EDC G 689 Teacher Research
University of Massachusetts Boston
College of Education and Human Development
Fall Semester 2022
Location: Room W01-0044, Wheatley Hall
Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 6-9 pm

A practitioner's stance toward inquiry is his [or her]
attitude toward the reality with which he [or she] deals.
- Donald Schön

[Practitioner] research is more associated with uncertainty than
with certainty, more with posing problems and dilemmas
than with solving them, and with the recognition that
inquiry both stems from and generates questions.
- Marilyn Cochran-Smith & Susan Lytle

Professor: Christopher Martell, Ed.D.
Office: Wheatley Hall Room W02-143-5
E-mail: christopher.martell@umb.edu
Phone: (617) 287-3874 (office)
Office hours: By appointment

General Course Description:
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the methodology and methods of teacher research. Teacher research is characterized by a careful documentation and analysis of teaching practice over time. Participants ask critical questions, analyze methods, and develop a teacher-research project. This course lays the groundwork for the professional licensure clinical experience.

Course Overview:
Action Research and Practitioner Inquiry encourages the development of an inquiry stance by enabling students to design action research projects that are grounded in authentic practice-based questions. This course is intended for educational practitioners, including teachers, special educators, principals, superintendents, counselors, school psychologists, school librarians, social workers, and teacher educators. Although this course is most beneficial to inservice practitioners, preservice practitioners are encouraged to also take it. If students do not have access to school sites or students, the instructor will help find possible inquiry locations or alternative data sources. This course runs in Summer Session I to allow for data collection while schools are still in session.

This course introduces students to the foundations, purposes, and practices of action research and practitioner inquiry. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) define practitioner inquiry as "systematic and intentional inquiry" carried out by teachers, principals, and other practitioners (p. 7). These practices differ from the observations and assessments that teachers, principals, and other practitioners do daily. Practitioner inquiry is characterized by the careful documentation and systematic analysis of practice over time. It enables teachers, principals, and other practitioners not only to explore central questions in their own settings, but also to create and share new knowledge about practice. In this class, students will ask critical questions about teaching and learning, curriculum, school management, student development, and educational change, while

applying various methods of data collection and analysis, in the design and implementation of action research projects based within practitioners' school sites.

This course is not intended to present practitioner research as a one-time project. Rather, it encourages teachers and other school-based practitioners to embrace inquiry as stance, which Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) described as "work[ing] within inquiry communities to generate local knowledge, envision and theorize their practice, and interpret and interrogate the theory and research of others. Fundamental to this notion is the idea that the work of inquiry communities is both social and political; that is, it involves making problematic the current arrangements of schooling; the ways knowledge is constructed, evaluated, and used; and teachers' (principals', counselors') individual and collective roles in bringing about change" (p. 289).

This course is organized into five categories: Introduction to Practitioner Research, Forming Questions/Conceptual Lens, Research Methods, Individual or Group Working Sessions (for Peer Support and Review), and Sharing Work with the Community. Each section will explore the basic principles of each category as they apply to teaching, learning, and school leadership and support services. The course instructor will use multiple instructional strategies: lecture, presentations, group work, discussion, guest speakers, etc.

Students are required to complete readings in preparation for each class session. These readings will be discussed in class. Students will also be required to complete a final project where they will engage in their own individual inquiry project. This project is intended to help students develop beginning inquiry skills that they will continue to build on. The inquiry project is not meant to be the end, but instead the beginning of an examination of a question that will be central to your identity as an education practitioner.

