

Conducting Research on Teaching

EDCI 698 IHP3

Spring 2008

Class Meetings: Alternate Thursdays 5-7:30 PM Montgomery Blair High School, Room 242

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"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." Albert Einstein

Purpose of the Course

Reflective practice is an essential component of the conceptual framework of the University of Maryland, College of Education. This course is designed to help you develop your reflective capacities by providing you the opportunity to engage in rigorous inquiry into your own classrooms during the teaching internship. Over the course of the year, you will:

- identify a question about your teaching practice and your students' learning;
- review the current literature surrounding your question;
- develop a conceptual framework for pursuing your question;
- develop a plan to collect data;
- collect and analyze your data and identify emergent themes;
- write an action research paper;
- present your project and findings to the class.

I will provide guidance and feedback during each stage of this project, but you will also find great support from other students in the class. Examining one's own teaching requires courage and support from the community. Because the support of a community is so central to inquiry into one's own teaching, you will be evaluated not only on completion of each component of the research project, but also on your participation in class discussions and collaborative activities. As part of your professional commitment to your colleagues and to your research you will be expected to attend all scheduled classes and actively participate in all class activities.

Assignments and Activities

This course has been modified from a one-semester course to a year-long course. In this second semester, you will be expected to produce the following:

- A research proposal (includes revised description/rationale of research question and literature review, plus description of proposed conceptual framework and methodology for data collection and analysis) (6-10 pages)
- A data analysis paper
- A final action research paper
- A presentation of your action research

I will provide fuller description of these as they are assigned. In addition to these assignments, you will also be expected to keep a weekly action research journal and participate (both in person and on-line) with a small research group.

Action Research Teacher Journal

The journal will serve as one of your primary sources of data and hence will serve as a running record of various events, interactions, and conversations in your classroom as well as your reflections upon these various moments in your teaching. You should pay particular attention to description in your journal. This means paying attention to the content of conversations, the nature of interactions, etc. In particular, you should pay attention to what students say and do, and to the ways in which your instruction creates opportunities for students to learn. From time to time you will be asked to share some of the entries in your teaching journal with others in the class.

Research Group

You will also be asked to be an involved member of small research groups comprised of your classmates. The purpose of these groups will be to help and guide each other through the action research process. You will be asked to support members of your groups and share some of your own challenges, issues, and questions you are facing in your own research process as well as some of your journal entries. We will have an on-line space through which you will interact with members of the research group and provide written feedback.

Grading

The four assignments will count equally and comprise 80% of your final grade. Your participation, which includes your attendance, and ongoing evidence that you are keeping your journal and participating in class and on-line discussions, will count for the remaining 20%.

Readings

Mills, Geoffrey. "Action Research: A Guide for the Teacher Researcher." Third Edition. 2007. Merrill Prentice Hall. ISBN# 013172276X

This is the required text. Other readings will be handed out in class or sent electronically as necessary.

Tentative Course Calendar for Spring 2008*

Readings listed are to be discussed on the day they are listed in italics. Please read them *before* coming to class. Assignments due are listed in bold

February 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research proposal due • Reading and discussing research proposals
Feb 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Read Mills chapters 3 and 4</i> • Bring in data • Data analysis paper assigned
March 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring in data • <i>Read Mills chapter 5</i>
March 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring in data
April 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis paper due in class and on-line • Final paper and presentation described and assigned
April 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and peer editing • Respond to two data analysis papers on-line
May 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing and peer editing
May 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting projects
May 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final papers due

*(Subject to change based on class discussions, additional reading assignments, or group activities)

Relevant student policies

Religious Observance: The University System of Maryland policy "[Assignments and Attendance on Dates of Religious Observance](#)" provides that students *should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs; students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances.*

We are a diverse community and enroll students of many religions; pursuant to policy, we will do what we can when there are students' requests for excused absences and make-up test requests due to reasons of religious observances. *It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance. Notice should be provided as soon as possible but no later than the end of the schedule adjustment period.*

Honor Code: The University is one of a small number of universities with a student-administered [Code of Academic Integrity](#) and an [Honor Pledge](#). The Code prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. Students should write the following signed statement on the top of each examination or assignment: *I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).* Compliance with the code is administered by the Student Honor Council, which strives to promote a "community of trust" on the College Park campus.

Individual Needs Accommodation: The University is legally obligated to provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. In order to ascertain what accommodations may need to be provided, students with disabilities should inform the instructors of their needs at the beginning of the semester. The instructor will then consult with [Disability Support Services](#) (314-7682). DSS will make arrangements with the student to determine and implement appropriate academic accommodations.