

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
TRANSFORMATIVE TEACHING PROGRAM**

**EDUC 665 DL1 Teacher Inquiry in Practice I (3 Credits)  
Fall 2015**

**PROFESSORS:**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

**A.** Prerequisite: Admission into the MEd Curriculum and Instruction concentration in Transformative Teaching program; completion of the EDUC 659 Teacher Leadership Course.

**B.** Builds further understanding of teacher research as teachers form and frame salient questions, examine the existing literature related to their questions, and take actions to improve teaching and learning.

**DELIVERY METHOD:**

This course will be delivered online using synchronous and asynchronous formats via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before "@masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password.

**TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:**

To participate in this course, students will need the following resources:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox. Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard;
- Consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of the course requirements.
- A headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool
- The following software plug-ins for Pcs and Macs respectively, available for free downloading by clicking on the link next to each plug-in:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
  - Windows Media Player: <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/downloads/windows-media-player>
  - Apple QuickTime Player: [www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)

## EXPECTATIONS:

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

- Submission/completion of assignments as specified by the professors
- Communication with the professors
- Active, meaningful, and respectful communication with peers

Expect to log in to this course **at least 3 times a week** to read announcements, participate in the discussions, and work on course materials. Students must also regularly check their GMU email for communications from the instructors. Remember, this course is **not** self-paced. There are **specific deadlines** and **due dates** listed in the **CLASS SCHEDULE** section of this syllabus to which you are expected to adhere. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.

- **Written Assignments:** All formal written assignments will be evaluated for content and presentation. (Formal assignments do not include Blackboard discussions, class/course feedback, in-class reflections or journaling) The American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition (APA) style guide should be followed for formal written assignments. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. (Use spell check!) If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work. When in doubt, they should check the APA manual. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the Mason library web guide at <http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/>. Students may consult the Writing Center for additional writing support. Students will do the following:

- Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
- Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.
- Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. (Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.)
- Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

- **Sessions:** Because our online courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our session will generally **start** on Wednesday and **finish** on Tuesday. Synchronous meetings will be arranged as needed.
- **Technical Competence:** Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students are expected to seek assistance if they are struggling with technical components of the course.
- **Technical Issues:** Students should expect that they could experience some technical difficulties at some point in the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly.
- **Mentoring/Advising:** If you would like to schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues, and you are unable to come to the Mason

campus, we can meet via telephone or web conference. Send an email to your instructors to schedule your one-on-one session and include your preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

- **Netiquette:** Our goal is to be **collaborative**, not combative. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be misconstrued. We suggest that you always re-read your responses carefully before you post them to encourage others from taking them as personal attacks. **Be positive in your approach to others and diplomatic with your words.** We will do the same. Remember, you are not competing with each other but sharing information and learning from one another as well as from the instructors.

### **LEARNER OBJECTIVES:**

This course is designed to enable students to:

1. Become researchers and reflective practitioners,
2. Plan, carry out, write, and present a classroom research project,
3. Frame research inquiries around moral/ethical purposes and on moral/ethical truths, and
4. Develop a critical perspective on issues related to teaching and learning.

### **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS:**

This course fits with the core values of the College of Education and Human Development, which include collaboration, research based practice, innovation, ethical leadership, and social justice.

This course is designed to meet the following professional teaching standards:

- GMU Dispositions for a Career Educator I, II, and III
  - Commitment to the Profession
  - Commitment to Honoring Professional Ethical Standards
  - Commitment to Key Elements of Professional Knowledge
- Teachers College Columbia Teacher Expectations I and II
  - Lifelong Learners
  - Learner-Centered Educators
- NBPTS Propositions 2, 3, and 4
  - Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students
  - Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning
  - Teachers Think Systematically about Their Practice and Learn from Experience

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Caro-Bruce, C., Flessner, R., Klehr, M. and Zeichner, K. (2007). *Creating equitable classrooms through action research*. CA: Corwin.

