



George Mason University
College of Education & Human Development/Graduate School of Education
Secondary Education Program

EDUC 675 (Section 003), “Research in Secondary Education”/Spring 2014 (3 credits)

Key Information

Instructor: Francis Eberle, PhD, Adjunct Professor

Office/hours: By appointment, via phone, or via Skype (feberle)

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Class Meetings

Mondays, 4:30 – 7:10 pm

When our class meets on campus (for approximately nine sessions), we will meet in Thompson Hall L 028. We will also hold asynchronous or synchronous virtual “meetings” approximately every other week throughout the semester (for approximately seven sessions). Finally, we will have at least two rounds of conferences—one round of individual/small group conferences at the beginning of our course and one round of individual/small group conferences at the end of the semester—to help you formulate your research focus and then complete your project. We may also conduct virtual small group conferences during our online sessions.

Catalog Description

Pre-requisites: Licensure and EDUC 674; to be taken as the last course in the M.Ed.

Co-requisite: M.Ed. exit requirement

The portfolio (or exit requirement) is submitted during the semester the candidate is enrolled in EDUC 675. This course helps beginning teachers become more effective by critiquing various research paradigms, reviewing the research literature, and systematically collecting and interpreting evidence to improve practice. EDUC 675 emphasizes linking evidence of student learning to make informed instructional decisions. Specifically, this course is designed to help beginning teachers understand and enact concepts and principles of action research in secondary classrooms. Students will learn how to identify and use research literature and systematic evidence to improve practice with a focus on students’ learning.

*Note: This course **requires** that you have access to a classroom or appropriate research site to conduct your research. If you do not have your own classroom, you will need to let me know during our first class. I will suggest alternative arrangements, but these will still require that you conduct*

research in a classroom setting on a teaching strategy.

Relationships to Professional Standards

By the end of this course students will demonstrate an understanding and application of subject area standards aligned with the National Content Standards and identified by their Specialized Professional Association (SPA):

- Social studies teachers: National Council for the Social Studies, <http://www.ncss.org/>
- English teachers: National Council of Teachers of English, <http://www.ncte.org/>
- Math teachers: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, <http://www.nctm.org/>
- Science teachers: National Science Teachers Association, <http://www.nsta.org/>

Students should also have an understanding of and be able to apply the teaching and learning standards as outlined by the Interstate New Teacher Assistance and Support Consortium (INTASC):

- www.ccsso.org/Documents/2011/InTASC_Model_Core_Teaching_Standards_2011.pdf

Finally, students should be aware of the skills framework of the Partnership for 21st Century Skills and the professional guidelines offered by the National Board for Teaching Standards:

- www.p21.org/overview/skills-framework
- http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards/the_five_core_propositio

CEHD Core Values Commitment

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. This course supports these values by providing students with learning experiences that necessitate collaboration; providing students opportunities to reflect on their teaching and leadership roles in classroom and school contexts; calling on students to develop and participate in innovative research-based practice; and requiring students to reflect on their pedagogies in light of social justice issues. These Core Values are aligned with course outcomes as described below. See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/> for more information.

Course Outcomes and Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to:

- 1) demonstrate an understanding of the process and components used in action research by conducting and assessing a chosen scholarly inquiry situated in their classroom and impact on students' learning (research-based practice; innovation)
- 2) prepare a research proposal which makes explicit links between theory and practice (research-based practice)
- 3) examine ethical considerations when conducting action research (research-based practice; social justice)
- 4) conduct action research which includes: research question(s), research proposal; review of related literature; methods; data collection/analysis; findings; discussion of impact on students, teachers, and the education field (research-based practice)
- 5) participate in critical and collaborative inquiries to gain multiple perspectives in interpreting research and for validation and peer review of research (collaboration; ethical leadership)
- 6) demonstrate integration of national and state standards for content and pedagogy as related to their research question(s) by reflecting on their own teaching practice and its impact on students' learning (SPA standards respective to students' discipline)
- 7) demonstrate skills in the application of technology and use of resources in action research (innovation)

Students will achieve these outcomes through the following objectives:

- 1) Prepare a research proposal that includes the research context, a problem statement, a research question and outcomes, and a data collection plan which makes explicit links between theory and practice. Students will brainstorm (in whole class and small group settings), give peer feedback online, self-reflect, and post a viable plan to conduct a research study in the classroom. Students will access resources and references, and conduct a review of the literature online. The proposal will be judged on its viability and level of practical application, given the time constraints of the semester.
- 2) Conduct an action research project in a local school or classroom. Students will prepare all data collection instruments to conduct the study. Prior to implementation, data collection instruments will be peer and instructor reviewed in online and/or face-to-face discussion forums. Students will be assigned to research teams that will troubleshoot and provide support as data is collected. Results will be shared and students will provide feedback to each other on the presentation and interpretation of data.
- 3) Review professional strengths and weaknesses of the action research process through peer review and self-assessment. Students will participate in weekly online and/or face-to-face discussions of their progress throughout the research process.
- 4) Write an action research report (using APA format) that includes the context for the study, research question(s) and outcomes, a review of related literature, methodology, data collection/analysis, implications, limitations, and an action plan. Students will review example research reports from prior semesters. Students will post drafts of their complete report and its sections on Blackboard for peer and instructor review and feedback using the rubric used to assess the report. Students will present a summary of their report to their peers in brief in-class presentations and a poster session format at the end of the semester.
- 5) Work in small groups to identify one authentic, alternative, preferably contemporary media-based method through which they will share the results of their action research findings. Each group will design and enact a presentation that moves the public understanding of group members' studies along. Groups might choose to create a collective presentation on group members' projects you might highlight one group member's project and findings. Groups might highlight the very importance of action research or summarize the findings of group members' efforts.

