

**George Mason University
College of Education & Human Development/Graduate School of Education
FAST TRAIN Program**

EDCI 777, "Research to Practice"/Spring-Summer 2013

Key Information

Instructor: Kristien Zenkov, PhD, Associate Professor
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Class Meetings

On-line: Tues, Mar 5th – Mon, Jun 17th; Fairfax campus (room TBA) Weds, Jul 17th – Fri, Jul 26th

Please note that due to the nature of this course, this class will meet via Blackboard the majority of the time, followed by eight days of face-to-face meetings as a whole group in late July. On-line class sessions will run from each Tuesday until the following Monday (midnight US eastern standard time). Students may request a voice, face-to-face, or chat conference at any time; voice and chat conferences will be conducted via phone or Skype. Please include your "Skype Name" and your time zone in your conference request. I am happy to clarify and lend assistance on assignments, but please contact me within a reasonable timeframe. I look forward to collaborating with each of you as you work toward your goals.

Catalog Description

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

EDCI 777 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.

Course Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, participants will achieve the following outcomes:

- Identify the basic elements of educational research, including methods (quantitative and qualitative), questions addressed, design, data collection and analysis, validity and reliability
- Formulate an inquiry/action research question that is relevant to their work setting
- Design and conduct an inquiry/action research study
- Use inquiry/action research as a foundation for professional growth, improvement of instruction, and advocacy
- Identify strategies for sharing the results of inquiry/action research

Course Delivery

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

Participants conduct independent research, as well as communicate with each other and the instructor via electronic media. In general, we will engage in four activities during our time together:

1. Mini-lectures, activities, and discussions related to research methods led by the instructor and supported by course text and other selected readings
2. Discussions of the week’s readings led by the instructor and course participants
3. Research and “Focus Session” group meetings in which students will concentrate on selected readings and provide feedback and support for each others’ writing and research process
4. Individual, small group, and whole group meetings to discuss research efforts

Please note that because you have much to learn from each other, and because teaching is often a collaborative effort, you will frequently work in groups. This will give you a chance to bounce ideas off each other, to be exposed to a variety of perspectives (rather than only the professor’s), and to support each other as you continue to hone your teaching and researching skills.

Course Overview

Teachers are often encouraged to implement “research-based” practices, required to attend workshops where research findings are presented, provided with lists of books that synthesize research, and asked to suggest changes in practice based on the implications of research. Although these practices have their usefulness, the assumption implicit in much of the discourse surrounding educational research is that teachers are *consumers* and/or *objects* of research, rather than *producers* of research. The past decade has seen a growing movement to upend those assumptions through an emphasis on the importance of teacher research. Thus, the research and theory we will read and the methodologies with which we will engage are those associated with “teacher research” (i.e., research conducted by teachers for professional purposes). Teacher research positions teachers as *producers* of knowledge—professionals who can learn about and improve their practice by studying important questions that grow from their own experiences and observations.

This class is designed to support you in using and building on the ideas and content you have encountered in your previous coursework. Most importantly, the course assists you as you consider ways to better support children and youth. In other words, your current and future students are at the center of our work. Toward these ends, the course requires you to conceptualize, design, and begin to implement an original research project in your school/classroom. Only if we attempt to live these action research (also called “teacher research” and “practitioner research”) processes in this course will you be able to use them eventually in your own teaching practices. Thus, for every activity in this course, you must act and study with multiple lenses—as a student, teacher, and advocate. Although the work required to achieve these goals is intensive, the course is designed to provide you with much support. You will need to hit the ground running, starting your research project early, and working on it steadily. Through our readings, we will explore research methodologies, analyses of the history and impact of teacher research, and the efforts of other teacher researchers. Our readings and discussions will help you develop your own rationale and “road map” for your inquiry project. We will dig into readings together, write often and share our writing with one another, and support each other in our research goals.

Instructor Introduction and Theoretical Framework

I believe that the best teachers know themselves as literate people in the broadest sense. I will ask you also to know yourselves as professionals with a variety of literacies, including those of photographers, visual sociologists, and community constituents. Teachers and those who work with children and youth must be resilient individuals who are willing to take risks to let school literacies matter to themselves, their students, and the broader community. I will expect you to be your best, brightest, most thoughtful, and most creative selves. I intend that this course will be one that you remember, and that you will care passionately about the work we do. I will have uncompromising professional standards for your behavior, participation, and openness. At the same time, I will do everything possible to ensure that you meet these standards. My hope is that we will experience much intellectual camaraderie, engaging discussion, and laughter as we proceed. I encourage you to take risks and celebrate the risks taken by your colleagues.

