

## **EDUC 707 EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH/ACTION RESEARCH Fall 2016**

Meeting times: September 14<sup>th</sup> (call, video chat or e-mail), September 21<sup>st</sup> (in UWSP library) and December 7 from 5:00 -8:00 p.m. (in CCIT or remotely connected)

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this course is to provide you with a basic understanding of educational research, with a specific focus on action research. The course will include a combination of optional face-to-face meetings and online work using the Desire 2 Learn (D2L) format. Because this is a course about research, you may decide to use the students you teach for your research subjects. After our first meeting, you will explore a variety of sources for educational research, determine ways educational research can inform and improve teaching practice, define your action research topic, examine best teaching practices to help determine a focus for your own action research, and develop an action plan for your action research. In October and November, you will carry out your action plan and collect and analyze data on the impact of your actions on students and student learning. Based on your findings, you will draw conclusions about the impact of your actions and determine a future plan of action. In October and November, we will not have meetings, but you can always contact me if you need support in the course. For our December meeting, you should plan on analyzing data/evidence and drawing conclusions from your research. You will also develop a Power Point presentation summarizing your action research project and present it to classmates during the final meeting on December 7<sup>th</sup>. As in all School of Education courses, the following InTASC standards will provide the foundation for what we do in this class:

### **InTASC Core Teaching Standards**

These standards have been adopted by the School of Education. The standards have been grouped into four general categories to help users organize their thinking about the standards:

#### **The Learner and Learning**

Teaching begins with the learner. To ensure that each student learns new knowledge and skills, teachers must understand that learning and developmental patterns vary among individuals, that learners bring unique individual differences to the learning process, and that learners need supportive and safe learning environments to thrive. Effective teachers have high expectations for each and every learner and implement developmentally appropriate, challenging learning experiences within a variety of learning environments that help all learners meet high standards and reach their full potential. Teachers do this by combining a base of professional knowledge, including an understanding of how cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical development occurs, with the recognition that learners are individuals who bring differing personal and family backgrounds, skills, abilities, perspectives, talents and interests. Teachers collaborate with learners, colleagues, school leaders, families, members of the learners' communities, and community organizations to better understand their students and maximize their learning. Teachers promote learners' acceptance of responsibility for their own learning and collaborate with them to ensure the effective design and implementation of both self-directed and collaborative learning.

- Standard #1: Learner Development. The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.
- Standard #2: Learning Differences. The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.
- Standard #3: Learning Environments. The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.

## **Content**

Teachers must have a deep and flexible understanding of their content areas and be able to draw upon content knowledge as they work with learners to access information, apply knowledge in real world settings, and address meaningful issues to assure learner mastery of the content. Today's teachers make content knowledge accessible to learners by using multiple means of communication, including digital media and information technology. They integrate cross-disciplinary skills (e.g., critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, communication) to help learners use content to propose solutions, forge new understandings, solve problems, and imagine possibilities. Finally, teachers make content knowledge relevant to learners by connecting it to local, state, national, and global issues.

- Standard #4: Content Knowledge. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.
- Standard #5: Application of Content. The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

## **Instructional Practice**

Effective instructional practice requires that teachers understand and integrate assessment, planning, and instructional strategies in coordinated and engaging ways. Beginning with their end or goal, teachers first identify student learning objectives and content standards and align assessments to those objectives. Teachers understand how to design, implement and interpret results from a range of formative and summative assessments. This knowledge is integrated into instructional practice so that teachers have access to information that can be used to provide immediate feedback to reinforce student learning and to modify instruction. Planning focuses on using a variety of appropriate and targeted instructional strategies to address diverse ways of learning, to incorporate new technologies to maximize and individualize learning, and to allow learners to take charge of their own learning and do it in creative ways.

- Standard #6: Assessment. The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.
- Standard #7: Planning for Instruction. The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of

content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

Standard #8: Instructional Strategies. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

### **Professional Responsibility**

Creating and supporting safe, productive learning environments that result in learners achieving at the highest levels is a teacher's primary responsibility. To do this well, teachers must engage in meaningful and intensive professional learning and self-renewal by regularly examining practice through ongoing study, self-reflection, and collaboration. A cycle of continuous self-improvement is enhanced by leadership, collegial support, and collaboration. Active engagement in professional learning and collaboration results in the discovery and implementation of better practice for the purpose of improved teaching and learning. Teachers also contribute to improving instructional practices that meet learners' needs and accomplish their school's mission and goals. Teachers benefit from and participate in collaboration with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members. Teachers demonstrate leadership by modeling ethical behavior, contributing to positive changes in practice, and advancing their profession.

Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice. The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration. The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

### **Course Learning Outcomes**

Graduate students participating in this course will be able to:

1. describe how educational research, including action research, can be used to inform and improve teaching practice and increase student learning
2. define action research as a specific kind of educational research, and explain how it can be used to inform and improve teaching practice and increase student learning.
3. identify the steps involved in action research and explain different strategies/methods that can be used to conduct action research.
4. conduct action research in a classroom/school setting to address a need/problem/interest related to students and student learning.
5. determine the impact of their actions on students/classroom/school through collecting and analyzing data.

6. develop a plan for future action based on the findings of their action research.

## ASSIGNMENTS, POLICIES AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### I. REQUIRED READINGS

You are required to read:

1. Johnson, A. P. (2008). *A short guide to action research*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson. (Used on Amazon for \$3.48)
2. Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., & Hyde, A. (2006). *Best practice: Today's standards for teaching and learning in America's schools*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (Available for check out in library)

### II. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (15 pts.)

Attending class meetings is a requirement and professional expectation of the course. You will be required to attend two meetings either face to face or remotely. The first meeting is mandatory on September 14<sup>th</sup>. The last meeting is scheduled for December 7<sup>th</sup> for final project presentations. You have the option of using Skype or another form of on-line communication for these meetings, but you must discuss this option with the instructor ahead of time. You must present your final project using a Powerpoint or Prezi.

### III. ACTION RESEARCH WORKSHEET (10 pts.)

The action research worksheet provides a framework for completing your action research project and is posted on the D2L website. This will be discussed and completed in the first session. Completion of the Action Worksheet is essential to keep you focused and to work independently on your action research project. The worksheet is your guide on the side. You should make an attempt to draft each section of your research project. It is not a final product.

Bring a draft of Module 1, Part 1 "Defining the Problem/Need/Area of Interest", Module II, Part 1 "Action Plan," the "Review of the Literature Template" with a minimum of four sources completed to the October meeting. You are also encouraged to draft ideas for Module III, Part 1 "Data Collection, which we will be addressing in class.

A due date for the action worksheet is October 9<sup>th</sup>.

## IV. MODULES

**Modules 1 and 2 are submitted together and are due October 30<sup>th</sup>. It is recommended that all modules be read by a reading/writing partner before submission.**

### **Module 1: Defining the problem/need/interest Review of the Literature**

In this first step of action research, you will identify a significant problem/need/area of interest in your own classroom/school (readings in the course text, "Best Practice", will help you identify the problem/need/area of interest). The first class session in September as well as your readings will also help you to identify and refine your problem/need/area of interest. Once you have identified your action research focus, you will review relevant professional literature to determine current practice and thought/theory in that area to help guide the development of an action plan. The review of the literature is

also very helpful for identifying the best methods for collecting and analyzing data to determine the impact of your action plan on students and student learning. This module will be the main focus of our September meetings.

**Corresponding readings:** Chapters 1, 8, and one additional chapter of your choice in “Best Practice”.  
Chapters 3, 4, 6, 7 and 16 in “A Short Guide to Action Research”

**Module 2: Action Plan  
Lesson Plans**

In the second step of action research, based on your area of focus and what you find in related professional literature, you will design an action plan to address the problem/need/area of interest in your classroom/school/project. In order to make very clear what is involved in your plan of action you will write an overview/summary of your action plan and write a set of lesson plans (if appropriate) to explain exactly what instruction/activities/practices you will be implementing in your classroom.

**Corresponding readings:** Chapter 11 in “A Short Guide to Action Research”

**Email a draft of Module 3 to the check in meeting in October. Modules 3 and 4 are submitted together and are due November 27<sup>th</sup>.**

**Module 3: Data Collection and Analysis**

In the third and fourth steps of action research, based on your area of focus, what you find in related professional literature and your particular action plan, you will choose at least three (triangulation) forms of data to collect and analyze to determine the impact of your action plan on students/student learning. You will then choose formats (i.e., bar graph, pie graph, chart, etc.) for representing your data that best highlight your findings. Tentative ideas for data collection methods should be done in early October. Data collection should take place in October and November. The goal is 4 weeks of data.

