

CI 5040
Teacher as Researcher
3 Credit Hours
Appalachian State University

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"Action research is the process through which teachers collaborate in evaluating their practice jointly; raise awareness of their personal theory; articulate a shared conception of values; try out new strategies to render the values expressed in their practice more consistent with the educational values they espouse; record their work in a form which is readily available to and understandable by other teachers; and thus develop a shared theory of teaching by researching practice." - John Elliott

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to provide an opportunity for practitioners to explore, using systematic observations, reflection, and planned action, an area of interest or concern in their professional practice. Teachers in this course will conduct an action research study in which they investigate a question they have about teaching and learning in their classrooms. Teachers will begin by studying the conceptual framework for teacher research, and then learn about action research, a specific type of research oriented toward change. After studying action research theory and process, teachers will design, implement, and present an action research project. The ultimate goal is that the inquiry action research project should lead to improvement in teaching and learning practices and to an increased understanding of the issues, both theoretical and practical, that arise in the course of conducting research.

Goals/Objectives:

This course is designed to provide guided assistance for participants to:

- Analyze and articulate relationships between and among theory, philosophy, research findings and current practice.
- Incorporate findings from educational literature into school and classroom strategies to improve student learning.
- Initiate professional inquiry through reading, dialogue, professional development, and teacher research.
- Become aware of and use professional resources that are available to teachers as researchers.
- Understand that the environment of the classroom, school, school system, community, and related institutions are arenas of inquiry for the teacher as researcher.

- Read and explore models of teacher and traditional research.
- Understand that a reflective practitioner continually evaluates the effects of decisions and actions on students, and actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.

Course Texts:

Mertler, C. A. (2009). *Action research: Teachers as researchers in the classroom*, (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Other readings on AsuLearn www.asulearn.appstate.edu or found through individual research.

Methods of Instruction:

Multiple methods of instruction will be used: whole class presentations, large group and small group discussion, writing/data analysis workshops, cooperative small group in-class activities, and independent study. Students will take an active role as peer instructors in the class. Attendance is required at each class meeting.

Course Assignments:

Literature Review (30 possible points are part of total 130 for Final Project)	
Response writings to assigned readings (10 each)	40 Points
Teacher as Researcher article search and summary	20 Points
Traditional quantitative research article summary	20 Points
Other type of qualitative research article summary	20 Points
Research Proposal	40 Points
Researcher Journal	40 Points
Final Inquiry Project including Literature Review	130 Points
Participation & Preparation	40 Points
Total Points	350 Points

Reading Responses: Response writings are thorough, thoughtful, and critical reactions to class readings. Writings are due at the beginning of class, and they are in response to the readings for the day. In your writings you should deal, in-depth, with the issues raised in the articles or book chapters. These writings serve not only as an assessment of your reading but also as a foundation for class discussions.

Research Article Summaries: Research can be loosely categorized into two general areas: qualitative and quantitative research. Each type of research has features and characteristics which define it and represent its manner of representing “truth”. Teacher research is a sub-category most often placed within the qualitative research area. We will learn the main features of each type and in this assignment you will find and summarize a qualitative, a quantitative, and a teacher research article from a

professional journal. More information will be provided in class. All work will follow the APA style guidelines. Articles found for this assignment may also be used in your literature review, if appropriate.

Literature Review: Before you begin your project, you will need to be aware of research that others have done about your particular problem or question. To facilitate this aspect of your final project, you will need to find 7-10 scholarly, research-based, articles written about your topic. In a chart format or some other format that works for you, you should provide an APA style citation for each article and summarize the methods, findings and key ideas/quotations for each.

Research Proposal: The research proposal serves as a detailed plan for the research project. You will need to include a rationale for why you have chosen your particular project, brief summary of literature, a list of research questions, an explanation of the research setting and participants, and an overview of the data you will collect. The proposal should be no more than 4 double-spaced pages in length.

Field Notes/Researcher's Journal: While collecting data, teacher-researchers will be expected to maintain a researcher's journal in which they will detail all aspects of the data collection and analysis process. This is also an opportunity to If you prefer, these may be electronic journals rather than pen-and-paper; however, you must be able to submit them for a grade.

Final Inquiry Project: The final project is a written manuscript that represents all phases of the research process: research questions, methods, theory, analysis, and representation/conclusions/application and final reflection. It should meet all APA guidelines and should be ready for publication to a professional journal.

Grading & Evaluation:

1. Written assignments will be assessed for depth of thinking, clarity of expression, and adherence to the standard rules of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Written assignments must be typed, 12 pt font, double-spaced, with 1" margins. Assignments should be submitted in hard copy format unless otherwise instructed. Please stick to one font per paper and keep it simple and easy to read (e.g. Times, Calibri, Arial, or another TT font). Please edit your papers closely prior to submitting and follow the citation format of the 6th edition of the use the American Psychological Association Manual (for questions on this see The Owl at Purdue website).
3. Late Assignments: Late papers or assignments will not be accepted, except by **prior** approval of the professor, and if accepted will result in a lowered score. For each late assignment, ten percent of the total point value of the assignment will be deducted from the total earned **per week** after the due date until it is turned in. I have the right to refuse to accept or grade assignments that are in excess of two weeks late. An assignment is considered "late" if it is not given to the

instructor at the end of the class session in which it is due. All assignments must be submitted by **May 3 at 11:55 pm** to receive credit.