Course Objectives:

Through this course, students will:
- comprehend *inquiry as a stance* and its role in teaching, learning, and school leadership
- ask authentic questions about their practice
- gain competence in the appropriate application of action research methods
- analyze and interpret various forms of data related to a central research question
- function as a collaborative research community to support each others' work
- consider the relation of equity, diversity, and/or exceptionalities to their research questions and project designs
- use the Internet and Mugar Library databases in conjunction with traditional literature as resources for research

Required Texts and Readings:

Textbook:
- Efron, S. E. & Ravid, R. (2003). *Action research in education*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Reading Packet:
- Course readings are numbered and can be downloaded from Blackboard (Please bring copies of the readings to class or a computer with the files on it): http://learn.bu.edu

Suggested Texts:

(These are suggested resources if you are interested further in practitioner research. These are not required)

- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (2009). *Inquiry as stance: Practitioner research for the next generation*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Dana, N. F. (2009). *Leading with passion and knowledge: The principal as action researcher*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. (Educational Leaders)

- Brooks-McNamara, V. (2009). *The reflective school counselor's guide to practitioner research: Skills and strategies for successful inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin. (School Counselors)

- Kincheloe, J. L. (2003). *Teachers as researchers: Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer. (Teachers)

- Hendricks, C. C. (2005). *Improving schools through action research: A comprehensive guide for educators.* New York: Allyn & Bacon. (Teachers)

- Altrichter, H., Posch, P., & Somekh, B. (1993). *Teachers investigate their work: An introduction to action research across the professions*. New York: Routledge. (Teachers)

Assignments and Evaluation

Data Assignments

Points: 50

Description: There will be five data assignments (10 points each) throughout the semester: Big Picture and Research Questions, Literature Review, Methodology Choice, Instrument Design, and Raw Data Collected. For each data assignment, students should upload their work on the Blackboard site. At instructors' request, students may also be asked to bring some assignments to class to share with their peers.

Participation: Readings, Class Discussions, and Participation in Working Sessions

Points: 30

Description: Class participation is important for successful learning. Students should regularly contribute to class discussions and participate during group work and class activities. The instructor will be informally assessing if students have read the material by their participation in reading related activities. It is expected that students will attend every class session. If you miss class, this will affect your participation grade.

Inquiry Project - Presentation

Points: 30

Description: Students will present her or his inquiry project using PowerPoint. This will involve summarizing the paper in 10-30 minutes (depending on class size) and taking questions from peers.

Inquiry Project - Final Report

Points: 90

Description: Master's students will write a minimum 10-page report on her or his inquiry project (this is the approximate length for a research conference proposal). Doctoral students will write a minimum 20-page report on her or his inquiry project (this is the approximate length for a research conference paper or journal article). Following the format of a traditional educational research article, but with a connection to the "big picture" questions that you embrace as a teacher, principal, or counselor in the study's conclusion. These papers will be posted on Blackboard, so it can be shared among the students in our class. Students will also be encouraged to submit their work to regional and national practitioner research conferences, so it may be shared with the greater teaching, leadership, and research communities (If you choose to do this and it is accepted, the instructor will help you prepare for any conference presentations).

There are 200 points total for the course. All assignments will be graded using a rubric (all rubrics are posted on the Blackboard site) and all grades will be returned in class or via e-mail. Assignments will be collected via Blackboard system. Late assignments will have the grade decreased by 10% for each day late. Students may gain an extension in advance with permission of the instructor or when extenuating circumstance do not allow for forewarning.

Below is the UMass Boston grade scale.

Grading Scale		
Grade	Percentage	Points
A	93-100%	4.00
A-	90-92%	3.70
B+	87-89%	3.30
B	83-86%	3.00
B-	80-82%	2.70
C+	77-79%	2.30
C	73-76%	2.00
F	0-72%	0.0

Grading Policies		
NA	Not Attending (student appeared on roster, but never attended class). NA has no effect on cumulative GPA. Student is still responsible for tuition and fee charges.	N/A
W	Received if withdrawal occurs before the withdrawal deadline (see the academic calendar). Student is still responsible for tuition and fee charges.	N/A
INC	Incompletes are given at the discretion of the instructor and only when satisfactory work has been accomplished in the majority of the course work, i.e. a passing grade at the withdrawal deadline, but the student is unable to complete course requirements as a result of circumstances beyond his/her control. The student must sign a contract with the course instructor to receive a grade of incomplete. Incompletes will turn into F's if the work is not completed within one year.	N/A

Accommodations

The University of Massachusetts Boston is committed to providing reasonable academic accommodations for all students with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate format upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the Ross Center for Disability Services to discuss needed accommodations. Students must be registered with the Ross Center for Disability Services, CC UL 211, www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/disability, ross.center@umb.edu , 617.287.7430 before requesting accommodations.

