Department of Curriculum, Culture and Educational Inquiry
College of Education
Florida Atlantic University

EDF 6918 Action Research in Schools and Communities

Participants will engage in collaborative planning for doing action research based on an inquiry question grounded in practice. The readings provide historical, critical and conceptual frameworks for action research, locally, nationally, and internationally.

It is not enough that teachers' work should be studied; they need to study it themselves. (Stenhouse, 1975)

COURSE CONNECTION TO COLLEGE OF EDUCATION CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

This course enables participants to be *informed* about the research foundations and pragmatic basis for making decisions about teaching practices through a methodology of practitioner action research. Participants will have to consider the *ethical* implications of those decisions, in regard to how they affect students, families, the school, and the community by becoming familiar with the Institutional Review Board process as it relates to classroom-based research. Participants will become more *capable* practitioners, as they analyze their own practice and that of other educators in action, and then recommend action steps for improvement and continued learning as professionals.

REQUIRED TEXTS FOR ALL IN COURSE:

Burnaford, G., Fischer, J. & Hobson, D. (2001). Teachers doing research: The power of action through inquiry. 2nd edition. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Hubbard, R.S. & Power, B. M. (1999). Living the questions: A guide for teacher researchers. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
          or
Caro-Bruce, C., Flessner, R., Klehr, M. & Zeichner, K.M., (Eds) (2007). Creating equitable classrooms through action research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

RECOMMENDED FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS ONLY:

Herr, K. & Anderson, G.L. (2005). The action research dissertation: A guide for students and faculty. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

AUDIO/VISUAL/TECHNOLOGY:

Websites
Videotapes
Power point presentations
Blackboard

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Participants will:

1) Design an inquiry question and subsequent research plan consistent with their professional goals and experience with research. (FEAP #3 Continuous Improvement)

> *The professional teacher recognizes the need to strengthen her/his teaching through self reflection and commitment to life long learning. The teacher becomes aware of and is familiar with the School Improvement Plan. The teacher's continued professional improvement is characterized by participation in service, participation in school/community committees, and designing and meeting the goals of a professional.*

2) Conduct classroom observation and student work analyses that serve as frameworks for investigation of classroom practice/action research. (FEAP #1 Assessment)

> *The professional teacher continually reviews and assesses data gathered from a variety of sources. These sources can include, but shall not be limited to, pretests, standardized tests, portfolios, anecdotal records, case studies, subject Area inventories, cumulative records, and student services information, and develops students' instructional plans that meet cognitive, social, linguistic, cultural, emotional and physical needs.*

3) Discuss the parameters and purposes of action research within the larger paradigm of educational research and teacher practice. (FEAP # 8 Knowledge of Subject Matter)

> *The professional teacher has a basic understanding of the subjects she/he teaches and is beginning to understand that her/his subject is linked to other disciplines and can be applied in real-world "integrated settings". The teacher seeks out ways/sources to expand her/his knowledge. The commitment to learning about new knowledge includes keeping abreast of sources which will enhance teaching.*

4) Apply the principles of respect for human subjects in action research, as indicated by the Institutional Review Board process at FAU. (FEAP # 6 Ethics)

> *Adheres to the Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida.*

5) Analyze action research studies implemented by practitioners. (FEAP # 11 Role of the Teacher)

> *The professional teacher establishes open lines of communication and works cooperatively with families, educational professionals and other members of the student's support system to promote continuous improvement.*

6) Prepare an individualized application of action research principles to a classroom project or professional development design. (FEAP # 3 Continuous Improvement)

The professional teacher recognizes the need to strengthen her/his teaching through self reflection and commitment to lifelong learning. The teacher becomes aware of and is familiar with the School Improvement Plan. The teacher's continued professional improvement is characterized by participation in in service, participation in school/community committees, and designing and meeting the goals of a professional.

ASSIGNMENTS:

The 'Products'/Assignments noted here reflect the course focus on DOING something, not just talking about it. In some cases, there are choices for products, depending on your experience with research, and action research in particular. <u>We will individualize these products as much as possible for your own research needs and goals, so please feel free to talk about your goals with me!</u>

It's also important to USE THE GROUP in this class for feedback and response on your project as we go through the course. Each class session will provide some time to work on your project, seek and obtain feedback from participants and the instructor in the class, and examine resources online relevant to your project.

