

EDCI 777: From Research to Practice
Spring 2011 (Version 1)
Instructor: Dr. Kavita Mittapalli (Dr. M)
Class meeting: Friday, 4.30 - 7.10pm
Room number: TBA

Office Hours: Before and after class meetings, via email (anytime)
Email: kmittapalli@gmail.com or kmittapa@gmu.edu

SYLLABUS AND ASSIGNMENTS ARE SUBJECT TO MINOR CHANGES BASED ON CLASS AND STUDENT NEEDS. PRIOR NOTICE OF ANY CHANGE/S WILL BE GIVEN TO STUDENTS.

Short Faculty Bio: Dr. Kavita Mittapalli is an instructor in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) at George Mason University. She received her Ph.D. in Research Methodology (Education) from George Mason University in May 2008. Dr. Mittapalli teaches research methods and conducts social science research and program evaluation for agencies/organizations and several school districts in the country. She presents at various conferences and publishes in peer-reviewed journals. In 2009, she published a book, *What Makes Public School Teachers Stay, Leave or become Non-teachers*. This work was based on her dissertation.

Course Description: This course utilizes the action research process to help educational practitioners plan and complete an action research project related to their current teaching assignment. Furthermore, the course examines the social, cultural, and ethical issues of conducting research with children.

Course Goals: Students will:

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: Learning outcomes are referenced to the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards Core Propositions and the International Education Technology Standards for teachers.

Learning Outcomes	NBPTS Core Propositions	ISTE NETS
1	4	
2	4	IV. B
3	1 and 4	IV. B

Learning Outcomes	NBPTS Core Propositions	ISTE NETS
4	5	V. D
5	4 AND 5	
6	5 AND 6	

Required Texts:

Mills, G. (2010). *Action Research: A guide for the teacher researcher (4 ed)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ. Merrill/Prentice-Hall.

Recommended:

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed, 2nd Printing)*. Washington, D.C.: Author.

Mertler, C.A., & Charles, C.M. (2011). *Introduction to educational research, (7th ed)*. Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 013701344-2

Class slides and research articles to read, and all other course related documents will be posted in different folders (under progress) on Blackboard. Access them through <https://blackboard.gmu.edu/> Details will be provided in class.

Additional readings will be either posted on Blackboard/links will be provided (see below) or distributed in class. Students are required to bring a hard copy of the article to class for discussion (unless they are distributed in class by instructor).

Article links

1. What is participatory action research
<http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/p-ywadsworth98.html>
2. UCERC resources- <http://ucerc.edu/teacherresearch/teacherresearch.html>
3. Brown University resources with additional links-
<http://www.alliance.brown.edu/pubs/voices/3qrt1999/actref.shtml>
4. Allan Feldman’s work- <http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~afeldman/ActionResearchPapers/ARpapersindex.html>

Journals on Action Research-

1. Action Research International
2. Action Research
3. Educational Action Research

Course Delivery: The delivery of EDCI 777 is through experiential learning activities to informed participation, and discussion, in-class collaborative work and mini-lectures to accomplish the course activities. Participants will also conduct an action research project in their current teaching assignment and, present their findings to the class.

Course Requirements

Attendance (10%): Attendance for the class is mandatory and comprises 10% of the grade. If the student cannot attend a class due to unavoidable circumstances/medical issues, he/she must contact the instructor as soon as feasible. In case of a medical emergency, the student must submit a medical form/documentation the following week. It is the responsibility of the student

to contact the instructor and/or fellow students to complete the class and homework assigned/missed for the week. Failure to do any of the above will affect final grade.

Discussion and Class participation (10%): informed participation in class discussions, “critical friend” analysis of action research components, case studies, and review and discussion of readings. All discussions will be held during class therefore, discussion points can only be acquired through informed participation.

Assignments

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period assigned unless otherwise stated by the instructor. Any late assignments are subject to a grade reduction penalty, one grade deducted for every day late.

Article Critiques (20%): each participant will locate TWO peer- reviewed journal research articles of interest/related to their topic and complete article critiques (critique document will be provided by instructor). Details will be provided in class.

Readings/Journal Entries (5%): each participant will keep a critical reading log of the assigned chapters. In each entry the student will *briefly* summarize the chapter, reflect on salient points in regard to class discussion, other readings and their action research project. A total of 5 entries are expected (**any 5 chapters**) throughout the semester.

Human Subject Review Board assignment (10%): specific directions will be provided in class.

OPTIONAL- Quiz (a short in class quiz may be given to students to assess their learning in the course).

Action Research Project (total- 50%): three components comprise the final grade for the Action Research Project.

