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Class Time: 4:30 to 7:00, Mondays (Office Hours by Appointment)
Place: EDUC 132

Required Textbooks:

Mertler, C. A. (2006). *Action research: Teachers as researchers in the classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Katzer, J., Cook, K. H., & Crouch, W. W. (1998). *Evaluating information: A guide for users of social science research*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Additional Resource Material:

Arhar, J. M., Holly, M. L., & Kasten, W. C. (2001). *Action research for teachers: Traveling the yellow brick road*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Baumann, J. F. (2001). Teacher-researcher methodology: Themes, variations, and possibilities. *The Reading Teacher*, 54, 608-615.

Bisplinghoff B. S., & Allen, J. (Eds.). (1998). *Engaging teachers: Creating teaching and researching relationships*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Calhoun, E. (1994). *How to use action research in the self-renewing school*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Hubbard, R. S., & Power, B. M. (1993). *The art of classroom inquiry: A handbook for teacher-researchers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

On-line Sample Action Research Projects:

Graduate School of Education: George Mason University – Action Research Projects.
http://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/tr_projects/
Look under categories of projects.

Ontario Action Researcher
http://www.nipissingu.ca/oar/new_issue.htm
<http://www.nipissingu.ca/oar/archive.htm>
Action research studies mixed in with articles about action research

Action Research Papers from Queen's University, Ontario, Canada
<http://educ.queensu.ca/~ar/files.htm>

Networks: An On-Line Journal for Teacher Research
<http://people.ucsc.edu/~gwells/networks/index.html>
Browse past issues with an easy click.

Center for Collaborative Action Research
<http://cadres.pepperdine.edu/ccar/projects.school.html> (schools)
<http://cadres.pepperdine.edu/ccar/projects.community.html> (community)

Action Research at Queen's University
http://educ.queensu.ca/projects/action_research/files.htm

Action Research Projects
<http://gse.gmu.edu/research/lmtip/arp>
Examples of many different short case studies are shared.

http://www.alliance.brown.edu/dnd/ar_cover.shtml
Click on the blue dates to get a variety of types of action research reports conducted by New York city schools in conjunction with Brown University.

Course Goals:

Students will gain skills for efficiently conducting journal and electronic database searches to address educational problems.

Students will develop skills and knowledge to help them be more effective consumers of educational research.

Students will be able to draw appropriate inferences about professional practice based on research results.

Students will be provided with the knowledge and skills to act as teacher-researchers and create classroom-based action research projects.

Students will demonstrate an attitude of openness and willingness to engage in and understand the research process.

Assignments:

1. Class Participation & Weekly Assignments (20% of grade). This class will be conducted as a seminar. Thus, student participation in classroom discussion is essential. Students are expected to attend every week's class, arrive on time, have all weekly readings and accompanying assignments completed, and engage thoughtfully in

class activities. The grading of class participation will be based on the above as well as the **quality** of a student's participation in discussions. A pattern of late arrivals or early departures or other participation problems will result in a lowering of your overall grade for the course. Unless special circumstances are shared with the professor in advance, please show respect for the professor and all participants by turning your cell phone off when you enter the classroom.

2. Proposal (40% of grade). Using the Mertler text, as well as guidelines provided in class, participants will complete an action research proposal. The proposal will include a problem statement, a review of relevant literature, a description of participants and the setting, and a plan for data collection. This is a formal paper and must follow APA formatting guidelines. The American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual 5th Edition is the style manual used by most graduate programs in education across the nation. In the past, students have ignored this requirement and unfortunately their grades were lower than they would have liked in the end. Please take the time to carefully edit all of your work and to make it consistent with APA standards.

Specific criteria for this assignment will be handed out separately.

3. Evaluating Educational Research Exam (20% of grade). Having read and discussed the Katzer, Cook, and Crouch text, students will demonstrate their understanding of major research concepts and their ability to be good consumers of research. The exam will include the evaluation of actual research. The examination will be open book.

4. Oral presentation on action research plan (20% of grade). Students choosing to complete their action research plan through collecting and analysing data will prepare a formal presentation to share their findings.

Grading:

Students often wonder what an "A" student looks like to a professor with whom they are unfamiliar. My expectations follow. A student earning a grade of "A" has attended all classes (unless extreme circumstances or illness prevent it) and demonstrated in his/her class participation, a strong commitment to understanding research. This commitment is shown in the exceptional quality of his/her class work as well as in his/her interactions with peers and the instructor. For example, when discussing assigned readings the student will be able to contribute to the discussion in a way that demonstrates understanding of the material (as opposed to surface level familiarity obtained from skimming the material.) This person is an avid learner and is able to use his or her motivation to produce oral and written work that is insightful, thoughtful, and carefully crafted. An "A" student goes beyond merely meeting the requirements of an assignment; an "A" student consistently adds depth and thoughtfulness to his or her work in a way that others notice and respect. An "A" student also demonstrates the writing skills expected of graduate students attending a major research university. Students who submit work late, come to class late or unprepared, or leave early, will not be eligible for a grade of "A."

Grades will be computed by multiplying each assignment grade (its numerical equivalent as seen below) by its weight for the assignment, all assignment totals will be added together and then divided by 10 for your grade. Grade ranges are shown below.

<u>Numerical Equivalent</u>		<u>Weight of Assignments</u>	
A	4	Participation (grade x 2.0)	20%
A-	3.67	(includes weekly assignments)	
B+	3.33	Proposal (grade x 4.0)	40%
B	3	Katzer Exam (grade x 2.0)	20%
B-	2.67	Oral Presentation of Action Research	20%
C+	2.33	(grade x 2.0)	

For example, if you received the following grades on individual assignments your course grade would be an A-.