- **Field Notes on a 30 – 40 minute "Informal Observation" from your class or one you visit** (Course Objective #2)

- **Analysis of student work protocol follow up paper** (Objective #2)

- **IRB application for a proposed project (and CITI Certificate denoting your completion of the IRB Human Subjects certification process)** (Course Objective # 4)

- **Two critiques of action research studies in refereed journals** (Course Objectives 3 & #5)

- **Action Research Project Design** (Objectives # 1 & 6)
  <u>**Possibilities for Final Projects points**</u> (Course Objectives # 1 & 6)

a) Plan, conduct, and report on an action research project. (Criteria attached to syllabus)
b) Work with at least one other teacher to plan, conduct, and report on a collaborative action research study. (Criteria attached to syllabus)
c) Write a detailed grant proposal with a specific funder for an action research study. (Criteria to be discussed with instructor)
d) Write an article or book chapter from an action research study you have conducted or are conducting.

e) Design a professional development program for a school focused on action research.
f) Prepare a literature review (minimum of 10 resources) about a focus question for an action research project relevant to your practice.)
g) Prepare a literature review (minimum of 10 references) of action research dissertations in the last ten years.
h) Other (submit a one-page proposal for approval to the instructor)

Evaluation and Assessment Plan:

Field Notes on Classroom Observation	**20**
Two Action research article critiques	**30**
Analysis of Student Work/Protocol-Based	**25**
IRB CITI and Application	**25**
Final Project	**80**
	180 points

162 – 180 = A
144 – 161 = B
126 - 143 = C

CLASS SCHEDULE
Session One

Introduction and Course Overview
History and Philosophy of Action Research
The Context for Action Research within Educational Research Paradigms
Six Degrees of Separation

Reading: Hubbard and Power, Chapter 1, Burnaford, Fischer & Hobson, Chapters 1, 8

Session Two

Inquiry Questions Developed From Your Practice
Literature Reviews and Practitioner Research

Reading: Hubbard and Power, Chapters 2, Burnaford, et al, Chapter 2
Doctoral students, *Traditions, Knowledge and Interests*, Chapter 2
Herr and Anderson

Session Three

Research Plans: Designing Action Research

Resource: Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1996). What's worth fighting for in your school? New York:: Teachers College Press.

Reading: Hubbard and Power, Chapter 3

Session Four

Instruments and Tools to Harvest (Collect/Generate) Data in a Classroom
Observing and Teaching: Teacher and Leader Inquiry

Reading: Hubbard & Power, Chapter 4, Burnaford, et al, Chapter 3

Session Five

Protecting Human Subjects – The IRB Process
Considering the ethics of being a teacher and a researcher

Reading: Pritchard, I.A. (2002). *Travelers and trolls: Practitioner research and Institutional Review Boards.* Educational Researcher, 31(3), 3-13.
Doctoral students, Chapter 7, Herr and Anderson
Ethics, IRB, and Action Research

DUE: Notes on a 30 – 40 minute "Informal Observation" from your class or one you visit. Observation notes should include responses to the following:

What did you notice? (note 3- 5 explicit and specific observations)
In what ways did the observation relate to your inquiry?
What questions did the observation raise for you?
(What do you wonder about?)
What are the possible implications for your/this teacher's practice, referring to these explicit and specific observations?
What are the possible promising research investigations for the field/for teachers as a profession that emerges from these 3 – 5 explicit and specific observations?

Session Six

Data from Classroom Practice: Designing Observational Data Collection for Action Research

Resource: Frank, C. (1999). Ethnographic eyes: A teacher's guide to classroom observation. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Reading: Teacher Research Writings – Brankis, Koller, Stephens in Burnaford, et al

Session Seven

Survey/Written Assessment Data
Archival and Test Score Data

Resources: Holly, M., Arhar, J., & Kasten, W. (2005). Action research for teachers: Traveling the yellow brick road, 2nd Ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, Inc.

Hopkins, D. (2002). A teacher's guide to classroom research, 3rd Ed. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Hubbard, R. & Power, B. (1993). The art of classroom inquiry: A handbook for teacher-researchers. Portsmouth: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.

Session Eight

Student or Peer Interview/Focus Group Data

Reading: Cappello, M. (2005). *Photo interviews: Eliciting data through conversations with children. Field Methods, 17(2), 170-182.*

Burnaford, et al, Chapter 5

DUE: CITI Certificate (denoting your completion of the IRB Human Subjects Certification process)

Sessions Nine
Student Work Analysis: Working with Protocols

Resource: Blythe, T., Allen, D., & Powell, B. (1999). <u>Looking together at student work:</u>
<u>A companion guide to assessing student learning</u>. New York: Teachers
College, Columbia University.
www.laws.orga/cac steps.html & http://pzweb.harvard.edu.

