

# Oakland University

School of Education and Human Services

Department of Teacher Development and Educational Services

## EST6500: Collaborative Action Research Summer 2018

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### Description

Informs practitioners and develops their skills in the use of qualitative and quantitative research to identify best practices and improve their practice at the classroom and school levels. Collaborative, systematic inquiry using the basic principles of research will be used to empower professionals as teachers and leaders.

### Required Texts

Mertler, C. (2008). *Action research: Teachers as researchers in the classroom*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

### Optional Text

Fine, M. (2018). *Just research in contentious times: Widening the methodological imagination*. New York: Teachers College Press.

### Central Questions

- a.) How can action research contribute to continued teacher and student growth?

- b.) How do reflection and collaborative inquiry impact and inform professional practice in education?
- c.) How can action research be used as a vehicle for continuous improvement and increased student achievement for all student groups?
- d.) What might action research contribute to the prospect of equal access to curriculum and instruction for marginalized groups?
- e.) In what ways might action research transform classroom practice and schools?
- f.) How does action research serve as a means for empowering individual teachers and students?

### **Learning Goals**

The aims of EST6500 are to develop awareness of the importance of reflective practice and collaborative inquiry. Through demonstrating the ability to think reflectively and act collaboratively, students will gain an enhanced understanding of the interconnected nature of action research, enhanced instruction, and increased student achievement. Student who have completed EST6500 are expected to demonstrate:

- An understanding of action research and collaborative inquiry as a theoretical frame and as an application to enhance and improve classroom instruction
- An increased awareness of their own educational philosophy, the contexts in which they must work, pedagogical practice and how action research works to bridge those three facets of education.

## Course Topics

- a.) Introduction to Action Research
- b.) Identifying a researchable problem
- c.) Research design
- d.) Data Collection
- e.) Data Analysis
- f.) Presenting Research Plans
- g.) Results and Action Plan

## Course Goal

At the end of this course students will have a fully designed action research project to be conducted in the Fall of 2018. Some students may be ready to conduct their research this summer (2018), which can be accepted based on readiness standards determined in collaboration with the instructor. The final project/paper will have the following components:

- a.) Introduction (problem statement, research questions)
- b.) Literature Review (from EST6000)
- c.) Research Design
- d.) Data Analysis
- e.) Results and Action Plan

## Assignments

Moodle Discussion-Questions essential to your learning will be posted each Thursday on Moodle. Post a response to **two** of the three questions available to you. Respond to **two posts of your classmates** with insight and knowledge that contributes to your learning and the learning of others. The purpose of a Moodle discussion is to create new understandings through reflective practice and push your thinking. It is expected that you will promote the development of your academic voice and that of others.

Assigned Reading-Keeping pace with the required reading by following the course schedule is essential to your learning and progress in this course. Your Moodle posts must demonstrate that you have completed the assigned reading.

Action Research Studies-will be posted for your reading to present models of students who have finished similar projects. Reading two studies of your choice and providing an insightful critique/analysis by use of your current knowledge base is a way to enhance your depth of the field. Students who select to participate by turning in a minimum of a two page, double spaced critique/analysis of the work of others will earn points towards their final grade in this course. The reading for this portion of the course is not optional.

Problem Statement (July 12<sup>th</sup>)-your problem statement should be one half page in length, single space. This is where you professionally identify your burning issue. Another way to think about this is, why do this study? What does the literature say about your research topic? Why is it important? What is the current state concerning your interest? In what ways might your project impact teaching and learning?

Field Notes from Observations-select a location where you know you can observe for an hour on three different occasions. During your observation(s) you will write field notes about what you observed. A research journal is suggested for your own use, but not required.

Analysis of Field Notes (August 2<sup>nd</sup>)-this is where you will analyze your three observations in the field. What did you notice? What might it mean?

Research Tools (August 9<sup>th</sup>)-For this assignment, you will develop the research tools to be used in your project. For example: interview scripts, surveys or collection of artifacts may be part of your research design. If interviews are to be used, parental permission is required. Examples of consent will be posted on Moodle.

