



George Mason University
College of Education & Human Development/Graduate School of Education
Secondary Education Program

EDUC 675 (Section 002), “Research in Secondary Education”/Spring 2015 (3 credits)

Key Information

Instructor: Kristien Zenkov, PhD, Associate Professor
Office hours: Mondays, 3:30-5:30; by appointment, via phone, or via Skype or Google Hangout
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Class Meetings

Tuesdays, 4:30-7:10 pm

When our class meets on campus (for eight sessions), we will gather in West 1007. We will also hold asynchronous virtual “meetings” approximately every other week throughout the semester (for seven sessions). Finally, we will have at least one round of small group conferences to help you formulate your research focus and complete your project. Note: For the first time this semester, I will divide our class in half and each group (Green or Gold) will meet face-to-face every other week. I believe these smaller group interactions will better support your abilities to complete your research projects.

Catalog Description

Pre-requisites: Licensure (or other education elective); taken as the last course in M.Ed;

Co-requisite: M.Ed. exit requirement (Action/Teacher/Practitioner Impact Presentation)

The exit requirement (the Action/Teacher/Practitioner Impact Presentation) is submitted during the semester the candidate is enrolled in EDUC 675. This course helps beginning teachers become more effective by critiquing various research paradigms, reviewing the research literature, and systematically collecting and interpreting evidence to improve practice. EDUC 675 emphasizes linking evidence of student learning to make informed instructional decisions. Specifically, this course is designed to help beginning teachers understand and enact concepts and principles of action/teacher/practitioner research in secondary classrooms. Students will learn how to identify and use research literature and systematic evidence to improve practice with a focus on students’ learning.

*Note: This course **requires** that you have access to a classroom or appropriate research site to conduct your research. If you do not have your own classroom, you will need to let me know during our first class. I will suggest alternative arrangements, but these will still require that you conduct research in a classroom setting on a teaching strategy.*

Relationships to Professional Standards

By the end of this course students will demonstrate an understanding and application of subject area standards aligned with the National Content Standards and identified by their Specialized Professional Association (SPA):

- Social studies teachers: National Council for the Social Studies, <http://www.ncss.org/>
- English teachers: National Council of Teachers of English, <http://www.ncte.org/>
- Math teachers: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, <http://www.nctm.org/>
- Science teachers: National Science Teachers Association, <http://www.nsta.org/>

Students should also have an understanding of and be able to apply the teaching and learning standards as outlined by the Interstate New Teacher Assistance and Support Consortium (INTASC):

- www.ccsso.org/Documents/2011/InTASC_Model_Core_Teaching_Standards_2011.pdf

Finally, students should be aware of the skills framework of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and the professional guidelines offered by the National Board for Teaching Standards:

- <http://www.p21.org/about-us/p21-framework>
- <http://www.nbpts.org/five-core-propositions>

CEHD Core Values Commitment

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. This course supports these values by providing students with learning experiences that necessitate collaboration; providing students opportunities to reflect on their teaching and leadership roles in classroom and school contexts; calling on students to develop and participate in innovative research-based practice; and requiring students to reflect on their pedagogies in light of social justice issues. These Core Values are aligned with course outcomes as described below. See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/> for more information.

Course Outcomes and Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to:

- 1) demonstrate an understanding of the process and components used in action/teacher/practitioner research by conducting and assessing a chosen scholarly inquiry situated in their classroom and impact on students' learning (research-based practice; innovation)
- 2) prepare a research proposal which makes explicit links between theory and practice (research-based practice)
- 3) examine ethical considerations when conducting action/teacher/practitioner research (research-based practice; social justice)
- 4) conduct action/teacher/practitioner research which includes: research question(s), research proposal; review of related literature; methods; data collection/analysis; findings; discussion of impact on students, teachers, and the education field (research-based practice)

- 5) participate in critical and collaborative inquiries to gain multiple perspectives in interpreting research and for validation and peer review of research (collaboration; ethical leadership)
- 6) demonstrate integration of national and state standards for content and pedagogy as related to their research question(s) by reflecting on their own teaching practice and its impact on students' learning (SPA standards respective to students' discipline)
- 7) demonstrate skills in the application of technology and use of resources in action/teacher/practitioner research (innovation)

Students will achieve these outcomes through the following objectives:

- 1) Prepare a research proposal that includes the research context, a problem statement, a research question and outcomes, and a data collection plan that makes explicit links between theory and practice. Students will brainstorm (in whole class and small group settings), 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.
- 2) Conduct an action/teacher/practitioner 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 and/or face-to-face discussion forums. Students will be assigned to research teams that will troubleshoot and provide support as data is collected. Results will be shared and students will provide feedback to each other on the presentation and interpretation of data.
- 3) Review professional strengths and weaknesses of the action/teacher/practitioner research process through peer review and self-assessment. Students will participate in weekly online and/or face-to-face discussions of their progress throughout the research process.
- 4) Write an action/teacher/practitioner research report (using APA format) that includes the context for the study, research question(s) 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 drafts of their complete report and its sections on Blackboard for peer and instructor review and feedback using the rubric used to assess the report. Students will present a summary of their report to their peers in brief in-class presentations and a poster session format at the end of the semester.
- 5) Work in small groups to identify one authentic, alternative, preferably contemporary media-based method through which they will share the results of their action/teacher/practitioner research findings. Each group will design and enact a presentation that moves the public understanding of group members' studies along. Groups might choose to create a collective presentation on group members' projects you might highlight one group member's project and findings. Groups might highlight the very importance of action/teacher/practitioner research or summarize the findings of group members' efforts.