Course Delivery

The primary purpose of this course is for you to learn how to conduct action research and apply it in your classroom in order to improve your teaching and your students' learning. Throughout the course, you will complete activities that you will later be able to insert—some almost verbatim—into your final action research report. This course is approximately 50% face-to-face and 50% online and is considered a hybrid course. This course is student-centered and will be conducted using a project-based approach. Your research questions and methodology will be the focus of the course and will drive readings, classroom discussions, peer review activities, reflections, and the action research project that you complete. The purpose of the class discussions and peer review sessions will be to support completion of our action research projects and provide opportunities for us to learn about and analyze methods and techniques of action research. You will have the opportunity to construct knowledge and critically reflect on the research process as you complete the action research proposal and report, and then prepare your "Action Research Impact Presentation" for graduation.

The course will be delivered through a variety of online, face-to-face, and individualized instructional approaches. Online sessions will be conducted in both synchronous and asynchronous formats, but you will be expected to post your own reflections and assignments and respond to

peers' and instructors' postings and feedback by the end of each designated class week (midnight US eastern standard time each Sunday). During class meetings there will be large group, small group, and individual activities. Online classes are considered regular instructional time and the assignments given during that time are the equivalent those from an in-class session. The online classes involve research, use of professional web sites, synchronous and asynchronous discussions (during specified timeframes), peer review, email with the instructor and classmates, readings, writing reflections, and other assignments. GMU's BlackBoard course framework will be used regularly throughout the course. Your GMU email address is required for communication with the course instructor and must be active by the first week of class. Please inform me of any accessibility problems the first day of class.

Participants conduct independent research, as well as communicate with each other and the instructor via electronic media. In general, we will engage in four activities during our time together:

1. Mini-lectures, activities, and discussions related to research methods led by both the instructor and course participants and supported by the course text and other selected readings
2. Discussions of the week's readings led by the instructor and course participants
3. Research and critical friends and Action Research Impact group meetings in which students concentrate on selected readings, provide feedback and support for each others' writing and research processes, and share how they have presented their research efforts to authentic audiences
4. Individual, small group, and whole group meetings to discuss research efforts

Please note that because you can learn from each other, and because teaching is often a collaborative effort, you will frequently work in groups. This will give you a chance to share ideas, be exposed to a range of perspectives and experiences, and support each other as you continue to develop your teaching and researching skills.

Course Overview

Teachers are often encouraged to implement "research-based" practices, required to attend workshops where research findings are presented, provided with lists of books that synthesize research, and asked to suggest changes in practice based on the implications of research. Although these practices have their usefulness, the assumption implicit in much of the discourse surrounding educational research is that teachers are *consumers* and/or *objects* of research, rather than *producers* of research. The past two decades have seen a growing movement to upend those assumptions through an emphasis on the importance of action research. Thus, the research and theory we will read and the methodologies with which we will engage are those associated with "action research" (i.e., research conducted by teachers for professional purposes). Action research positions teachers as *producers* of knowledge—professionals who can learn about and improve their practice by studying important questions that grows from their own knowledge, experiences and observations.

This class is designed to support you in using and building on the ideas and content you have encountered in your previous coursework. Most importantly, the course assists you as you consider ways to better support children and youth. In other words, your current and future students are at the center of our work. Toward these ends, the course requires you to conceptualize, design, and begin to implement an original research project in your school/classroom. Only if we attempt to live these action research (also called "teacher research" and "practitioner research") processes in this course will you be able to use them eventually in your own teaching practices. Thus, for every

activity in this course, you must act and study with multiple lenses—as a student, teacher, and advocate. Although the work required to achieve these goals is intensive, the course is designed to provide you with much support. You will need to hit the ground running, starting your research project early, and working on it steadily. Through our readings, we will explore research methodologies, analyses of the history and impact of action research, and the efforts of other action researchers. Our readings and discussions will help you develop your own rationale and “road map” for your inquiry project. We will dig into readings together, write often and share our writing with one another, and support each other in our research goals.

Instructor Introduction and Theoretical Framework

I believe that the best teachers know themselves as professionals in the broadest sense; knowledge, skills and character. I will ask you also to express yourselves as professionals in a variety of ways, including text, photography, anthropology, interpersonal, visual and as community constituent. I will expect you to be your best, brightest, most thoughtful and most creative selves (while having some fun too). I intend that this course will be one that you remember, and that you will care passionately about the work we do. I will have uncompromising professional standards for your behavior, participation, and openness. At the same time, I will do everything possible to ensure that you meet these standards. My hope is that we will experience much intellectual collaboration, engaging discussion, professional camaraderie and laughter. I encourage you to take risks, celebrate those risks and those taken by your colleagues.

