

**George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
FAST TRAIN**

College of EDUCATION HUMAN DEVELOPMENT MASON



Promoting Learning Development Across the Lifespan

EDCI 777.6F5: RESEARCH TO PRACTICE
[CRN: 18411] –CREDIT HOURS: 3.0
SPRING 2015: JANUARY 20TH – MAY 12TH

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

- A. **Prerequisites:** All other program courses except EDRS 590 and elective, or permission of instructor.
- B. **Course Catalog 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.

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.

LEARNER OUTCOMES and OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to enable students to:

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

Mills, G.E. (2014). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher* (5th ed.). Pearson Education

RECOMMENDED TEXT

McAteer, M. (2013). *Action research in education*. Sage Publications

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)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

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. Absences and tardiness – in both campus and online sessions – will impact your grade. Two tardiness 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.

Literature Review (15 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 a literature review (2-3 pp, 600 – 900 words). 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.). 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.

Collaborative Design Project (25 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 (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 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. Please note that projects and papers submitted for credit in another course cannot also be used for a grade in this course. 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.

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.
- 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.

GRADING POLICY

At George Mason University course work is measured in terms of quantity and quality. A credit normally represents one hour per week of lecture or recitation or not fewer than two hours per week of laboratory work throughout a semester. The number of credits is a measure of quantity. The grade is a measure of quality. The university-wide system for grading graduate courses is as follows:

Grade	GRADING	Grade Points	Interpretation
A+	=100	4.00	Represents mastery of the subject through effort beyond basic requirements
A	94-99	4.00	
A-	90-93	3.67	
B+	85-89	3.33	Reflects an understanding of and the ability to apply theories and principles at a basic level
B	80-84	3.00	
C*	70-79	2.00	Denotes an unacceptable level of understanding and application of the basic elements of the course
F*	<69	0.00	

Note: "C" is not satisfactory for a licensure course

"F" does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education

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

TASKSTREAM REQUIREMENTS

The Action Research Project is a required FAST TRAIN performance-based assessment (PBA). Every candidate registered for any Curriculum and Instruction course with a required PBA is expected to submit it to TaskStream (regardless of whether the course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the PBA 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) (even if the candidate has submitted the assessment as a hard copy or via email). 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.

All assignments are due on the date indicated in the syllabus. ***Projects must be submitted to the TaskStream portal no later than 5:00pm EST on the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted*** unless there is a prior arrangement made between the candidate and the professor and only in exceptional circumstances for non-academic reasons beyond reasonable student control. Projects or papers submitted for credit in one course cannot be used for a grade in a different course, even they have been revised. It is not ethical.

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

- a. The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu> is the central resource for university policies affecting candidates, faculty, and staff in university academic affairs.
- b. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu> . All members of the university are responsible for knowing and following established policies.
- c. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code>].
- d. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- e. 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.***
- f. 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>].
- g. 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/>].
- h. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provide a wide range of services to students, faculty, and staff. Services are provided by a staff of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors. CAPS provide individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs -- experiences to enhance a

student's personal experience and academic performance. For more information please call (703) 993-2380 [See <http://caps.gmu.edu>].

- i. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- j. "Ask a Librarian"[See <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>]. CEHD Education Liaison librarian is Ms. Anne Driscoll and can be reached at adrdisco2@gmu.edu and CEHD Distance Education Liaison librarian is Ms. Tina Adams and can be reached at tadams11@gmu.edu .
- k. 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>].
- l. For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD), Graduate School of Education (GSE), please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu>].

COURSE WITHDRAWAL WITH DEAN'S APPROVAL

For graduate and non-degree students, withdrawal after the last day for dropping a course requires approval by the student's academic dean, and is permitted only for nonacademic reasons that prevent course completion (Mason Catalog). Candidates must contact their academic advisor to withdraw after the deadline. There is no guarantee that such withdrawals will be permitted.