I bring the perspectives of a veteran teacher and teacher educator, as well as the points of view of a community

activist and artist. I approach all educational experiences with the goal of helping students to learn to be active, creative, “real world” members of a just society. It is important for us as educators to approach our teaching with a simultaneously critical and creative perspective: when we assess current teaching practices, we also begin to develop new ones. I offer an explicit critique of schooling: as a classroom teacher with more than fifteen years experience, an active scholar, and an advocate for children and youth and schools, playing a critical role is my right and responsibility. It is my hope that you will take on this same role. Perhaps most importantly to you, I have spent my school and university teaching career working across school and university settings with a wide range of children and youth, so I am confident that I’ll be able to support you in this class. As well, as a scholar and teacher quite recently based in an international setting—Port-au-Prince, Haiti—I think I will be able to be especially sensitive to your teaching and research challenges. Finally, much as you as university students must be concerned with your own development and others’ assessments of your class efforts, I am committed to my growth as a teacher and teacher educator. I will ask for your support in my research as I study your learning and your use of visual tools in your research processes.

I will ask you to think of the teaching strategies we use in class and that you plan to use as research interventions in your own classroom in three categories, which are framed by an assessment-driven, “backwards” design:

- 1) “Ways Out”: What is the student’s “way out” of the text or activity with which you are asking them to engage? That is, what artifacts and demonstrations will the student complete to exhibit her/his comprehension of the key ideas that they are encountering? How will you assess students’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes? How will students demonstrate their retention of and relationship to the material?
- 2) “Ways In”: What is the student’s “way in” to this text or activity? That is, how are you approaching the student’s natural interests in or motivations for this assignment? Think about how you might use the student’s existing “literacies” to do this. What specific strategies will you use?
- 3) “Ways Through”: What are students’ “ways through” this text or activity? That is, what strategies and tools are you giving students to make sense of and understand the sources you’re using with this assignment? How will students translate the material into their own terms?

College of Education and Human Development Statements of Expectations and Resources

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

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.

- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/> for the full honor code.
- All students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the Mason Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. [See <http://ods.gmu.edu>].
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers a wide range of services to students that are provided by a staff of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors. The Center provides individual and group counseling, workshops, and outreach programs – experiences to enhance a student’s personal and academic performance. [See <http://caps.gmu.edu>].
- All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students through their Mason e-mail account only. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly.
- University policy states that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the professor.
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website: <http://gse.gmu.edu/>.

Emergency Notification

The university utilizes a communication system to reach all students, faculty, and staff with emergency information (e.g., in case of severe weather). You can be sure that you are registered with the Mason Alert system by visiting <https://alert.gmu.edu>. An emergency poster can also be found in each Mason classroom. Information about Mason emergency response plans can be found at <http://cert.gmu.edu/>.

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>. I am also happy to provide you with examples of approved HSRB applications.

Required Texts

- Golobic, J. (2012). *Engage with Reading and Writing: Strategies for High School Literacy Students*. Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Groves, M. (2011). *Readers theater: The path to reading enjoyment and comprehension*. Unpublished masters teacher research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Leathart, S. (2012). *A Slice of Pizza: The Use of Authentic Contexts in a High School Biology Class*. Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Mills, G.E. (2014). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Person Education, Inc, Merrill Prentice Hall. ISBN: 978013700314-3.
- Tumolo, M. (2011). *Interactive storytelling: A classroom case study*. Unpublished masters teacher research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Walsleben, K. (2012). *Student-Teacher Relationships and Their Effect on Student Engagement and Achievement*. Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Zenkov, K. & Harmon, J. (2009). Picturing a writing process: Using photovoice to learn how to teach writing to urban youth. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 52(7), 575-584. Note: This article will be provided electronically.

Additional readings available on-line and/or in class.

Materials

In addition to the books required for this course, you will need access to a digital camera and a computer (with

web, email, and printing privileges). As well, I recommend that you join at least one professional association (e.g., the National Council of Teachers of English) *now*: the resources to which you have access are generally incredible and the cost is reasonable for student members.