**Corresponding readings:** Chapters 8, 9, 10, 17 and 18 in “A Short Guide to Action Research”

**Module 4: Conclusions, Recommendations and Plan for Future Action**

In the last step of action research, you will draw conclusions based on your data analyses, make any appropriate recommendations, and determine a plan for future action based on your findings. Your plan for future action should explain specifically what your next steps will be and when they will occur.

**Corresponding readings:** Chapters 5 and 11 in “A Short Guide to Action Research”

**Module 5: Power Point Presentation to Peers, Final Sharing Meeting**

We will have a final class meeting on Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at which time everyone will present a Power Point presentation of their action research. The Power Point will include a summary of the problem/need/area of interest, review of literature, action plan, data collection and analysis, conclusions and plan for future action. Power Point presentation should be limited to eight minutes. Please upload your Power Point to D2L before Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> so it is easy to access for sharing.

**Corresponding readings:** Chapter 13 in “A Short Guide to Action Research”

## V. LESSON PLAN FORMAT (if appropriate)

Your action plan must include lesson plans to provide a description of the practices you will be implementing in your classroom. Having lesson plans will also make it easier for you to remember the process you used with students and to use and revise your lesson plans in the future. It is recommended that lesson plans include the following components:

**Rationale** - should clearly identify the purpose for teaching each day's lesson and should be connected to your action plan.

**Learning Outcomes** - should include a list of specific intended learning outcomes.

**Materials** - should include a list of the materials needed to conduct the lesson.

**Procedure** – should describe the procedure that will be used, including what you will do and what the students will do.

**Assessment/evaluation** – should provide a plan for how you will assess student learning.

Assessment should describe how you will assess the accomplishment of learning outcomes.

## VI. GRADING PROCEDURES

You will receive credit according to the following point system:

### Graded Assignments

Attendance at mandatory meetings		10 points
Action Research Worksheet		10 points
October check in by email		5 points
Module 1:	Defining the problem/need/interest Review of the Literature	15 points
Module 2:	Action Plan Lesson Plans	15 points
Module 3:	Data Collection and Analysis	15 points
Module 4:	Conclusions and Plan for Future Action	15 points
Module 5:	Power Point Presentation to Peers Final Sharing Meeting	15 points
Total		<hr/> 100 points

**NOTE:** 1 point per day will be deducted for late submission of any assignment unless communication has happened with the instructor.

## VI. GRADING SCALE

Points	Grade	Points	Grade
100-93	A	82-81	B-
92-91	A-	80-79	C+
90-89	B+	78-73	C
88-83	B		

No grades below a C will be given. If your grade is below a C, you will be assigned an incomplete for the course and will need to redo/revise your action research project to bring your grade to a C or above.

### **Common Core Standards and Rtl**

Wisconsin has adopted the common core standards as a means of defining how and what instruction is taught at each grade level. Please refer to the link attached if you want to find the common core standards in a curricular area.

[http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/stn\\_ccss](http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/stn_ccss)

Wisconsin has a unique vision for the implementation of the framework for Rtl. The attached link provides you that framework as well as additional links to PBIS and SIMS. You are strongly encouraged to use this framework when thinking about instructional design. There is also a wealth of resources for understanding Wisconsin Rtl located at the Wisconsin Rtl Center website that is also included.

<http://rti.dpi.wi.gov/>

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

### **UWSP Community Bill of Rights and Responsibilities**

UWSP values a safe, honest, respectful and inviting learning environment. In order to ensure that each student has the opportunity to succeed, a set of expectations have been developed for all students and instructors. This set of expectations is known as the Rights and Responsibilities document, and it is intended to help establish a positive living and learning environment at UWSP. For information go to:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Pages/rightsandresponsibilities.aspx>

The rights and responsibilities document also includes the policies regarding academic misconduct, which can be found in Chapter 14. A direct link can be found here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/SSR-2010/rightsChapter14.pdf>

### **American with Disabilities Act**

The American Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, check here:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADAPolicyinfo.pdf>

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center and then contact me at the beginning of the course. I am happy to help in any way I can. For more information, please visit the Disability

and Assistive Technology Center located on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Learning Resource Center (Library). You can also find more information here: <http://www.4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>

Again, any special circumstances that are unique to you as a student learner can be discussed at any time. Please make special arrangements to meet privately during my office hours.