Academic Integrity and The Code of Student Conduct

It is the expressed policy of the University that every aspect of academic life not only formal coursework situations, but all relationships and interactions connected to the educational process shall be conducted in an absolutely and uncompromisingly honest manner. The University presupposes that any submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student's own and is in compliance with University policies. In cases where academic dishonesty is discovered after completion of a course or degree program, sanctions may be imposed retroactively, up to and including revocation of the degree. Any student who reasonably believes another student has committed an act of academic dishonesty should inform the course instructor of the alleged violation. These policies are spelled out in the Code of Student Conduct. Students are required to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct, including requirements for academic honesty, as delineated in the University of Massachusetts Boston Graduate Catalogue and on their Website and in relevant program student handbook(s) or websites:
http://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/code/

You are encouraged to visit and review the UMass website on Plagiarism:
http://umb.libguides.com/plagiarism

Course Schedule

Class	Topic(s)	Readings Due[1]	Assignments Due
1 6/3 Mon	**Course Introduction and Overview** Instructor and student introductions/course syllabus/Blackboard **Introduction to Practitioner Research** What is action research and practitioner research? "Big picture" and inquiry questions		
2 6/5 Wed	**Forming Questions/Conceptual Lens** Examples of practitioner research (Different sizes and shapes) Literature searching and writing it up Discuss inquiry project research questions with class Literature review	TEXT-Efron & Ravid Ch. 1*, 2* Choose 1 (although you are encouraged to read more): 1-Martell & Hashimoto-Martell (Secondary History and Textbooks) 2-Martell (Secondary History and Teaching Race) 3-Hashimoto-Martell (Elementary Science and Students of Color) 4-MacPhail (Elementary Writing Curriculum and Boys) 5-Whitin (Secondary English and Interpreting Texts) 6-Kenney (Secondary English and Queer-Inclusive Texts) 7-Gutstein (Secondary Math and Social Justice) 8-Ekk (Special Education/Educational Leadership and AYP) 9-Buckles (Educational Leadership and Classroom Instruction) 10-Zinck & Littrell (Counseling and At-risk Adolescent Girls)	Data Assignment 1: Big Picture and Research Questions (NOTE: Read the assigned readings before completing Data Assignment 1)

---

[1] All readings with a star must be read. Readings without a star are part of a choice, which students will chose in the prior class.

Class	Topic(s)		Assignments Due
3 6/10 Mon	**Research Methods** Conceptual frameworks **Working Sessions²**	11-Cochran-Smith & Lytle* TEXT-Efron & Ravid Ch. 3*	
4 6/12 Wed	**Research Methods** Choosing a method/mode of inquiry **Working Sessions**		Data Assignment 2: Literature Review
5 6/17 Mon	**Research Methods** Data collection (Designing and implementing interview/focus groups protocols, journals, surveys, and other instruments) **Working Sessions** Design instruments	TEXT-Efron & Ravid Ch. 4*	Data Assignment 3: Conceptual Framework and Methodology Choice (NOTE: Read the assigned readings before completing Data Assignment 3)
6 6/19 Wed	**Instrument Feedback** **Working Sessions** Students will test interview protocol, journal prompts, or surveys with inquiry groups	TEXT-Efron & Ravid Ch. 5*	Data Assignment 4: Instrument Design (NOTE: Read the assigned readings before completing Data Assignment 4) (NOTE: Collect initial data this week)
7 6/24 Mon	**Research Methods** CITI – Protecting Human Subjects **Instructor Conferences** **Working Sessions** Students will test interview protocol, journal prompts, or surveys with inquiry groups	TEXT-Efron & Ravid Ch. 6 (Optional)	(NOTE: Collect initial data this week)

---

² During these working sessions, you should bring a laptop computer. If you do not have a laptop, please let the instructor know.

