

EDCC 551 Action Research in Educational Settings
Eastern Mennonite University Lancaster
Fall 2012

Course is required in the EMU MA in Education program Core Curriculum.

Credit Hours: 3 semester hours

Class Instructors: James M. Cox, Ed.D.
Office: EMU at Lancaster by appointment
Email: peacocks563@frontiernet.net
Phone: (717) 354-4942
Donovan D. Steiner, Ph.D.
Email: steinerd@emu.edu

Class Meetings:

Friday, September 7	6 p.m.-9 p.m.	3 hrs.
Saturday, September 8	8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.	6 hrs.
Friday, October 5	6 p.m.-9 p.m.	3 hrs.
Saturday, October 6	8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.	6 hrs.
Friday, November 2	6 p.m.-9 p.m.	3 hrs.
Saturday, November 3	8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.	6 hrs.
Friday, November 30	6 p.m.-9 p.m.	3 hrs.
<u>Saturday, December 1</u>	8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.	<u>6 hrs.</u>
<i>Total</i>		<i>36 hrs.*</i>

*Individual appointments will be scheduled at other times for consultation to total 43 hours

Course Description:

This course is designed to give an overview of action research conducted in educational settings. Emphasis is placed upon qualitative and quantitative research design, as well as developing an action research project. Participants are taught to use computer technology to conduct a literature review and collect, analyze and interpret data. Participants prepare an action research proposal, ready to be fine-tuned with their program mentor. (NOTE: This course extends over five months and requires submission of proposal sections throughout the course.)

Conceptual Framework: “Preparing Caring, Reflective Teachers for a Changing World”

The EMU Teacher Education Program has chosen the theme *Teaching boldly in a changing world through an ethic of care and critical reflection* as the conceptual framework from which its beliefs and outcomes are based. The Teacher Education Program envisions preparing informed lifelong leaders and learners who value the dignity of all persons and are ready and willing to share a pilgrimage of openness and continuous growth as they invite others to join them. These caring, reflective educators will offer healing and hope in a diverse world. Six performance outcomes focus all course and candidate outcomes.

MA in Education Program Outcomes:

Scholarship: to acquire advanced knowledge through core curriculum and specialty area courses and to organize and integrate that knowledge into professional practice. **(S)**

Inquiry: to generate questions and to use critical thinking to self-assess, to view problems from multiple perspectives, to make informed decisions and to engage in action research for educational change. **(I)**

Professional Knowledge: to acquire advanced pedagogical and specialty area knowledge in order to create cultures of change and manage environments conducive to learning, setting high expectations and implementing appropriate instructional and assessment practices. **(PK)**

Communication: to develop communication strategies (verbal, nonverbal, and technological), which support collaboration and resourcefulness to empower self and others. **(C)**

Caring: to develop a nurturing spirit that advocates for students, encourages social and ethical responsibility, and promotes peacebuilding in diverse settings. **(Ca)**

Leadership: to act as social change agents by working collaboratively to bring about fair and just systemic change within educational contexts. **(L)**

Course Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course the student should have the ability to:

1. Define action research. (S)
2. Define the difference between qualitative and quantitative research. (S)
3. Identify four models of action research. (S)
4. Design a research project including:
 - a. formulating thorough, but pertinent, research questions
 - b. conducting literature reviews using electronic resources
 - c. designing and/or choosing effective data collection instruments and procedures
 - d. setting up the procedures regarding 'gaining access' to conduct research within an educational setting (S, I, Ca)
5. Reflectively analyze and develop personal responses to the following questions:
 - a. Why is action research so important in the educational world?
 - b. Historically, why have we accepted some research and rejected others?
 - c. How can the practitioner become a participant-researcher in an action research project?
 - d. What are ways in which action research can be designed and written to impact policy change?
 - e. How can a participant-researcher take on the role of advocacy based upon research findings? (S, I, Ca)

Required Texts:

Mertler, C.A. (2012). *Action research: Improving schools and empowering educators* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE publications.