I approach all educational experiences with the goal of helping students to learn to be active, curious, engaged, creative, and citizens of a just society. It is important for us as educators to approach our teaching with a simultaneously critical and creative perspective: when we assess current teaching practices, we also begin to develop new ones. I bring to this class the perspectives of a veteran teacher, teacher educator and teacher advocate, as well as the points of view from educational politics, scientist and artist. I offer an explicit critique of teaching and learning: as a classroom science teacher with more than fifteen years’ experience, an advocate for teachers, critical friend of education, scholar, scientist, exploring technologist, parent of two children, and an advocate for children and youth and schools. Perhaps most importantly to you, I have spent my school, university teaching, and career working in and for K-12 teachers and schools (mostly secondary) with a wide range of children and youth. It is my hope that you will identify and express the experiences that influence your thinking. Taking on the role of an action researcher, it will be important for you to know yourself and the views you “see” the world and in particular your classroom. I am excited about the opportunity to be able to support you in this class as you investigate your classrooms. Finally, much as you as educators and university students must be concerned with your own development and others’ assessments of your class efforts, I am committed to my growth as a teacher, teacher educator and person. I will ask for your support in my learning as I assist your inquiry processes and as I consider the prospect of authoring (or co-authoring with you) articles exploring how best to help teachers conduct action research in disciplinary contexts.

During this class, I will ask you to think of the teaching strategies we use in class and that you plan to use as research interventions in your own classroom in three categories, which are framed by an assessment-driven, “backwards” design:

- 1) “Ways Out”: What is the student’s “way out” of the text or activity with which you are asking them to engage? That is, what artifacts and demonstrations will the student complete to exhibit her/his comprehension of the key ideas that they are encountering? How will you assess students’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes? How will students demonstrate their retention of and relationship to the material?

- 2) "Ways In": What is the student's "way in" to this text or activity? That is, how are you approaching the student's natural interests in or motivations for this assignment? Think about how you might use the student's existing "literacies" to do this. What specific strategies will you use?
- 3) "Ways Through": What are students' "ways through" this text or activity? That is, what strategies and tools are you giving students to make sense of and understand the sources you are using with this assignment? How will students translate the material into their own terms?

GMU/CEHD Policies and Resources for Students

George Mason University and the College of Education and Human Development expect that all students abide by the following:

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Professional Dispositions: Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm> or <http://cehd.gmu.edu/assets/docs/cehd/Dispositions%20for%20a%20Career%20Educator.pdf> for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code> for the full honor code.
- All students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the Mason Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. [See <http://ods.gmu.edu>].
- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website: <http://gse.gmu.edu/>.

Please note that:

- "Plagiarism encompasses the following:
 1. Presenting as one's own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment.

2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment." (from Mason Honor Code online at <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>)

- Paraphrasing involves taking someone else's ideas and putting them in your own words. When you paraphrase, you need to cite the source using APA format.
- When material is copied word for word from a source, it is a direct quotation. You must use quotation marks (or block indent the text) and cite the source.
- Electronic tools (e.g., SafeAssign) may be used to detect plagiarism if necessary.
- Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are treated seriously and may result in disciplinary actions.

The GMU Graduate School of Education Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions. The Virginia Department of Education and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education promote standards of professional competence and dispositions. Dispositions are values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and all members of the learning community.

The Graduate School of Education expects students, faculty, and staff to exhibit professional dispositions through a:

1. Commitment to the profession

- Promoting exemplary practice
- Excellence in teaching and learning
- Advancing the profession
- Engagement in partnerships

2. Commitment to honoring professional ethical standards

- Fairness
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Trustworthiness
- Confidentiality
- Respect for colleagues and students

3. Commitment to key elements of professional practice

- Belief that all individuals have the potential for growth and learning
- Persistence in helping individuals succeed
- High standards
- Safe and supportive learning environments
- Systematic planning
- Intrinsic motivation
- Reciprocal, active learning
- Continuous, integrated assessment
- Critical thinking
- Thoughtful, responsive listening
- Active, supportive interactions
- Technology-supported learning
- Research-based practice
- Respect for diverse talents, abilities, and perspectives
- Authentic and relevant learning

4. Commitment to being a member of a learning community

- Professional dialogue
- Self-improvement
- Collective improvement
- Reflective practice
- Responsibility
- Flexibility
- Collaboration
- Continuous, lifelong learning

5. Commitment to democratic values and social justice

- Understanding systemic issues that prevent full participation
- Awareness of practices that sustain unequal treatment or unequal voice
- Advocate for practices that promote equity and access
- Respects the opinion and dignity of others
- Sensitive to community and cultural norms
- Appreciates and integrates multiple perspectives

Emergency Notification

The university utilizes a communication system to reach all students, faculty, and staff with emergency information (e.g., in case of severe weather). You can be sure that you are registered with the Mason Alert system by visiting <https://alert.gmu.edu>. An emergency poster can also be found in each Mason classroom. Information about Mason emergency response plans can be found at <http://cert.gmu.edu/>.

Human Subjects Research Review Process

Any research or action research that will be publicly disseminated must have prior approval of the GMU Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). Inquiry/action research that is used solely for the purpose of studying pedagogical aspects may be conducted without additional permission **but cannot be disseminated**. Detailed information on what is involved in submitting a proposal to the Review Board is available from the following web site: <http://oria.gmu.edu/>

Required Texts and Materials

Anderson, L. (2013). *The Inclusion of Team Building Exercises to Encourage Productive Mathematical Discourse*.

Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.

Blake, M. (2013). *Science and Literacy: The impact of content reading on student learning*.

Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.

Dasbach, M. (2013). *Flipped Learning: The Impact of a Flipped Classroom Model on Achievement, Motivation, and Satisfaction*.

Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.

Gibson, S. (2013) *Helping History Come Alive Through Student-Based Learning Projects*.

Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.

