

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Educational Psychology and Research Methods

EDRS 825.001– Advanced Research Methods in Self-Study of Professional Practice
3 Credits, Spring 2023
Tuesdays 4:30-7:10; Research Hall 202

Faculty

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Prerequisites/Corequisites

(EDRS 810^{B-} or 810^{XS}) and (EDRS 811^{B-} or 811^{XS}) and (EDRS 812^{B-} or 812^{XS}).

^{B-} Requires minimum grade of B-.

^{XS} Requires minimum grade of XS

This course has been approved in the Research Methods track as an Advanced Research Methods and in the Certificate in Qualitative Research (C-AR). The course may also count towards a major or minor area of specialization in a program of doctoral studies.

University Catalog Course Description

Prepares students to conduct research using self-study research methodology, a qualitative research genre for systematically examining one’s practitioner role for improvement-aimed purposes with contributions to the educational field and knowledge base.

Course Overview

This course provides students with both knowledge and practical applications and praxis of self-study methodology; its historical and paradigmatic outgrowth and ontological and methodological inventiveness along with learning an advanced research methodology with immediate applications to professional practice. Whereas the Self-Study School grew out of the work of teacher educators, it now extends to other practitioners outside of teacher education such as administrators, librarians, occupational therapists, psychotherapists, actor-directors, career coaches, social workers, counselors and community educators working for social justice and educational reform. The methodology requires openness, reflection, peer review for validation with critical friends, transparent data analysis and process, and improvement-aimed work which contributes to professional knowledge.

Class assignments are designed to promote exploring and articulating the role of the “self” as the central but not only focus in a situated research study. This course includes a synthesis of the literature of the Self-Study School, exploration of multiple self-study methods, and enacting rigorous methodological components and design elements of self-study research. The course also includes support in developing professional skills in writing, presenting, and publishing.

Polyvocal Professional Learning Community

Our work will involve individual and collective responsibility and accountability with mutual support for reciprocal learning. Assignments include ongoing peer and professor review for you as an emerging self-study research scholar in transdisciplinary and multivoiced fashion. You will learn guidelines for collecting, enacting, and reporting self-study research findings with numerous exemplars which serve to inform your particular topic. There will be significant support along the way culminating in your final presentation and project.

Working with/as Critical Friends

The critical friend analytical memo assignment is a purposely designed dialogic assignment designed from Vygotskian (1978) theory to scaffold your particular self-study research interest and its development. Consider what you would be interested in studying and researching further and why. Construct research questions that relate to your interest. You may start with broad questions. Then you need to reflect on your questions and utilize research articles on your specific topic. Include research-based information, such as refereed journals, books that are supported by research, and dissertations or theses. Reconstruct your questions so they fit what you want to pursue. Think about how you will go about conducting the research, collecting and analyzing data. Share your ongoing thinking and development with your critical friend and professor for feedback.

Peer Review for Quality and Validity

Virtually all research designs go through some type of peer review process in academia, including the dissertation proposal stage, requests for funding, or when a study is reviewed for publication. For this reason, we promote a peer review process, designed to be supportive as well as constructive. You will provide, and receive, constructive suggestions to assist you in improving your study and in looking at something familiar from alternative perspectives to extend your way of knowing. In a collaborative relationship, you are expected to practice your best professional relationship skills in your discussions and constructive feedback. This collaboration/peer review will provide us with opportunities to see the value of collaborating as well as the challenges. It gives us practice.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered using a lecture format.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Describe the historical and paradigmatic foundations of self-study methodology
2. Learn an advanced qualitative research methodology with immediate applications to professional practice;
3. Demonstrate an understanding of self-study research methodological components and design elements by applying a self-study method(s) in an enacted self-study research project;
4. Participate in a polyvocal professional learning community to gain alternative perspectives with reciprocal learning;
5. Develop and refine qualitative research skills including: conduct a literature review, design a research proposal, dialogue in a validation group with critical friends, assess ethics and social justice implications of one's study; collect and analyze data, interpret, write, and present findings;
6. Develop skills to self-critique and peer-critique and assess self-study research;

7. Present knowledge of one's research focus with evidence-based practice integrating the literature of the Self-Study School.

Professional Standards

Not Applicable

Required Texts and Other Materials*

Additional articles and chapters will be made available as resources on Blackboard.

Pithouse-Morgan, K., & Samaras, A. P. (Eds.), (2015). *Polyvocal professional learning through self-study research*. Sense Publishers. (Digital access via Mason Libraries)

American Psychological Association (2020). *Publication manual* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association (Available as reference at library).