Course Delivery

The primary purpose of this course is for you to learn how to conduct action/teacher/practitioner research and apply it in your classroom in order to improve your teaching and your students’ learning. Throughout the course, you will complete activities that you will later be able to insert—some almost verbatim—into your final action/teacher/practitioner research report. This course is approximately 50% face-to-face and 50% online and is considered a hybrid course. This course is student-centered and will be conducted using a project-based approach. Your research questions and methodology will be the focus of the course and will drive readings, classroom discussions, peer review activities, reflections, and the action/teacher/practitioner research project that you complete. The purpose of the discussions and peer review sessions will be to support completion of our action/teacher/practitioner research projects and provide opportunities for us to learn about and analyze methods and techniques of action/teacher/practitioner research. You will have the opportunity to construct knowledge and critically reflect on the research process as you complete the action/teacher/practitioner research proposal and report, and then prepare your “Action/Teacher/Practitioner Research Impact Presentation” for graduation.

The course will be delivered through a variety of online, face-to-face, and individualized instructional approaches. Online sessions will be conducted in asynchronous formats, but you will be expected to post your own reflections and assignments and respond to peers’ and instructors’ postings and feedback by the end of each designated class week (midnight US eastern standard time each Monday). During class meetings there will be large group, small group, and individual activities. 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, asynchronous discussions, peer review, email with the instructor and classmates, readings, writing reflections, and other assignments. GMU’s Blackboard course framework will be used regularly throughout the course. Your GMU email address is required for communication with the course instructor and must be active by the first week of class. Please inform me of any accessibility problems the first day of class.

Participants conduct independent research, as well as communicate with each other and the instructor via electronic media. In general, we will engage in four activities during our time together:

1. Mini-lectures, activities, and discussions related to research methods led by the instructor and course participants and supported by course text and selected readings
2. Discussions of the week’s readings led by the instructor and course participants
3. Class and peer review group meetings in which students concentrate on selected readings, provide feedback and support for each others’ writing and research processes, and share how they have presented their research efforts to authentic audiences
4. Individual, small group, and whole group meetings to discuss research efforts

Please note that because you have much to learn from each other, and because teaching is often a collaborative effort, you will frequently work in groups. This will give you a chance to share ideas, be exposed to a range of perspectives and experiences, and support each other as you continue to develop your teaching and researching skills.

Course Overview

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 two decades have seen a growing movement to upend those assumptions through an emphasis on the importance of action/teacher/practitioner research. Thus, the research and theory we will read and the methodologies with which we will engage are those associated with “action/teacher/practitioner research” (i.e., research conducted by teachers for professional purposes). Action/teacher/practitioner 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/teacher/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 action/teacher/practitioner research, and the efforts of other action/teacher/practitioner researchers. Our readings and discussions will help you develop your own rationale and “road map” for your project. We will dig into readings together, write often and share our writing with one another, and support each other in our research goals.

Instructor Introduction and Theoretical Framework

I believe that the best teachers know themselves as literate people in the broadest sense. I will ask you also to know yourselves as professionals with a variety of literacies, including those of photographers, visual sociologists, and community constituents. Teachers and those who work with children and youth must be resilient individuals who are willing to take risks to let school literacies matter to themselves, their students, and the broader community. I will expect you to be your best, brightest, most thoughtful, and most creative selves. I intend that this course will be one that you remember, and that you will care passionately about the work we do. I will have uncompromising professional standards for your behavior, participation, and openness. At the same time, I will do everything possible to ensure that you meet these standards. My hope is that we will experience much intellectual camaraderie, engaging discussion, and laughter as we proceed. I encourage you to take risks and celebrate the risks taken by your colleagues.

I bring the perspectives of a veteran teacher and teacher educator, as well as the points of view of a community activist and artist. I approach all educational experiences with the goal of helping students to learn to be active, creative, “real world” members of a just society. It is important for us as educators to approach our teaching with a simultaneously critical and creative perspective: when we assess current teaching practices, we also begin to develop new ones. I offer an explicit critique of schooling: as a classroom teacher with more than fifteen years experience, an active scholar, and an advocate for children and youth and schools, playing a critical role is my right and responsibility. It is my hope that you will take on this same role.