1. *Components of Action Research Proposal or Outline (10%):* each section is available for discussion on the specified date and a copy of the drafted section is turned into the instructor for review and discussion.
2. *Presentation of AR (10%):* Each participant will present their Action Research to the class. Each presentation will use technology and consist of the following elements: Abstract, Introduction, Research Questions, Literature Review, Methodology, Findings and Implications for Practice. Following the presentation the participants will engage in Questions/Answer session from the audience. The presentations will be evaluated on: communication skills, clarity, use of technology, understanding of the process of action research and articulation of the implications for practice. Power point template will be provided.

Abstract
Introduction- Research Questions
Review of Literature
Method

Participants, Settings Design
Data analysis Qualitative/Quantitative
Findings
Implications for Practice
APA and Overall presentation

3. *Final Action Research Paper (25%)*: each participant will write a report which includes the following sections – Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Data Analysis (with accompanying samples/examples), Findings, Implications for Practice, and Reflections. (Additional information will be provided throughout the course). All papers must follow APA format.

Scoring Rubric for Final paper/project

Exemplary paper (22-25 points): Appropriate topic, RQs fully addressed, appropriate methods discussed, thorough, reflective, and thoughtful review of previous research. Good writing style, free of mechanical or stylistic errors, appropriate use of APA format.

Adequate paper (18-21 points): Good overall paper, lacking in one or two of the criteria for an exemplary paper. Not entirely reflective or thoughtful, or minor writing style errors may be present.

Marginal paper (14-18 points): Overall, acceptable but with one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information, but may have substantial problems with evaluation, writing style, or review of relevant literature.

Inadequate paper (1-18 points): Paper with substantial problems in important areas such as writing, evaluation of research, overall thoughtfulness. Contains little or no information of value to special education practice.

Unacceptable/no paper (0 points): Paper with no value whatsoever relative to the assignment, or no paper turned in at all. May describe a literature of no value or relevance, or that was not approved for this assignment.

Exemplary paper	Adequate paper	Marginal paper	Inadequate paper	Unacceptable/no paper
22-25	18-21	14-18	1-18	0

Format of the final paper

Your final project is short research study completed in your classroom/school applying the knowledge and skills you have acquired throughout this class. I recognize that this is probably your first attempt at such a draft. This is a learning process, and as such I do not expect it to be perfect. I do expect it to be complete, however. I will post examples in BB to show you how studies might look. Your paper should be 12-15 pages, and be organized according to the following sections with appropriate levels of headings according to APA guidelines.

Cover page (1 page)

Title

Introduction (2-3 pages)

Background
 Statement of the Problem
 Research Question(s)/Research Hypothesis (es)
 Significance/Implications of Research

Literature Review (2-3 pages)

Methodology (2 pages)

General Design of the Study
 Target Population, Sample Selection, and Site/location of study
 Data Collection Method (instruments used)

Data Analyses (2 pages)

Conclusion and Discussion (1-2 pages)

Implications
 Limitations of (your) Research

References (1-2 pages)

Appendices

Include search Matrix

Title of Article (in APA)	Abstract (you may copy and paste from the article)	Summary (in your own words)	Your notes/impressions about the article/research
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

Include Data collection instruments (survey, interview protocol, classroom observation)

Attach IRB forms

Review your draft for logical flow and coherence and revise as needed. Use the following guidelines for evaluating the literature section:

- a. Is there a paragraph describing the organization of the related literature section?
- b. Does the order of the headings and subheadings represent the relative importance of the topics and subtopics? Is the order of the headings rational?
- c. Is there a relation of the study to past and current research clearly shown in the summary paragraphs?
- d. What new answers (extension of the body of knowledge) will the proposed research provide?
- e. What is distinctive or different about the proposed research compared with previous research?
- f. What are the most relevant articles that bear on this research? Are the articles presented in a way that denotes their importance? Are some cited so many times that they lose power through repetition?
- g. Have the evaluation of these key articles been presented succinctly in terms of both procedures and interpretation of results?

Use the following guidelines for the purpose of editing and grammatical structure:

- a. Parallel Structure for items in a series.
- b. Make a point of view consistent in number and person.
- c. Maintain consistent verb tenses throughout the document.
- d. Make verbs consistent in mood and voice throughout the document.
- e. Avoid using *is when...is where...* and *is because* sentence constructions.
- f. Combine choppy sentences.
- g. When combining ideas in a sentence use, use coordination to create equal emphasis and use of subordination to create unequal emphasis.
- h. Use a variety of sentence structures.
- i. Use a variety of sentence openings.
- j. APA and Guide to the Dissertation Process form and style must be followed for capitalization, numbers, citations, and references.
- k. Write the proposal using future tense.
- l. Write the literature review in historic present tense.

Additional guidelines for revising your proposal:

- a. What is the purpose of the study? Does the study accomplish its purpose?
- b. Is the study appropriate for its intended audience? Does it take into consideration the audience's knowledge of the subject, level of interest in the subject, and possible attitude toward the subject?
- c. Do the introduction and conclusion focus clearly on the problem statement and purpose of the study?
- d. Can the reader follow the overall structure of the study?
- e. Are the sections of the study ordered effectively?
- f. Are the supportive materials persuasive? Does the review of literature support the study?
- g. Which ideas in the study need further development?
- h. Where might irrelevant material be deleted?
- i. Is each body paragraph unified, adequately developed, organized, and coherent?
- j. Are any paragraphs too long or too short?
- k. Is the study free of bias and personal opinion?