- University policy guidelines will be followed with respect to academic dishonesty (see below), grading procedures, withdrawals, and incompletes. Refer to the University Catalog for a complete description of all policies.

***** A note on grading:** A “C” reflects work that is adequate. In most cases, this represents work that is complete, but is not supported by connections to theory and practice, does not show evidence of critical reflection and creativity, or does not show depth of independent thought. A “B” shows some of the above mentioned criteria. An “A” will only be given for work that is exemplary. This work makes connections between topics, theory, practice, and social implications for schools. It also shows evidence of creativity, originality, and critical reflection. ***

Grading System

Plus/minus grades will be used in this course, according to the following percentages of points earned.

A	90-100	94-100 = A	90-93 = A-	
B	80-89	87-89 = B+	83-86 = B	80-82 = B-
C	70-79	77-79 = C+	73-76 = C	70-72 = C-
D	65-69	67-69 = D+	65-66 = D	63-64 = D-
F	below 63			

350 points total (see points above).

Attendance Policy

All students are required to attend **ALL** class meetings, including online meetings. Students are granted one absence for serious personal illness, funeral attendance, and other situations that require the student to be somewhere else during assigned course hours. Students who are absent from this course beyond the initial time will lose half a letter grade for each absence from their course total. Additionally, all students should be punctual in regard to class meetings. Excessive tardiness may also lead to point deductions. In the event of inclement weather, students should check their ASU e-mail account for information regarding classes. In cases of absences or tardiness, students are responsible for obtaining missed information including notes, handouts, etc., from a fellow student.

Adverse Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather, please contact ASU Emergency Closings: (828) 262-SNOW. Is also helpful to consult Ray’s Weather, or follow WataugaRoads on facebook/twitter. **All efforts will be made to hold class.** If there are snow closures, we will utilize the AsuLearn/Wimba site for holding class remotely. (We will do this once to practice in preparation for inclement weather.)

Civility Statement

This class is intended to be a participatory community if students are to fulfill their potential for learning. Thus, people who disrupt the community by their words or actions (rude, sarcastic, or disrespectful speech or disruptive behavior) will not be allowed in class. In order to achieve our educational goals and to encourage the expression, questioning, testing, understanding, and creation of a variety of ideas and opinions, respect must be shown to everyone. Please do not intentionally dismiss or disregard the thoughts and opinions of other members of our learning community. Also, please do not interrupt and/or participate in side conversations or activities while others are speaking, presenting, etc. Respect, honesty, and personal/professional growth are valued in this course.

Academic Integrity Code

Appalachian's policy on academic integrity allows a student and faculty member to work out sanctions for a first offense without a formal referral to the Office of Student Conduct. However, this policy works only if the process outlined in the Code is followed, which includes a record of the sanction submitted to the Office of Student Conduct on the appropriate form. Upon the first breach of academic integrity, I will submit the appropriate form to the Office of Student Conduct.

As a community of learners at Appalachian State University, we must create an atmosphere of honesty, fairness, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of each other. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of an Appalachian degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form and will oppose any instance of academic dishonesty. This course will follow the provisions of the Academic Integrity Code, which can be found on the Office of Student Conduct Web Site: www.studentconduct.appstate.edu.

Accommodations For Students With Disabilities

Appalachian State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you have a disability and may need reasonable accommodations in order to have equal access to the University's courses, programs and activities, please contact the Office of Disability Services (828.262.3056 or www.ods.appstate.edu). Once registration is complete, individuals will meet with ODS staff to discuss eligibility and appropriate accommodations.

Religious Observance Policy

Students will be allowed two excused absences each academic year for religious observances. Students are responsible for requesting excused absences for religious observances required by the faith of a student. Instructors are responsible for

complying with this requirement. In classes in which attendance is taken and/or penalties are applied for student absences, instructors must document their compliance with the religious observance policy by tracking student excused absences for religious observances. For purposes of this policy, the term “religious observances” shall include religious holidays or holy days or similar observances required by a student’s religion and that require absence from class. Except in extraordinary circumstances, student requests for excused absences for religious observances must be submitted to instructors in writing no later than three weeks after the first class day of the term.

Internet resources:

****Source for APA style guide:** <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

http://teacherresearch.net/tr_bitternepark.html

<http://www.NCPublicSchools.org>

<http://www.lesley.edu/faculty/kholmes/libguides/edjournals.html>

<http://www.lib.uwo.ca/education/online-journals-two.htm>

<http://gse.gmu.edu/research/tr/>

<http://teacherresearch.net>

http://www.lesn.appstate.edu/olson/stat_directory/Default.htm - Directory to a variety of statistical procedures.

Sources for research as identified by previous teachers in this course:

EBSCO Masterfile database

Education Full text database

Deer Park Elementary School – Fairfax County, Va

NC Live

NC Learn

Academic Search Elite (good for quantitative research articles)

NC Live Infotrac One File

ERIC Database: type in topic AND quantitative for search

The WritingProject.org

Educational Leadership Journals