Perhaps most importantly to you, I have spent my school and university teaching career working across school and university settings with a wide range of children and youth, so I am confident that I will be able to support you in this class. Finally, much as you as university students must be concerned with your own development and others’ assessments of your class efforts, I am committed to my growth as a teacher and teacher educator. I will ask for your support in my research as I study your inquiry processes and as I consider the prospect of authoring (or co-authoring with you) a book exploring how best to help early career teachers conduct action/teacher/practitioner research. I am particularly interested in comparing efforts of members of our class who use traditional action/teacher/practitioner research methods with those who use Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) methods.

I will ask you to think of the teaching strategies we use in class and that you plan to use as research interventions in your own classroom in three categories, which are framed by an assessment-driven, "backwards" design:

- 1) "Ways Out": What is the student's "way out" of the text or activity with which you are asking them to engage? That is, what artifacts and demonstrations will the student complete to exhibit her/his comprehension of the key ideas that they are encountering? How will you assess students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes? How will students demonstrate their retention of and relationship to the material?
- 2) "Ways In": What is the student's "way in" to this text or activity? That is, how are you approaching the student's natural interests in or motivations for this assignment? Think about how you might use the student's existing "literacies" to do this. What specific strategies will you use?
- 3) "Ways Through": What are students' "ways through" this text or activity? That is, what strategies and tools are you giving students to make sense of and understand the sources you are using with this assignment? How will students translate the material into their own terms?

GMU/CEHD Policies and Resources for Students

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- 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.
- 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/>].
- 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 stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- 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/>].
- Professional Dispositions: Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times [See http://cehd.gmu.edu/assets/docs/forms/secondary_ed/sec_ed_handbook.pdf].
- Core Values Commitment: The College of Education & Human Development 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/>]

Emergency Notification

The university utilizes a communication system to reach all students, faculty, and staff with emergency information (e.g., in case of severe weather). You can be sure that you are registered with the Mason Alert system by visiting <https://alert.gmu.edu>. An emergency poster can also be found in each Mason classroom. Information about Mason emergency response plans can be found at <http://cert.gmu.edu/>.

Human Subjects Research Review Process

Any research or action/teacher/practitioner research that will be publicly disseminated must have prior

approval of the GMU Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). Action/teacher/practitioner research that is used solely for the purpose of studying pedagogical aspects may be conducted without additional permission but cannot be disseminated. Detailed information on what is involved in submitting a proposal to the Review Board is available from the following web site: <http://oria.gmu.edu/>

Required Texts and Materials

Textbooks/General Readings

- Dana, N.F. & Yendol-Hoppey, D. (2009). *The reflective educator's guide to classroom research: Learning to teach and teaching to learn through practitioner inquiry*. Corwin (2nd edition).
- Zenkov, K., Pellegrino, A., Sell, C., Biernesser, S., & McCamis, M. (in review). Picturing kids and "kids" as researchers: Preservice teachers and effective writing instruction for diverse youth and English language learners. *The New Educator*. Note: This article will be provided electronically.

English Exemplar Action/Teacher/Practitioner Papers

- Denicola, H. (2014). *Engagement, motivation, and learning with discussions: Incorporating different discussion techniques in the classroom*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Dwyer, E. (2014). *Reading techniques and popular culture*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Golobic, J. (2012). *Engage with Reading and Writing: Strategies for High School Literacy Students*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Hannon, S. (2012). *Expanding our Literacies: Reading and Writing Strategies in the Classroom*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Lima-Whitney, A. (2014). *Proofreading understanding, attitudes & practice*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Mitro, C. (2014). *Effective Strategies for Teaching Shakespeare: Getting High School Students to Connect With and Internalize the Bard*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Patterson, J. (2014). *Effects of reading interventions on reading comprehension, reading fluency, and attitudes toward reading*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Townsend, S. (2013). *ANOTHER homework assignment? Increasing homework motivation in the middle school classroom*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.

Social Studies Exemplar Action/Teacher/Practitioner Papers

- Barton, S. (2014). *Effectiveness of Informal Mentoring on Vulnerable Learners*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.

Science Exemplar Action/Teacher/Practitioner Papers

- Leathart, S. (2012). *A Slice of Pizza: The Use of Authentic Contexts in a High School Biology Class*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Polen, C. (2014). *Particle physics: An essential and engaging part of the program*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Walsleben, K. (2012). *Student-teacher relationships and their effect on student engagement and achievement*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.

Math Exemplar Action/Teacher/Practitioner Papers

- Brand, M. (2014). *Station teaching co-teaching method*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Hahne, C. (2012). *Confidence + Good Grades = Success!: Defining and Promoting Student Success in Mathematics Through the Use of Self-Monitoring and Progress Tracking*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Long, L. (2013). *Mathematical proficiency through problem-solving*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.

