

COURSE SYLLABUS

SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Elementary, Early & Special Education Course No. EL615

Course: Research in Action

New: FA '01



“The Teacher as Professional Educator”

I. Catalog Description and Credit Hours of Course:

Introduction to the methods of action research for improving classroom practice. (3)

II. Prerequisite(s):

Graduate status.

III. Purposes or Objectives of the Course:

Action research is a systematic and valid methodology for bringing about practical and sustainable improvement in pedagogical practice and student achievement using National Board Standards. Teachers investigate their own work by focusing on practical questions arising from their educational work and developing reflective and collegial methods to answer those questions. Having participated in this course, the student will be able to:

- A. Develop systematic and organized procedures for collecting and analyzing information about one's own teaching to improve classroom practice.
- B. Explain the stages of action research and effectively apply them to one's own classroom situation.
- C. Make effective use of research diaries by writing different types of entries, e.g., descriptive and interpretive sequences, theoretical and methodological notes, and in-depth reflections.
- D. Locate and gather research literature pertinent to the selected classroom issue and understand and explain the components of a research document.
- E. Understand and describe the relationship between instructional objectives, measurement, teaching, and evaluation.
- F. Understand and apply descriptive statistics: concepts of validity, reliability, central tendency, correlation, and microcomputer applications.
- G. Critically analyze, evaluate, and use research literature to enhance action research procedures.
- H. Synthesize information from multiple research studies and accurately collect, interpret, summarize, and report data.
- I. Develop collegial inquiry processes, reflective thinking skills, and new understandings of pupils and self, including one's impact on the process.
- J. Effectively utilize and apply the results of the findings to bring about teaching improvement and enhanced student achievement.
- K. Validate one's own classroom practice through the systematic inquiry of classroom processes.

IV. Expectations of Students:

- A. To read and accurately interpret, use, and apply current research literature to one's own action research project.
- B. To develop and carry out one major action research project on an area of concern in one's own classroom.
- C. To work with colleagues in developing the project and the intervention strategies.
- D. To prepare and present the results of the action research project.

V. Course Content or Outline:

Hours

- A. Introduction; purposes of action research 3
 - 1. Features that distinguish action research
 - 2. Stages of action research
- B. The research diary: companion to the research process 3
 - 1. Why diaries are useful for research
 - 2. Suggestions for writing research diaries
- C. Finding and clarifying the starting point of research 9
 - 1. Systematically reflecting and analyzing area of concern
 - 2. Activating additional knowledge through use of research literature
 - a. Locating and gathering pertinent research literature
 - b. Understanding and explaining the components of a research document
 - c. Understanding and describing the relationship between instructional objectives, measurement, teaching, and evaluation
 - d. Understanding and applying descriptive statistics
 - e. Critically analyzing, evaluating, and using the research literature
 - f. Synthesizing the information from multiple research studies
 - 3. Developing and elaborating practical theories for area of concern
 - 4. Deciding on which aspect of the teaching-learning process to focus upon: classroom practice, program restructuring, using new processes, new understandings of pupils and self
- D. Establishing baseline through data collection 9
 - 1. Collecting existing data
 - 2. Observing and documenting situations
 - 3. Interviewing
 - 4. Written survey
 - 5. Collecting data as part of classroom work
 - 6. Triangulation
- E. Data analysis 9
 - 1. Interpretation of data
 - 2. Developing an intervention based on data
- F. Implementing the action research intervention 9
 - 1. Identifying action and activities
 - 2. Keeping the intervention focused while maintaining openness to change
 - 3. Using a colleague to observe intervention and reflect back to you
 - 4. utilizing observations to shift, change, or continue intervention
 - 5. Designing a new plan of action to take the research to a new level, to answer new questions that have arisen as a result of the first intervention

- G. Making teachers' knowledge public 3
1. Disseminating teachers' knowledge
 2. Validating classroom practice through dissemination
 3. The importance of teachers' action research

VI. Textbook(s) and/or Other Required Materials or Equipment:

Altrichter, H., Posch, P., and Somekh, B. (2000). *Teachers investigate their work*. New York: Routledge.

VII. Basis for Student Evaluation:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| A. Participation | 10% |
| B. Quality of written materials (various stages of the action research process) | 30% |
| C. Quality of oral presentation | 20% |
| D. Effectiveness in reflecting on the outcome of the action research project and applying the results to one's own practice as reflected in oral and written material (Critical analysis evident). | 40% |

VIII. Knowledge Base:

Arnold, G. H. (1992, March). *Strengthening student teachers' critical/reflective thinking skills through collaborative research*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association, Hilton Head, SC.

