George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Graduate School of Education

EDCI 559: Research and Assessment in Elementary Education
Summer 2012
Monday/Wednesday/Friday 7:00 pm – 10:05 pm
West 1004
May 21, 2013 – June 21, 2013

Instructor: Dr. Katy Swalwell   **Office:** Thompson 1407
Phone: 608-852-3056   **Email:** kswalwel@gmu.edu
Skype ID: katyswalwell

Office Hours
Tuesdays 10-12am F2F
Skype appointments can also be made

Course Description
Provides teacher candidates an understanding of research paradigms utilizing systematic evidence to improve practice and further skills in assessment of learning outcomes. Emphasizes linking research and practice, making instructional decisions based on systematically collected data. Prerequisite(s): Admission into elementary education graduate program; capstone course for degree must be taken last in programmatic sequence. Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week: 3

Nature of Course Delivery
This course employs multiple instructional strategies, including online activities (all asynchronous tasks to replace Friday class sessions) and face-to-face (F2F) class sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays. Some Mondays and Wednesdays may also be online, but will be synchronous.

Technology Requirements
• It is required that you have regular access to a **desktop/laptop PC**.
• It is required that you have access to the **Internet**. It is highly recommended that you have access to high speed internet to facilitate the downloading of necessary files and other information for this course.

Course Expenses

Required:
Fairfax County Public School Action Research conference registration - $10

Mills, G. E. (2008). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher (5th ed.).* Upper Saddle River, NJ:
        Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.

Recommended Texts:
American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological*

        Association (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Jones, W. P., & Kottler, J. A. (2008). *Understanding Research: Becoming a Competent and*
        Critical Consumer. New York, NY: Pearson.

Learning Outcomes
    A. Students will be able to:
1. Articulate the role of systematic evidence in the improvement of teaching and learning.
2. Use educational research literature as a basis for reflecting on and improving their teaching practice.
3. Make explicit linkages between research and assessment practice.
4. Distinguish between the purposes and methods of theoretical, applied, and action research as well as quantitative and qualitative research.
5. Explain the fundamentals of validity and reliability, and articulate the potential threats to validity within various research paradigms.
6. Critique the quality of research studies within various paradigms.
7. Describe the purpose and cycle of action research, specifically in relationship to assessment of their learners.
8. Design appropriate and authentic assessments and analyze student data.
9. Design an action research study based on research and student assessments.
10. Use technology to assist in locating, using, conducting research, and analyzing data.

Standards
    A. National Board for Professional Teaching Standards:
    Proposition 1: Teachers are committed to students and learning
    Proposition 3: Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning
    Proposition 4: Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from their experience.
    B. National Technology Standards:
    Standard IV: Teachers apply technology to facilitate a variety of effective assessment and evaluation strategies.
    Standard V: Teachers use technology to enhance their productivity and professional practice.
    C. The Virginia State Technology Standards for Instructional Personnel:
1. Instructional personnel shall be able to demonstrate effective use of a computer system and utilize computer software.
2. Instructional personnel shall be able to apply knowledge of terms associated with educational computing and technology.
3. Instructional personnel shall be able to apply computer productivity tools for professional use.
4. Instructional personnel shall be able to use electronic technologies to access and exchange information.

    B. Outcomes and Standards

Learning Outcomes	NBPTS Propositions	NETS Standards
1	1, 3	V
2	1, 3, 4	IV & V
3	1, 3, 4	IV & V
4	4	V
5	4	V
6	4	V
7	1, 3, 4	IV & V
8	1, 3	IV & V
9	4	IV & V
10	4	V

Assignments

Assignment	Points
Readings & Activities	30
Action Research Report (PBA)	21
Action Research Reflection	4
Quantitative Data Collection Trial	15
Qualitative Data Collection Trial	15
Action Research Presentation	15
Total	**100**

Readings and Activities (In-class and Online)
It is expected that you will complete all assigned readings and tasks each week. You also must be "present" during each class session by actively engaging with the content and your peers. Online discussions and activities must also clearly demonstrate your thoughtful completion of the readings and tasks. You are expected to attend class and complete all assigned readings and tasks BEFORE class begins for that day. In the event of an emergency, your instructor must be notified of your absence in advance of class.

