EDUC 626.601: Inquiry Into Action – IB Teachers, Learners and Schools
Spring 2011 Iteration.

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Course Days: Materials will be posted, updated, and the course leader will be available online, Thursdays, 5.00 – 7.30, from January 27 – May 9, 2011 (equivalent to 14 class modules)
Location: Online

Course Description:

This course explores and utilizes the action research and qualitative research process to help educational practitioners plan and complete an action research study related to IB learners, teachers or schools. Furthermore, the course examines the social, cultural and ethical issues of conducting research with students.

Prerequisites: Admission to GSE, enrollment in FASTTRAIN IB certificate program and completion of EDUC 621: Teaching and Learning in the International Baccalaureate Programs or permission of instructor.

Nature of Course Delivery:

The course will be taught online. Colleagues will engage, virtually, in large group, small group, pair work and individual instructional strategies will be used that are based on the IB philosophy of concept driven inquiry wherever possible. Weekly, posted, online learning tasks and assignments, live chats, discussion board postings and building a learning community will be primary features of the course.

Standards:

National Board of Professional Teaching Standards

Proposition 1: Teachers are committed to students and their learning.
Proposition 2: Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects.
Proposition 3: Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.
Proposition 4: Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.
Proposition 5: Teachers are members of learning communities

ASTL 6: Teachers attend to the needs of culturally, linguistically and cognitively diverse learners.
ASTL 7: Teachers are change agents, teacher leaders, and partners with colleagues and families.

Area of Inquiry 4: Professional Learning

n. What is reflective practice and how does it support Program implementation and enhance practice?
n. How are current standards and practices pertaining to the Program implemented?
n. What are current innovations and ideas in the area of international education and how can these be applied to enhance the IB program?
n. What elements of the program authorization, evaluation and curriculum review process are implemented and how do these processes enhance IB programs?
o. What is the role of collaborative working practice in supporting the Program learning outcomes?
o. What are the connections between Programs, vertical and horizontal planning that reinforce learner outcomes?
p. In what ways does IB promote communities of practice?
p.In what ways does the use of the ITC support building communities of practice?
p.In what ways can we engage across regional and international boundaries to collaborate on IB research initiatives?
p. In what ways can we share our findings and experiences to enhance the professional expertise of IB teachers, students and communities?

Technology (ISTE):

IV. Teachers use technology to enhance their productivity and professional practice

Learner Outcomes:

This course is designed to enable students to:

1. evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of research studies within various paradigms, including action research, using measures of rigor;
2. propose and complete an action research project that includes an overview, contextual statement, review of the literature, methodology, data analysis, conclusions, reflections and relationship to practice;
3. make explicit links between theory and practice in their own action research;
4. examine ethical considerations when conducting research with children including their own project;
5. explain the critical importance of considering multiple perspectives using different approaches to inquiry; and,
6. demonstrate leadership in conducting class discussions and presenting their action research projects to others.

Standards:

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Outcomes	NBPTS/ASTL	IB	Technology
1	4	N,O,P	
2	4	N,O,P	IV. B
3	1 , 4	N,O,P	IV. B
4	5	N,O,P	V. D
5	4 , 5	N,O,P	
6	5 , 6	N,O,P	

Required Text:

Hendricks, C. (2005). *Improving schools through action research : A comprehensive guide for educators*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Related Text (s):

Graue, M. E. and D. Walsh (1998). Studying Children In Context: Theories, Methods and Ethics. New York: SAGE.

Mills, G. (2000/2003). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher*. Upper Saddle River, NJ.: Merrill/Prentice-Hall.

Samaras, A. and A. Freese (2006). Self-Study of Teaching Practices. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Course Requirements:

A. Discussion (10%): Discussions will be assessed through weekly online discussions or forum postings, informed participation in class discussions, "critical friend" analysis of action research components, case studies and review of readings. All discussions will be held using online communication tools or on Blackboard and the grade will be based on participation.

B. Readings/Journal Entries (10%): Each student will keep a critical reading log of the assigned chapters. In each entry the student will *briefly* summarize the chapter, and reflect on salient points in regard to class discussion, other readings and their action research project. Each entry should address the following points, "Here's what, So what, Now what" or similar (All 10 entries required for maximum 10 points, minimum 5 entries required for 5 points including quality, depth of analysis, and mechanics.) Reflections will be posted and responded to on Blackboard at least weekly.

C. Action Research Study: Three components comprise the final grade for the Action Research Project.

1. *Drafts of Action Research Proposal (20%s):* A draft of each section of the action research study will be available for class discussion on the specified date and a copy of the section turned into the instructor for review:

   > 20 points = 6 of 6 of drafts completed for thoughtful class discussion and critique
   > 15 points = 4 of 6 of drafts completed for thoughtful discussion and critique.
   > 10 points = 3 of 6 drafts completed for thoughtful discussion and critique.
   > 5 points = 1-2 of 6 drafts completed for thoughtful discussion and critique.

2. *Presentation of Action Research (25%) (Performance Based Assessment):* Each student will present his/her Action Research to the class and outside guests. Each presentation will consist of the following elements: Introduction, Research Questions, Methodology, Findings, and Implications for Practice. Each presenter will provide an executive summary and a brief list of important resources. Following the presentation the presenter will engage in a Question/Answer session with the audience. The presentations will be evaluated on: clarity, understanding of the process of action research, articulation of the implications for practice, communication skills, and use of technology.

