

EDUC 675: "RESEARCH in SECONDARY EDUCATION"
Spring 2011

Professor: **Mary M. Williams, Ed.D.**

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:30-4:00 p.m., or by appointment using Skype or Bbrd9.1 chat

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to help beginning teachers understand and apply concepts and principles of action research in Secondary classrooms. Students will learn how to identify and use research literature and systematic evidence to improve practice. Emphasis is placed on linking research and practice to make informed instructional decisions. *Co-requisite:* M.Ed. Portfolio

Pre-requisites: Licensure and EDUC674. To be taken as the last course in the M.Ed.

COURSE OUTCOMES and OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Demonstrate understanding of basic concepts and processes used in action research by articulating its' role in professional development.
- Examine ethical considerations when conducting action research.
- Prepare a research proposal which makes explicit links between theory and practice.
- Conduct an action research project.
- Prepare an action research report [using APA format] that includes a rationale, a research question and outcomes, a review of related literature, methodology, data collection/analysis, limitations, an action plan, and future thoughts.
- Review professional strengths and weaknesses of action research through peer review.
- Demonstrate skills in the application of technology and use of resources in action research.

Objective 1. Prepare a research proposal that includes the research context, a problem statement, a research question and outcomes, and a data collection plan which makes explicit links between theory and practice. Students will brainstorm (whole class and small group), give peer feedback online, self-reflect, and post a viable plan to conduct a research study in the classroom. Students will access resources and references, and conduct a review of the literature online. The proposal will be judged on its' viability and level of practical application, given the time constraints of the semester.

Objective 2. Conduct an action research project in a local school or classroom. Students will prepare all data collection instruments to conduct the study. Prior to implementation, data collection instruments will be peer and instructor reviewed in online discussion forums. Students will be assigned in research teams that will troubleshoot and provide support as data is collected. Results will be shared online where students will provide feedback to each other on the presentation and interpretation of the data.

Objective 3. Review professional strengths and weaknesses of the action research process through peer review and self-assessment. Students will prepare and post links to a video or audio reflection on different phases of the research process. Students will maintain a weekly blog of their progress throughout the research process. Students will use the blog entries as a starting point for discussion and reflection on the research process.

Objective 4. Write an action research report [using APA format] that includes the context for the study, a research question and outcomes, a review of related literature, methodology, data collection/analysis, implications, limitations, and an action plan. Students will review example research reports from prior semesters. Students will post a draft of their report on Blackboard for peer and instructor review & feedback using the rubric used to assess the report. Students will present a summary of their report to their peers in a Poster Conference Format at the end of the semester.

Objective 5. Prepare and defend a Best Practices Showcase of artifacts/reflections related to student learning and effective teaching, with reflections that indicate how the artifacts demonstrate mastery of the INTASC standards and reflect on your growth & professional development throughout the program. A rubric will be used to assess the Best Practices Showcase (see the Best Practices Showcase Rubrics online). Presentations of the Best Practices Showcase will be conducted at the end of the semester in a conference for your peers, local educators, and professors in the CEHD.

RELATIONSHIP TO PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

At the end of this course students will demonstrate mastery of the teaching standards, as outlined by INTASC in their Best Practices Showcase.

INTASC: Interstate New Teacher Assistance and Support Consortium

<http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/corestrd.pdf>

TEXTs, Materials & Technology* [RECOMMENDED]

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual* (6th Ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Mills, G. (2011). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher* (4th Ed.). NJ: Pearson Merrill/Prentice Hall.

GMU email, Internet access, <http://bb-gmu.blackboard.com>

A standard size POSTER [minimum ~2feet x 3feet]

Articles/handouts will be posted online at the course website <http://bb-gmu.blackboard.com>

***Technology – see separate guidelines for technology requirements and recommendations.**

TEACHING/LEARNING METHOD

This semester the course is more than 50% online and is considered a Distance Education (DE) course. This course is student-centered and will be conducted using a project-based approach. Teachers' research questions and methodology will be the focus of the course and will drive readings, classroom discussions, peer review activities, reflections, and the action research project. The purpose of the discussions and peer review sessions will be to support each action research project and provide opportunities to learn about and analyze methods and techniques of action research. Teachers will have the opportunity to construct knowledge and critically reflect on the research process as they complete the AR Proposal and Report, and prepare their Best Practices Showcase for graduation.

OUT-OF-CLASS SESSIONS

Many class sessions will be held out-of-class [online]. Online classes are considered regular instructional time and the assignments given are the equivalent of a full in-class session. The online classes involve research, use of professional web sites, discussions [during a specified time frame], peer review, email with the instructor and research teammates, readings, writing reflections/blogs, video/audio updates on the action research process, and other assignments. GMU's BlackBoard course framework will be used regularly throughout the course. Online course participation will take place at: <http://bb-gmu.blackboard.com>

*Access to the Internet to search for resources, lesson/unit plans, and to engage in online course related activity is required at least 3x a week.

**Your GMU email address is required for communication with the course instructor – your GMU email account must be active by the first week of class.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- 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/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- 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.

- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Campus Resources

- 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/>].
- 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/>].