Reading: Hubbard & Power, Chapters 5, 6
Doctoral Students – *Quality Criteria*, Chapter 4, Herr and Anderson

DUE: Analysis of student work protocol follow up paper

Session Ten

Using the Group: **Collaborative Action Research**
Action Research Learning Communities

Reading: Burnaford, et al, Chapter 5

Sessions Eleven and Twelve

Writing it up/Documentation and practitioner research
For Presentation – grade level or whole school faculty
For Publication (where, how, when)
Journals 'friendly' to teachers
Cover letters
Presenting your work for others

Reading: Klingner, J.K., Scanlon, D. & Pressley, M. (2005). *How to publish in*
scholarly journals. <u>Educational Researcher</u>, November, 14-20.
HANDOUT

Doctoral students, *Continuum of Positionality*, Chapter 3, Herr and
Anderson (Optional Reading, Chapters 5 and 6, *Proposing and Doing*
A.R., Sample Action Research Dissertations)

DUE: Two article critiques focused on action research studies *Analysis should*
include: APA citation, purpose of the article or study; summary of key ideas or findings;
description of what you learned from the article; your questions and/or implications for
classroom practice; methodological issues and questions.

Session Thirteen

Whole School Action Research

District and State Level 'Outreach' for Teacher Researchers
Communities and Action Research

Resource: Stringer, E. (2007). <u>Action research, 3rd Ed</u>. Thousand Oaks: SAGE
Publications, Inc.

Reading: Hubbard and Power, Chapters 8, 10, Burnaford et al, Chapter 6
Teacher Research Writings, Whitcomb and Visconti in Burnaford, et al
+ In
Practice story by Joseph Senese (*The Action Research Laboratory as a
Vehicle for School Change)*, Burnaford, et al

Session Fourteen
Grants and Professional Associations Supporting Action Research
Being a Consumer of Action Research
Audiences for Action Research

Reading: Hubbard and Power, Chapters 6, 9, Burnaford, et al, Chapters 7, 9

DUE: Completed IRB Application for Action Research Design

Session Fifteen

Politics, Policies and Action Research So What? Now What?
Doctoral Students – Examination of university positions, course work, and
integration of action research

Reading: Hubbard and Power Chapter 7, Burnaford, et al, Chapters 5 – 8

Resource: Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (1999). The teacher research
movement: A decade later.<u>Educational Researcher,</u> 28(7), 15-25.

DUE: Action Research Project Design and Presentation

FINAL ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT DESIGN CRITERIA

- History leading to this area of inquiry

- Your focus question (and sub questions)

- Purpose of the study: Why is this an important area of study? Why is this question important to you and your practice?

- Context for the study - How would you describe your school, your district, and community? Who are the learners? How would you describe your classroom and your teaching?

- Review of Relevant and Meaningful Literature Related to the Focus/Question (refer to 6 - 8studies or articles that help you understand your focus question and how to investigate it)

- Methodology
    What is your timeline?
    How will you collect data?
        1 interview or focus group protocol included
        1 survey or student work assessment instrument included
        Observation description
    What are your data sources?
    How will you make sense of the data for your own practice? (Analysis)
    Who can help you?

- Reflections: What might you learn about your practice as a result of this study that can help you improve your practice? Who are the potential audiences for your work? What are your plans for sharing the project?

- References

- Appendices

Selected References

Allen, D., (Ed.). (1998). <u>Assessing student learning: From grading to understanding</u>. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Anderson, G.L., Herr, K., & Nihlen, A.S. (1994). <u>Studying your own school: An educator's guide to qualitative practitioner research</u>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Blythe, T., Allen, D., & Powell, B. (1999). <u>Looking together at student work: A companion guide to assessing student learning</u>. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Bradshaw, A. & Cochrane, P. (Eds.). (2005). <u>Building creative futures: The story of the creativity action research awards 2005.</u> London: Arts Council England and CapeUK.

Burnaford, G., Fischer, J., & Hobson, D. (Eds.). (2001). <u>Teachers doing research: The power of action through inquiry</u>, 2nd Ed. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Burns, A. (1999). Definitions and processes. In A. Burns (Ed.), Collaborative <u>Action research for English language teachers</u> (pp. 2044). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Campbell, C., & Tovar, D. (2006). Action research as a professional development tool for teachers and administrators. <u>Applied Language Learning</u>, 16(1), 75-80.

CAPE UK. (2005). <u>Building creative futures: The story of the Creativity Action Research Awards 2005.</u> London: Arts Council.

Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (1999). The teacher research movement: A decade later. <u>Educational Researcher,</u> 28(7), 15-25.

Crookes, G. (1993). Action Research for Second Language Teachers: Going Beyond Teacher Research. <u>Applied Linguistics</u>.14 (2): 130-144, <u>Oxford University Press</u>.

D'Acquisto, L. (2006). <u>Learning on display: Student-created museums that build understanding.</u> Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

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Frank, C. (1999). <u>Ethnographic eyes: A teacher's guide to classroom observation</u>. Portsmouth:

Heinemann.