Required Readings

Brandenburg, R. (2009). Assumption interrogation: An insight into a self-study researcher's pedagogical frame. In D. L. Tidwell, M. L. Heston, & L. M. Fitzgerald (Eds.). *Research methods for the self-study of practice*. (pp. 195-211). Springer. [Available on Bb]

Bullough, R. V. Jr. & Pinnegar, S. (2001). Guidelines for quality in autobiographical forms of self-study research. *Educational Researcher*, 30(3), 13-21. [Available on EJ]

Feldman, A. (2003). Validity and quality in self-study. *Educational Researcher*, 32(3), 26-28. [Available on EJ]

Hamilton, M. L., Smith, L., & Worthington, K. (2008). Fitting the methodology with the research: An exploration of narrative, self-study and auto-ethnography. *Studying Teacher Education* 4 (1), 17-28.

Hjalmarson, M. (2015). Learning to teach mathematics specialists in a synchronous online course: A self-study. *Journal of Math Teacher Education*. DOI 10.1007/s10857-015-9323-x [Available on EJ]

Meskin, T., Singh, L., & van der Walt, T. (2014). Putting the self in the hot seat: Enacting reflexivity through dramatic strategies. *Educational Research for Social Change (ERSC)*, 3(2), 5-20. Retrieved from http://ersc.nmmu.ac.za/view_edition.php?v=3&n=2#

Mittapalli, K., & Samaras, A.P. (2008). Madhubani Art: A journey of an education researcher seeking self-development answers through art and self-study. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(2), 244-261. [Available on EJ.]

Naicker, S. (2014). Digital memory box as a tool for reflexivity in researching leadership practice. *Educational Research for Social Change (ERSC)*, 3(2), 51-65. Retrieved from http://ersc.nmmu.ac.za/view_edition.php?v=3&n=2#

Pinnegar, S., & Hamilton, M. L. (2009). *Self-study of practice as a genre of qualitative research: Theory, methodology, and practice*. Excerpts from Chapters 5 & 6: Data collection and analysis (pp. 103-156). Springer. [Available on Bb.]

Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage. [Excerpts from Chapters 1 & 2 available on Bb]

Samaras, A. P. (2011). *Self-study teacher research: Improving your practice through collaborative inquiry*. Sage. [Selected Draft chapters on Bb]

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https://wrlcgm.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/view/action/uresolver.do?operation=resolveService&package_service_id=12527132610004105&institutionId=4105&customerId=4100

*In addition to the readings, you will be assigned individual readings related to your research topic and/or method to share your insights on how the self-study method was used and for what purposes. You are encouraged to connect with authors of the readings by email and begin establishing a professional network with self-study scholars.

***See [Info Guides](#) [Self-Study Research: Courtesy of Anne Driscoll Melville](#)**

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA, hard copy).

Detailed instructions and rubrics for all assignments will be posted to the Blackboard site for the course at <http://mymason.gmu.edu>. Please refer to these documents when completing your work. All written assignments should be submitted using APA 7th Edition for formatting.

All assignments should be submitted in Blackboard by 11:59 pm on the due date for the assignment. Extensions may be provided at the instructor's discretion only with permission provided by email *prior* to the deadline. Assignments submitted after the deadline will be subject to a 10% reduction in grade for the assignment.

- **Assignments**

All assignments are to be completed on time so that class members might benefit from the expertise and contributions of their colleagues. **Additional details and rubrics for all assignments will be posted on Blackboard.**

A. THREE ANALYTICAL MEMOS WITH CRITICAL FRIEND RESPONSES (30%)

Effective research involves continuous reflection about the process and your learning with peer response. You will have the opportunity to work with critical friends in a series of 3 analytical memos, i.e., meta-conversations about the development of your project with peer input. We will use Blackboard to post and offer peer feedback. Also, please place your 3 memos and responses from your critical friend in your final research project appendix.

Memo 1: Statement and Rationale

Memo 2: Method with focus on Data

Memo 3: Data Analysis

Additional details on this assignment can be found on Blackboard.

B. VISUALLY RICH DIGITAL PROPOSAL DESIGN (10%)

The idea is for the visual to help you figure out your “thesis” or main idea and not to enter an art show. Students have found it beneficial not only to write but also to create a visual representation of their research question and rationale. Engaging in arts-based projects like this one allows you, as one student wrote, “to show a hidden side of data, because it is gathered, in a sense, from the ‘dark side of the moon’” (Adams-Legge, 2006). This is similar to what Weber and Mitchell (2004) assert about the “ineffable” nature of arts-based research: “Arts-based methods of inquiry can help us access those elusive hard-to-put-into-words aspects of our practitioner knowledge that might otherwise remain hidden, even from ourselves” (p. 984). Creating a visual research designs gives you agency as the composers and designers of your research and an object that you can discuss with critical friends for feedback. Additional details on this assignment can be found on Blackboard.