Resources

Articles and Books

- American Psychological Association (2010). *Publications manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author. ISBN: 978143380561-5.
- Arhar, J., Holly, M. & Kasten, W. (2001). *Action research for teachers: Traveling the yellow brick road*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Bell, J. (1993). *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education and social science*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Biancarosa, G. & Snow, C.E. (2004). *Reading next—A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report from the Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education, 12.
- Burnaford, G., Fischer, F. & Hobson, D. (1996). *Teachers doing research: Practical possibilities*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Carlisle, L.R., Jackson, B. & George, A. (2006). Principles of social justice education: The social justice education in schools project. *Equity & Excellence in Education* 39, 55-64.
- Children's Defense Fund. (2008). *The state of America's children yearbook*. Available: www.childrensdefense.org/ac2001/Acol.ASP.
- Chiseri-Strater, E. & Sunstein, B. (2006). *What works? A practical guide for teacher research*. Heinemann. Note: Intro and sample chapter can be found at <http://books.heinemann.com/shared/onlineresources/E00713/chapter9.pdf> and ordered on-line at <http://books.heinemann.com/products/E00713.aspx>.
- Cochran-Smith, M., Lytle, S.L (1999). The teacher research movement: A decade later. *Educational Researcher*, 28(7), 15-25.
- Cook-Sather, A. (2009). *Learning from the student's perspective: A methods sourcebook for effective teaching*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Courtland, M.C., & Gambell, T.J. (1994). *Curriculum Planning in the Language Arts K-12: A Holistic Perspective*. North York, Ontario: Captus Press.
- Duncan-Andrade, J. (2005). Toward teacher development for the urban in urban teaching. *Teaching Education*, 15, 339-350.
- Ewald, W. (2001). *I wanna take me a picture: Teaching photography and writing to children*. Boston: Center for Documentary Studies/Beacon.
- Falk, B. & Blumenreich, M. (2005). *The power of questions: A guide to teacher and student research*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

- Freeman, D. (1998). *Doing teacher research: From inquiry to understanding*. Toronto, Canada: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Hanks, R.S. & Ponzetti, J.J. (2004). Family studies and intergenerational studies: Intersections and opportunities. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 2(3/4), 5-22.
- Herrell, A. & Jordan, M. (2007). *Fifty strategies for training English language learners*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- Hopkins, D. (1993). *A teacher's guide to classroom research*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Hubbard, R. & Power, B. (1999). *Living the questions: A guide for teacher researchers*. NY: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Jones, S. (2006). *Girls, social class, and literacy: What teachers can do to make a difference*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in US schools. *Educational Research*, 35(7), 3-12.
- Lucas, T. & Villegas, A.M. (2003). *Educating culturally responsive teachers: A coherent approach*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Macintyre, C. (2000). *The art of action research in the classroom*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- MacLean, M. & Mohr, M. (1999). *Teacher-researchers at work*. Berkeley, CA: National Writing Project.
- Mahiri, J. (Ed). (2004). *What they don't learn in school: Literacy in the lives of urban youth*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Marquez-Zenkov, K. (2007). Through city students' eyes: Urban students' beliefs about school's purposes, supports, and impediments. *Visual Studies*, 22(2), 138-154.
- Marquez-Zenkov, K., & Harmon, J.A. (2007). "Seeing" English in the city: Using photography to understand students' literacy relationships. *English Journal*, 96(6), 24-30.
- Marzano, R., Pickering, D., & Pollock, J. (2004). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. Prentice Hall.
- Mertler, C.A. & Charles, C.M. (2011). *Introduction to educational research (7th ed.)*. Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 013701344-2.
- Mitra, D. (2007). Student voice in school reform: From listening to leadership. In D. Thiessen & A. Cook-Sather (Eds.), *International handbook of student experience in elementary and secondary school*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer Publishers.
- Moje, E.B., & Hinchman, K. (2004). Culturally responsive practices for youth literacy learning. In J. Dole & T. Jetton (Eds.), *Adolescent literacy research and practice* (pp. 331-350). New York: Guilford Press.
- Moje, E.B. (2008). The complex world of adolescent literacy: Myths, motivations, and mysteries. *Harvard Educational Review*, Spring 2008, 107-154.
- Morrell, E. and Duncan-Andrade, J. (2006). Popular culture and critical media pedagogy in secondary literacy classrooms. *International Journal of Learning*, 12, 2005/2006.
- Morrell, E. (2007). *Critical literacy and urban youth: Pedagogies of access, dissent, and liberation*. New York: Routledge.
- Myers, E. & Rust, F. (2003). *Taking action with teacher research*. Heinemann. Note: Text can be ordered at <http://books.heinemann.com/products/E00544.aspx>.
- Nieto, S. (2003). *What keeps teachers going?* New York: Teachers College Press.
- Oakes, J. & Lipton, M. (2003). *Teaching to change the world, 2nd ed.* Boston: McGraw Hill.
- Raggl, A. & Schratz, M. (2004). Using visuals to release pupil's voices: Emotional pathways to enhancing thinking and reflecting on learning. In C. Pole (Ed.), *Seeing is believing? Approaches to visual research (Volume 7)*. New York, NY: Elsevier.