- Golobic, J. (2012). *Engage with Reading and Writing: Strategies for High School Literacy Students*. Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Hannon, S. (2012). *Expanding our Literacies: Reading and Writing Strategies in the Classroom*. Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Hegerle, J. (2013). *Changing Desks, Changing Outcomes?* Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Marnell, J. (2013). *Flipping for Literacy in the History Classroom*. Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- McKew, E. (2013). *Striving For Excellence: The Use of Science Portfolios in a High School Earth Science Class*. Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Mills, G.E. (2013). *Action research: A guide for the teacher researcher* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education/Merrill Prentice Hall. ISBN: 9780132887762.
- Taylor, e. (2013). *A Questioning Change in a Procedural Classroom* Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Scharl, J. (2013). *Making Personal Connections*. Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.
- Thessin, R. (2013). *Increasing Student Engagement*. Unpublished masters action research project. Note: This paper will be provided electronically.

Additional readings will be available online and/or in class; we may substitute other teacher research projects for those listed above based on the topics and questions you select to examine, but these will be provided electronically and free-of-charge. You will also need access to a digital camera and a computer (with web, email, and printing privileges).

Recommended Texts

American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual (6th Ed.)*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Note: APA guidelines are available online at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Resources

Articles and Books

- Arhar, J., Holly, M. & Kasten, W. (2001). *Action research for teachers: Traveling the yellow brick road*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Bell, J. (1993). *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education and social science*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Biancarosa, G. & Snow, C.E. (2004). *Reading next—A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report from the Carnegie Corporation of New York*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education, 12.
- Burnaford, G., Fischer, F. & Hobson, D. (1996). *Teachers doing research: Practical possibilities*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Carlisle, L.R., Jackson, B. & George, A. (2006). Principles of social justice education: The social justice education in schools project. *Equity & Excellence in Education* 39, 55-64.
- Children's Defense Fund. (2008). *The state of America's children yearbook*. Available: www.childrensdefense.org/ac2001/Acol.ASP.
- Chiseri-Strater, E. & Sunstein, B. (2006). *What works? A practical guide for teacher research*. Heinemann. Note: Intro and sample chapter can be found at <http://books.heinemann.com/shared/onlineresources/E00713/chapter9.pdf> and ordered online at <http://books.heinemann.com/products/E00713.aspx>.
- Cochran-Smith, M., Lytle, S.L. (1999). The teacher research movement: A decade later. *Educational Researcher*, 28(7), 15-25.
- Costa, A. and Kallick, B. (1993). Through the lens of a critical friend. *Educational Leadership*, 51(2), 49-51.
- Cook-Sather, A. (2009). *Learning from the student's perspective: A methods sourcebook for effective teaching*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.
- Courtland, M.C., & Gambell, T.J. (1994). *Curriculum Planning in the Language Arts K-12: A Holistic Perspective*. North York, Ontario: Captus Press.
- Duncan-Andrade, J. (2005). Toward teacher development for the urban in urban teaching. *Teaching Education*, 15, 339-350.
- Ewald, W. (2001). *I wanna take me a picture: Teaching photography and writing to children*. Boston: Center for Documentary Studies/Beacon.
- Falk, B. & Blumenreich, M. (2005). *The power of questions: A guide to teacher and student research*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Freeman, D. (1998). *Doing teacher research: From inquiry to understanding*. Toronto, Canada: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Goodnough, K. (2001). Teacher development through action research. *Action in teacher education*, 23(1), 37-46.
- Greely, K. (2000). *Why fly that way?: Living community and academic achievement*. NY: Teachers College.
- Hanks, R.S. & Ponzetti, J.J. (2004). Family studies and intergenerational studies: Intersections and opportunities. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 2(3/4), 5-22.
- Herrell, A. & Jordan, M. (2007). *Fifty strategies for training English language learners*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- Hopkins, D. (1993). *A teacher's guide to classroom research*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press.
- Hubbard, R. & Power, B. (1999). *Living the questions: A guide for teacher researchers*. NY: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Jones, S. (2006). *Girls, social class, and literacy: What teachers can do to make a difference*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Kagan, D.M. (1993). *Laura and Jim and what they taught me about the gap between educational theory and practice*. NY: State University of New York Press.
- Kosnik, C., Beck, C., Freese, A.R., & Samaras, A.P. (Eds.), (2006). *Making a difference in teacher education through self-study: Studies of personal, professional, and program renewal*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in US schools. *Educational Research*, 35(7), 3-12.
- Leedy, P.D., and Ormrod, J.E. (2001). *Practical research: Planning and design*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Lucas, T. & Villegas, A.M. (2003). *Educating culturally responsive teachers: A coherent approach*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Macintyre, C. (2000). *The art of action research in the classroom*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