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Strunk, W., Jr. & White, E. B. (2000) *The elements of style* (4th ed.). New York: Longman.

Provided by EMU on first day of class:

Eastern Mennonite University Master of Arts In Education Program. (Fall 2012). *A guide to action research project*. Harrisonburg, VA: Eastern Mennonite University.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance in all class sessions. Absences must be kept to a minimum. Please contact the instructor if any absence is anticipated. University policy includes lowering of grade for absences for a day or part of a day. Any student who misses a weekend or the equivalent without the instructor's consent cannot earn an "A" grade.
2. Participation in class activities designed to increase knowledge about action research.
3. Analysis of course readings. [Textual reading and articles as distributed in class.]
4. Design an action research project proposal. **(Submit each section as instructed below on the following due dates: specific short term assignments may also be included at the instructors discretion):**
 - A) Develop the title page, table of contents, and a 2-page mini literature review that includes at least three research references on the topic of the problem you have identified. **Due October 5 or before.**
 - B) Write an introduction and literature review draft, all of which will be explained in detail during class. Briefly, the introduction is the part where you give a general rationale for the study and describe the research question. You do not state the research question explicitly yet! The background for the study is developed thorough the literature review with a minimum of 15 research studies. The majority of the studies must be from 2005 or later. Seminal or "ground breaking" studies may be older. The overall purpose and rationale is included in the introduction section. As per APA, do not use explicitly the heading **Introduction** since the opening automatically signals this. Under literature review, a subheading of Research Question will be included. **Due November 2 or before.**

- C) Write the method section of your study. Identify participants including the selection process as applicable. Identify the apparatus you will use including a narrative description for each apparatus used and how data will be collected. Describe your procedures thoroughly. Revise total document into a draft copy of your final proposal. **Due November 30 or before.**

Final Components: revise steps A-C above. Identify potential limitations of the design of the study. Reflect on contribution of this study to the field of research and include the following: Unsigned permission letters to conduct AR Project in schools, unsigned permission letter to parents of subjects, actual copies of apparatus/instruments used unless standardized. In such case, provide a reference for the standardized document. Also include a timeline for your study. Some of these same documents will also be needed to obtain Institutional Review Board approval. **Due Friday, December 14, 5:00 p.m. Please submit your final AR proposal to the instructor electronically.**

Course Evaluation:

Grades will be submitted December 16, 2012. *A Guide to Action Research Project* contains a rubric entitled *Action Research Proposal Rubric* that will be used by your instructor to assign a grade for your proposal. A grade of C+ or better in EDCC 551 Action Research in Educational Settings is required to proceed to EDPC 611 Action Research Project. (This includes permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to collect data and to begin working with your assigned mentor.) The student is expected to revise the action research proposal until the course instructor determines that a grade of C+ or better has been achieved.

Mentor Assignments:

Upon completion of *EDCC 551 Action Research in Educational Settings*, you will be assigned a mentor by the Director or Assistant Director of the MA in Education program. The mentor will review the action research proposal and may require revisions prior to granting consent to begin data collection and enroll the student in *EDPC 611 Action Research Project*. Do not expect to collect any data prior to the second semester of the 2012/13 school year since it's unlikely that IRB will be able to give early approvals.

In most cases the earliest completion date for project completion will be April 2013.

Institutional Review Board (IRB):

Action Research proposals are subject to review by the EMU Institutional Review Board. See *A Guide to Action Research Project Fall 2012*. After a grade has been assigned and your instructor has signed off on the Institutional Review Board *Faculty Approval of Student Research* form, you may submit your application to the IRB for approval to begin your study. If you plan to conduct your study in the spring, you will need to submit your application to the IRB by Friday, December 28, 2012 for approval in early January.

Additional information will be presented near the end of the course regarding the candidate's responsibility for submitting materials directly to the chair of the IRB.