Action Research Report (PBA)
This is the major assignment for this class and is the Performance Based Assessment (PBA) for the course. The Action Research Report will detail the process and findings from the action research that you conducted during your Spring 2013 internship placement. If you did not have a Spring 2013 internship placement, you will write a proposal for research and change all of the sections below to future tense (I will…).

The final written report (or proposal) will include the five major sections below. These sections will be submitted throughout the semester for formative feedback from peers and your instructor. These drafts MUST be submitted by their syllabus due dates. Not doing so will affect your Readings and Activities (In-class and Online) grade. Points will also be earned for quality of writing and use of APA style. See attached rubric. Please see *TRA Report-Proposal Template* on Blackboard for more details about the sections below and for differences between the report and proposal sections.
- Part One: Rationale and Research Question
- Part Two: Literature Review
- Part Three: Instructional Context and Change
  - Describe your school, community, classroom and student population; and
  - Describe the instructional change
- Part Four: Data Collection and Student Assessment
  - Describe how you collected data to answer your research question(s). This includes formative and summative assessments designed to gather that data.
- Part Five: Data Analysis
  - Part 5a: Describe how you analyzed your data
  - Part 5b: Identify and describe limitations to your study (use what you learned both from your experience and from what you learned in the course)
  - Part 5c: Describe your findings and their implications for teaching and learning

*Note: If you conducted it, you will be using your question and data from your spring 2013 action research.

Action Research Reflection
In this one to two- page written reflection, you will think over your process of teacher research from start (January seminars) to finish (summer written report). Where have you grown as a teacher researcher? Where do you feel uncertain? How did your actions affect your students' opportunities for learning? How did you create more equitable conditions for student success?

Quantitative Data Collection Trial
Groups of students will develop a short survey instrument with 10-12 questions, collect data from at least 15 people each, analyze the data using descriptive statistics, and write up a short report. This does not have to be related to the focus of your Action Research Report. Typically students do better when the topic can be asked of non-school personnel- for example, you may ask parents about their views of schools, ask college students to identify top issues in education, etc. Your survey instrument must be workshopped with and approved by your critical friends.

Qualitative Data Collection Trial
Individually, students will collect qualitative data through interviews, observation, or a focus group; code and interpret the data; and write a short report. This does not have to be related to the focus of your Action Research Report. Your data collection protocol must be workshopped with and approved by your critical friends.

Action Research Presentation
You will present your Action Research. This presentation will be based on your written report (see above). You will participate with other sections of EDCI 559 in a roundtable session. You will prepare a one-page handout for distribution to your audience. You may already have this prepared from the spring and if so, you may use it, updated to reflect any new analysis or findings.

** Note: All assignments are only accepted via Blackboard (except the PBA, which is uploaded to TaskStream). **

Late work will NOT be accepted without prior approval by your instructor. Any assignment submitted past the syllabus deadline without prior approval will earn 0 points. Late submission of your Action Research Report sections will affect your Readings and Activities (In-class and Online) grade.

All written papers must be double-spaced, with 1" margins, and in 12-point font (Times New Roman, Calibri, or Arial). Correct grammar, spelling, and APA format is expected. If you do not have a 6th Edition APA manual, the OWL at Purdue is an excellent resource http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/.

TaskStream Requirements
Every student registered for any Elementary Education course with a required performance-based assessment (designated as such in the syllabus) is required to submit this assessment (EDCI 559: Action Research Proposal) to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime 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 a 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.

Grading Scale and Policies

A=93-100; A-=90-92; B+=87-89; B=80-86; C=70-79; F=below 70
Remember: You must maintain above a B average to stay in the program.