- Richardson, L. (1998). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (volume 2). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Rodgers, C. (2006). Attending to student voice: The role of descriptive feedback in learning and teaching. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 36(2), 209-237.
- Rogers, R., et al. (2005). Professional development for social transformation: The literacy for social justice research group. *Language Arts*, 82(5), 347-358.
- Sagor, R. (1993). *How to conduct collaborative action research*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Samaras, A. P. (2011). *Self-study teacher research: Improving your practice through collaborative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Samaras, A. P., & Freese, A. R. (2006). *Self-study of teaching practices primer*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Samaras, A. P., Freese, A. R., Kosnik, C., & Beck, C. (Eds.) (2008). *Learning communities in practice*. The Netherlands: Springer Press.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Singer, Jessica. (2006). *Stirring up justice: Writing and reading to change the world*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. ISBN: 0325007470
- Street, B. (2003). What's "new" in New Literacy Studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 5(2), pp. 1-14.
- Teel, K., & Obidah, J. (Eds.). (2008). *Building racial and cultural competence in the classroom: Strategies from urban educators*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Temple, C., Ogle, D., Crawford, A., Frepon, P. (2008): *All children read: Teaching for literacy in today's diverse classrooms*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon. (Required)
- Van Horn, L. (2008). *Reading photographs to write with meaning and purpose, grades 4–12*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Villegas, A. & Lucas, T. (2007). The culturally responsive teacher. *Educational Leadership*. 64(6), 28-33.
- Yonezawa, S., & Jones, M. (2007). Using student voices to inform and evaluate secondary school reform. In D. Thiessen & A. Cook-Sather (Eds.), *International handbook of student experience in elementary and secondary school* (pp. 681-710). The Netherlands: Springer Publishers.
- Zenkov, K., Harmon, J., van Lier, P., & Marquez, M. (2008). Picture this: Seeing diverse city students' ideas about schools' purposes, impediments, and supports. *Multicultural Perspectives*.

Qualitative Analysis

- Bogdan, R. C., & Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Czaja, R., & Blair, J. (1996). *Designing surveys: A guide to decisions and procedures*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Maxwell, J.A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach (2nd Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods (2nd Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Quantitative Analysis and Statistics

- Bartz, A. E. (1999). *Basic statistical concepts (4th ed)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Cronk, B. C. (2002). *How to use SPSS: A step-by-step guide to analysis and interpretation (2nd ed)*. Los Angeles, CA: Pyczak Publishing.
- Jaeger, R. M. (1993). *Statistics: A spectator sport (Second Edition)*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Rovessi, C., & Carroll, D. J. (2002). *Statistics made simple for school leaders*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Salkind, N. (2000). *Statistics for people who think they hate statistics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Research and Writing

Booth, W.C., Colomb, G.G., & Williams, J.M. (1995). *The craft of research*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago.

Dahl, K.K. (1992). *Teacher as writer: Entering the professional conversation*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.

General Websites

- George Mason University Library: <http://library.gmu.edu/>
- What Kids Can Do: www.whatkidscando.org
- Through Students' Eyes: www.throughstudenteyes.org
- International Reading Association (IRA): www.reading.org
- National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE): www.ncte.org
- International Visual Sociology Association (IVSA): www.visualsociology.org

Teacher Research Websites

- http://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/tr_action/ (GMU teacher research site)
- <http://www.accessexcellence.org/LC/TL/AR/> (teacher research site)
- <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ntrp/> (UK teacher research site)
- <http://www.teacherresearch.net/> (international teacher research site)
- <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/english/composition/wits/research/index.html>
- <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/Dox/basics.html>

Data Collection Tools

- Go to GoogleDocs, then "spreadsheets" to create survey.
- Survey Monkey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/home.asp>