Tentative Course Schedule (Readings may be assigned by instructor)

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date due. Class slides will be posted on Blackboard just before or right after class. Please note the final project due date.

Date	Discussions/Readings	Assignments/Activities (IN PROGRESS)
January 28	Introductions Syllabus Research topic/s discussion Reading : Chapter 1 (Understanding AR) Article 1 (Action Research)	Autobiography/ Essay due before class/email to instructor Qualitative vs Quantitative Research
February 4	Text: Chapter 2 (Ethics) Locating a research article (library search)- Filling a matrix	Devising a research question IRB forms begin working
February 11 NO CLASS	Read Text: Chapter 3 (Deciding on an area of focus)	Matrix exercise (4-5 articles) due. Email instructor before 7.30pm.
February 18	Text: Chapter 4	Online quizzes Chapters 1, 3, and 4 due- email responses to instructor prior to class. Instructions will be provided.
February 25	Text: Chapter 5 Article 5 IRB practice	IRB discussion Video/s
March 4	Lab- SPSS	IRB assignment due before class.
March 11	Text: 6 Lab continues Introduction to Statistics How to use SPSS (download instructions for FREE trial to be provided by instructor) READ help documents will be posted before class on BB	Data Collection on site begins
SPRING BREAK		
March 25	Text: 8 Slides (will be posted before class)	Data collection continues/ends (Computer lab)
April 1	Text: 9 Slides (will be posted before class)	Data analyses continued Outline of paper due (computer lab)

Date	Discussions/Readings	Assignments/Activities (IN PROGRESS)
April 8	DRAFT PAPERS	Draft paper due in class- peer review (computer lab)
April 15	DRAFT PAPERS	Revisions due/Class discussion
April 22	Presentation 1 (5 students) 20 minutes each	
April 29	Presentation 2 (5 students) 20 minutes each	
May 10th (TUESDAY) by Midnight	Final Papers Due. Email.	

NOTE: This is an advanced graduate level course, therefore the quality of your work, attendance, and informed participation are expected to be of the highest caliber. Unless it is an emergency situation, no absences are excused. Should you need to miss a class it is your responsibility to inform the instructor ahead of time, turn in your assignments, collect any notes/assignments from a colleague and do your utmost to remain current in the class. Should you need special assistance because of identified learning needs please contact the instructor immediately.

Grading criteria

A+	100
A	94-99
A-	90-93
B+	85-89
B	80-84
C	70-79
	Does not meet licensure requirements or Level 1 award recommendation
F	Does not meet requirements of the Graduate School of Education

College of Education and Human Development Statement of Expectations

CHED Statement of Expectations

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

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

MASON ALERT- Register for the MASON ALERT system to be informed of emergency situations on campus by cell phone and email. Go to <http://alert.gmu.edu>

Library- All resources in George Mason University's online collection are available through the Internet. The campus librarian will provide students with links, user IDs, and passwords.

Library Resources: George Mason University's core online collection features nearly 21,000 full-text journals and 23,000 electronic books and other content covering all academic subject areas including Business & Economics, Career & General Education, Computers, Engineering & Applied Science, Humanities, Science, Medicine & Allied Health, and Social & Behavior Sciences. Many titles are directly accessible through the Online Public Access Catalog at <http://library.gmu.edu>.

Academic Policies

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism: In an effort to foster a spirit of honesty and integrity during the learning process, George Mason University requires that the submission of all course assignments represent the original work produced by that student. All sources must be documented through normal scholarly references/citations and all work must be submitted using the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition (2009)*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association (APA) format. Please refer to Appendix A in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition* for thesis and paper format. Students are encouraged to purchase this manual (required in some courses) and become familiar with its content as well as consult the George Mason University catalog for further information regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism. Assignments and final papers may be reviewed by the instructor by SafeAssign (Bb) this is software that detects plagiarism. Plagiarism is grounds for dismissal from the graduate program and FAST TRAIN.

Americans with Disabilities Act Policy

It is the policy of George Mason University to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If a student with disabilities needs accommodations, the student must notify the Director of Student Services. Procedures for documenting student disability and the development of reasonable accommodations will be provided to the student upon request.

Students will be notified by the Director of Student Services when each request for accommodation is approved or denied in writing via a designated form. To receive accommodation in class, it is the student's responsibility to present the form (at his or her discretion) to the instructor. In an effort to protect student privacy, the Department of Student Services will not discuss the accommodation needs of any student with instructors. Faculty may not make accommodations for individuals who have not been approved in this manner.