3. *Final Action Research Paper (35%)*: Each student will write a report which includes the following sections: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Analysis (with accompanying samples/examples), Findings, Implications for Practice, and Reflections. (Additional information will be provided). All papers must follow APA, 5th edition, format.

Assignment	Percent of Final Grade	Outcomes Addressed
Discussion/Class Participation	10	1, 3, 4
Readings and Journal Entries	10	1, 3, 4
Drafts of AR	20	3, 4
Presentation of AR*	25	5, 6
Final AR Paper	35	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

*Designated Performance Based Assessment

Grading Scale:

100 = A+,
97-94 = A,
90-93 = A-,
85-59 = B+,
80-84 = B,
70-79 = C, (not accepted for Level I or II award recommendation)
below 70 = F, Does not meet course requirements

Technology Resources:

All students are required to have access to a computer with Internet access and a current GMU email account.

Relevant Websites:

All students will be enrolled in the online Curriculum Center through the International Baccalaureate Organization.

All students will have online copy of the complete IB Teacher Award Standards, Level 1.

International Baccalaureate Organization, http://www.ibo.org/

Practitioner Research as Staff Development, http://www.aelweb.vcu.edu

CEHD Course Expectations

The College of Education and Human Development expects that all students abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions (see http://www.gse.gmu.edu for a list of these dispositions).
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code (see http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full Honor Code).
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see http://mail.gmu.edu).
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester (see www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703.993.2474 to access the DRC).

Online Participation/Attendance Policy

Students are expected to participate in *all* online discussions and attend *all* classes of courses for which they register. Online and class participation is important not only to the individual student, but to the class as whole. Online and class participation is a factor in grading; instructors may use class absence, absence of postings, tardiness in posting or attendance, or cursory postings as de facto evidence of nonparticipation and as a result lower the grade as stated in the course syllabus.

Course Outline

Class	Topic/Questions	Readings and Assignments

1
Jan 27, 2011
	Action Research
	   ***Pre-assessment**
	   ***What is Action research**
	   ***Reflective practice**
	
	Proposal Discussions
		Hendricks, Ch. 1, 2
		
		Mills, Ch. 1

2	**What are the goals and purposes of action-research?** ***Here's what-*So what-*Now what?**	
3	**Casting a Question** **Collecting Data** **Ethical Issues**	**Hendricks, Ch. 4, 5** **Mills, Ch. 2, 3, 4**
4	**Reconnaissance** **Revisit research questions** **Revisit data collection**	**Hendricks, Ch. 3** **Mills, Ch. 6**
5	**Data Analysis**	**Hendricks, Ch. 6, 7** **Mills, Ch. 5**
6	**AR proposal**	**Due: AR Proposal** **Mid-point feedback**
7	**Section #1: Introduction** **Discussion/Peer Reviews**	**Due: Draft #1 Introduction for peer review**
8	**Section #2: Reconnaissance/Lit Review** **Discussion/Peer Reviews**	**Due: Draft #2 for peer review** **Due: Draft #1 for instructor review**
9	**Section 3: Methodology** **Discussion/Peer Reviews**	**Due: Draft #3 for peer review** **Due: Draft #2 for instructor review**
10	**Section 4: Analysis/Findings** **Discussion/Peer Reviews**	**Due: Draft #4 for peer review** **Due: Draft #3 for instructor review**
11	**Sections 5 & 6: Conclusions, Implications for Practice, Reflections** **Discussion/Peer Review**	**Due: Draft #5 & #6 for peer review** **Due: Draft #4 for instructor review**
12	**Conclusions that matter**	**Due: Drafts #5 & #6 for instructor review**
13	**Presenting our research**	**Due: Executive summaries of AR**
14 May 9, 2011	**Presenting our research**	**Due: Final paper** **Post course assessments**

EDUC 625: Rubric for Action Research Presentation

Elements	Limited (1-2)	Good(3)	Very Good(4)	Excellent (5)
Introduction	Makes the presentation without stating the question or its importance	Describes the question studied however supporting information is not strong	Describes the question studied and provides reason for its importance	Clearly describes the question and provides strong reasons for its importance
Reconnaissance	Little information is shared about current research or studies reviewed	Some information is shared about current research or studies reviewed	Several examples are shared of current research, studies and/or school related information collected	Several examples are shared and connected directly to the question under study
Methods	A description of the methods used is provided however no examples are shared	A description of the methods and a few examples are shared	A clear description of the methods with examples are shared	A clear and concise description of the methods along with salient examples are shared and directly connected to the inquiry
Analysis	A brief overview of the analysis is provided	An overview of the analysis is provided with a few examples	A clear description of the analysis is provided along with examples	A clear and concise description of the analysis, along with salient examples are provided and connected directly to the inquiry
Findings/Implications	A brief understanding of the findings and implications are shared	A description of the findings and implications are shared but do not fully connect to the inquiry	A clear description of the findings and implications are share with some connection to the inquiry	A clear and concise description of the findings and implications along with specific recommendations and connections to the inquiry are shared.
Reflections	The presenter does not appear to have reflected on the study.	The presenter gives some evidence of reflection.	The presenter gives clear evidence of reflection.	The presenter gives clear and ample evidence of reflection.