- MacLean, M. & Mohr, M. (1999). *Teacher-researchers at work*. Berkeley, CA: National Writing Project.
- Mahiri, J. (Ed). (2004). *What they don't learn in school: Literacy in the lives of urban youth*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Marquez-Zenkov, K. (2007). Through city students' eyes: Urban students' beliefs about school's purposes, supports, and impediments. *Visual Studies*, 22(2), 138-154.
- Marquez-Zenkov, K., & Harmon, J.A. (2007). "Seeing" English in the city: Using photography to understand students' literacy relationships. *English Journal*, 96(6), 24-30.
- Marzano, R., Pickering, D., & Pollock, J. (2004). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. Prentice Hall.
- McNiff, J., Lomax, P., & Whitehead, J. (2003). The main features of action research process. In *You and your action research project*. London and NY: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Mertler, C.A. & Charles, C.M. (2011). *Introduction to educational research* (7th ed.). Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 013701344-2.
- Mitra, D. (2007). Student voice in school reform: From listening to leadership. In D. Thiessen & A. Cook-Sather (Eds.), *International handbook of student experience in elementary and secondary school*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer Publishers.
- Moje, E.B., & Hinchman, K. (2004). Culturally responsive practices for youth literacy learning. In J. Dole & T. Jetton (Eds.), *Adolescent literacy research and practice* (pp. 331-350). New York: Guilford Press.
- Moje, E.B. (2008). The complex world of adolescent literacy: Myths, motivations, and mysteries. *Harvard Educational Review*, Spring 2008, 107-154.
- Morrell, E. and Duncan-Andrade, J. (2006). Popular culture and critical media pedagogy in secondary literacy classrooms. *International Journal of Learning*, 12, 2005/2006.
- Morrell, E. (2007). *Critical literacy and urban youth: Pedagogies of access, dissent, and liberation*. New York: Routledge.
- Myers, E. & Rust, F. (2003). *Taking action with teacher research*. Heinemann.
- Nieto, S. (2003). *What keeps teachers going?* New York: Teachers College Press.
- Oakes, J. & Lipton, M. (2003). *Teaching to change the world, 2nd ed*. Boston: McGraw Hill.
- Raggl, A. & Schratz, M. (2004). Using visuals to release pupil's voices: Emotional pathways to enhancing thinking and reflecting on learning. In C. Pole (Ed.), *Seeing is believing? Approaches to visual research (Volume 7)*. New York, NY: Elsevier.
- Richardson, L. (1998). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (volume 2). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Rodgers, C. (2006). Attending to student voice: The role of descriptive feedback in learning and teaching. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 36(2), 209-237.
- Rogers, R., et al. (2005). Professional development for social transformation: The literacy for social justice research group. *Language Arts*, 82(5), 347-358.
- Sagor, R. (1993). *How to conduct collaborative action research*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Samaras, A. P. (2011). *Self-study teacher research: Improving your practice through collaborative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Samaras, A. P., & Freese, A. R. (2006). *Self-study of teaching practices primer*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Samaras, A. P., Freese, A. R., Kosnik, C., & Beck, C. (Eds.) (2008). *Learning communities in practice*. The Netherlands: Springer Press.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Singer, Jessica. (2006). *Stirring up justice: Writing and reading to change the world*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. ISBN: 0325007470

- Street, B. (2003). What's "new" in New Literacy Studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 5(2), pp. 1-14.
- Teel, K., & Obidah, J. (Eds.). (2008). *Building racial and cultural competence in the classroom: Strategies from urban educators*. New York: Teachers College Press.
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Quantitative Analysis and Statistics

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Research and Writing

- Booth, W.C., Colomb, G.G., & Williams, J.M. (1995). *The craft of research*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago.
- Dahl, K.K. (1992). *Teacher as writer: Entering the professional conversation*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.

General Websites

- George Mason University Library: <http://library.gmu.edu/>
- What Kids Can Do: www.whatkidscando.org

- Through Students' Eyes: www.throughstudenteyes.org
- International Visual Sociology Association (IVSA): www.visualsociology.org

Action/Teacher Research/Research Websites

- http://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/tr_action/ (GMU teacher research site)
- <http://www.accessexcellence.org/LC/TL/AR/> (teacher research site)
- <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ntrp/> (UK teacher research site)
- <http://www.teacherresearch.net/> (international teacher research site)
- <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/english/composition/wits/research/index.html>
- <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/Dox/basics.html>

Data Collection Tools

- Go to Googledocs, then "spreadsheets" to create survey
- Survey Monkey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/home.asp>

National Reports and Test Reporting Centers

- A Nation at Risk: <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html>
- The Nation's Report Card/National Assessment of Educational Progress: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>
- National Center for Educational Statistics: <http://nces.ed.gov/help/sitemap.asp>
- TIMSS and PIRLS (The International Math and Science Study and International Literacy Study): <http://www.timss.org/>
- Best Evidence/School Reform Reports/School Models (Johns Hopkins University): <http://www.bestevidence.org/index.htm>

Virginia State Standards

- Virginia Department of Education: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/>
- State of Virginia, SOL Resources: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Instruction/sol.html>
- State of Virginia Standards of Learning Test Information: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/src/SOLassessments.shtml>

Course Requirements

General

All assignments should be turned in on the due date indicated in the schedule below via email. The submission deadline for assignments is Sunday midnight (US eastern standard time) each week. All projects must be typed, in 12-point font, with one-inch margins, double-spaced, in Times New Roman font, and follow APA guidelines. Writing quality (including mechanics, organization, and content) is figured into the overall points for each writing assignment, so please proofread carefully. Late papers and projects will not be accepted without penalty, excepting extraordinary circumstances. I am happy to clarify and lend assistance on projects and assignments, but please contact me within a reasonable timeframe. Please title each assignment with your last name, the name of the project/assignment, and the date you are submitting it (e.g., Smith_Literature_Review_Draft_9-1-12). *Note: I reserve the right to add, alter, or omit any assignment as necessary during the course of the semester.*

Attendance, Participation, and Discussion Facilitation (15 points)

Students are expected to attend *all* class periods of courses for which they register. Class participation—both in online and face-to-face settings—is important not only to the individual student, but to the class as whole. Class participation is a factor in grading; instructors may use

absences, tardiness, or early departures as de facto evidence of non-participation and as a result lower the grade. Participants are expected to read the assigned materials, complete online activities including pre-session Blackboard assignments, arrive promptly, attend all class meetings for the entire session, and participate in online and face-to-face class discussions. It is your responsibility to offer insights, questions, comments, and concerns from the readings; I suggest that you keep a reading log that includes both notes on and reactions to each reading. This log could also contain the field notes that you will take about your classroom as you complete your research project.