National Reports and Test Reporting Centers

- A Nation at Risk: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html>
- The Nation's Report Card/National Assessment of Educational Progress: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>
- National Center for Educational Statistics: <http://nces.ed.gov/help/sitemap.asp>
- TIMSS and PIRLS (The International Math and Science Study and International Literacy Study): <http://www.timss.org/>
- Best Evidence/School Reform Reports/School Models (Johns Hopkins University): <http://www.bestevidence.org/index.htm>

Virginia State Standards

- Virginia Department of Education: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/>
- State of Virginia, SOL Resources: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/sol.html>
- State of Virginia Standards of Learning Test Information: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/src/SOLassessments.shtml>

Professional Organizations

- Greater Washington Reading Council: www.gwrc.net
- Virginia State Reading Association: www.vusra.org
- International Reading Association (IRA) (organization for educators/ and researchers) www.reading.org
- National Reading Conference (NRC) (an international literacy research organization): www.nrconline.org
- National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE): www.ncte.org
- International Visual Sociology Association (IVSA): www.visualsociology.org
- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL): http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/index.asp

Course Requirements

General

All assignments should be turned in on the due date indicated in the schedule below via email. The submission deadline for assignments is Monday midnight (US eastern standard time) each week. All projects must be typed, in 11- or 12-point font, with one inch margins, double-spaced, in Times New Roman font. 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. *Note: I reserve the right to add, alter, or omit any assignment as necessary during the course of the semester.*

Attendance and Participation (20 points)

FAST TRAIN students are expected to attend *all* class periods of courses for which they register. Class participation—both in on-line and face-to-face settings—is important not only to the individual student, but to the class as whole. Class participation is a factor in grading; instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of non-participation and as a result lower the grade as stated in the course syllabus. Participants are expected to read the assigned materials, complete on-line activities including pre-session Blackboard assignments, arrive promptly, attend all class meetings for the entire session, and participate in on-line and face-to-face class discussions. It is your responsibility to offer insights, questions, comments, and concerns from the readings; I suggest that you keep a reading log that includes both notes on and reactions to each reading. This log could also contain the field notes that you will take on your classroom as you complete your research project. If, due to an emergency, you will not be able to participate during a given week of class, please contact me as soon as possible and certainly prior to any face-to-face class time; it’s best to do so via my email or my mobile phone (216.470.2384). Students are responsible for obtaining information given during class discussions despite attendance.

By virtue of agreeing to work together in this course we instantly formed a new community. This community will be rooted in mutual respect and shared responsibility; these foundations translate into consistent and punctual attendance and active participation in all class activities. My goal is to develop a comfortable on-line and face-to-face classroom community where risk-taking is encouraged; we can only grow through such open-heartedness. Your attendance, thoughtfulness, clarity, and active sharing of responsibility for our classroom community will affect your grade. It is your responsibility to share and respond with insights, questions, comments, concerns, artifacts, and

images from the readings and your teaching and research experiences. Absences and tardies—in both on-line and campus class sessions—will impact your grade. Two tardies are equal to one absence, and missing 30% or more of class sessions will result in automatic course failure. Each student is allowed one absence, no explanation required. For each session you are absent beyond this one session, one point will be deducted from your attendance and class participation points up to a total of 20 points. Please turn off all mobile phones, computers, and pagers when you participate in our class.

Blackboard Participation and Assignments (20 points)

Due to the large size of our class and in order to make discussions relevant and manageable, you will be divided into subgroups at three points over the months of our course. You will see the first group you are assigned to when you log into Blackboard the first day of class.

1. During the first portion of our course you will be divided into groups based on the discretion of the instructor;
2. For the next segment of our course, you will be grouped based on research interests and questions;
3. Finally, the last period of our course will focus on clarifying methods and findings and groups will be assigned when we begin to submit draft versions of the sections of your final project.

The intent of these groups is to ensure that each of you gets a chance to interact with as many of your classmates as possible. But given our focus on the quality of the online discussions, I believe it might be burdensome for you to read twenty or so thoughtful and comprehensive posts every week. In an effort to make these discussions easier to navigate, I will create the smaller groups described above, but will expect high quality responses online. *Note: These will not be closed groups; others in our class will be able to read what you have posted. Let's err on the side of maintaining a professional tone in our interactions.*

Participants are expected to log onto Blackboard at least twice weekly during the on-line portion of our course and daily while the class is in session in July. The Blackboard URL is <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>. Each participant will be responsible for contributing at least one posting to each discussion, accompanied by one image/artifact that is related to the ideas and/or events described in your posting. Please post contributions by the end of the week in which the topic is discussed. Discussion postings should be thorough and thoughtful. Just posting an "I agree/disagree with your comment" or "I think the same" to someone else's thoughts is not considered adequate.