Final Paper (August 23<sup>rd</sup>)-your final paper will include:

- Introduction (problem statement)
- Literature Review (from last semester)
- Research Methodology (The first core concept of this course.)
- Data Analysis (The second core concept of this course.)
- Action Plan (What will you do with your findings?)

Your final paper should be between 10-12 pages (double spaced), including your literature review.

**Use of APA is expected in all assigned writing for this course.**

### **Due Dates**

Keeping pace with the assigned readings, writings and Moodle discussion is the best way to promote your own learning and successful completion of EST6500. Thursday will be an important day in this course to keep you on track. Do not hesitate to contact me via email or phone should any clarification be needed on any assignment. If you experience any extenuating circumstances do not hesitate to contact me to make other arrangements that support your situation.

### **Performance Assessment**

Both the content and the quality of your writing are important. Make sure that your writing is carefully proofread. A peer editor may be something to consider before turning in your writing. If assignments

that have been submitted are not of high quality, students will be asked to re-do the assignment before instructor feedback.

All assignments are expected to be the individual student's original work and writing. Use of **proper APA** formatting is expected in this course including proper use of direct quotes and paraphrasing. Plagiarism is considered serious at Oakland University. Academic misconduct will be reported to the Dean of Students and, thereafter, to the Academic Conduct Committee. Please refer to the Oakland University Graduate Catalog to read the full Academic Conduct Policy.

Students are always welcome to discuss your ideas and topics with the instructor before starting work on any assignment to clarify expectations.

### **Grading**

Your performance in this course will be graded using the University's point scale: 1.0-4.0. Your earned total points will determine your grade in EST6500. Students should not assume full credit will be given for each assignment. The quality (e.g., well-organized, correct spelling, meeting deadlines and expectations, and degree of insight displayed) in completed assignments will be considered in the evaluation of each assignment.

| <b>Assignment</b>       | <b>Points Available</b>          |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Moodle Discussion X 8   | 10 Points Per Week = 80 Possible |
| Problem Statement       | 10 Points                        |
| Field Notes             | 5 Points X 3 = 15 Points         |
| Analysis of Field Notes | 15 Points                        |
| Research Tools          | 30 Points                        |
| Final Paper             | 50 Points                        |
| Total                   | 200 Points X 2 = 400 Points      |

Grading for Moodle posts will be based on levels of reflection and critical thinking evident in your writing. Continuing the theme of your literature review and infusing it throughout your work demonstrates layers of depth and understanding of the field you are researching. Demonstration of your learning throughout the semester will guide your writing and research design.

An example student who earns a total of 190 points throughout the semester will earn a 3.8 in the course.

### **Course Evaluations**

At the end of this course, evaluations can be completed confidentially by going to <http://www2.oakland.edu/secure/evals/student/> and entering your Grizzly ID number and password. You will be asked to rate the course on 21 items. A summary of the results is not available to the professor until after final grades have been submitted.

### **Relevant Professional Associations**

American Educational Research Association  
American Educational Studies Association  
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development  
National Association for Multicultural Education

### **Relevant Journals**

American Journal of Educational Research  
Action Research  
Action Research International  
Curriculum Inquiry  
Educational Action Research  
Educational Leadership  
Educational Researcher  
Harvard Educational Review

Journal of Curriculum Studies  
Journal of Curriculum Theory  
Journal of Curriculum & Supervision  
Journal of Educational Thought  
Journal of Teacher Education  
Teachers College Record  
The Action Research Electronic Reader

### **Web-Based Resources**

Action Research at Queen's University  
<http://educ.queensu.ca/~ar/>

Action Research at Bath University  
<http://www.bath.ac.uk/~edsajw/>

WEB Links to Participatory Action Research Sites  
<http://www.goshen.edu/soan/soan96p.htm>

Ontario Educational Research Council  
<http://www.oerc.cyberus.ca/>

Educating as Inquiry  
<http://users.andara.com/~jnewman/>

An On-Line Journal for Teacher Research  
<http://wwwise.utoronto.ca/~ctd/networks/>

The Ontario Action Researcher  
<http://www.unipissing.ca/oar/oarhomePAG>