Please Note: Additional articles, chapters, PowerPoint presentations, and media will be distributed and/or posted on Blackboard as needed. You should also be doing some background reading on your chosen research topic.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS: (aligned with outcomes/objectives)**

### **1. Assignment descriptions**

- Class Participation (Assesses objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4)
- Teacher Research Journal Reflections (Assesses objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4).

This assignment provides you with an opportunity to formalize your thinking and plans around your research project and to allow your mentor to see where you are so that we can offer our support. Throughout the course, you must be engaged in reflection and ongoing dialogue about the research problem and process, drawing on classmates' knowledge and experience to address new and unresolved questions and issues. This work will allow you to generate ideas and to consider and negotiate interpretations of evidence that will result in a fuller understanding of your teaching and your students' learning. Given our ongoing emphasis on critical pedagogy, learner-centered teaching, and culturally relevant pedagogy, you are encouraged to consider incorporating one or more of these approaches as part of your research to improve teaching and learning in your classroom and school. There are seven assigned journal reflections over the course of the semester. Each will have a set of reflection prompts for you to address.

### **2. Assignment and examination weighting (percentages, points)**

Class Participation	
Session #5	10 points
Session #6	10 points
Session #8	10 points
Teacher Research Journal Reflections	
Reflection #1	10 points
Reflection #2	10 points
Reflection #3	10 points
Reflection #4	10 points
Reflection #5	10 points
Reflection #6	10 points
Reflection #7	10 points

### **3. Grading policies (and grading scale appropriate for UG or GR level)**

#### **Grade Distribution**

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

## **GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code (See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- c. 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.
- d. 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/>).
- e. 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/>).
- f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g. 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.

## **CORE VALUES COMMITMENT**

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

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

**EDUC 663/665 Class Schedule**  
**The two courses are integrated for the fall semester**

Sessions	Readings & Assignments
<p><b>Session 1 (2 weeks)</b></p> <p><b>Dates:</b> Sept. 2 – Sept. 15</p> <p><b>Topics:</b> Introduction to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP); Overview of the Conceptual and Theoretical Literature; Learner-centered teaching connections to CRP; Teacher Research</p>	<p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Watch: the video overview of the fall semester</li> <li>2. Read: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brown-Jeffy &amp; Cooper article</li> <li>• Weimer -- Learner-Centered Teaching: Five Key Changes to Practice (summary)</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Participate in Discussion #1: Readings (See Discussion folder for guidelines)</li> <li>4. Complete <b>Teacher Research Journal Reflection #1</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>Session 2 (2 weeks)</b></p> <p><b>Dates:</b> Sept. 16 – Sept. 29</p> <p><b>Topics:</b> Exploring culturally relevant pedagogy; Teacher Research</p>	<p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read Gay chapters 7 &amp; 8</li> <li>2. Participate in Discussion #2: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy –Teacher Identity &amp; Teacher Voices</li> <li>3. Complete <b>Teacher Research Journal Reflection #2</b></li> <li>4. <b>Due: CRP project reflection #1</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>Session 3 (2 weeks)</b></p> <p><b>Dates:</b> Sept. 30 – Oct. 13</p> <p><b>Topics:</b> CRP; Teacher Research</p>	<p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read Scherff &amp; Spector chapters</li> <li>2. Bb Collaborate Session #1 – CRP project check in and bridge CRP into equity focused research</li> <li>3. <b>Complete Teacher Research Journal Reflection #3</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>Session 4 (2 weeks)</b></p> <p><b>Dates:</b> Oct. 14 – Oct. 27</p> <p><b>Topics:</b> Teacher Research</p>	<p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read Caro-Bruce chapters 1, 2 &amp; 13</li> <li>2. Participate in Discussion #3: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy – Student Voices &amp; Community Connections</li> <li>3. Complete <b>Teacher Research Journal Reflection #4</b></li> </ol>

