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

EDCI 777-001--CRN 14481--**Syllabus** – Research to Practice

3 Credits, Spring 2014
Face-to- Face---Thursdays, 7:20 – 10:00 pm; Thompson Hall 2020, Fairfax campus
Online: Thursday, April 03; 7:20 – 10:00 pm, synchronous Blackboard discussion; no meeting on campus

PROFESSOR(S):

Name: Elavie Ndura, Professor
Office hours: Wednesdays, 1:00pm-3:00pm OR by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A. Prerequisites/Corequisites

All other program courses except EDRS 590 and elective, or permission of instructor.

B. University Catalog Course Description

Provides culminating experience that synthesizes and applies essential elements of second language teaching and learning. Emphasizes teacher as change agent through critical inquiry into practice. Promotes collaboration between ESL and grade-level teachers to advance achievement of English language learners and language minority students.

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:

1. Identify the basic elements of educational research, including methods (qualitative and quantitative), questions addressed, design, data collection and analysis, validity and reliability

2. Formulate an inquiry/action research question that is relevant to their work setting

3. Design and conduct an inquiry/action research study

4. Use inquiry/action research as a foundation for professional growth, improvement of instruction, and advocacy

5. 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
    - o Commitment to the Profession
    - o Commitment to Honoring Professional Ethical Standards
    - o Commitment to Key Elements of Professional Knowledge

- Teachers College Columbia Teacher Expectations I and II
    - o Lifelong Learners
    - o Learner-Centered Educators

- NBPTS Propositions 2, 3, and 4
    - o Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students
    - o Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning
    - o 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* (5th 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/ (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.

NATURE OF 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.

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 effort.

*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 change 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

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

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 participant in on-line and face-to-face discussions. It is your responsibility to offer insights, questions, comments, and concerns form 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.

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 participation in our class.

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 February 13 (5 points) and Draft Review #2 is due March 06 (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 students will each make brief presentations of their individual research findings in class, the goal 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 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 to demonstrate the significance of your action research to the broader world.

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, March 20, 2014. Interim drafts are due April 17 (sections 1, 2, 3); April 29 (methods); and May 01 (results/findings), 2014. The final paper and Powerpoint are due on Thursday, May 08, 2014.

2. **Grading Policies / Grade Distribution**

95-100	A
90-94	A-
87-89	B+
80-86	B
75-79	C
74 and below	F

3. **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. Each written assignment must be submitted electronically in Blackboard, and in hard copy to the instructor. The electronic submission deadline for assignments is Thursday, 12noon (US eastern standard time
- 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 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.

TASKSTREAM REQUIREMENTS

Every student registered for any MME course <u>with a required performance-based assessment</u> 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/.

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE:

Date	Topic/Learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
Week 1 – Jan 23	--Introductions, course overview, syllabus, requirements --Introduction to action research and education research	None
Week 2 – Jan 30	--Understanding action research/ teacher inquiry --Deciding on an area of focus --Reading literature	Mills – Chapters 1 & 3
Week 3 – Feb 06	--Data collection techniques --Developing research questions	Mills – Chapter 4
Week 4 – Feb 13	--Validity, reliability, generalizability	--Mills- Chapter 5 --**Draft literature review #1 due**
Week 5—Feb 20	--Ethics --Naming and Examining Assumptions	--Mills – Chapter 2 --Supplemental reading given in class
Week 6 – Feb 27	--Action research plan --Data analysis and interpretation	--Mills – Chapter 6 --Participate in Bb discussion
Week 7 – Mar 06	--Developing a Research Plan, continued	--Mills- Chapter 7 --**Draft literature review #2 due**
Mar 10--16	SPRING BREAK---NO CLASS	SPRING BREAK
Week 8 – Mar 20	--Advanced Data Collection Strategies	--Mills- Chapters 8 **--Initial Research Outline and Draft Introduction Due**
Week 9 – Mar 27	--Advanced Data Analysis Strategies	Mills – Chapter 9
Week 10 – Apr 03 (Bb Discussion)	--Exploring examples of Teacher Research Projects--How Others' --Research Might Inform our Own	--Caro-Bruce et al. (all) --Participate in Bb discussion
Week 11 – Apr 10 (Research & Study Day)	Research and Study Day: Students work independently and in groups on their course assignments	--Class meeting locations will vary
Week 12 – Apr 17	--Understanding the peer review process --Peer reviews	**Draft of sections 1,2, and 3 due**
Week 13 – Apr 24	--Peer reviews --Making teacher research public	**--Draft methods description due** --In-class, small groups

		design project
Week 14 – May 01	--Quality indicators for teacher research --Action research presentations	--**Draft results/findings due** -- In-class presentations of small group design projects -- (PowerPoint presentations ?)
Week 15 – May 08	--Action research presentations --Course evaluations and feedback forms	**--Individual research project paper and Powerpoint due** -- In-class presentations of small group design projects -- (PowerPoint presentations ?)

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:_____

CRITERIA	Beginning (Does not meet standards) 1	Developing (Meets standards) 2	Accomplished (Exceeds standards) 3	Exemplary (Exceeds standards) 4
Imagination and Creativity **(GMU I, TC II)**	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
Theorizing/Praxis **(GMU I, TC II, NBPTS 3)**	Beginning to question own thinking about pedagogy *or* practice	Questions own thinking about pedagogy *and* 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

Content Depth **(GMU III, TC II, NBPTS 2, NETS-T 1,2,3,4,5)**	Demonstrates uneven skill and knowledge about the disciplines and practices that you present	Demonstrates skill and knowledge about the trends, theories, *or* disciplinary practices in education	Demonstrates skill and knowledge about the trends, controversies, theories, *and* disciplinary practices in teaching and effectively applies skills and knowledge to create critical, imaginative, and creative thinking for all students.	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.
Research skills and impact on practice **(GMU II, TC 1, NBPTS 4)**	Demonstrates minimal understanding of the research process and potential impact on practice.	Demonstrates clear understanding of the research process and potential impact on practice.	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.	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.
Literature Review	No literature review included	At least 5 relevant sources are reviewed; however there is little synthesis of information from the sources	At least 7 relevant sources are reviewed and there is adequate synthesis of information from the sources	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
Elements of the Research Report	Fails to address all required elements of RS	Minimally addresses all elements of the research report	Adequately addresses all elements of the research report	Thoughtfully addresses all elements of the research report

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.