation

Assumptions

1. That teachers as professionals need practice in making presentations to other teachers;
2. That teachers benefit from sharing research in progress;
3. That teachers can provide useful peer feedback for improving presentations; and
4. That using feedback can improve presentations

Project: Each graduate candidate will *individually* prepare materials for and make an *individual* presentation on his/her Action Research Project in order to receive an *individual* rating on it.

Tasks

1. Begin with a hands-on warm-up or opening activity to get the audience involved. This activity should only take about 3 minutes to demonstrate the point that you plan to make during your presentation. Each speaker must have his/her own warm-up activity relating to his/her own presentation. Team members are not allowed to provide assistance to each other during the INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS. For this presentation, act on your own as if you were leading a conference presentation without your teammates. Be sure to connect the warm-up to your research topic. **Option:** Teams have the option of having a 7-10 minute team warm-up activity. In this case, team members will receive the same rating.

2. Present a presentation based on an outline of your Action Research Project using the steps of the Action Research Process. Teams: Be careful to limit each speaker to about 7-10 slides or transparencies. Be sure to distribute slides evenly among team members (e.g., Presenter #1, Steps 1-4, Presenter #2, Step 5, Presenter #3, Step 7). Plan to speak for 15- 20 minutes rather than for only part of that time. Presentations of less than 15 minutes are not appropriate and will not allow adequate time for me to rate your performance.

Power point Tips: (1) No agenda or overview slides needed; (2) Animation: Rather than bring in one bullet at a time, bring in all text on slide at once (this saves time); (3) Only one slide on theory; (4) Only a few bullets with short phrases on each slide. The slides should provide visual cues about the information. This is not a reading activity.

3. Prepare a two-page, double-sided handout for the class and overhead transparencies or a Power point slide show. Put your individual name (rather than all team members' names) on your handouts. If on a team, you can PLAN who will do what, but you need to DESIGN AND PRESENT YOUR OWN POWERPOINT SLIDES. If on a team, each team member prepares separate handouts for his/her part of the presentation.

4. Follow the *Do's & Don'ts for Presenters* (class discussion).

5. Signal your most important points. Indicate these on your handout. Tell what you were looking for, how you looked for it, what you found out, and what this means to your teaching – what you will change or do differently.
6. Use your hands deliberately; don't play with notes or hold your hands behind your back.
7. Keep the presentation light – add a sense of humor. Find a cartoon, relate a short anecdote, or relate to current events.
8. Draft a feedback form or use index cards to get an audience response to your presentation. Ask for feedback on your strengths and weaknesses in the presentation. *Each individual presenter* must submit a one-page reflection and **self-assessment** on the presentation for him or herself.

You will submit a one-page self-assessment report to me by email within 48 hours of your presentation. I will reply to your email message with a rating for your presentation. Remember, you will not receive the rating for your presentation until I have your self reflection.

What to include in the self-assessment email report?

- * A count of positive responses specific to areas of strength
- * A count of negative responses corresponding to areas of weakness
- * A summary of constructive criticism for improvement
- * Your response (not defense) to the feedback
- * A proposal for how you would change your presentation next time to address the feedback received

9. Rehearse the presentation so that you can stick to the 20-minute time limit. Don't exceed the time limit, but don't speak for less than 15 minutes, either. Practice speaking slowly and enunciating. Use modulations in your voice to signal your most important points.
10. Make a PRACTICE videotape or cassette tape of your presentation so that you can hear yourself. This will also help you get in all of the important points without going over the time limit.

Materials to bring for your presentation:

1. Power point slides on jump, flash, key drive or memory stick (USB port).
2. Power point mini-pages and any other handouts you need;
3. Wall charts or manipulatives you may need;
4. VHS – blank tape to videotape your presentation.
5. 9-Volt Battery for microphone (just in case)

Due dates: Classes see schedule (sign up in advance)

Time Limit. 15 -20 minutes per person (depending on the size of the team); for teams with two or four members, times will be adjusted.