ESOL Exemplar Action/Teacher/Practitioner Papers

- Lancia, A. (2013). *Electronic Portfolios: 21st Century Assessment Tools for Early Childhood Learners*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- McCusker, D. (2013). *Using movement to explicitly teach vocabulary to first grade English language learners*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Peckenham, E. (2013). *"I know that I'm use water for somethink": A study of self-assessment in a third grade science classroom*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Sharp, R. (2012). *Learn with your friends: Literature circles with English Language Learners in Africa*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Stone, K. (2013). *The "art" of mother tongue inclusion: Its effect on achievement, self-esteem and identity*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Vranas, J. (2013). *Combating the "Bueller effect." A study of the effects of homogeneous ability grouping on confidence and participation*. Unpublished masters action/teacher/practitioner research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.

Additional readings available online and/or in class; we may substitute other teacher research projects for those listed above, but these will also be provided electronically and free-of-charge. You will also need access to a digital camera and a computer (with web, email, and printing privileges).

Recommended Texts

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

Note: APA guidelines are available online at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Resources

Articles and Books

- Arhar, J., Holly, M. & Kasten, W. (2008). *Action research for teachers: Traveling the yellow brick road*, (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Bell, J. (2005). *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education and social science* (4th ed.). Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Biancarosa, G. & Snow, C.E. (2004). *Reading next—A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report from the Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education, 12.
- Bruce, S.M. & Pine, G. J. (2010). *Action research in special education: An inquiry approach for effective teaching and learning*. New York: Teacher's College Press.
- Burnaford, G., Fischer, F. & Hobson, D. (1996). *Teachers doing research: Practical possibilities*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Carlisle, L.R., Jackson, B. & George, A. (2006). Principles of social justice education: The social justice education in schools project. *Equity & Excellence in Education* 39, 55-64.
- Children's Defense Fund. (2008). *The state of America's children yearbook*. Available: www.childrensdefense.org/ac2001/Acol.ASP.
- Chiseri-Strater, E. & Sunstein, B. (2006). *What works? A practical guide for teacher research*. Heinemann. Note: Intro and sample chapter can be found at <http://books.heinemann.com/shared/onlineresources/E00713/chapter9.pdf> and ordered online at <http://books.heinemann.com/products/E00713.aspx>.
- Cochran-Smith, M., Lytle, S.L (1999). The teacher research movement: A decade later. *Educational Researcher*, 28(7), 15-25.
- Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S.L. (2009). *Inquiry as stance: Practitioner research in the next generation (practitioner inquiry)*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Costa, A. and Kallick, B. (1993). Through the lens of a critical friend. *Educational Leadership*, 51(2), 49-51.
- Cook-Sather, A. (2009). *Learning from the student's perspective: A methods sourcebook for effective teaching*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Courtland, M.C., & Gambell, T.J. (1994). *Curriculum Planning in the Language Arts K-12: A Holistic Perspective*. North York, Ontario: Captus Press.
- Dick, B. (2011). Action research literature 2008—2010: Themes and trends. *Action Research*, 9(2), 122-143. doi: 10.1177/1476750310388055
- Duncan-Andrade, J. (2005). Toward teacher development for the urban in urban teaching. *Teaching Education*, 15, 339-350.
- Ewald, W. (2001). *I wanna take me a picture: Teaching photography and writing to children*. Boston: Center for Documentary Studies/Beacon.
- Falk, B. & Blumenreich, M. (2005). *The power of questions: A guide to teacher and student research*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Freeman, D. (1998). *Doing teacher research: From inquiry to understanding*. Toronto, Canada: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Friedman, V. J., & Rogers, T. (2009). There is nothing so theoretical as good action research. *Action Research*, 7(1), 31-47. doi: 10.1177/1476750308099596
- Goodnough, K. (2001). Teacher development through action research. *Action in teacher education*, 23(1), 37-46.
- Greely, K. (2000). *Why fly that way?: Living community and academic achievement*. NY: Teachers College.
- Hanks, R.S. & Ponzetti, J.J. (2004). Family studies and intergenerational studies: Intersections and opportunities. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 2(3/4), 5-22.
- Herrell, A. & Jordan, M. (2007). *Fifty strategies for training English language learners*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- Hopkins, D. (1993). *A teacher's guide to classroom research*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Hubbard, R. & Power, B. (1999). *Living the questions: A guide for teacher researchers*. NY: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Hubbard, R. & Power, B. (2003) *The art of classroom inquiry: A handbook for teacher-researchers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Jones, S. (2006). *Girls, social class, and literacy: What teachers can do to make a difference*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Kagan, D.M. (1993). *Laura and Jim and what they taught me about the gap between educational theory and practice*. NY. State University of New York Press.
- Kosnik, C., Beck, C., Freese, A.R., & Samaras, A.P. (Eds.), (2006). *Making a difference in teacher education through self-study: Studies of personal, professional, and program renewal*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

- Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in US schools. *Educational Research*, 35(7), 3-12.
- Lebak, K. (2010). Can inquiry and reflection be contagious? Science teachers, students, and action research. *Journal of Science Teacher Education*. 21 (8), 953 - 970. Doi: 10.1007/s10972-010-9216-x
- Leedy, P.D., and Ormrod, J.E. (2012). *Practical research: Planning and design* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Lucas, T. & Villegas, A.M. (2003). *Educating culturally responsive teachers: A coherent approach*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Macintyre, C. (2000). *The art of action research in the classroom*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- MacLean, M. & Mohr, M. (1999). *Teacher-researchers at work*. Berkeley, CA: National Writing Project.
- Mahiri, J. (Ed). (2004). *What they don't learn in school: Literacy in the lives of urban youth*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Marquez-Zenkov, K. (2007). Through city students' eyes: Urban students' beliefs about school's purposes, supports, and impediments. *Visual Studies*, 22(2), 138-154.
- Marquez-Zenkov, K., & Harmon, J.A. (2007). "Seeing" English in the city: Using photography to understand students' literacy relationships. *English Journal*, 96(6), 24-30.
- Marzano, R., Pickering, D., & Pollock, J. (2004). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. Prentice Hall.
- McNiff, J., Lomax, P., & Whitehead, J. (2003). The main features of action research process. In *You and your action research project*. London and NY: RoutledgeFalmer.
- McNiff, J., & Whitehead, J. (2011). *All you need to know about action research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mertler, C.A. & Charles, C.M. (2011). *Introduction to educational research* (7th ed.). Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 013701344-2.
- Mertler, C.A. (2013) *Action research: Improving schools and empowering educators* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Meyers, E. & Rust, F. (2003). *Taking action with teacher research*. Heinemann.
- Mills, G. E. (2010). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher* (4th ed.). Pearson
- Mitra, D. (2007). Student voice in school reform: From listening to leadership. In D. Thiessen & A. Cook-Sather (Eds.), *International handbook of student experience in elementary and secondary school*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer Publishers.
- Moje, E.B., & Hinchman, K. (2004). Culturally responsive practices for youth literacy learning. In J. Dole & T. Jetton (Eds.), *Adolescent literacy research and practice* (pp. 331-350). New York: Guilford Press.
- Moje, E.B. (2008). The complex world of adolescent literacy: Myths, motivations, and mysteries. *Harvard Educational Review*, Spring 2008, 107-154.
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Research and Writing

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General Websites

- George Mason University Library: <http://library.gmu.edu/>
- What Kids Can Do: www.whatkidscando.org
- Through Students' Eyes: www.throughstudenteyes.org
- International Visual Sociology Association (IVSA): www.visualsociology.org

Action/Teacher/Practitioner Research/Research Websites

- http://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/tr_action/
- <http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arp/arfaq.html>
- <http://www.lupinworks.com/jn>
- <http://www.drawntoscience.org/educators/action-research/what-is-action-research.html>
- <http://www.accessexcellence.org/LC/TL/AR/>
- <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ntrp/>
- <http://www.teacherresearch.net/>
- <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/english/composition/wits/research/index.html>
- <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/Dox/basics.html>

Data Collection Tools

- Go to GoogleDocs, then "spreadsheets" to create survey
- Survey Monkey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/home.asp>

National Reports and Test Reporting Centers

- A Nation at Risk: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html>
- The Nation's Report Card/National Assessment of Educational Progress: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>
- National Center for Educational Statistics: <http://nces.ed.gov/help/sitemap.asp>
- TIMSS and PIRLS (The International Math and Science Study and International Literacy Study): <http://www.timss.org/>
- Best Evidence/School Reform Reports/School Models (Johns Hopkins University): <http://www.bestevidence.org/index.htm>

Virginia State Standards

- Virginia Department of Education: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/>
- State of Virginia, SOL Resources: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/sol.html>
- State of Virginia Standards of Learning Test Information:

<http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/src/SOLassessments.shtml>

Course Requirements

General

All assignments should be turned in via Blackboard on the due date indicated in the schedule below. The submission deadline for assignments is Tuesday midnight (US eastern standard time) each week. All projects must be typed, in 12-point font, with one-inch margins, double-spaced, in Times New Roman font, and follow APA guidelines. Writing quality (including mechanics, organization, and content) is figured into the overall points for each writing assignment, so please proofread carefully. 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. I reserve the right to add, alter, or omit any assignment as necessary during the course of the semester.

Note: Please title each assignment with your last name, the name of the project/assignment, and the date you are submitting it (e.g., Smith_Literature_Review_Draft_9-1-12).