** Note: Assignments earning less than a passing grade may be rewritten and resubmitted so that the assignment is satisfactorily completed. In fact, because learning is the goal, I may require you to redo an assignment that is far below expectations.

Course Assumptions
There are five fundamental expectations I have of you, and that you should have of me. Please read them carefully and commit to them for your final class with our program.

   1- BE PRESENT
   If you are planning on being absent or have an emergency, please contact me by email before class. **Missing more than one class period or missing any class without contacting me will affect the participation portion of your grade and may warrant further administrative action**. We only meet for six weeks, so our time together is very important. When you are in class, I expect you to be both mentally and as physically present by being attentive and engaged. Cell phones are for emergency use only – **no texting, social media, or phone calls during class time**. I encourage you to bring laptops, and will ask you to open them when only their use is appropriate or necessary.

   2- BE THOUGHTFUL
   We will be constructively critiquing each other's work and pushing each other to think about our practice in new and different ways. This is done in the spirit of intellectual inquiry and demands that we are all respectful, honest, and willing to engage tough questions with each other as a compassionate community. Agreement is not required, but mutual respect and consideration is.

   3- BE PROACTIVE
   I am here to support your learning this semester and will provide you with feedback in response to the course's formative and summative assessments. I cannot read minds, however – if you have any questions or concerns throughout the course, please schedule an appointment with me I would be happy to make any adjustments we can to facilitate a meaningful course experience.

   4- BE COLLABORATIVE
   We are a community of learners who are here to support and challenge each other. Each of us has the responsibility to be an engaged, reliable, and respectful group member who brings something to the class. This is your last class, and your last opportunity to work collaboratively with your peers – don't miss this great opportunity to learn from each other!

   5- BE PROUD OF YOUR WORK
   Each assignment builds upon the last and coordinates with the activities on the day it was due. Extensions, therefore, should only be requested when absolutely necessary and as soon as possible. If you need more time to do your best work, let me know. **More than three delayed assignments for any reason will result in scheduling a conference with the instructor and the program coordinator and may result in a student failing the class**.

CEHD Student Expectations
Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor. One cell phone will remain on in class that is registered with the Mason Alert System. Visit https://alert.gmu.edu, to find out more about Mason's alert system for GMU emergencies.

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions. The College of Education and Human Development strives to represent a set of core values that drive the work of faculty and students. These values of collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice are further described on the CEHD website http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/.

Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/].

Honor Code. To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, and/or lie in matters related to academic work.

The Elementary Program abides by these policies and takes them seriously.
Students must also 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 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/].

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/]

Levels/Criteria	3	2	1
Introduction: Describes the problem. Clear research question stated. Significance of problem is addressed.	The problem is described in details. The description fully leads the reader to the research question. The research question is clear. It is measureable. The significance of the problem is addressed fully. It is clear why this is an important problem to study.	The problem is adequately described. The description partially leads the reader to the research question. The research question is vague. It is measureable. The significance of the problem is adequately addressed, but it is not clear as to why this is important.	The problem is not adequately described. It does not lead the reader to the research question. The research question is unclear. It is not measureable. The significance of the problem is unfocused and rambles. It is not clear why this is an important topic to study.
Literature Review: Research studies are used. Analysis of literature is evidence. Synthesis of literature is evident.	At least ten research studies are used to support the literature review. These are from respectable journals. The studies are appropriate for the topic. Analysis of the literature is well-developed. It connects directly to the problem statement and the research question. There is a good synthesis of the literature. This goes beyond restating what is in the articles. Student is able to tie the studies together and connect this back to the importance of the topic.	Six to nine research studies are used. At least one of them is from a respectable journal. The studies are somewhat appropriate for the topic. The analysis of the literature is adequate. It connects somewhat to the problem statement and research question, but leaves the reader wanting to know more. There is an adequate synthesis of the literature. Student primarily relies on restating the research studies to support the topic, but is able to include own thoughts regarding the studies.	Less than six research studies are used. The articles are not from respectable journals. The studies are not appropriate for the topic. The analysis of the literature is inadequate. It does not connect to the problem statement and research question. There is an inadequate synthesis of the literature. The studies are treated separately and not tied together. Student is unable to connect studies to the importance of the topic.
Context and Intervention Provided: Setting Described. Population identified. Intervention.	The setting is fully described. It includes, size of school, location, grade level, subject taught, etc. All pertinent information is included. The population is fully described. It includes number of students,	The setting is adequately described. Most information is included, but not all. The population is adequately described. Most information is included, but not all. Intervention is	Setting is not included or inadequately described. It is not clear where the research will be conducted. Population is not included or inadequately described. It is not clear who will be