If, due to an emergency, you will not be able to participate during a given week of class, please contact me as soon as possible and certainly prior to any face-to-face class time; it's best to do so via my email or my mobile phone (703-400-0363). Students are responsible for obtaining information given during class discussions despite attendance. Demonstration of positive and collaborative professional dispositions toward colleagues during peer review, along with a willingness to accept constructive criticism, is a course expectation.

By agreeing to work together in this course, we can form a new learning community. This community will be rooted in mutual respect and shared responsibility; these foundations translate into consistent and punctual attendance and active participation in all class activities. My goal is to develop a comfortable online and face-to-face classroom community where risk-taking is encouraged; we can only grow through such open-heartedness. Your attendance, thoughtfulness, clarity, and active sharing of responsibility for our classroom community will affect your grade. It is your responsibility to share and respond with insights, questions, comments, concerns, artifacts, and images from the readings and your teaching and research experiences. Absences and tardies—in both online and campus class sessions—will impact your grade. Two tardies are equal to one absence, and missing 30% or more of class sessions will result in automatic course failure. Please turn off all mobile phones, computers, and pagers when you participate in our class.

You will have the chance to work with “critical friends” across the semester as you draft and craft your teacher research project. A critical friend is first of all a colleague whom you trust personally and professionally. S/he is also someone who is kind but courageous about asking provocative questions about your work and your perspective. In our course, a significant amount of in- and out-of-class time will be spent in our critical friends groups, and I will offer you tools to use to support the creation and revision of each section of your teacher research reports. These activities will require that you follow the outlined procedures quite closely—not religiously or without modification—but trusting the critical friends process and your peers. Critical friends intend not just to know their own work, but to be understanding of the contexts, circumstances, and settings of their peers' efforts. We can be advocates for each others' critical reflections on our teaching practices while helping each other. We will establish non-negotiables for our work as a class and for each of our critical friends groups.

As well, working in small groups (3-4), participants will serve as the discussion facilitators for an approximate 30-minute conversation related to the readings in a given week. Please find and implement a discussion facilitation strategy that you think would be useful among a group of teachers, paying attention to the topics in the given readings—both the textbook reading and the sample teacher research projects for this week. Please provide sufficient copies for all members of our class of a one-page summary of the discussion strategy you have used. Your ultimate goal is to help us make sense of the information in the week's reading and their relevance to our own teaching, researching, and professional development practices.

Note: Class participation (and Blackboard Discussion Board participation) may include development of an action research proposal and a tentative project timeline, completion of a weekly researcher log, drafting of weekly exit notes after our class sessions, and/or the completion of "analytic memos."

Blackboard Participation and Assignments (10 points)

Participants are expected to log onto Blackboard at least three times weekly. The Blackboard URL is <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>. Each member of our class will be responsible for contributing at least one posting to each discussion, accompanied by one image/artifact that is related to the ideas and/or events described in your posting. Each class member will also be required to respond to at least three peers each week, two of whom will be scheduled on a rotating basis and at least one other of your choosing. Please post contributions by the end of the week in which the topic is discussed. Discussion postings should be thorough and thoughtful. Just posting an "I agree/disagree with your comment" or "I think the same" to someone else's thoughts is not considered adequate. *Note: Access to the Internet to search for resources and to engage in online course related activity is required approximately three times per week.*

1) Assignment #1 (due Feb 3th)

Post a brief biographical sketch introducing yourself to the class. Attach a photo of yourself, preferably a close-up of you in your work environment. Then, choose and respond to two of the following questions on the Discussion Board and upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe:

- As you understand it, what is the scientific method and what is its purpose?
- When you hear the term "education research" what do you think?
- What has your experience been in reading education research studies, reports or articles? How have they been beneficial?
- Have you conducted or taken part in a research project or study? If so, please describe the experience, including your role.

2) Assignment #2 (due Feb 10th)

Please respond to BOTH of the following questions on the Discussion Board, then upload an image/artifact that relates to the ideas/experiences you describe:

- What teaching problem/issue would you like to make your area of focus? Why?
- Action research is often criticized because the outcomes are not generalizable. How might you respond to this concern in defending action research as a viable research method?

On pp. 69-70 Mills lists the nine steps in the "Action Research Plan." Please prepare the following first three steps and upload them to the Assignments section on Bb, then upload an image/artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe:

- i) Write an area-of-focus statement
- ii) Define the variables
- iii) Develop research questions

3) Assignment #3 (due Feb 17th)

Please respond to ONE of the following questions on the Discussion Board, then upload an image/artifact that relates to the ideas/experiences you describe:

- What steps will you take to insure that your study has met all ethical challenges?
- What is your school's ethics policy regarding the collection of data from students?

