

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
Multilingual/Multicultural Education**

**EDCI 777 72242: – Research to Practice  
3 Credits, FALL 2013**

Face-to-face: Thursday 7:20 – 10:00 pm Thompson Hall L013, Fairfax campus

Online: Thursday, September 26; Thursday, October 24; Thursday, November 21, 7:20 – 10:00 pm,  
synchronous Blackboard discussion; no meeting on campus [Class Location]

**PROFESSOR(S):**

Name: Jenice L. View, Ph.D., Associate Professor

Office hours: By appointment

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

**A. Prerequisites/Corequisites**

All other program courses except elective, or permission of instructor

**B. University Catalog Course Description**

EDCI 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 (qualitative and quantitative), questions addressed, design, and data collection and analysis.

**C. Expanded Course Description**

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), and developing or deepening an inquiry stance. 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 one another in our research goals.

### **LEARNER OUTCOMES or OBJECTIVES:**

This course is designed to enable students to:

- Identify the basic elements of educational research, including methods (qualitative and quantitative), 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

### **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS (National Board of Professional Teaching Standards; Teachers College Columbia Teacher Expectations; George Mason Dispositions for a Career Educator):**

This course fits with the core values of the College of Education and Human Development, which include collaboration, research based practice, innovation, ethical leadership, and social justice.

This course is designed to meet the following professional teaching standards:

- GMU Dispositions for a Career Educator I, II, and III
  - Commitment to the Profession
  - Commitment to Honoring Professional Ethical Standards
  - Commitment to Key Elements of Professional Knowledge

- Teachers College Columbia Teacher Expectations I and II
  - Lifelong Learners
  - Learner-Centered Educators
- NBPTS Propositions 2, 3, and 4
  - Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students
  - Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning
  - Teachers Think Systematically about Their Practice and Learn from Experience

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Caro-Bruce, C., Flessner, R., Klehr, M. & Zeichner, K. (2007). *Creating equitable classrooms through action research*. CA: Corwin. ISBN 1412936675

Mills, G.E. (2014). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc. Merrill Prentice Hall. ISBN-10: 0132887762

Teacher Research Websites:

[http://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/tr\\_action/](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)

Supplemental texts and references will be distributed periodically in class and prior to Blackboard discussions to enhance discussions.

### **Course Delivery**

The course is delivered through a variety of on-line, face-to-face, and individualized instructional approaches. During class meetings there will be large group, small group, and individual activities. The three on-line sessions will be synchronous, conducted on the class day at the same time as the face-to-face class.

Participants conduct independent research, as well as communicate with one another and the instructor in person and via electronic media. In general, we will engage in four activities over the course of the semester:

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 groups meetings in which participants will concentrate on selected readings and

- provide feedback and support for one another's 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 one another, and because teaching is often a collaborative effort, you will frequently work in groups. This will give you a chance to share ideas, to be exposed to a variety of perspectives (rather than only the professor's), and to support one another as you continue to hone your teaching and research skills.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS:**

### **1. Assignment descriptions**

- Research Report and PowerPoint (PBA – detailed description below)
- Draft Literature Reviews
- Collaborative Design Project

#### **Draft Literature Reviews (10 points)**

This assignment is intended to engage you in a thoughtful process that will help you do an exploration, as well as continue to be a critical consumer, of the education literature that relates to your action research paper. Each participant will submit two draft literature reviews (2-3 pp, 600 – 900 words each). In each paper participants will review and critique literature related to the research project; the readings can include artifacts such as school policies, empirical research, policy, interviews, etc.). Draft literature reviews should describe how the participant relates to the ideas of the various authors and how their 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 midnight September 19 (5 points) and Draft Review #2 is due midnight October 3 (5 points).

#### **Collaborative Design Project (20 points)**

Working in small groups, participants will identify one authentic, alternative, preferably contemporary media-based method through which to share the results of their action research findings. While we each will 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. You might choose to create a collective presentation on your group members' projects or you might highlight one group members' project and findings. You might highlight the very importance of action research or summarize the finding 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 to demonstrate the significance of your action research to the broader world.

### **2. Assignment and examination weighting (percentages, points)**

Class Participation	20 points
Research Report and PowerPoint (PBA)	50 points
Draft Literature Review	10 points
Collaborative Design Project	20 points

### 3. Grading policies (and grading scale appropriate for UG or GR level)

#### Grade Distribution

95-100	A
90-94	A-
85-89	B
80-84	B-
75-79	C
74 and below	F

### 4. Other expectations (e.g., attendance, writing requirements)

#### Attendance and Participation (20 points)

Graduate School of Education students are expected to attend *all* class periods of courses for which they register. Class participation – both in face-to-face and online settings – is important not only to the individual student, but to the class as a 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 arrive promptly, attend all class meetings for the entire session, and participate in on-line and face-to-face discussions. It is your responsibility to offer insights, questions, comments, and concerns from the readings and other course material.