1) Assignment #1 (due Mar 11th)

Post a brief biographical sketch introducing yourself to the class. Prepare your sketch in Microsoft Word or another word processing program. Copy and paste this sketch to the Blackboard "Discussion Board." Also attach a photo of yourself (not larger than 300 pixels by 300 pixels), preferably a close up of you in your work environment. Then, please choose and respond to at least two of the following questions on the Discussion Board and upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe:

- As you understand it, what is the scientific method and what is its purpose?
- When you hear the term "education research" what do you think?
- What has your experience been in reading education research studies, reports or articles? How have they been beneficial?
- Have you conducted or taken part in a research project or study? If so, please describe the experience, including your role.

- 2) Assignment #2 (due Mar 18th)
Please respond to BOTH of the following questions on the Discussion Board, then upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe:
- What problem or issue in your class would you like to make your area of focus? Why?
 - Action Research is often criticized because the outcomes are not generalizable. How might you respond to this concern in defending action research as a viable research method?
- 3) Assignment #3 (due Mar 25th)
On p. 60 Mills lists the nine steps in the "Action Research Plan." Please prepare the following first three steps and upload them to the Assignments section on Bb, then upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe:
- i) Write an area-of-focus statement
 - ii) Define the variables
 - iii) Develop a research question
- 4) Assignment #4 (due Apr 1st)
Please respond to ONE of the following items on the Discussion Board, then upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe:
- On p. 92 Mills defines the term "triangulation." How will you triangulate the data collection in your study? Why did you choose these sources?
 - How will you insure that your study is VALID?
 - How will you insure that your data collection techniques are RELIABLE?
- 5) Assignment #5 (due Apr 8th)
Please respond to ONE of the following questions on the Discussion Board, then upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe:
- What steps will you take to insure that your study has met all ethical challenges?
 - What is your school's ethics policy regarding the collection of data from students?
- 6) Assignment #6 (due April 22nd)
Return to the Action Research Plan on p. 60 in Mills. Please upload your responses to the following items to the Assignments section of Bb, then upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe:
- iv) Describe the intervention or innovations
 - v) Describe the membership of the action research group
 - vi) Describe negotiations that need to be undertaken
 - vii) Develop a timeline
 - viii) Develop a statement of resources
 - ix) Describe the data collection sources and process, including plan for triangulation.
- 7) Assignment #7 (due April 29th)
Prepare a list of ten references (APA style) you have identified so far in your review of the literature that appear to be relevant to your study. References should be from refereed journals, books, and scholarly compilations. Please upload your list of references to the Assignments section of Bb, then upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe.
- 8) Assignment #8 (due May 6th)
During the data collection period continue to check Bb site twice per week for updates and discussion questions related to AR, Ch. 8/9. Be sure to upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe in response to these questions. Please contact your instructor with question or requests for information.

- 9) Assignment #9 (due May 13th)
During the data collection period continue to check Bb site twice per week for updates and discussion questions related to *AR*, Ch. 8/9. Be sure to upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe in response to these questions. Please contact your instructor with question or requests for information.
- 10) Assignment #10 (due May 20th)
During the data collection period continue to check Bb site twice per week for updates and discussion questions related to *AR*, Ch. 8/9. Be sure to upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe in response to these questions. Please contact your instructor with question or requests for information.
- 11) Assignment #11 (due May 27th)
During the data collection period continue to check Bb site twice per week for updates and discussion questions related to *AR*, Ch. 8/9. Be sure to upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe in response to these questions. Please contact your instructor with question or requests for information.
- 12) Assignment #12 (due Jun 3rd)
For this week's posting—to which I would like everyone to respond—please consider the following: What have been your top two or three questions about this teacher research work thus far? That is, questions about the *PROCESS* of doing teacher research, the challenges of doing it. And how would you answer those questions now, if such a question was posed to you by someone else planning to take this course or conduct a teacher research project in the future? (I will compile these questions and answers into a list for all of us to consider).
- 13) Assignment #13 (due June 17th)
On p. 182 Mills presents an Outline format for an Action Research Report. Please complete the outline and upload it to the Assignments section on Blackboard. Be sure to upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe. Please contact your instructor with question or requests for information. The instructor will review and provide feedback prior to on-site class meetings in July.