4) Assignment #4 (due Feb 24th)

Please respond to ONE of the following items on the Discussion Board, then upload an image/artifact that relates to the ideas/experiences you describe:

- 1) On pp. 104-105 Mills defines the term "triangulation." How will you triangulate the

data collection in your study? Why did you choose these sources?

2) How will you insure that your study is VALID?

3) How will you insure that your data collection techniques are RELIABLE?

6) Assignment #5 (due Mar 3rd)

Return to the Action Research Plan on p. 69-70 in Mills. Please upload your responses to the following items to the Assignments section of Bb, then upload one accompanying image or artifact that relates to the ideas or experiences you describe:

iv) Describe the intervention or innovations

v) Describe the membership of the action research group

vi) Describe negotiations that need to be undertaken

vii) Develop a timeline

viii) Develop a statement of resources

ix) Describe the data collection ideas

7) Assignment #6 (due Mar 17th)

Prepare a list of ten references (APA style) you have identified so far in your review of the literature that appear to be relevant to your study. References should be from refereed journals, books, and scholarly compilations.

8) Assignment #7 (due Mar 24th)

During the data collection period, please respond each week to the following questions: 1) What is an example of the most interesting, surprising, consistent, or representative data you have gathered this week? 2) What initial sense (analysis!) have you made of any data you collected this week or thus far in your study?

9) Assignment #8 (due Oct 31st)

During the data collection period, please respond each week to the following questions: 1) What is an example of the most interesting, surprising, consistent, or representative data you have gathered this week? 2) What initial sense (analysis!) have you made of any data you collected this week or thus far in your study?

10) Assignment #9 (due April 7th)

During the data collection period, please respond each week to the following questions: 1) What is an example of the most interesting, surprising, consistent, or representative data you have gathered this week? 2) What initial sense (analysis!) have you made of any data you collected this week or thus far in your study?

11) Assignment #10 (due April 21st)

For this week's posting—to which I would like everyone to respond—please consider the following: What have been your top two or three questions about this action research work thus far? That is, questions about the PROCESS of doing action research, the challenges of doing it. And how would you answer those questions now, if such a question was posed to you by someone else planning to take this course or conduct an action research project in the future? (I will compile these questions and answers into a list for all of us to consider).

Action Research Project Draft Components (15 points)

You will submit for instructor and peer review the following draft sections of your action research paper: introduction/contexts, literature review, methodology, findings, and discussion/action plan. Due dates of these drafts are listed in the schedule below, and the specific elements of these sections will be provided via samples, descriptions, and rubrics. Completing these draft elements will scaffold you toward completion of your final project—a very good thing.

Action Research Project (60 points)

Participants will design and conduct an action research project that is relevant to their present or future teaching positions. Outlines, examples, descriptions, and rubrics of these projects will be

provided. You will write a literature review and proposal for this project, collect and analyze preliminary data, and share the results of your study with both our class (and potentially an outside audience) in a PowerPoint presentation. It is possible to partner with another student for the purpose of sharing data and researching different aspects of a common topic; each partner, however, must submit an original, stand-alone report. Each participant will make an in-class ten-minute presentation (ungraded) on her/his project; an outline and examples of these presentations will be provided. Please note that projects or papers submitted for credit in another course cannot also be used for a grade in this course. Your data sources for this project must include either (or both) of the following artifacts: 1) visual representations (images or photographs of your classroom, students at work, etc.); 2) student feedback related to your research question and your teaching intervention. When considering research topics, you should identify a research question that really matters to you. It should be something about which you are curious and with which you are willing to spend time researching and learning. In the words of a former Mason student, “If you aren’t eager to spend several days curled up reading about your topic, then it’s not love, and you need to ditch it and find another topic.”

Action Research Impact Presentations

Working in small groups—likely your critical friends group—participants will identify one authentic, alternative, preferably contemporary media-based method through which they will share the results of their action research findings. While we will each make brief presentations of our individual research findings in class, the mission of this assignment is for your group to design and enact a presentation that moves the public understanding of your group members’ studies along. You might choose to create a collective presentation on your group members’ projects or you might highlight one group member’s project and findings. You might highlight the very importance of action research or summarize the findings of your group members’ efforts. You are encouraged to display these findings in an alternative setting and through creative means, with your primary goal being engaging in an exercise in demonstrating the significance of your action research to the broader world.

Note: The Action Research Impact Presentation is an ungraded requirement for our course. Students are required to successfully complete an Action Research Impact Presentation and share it with the Secondary Program Faculty and potentially to members of the larger college community. Your grade for EDUC 675 will be posted only upon successful completion of the Action Research Impact Presentation requirements.

TaskStream Requirements

Every student registered for any Masters of Education course with a required performance-based assessment (PBA) is required to submit this assessment to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor.) Evaluation of your performance-based assessment will also be provided using TaskStream. The performance-based assessment for EDUC 675 is the Action Research Project. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester. Details about which course assignment will serve as the required PBA for this course will be provided in the first week of class.

Assessment and Mastery Grading

All assignments will be evaluated holistically using a mastery grading system; the general rubric is described below, and a specific rubric provided with each assignment. A student must demonstrate “mastery” of each requirement of an assignment; doing so will result in a “B” level score. Only if a

student additionally exceeds the expectations for that requirement—through quality, quantity, or the creativity of her/his work—will she/he be assessed with an "A" level score. With a mastery grading system, students must *choose* to "go above and beyond" in order to earn "A" level scores.