<p><b>Session 5 (2 weeks)</b>  <b>Dates:</b> Oct. 28 – Nov. 10  <b>Topics:</b> Teacher Research</p>	<p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read Caro-Bruce chapters (choose two)</li> <li>2. Bb Collaborate Session #2 in Mentor groups</li> <li>3. Complete <b>Teacher Research Journal Reflection #5</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>Session 6 (2 weeks)</b>  <b>Dates:</b> Nov. 11 – Nov. 24  <b>Topics:</b> Teacher Research</p>	<p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read Caro-Bruce chapters (choose two)</li> <li>2. Participate in Discussion #4 on Research</li> <li>3. Complete <b>Teacher Research Journal Reflection #6</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>Session 7 (1+ week)</b>  <b>Dates:</b> Nov. 25 – Dec. 5  (Includes Thanksgiving recess  Nov. 25 – Nov. 29)  <b>Topics:</b> Teacher Research</p>	<p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete <b>Teacher Research Journal Reflection #7</b></li> <li>2. <b>Due Dec. 5th: CRP project on VoiceThread</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>Session 8 (1 week)</b>  <b>Dates:</b> Dec. 6 – Dec. 12  <b>Topics:</b> CRP</p>	<p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete Feedback in VoiceThread on CRP project</li> <li>2. Complete end of semester reflective feedback</li> </ol>

**ASSESSMENT RUBRIC(S):**

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

**Teacher Inquiry in Practice I**  
*Assignment rubric*

CRITERIA	<b>Beginning (Does not meet standards)</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Developing (Meets standards)</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Accomplished (Exceeds standards)</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Exemplary (Exceeds standards)</b> <b>4</b>
<b>Imagination and Creativity (GMU I, TC II)</b>	Beginning to take risks beyond what is familiar	Generates multiple possibilities before attempting to solve problems creatively	Creative problem-solving technique includes multiple possibilities, research, divergent and convergent thinking, and tenacity	Metacognitive and innovative thinking and practice derived from creative problem solving that sparks more questions, possibilities, and creativity for self and students. Overcomes social and material obstacles
<b>Theorizing/Praxis (GMU I, TC II, NBPTS 3)</b>	Beginning to question own thinking about pedagogy <i>or</i> practice	Questions own thinking about pedagogy <i>and</i> practice	Consistently questions own thinking about pedagogy and practice w/ students and families, seeks research texts and studies, and applies theories to shape practice	Metacognitively synthesizes own and others' theories, hypotheses, and research and connects them to practice and uses practice to test theory
<b>Content Depth (GMU III, TC II, NBPTS 2, NETS-T 1,2,3,4,5)</b>	Demonstrates uneven skill and knowledge about the disciplines and practices that you present	Demonstrates skill and knowledge about the trends, theories, <i>or</i> disciplinary practices in education	Demonstrates skill and knowledge about the trends, controversies, theories, <i>and</i> disciplinary practices in teaching and effectively applies skills and knowledge to	Demonstrates critical metacognition about skill and knowledge on the trends, trends, theories, and disciplinary practices in teaching and learning and effectively applies skills and knowledge to create critical, imaginative, creative,



			create critical, imaginative, and creative thinking for all students.	and relevant multicultural curricula for all students.
<b>Research skills and impact on practice (GMU II, TC 1, NBPTS 4)</b>	Demonstrates minimal understanding of the research process and potential impact on practice.	Demonstrates clear understanding of the research process and potential impact on practice.	Demonstrates clear understanding of the research process and potential impact on practice; demonstrates imaginative, creative, and critical thought about some aspect of the research process.	Demonstrates clear understanding of the research process and potential impact on practice; demonstrates imaginative, creative, and critical thought in all aspects of the research process.
<b>Literature Review</b>	No literature review included	At least five relevant sources are reviewed; however there is little synthesis of information from the sources	At least seven relevant sources are reviewed and there is adequate synthesis of information from the sources	More than seven relevant sources are reviewed and there is a sophisticated synthesis of information from the sources with strong connections to their own research project
<b>Elements of the Research Report</b>	Fails to address all required elements of the research report	Minimally addresses all elements of the research report	Adequately addresses all elements of the research report	Thoughtfully and thoroughly addresses all elements of the research report