If, due to an emergency, you will not be able to participate in a given class, please contact me as soon as possible via email and/or telephone.

Absences and tardies – in both campus and online 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 are part of Attendance and Participation. To make online discussions more relevant and manageable, you will be divided into three subgroups, three times over the course of the semester (September 26; October 24, and November 21). The first group will be based on the discretion of the instructor. The second group will be based on research interests and questions. The third group will be a design team for creating a public presentation of research. You will know your group members prior to each Blackboard discussion date.

The intent of these groups is to ensure that each of you has the opportunity to interact with as many of your classmates as possible. But given our focus on quality, it might be burdensome for you to read 17 thoughtful and comprehensive online posts. 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. Please err on the side of maintaining a professional tone in our interactions.*

Participants are expected to sign onto Blackboard at 7:20 pm at the start of the session, respond individually to the prompts, and then begin a conversation with other group members concerning the ideas and questions generated by the group. The session will automatically cut off at 10:00 pm.

#### **Other Expectations:**

- The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities, it is imperative that students keep up with the readings and participate in class.
- All assignments should be turned in on the due date indicated in the schedule below via Blackboard (email attachments are an option we can discuss). The submission deadline for assignments is Thursday midnight (US eastern standard time); for example, the first assignment, due on Thursday September 19, should be uploaded by 12:00 midnight September, **not** 11:59 pm on September 19.
- 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.
- All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation. The American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition (APA) style will be followed for all written work. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. All projects must be typed, in 11- or 12-point font with one-inch margins, double-spaced, in Times New Roman font.
- If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work. When in doubt, they should check the APA manual. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the Mason library web guide at <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/>. Students may consult the Writing Center for additional writing support. Students will do the following:
  - Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
  - Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.
  - Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.
  - Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

## **5. Selected performance-based assessment**

### **Inquiry/Action Research Project (50 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 research 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 and 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. Your data sources for this project must include either or both of the following artifacts: 1) visual representations (images or photos of your classroom, students at work, etc.); 2) student feedback related to your research questions and your teaching intervention. Your initial research outline and draft introduction is due Thursday, October 10, 2013. Interim drafts are due November 7 (sections 1, 2, 3), 14 (methods), and 21 (results/findings), 2013. The final paper and powerpoint are due on Thursday, December 12, 2013.

## **TASKSTREAM REQUIREMENTS**

Every student registered for any MME course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, the research report, to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in TaskStream. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

## **GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code (See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>).
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- c. 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.

- d. 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/>).
- e. 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/>).
- f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g. 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/>).

## **PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

## **CORE VALUES COMMITMENT**

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website <http://gse.gmu.edu/>.**

**PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic/Learning Experiences</b>	<b>Readings and Assignments</b>
Week 1 – Aug 29	--Introductions, course overview, syllabus, requirements --Introduction to action research and education research	None
Week 2 – Sept 5	--Understanding action research/ teacher inquiry --Deciding on an area of focus --Reading literature	Mills – Chapters 1 & 3
Week 3 – Sept 12	--Data collection techniques --Developing research questions	Mills – Chapter 4
Week 4 – Sept 19	--Validity, reliability, generalizability	--Mills- Chapter 5 <b>--Draft literature review #1 due (upload to Bb)</b>
Week 5	--Ethics --Naming and Examining Assumptions	--Mills – Chapter 2 --Supplemental reading given in class
Week 6 – Sept 26 (Bb discussion)	--Action research plan --Data analysis and interpretation	--Mills – Chapter 6 --Participate in Bb discussion
Week 7 – Oct 3	--Developing a Research Plan, continued	--Mills- Chapter 7 <b>--Draft literature review #2 due (upload to Bb)</b>
Week 8 – Oct 10	--Advanced Data Collection Strategies	Mills- Chapters 8
Week 9 – Oct 17	--Advanced Data Analysis Strategies	Mills – Chapter 9
Week 10 – Oct 24 (Bb discussion)	--Exploring examples of Teacher Research Projects	--Caro-Bruce et al. (all) --Participate in Bb discussion
Week 11 – Oct 31	--How Others’ Research Might Inform our Own --Understanding the peer review process	--Caro-Bruce et al. (all)
Week 12 – Nov 7	--Peer reviews	<b>Draft of sections 1,2, and 3 due (upload to Bb)</b>
Week 13 – Nov 14	--Peer reviews --Making teacher research public	<b>--Draft methods description due (upload to Bb)</b> --In-class, small group

		design project
Week 14 – Nov 21 (Bb discussion)	--Quality indicators for teacher research	-- <b>Draft results/findings due (upload to Bb)</b> --Participate in Bb discussion --Small group design project, continued
THURSDAY NOV 28 NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING		
Week 15 – Dec 5	--Action research presentations	--Grade-level group sharing of individual research projects (PowerPoint presentations)
Week 16 – Dec 12 Last class	--Action research presentations --Course evaluations and feedback forms	-- <b>Individual research project due (upload final paper and PowerPoint to Bb)</b> -- In-class presentations of small group design projects