Draft Literature Reviews (10 points)

This assignment is intended to engage you in a thoughtful process that will help you do a bit of reconnaissance for your action research paper and continue your development as critical consumers of education literature. Each participant will submit two draft literature reviews (2-3 pp, 600-900 words each). In each paper participants will review and critique literature for their research project (this could include artifacts such as school policies, empirical research, policy or interviews etc.) that relates to their question. Draft literature reviews should describe how the participant relates to the ideas of the author of the literature considered and how and these ideas can *and* cannot be applied in practice. Participants should select readings that relate to their Inquiry/Action Research Project. Draft Review #1 is due April 1st and Draft Review #2 is due April 22nd.

Inquiry/Action Research Project (40 points)

Participants will design and conduct an inquiry/action research project that is relevant to their present or future teaching positions. An outline and examples of these projects will be provided. You will write a literature review and proposal for this project, collect and analyze preliminary data, and share the results of your study with both our class (and potentially an outside audience) in a PowerPoint presentation. Both pre- and in-service teachers must complete the project. It is possible to partner with another student for the purpose of sharing data and researching different aspects of a common topic; each partner, however, must submit an original, stand-alone report. Each participant will make a 10-12 minute presentation (ungraded) on her/his project; an outline and examples of these presentations will be provided. Please note that projects or papers submitted for credit in another course cannot also be used for a grade in this course. With instructor approval, however, participants may build on a research topic originally presented as a significant research proposal in the EDRS 590 Education Research course. Your data sources for this project must include either (or both) of the following artifacts: 1) visual representations (images or photographs of your classroom, students at work, etc.); 2) student feedback related to your research question and your teaching intervention. Your initial research outline and draft

introduction due June 17th, drafts of sections will be due at various points during our on campus period of July 17th-26th (see dates in the schedule below), and your final project is due July 26th.

Focus Group Sessions (10 points)

Working in small groups—likely one of the sets of groups previously assigned for responding to Discussion Board postings—participants will identify one authentic, alternative, preferably contemporary media-based method through which they will share the results of their action research findings. While we will each make brief presentations of our individual research findings in class, the mission of this assignment is for your group to design and enact a presentation that moves the public understanding of your group members' studies along. You might choose to create a collective presentation on your group members' projects or you might highlight one group member's project and findings. You might highlight the very importance of action research or summarize the findings of your group members' efforts. You are encouraged to display these findings in an alternative setting and through creative means, with your primary goal being engaging in an exercise in demonstrating the significance of your action research to the broader world. The Focus Groups will meet and prepare their reports during the July on-campus portion of the course.

Assessment and Mastery Grading

All assignments will be evaluated holistically using a mastery grading system; the general rubric is described below, and a specific rubric provided with each assignment. A student must demonstrate "mastery" of each requirement of an assignment; doing so will result in a "B" level score. Only if a student additionally exceeds the expectations for that requirement—through quality, quantity, or the creativity of her/his work—will she/he be assessed with an "A" level score. With a mastery grading system, students must *choose* to "go above and beyond" in order to earn "A" level scores.

- "A" level score = Student work is well-organized, exceptionally thorough and thoughtful, candid, and completed in a professional and timely manner. Student followed all format and component guidelines, as well as including additional relevant component. Student supports assertions with multiple concrete examples and/or explanations. Significance and/or implications of observations are fully specified and extended to other contexts. Student work is exceptionally creative, includes additional artifacts, and/or intentionally supports peers' efforts.
- "B" level score = Student work is well organized, thorough, thoughtful, candid, and completed in a professional and timely manner. Student followed all format and component guidelines. Student supports assertions with concrete examples and/or explanations. Significance and/or implications of observations are fully specified.
- "C" level score = Student provides cursory responses to assignment requirements. Student followed all format and component guidelines. Development of ideas is somewhat vague, incomplete, or rudimentary. Compelling support for assertions is typically not provided.
- "F" level score = Student work is so brief that any reasonably accurate assessment is impossible.

Grading Scale

A = 95-100%

A- = 90-94%

B+ = 87-89%

B = 83-86%

B- = 80-82%

C = 70-79%

F = Below 70%

Incomplete (IN): This grade may be given to students who are passing a course 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. 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. A copy of the contract should be provided to the FAST TRAIN office.

