Course Description

The University of Maryland faculty believes that professional teachers need to be reflective about their own practice. EDCI 698, Conducting Research on Teaching, helps pre-service teachers develop their reflective capacities by providing the opportunity for MCERT students to engage in rigorous inquiry into their own classroom practices during the course of their teaching internship. Over the course of the fall semester, students will identify a question about their own teaching practice and begin reviewing the current literature. In the winter, students will generate a theory of understanding about their highlighted classroom problem and identify promising practices that can address this problem. In the spring, students will develop and implement a piloted plan to improve student learning and achievement in their classrooms, design and implement a research study of their pilot, collect, interpret and analyze classroom data, identify emergent themes, present their project and their preliminary findings, and write an action research/seminar paper.

Undertaking an inquiry project into one’s own teaching requires a reflective disposition because the subject of scrutiny is oneself and the fallibility of one’s current practices. Therefore, it is important that each student have the support of the MCERT community as all face the challenge of improving their own pedagogy by application of self-study, and, in turn, the learning and achievement of their students. Because it is so important that MCERT students have the resource of a trusted, safe community through which to explore the improvement of their teaching, this course will organize students into groups, and students will be expected to provide generous feedback to their peers at key junctures in the development of each individual inquiry project. Students will also have ample access to the instructor who will provide feedback and direction with each benchmark assignment of the course that will lead to the final paper.

Course Objectives

(INTASC 1, 3, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; Emerging Commitments Equity and Diversity, Advocacy, Reflection, Innovation and Creativity, Responsible for Ethical Action, and Specialist Competence; Conceptual Framework Knowledge of Subject Matter, Pedagogy, Learners, Curriculum, Social and Cultural Contexts.

This course is designed to:

1 You are expected to attend all regularly scheduled class sessions identified; exceptions only for documented emergencies.
• To closely examine a dimension of your own practice with a perspective of improving your teaching. (*INTASC 1,2,3,4,5,9; Emerging Commitments Reflection, Specialist Competence; Conceptual Framework Knowledge of Subject Matter, Pedagogy, Learners, Curriculum, Social and Cultural Contexts*).  

• To develop the tools, knowledge, and skills that support an intentional, systematic, and rigorous investigation of practice (*INTASC 1,2,3,4,5,9; Emerging Commitments Reflection, Specialist Competence; Conceptual Framework Knowledge of Subject Matter, Pedagogy, Learners, Curriculum, Social and Cultural Contexts*).  

• To engage students in the process of investigating the nature of the problems faced in daily classroom practice and in generating and evaluating promising solutions from a more deeply informed perspective (*INTASC 1,2,3,4,5,8,9; Emerging Commitments Internationalization, Reflection, Responsible and Ethical Action, Specialist Competence; Conceptual Framework Knowledge of Subject Matter, Pedagogy, Learners, Curriculum*).  

• To guide students through the research process in a classroom setting (*INTASC 1,2,3; Emerging Commitments Reflection, Responsible and Ethical Action; Conceptual Framework Knowledge of Subject Matter, Pedagogy, Learners, Curriculum, Social and Cultural Contexts*).  

• To help students learn the importance of collaboration in examining their own teaching through membership in a research group (*INTASC 9,10; Emerging Commitments Advocacy, Responsible and Ethical Action; Conceptual Framework Knowledge of Educational Goals and Assessment*).  

• To show students how research on the improvement of one’s own teaching can have a potentially transformative effect on student learning as well as school improvement and change (*INTASC 9,10; Emerging Commitments Equity and Diversity, Advocacy, Reflection, Responsible and Ethical Action; Conceptual Framework Knowledge of Educational Goals and Assessment*).  

• To conduct research that allows students to engage in professional conversations with their colleagues about some of the problems, challenges, and dilemmas of teaching and learning in the context of practice (*INTASC 9,10; Emerging Commitments Advocacy, Responsible and Ethical Action; Conceptual Framework Knowledge of Educational Goals and Assessment*).

**Required Text**


Additional supplemental readings posted on the course Blackboard throughout the year.