PLAGIARISM

Avoid plagiarism, which is using an author's words without citing the author in your paper. Follow APA (6th edition) writing and citation guidelines in order to correctly cite your sources. Plagiarism is unethical and illegal and violates the GMU Honor Code. It is grounds for dismissal from the program and from GMU.

CEHD STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

CEHD candidates must abide by the following:

Academic Integrity

The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

Absences

Candidates are expected to attend **all** class periods for face to face courses and participate every week on the discussions and activities for online courses for which they registered. Students should contact the professor ahead of an absence or non-participation online. Only approved (see Mason catalog) absences will not result in a grade penalty.

Professional Behavior and Dispositions

The Virginia Department of Education and the National Council for accreditation of Teacher Education promote standards of professional competence and dispositions. Dispositions are values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and all members of the learning community. The Graduate School of Education expects students, faculty, and staff to exhibit professional dispositions through: See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> for a listing of these dispositions.

Core Values Commitment

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

PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE

Class	Topic/ learning Experiences	Readings and Assignments
Week 1	Introductions, course overview, syllabus, requirements Introduction to action research and education research	None
Week 2	Introduction to library and databases search Preparing for research and lit review	Study the Databases and Infoguides
Week 3	Understanding action research and teacher inquiry Deciding on an area of focus Reading literature	Mills – Chapters 1 and 3
Week 4	Data collection techniques Developing research questions	Mills – Chapter 4
Week 5	Validity, reliability, generalizability	Mills – Chapter 5
Week 6	Ethics Naming and Examining Assumptions	Mills – Chapter 2
Week 7	Action research plan Data analysis and interpretation	Mills – Chapter 6
Week 8	Developing a research plan	Mills – Chapter 7
Week 9	Advanced data analysis strategies	Mills – Chapter 8

Week 10	Exploring examples of teacher research projects How others' research might inform your own	Mills – Chapter 9
Week 11	Research and study day: students work in groups	Research and Study
Week 12	Understanding the peer review process Peer reviews	Draft of Action Research
Week 13	Making teacher research public	Power Point Presentations
Week 14	Quality indicators for teacher research	Power Point Presentations
Week 15	Action research – wrap up Course evaluations	Power Point Presentations

EDCI 777 ASSIGNMENT EVALUATION RUBRICS

Attendance and Participation Evaluation Rubric

Class Participation	Approaches the Standards 1	Meets the Standards 2	Exceeds the Standards 3
<i>Criteria:</i> <hr/>			
ATTENDANCE	One unexcused absence. Online work is usually late.	Attends every class session, usually on time, or arranges with the instructor prior to an excused absence or tardy. Some online work is late.	Attends every class session on time or arranges with the instructor prior to an excused absence or tardy. Online work is prepared on time.
PREPARATION OF READINGS	Prepared some of the time for thoughtful contribution to class.	Prepared most of the time for thoughtful contribution to class	Always prepared for thoughtful contributions to class discussions.
PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES, DISCUSSIONS, PROJECTS	Minimal participation in discussions, activities, and projects.	Always participates in discussion, activities, and projects.	Is actively engaged in all aspects of class discussion, in both small and whole class venues, in all activities and projects.
HOMEWORK PROJECTS	Usually prepared with assignments or group work.	Always prepared with assignments or group work.	Always prepared with assignments and assumes active and engaged role in all group work.
BLACKBOARD ASSIGNMENTS	Limited contribution to the quality of discussion. Provides limited references to other research, gives some examples, and sometimes evokes follow-up responses from other students. Does not post all assignments required on time.	Enhances quality of discussion. References other research, gives examples, and evokes follow-up responses from other students. Posts all assignments and work required on time.	Demonstrates thoughtful contributions to discussions, citing readings; substantially enhances quality of discussion through meaningful responses to posted strands (e.g., suggests new perspectives on issues, asks questions that help further discussion).

Teacher Inquiry in Practice- Rubric

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 <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
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	Demonstrates critical metacognition about skill and knowledge on the trends, trends, theories, and disciplinary practices in teaching and learning and effectively

			and knowledge to create critical, imaginative, and creative thinking for all students.	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

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.