- "A" level score = Student work is well-organized, exceptionally thorough and thoughtful, candid, and completed in a professional and timely manner. Student followed all format and component guidelines, as well as including additional relevant component. Student supports assertions with multiple concrete examples and/or explanations. Significance and/or implications of observations are fully specified and extended to other contexts. Student work is exceptionally creative, includes additional artifacts, and/or intentionally supports peers' efforts.
- "B" level score = Student work is well organized, thorough, thoughtful, candid, and completed in a professional and timely manner. Student followed all format and component guidelines. Student supports assertions with concrete examples and/or explanations. Significance and/or implications of observations are fully specified.
- "C" level score = Student provides cursory responses to assignment requirements. Student did not follow all format and component guidelines. Development of ideas is somewhat vague, incomplete, or rudimentary. Compelling support for assertions is typically not provided.
- "F" level score = Student work is so brief that any reasonably accurate assessment is impossible.

Grading Scale

A = 95-100%
 A- = 90-94%
 B+ = 87-89%
 B = 83-86%

B- = 80-82%
 C = 70-79%
 F = Below 70%

Incomplete (IN): This grade may be given to students who are passing a course but who may be unable to complete scheduled course work for a cause beyond reasonable control. The student must then complete all the requirements by the end of the ninth week of the next semester, not including summer term, and the instructor must turn in the final grade by the end of the 10th week. Faculty may grant an incomplete with a contract developed by the student with a reasonable time to complete the course at the discretion of the faculty member.

Assignments/Possible Points

Attendance, Participation, and Discussion Facilitation = 15 points
 Blackboard Participation and Assignments = 10 points
 Action Research Project Draft Components = 15 points

- Introduction/Contexts
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Findings
- Discussion/Action Plan)

Action Research Project (including presentation) = 60 points
 Total = 100 points

Tentative Schedule

Week #/ Dates	Topic/Detail	Assignment due	Reading
Week #1 Jan 21	MLK day – <i>No Classes</i>	• None	• None
Week #2 Jan. 27 (Campus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions, course overview, syllabus, requirements • Introduction to action research (AR) • Types and corresponding sources of data • Scheduling conference times 	• None	• None
Week #3 Feb. 3 (Campus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small group conferences, 4:00-5:30 pm • Understanding AR and “education research” • Considering an area of focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #1 • Biographical Sketch 	• AR, Chapters 1, 3
Week #4 Feb 10 (Online)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deciding on an area of focus • Developing research questions • Action Research Experts: Sara Hannon, Marileigh Blake 	• Discussion Board Assignment #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AR, review Chapter 3 • Hannon and Blake action research projects
Week #5 Feb. 17 (Online)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online small group conferences • Ethics of action research • Action Research Experts: Melanie Dasbach, Leigh Anderson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #3 • Draft of Introduction/Contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AR, Chapter 2 • Dasbach and Anderson action research projects
Week #6 Feb 24 (Campus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection techniques • Mason library visit (tentative) • Action Research Experts: Jennifer Golobic, Julie Marnell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #4 • Discussion Facilitation Group #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AR, Chapter 4 • Golobic and Marnell action research projects
Week #7 Mar 3 (Online)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variability, reliability, and generalizability • Data analysis and interpretation • Action Research Experts: Emily McKew, Sara Gibson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #5 • Draft of Literature Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AR, Chapter 5 • McKew and Gibson action research projects

Week #/ Dates	Topic/Detail	Assignment due	Reading
Week #8 Mar 10-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No Classes Spring Break!</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	
Week #9 Mar 17 (Campus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data analysis and interpretation • Action Research Experts: Jessica Scharl, Rachel Thessin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #6 • Discussion Facilitation Group #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AR, Chapter 6 • Scharl and Thessin action research projects
Weeks #10 Mar 24 (Campus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action planning for educational change • Data collection period • Action Research Experts: Eric Taylor, John Hegerle, Julie Marnell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AR, Chapter 7 • Taylor and Hegerle action research projects • Marnell action research presentation
Week #11 Mar 31 (Online)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online small group conferences • Data collection period • Action Research Experts: Sara Hannon, Marileigh Blake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #8 • Discussion Facilitation Group #3 • Draft Methodology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hannon, Blake action research projects and presentations
Week #12 April 7 (Online)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection period • Action Research Experts: Jennifer Golobic, Melanie Dasbach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Assignment #9 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dasbach, Golobic, Anderson action research projects and presentations
Week #13 April 14 (Campus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing up action research • Standard deviation and action research • Data collection and analysis period • Action Research Experts: Emily Mckew, Sara Gibson, Jessica Scharl, Rachel Thessin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AR, Chapter 8 • Mckew and Gibson action research projects and presentations. Scharl and Thessin presentations

Week #/ Dates	Topic/Detail	Assignment due	Reading
Week #14 April 21 (Campus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluating action research Data collection and analysis period Displaying data visually Action Research Experts: Eric Taylor and John Hegerle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft of Findings Discussion Board Assignment #10 Discussion Facilitation Group #4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AR, Chapter 9 Taylor and Hegerle , Hannon action research projects and presentations
Week #15 April 28 (Online)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online individual/small group conferences Action research in action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft of Discussion/Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AR, Appendices A-C
Week #16 May 5 (Campus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Research presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conferences Action Research Presentations Action Research Impact Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None!
Week #17 May 12 (Campus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Research presentations (Course evaluation and feedback forms) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Research Presentations Action Research Impact Presentations Final Action Research Project due Wed, May14th 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None