Attendance, Participation, and Project Component Dissection (15 points)

Students are expected to attend *all* class periods of courses for which they register. Class participation—both in online and face-to-face settings—is important not only to the individual student, but to the class as whole. Class participation is a factor in grading; instructors may use absences, tardiness, or early departures as de facto evidence of non-participation and as a result lower the grade. Participants are expected to read the assigned materials, complete online activities including pre-session Blackboard assignments, arrive promptly, attend all class meetings for the entire session, and participate in online and face-to-face class discussions. It is your responsibility to offer insights, questions, comments, and concerns from the readings; I suggest that you keep a reading log that includes both notes on and reactions to each reading. This log could also contain the field notes that you will take on your classroom as you complete your research project. If, due to an emergency, you will not be able to participate during a given week of class, please contact me as soon as possible and certainly prior to any face-to-face class time; it’s best to do so via my email or my mobile phone (216.470.2384). Students are responsible for obtaining information given during class discussions despite attendance. Demonstration of positive and collaborative professional dispositions toward colleagues during peer review, along with a willingness to accept constructive criticism, is a course expectation.

By virtue of agreeing to work together in this course we instantly formed a new community. This community will be rooted in mutual respect and shared responsibility; these foundations translate into consistent and punctual attendance and active participation in all class activities. My goal is to develop a comfortable online and face-to-face classroom community where risk-taking is encouraged; we can only grow through such open-heartedness. Your attendance, thoughtfulness, clarity, and active sharing of responsibility for our classroom community will affect your grade. It is your responsibility to share and respond with insights, questions, comments, concerns, and artifacts from the readings and your teaching and research experiences. Absences and tardies—in both online and campus class sessions—will impact your grade. Two tardies are equal to one absence, and missing 30% or more of class sessions will result in automatic course failure. Please turn off all mobile phones, computers, and pagers when you participate in our class.

You will have the chance to work with a peer review group across the semester as you draft and craft your research project. A peer reviewer is first of all a colleague whom you trust personally and professionally. S/he is also someone who is kind but courageous about asking provocative questions about your work and your perspective. In our course, a significant amount of in- and out-of-class time will be spent in our peer review groups, and I will offer you tools to use to support the creation and revision of each section of

your research reports. These activities will require that you follow the outlined procedures quite closely—not religiously or without modification—but trusting the peer review process and your peers. Let's keep in mind that peer reviewers intend not just to know their own work but to understand the contexts, circumstances, and settings of their peers' efforts. Let us also be advocates for each others' critical reflections on our teaching practices. We will establish non-negotiables for our work as a class and for each of our peer review groups.

As well, working in small groups (3-4), participants will serve as the project component dissection facilitators for an approximate 20-minute analysis and "how to" of a given element of our research projects. Consider the example project we are reading and identify or create a "how to" strategy from your group members' subject area and apply this to your group's assigned research project component. Teach us *how* to write this particular section. Provide sufficient copies for all members of our class of a one-page summary of the dissection or "how to" strategy you have used.

Blackboard Participation and Assignments (10 points)

Participants are expected to log onto Blackboard at least three times weekly. The Blackboard URL is <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>. Each member of our class will be responsible for contributing at least one posting to each discussion, accompanied by one artifact that is related to the ideas and/or events described in your posting. Each class member will also be required to respond to at least two peers each week. Please post contributions by the end of the week in which the topic is discussed. Discussion postings should be thorough and thoughtful. Just posting an "I agree/disagree with your comment" or "I think the same" to someone else's thoughts is not considered adequate. *Note: Access to the Internet to search for resources and to engage in online course related activity is required approximately three times per week.*

1) Assignment #1 (due Jan 26th)

Post a brief biographical sketch introducing yourself to the class. Attach a photo of yourself, preferably a close-up of you in your work environment. Then, choose and respond to the following questions on the Discussion Board and upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe:

- What has your experience been in reading education research studies, reports or articles? How have they been beneficial?
- Have you conducted or taken part in a research project or study? If so, please describe the experience, including your role.
- What do you believe the benefits of conducting research in your own classroom might be?

2) Assignment #2 (due Feb 2nd)

Please respond to BOTH of the following questions on the Discussion Board, then upload an artifact that relates to the ideas/experiences you describe:

- What teaching problem/issue would you like to make your area of focus? Why?
- Action/teacher/practitioner research is often criticized because the outcomes are not generalizable. How might you respond to this concern in defending action/teacher/practitioner research as a viable research method?

3) Assignment #3 (due Feb 16th)

What are three to five research questions you might address with your research? Be sure that these are "how" questions rather than "yes/no" questions. With whom might you collaborate to conduct your project? In particular, how might you involve your students in your research project?

4) Assignment #4 (due Feb 23rd)

Based on our textbook and sample project readings, what do you imagine will be your research plan? What will be your primary data collection methods? And your specific teaching

interventions? And how will you ensure that you have met any ethical challenges associated with conducting research on your teaching and followed your school's ethics policy regarding the collection of data?