Editing Service:

Each candidate is offered 4 hours of free editing by an EMU-approved editor during *EDPC 611 Action Research Project*. Note that this support service applies to EDPC 611 Action Research Project and does not apply to this course. When the candidate wishes to access the editing service, an electronic copy of the action research paper is submitted to the mentor who then forwards the paper to the editor for editing assistance. The editor provides electronic feedback to the candidate. Additional editing may be arranged between the candidate and the editor, and will be billed to the student's account.

Academic Integrity Policy (AIP): EMU faculty and staff care about the integrity of their own work and the work of their students. They create assignments that promote interpretative thinking and work intentionally with students during the learning process. Honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility are characteristics of a community that is active in loving mercy, doing justice, and walking humbly before God. EMU defines plagiarism as occurring when a person presents as one's own someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. (Adapted from the Council of Writing Program Administrators.) This course will apply EMU's AIP to any events of academic dishonesty.

Any incidences of academic dishonesty may result in a failing grade for the work submitted and a “Record of Academic Dishonesty” filed in the graduate dean’s office. Students are asked to meet with the professor (and other affected persons, where appropriate) to examine the effects of the dishonesty on others and to develop an accountability plan.

Special Accommodations Statement: If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a documented disability, or has emergency medical information to share, please contact the instructor personally as soon as possible to discuss any accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate equal educational opportunity. All information and documentation of the disability is confidential and will not be released without permission.

Use of Graduate Level Writing Standards and American Psychological Association (APA) Writing Style (see Writing Standards rubric in the Guide to Action Research Project.)

Candidates are expected to use *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 6th Edition* for written assignments including annotated bibliographies and references. Candidates citing references in Power Point references are also expected to use APA style. Instructors may exclude short personal narratives, essays, lesson plans, or some project work if APA writing style is inappropriate.

Class Format:

The following learning strategies will be used throughout the class sessions:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. lecture | h. group summaries |
| b. lecture-discussion | i. peer critique |
| c. socratic questioning | j. electronic search |
| d. shared inquiry | k. reflective writing |
| e. observational analysis | l. participant-observer research |
| f. jigsaw reading | m. analytical writing |
| g. small group interaction | |

Class Schedule:

Session 1:

September 7/8, 2012

Topics

Introductions, expectations, and stress reduction

Course overview, Syllabus review

Defining the Concept: What is Action Research?

Review of *Guide to Action Research Project Fall 2012*

Overview of APA Manual

Use of Moodle and Turn it In, Academic Integrity

Defining the Concept: What is Action Research?

Mertler text reflection – Chpts. 1-3

Observing and developing questions about practice

Research topic worksheet

Sharing Research Topics

Defining Key Terms

Refining the Problem Statements and Writing a Clear,
Concise Problem.

Research Orientation, Question and Topic Search
(Library orientation and “tour”)

Action Research Examples

Beginning the Literature Review

Questions and Answers over First Class Session

Assignment for October 5: Concentrate on writing your 2-page mini-literature review on your proposed topic. Your mini-literature review must follow APA guidelines complete with title page, correct formatting, and documentation. Attach a reference page and clearly document your sources. This assignment’s first draft may be submitted via “Turnitin” on September 21st. Read Mertler, Chpts 4 & 5. Identify any questions you still have regarding the process of action research.

Session 2:

October 5/6, 2012

Topics

Overview and questions and answers

Q & A on the Literature Review

Check Assignment Work: Reviewing 2-page literature review

Review of Action Research

Defining your research

Determining key terms

Hypothesis concept for support

Overview of Literature Reviews

Continuing review of 2 page draft

Reflections on Mertler Chapters 4 & 5

Methodology: Participants, Apparatus, Procedures (intro)

Writing seminar

AR presentations

Assignment for November 2: Read Mertler Chapter 6. An initial draft of your literature review should be submitted. Propose several instruments or apparatus you might use for data collection based on your preliminary action research question.