Analytic Scoring Rubric for Action Research Project – Final Report

DOMAIN SCORE POINTS	RESEARCH QUESTION	TREATMENT PLAN & DATA ANALYSIS	VALIDITY & RELIABILITY	ACTION PLAN-RECOMMENDATIONS	WRITING & CITATIONS
<p>4</p>	<p>Presents well-formulated primary and secondary research questions based on second language acquisition research and practice.</p>	<p>Treatment Plan & Data Analysis are clear, accurate and appropriate; attaches all data collection tools</p>	<p>Makes valid inferences from data for multiple areas of validity & reliability; indicates all reasonable limitations and threats.</p>	<p>Explains and justifies research-based recommendations for improvement of procedure and instruction.</p>	<p>Presents a well-organized report with on errors in writing style OR APA; uses 10 or more citations supporting strong theoretical basis for project.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Presents primary and secondary research questions that are partially based on second language acquisition research and practice.</p>	<p>Treatment Plan and/or Data Analysis have some errors in clarity, accuracy or appropriateness; and/or are incomplete; attaches some inappropriate data collection tools</p>	<p>Address some areas of validity & reliability; makes some inaccurate inferences from data; may include minor threats or limitations to validity & reliability.</p>	<p>Makes recommendations BUT does not fully explain or justify them w/ research.</p>	<p>Presents a well-organized report with some errors in writing and/or APA; Cites 8-9 readings providing a theoretical basis for project.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Presents primary and secondary research questions that infer basis in second language acquisition research and practice</p>	<p>Treatment Plan and/or Data Analysis have numerous errors or are incomplete; fails to attach all components of treatment plan or plan and data tools</p>	<p>Addresses few areas of validity & reliability; makes several inaccurate inferences from data; includes serious threats to validity & reliability.</p>	<p>Makes no recommendations that are justified OR research-based.</p>	<p>Presents a report that lacks organization and/or clarity; many errors in writing that affect meaning; numerous APA errors; cites few readings providing theoretical basis.</p>
<p>1</p>	<p>Presents primary and secondary research questions that lacks basis in second language acquisition research and practice and education.</p>	<p>Treatment plan and Data analysis are incomplete, has numerous errors and lacks clarity; does not attach plan and data collection tools.</p>	<p>Broadly addresses validity & reliability; Makes numerous inaccurate, unfounded inferences from data; fails to address limitations or threats to validity & reliability.</p>	<p>Does not make recommendations for improvement.</p>	<p>Presents a report that lacks organization and clarity; has many errors in writing that affect meaning; many APA errors.</p>

Analytic Scoring Rubric for Action Research Project Proposal

DOMAIN SCORE POINTS	RESEARCH QUESTION	RESEARCH BASE	VALIDITY & RELIABILITY	CITATIONS	WRITING
4	Drafts a well-formulated research questions appropriate to target population.	Clearly establishes second language acquisition research base for research questions.	Uses a variety of data collection tools appropriate to research question and collects pre-and post-data for all data sources in timely manner. Attaches all data collection tools.	Uses APA citations appropriately to assigned texts and those providing the theoretical basis for the project.	Presents a well-organized plan with no errors in writing.
3	Drafts primary or secondary research questions that are unclear or that may not be appropriate to target population.	Establishes limited research base for questions.	Uses similar or inappropriate data collection tools or does not collect pre- and post-data for all data sources in timely manner. Attaches some data collection tools.	Uses some APA citations to assigned texts and those providing the theoretical basis for the project.	Presents a plan that lacks clear organization, contains numerous errors in writing, or needs elaboration.
2	Drafts primary or secondary research questions that are not feasible and inappropriate for target population.	Establishes unclear research base for questions.	Uses too few or inappropriate data collection tools or does not collect pre- and post-data for all data sources in timely manner. Attaches no tools.	Uses few APA citations.	Presents a plan that lacks organization needs re-organization and elaboration and contains numerous errors in writing.
1	Does not draft feasible research questions.	Establishes no research base for questions.	Uses no inappropriate data collection tools and does not collect pre-and post-data for all data sources.	Uses no APA citations.	Presents a plan that lacks organization and coherence and contains numerous errors in writing.