**Course Requirements for this Yearlong Course**

Students will earn one credit in the fall semester and two credits in the spring semester for this yearlong course. Student performance will be evaluated as satisfactory or unsatisfactory at the end of the fall semester, based on the production of the first two of four benchmark assignments. Students who receive an unsatisfactory evaluation in December will be required to register for three credits in the spring semester. At the end of the yearlong course, students will receive a final letter grade that reflects their successful production of an inquiry project paper (75%) as well as a formal presentation of their inquiry...
project (25%). Students will present their inquiry project at their school sites to their colleagues (e.g., school staff/department meeting). The point distribution for final grades is as follows:

A+= 100-99; A=98-95; A-=94-90; B+=89-86; B=85-83; B-=82-80; C = 70-79

From the beginning of the course this fall to the completion of the course next spring, students will be guided through several benchmark assignments that are designed to help scaffold the inquiry process. The benchmark assignments follow:

1) Inquiry Project Question and Justification [Fall Semester]
2) Literature Review [Fall Semester, first draft; final version, Spring Semester]
3) Investigation Plan [Spring Semester]
4) Inquiry Project Proposal [Spring Semester]
   (Components include: revised description/rationale of research question and literature review, plus description of classroom pilot and methodology for data collection and analysis)
5) Data analysis paper [Spring Semester]
6) Inquiry Project Presentation (based on preliminary findings from inquiry) [Spring Semester, during May]
7) Final Inquiry Project Paper [Summer Semester]
   (Final product is required to be 35-50 pages long and must meet university guidelines for master’s seminar papers).

Please be advised that all students must complete every assignment to pass the course.

Course Expectations
A. Professionalism
   You are expected to attend all scheduled classes and to arrive on time. If you are unable to attend class for some documented emergency, you must contact the instructor as soon as possible (jmcginni@umd.edu). You will be expected to make-up the missed class session (TBD on an individual basis). Missed class sessions (without prior approval) will affect your final grade in this course by 5% per missed class.

   You are expected to come to class prepared, having read the assigned readings, taken notes, and completed any other assigned activities. Your notes must go beyond the basic level of comprehension and instead indicate how the readings added to your knowledge or changed your thinking. These notes should serve as a basis for your written assignments and will assist you in participating in class discussions thoughtfully, responsibly, and constructively.

   You are expected to participate actively in class discussions. Be prepared to share insights each class session that were shaped by the readings and your emerging experiences as a classroom teacher. Your participation is important not only for your own growth and learning but also for the learning of others in the course. Our discussions serve as a forum in which you can sharpen your thinking, test your ideas, exchange insights and perceptions with the instructor and with each other, and contribute towards others thinking. As a result, we must all try to work hard at providing opportunities for all perspectives to be voiced and listened to in order to maximize the learning potential of this course. We will all strive to
be tolerant, patient, and respectful of diverse viewpoints.

All papers for this course, and all courses taken in the MCert program, must represent the students original work/ ideas, be written in accordance with APA Guidelines for writing research papers and must be wordprocessed, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font, with 1-inch margins all around.

B. Teacher Journal

Every student is expected to maintain a Teacher Journal for this yearlong course. You are expected to bring this journal to every class session. The journal will guide your inquiry project into your own classroom practices. All students in EDCI 698 are expected to keep a regular record (daily/weekly) of their responses, ideas, questions, and reflections about their teaching. This journal will serve as a primary source of data for each inquiry project, a running record and commentary, if you will, of what transpires in your classroom, conversations between you and your students and between you and your mentor teacher and other colleagues, and your sense-making of these exchanges. Time will be built into each class session of EDCI 698 for students to share their entries with their peers and to engage in dialogue about each student’s ongoing questions about their practice. Selections from your teacher journal are expected to appear in your final paper as evidence of your thinking about your inquiry topic.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students will not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs. Whenever possible, students will be given reasonable time to make up any academic assignment that is missed due to participation in a religious observance. Please advise the professor as soon as possible of any absences for religious observances.

Students at the University of Maryland are held to the highest level of academic integrity. The Honor Code prohibits students from submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents, plagiarizing papers or materials from the internet and other sources without proper documentation and cheating on exams. The full code is posted at www.studentconduct.umd.edu; students are responsible for its content. Laptops, smart phones, and tablets should be used to enhance instruction, not distract from it by engaging in private email or social media activities. Also, please turn all cell phones to vibrate and put them away during class session. Save texting to break times or between classes. Thank you for your cooperation.

