

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHING PROGRAM
EDUC 655 DL1
Teacher Research Methods
3 Credits, Spring 2017**

PROFESSORS:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A. Prerequisites

Admission into the MEd Curriculum and Instruction concentration in Transformative Teaching program; completion of the EDUC 651 Critical Theories and Pedagogies course and the EDUC 653 Technology and Learning course.

B. University Catalog Course Description

Introduces teacher research methods and situates them in relation to other research approaches. Emphasizes the understanding and use of various research methods as innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

C. Expanded Course Description

Not Applicable

DELIVERY METHOD:

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using both synchronous and asynchronous formats via Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available by January 18.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox is required (note: Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard).
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.

- Students will need a headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - Windows Media Player: <https://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/downloads/windows-media-player/>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

EXPECTATIONS:

- **Course Participation:** Active and consistent participation in the course as described in the individual course syllabus is extremely important for online courses. Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which include viewing of all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions. The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Online courses will, at a minimum, have session requirements for student participation that can be documented by any or all of the following methods:
 - Submission/completion of assignments as specified by the professors
 - Communication with the professors
 - Active, meaningful, and respectful communication with peers

Expect to log in to this course **at least 4 times a session** to read announcements, participate in the discussions, and work on course materials. Students must also regularly check their GMU email for communications from the instructors. Remember, this course is **not** self-paced. There are **specific deadlines** and **due dates** listed in the **CLASS SCHEDULE** section of this syllabus to which you are expected to adhere. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- **Written Assignments:** All written assignments will be evaluated for content and presentation. The American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition (APA) style guide should be followed for formal written projects and reports. All written work, unless otherwise noted, must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. (Use spell check!) If you are not confident in your ability to catch errors, have another person proofread your work. When in doubt, 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/>. You may want to consult the Writing Center for additional writing support. It is expected that you 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.

- **Sessions:** Because our online courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our session will generally **start** on a Wednesday and **finish** on a Tuesday (whether sessions are one or more weeks in duration). Synchronous meetings will be arranged as needed.
- **Technical Competence:** Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students are expected to seek assistance if they are struggling with technical components of the course.
- **Technical Issues:** Students should expect that they could experience some technical difficulties at some point in the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly.
- **Mentoring/Advising:** If you would like to schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues, and you are unable to come to the Mason campus, we can meet via telephone or web conference. Send an email to your instructors to schedule your one-on-one session and include your preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
- **Netiquette:** Our goal is to be **collaborative**, not combative. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be misconstrued. We suggest that you always re-read your responses carefully before you post them to encourage others from taking them as personal attacks. **Be positive in your approach to others and diplomatic with your words.** We will do the same. Remember, you are not competing with each other but sharing information and learning from one another as well as from the instructors.

LEARNER OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to enable students to:

1. Learn how to critically examine classroom practices to understand how to improve them;
2. Understand the framework of qualitative research and situates it in relation to other methods used in classrooms;
3. Participate in the hermeneutic cycle of questioning, acting, revisiting, and re-questioning;
4. Explore the known and unknown themes and outcomes of systematic research; and
5. Analyze multiple sources of data and ground it in practice to engage in a transformative exercise geared to improving teaching and classroom practices.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS:

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 II and IV
 - Commitment to Honoring Professional Ethical Standards
 - Commitment to Being a Member of a Learning Community
- Teachers College Columbia Teacher Expectations I and IV
 - Lifelong Learners
 - Advocates of Social Justice and Diversity
- NBPTS Propositions 1 and 4

- Teachers are Committed to Students and Their Learning
- Teachers Think Systematically about Their Practice and Learn from Experience

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Hinchey, P. (2008). *Action research*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Primer.

Booth, W., Colomb, G., and Williams, J. (1995). *The craft of research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (selected chapters)

Hubbard, R. and Power, B. (1993). *The art of classroom inquiry*. New Hampshire: Heinemann. (selected chapters)

Dana, N.F., and Yendol-Hoppey, D. (2003). *The reflective educator’s guide to classroom research: Learning to teach and teaching to learn through practitioner inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. (selected chapters)

*Please Note: Additional articles, chapters, PowerPoint presentations, and media will be posted on Blackboard as needed.

**You should also be doing some background reading on your chosen research topic.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS (aligned with outcomes/objectives)

1. Assignment descriptions

- Session Participation (Assesses objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- The First Year Action Research Project – PBA (Assesses objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)

2. Assignment weighting

Session Participation	Session 1	10 points
	Session 4	15 points
	Session 5	15 points
	The First Year Action Research Project	

3. Grading policy: Grade distribution

95-100	A
90-94	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
75-79	C
74 and below	F

4. Selected performance-based assessment

The First Year Action Research Project. We will be using the Blackboard space (Reflective Journals, Discussions & Collaborate sessions) to help you articulate and clarify your thinking and to share your research efforts with your peers. All of these postings can be used for the development of your final research paper. All of these efforts are ways to document your research process. The process includes reflecting on the topic/issue that led to your research question, strategies you have tried in your classroom, your data collection processes, and your analysis of the data. Detailed guidelines will be distributed later.