Levels/Criteria	3	2	1
	gender and ethnic breakdown, grade levels, academic abilities, etc. Information relevant to the research is included. Intervention is fully described. It is clear what the intervention is and how it will be implemented. Intervention is realistic.	adequately described, but either the description of the intervention or the implementation is confusing.	participating in the research study. There is no intervention or implementation explained or the intervention does not align with the research question.
Research Design Design of study matches goals. Formative and Summative Assessments included. Data sources appropriate.	The methodology chosen (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods) is appropriate for the research question. There is adequate time allowed for data collection. The treatment is reasonable and ethical. There is a mixture of formative and summative assessments included in the design. They are well-described or a copy is included. All data sources are appropriate for the research question. The information collected will help answer the question.	Two of the three stated criteria are adequate. Formative and summative assessments are included in the design. Copies are not included and they are not well described. Most, but not all, of the data sources are appropriate.	None or one of the criteria is adequate. The research is not ethical. Either formative or summative assessments are included, but not both. Copies are not included and they are not well described. The majority of the data sources are not appropriate for the research question. Data collected is not ethical.
Analysis of Data: Appropriate analysis for data collected. Implications from data proposed.	The entire analysis of the data is appropriate. The information gathered will address the research question. Implications from the data are well-developed and fully discussed. The implications are connected back to the results of the data analysis.	The majority of the analysis is appropriate. However, it is not clear how other parts will be analyzed. Implications from the data are adequately discussed. It is clear the student is able to interpret the findings. However, the implications are not tied back to the results.	The analysis is inappropriate or not well-defined. Implications from the data are inadequately discussed. It is not clear the student is able to interpret the findings. The implications are not tied back to the results.

Levels/Criteria	3	2	1
References: Full citations for all sources mentioned. Use of APA style for formatting. All listed references are used in the paper. Most references are from scholarly sources.	All sources are completely and correctly cited. All articles cited are referenced in the proposal and all references contain complete citations. All citations and references follow APA style. There are no errors. All references listed are cited in the proposal. All references are from scholarly sources (journal articles, text books, etc.) They are not just from websites.	Only one source is not cited correctly. There are one to three APA errors. One reference is not cited in the proposal The majority of the references are from scholarly sources.	Two or more sources are not cited correctly. There are four or more APA errors. Two or more references are not cited. The majority of the references are not from scholarly sources.
Overall Style: Clear, concise writing. Grammar and punctuation. Multiple levels of headings used to organize ideas.	The writing is very clear and concise. The reader can understand what the problem is and how the research will address it. There are no grammar and punctuation errors. There is evidence of multiple levels of headings. These are used appropriately in all instances.	The majority of the writing is clear and concise. There are one to three grammar and punctuation errors. There is evidence of multiple levels of headings. These are used appropriately in the majority of instances.	The majority of the reading is vague and unclear. The reader has difficulty seeing the connections between the various sections. There are four or more grammar and punctuation errors. There is no evidence of multiple levels of headings or these are used inappropriately in the majority of instances.