Equal Educational Opportunity Policy Statement

In accordance with federal, state, local, university, and the UMD College of Education access to equal educational opportunity based on race; ethnicity; geographic origin; language; socioeconomic class; sex and gender; gender identity and expression; sexual orientation; physical, developmental, and psychological ability; religious, spiritual, faith-based, or secular affiliation; age and generation; and physical appearance, among other categories of social identity, is paramount. Every effort will be made to arrange for reasonable accommodations to ensure that such opportunity exists and is measurable in terms of equality of outcome.

Student Course Evaluations

As a member of the UMD academic community, as a student you have an important responsibility to submit your final course evaluations each term though CourseEvalUM in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland (Note: Please ignore email messages for you to evaluate the course before the end of the course). The link through which you can access the evaluation system is: www.courseevalum.umd.edu. Once you submit your electronic
evaluations, you can access all posted results via Testudo under CourseEvalUM Reporting. More information on the electronic evaluation system is available at: https://www.irpa.umd.edu/Assessment/CourseEval/stdt_faq.shtml.
## Tentative Class Schedule*

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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| September 29  | Course Introduction: What is systematic inquiry into your teaching practice?  
Overview of Teacher Inquiry  
Initial Exploration of Possible Inquiry Questions  
The Role of Teacher Journaling and Your Final Paper in EDCI 698 | Mills, Chapter 1  
Three other journal articles provided by the professor on the course Blackboard site. | Read the assigned readings and come prepared with notes in relation to these questions:  
1. What is teacher inquiry?  
2. Based on the readings, whom does teacher inquiry seem to benefit?  
3. How do you think engaging in teacher inquiry may help you become the type of teacher you seek to become?  
(Hesitancies to engaged in teacher inquiry?) |
| November 10   | Deciding on an area of inquiry and writing inquiry questions.  
Reviewing the Literature: An Introduction                      | Mills, Chapter 3  
Other readings provided by the professor on the course Blackboard site | Read the assigned readings and come prepared with notes on each.  
Prepare a statement/vignette that explains how you are focused on a particular area of AR inquiry.  
Include events/issues in your explanation that add richness/texture.  
See Mills, Chapter 1, page 1-2 for an example of a vignette. |
| December 8    | Reviewing the Literature Part Two: Writing a Literature Review         | Mills, Chapter 2.  
Sample teacher inquiry articles and selected past MCERT student AR Inquiry Project Papers     | Inquiry Project Question  
Justification due (electronic version sent to the professor before) |
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<tr>
<td>Jan 12</td>
<td>Developing a <em>Theory of Understanding &amp; Action</em> and Designing an Inquiry Classroom Pilot</td>
<td>Mills, Chapter 4</td>
<td>Literature Review due. Minimum of 10 sources (an electronic version sent to instructor before the class session and a hardcopy version brought to class for sharing) [Benchmark #2]</td>
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<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>An Introduction to Inquiry Design: Theory of Triangulation Utilizing Qualitative Data Utilizing Quantitative Data</td>
<td>Mills, Chapter 5</td>
<td>Read the assigned readings and come prepared with notes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>An Introduction to Data Analysis</td>
<td>Mills, Chapter 6</td>
<td>Read the assigned readings and come prepared with notes.</td>
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<td><strong>March 16</strong></td>
<td>Individual Conferences (as needed)</td>
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<td>Inquiry Project Proposal due (an electronic version sent to instructor before the class session and a hardcopy version brought to class for sharing) [Benchmark #3]</td>
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<td>April 13</td>
<td>Writing your Inquiry Paper</td>
<td>Mills, Chapter 8 Appendix A</td>
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<td>May 4</td>
<td>Reflecting on and Evaluating Action Research: Next Steps</td>
<td>Data Analysis paper due (an electronic version sent to instructor before the class session and a hardcopy version brought to class for sharing) [Benchmark #4]</td>
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<td><strong>May 18</strong></td>
<td>Individual conferences (as needed)</td>
<td>Final Seminar Draft Paper (file sent to instructor) accepted starting on Friday, May 24th. Deadline: (submitted in LiveText) Friday, June 7, 2012.</td>
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*Class meetings dates are subject to change
** Students who would like an individual conference with the instructor will sign up for them the week before the session (COB Thursday).