FEEDBACK:

TEAM PROCESS FORM

TEAM MEMBERS: _____

TITLE OF PROJECT: _____

Member	Role#1	Role #2	Timeline	Completed

FINAL RATING OF TEAM PROCESS

MEMBER	4	3	2	1

COMMENTS:

RATING SCALE: RATE EACH TEAM MEMBER'S ABILITY TO MEET RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO SUPPORTING THE TEAM EFFORT IN SUCCESSFULLY COMPLYING WITH REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT.

- 4= highly consistent in performing responsibilities, highly effective team member (inspired and motivated other members)**
- 3= consistent in performing responsibilities, reliable team member**
- 2= some what inconsistent in performing responsibilities, occasionally unreliable**
- 1= inconsistent in performing responsibilities, often unreliable, ineffective team member**

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Oral Presentation of Action Research Project Evaluation Guide (revised)

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

TITLE OF PROJECT:

RATING SCALE: 4 to 1 POINTS FOR EACH CRITERON AREA, FINAL SCORE INDICATES THE MEAN RATING

- 4=** Highly Consistent
- 3=** Consistent
- 2=** Occasionally Inconsistent
- 1=** Often Inconsistent

Checklist w/ Rating Scale for ARP Oral Presentation

- _____ 1. Engages participants with an effective warm-up activity.
- _____ 2. Connects warm-up to research question or topic.
- _____ 3. Does not read from notes.
- _____ 4. Faces forward consistently, does not look back at screen.
- _____ 5. Maintains consistent eye contact with audience.
- _____ 6. Utilizes appropriate non-verbal communication tools.
- _____ 7. Provides clear, smooth transitions between ideas and across sections.
- _____ 8. Speaks clearly using a strong voice, can be heard & understood by all.
- _____ 9. Uses handouts and technology effectively.
- _____ 10. Appropriate references to research.
- _____ 11. Utilizes a range of technology tools.

_____ 12. PPT slides clear, readable, did not exceed maximum number.

_____ 13. Sticks to the time limit.

_____ 14. Utilizes engagement devices.

_____ 15. Analyzes peer feedback to suggest self-improvements (requires submission of self-reflection, otherwise rating of "0" will be entered).

_____ 16. Engages in critical self-reflection of performance (requires submission of self-reflection, otherwise rating of "0" will be entered).

Individual points: _____yes no_____

Individual time limits:

Presenter one _____ Meets _____ Exceeds _____ by _____

Presenter two _____ Meets _____ Exceeds _____ by _____

Presenter three _____ Meets _____ Exceeds _____ by _____

Presenter four _____ Meets _____ Exceeds _____ by _____

Presenter five _____ Meets _____ Exceeds _____ by _____

Group points: _____ yes no _____

Group rating: _____

Group Mean Rating: _____

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CHECKLIST AND RATING SCALE FOR ARP TREATMENT PLAN

TEAM MEMBERS: _____

OVERALL RATING: _____

Complete

Partial

_____	_____	Lesson plan (s) covering all strategies
_____	_____	ARP instructional strategies are appropriate
_____	_____	Instruction scripts (teacher-talk) details instruction for each session
_____	_____	Time table representing each session and timeframe (e.g. 45 minutes three days per week, three 20 minute sessions, etc.)
_____	_____	Assessment sessions with directions for administering each assessment
_____	_____	Dates indicating total number of instructional treatment sessions
_____	_____	Information accessible and clearly labeled
_____	_____	Number of subjects indicated for each session
_____	_____	Basic background information for subjects

RATING EARNED

- 4= meets all areas, consistently
- 3= failed to meet one (1) area
- 2= failed to meet two (2) areas
- 1= failed to meet 3 or more areas

Rag/spring 09