5) Assignment #5 (due Mar 2nd)

How will you TRIANGULATE the data collection in your study? What three sources will you consider for at least one of your research questions? Why did you choose these sources? How will you insure that your study is VALID? How will you insure that your data collection techniques are RELIABLE? What is an example of the most interesting, surprising, consistent, or representative data you have gathered this week? What initial sense (analysis!) have you made of any data you collected this week or thus far in your study?

6) Assignment #6 (due Mar 16th)

Prepare a list of ten references (APA style) you have identified so far in your review of the literature that appear to be relevant to your study. References should be from refereed journals, books, and scholarly compilations.

7) Assignment #7 (due Mar 23rd)

What is an example of the most interesting, surprising, consistent, or representative data you have gathered this week? What initial sense (analysis!) have you made of any data you collected this week or thus far? What challenges do you anticipate facing in writing up the results of your final research project? Return to your methods section and revise your timeline and the description of your intervention and data collection plan to match what you are *actually* doing—if this was different than what you originally planned.

- 8) Assignment #8 (due Mar 30th)
What is an example of the most interesting, surprising, consistent, or representative data you have gathered this week? What initial sense (analysis!) have you made of any data you collected this week or thus far in your study?
- 9) Assignment #9 (due Apr 6)
What is an example of the most interesting, surprising, consistent, or representative data you have gathered this week? What initial sense (analysis!) have you made of any data you collected this week or thus far in your study?
- 10) Assignment #10 (due Apr 13th)
What have been your top two or three questions about this action research work thus far? That is, questions about the PROCESS of doing action research, the challenges of doing it. And how would you answer those questions now, if such a question was posed to you by someone else planning to take this course or conduct a research project in the future?

Action/Teacher/Practitioner Research Project Draft Components (15 points)

You will submit for instructor and peer review the following draft sections of your action/teacher/practitioner research paper: introduction/contexts, literature review, methodology, findings, and discussion/action plan. Due dates of these drafts are listed in the schedule below, and the specific elements of these sections will be provided via samples, descriptions, and rubrics. Completing these draft elements will scaffold you toward completion of your final project—a very good thing.

Action/Teacher/Practitioner Research Project (60 points)

Participants will design and conduct an action/teacher/practitioner research project that is relevant to their present or future teaching positions. Outlines, examples, descriptions, and rubrics 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. It is possible to partner with another student for the purpose of sharing data and researching different aspects of a common topic; each partner, however, must submit an original, stand-alone report. Each participant will make an in-class ten-minute presentation (ungraded) on her/his project; an outline and examples of these presentations will be provided. Please note that projects or 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 photographs of your classroom, students at work, etc.); 2) student feedback related to your research question and your teaching intervention. When considering research topics, you should identify a research question that really matters to you. It should be something about which you are curious and with which you are willing to spend time researching and learning. In the words of a former Mason student, "If you aren't eager to spend several days curled up reading about your topic, then it's not love, and you need to ditch it and find another topic."

Action/Teacher/Practitioner Research Impact Presentation

Working independently or in small groups—likely your peer review group—you will identify one authentic, alternative, preferably contemporary media-based method through which you will share the impact of your teacher research. While you will make a brief presentation of your individual research findings in class, the mission of this assignment is for your group to design and enact a presentation that moves the public understanding of your group members' studies along. You might choose to create a collective presentation on your group members' projects or you might highlight one group member's project and findings. You might decide to present your knowledge about a theme or topic central to each of your research topics such as differentiation or classroom environments. You might highlight the very importance of action/teacher/practitioner research or summarize the findings of your group members' efforts. You are encouraged to display and present these findings in an alternative setting and through creative means, with your primary goal being engaging in an exercise in demonstrating the significance of

your research to the broader world. You may potentially share your project with the Secondary Program Faculty and members of the larger college or educational community.

TaskStream Requirements

Every student registered for any Masters of Education course with a required performance-based assessment (PBA) is required to submit this assessment to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor.) Evaluation of your performance-based assessment will also be provided using TaskStream. The PBA for EDUC 675 is the Action/Teacher/Practitioner Research Project and the Impact Presentation. Failure to submit these assessments to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Assessment and Mastery Grading

All assignments will be evaluated holistically using a mastery grading system; the general rubric is described below, and a specific rubric provided with each assignment. A student must demonstrate “mastery” of each requirement of an assignment; doing so will result in a “B” level score. Only if a student additionally exceeds the expectations for that requirement—through quality, quantity, or the creativity of her/his work—will she/he be assessed with an “A” level score. With a mastery grading system, students must *choose* to “go above and beyond” in order to earn “A” level scores.

