George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
FAST TRAIN Program

EDCI 777:
Research to Practice

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Office Hours: By appointment
Office: 2603 Thompson Hall
Meeting Dates: January 24 – May 8
Meeting Time: Wednesdays 5:00 – 8:00 and online
Meeting Location: Loudon County and online

Course Description: This course emphasizes the teacher as a change agent through critical inquiry into practice. The course includes an overview of the basic elements of educational research, methods (quantitative and qualitative), questions addressed, design, and data collection and analysis.

Prerequisites: All other program courses except elective, or permission of instructor

Nature of Course: The course is delivered through a variety of on-line, face-to-face, and individualized instructional approaches. On-line sessions will be conducted in an asynchronous format, but students will be expected to post their own reflections and assignments by the end of each designated class week (midnight US eastern standard time each Tuesday). During face-to-face class meetings there will be large group, small group, and individual activities.

Learner Outcomes: This course is designed to enable students to:
1. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of research studies within various paradigms, including action research, using measures of rigor;
2. Propose and complete an action research project that includes an overview, contextual statement, review of the literature, methodology, data analysis, conclusions, reflections and relationship to practice;

3. Make explicit links between theory and practice in their own action research;
4. Examine ethical considerations when conducting research with children including their own project;
5. Explain the critical importance of considering multiple perspectives using different approaches to inquiry; and,
6. Demonstrate leadership in conducting class discussions and presenting their action research projects to others.

Standards: The following standards will be addressed in this course:

National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)
Proposition 1: Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
Proposition 2: Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects.
Proposition 3: Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
Proposition 4: Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
Proposition 5: Teachers are members of learning communities
ASTL 6: Teachers attend to the needs of culturally, linguistically and cognitively diverse learners.
ASTL 7: Teachers are change agents, teacher leaders, and partners with colleagues and families.

IB Teacher Award Inquiry Strands
Area of Inquiry 4: Professional Learning:
    n. What is reflective practice and how does it support Program implementation and enhance practice?
    n. How are current standards and practices pertaining to the Program implemented?
    n. What are current innovations and ideas in the area of international education and how can these be applied to enhance the IB program?
    n. What elements of the program authorization, evaluation and curriculum review process are implemented and how do these processes enhance IB programs?
    o. What is the role of collaborative working practice in supporting the Program learning outcomes?
    o. What are the connections between Programs, vertical and horizontal planning that reinforce learner outcomes?
    p. In what ways does IB promote communities of practice?
    p. In what ways does the use of the ITC support building communities of practice?
    p. In what ways can we engage across regional and international boundaries to collaborate on IB research initiatives?
    p. In what ways can we share our findings and experiences to enhance the professional expertise of IB teachers, students and communities?

Technology (ISTE):
IV. Teachers use technology to enhance their productivity and professional practice

Standards and Outcomes Matrix:

Outcomes	NBPTS/ASTL	IB	Technology
1	4	N, O, P	
2	4	N, O, P	IV, B
3	1, 4	N, O, P	IV, B
4	5	N, O, P	V, D
5	4, 5	N, O, P	
6	5, 6	N, O, P	

Required Course Texts:

Mills, G.E. (2011). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Person Education, Inc., Merrill Prentice Hall. ISBN: 978013700314-3.

Henricks, C. (2012). *Improving schools through action research: A reflective practice approach* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. ISBN: 978-0132868648

Technology Resources:
- All students are required to have access to a computer with Internet access and a current GMU email account.
- All students will be enrolled in the online Curriculum Center through the International Baccalaureate Organization.
- Relevant Websites:
  International Baccalaureate Organization – Online Curriculum Center (OCC)
  http://www.ibo.org/
  Practitioner Research as Staff Development:
  http://www.valrc.org/publications/research/index.html
  American Psychological Association
  http://www/apa.org

GSE Student Expectations:
- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See http://ods.gmu.edu/].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account

and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources:
- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See http://caps.gmu.edu/].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/].

Grading Scale for FAST TRAIN:

A+ = 100
A   = 94-99
A-   = 90-93
B+ = 85-89
B   = 80-84 (no B- grades)
C   = 70-79 – does not meet licensure requirements or Level I award recommendation
F   = Does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education

Courses below a B are ineligible for licensure or recommendation for Level I IB Award – these must be repeated.

Students must maintain a 3.0 average and a grade of B or higher for licensure and master's degree. *All course assignments and activities must be satisfactorily completed before the final grade is awarded.*

Incomplete (IN): This grade may be given to students who are in good standing, but who may be unable to complete scheduled course work for a cause beyond reasonable control. The student must then complete all the requirements by the end of the ninth week of the next semester, not including summer term, and the instructor must turn in the final grade by the end of the 10th week. Unless an explicit written extension is filed with the Registrar's Office by the faculty deadline, the grade of IN is changed by the registrar to an F (Mason catalog). Faculty may grant an incomplete with a contract developed by the student with a reasonable time to complete the course at the discretion of the faculty member. The faculty member does not need to allow up to the following semester for the student to complete the course. A copy of the contract will be kept on file in the FAST TRAIN office.

GMU E-mail & Web Policy: Mason uses electronic mail (**www.gmu.edu/email**) to provide official information to students. Examples include notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account and are required to activate that account and check it regularly (Mason catalog).

Course Withdrawal with Dean Approval: For graduate and non-degree students, withdrawal after the last day for dropping a course requires approval by the student's academic dean, and is permitted only for nonacademic reasons that prevent course completion (Mason catalog). Students must contact an academic advisor in FAST TRAIN to withdraw after the deadline. There is no guarantee that such withdraws will be permitted.