Assignments/Possible Points

Attendance and Participation = 20 points

Blackboard Participation and Assignments = 20 points

Draft Literature Reviews = 10 points

Focus Group Sessions = 10 points

Inquiry/Action Research Project (including presentation) = 40 points

Total = 100 points

Tentative Schedule

Week #/ Dates	Topic/Detail	Assignment due	Reading
Week #1 T, Mar 5 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions, course overview, syllabus, requirements • Introduction to action research • Overview of education research • Types and corresponding sources of data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bb: 1) Read "Welcome" message; 2) Review syllabus; 3) Discussion Board Assignment #1; 4) Biographical Sketch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Week #2 T, Mar 12 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding action research • Deciding on an area of focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPT files on educational research (from Mertler & Charles) in Supplemental Readings • AR, Chapters 1, 3 • Zenkov, et al teacher research project
Week #3 T, Mar 19 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection techniques • Developing research questions • Teacher Research Expert: Kaitlyn Walsleben 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #3; instructor will review and evaluate research questions by Week #5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AR, Chapter 4 • Walsleben teacher research project
Week #4 T, Mar 26 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validity, reliability, and generalizability • Teacher Research Expert: Matthew Groves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #4 • Draft Literature Review #1 due Apr 2nd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AR, Chapter 5 • Groves teacher research project
Week #5 T, Apr 2 nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics • Teacher Research Expert: Marlies Tumolo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AR, Chapter 2 • Tumolo teacher research project
Week #6 T, Apr 9 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action research plan • Data analysis and interpretation • Teacher Research Expert: Sandy Leathart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AR, Chapter 6 • Leathart teacher research project

Week #/ Dates	Topic/Detail	Assignment due	Reading
Week #7 T, Apr 23 rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action research plan, continued Teacher Research Expert: Jennifer Golobic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Board Assignment #7 Draft Literature Review #2 due Apr 23rd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AR, Chapter 7 Golobic teacher research project
Weeks #8- #12 T, Apr 30 th – T, May 28 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Board Assignments #8-12: During data collection period continue to check Bb site twice per week for updates and discussion questions related to AR, Ch. 8/9; contact instructor with question or requests for information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AR, Chapter 8, 9
Weeks #13-#15 Jun 4 th – Jun 17 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis, outlining, and drafting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Board Assignment #13 Draft introduction, area of focus, and literature review due by Jun 17th 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all sample teacher research projects
Week #16 W, Jul 17 th 8 a – 3 p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course overview: Description, objectives, content; major learnings from course; applications to teaching Overview of action research Meet with Focus Session Group to select thematic framework and topic Research project conferences Teacher Research Expert: Matthew Groves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafts methods description due 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review AR, Ch. 1 Review Groves teacher research project Groves research presentation
Week #17 Th, Jul 18 th 8 a – 3 p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying a focus for action research Work on action research project Teacher Research Expert: Marlies Tumolo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review AR, Ch. 2 Review Tumolo teacher research project Tumolo research presentation

Week #/ Dates	Topic/Detail	Assignment due	Reading
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Week #17 F, Jul 19 th 8 a – 3 p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection techniques • Work on action research project • Focus Group Session • Teacher Research Expert: Sandy Leathart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group Session #1 • Draft results/findings due 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review AR, Ch. 3 • Review Leathart teacher research project • Leathart research presentation
Week #17 M, Jul 22 nd 8 a – 3 p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection considerations: validity, reliability, generalizability • Ethical considerations • Focus Group Session • Teacher Research Expert: Jennifer Golobic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group Session #2 • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review AR, Ch. 4 • Review Golobic teacher research project • Golobic research presentation
Week #17 T, Jul 23 rd 8 a – 3 p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis and interpretation • Focus Group Session • Action research presentations • Teacher Research Expert: Kaitlyn Walsleben 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group Session #3 • Draft discussion, recommendations, and action plans due 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review AR, Ch. 6 • Review Walsleben teacher research project • Walsleben research presentation
Week #17 W, Jul 24 th 8 a – 3 p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action planning for educational change • Focus Group Session • Action research presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group Session #4 • Action research presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review AR, Ch. 7
Week #17 Th, Jul 25 th 8 a – 3 p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting action research in writing • Focus Group Session • Action research presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group Session #5 • Action research presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review AR, Ch. 8
Week #17 F, Jul 26 th 8 a – 3 p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative action research in practice • Reporting action research on-line • Focus Group Session • Action research presentations • Course evaluation and feedback forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group Session #6 • Research project due • Action research presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review AR, Ch. 9