- “A” level score = Student work is well-organized, exceptionally thorough and thoughtful, candid, and completed in a professional and timely manner. Student followed all format and component guidelines, as well as including additional relevant component. Student supports assertions with multiple concrete examples and/or explanations. Significance and/or implications of observations are fully specified and extended to other contexts. Student work is exceptionally creative, includes additional artifacts, and/or intentionally supports peers’ efforts.
- “B” level score = Student work is well organized, thorough, thoughtful, candid, and completed in a professional and timely manner. Student followed all format and component guidelines. Student supports assertions with concrete examples and/or explanations. Significance and/or implications of observations are fully specified.
- “C” level score = Student provides cursory responses to assignment requirements. Student did not follow all format and component guidelines. Development of ideas is somewhat vague, incomplete, or rudimentary. Compelling support for assertions is typically not provided.
- “F” level score = Student work is so brief that any reasonably accurate assessment is impossible.

Grading Scale

- A = 95-100%
- A- = 90-94%
- B+ = 87-89%
- B = 83-86%
- B- = 80-82%
- C = 70-79%
- F = Below 70%

Incomplete (IN): This grade may be given to students who are passing a course 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 summer term, and the instructor must turn in the final grade by the end of the 10th week. 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.

Assignments/Possible Points

Attendance, Participation, and Discussion Facilitation = 15 points

Blackboard Participation and Assignments = 10 points

Action/Teacher/Practitioner Research Project Draft Components = 15 points

- Introduction/Contexts
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Findings
- Discussion/Action Plan

Action/Teacher/Practitioner Research Project (including presentation) = 60 points

Total = 100 points

Tentative Schedule

Week #/ Dates	Topic/Activity	Assignment due	Reading
Week #1 Jan 20 th <i>Whole Class</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions, course overview, syllabus, requirements • Introduction to action/teacher/practitioner research and Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None!
Week #2 Jan 27 th <i>Green and Gold Groups</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green and Gold group conferences • What is action research? • What teaching/learning questions might we address? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mills, “Understanding Action Research”
Week #3 Feb 3 rd <i>Green Group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissection of an Introduction/Contexts section • Choosing our research model—action/teacher/practitioner research or YPAR • Research Expert: Kristien Zenkov 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #2 • Draft Introduction/Contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reflective</i>, Ch. 1-2 • Bautista, et al article • Zenkov, et al YPAR project
Week #4 Feb 10 th <i>Gold Group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering feedback on draft Introduction/Contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online feedback to peer review group on draft Introduction/Contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None!
Week #5 Feb 17 th <i>No Class</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent writing/research time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemplar Papers: Select two from Denicola, Dwyer, Leathart, and Lancia
Week #6 Feb 24 th <i>Gold Group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissection of a Methodology • Developing our research questions and research plan • The nature of “collaboration” with our research projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #4 • Draft Methodology • Research Dissection Group #1: The Methodology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reflective</i>, Ch. 3-4 • Exemplar Papers: Select two from Golobic, Hannon, Barton, and Brand
Week #7 Mar 3 rd <i>Green Group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering feedback on draft Methodology sections • Data collection period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #5 • Online feedback to peer review group on draft Methodology sections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exemplar Papers: Select two from Lima-Whitney, Mitro, Polen, and McCusker
Week #8 Mar 10 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No class: Mason Spring Break! • Data collection period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None!
Week #9 Mar 17 th <i>Green Group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissection of a Literature Review • Finding relevant research resources and drafting our literature reviews • Data collection period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #6 • Draft Literature Review • Research Dissection Group #2: The Literature Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reflective</i>, Ch. 5-6 • Exemplar Papers: Select two from Patterson, Townsend, Hahne, and Peckenham

Week #10 Mar 24 th <i>Gold Group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering feedback on draft Literature Review sections Data collection period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Board Assignment #7 Online feedback to peer review group on draft Literature Review sections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exemplar Papers: Select two from Walsleben, Long, Sharp, and a fourth of your choice
Week #11 Mar 31 st <i>Independent Writing/ Research Time</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent writing/research time Data collection period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Board Assignment #8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exemplar Papers: Select two from Stone, Vranas, and two others of your choice
Week #12 Apr 7 th <i>Gold Group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissection of a Findings section Making sense of our data and determining how to share our findings Data collection and analysis period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Board Assignment #9 Research Dissection Group #4: The Findings Section Draft Findings section 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Reflective</i>, Ch. 7-8 Exemplar Papers: Select two of your choice
Week #13 Apr 14 th <i>Green Group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering feedback on draft Findings sections Data collection and analysis period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Board Assignment #10 Online feedback to peer review group on draft Findings section 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exemplar Papers: Select two of your choice
Week #14 Apr 21 st <i>Green and Gold Groups</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research presentations and Action/Teacher/Practitioner Research Presentation discussions Dissection of a Discussion/Implications Section Data analysis period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Discussion section Research Presentations and Impact Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None!
Week #15 Apr 28 th <i>Gold and Green Groups</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research presentations and Action/Teacher/Practitioner Research Presentation discussions Course evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research Presentations and Impact Presentations <i>Final presentations due (via Blackboard) and final projects due (via Taskstream) on Monday, May 4th</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None!
Week #16 May 4 th (Optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None!