Online Participation/Attendance Policy: Students are expected to participate in **all** online discussions and attend every class. Not participating in an online discussion module or not attending a face-to-face class session will be reflected with a zero for the week and as an absence. **Students with more two or more absences will not receive credit for the course.**

Performance Based Assessment (PBA): All courses in FAST TRAIN will have a required Performance Based Assessment (PBA). The required PBA for this course is the *Action Research Project*. This assignment must be posted to Task Stream, where it will be reviewed and scored.

TaskStream: Every student registered for any FAST TRAIN course with a required performance-based assessment (will be designated as such in the syllabus) is required to submit this assessment (The ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT) to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a one-time course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of your performance-based assessment will also be provided using TaskStream. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Late Work/Submissions: At the graduate level all work is expected to be of high quality and submitted on the dates due. *Work submitted late will be reduced one letter grade for every day of delay.* Because we live in uncertain times, if you have any extraordinary circumstances (*think* flood, earthquake, evacuation) that prevent you from submitting your work in a timely manner, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor as soon as possible after the circumstances occur and make arrangements to complete your work. It is up to the discretion of the instructor to approve the late/makeup work.

Human Subjects Research Review Process: Any research or action research that will be publicly disseminated must have prior approval of the GMU Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). Inquiry/action research that is used solely for the purpose of studying pedagogical aspects may be conducted without additional permission but cannot be

disseminated. Detailed information on what is involved in submitting a proposal to the Review Board is available from the following web site: http://www.gmu.edu/research/ORSP/index.html.

Course Requirements:

All assignments should be turned in on the due date indicated in the schedule below via Blackboard **except** for the final assignment, the Project Based Assessment (PBA). The PBA will be uploaded into **Task Stream.** The submission deadline for assignments is Tuesday night (11:59pm EST) each week. All projects must be typed, in a legible 12-point font, with one-inch margins, double-spaced. Writing quality (including mechanics, organization, and content) is figured into the overall points for each writing assignment, so please proofread carefully. Late papers and projects will not be accepted without penalty, excepting extraordinary circumstances. I am happy to clarify and lend assistance on projects and assignments, but please contact me within a reasonable timeframe.

1. **Participation (20%)**

   Class participation will be based on both online and face-to-face interactions given the hybrid nature of this course.

   For all sessions, students are expected to complete the readings thoughtfully and critically and should be prepared to discuss the topics and questions posed through the texts. During face-to-face sessions, students are expected to actively engage in dialog with the class and the instructor and participate in all in-class activities. During online module weeks, we will have an online group discussion of the readings that are assigned for the week. Students are expected to participate in this discussion in a substantive way (by both responding directly to the prompt and by responding to others comments). Class participation will account for **20%** of your final grade.

   For online module weeks:
   Please note, during online weeks, our discussion will be in the form of the electronic discussion board. It is not acceptable to wait until the end of the week to post your comments as you will not be able to engage fully in the discussion, and others will not have an opportunity to engage with your thoughts and comments. **Each module will begin on a Wednesday and run through the following Tuesday. You must start posting for each module by *Saturday at noon (EST)* so that the class will have Sunday through Wednesday to engage in conversation.
   **Students will be expected to respond to each of the discussion prompts posted.
   Additionally, students should respond to at least **three posts from other classmates.

2. **Independent Reading Project (15%)**

   Each student will select a current text in the field of education and create a book

review. The book should align with the overarching topic of research you select for action research, and should be a recent publication (within the past three to four years). Texts must be pre-approved by the instructor, and only one student may review a given text. The book reviews, when completed, will be posted online on Blackboard, so that all participants in the class will have the opportunity to get a quick glimpse of the text and perhaps find additional texts on the subject that they wish to read. The book review should be between 500 and 600 words. The book review is **15%** of your final grade.

3. Action Research Study

The action research study is comprised of four major components: 1) the action research plan of action, 2) the final action research paper, and 3) a multimedia presentation of the project.

Collaborative "support" groups will be formed in the beginning of the semester for this project, so that you have a sounding board and peer feedback for your work.

A. **Action Research Plan of Action (10%)**

Students will submit an action research plan of 4-7 double spaced pages that includes the following components:
1) An area-of-focus statement
2) Defines the variables
3) Develops a research question
4) Describes the intervention or innovations
5) Describes the membership of the action research group
6) Describes negotiations that need to be undertaken
7) Develops a timeline
8) Develops a statement of resources
9) Develops data collection ideas

B. **Final Action Research Paper (35%)**

Each student will write a report that includes the following sections: introduction, literature review, methodology, findings (with accompanying samples/examples), analysis and implications for practice, and reflections. Additional information will be provided on Blackboard. Papers must follow current APA formatting guidelines.

C. **Presentation of Action Research (20%)**

Each student will create a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation of his or her action research project. Like the paper, the presentation should include an introduction, summary of the literature, description of the methodology, findings, analysis and implications for practice, and reflections. Additional information will be provided on Blackboard.

Assignments, Grading, and Due Dates:

Assignment	Percent of Final Grade	Outcomes Addressed	Due Date
Discussion Board/ In Class Assignments	20	1, 3, 4, 6	weekly
Independent Reading Project	15	3, 5	March 26
Plan of Action	10	2, 3, 4	March 12
Action Research Paper*	35	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	April 23
Presentation of Action Research	20	5, 6	May 1

*Designated Performance Based Assessment