GSE Secondary Education Program Resources:

- For additional information about the Secondary Education Program in the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/gsemasters/>]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EVALUATION

Title each assignment with the name of the project/assignment and your initials (e.g., Action Research Question Adam Smith: **(ARQuestionAS)** or (Weekly Update for 3/17 Adam Smith: **WU0317AS)**).

Each student will be evaluated on the following:

- a) **Action Research Project and Report (Performance Based Assessment): [75%]**
 - a) **Action Research Proposal:** The **AR Proposal** will describe the action research project including the following elements: Context, Area of Focus, Research Question, Outcomes, and Methodology, including data collection instruments and analysis of data. All research projects must include a rationale for triangulation of data collection instruments or sources. The proposal must be reviewed by your research team and approved by the course instructor. (see the **Action Research Proposal & Work Agreement** online)
 - b) **Research Updates:**
 - a. Once the AR Proposal is approved, a **weekly BLOG update** must be submitted each Wednesday during class time. Each update will clarify progress made on the Action Research study since the last report.
 - b. Once the AR Proposal is approved, a **bi-weekly video/audio critique** (<5 minutes) of the research process must be submitted during class time.
 - c) **Action Research Report:** Each candidate will write a report that includes the following sections: Cover Page, Abstract, Introduction, Area of Focus, Research Question, Review of Literature, Methodology [data collection including a rationale for triangulation, analysis of findings including interpretation and limitations], an Action Plan, Final Thoughts, References, and Appendices. The action research report must adhere to APA format. (see the **Action Research Report Rubric** online)

b) Participation, Peer & Self Review, and Presentation: [25%]

- a. **Participation** is defined as full attendance, active participation in class and online discussions, and self and peer review activities.
- b. Demonstration of positive and collaborative dispositions towards colleagues during **peer reviews of AR questions, data collection instruments, review of the literature, and draft AR reports**; along with a willingness to give and receive constructive criticism.
- c. Each student will present a summary of their action research report in the form of a **‘poster presentation’**. The presentation must include: 1. the AR question, 2. the data triangulation, 3. major findings, 4. Connections to the Literature, and 5. action plan.

SOCIAL
JUSTICE

POSTNOTE: The Best Practices Showcase is NOT included as part of your grade for EDUC675. However, you MUST successfully complete your Best Practices Showcase and present it to the Secondary Program Faculty. Your GRADE for EDUC675 will be posted only upon successful completion of the Best Practices Showcase requirements.

RESEARCH-BASED
PRACTICE

CORE
VALUES

INNOVATION

ETHICAL
LEADERSHIP

COLLABORATION

EDUC 675 “Research in Secondary Education”

Spring 2011 Class Agenda [version 1.0*]

<u>DATE</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Reading / Assignments</u>
01/26	Introductory Activities, Standards, Action Research Concept & Processes, Course Overview	M 1 Standards/Problem ID
02/02	Problem Statement, Research Question Related Research: AR Review of Literature (RoL)	M 2 Research / Resources
02/09	AR Proposal: Content & Format Content/Teaching Standards, RoL Action Research Plan Mapping	M 3, 4, appB AR Proposal [draft in-class]
02/16	Library Research: AR Review of Literature (RoL) Peer Review: References Individual Consultation (email to arrange a time)	M 1, 2, 3 References / Annotations
02/23	Proposal Review Individual Consultation (email to arrange a time)	AR Proposal (draft) [posted for feedback]
03/02	Data Collection: Instruments peer review Triangulation, Methodology Individual Consultation (email to arrange a time)	M 6, 7, appA Data Col Instruments Update
03/09	Data Analysis, Interpretation, Action Plan, APA Style Review of Procedures: Final report & presentation	M 3, 6 AR Proposal [final] Update
03/16	Spring BREAK	
03/23	Ethics, Bias, Limitations Data Collection & Analysis Individual Consultation (email to arrange a time)	M 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 Review of Literature Update / Critique
03/30	**SEED Program- Best Practices Showcase Data Analysis & Interpretation Individual Consultation (email to arrange a time)	Artifact/Reflection [draft] M 8 Update
04/06	Action Plan & AR Report Writing Individual Consultation (email to arrange a time)	M 8 TITLE of AR Report Update / Critique
04/13	Action Plan & AR Report Writing Integrate Standards / Apply APA Format / Prepare Report	M 8, M App

04/20 'AR Poster Presentation'
Research Reflection / Next Steps **AR Poster Presentation**
Update / Critique

04/27 Reflection on Learning and Teaching
AR Report (draft for peer review) **AR report [draft]**
Reflection***

05/02 **MONDAY **SEED Program- Best Practices Showcase**
7:20-10pm Location: JC Dewberry Hall

05/11 Action Research Report [final] AR Report

05/11/11 at 11pm is the deadline to turn in any and all course assignments for consideration to be included in this semester's grade.

*This class agenda (**version 1.0**) is TENTATIVE... Check our website regularly for any new version:
<http://bb-gmu.blackboard.com>

Note: Before coming to class **check the course website and your email** for ANY notice regarding a change in the class schedule.

****SEED Program – The Best Practices Showcase Presentation is mandatory for the M.Ed. degree. The Best Practices Showcase grade is P/F and has NO impact on the grade for EDUC675. However, your grade for EDUC675 will not be released until the Best Practices Showcase receives a grade of 'P'.**