Belenky, M. F. et. al. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and mind*. New York: Basic Books.

Benton, J. E. & Jain, N. (1999). A comparative study of teaching practices in the United States and India which promote intercultural understanding and awareness. In K. Hakkinen (Ed.), *Innovative practices to intercultural education* (pp. 75-108). Jyväskylä, Finland: University of Jyväskylä.

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

Carr, W. & Kemmis, S. (1996). *Becoming critical: Education, knowledge and action research*. London: Falmer.

Clift, R.T., Houston, W. R., & Pugach, M. C. (Eds.). (1990). *Encouraging reflective practice in education: An analysis of issues and programs*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Corey, S. (1953). *Action research to improve school practices*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Davis, N. J. (1992). Teaching about inequality: Student resistance, paralysis, and rage. *Teaching Sociology*, 20(3), 232.

Dewey, J. (1997). *How we think*. Toronto, Canada: Dover.

Elliott, J. (1991). *Action research for educational change*. Philadelphia: Milton Keynes Open University Press.

Hitchcock, G. & Hughes, D. (1989). *Research and the teacher: A qualitative introduction to school-based research*. London: Routledge.

- Hopkins, D. (1985). *A teacher's guide to classroom research*. Philadelphia: Milton Keynes Open University Press.
- Hubbard, R. S. & Power, B. M. (1999). *Living the questions: A guide for teacher-researchers*. York, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy within the postmodern*. London: Routledge.
- McKernan, J. (1991). *Curriculum action research: A handbook of methods and resources for the reflective practitioner*. London: Kogan Page.
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (1998). *Middle childhood/generalist standards*. Southfield, MI: Author.
- Noffke, S. E. & Stevenson, R. B. (Eds.). (1995). *Educational action research: Becoming practically critical*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Noffke, S. E., Brennan, M. (1988, February). *Action research and reflective student teaching*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators, San Diego, CA.
- Novak, J. M. (Ed.). (1994). *Democratic teacher education: Programs, processes, problems and prospects*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Parsons, S., Reynolds, K.E. (1995, April). *Establishing an action research agenda for pre-service and in-service elementary teacher collaboration on self-empowerment in science*. Paper presented at the meeting of the National Association of Research in Science Teaching, San Francisco, CA.
- Scheirer, E. A. (1998). *The curriculum thinking in pre-service teachers in elementary education*. East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 420 633).
- Stenhouse, L. (1975). *An introduction to curriculum research and development*. London: Heinemann.
- Tabachnick, R. B. & Zeichner, K. M. (Eds.). (1991). *Issues and practices in inquiry-oriented teacher education*. London: Falmer.
- Whitehead, J. (1994, April). *How teacher-researchers are creating a new form of educational knowledge*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Zelazek, J. R., Lamson, S. (1992, February). *Action research and the student teacher: A framework for problem-solving and reflective thinking*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators, Orlando, FL.
- Zuber-Skerritt, O. (Ed.). (1996). *New directions in action research*. London: Falmer Press.

Internet sites and sources:

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
<http://www.nbpts.org/nbpts/>

The Education and Research Network American Education Research Association

The Ontario Action Research (on-line journal for teachers)
<http://www.unipissing.ca/oar/>

Action research at Bath University (UK)
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/>

Action Research: A Brief Overview

<http://users.andara.com/~jnewman/ARoverview.html>

GAJAL-The Global Anthological Journal of Action Learning

<http://www.free-press.com/journals/gajal/>

WEB Links To Participatory Action Research Sites

<http://www.goshen.edu/soan/soan96p.htm>

Educating as Inquiry a Teacher/Action Research Site

<http://users.andara.com/~jnewman/>

NETWORKS—An On-Line Journal for Teacher Research

<http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~ctd/networks/>

Action Research Resources at Southern Cross University, Australia

<http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/sawd/ari/ar.html>

The Teacher Inquirer (BC Teachers' Federation)

<http://www.bctf.bc.ca/inquirer/>

Action Research Electronic Reader at University of Sydney, Australia

<http://www.behs.cchs.usyd.edu.au/arow/Reader/welcome.htm>

PARnet Cornell University, USA

<http://www.parnet.org/>

Collaborative Action Research Network University of East Anglia, UK

<http://www.uea.ac.uk/care/carn/>