TK20 PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT SUBMISSION REQUIREMENT

Every student registered for any Transformative Teaching program course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, The First Year Action Research Project, to Tk20 through Blackboard (regardless of whether the student is taking the course as an elective, a onetime course or as part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in Tk20 through Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to Tk20 (through Blackboard) will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required Tk20 submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

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

CORE VALUES COMMITMENT

The College of Education and 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/>.

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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 George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/>.
- The Writing Center 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/>).
- The 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 Student Support & Advocacy Center staff helps students develop and maintain healthy lifestyles through confidential one-on-one support as well as through interactive programs and resources. Some of the topics they address are healthy relationships, stress management, nutrition, sexual assault, drug and alcohol use, and sexual health (see <http://ssac.gmu.edu/>). Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone at 703-993-3686. Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to <http://ssac.gmu.edu/make-a-referral/>.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/>.

EDUC 655/657 Class Schedule

(The two courses are integrated for the spring semester)

Sessions	Topics & Major Assignments
Session 1 (2 weeks) Dates: Jan. 25 – Feb. 7	Topics: Developing a research question; Deliberative democratic practices Due Feb. 7: Reflective Journal Assignment #1
Session 2 (2 weeks) Dates: Feb. 8 – 21	Topics: Data collection Due Feb. 21: Reflective Journal Assignment #2
Session 3 (2 weeks) Dates: Feb. 22 – Mar. 7	Topics: Data collection Due March 7: Synchronous Group Dialogue #1 and Synthesis
Session 4 (3 weeks) Dates: Mar. 8 – 28 (includes spring break)	Topics: Data collection and data analysis Due March 21: Draft of the first 4 sections of your Teacher Research report
Session 5 (3 weeks) Dates: Mar. 29 – Apr. 18	Topics: Data collection and data analysis Due April 11: Synchronous Group Dialogue #2 & Synthesis: Due April 18: Reflective Journal Assignment #3
Session 6 (2 weeks) Dates: April 19 – May 2	Topics: Data collection and data analysis Due April 25: Equity Audit Action Project
Session 7 (1 week) Dates: May 3 – May 9	Topics: Equity Audit Action Projects; Teacher Research Projects Due May 9: Equity Audit post-survey Due May 9: Teacher research project

Note: Faculty reserve the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC:

The PBA will be assessed according to the professional standards and the specific assignment guidelines using the following rubric:

Teacher Research Methods

CRITERIA	Beginning (Does not meet standards) 1	Developing (Meets standards) 2	Accomplished (Exceeds standards) 3	Exemplary (Exceeds standards) 4
Multiple Perspectives (GMU V, TC IV, NBPTS 1)	Budding understanding of how own perspective affects teaching and relationships with children, families, pedagogy, and colleagues	Understands own perspective and how it affects teaching and relationships with children, families, pedagogy, and colleagues	Understands how own perspective affects teaching and relationships with children, families, pedagogy, and colleagues. Respects difference and avoids deficit thinking. Distinguishes between assumptions and facts	Metacognitively understands the origins of own perspective, questions self about perspectives, actively seeks understanding of others' cultural knowledge and views, respects difference. Avoids deficit thinking. Distinguishes between assumptions and facts
Understanding of multiple research methods and relation to practice (GMU II, TC 1, NBPTS 4)	Does not have an understanding of research methods and relations to practice.	Understands how research methods are used but does not relate to practice.	Understands how research methods are used and relates it to practice.	Has a sophisticated understanding of the complexities of research methods and their relations to practice.
Data Collection	No data were collected	Notes were taken on observations and/or conversations with students and parents.	Rich notes were taken on observations and conversations with students and parents.	Detailed descriptive and analytic notes were taken on observations and conversations with students and parents.
Data Analysis	Data were not analyzed	Observations and/or conversations were minimally analyzed although	Observations and conversations were systematically analyzed and assumptions were examined.	Observations and conversations were analyzed in a sophisticated way: multiple interpretations were used, assumptions were

		assumptions were left unexamined.		carefully examined, and data were triangulated
Claims and Conclusions	There were no claims or the claims made were not supported by the data	Claims were minimally supported by the data	Claims were adequately supported by the data	Claims were supported not only by the data, but by existing literature and theories.