Participation A ($4.0 \times 2 = 8$), Proposal B ($3.0 \times 4 = 12$), Katzer Exam A ($4.0 \times 2 = 8$), Presentation ($4.0 \times 2 = 8$) $8+12+8+8 = 36$ $36/10 = 3.6$ $3.6 = A-$

Grade Ranges

A = 3.83 to 4.0

B+ = 3.17 to 3.49

B- = 2.5 to 2.82

A- = 3.5 to 3.82

B = 2.83 to 3.16

C+ = 2.17 to 2.49

Plagiarism or any form of academic dishonesty works against a student and may in fact disqualify him or her from receiving a passing grade in this course. Other university level penalties may result as well. Thus, you should make sure that all material taken from another source is appropriately referenced in your papers. For more information regarding the USU student policy on academic honesty see:

<http://www.usu.edu/policies/PDF/Acad-Integrity.pdf>. For information on how to appropriately reference ideas you use in your work refer to the 5th Edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association.

If any major personal or work-related difficulties arise, kindly make sure that the professor has been informed of the situation in a timely fashion. Otherwise, things may not be adjusted for her to be of assistance. For more information regarding the USU student code see: <http://www.usu.edu/studentservices/studentcode/>

If a student has a disability that will require some accommodation by the instructor, the student must contact the instructor and document the disability through the Disability Resource Center, preferably during the first week of the course. Any requests for special considerations relating to attendance, pedagogy, taking of examinations, etc. must be discussed with and approved by the instructor. In cooperation with the Disability Resource Center, course materials can be provided in alternative formats-- large print, audio, diskette or Braille.

Schedule - Fall 2007

<u>Date</u>	<u>Discourse</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
August 27	Introduction What is Teacher Inquiry?	
September 3	No Formal Class – Holiday	IRB Certification - Online Research & Ethics/Human http://www.citiprogram.org/ (go to registration – select USU). Complete required + children, public schools & records-based res. modules (if not required)
September 10	Library Research Action Research Questions Problem Statements & Literature	Mertler chpts. 1 & 2 Questions and Activities
September 17	Literature Reviews/Research Planning Action Research Online	Mertler, chpts. 3 & 4 Questions and Activities Read at least one online case study. Summarize in paragraph.
September 24	APA, Data Collection and Literature Reviews Continued	Mertler, chpts. 5 & 6 Questions and Activities
October 1	Action Plans Based on Research Sharing Your Research	Mertler, 7 & 8 APA references due Work on proposal
October 8	How Does Anyone Know Anything? Discussion on Readings	Katzer pp. 1-34 Questions
October 15	Individual Appointments on Campus Times will vary – Check appt. list	Proposal Draft Due– (All assigned sections)
October 22	Sharing & Evaluating Proposals	Proposal Due
October 29	Where do Errors Come From? Discussion on Readings	Katzer pp. 36-92 Discussion Questions
November 5	Measurement, Can you Believe it? Discussion on Readings	Katzer pp. 93-129, Discussion Questions
November 12	Summarizing Results/Rival Explanations Discussion on Readings & Exam Review	Katzer pp. 130-183 Discussion Questions
November 19	Critiquing Research Using and Applying Research	Katzer pp.202-229
November 26	Discussion on Presentations	Katzer Final Exam
December 3	Closing Session	AR Presentations

Action Research Proposal

When selecting what you will do for your action research proposal please make sure that the type of data you propose to collect falls within the normal responsibilities of your professional assignment. For example, teachers normally collect information on student progress, collect and evaluate work samples, assess journals, survey interests and attitudes, etc. If the data you plan to collect is outside of your normal purview as a professional than it is probably not appropriate for this assignment and should be discussed with the professor.

Proposal Requirements:

Section 1. Share your research interest. Write a short paragraph sharing the origins of your action research question. Why did you choose to study this particular problem in your classroom? Then, share your action research question and any smaller sub-questions you plan to address in your work.

Section 2. Set the problem in a context of what others have written. Look in professional books, journals, and web resources to see what others have said. Now, write a background section that acknowledges and synthesizes what others have said about the problem you are exploring. This section would usually include about 5 to 10 different references. (Let me know if you are having problems finding quality information.) Please type your references and cite them in your proposal using the format guidelines from the *APA 5th Edition* manual. Try to hone in on your specific topic as much as possible. (5-7 pages)

Section 3. Describe the setting and participants in your research. Where will you conduct your action research? Describe who will participate in the study? Share appropriate demographic information (SES, race, gender, age, and language) if you already have it available. When discussing subjects in this study, pseudonyms for your school and students should always be used.

Section 4. Methods of data collection. Share how you will collect information to answer your question. Remember that multiple sources of data are best. Include copies of actual forms (assessments, checklists, observation charts, surveys, interview questions) that you plan to use. (Remember, information you collect here must be appropriate to your normal professional role.) A minimum of two sources of data should be planned with three being preferable. If you plan to actually conduct your study share a time line (or chart) for data collection. Be sure that your data collection methods are well matched to your research questions.

Section 5. Data analysis. How would you analyze your data? Share a paragraph or two describing how you would organize the data you have collected so that it sheds light on your research question. Will you look for patterns? Use tables or graphs? Run a t test?

Note: If you conduct the study you propose with an audience for your work that will go beyond your immediate professional environment or the professor for this course (e.g., you plan to present the information at a conference or share it in some form of publication) it is critical that you follow additional IRB procedures including the use of informed consent forms.