C. TWO PEER REVIEWS OF DRAFTS (10%)

Peer-review is an essential aspect of both academia and self-study. The purpose of this assignment is for you to provide detailed feedback on your peers’ writing. Questions that will be explored are: What do you find most interesting and significant about this analytical memo? Do you have any questions about this analytical memo? Additional details on this assignment can be found on Blackboard.

D. FINAL SELF-STUDY RESEARCH PROJECT (50%)

For your self-study research, you should choose a research question that really matters to you. It should be something you are curious about and willing to spend time researching and learning about. “If you are not 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” (Roberts, GMU alumna, 2009). Choose a research project which includes the “self” as a resource to the research. Push yourself out of your comfort zone. Be honest, brave, and bold. Ask how your research matters to you, to others, to education, and towards social justice in education. We will discuss what this means and how it relates to this methodology at length in class.

Designing and completing your self-study research project will be a significant marker in your personal and professional development. For this assignment, you may build upon prior research when writing your paper. This project includes professor and peer support and continuous formative assessment with class discussion. Each assignment is purposely designed to scaffold the development of your final project. Each formative assignment will be important for success in your summative assessment of the final project.

Additional details on this assignment can be found on Blackboard.

- **Other Requirements**

- A. **Attendance and Participation Expectations**

This course operates with the assumption that knowledge is socially constructed and the most meaningful learning opportunities are those where you have the opportunity to offer and explore diverse perspectives with peers. To do this **it is expected that you attend all scheduled classes and asynchronous/synchronous online meetings** outlined within the syllabus. Absence from class to observe a religious holiday, to serve jury duty, or to participate in required military service, and medical emergencies are exceptions to the above policy. If you anticipate being absent for any of these reasons, please make arrangements at least 48 hours in advance. In addition, **you are expected to be on time to class** each week unless advance notice has been provided to the instructor.

You are expected to contribute to both class and online discussions and activities as well as genuinely listen to peers as they do the same. In addition, **you are expected to be prepared for each class**, which means having completed all assigned readings and tasks for that class. To be successful in the course, you will need to actively participate and read widely to become familiar with the self-study literature. There is a list of reading resources (see Blackboard) to provide you with a rich reservoir of materials to draw upon for your research project and we will direct you to particular research. The expectation is for you to read and use these resources as they apply to your self-study research project. Please informally memo and/or take notes about the readings and bring your comments and questions to each class.

- B. **Assignment Formatting Expectations**

- All written papers are expected to be double-spaced, with 1” margins, and in 12-point font (Times New Roman). Late assignments will not be accepted without making prior arrangements with the instructor(s).
- Title each assignment with your last name and the name of the project/assignment (e.g., **Smith.ResProp.02.10.21**). APA format is expected.
- If you do not have a 7th Edition APA manual, the OWL at Purdue is an excellent resource. <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- Please Note: The GMU Writing Center offers online support via email. They will provide feedback on your writing. We encourage you to take advantage of this service as needed. http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/?page_id=177
- It is expected that all class assignments will be submitted on time to the correct location; therefore, **late assignments will not receive full credit**. Assignments turned in late will receive an automatic deduction of 10% per day. All assignments must be submitted on the due date stated within the syllabus (see below) and should be submitted in the format outlined below.

Note: Instructor reserves the right to add, alter, or omit any assignment as necessary during the course of the semester. You will always receive advance notice of any modifications.

- **Grading**

The final evaluation criteria utilizes the graduate grading scale and is as follows:

A	94%-100%	B+	87%-89%	C	75%-79%
A-	90%-93%	B	80%-86%	F	Below 75%

- **Course Performance Evaluation Weighting**

30%	Three Analytical Memos & Peer Responses
10%	Visually Rich Digital Proposal Design
10%	Two Peer Reviews of Drafts
50%	Final Self-Study Research Project

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. Education professionals are held to high standards, both inside and outside of the classroom. Educators are evaluated on their behaviors and interactions with students, parents, other professionals, and the community at large. At the College of Education and Human Development, dispositions may play a part in the discussions and assignments of any/all courses in a student's program (and thus, as part or all of the grade for those assignments). For additional information visit:

<https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>

Class Schedule

Date	Topic(s)	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Week 1 January 24 Format In Person	Introduction to Course Beginning with the self for the public good Self-Study Methodology Methodological Components Self-Study Methods Paradoxically Polyvocal	No Assigned Readings Due	Bring a personal learning event to share orally. This will be useful to writing your first analytical memo. (emailed prompt sent)
Week 2 January 31 Format In Person	Deep Dive for your Question Analytical Memos History of Self-Study School Phase I: Emergence of Research Genre & Community Phase II: Defining/ Refining & Establishing Value Phase III: Methodological Inventiveness Phase IV: Critique, Response, & Potential	Samaras Chs 1 & 4 Pithouse-Morgan & Samaras Ch 1 Saldana Ch 2	POST Analytical Memo 1 Focus on Statement: "What" and "Why" using lesson 1 ppt prompts Begin building your literature review