Session 3:

EDCC 551 Action Research in Educational Settings, Fall 2012

November 2/3 2012 (AR presentations on 3rd)

Topics

Overview and questions and answers

Critiquing educational research

Organizing/interpreting/graphing raw data

Revision/Review of Design/Methods

Identifying and describing: Participants, Apparatus, and Procedures

Writing the Results, Discussion, and Abstract sections

Mertler reflection

Independent and Dependent Variables

Survey/questionnaire development

Sampling

Validity and Reliability

Assignment for November 30: Read Mertler, chapters 8 and 9. Work toward finalization of overall proposal.

Session 4:
November 30/December 1, 2012

Topic

Overview and questions and answers

Mentor meeting/discussion/planning

Individual meetings as needed/requested

Assignment for December 14, 2012: Final proposal is due!

Additional Readings:

- Anderson, G., Herr, K., & Nihlen, A. (1994). *Studying your own school: An educator's guide to practitioner research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Boote, D. N. & Beile, P. (2005). Scholars before researchers: On the centrality of the dissertation literature review in research preparation. *Educational Researcher*, 34(6), 3-15.
- Burns, A. (1999). Definitions and processes. In *Collaborative action research for English language teachers*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Bush, J. (2000). "Here's what I did:" Making "sharing" research meaningful for teaching. *English Education*.
- Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1993). Action research in education. In Martyn Hammersley (Ed.), *Controversies in classroom research* (2nd ed., pp. 235-245). Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Certo, J. L., & Fox, J. E. (2002). Retaining quality teachers [Electronic version]. *High School Journal*, 86(1), pp. 57-76.
- Chattin-McNichols, J., & Loeffler, M. H. (1989, July). Teachers as researchers: The first cycle of the teachers' research network. *Young Children*, 10-27.
- Elliott, J. (1991). A practical guide to action research. In *Action research for educational change*. Bristol, PA: Open University Press.
- Elliott, J. (1991). The dilemmas and temptations of the reflective practitioner. In *Action research for educational change*. Bristol, PA: Open University Press.
- Elliott, J. (1991). The fundamental characteristics of action research. In *Action research for educational change* (pp. 49-56). Bristol, PA: Open University Press.
- Hobson, D. (1996). Learning with each other: Collaboration in teacher research. In G. Burnaford, J. Fischer, & D. Hobson (Eds.), *Teachers doing research* (pp. 93-108). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Hopkins, D. (1993). Why classroom research by teachers? In *A teacher's guide to classroom research* (pp. 32-41). Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Hostetler, K. (2005). What is "good" education research? *Educational Researcher*, 34(6), 16-21.
- Kim, J. S. & Sunderman, G. L. (2005). Measuring academic proficiency under the No Child Left Behind Act: Implications for educational equity. *Educational Researcher*, (34)8, 3-13.
- Klingner, J. K. Scanlon, D., & Pressley, M. (2005). How to publish in scholarly journals. *Educational Researcher*, 34(8), 14-19.
- McLaughlin, C. (2005). The feeling of finding out: The role of emotions in research. *Educational Action Research*, 11(1), 65-77.

- Pogrow, S. (1996). Reforming the wannabe reformers: Why education reform almost always end up making things worse. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 77(10), 656-663.
- Rager, K. B. (2005). Self-care and the qualitative researcher: When collecting data can break your heart. *Educational Researcher*, (34)4, 23-27.
- Rogers, C. (1992). Research into teachers' expectations and their effects. In M. Hammersley (Ed.), *Case studies in classroom research* (pp.159-179). Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.
- Schoen, F., & Schoen, A. (2003). Action research in the classroom: Assisting linguistically different learner with special needs. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 35(3), 16-25.
- Smeltzer Erb, C. (1998). Improving the motivation of a general level student. *Orbit*, 29(3), 44-45.
- Sullivan, P., & Elifson, K. In the field with snake handlers. In C. Smith & W. Kornblum (Eds.), *In the field: Readings on the field research experience* (33-38). Westport, CT: Praeger.