Freedman, S.W., Simons, E.R., Kalnin, J.S., Casareno, L., & The M-Class Teams. (1999). Inside city Schools: Investigating literacy in multicultural classrooms. New York: Teachers College Press.

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Glesne, C. (1999). Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction. New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

Hatch, A., Greer, T. & Bailey, K. (2006). Student-produced action research in early childhood teacher education. Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 27, 205-212.

Herr, K. & Anderson, G. (2005). The action research dissertation: A guide for students and faculty. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

Hollingsworth, S. (1994). Teacher research and urban literacy education: Lessons and conversations in a feminist key. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Holly, M., Arhar, J., & Kasten, W. (2005). Action research for teachers: Traveling the yellow brick road, 2nd Ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, Inc.

Hopkins, D. (2002). A teacher's guide to classroom research, 3rd Ed. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Hubbard, R. & Power, B. (1993). The art of classroom inquiry: A handbook for teacher-researchers. Portsmouth: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.

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Zeni, J., (Ed.). (2001). Ethical issues in practitioner research. New York: Teachers College Press.

Expectations

Attending Florida Atlantic University is a privilege. Professional conduct is expected, and includes, but is not limited to, showing respect to colleagues and the instructor; being on time for class; completing assignments prior to entering class; preparing assignments with substantive content and accurate spelling, grammar, and mechanics; and displaying a positive interest in class.

It is your responsibility to read and study all texts, class notes, Internet resources, journal articles, and handouts, and to complete all assignments in a meticulous and professional manner. A student should spend 3 hours studying for each hour s/he is in class. (3 hours in class = 9 hours out of class preparation).

Grading Each assignment has clear, stated Criteria or a Rubric, representing the essentials required. Students are invited to discuss assessment, seek feedback on assignment drafts before they are due, or discuss progress at any time.

Dropping the Course It is the student's responsibility to complete all forms. Forms may be obtained in the office of the Registrar located in the Admissions Building. If this is not done, I must assign a grade of F at the end of the semester.

Bringing Children to Class Because of safety and liability issues, minor children are not permitted in class or in the hallways during class time.

Communication Devices In order to enhance and maintain a productive atmosphere for education, personal communication devices such as pagers, beepers, and cellular phones must be disabled in class session.

Attendance is expected in all classes, not only because of what you will learn during class, but also because of what you will contribute. According to university policy, a student will receive an F in the course if 4 or more classes (12 clock hours) are missed. Class is only to be missed in the case of illness or emergency; in these cases, please see me for makeup work that will benefit you and the class. Consequences affecting your grade for absences of less than 4 classes will be at the discretion of the instructor. Note: in a five week fast track, you may not miss any classes and receive full credit for the course.

Punctuality Students are expected to be on time and to remain for the duration of each class session. Since late arrivals and early departures are disruptive, they will be treated as absences and may affect your grade.

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Plan ahead. Graduate work should reflect the highest degree of care, scholarship, and accuracy. An assignment not received during class may be considered late and will result in a grade being lowered one letter grade; please see me if there are extenuating circumstances. Assignments may be turned in electronically. No handwritten assignments please.

Readings Graduate courses depend on the preparation that students do for discussion, critique, and analysis. To that end, please read assigned pieces before coming to class. Highlight or use margin notes. These will help to facilitate a discussion in which each of you is a leader and you are not dependent on the instructor to guide what should be a conversation among professionals.

Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. The purpose of the Office for Students with Disabilities "is to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities."

Plagiarism

Florida Atlantic University Regulation 4.001 Honor Code, Academic Irregularities, and Student's Academic Grievances states:

(1) Academic irregularities frustrate the efforts of the faculty and serious students to meet University goals. Since faculty, students and staff have a stake in these goals, the responsibility of all is to discourage academic irregularities by preventative measures and by insuring that appropriate action is taken when irregularities are discovered. Thus, FAU has an honor code requiring a faculty member, student or staff member to notify an Instructor when there is reason to believe an academic irregularity is occurring in a course. The Instructor's duty is to pursue any reasonable allegation, taking action, as described below, where appropriate.

(2) The following shall constitute academic irregularities:
(a) The use of notes, books or assistance from or to other students while taking an examination or working on other assignments unless specifically authorized by the Instructor are defined as acts of cheating.
(b) The presentation of words or ideas from any other source as one's own — an act defined as plagiarism.
(c) Other activities which interfere with the educational mission within the classroom."

APA defines plagiarism as:

"Plagiarism (Principle 6.22). Psychologists do not claim the words and ideas of another as their own; they give credit where credit is due. Quotation marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another. Each time you paraphrase another author (i.e., summarize a passage or rearrange the order of a sentence and change some of the words), you will need to credit the source in the text."