<p>Week 3 February 7</p> <p>Format In Person</p>	<p>Conceptual Framework and Argument</p> <p>Reciprocal Interviewing</p> <p>Reciprocal Mentorship</p>	<p>Hamilton, et al., 2008</p> <p>Pithouse-Morgan & Samaras Chs 4 & 6</p> <p>Samaras, Ch 3</p> <p>Meskin et al. (2014)</p>	<p>Peer Response to Memo 1 Explore Bb Resource</p> <p>Scan Castle Proceedings at http://www.castleconference.com/conference-history.html</p> <p>Scan S-STEP listserve at http://aera.net/sstepsig109</p>
<p>Week 4 February 14</p> <p>Format In Person</p>	<p>Design Elements</p> <p>Data in Self-Study Research</p> <p>IRB and Research Ethics</p>	<p>Brandenburg, 2010</p> <p>Pinnegar & Hamilton, Ch 5, 2009</p> <p>Hjalmarson, 2015</p> <p>Samaras Chs 5 & 7</p>	
<p>Week 5 February 21</p> <p>Format In Person</p>	<p>Self-Studies of Prof Practice (SSoP)</p> <p>Doctoral Student Exemplars</p>	<p>Naiker, 2014</p> <p>Mittapalli, 2008</p> <p>Pithouse-Morgan & Samaras Ch 7</p> <p>Pithouse-Morgan & Samaras Ch 10</p>	<p>POST Analytical Memo 2 Focus on Method: “How” Explore Bb Resources</p>
<p>Week 6 February 28</p> <p>Format In Person</p>	<p>Self-Study Methods Personal History Narrative Dialogue Arts-Based Memory Work Collective Co-autoethnography Bricolage Self-Study Action Research,</p>	<p>Individual Readings Assigned</p>	<p>Peer Response to Memo 2</p> <p>Peer Presentations and Briefs on Method</p>
<p>Week 7 March 7</p> <p>Format In Person</p>	<p>Data Analysis</p>	<p>Pinnegar & Hamilton, Ch. 6, 2009</p>	<p>POST Visually-Rich Digital Design Draft: RQ, Rationale, data sources, & method(s)</p> <p>Present 3-minute Mock-up of Argument and Design (Oral)</p> <p>In-class Peer Critiques of Mock-ups</p>
<p>Week 8 March 14</p>	<p>Mason Spring Break: No Class Meeting</p>		

<p>Week 9 March 21</p> <p>Format Online Asynchronous</p>	<p>Writer's Workshop</p>		
<p>Week 10 March 28</p> <p>Format In Person</p>	<p>Assess Research Quality</p> <p>Critical Friend Work First Pass Validation Workshop</p> <p><i>Peer and Individual Consultations</i></p>	<p>Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001 Feldman, 2003 Samaras Ch. 11</p>	
<p>Week 11 April 4</p> <p>Format Online Asynchronous</p>	<p>Critical Friend Work Second Pass Validation Workshop</p> <p>Build Drafts (<i>Continued</i>)</p> <p>IN CLASS POST: Peer Response to Memo 3</p> <p><i>Peer and Individual Consultations</i></p>	<p>No Readings</p>	<p>BLACKBOARD POST: Analytical Memo 3 Focus on Analysis</p>
<p>Week 12 April 11</p> <p>Format In Person</p>	<p>Writing the "So What"</p> <p>Knowledge Generation Contributions to knowledge base; links with other studies</p> <p>IN CLASS PEER REVIEW: DRAFT 1 (with tracking and comments)</p> <p><i>Peer and Individual Consultations</i></p>	<p>No Readings</p>	<p>BLACKBOARD POST: DRAFT 1 for professor and peer review</p>
<p>Week 13 April 18</p> <p>Format Online Synchronous</p>	<p>Writing Workshop & Virtual Hours</p>	<p>No Readings</p>	
<p>Week 14 April 25</p> <p>Format In Person</p>	<p>Self-Critique Peer Assessment</p> <p>IN CLASS: POST PEER REVIEW OF DRAFT 2 using rubric with brief comments</p>	<p>No Readings</p>	<p>BLACKBOARD POST: DRAFT 2</p>

<p>Week 15 May 2</p> <p>Format In Person</p>	<p>Presentations (Oral) In 5 timed minutes tell us: What and Why How (method) Ways your thinking changed Most valuable mistake Most valuable leap</p>	<p>No Readings</p>	<p>BLACKBOARD POST: Final Research Paper</p>
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Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

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/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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 with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments> . Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard

should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.

- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per [University Policy 1202](#). If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as [Student Support and Advocacy Center](#) (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/> .