Class	Topic(s)	Readings Due	Assignments Due
8 6/26 Wed	**Research Methods** Data collection (Transcribing, inputting quantitative data) Data analysis (Coding, Statistical Analysis) and making sense of the data. Using free computer programs for research: NVIVO/HyperRESEARCH (Qualitative) and Excel (Quantitative) **Working Sessions** Students will begin using research programs to transcribe/input data	TEXT-Efron & Ravid Ch. 7*, 8*	Data Assignment 5: Collect and Process Data **(Part 1: Bring to class unprocessed data.)**
9 7/1 Mon	**Research Methods** Data analysis (Writing up analysis) **Working Sessions** Students will begin using research programs to code data/run statistical analyses **Critical Friends Groups** **Instructor Conferences**		Data Assignment 5: Collect and Process Data **(Part 2: Bring to class processed data.)**
10 7/3 Wed	**Research Methods** Writing up the final research report **Working Sessions** Students will continue using research programs to code data/run statistical analyses Preparing the presentation and research report		Inquiry Project PowerPoint Presentations (file name LastNamePresentation.ppt) **Upload to Blackboard by 4 pm on 6/25. [NOTE: This is due at a different time to allow me to download them before class]**

Class	Topic(s)	Readings Due	Assignments Due
11 7/8 Mon	**LAST CLASS** **Evaluations** **Celebration** **Reflections and Final Thoughts**		Inquiry Project Report is due (Word format–file name LastNameFinalReport.doc) **[NOTE: Due at 8 am on Thursday 6/27]** Due to limited time between the project due date and instructor grades being due, feedback on final project will be limited. If you would like in-depth comments on your entire project, arrange with the instructor.

READING LIST

Reading 1
Martell, C. C., & Hashimoto-Martell, E. A. (2012). Throwing out the textbook: A teacher research study of changing texts in the history classroom. In H. Hickman & B. J. Porfilio (Eds.), *The new politics of the textbook: Critical analysis in the core content areas* (pp. 305-320). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.

Reading 2
Martell, C. C. (2013). Race and histories: Examining culturally relevant teaching in the U.S. history classroom. *Theory & Research in Social Education, 41*(1), 65-88.

Reading 3
Hashimoto-Martell, E. A. (2011). *Exploring science identities of elementary students of color.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Reading 4
MacPhail, G. (2009). *The "bad boy" and the writing curriculum*. In M. Cochran-Smith & S. L. Lytle (Eds.). *Inquiry as stance: Practitioner research for the next generation* (pp. 193-212). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Reading 5
Whitin, P. E. (1996). Exploring visual response to literature. *Research in the Teaching of English, 30*(1), 114-140.

Reading 6
Kenney, L. M. (2010). Being out and reading queer-inclusive texts in a high school English classroom. In M. V. Blackburn, C. T. Clark, L. M. Kenney, & J. M. Smith (Eds.), *Acting out!: Combating homophobia through teacher activism* (pp. 56-73). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Reading 7
Gutstein, E. (2003). Teaching and learning mathematics for social justice in an urban, Latino school. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education, 34*(1), 37-73.

Reading 8
Ekk, V. B. (2011). *Unintended consequences: A practitioner researcher's study of the impact of No Child Left Behind on middle school special education students*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Reading 9
Buckles, T. T. (2008). Monitoring what goes on in the school building: A closer inspection of classroom instruction and student learning through implementation of the continuous improvement model. In D.C. Delane & S.B. Hayes (Eds.) *Improving Florida schools through teacher inquiry* (pp. 229-238). Gainesville, Florida: Center for School Improvement and North East Florida Educational Consortium.

Reading 10
Zinck, K. & Littrell, J. M. (2000). Action research shows group counseling effective with at-risk adolescent girls. *Professional School Counseling*, *4*(1), 50-59.

Reading 11
Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1993). *Inside/outside: Teacher research and knowledge*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press. (Chapter 1: Research on Teaching and Teacher Research: The Issues that Divide)