**ASSESSMENT RUBRIC(S):**

In addition to specific assignment guidelines, the PBA will also be assessed according to the professional standards using the following rubric:

**Teacher Inquiry in Practice**

*Assignment rubric*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>Beginning (Does not meet standards)  1</b>	<b>Developing (Meets standards)  2</b>	<b>Accomplished (Exceeds standards)  3</b>	<b>Exemplary (Exceeds standards)  4</b>
<b>Imagination and Creativity (GMU I, TC II)</b>	Beginning to take risks beyond what is familiar	Generates multiple possibilities before attempting to solve problems creatively	Creative problem-solving technique includes multiple possibilities, research, divergent and convergent thinking, and tenacity	Metacognitive and innovative thinking and practice derived from creative problem solving that sparks more questions, possibilities, and creativity for self and students. Overcomes social and material obstacles
<b>Theorizing/Praxis (GMU I, TC II, NBPTS 3)</b>	Beginning to question own thinking about pedagogy <i>or</i> practice	Questions own thinking about pedagogy <i>and</i> practice	Consistently questions own thinking about pedagogy and practice w/ students & families, seeks research texts & studies, and applies theories to shape practice	Metacognitively synthesizes own and others' theories, hypotheses, and research and connects them to practice and uses practice to test theory

<p><b>Content Depth</b> (GMU III, TC II, NBPTS 2, NETS-T 1,2,3,4,5)</p>	<p>Demonstrates uneven skill and knowledge about the disciplines and practices that you present</p>	<p>Demonstrates skill and knowledge about the trends, theories, <i>or</i> disciplinary practices in education</p>	<p>Demonstrates skill and knowledge about the trends, controversies, theories, <i>and</i> disciplinary practices in teaching and effectively applies skills and knowledge to create critical, imaginative, and creative thinking for all students.</p>	<p>Demonstrates critical metacognition about skill and knowledge on the trends, trends, theories, and disciplinary practices in teaching and learning and effectively applies skills and knowledge to create critical, imaginative, creative, and relevant multicultural curricula for all students.</p>
<p><b>Research skills and impact on practice</b> (GMU II, TC 1, NBPTS 4)</p>	<p>Demonstrates minimal understanding of the research process and potential impact on practice.</p>	<p>Demonstrates clear understanding of the research process and potential impact on practice.</p>	<p>Demonstrates clear understanding of the research process and potential impact on practice; demonstrates imaginative, creative, and critical thought about some aspect of the research process.</p>	<p>Demonstrates clear understanding of the research process and potential impact on practice; demonstrates imaginative, creative, and critical thought in all aspects of the research process.</p>
<p><b>Literature Review</b></p>	<p>No literature review included</p>	<p>At least 5 relevant sources are reviewed; however there is little synthesis of information from the sources</p>	<p>At least 7 relevant sources are reviewed and there is adequate synthesis of information from the sources</p>	<p>More than 7 relevant sources are reviewed and there is a sophisticated synthesis of information from the sources with strong connections to their own research project</p>
<p><b>Elements of the Research Report</b></p>	<p>Fails to address all required elements of the</p>	<p>Minimally addresses all elements of the research report</p>	<p>Adequately addresses all elements of the research report</p>	<p>Thoughtfully addresses all elements of the research report</p>

	research report			
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Comments

George Mason University Diversity Statement

George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.

An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

The reflection of Mason’s commitment to diversity and inclusion goes beyond policies and procedures to focus on behavior at the individual, group and organizational level. The implementation of this commitment to diversity and inclusion is found in all settings, including individual work units and groups, student organizations and groups, and classroom settings; it is also found with the delivery of services and activities, including, but not limited to, curriculum, teaching, events, advising, research, service, and community outreach.

Acknowledging that the attainment of diversity and inclusion are dynamic and continuous processes, and that the larger societal setting has an evolving socio-cultural understanding of diversity and inclusion, Mason seeks to continuously improve its environment. To this end, the University promotes continuous monitoring and self-assessment regarding diversity. The aim is to incorporate diversity and inclusion within the philosophies and actions of the individual, group and organization, and to make improvements as needed.