

EDEC 7500
Teacher Action Research & Reflective Teaching
SPRING 2006

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Course Meeting Time & Place: Wednesdays 5:00-7:45 pm, 417 Aderhold Hall

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will explore various aspects of a movement in education and educational research in which practitioners (e.g., P-12 teachers, school administrators, professors, etc.) are viewed as researchers of their own practice and in which teaching is viewed as a form of educational inquiry. I have planned the semester to provide you with a broad overview of some of the epistemological, political, and methodological issues associated with the idea of practitioner research. Throughout the course, we will be reading work by both practitioner researchers and academics about the process of practitioner research and about the specific questions and issues that have been investigated through practitioner research. Participants are encouraged to complete an inquiry project in which they grapple with issues of discourse and interaction within their teaching. Students will engage in practitioner-based research strategies such as observations, interviewing, and document analysis.

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE AND TOPICS

The focus in this course will be on action research in education with an emphasis on research conducted by P-12 teachers. The purpose of this course is to provide opportunities for you to be involved in classroom inquiry and to develop your understandings of how action research supports teaching and learning. We will consider the history and definitions of action research and analyze a variety of perspectives on its purposes, processes, and theoretical foundations; simultaneously, we will practice research processes in relation to our own teaching and researching agendas. You will be continuously examining the research reports of other teacher researchers to analyze the models they use for research and reporting. The course is about learning to listen, reflect, document, analyze, and take actions based on evidence.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

There are a number of central issues and themes that are currently being discussed and debated in action research that I would like to address in the course.

1. What is practitioner research? Is it "real" educational research or is it "just" a form of professional development?
2. If it is "real" research, as well as professional development, what are the criteria that can help us determine the quality and trustworthiness of the research? Who should be making these judgments about practitioner research?
3. What tools and methods do practitioner researchers use to collect, generate, and analyze data about their teaching and classrooms?
4. What role can the study of classroom discourse and interaction have in teacher research? What are some barriers to teachers studying classroom discourse and interaction?
5. Is there a role for college and university academics in the world of P-12 teacher research? If so, what should that role be?
6. How does engaging in the process of action research have an impact on the researcher, his or her teaching, and the context of his or her work?
7. How do practitioner researchers view the relationship between theory and practice?
8. Is reflective teaching good teaching? What is reflective teaching?

A WebCT has been set up for this course. I may ask you to post things to the

discussion board portion of this page throughout the semester.

COURSE STANDARDS

The course evaluation process will be guided by the professional standards as outlined by the Guiding Principles of the Georgia Systemic Teacher Education project (GSTEP).

GSTEP GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Process Principle: *Learning to teach is a career-long process of development and growth.*

The Support Principle: *All educators share responsibility for supporting their colleagues as professional peers.*

The Ownership Principle: *Teachers design their own career paths.*

The Impact Principle: *Effective teaching yields evidence of student learning and achievement.*

The Equity Principle: *All students and teachers deserve equally high expectations and support.*

The Dispositions Principle: *Productive dispositions positively affect student learning, teacher growth, and school climate.*

The Technology Principle: *Teachers use technology to facilitate teaching, learning, community building, and resource acquisition.*

READING MATERIALS

Required Texts

Brookline Teacher Research Seminar. (2003). *Regarding Children's Words: Teacher Research on Language and Literacy*. New York: Teachers College Press. **ISBN:** 0807744018

Cochrane-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (1992). *Inside/Outside: Teacher Research and Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Press. **ISBN:** 0807732354

Compton-Lilly, C. (2003) *Reading families: The literate lives of urban children*. New York: Teachers College Press. **ISBN:** 0807742767

Fecho, B. *"Is This English?": Race, Language, and Culture in the Classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press. **ISBN:** 0807744077

Gallas, K. (1998). *"Sometimes I Can Be Anything": Power, Gender, and Identity in a Primary Classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press. 0807736953

Obidah, J. & Teel, K. (2001) *Because of the kids: Facing racial and cultural differences in schools*. New York: Teachers College Press. 0807740128

Zeichner, K.M. & Liston, D.P. (1996). *Reflective Teaching: An Introduction*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. **ISBN:** 080588050X

Recommended Texts

Elliott, J. (1991) *Action research for educational change*. Bristol, PA: Open

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Zeni, J. (Ed.). (2000). *Ethical Issues in Practitioner Research*. New York: Teachers College Press. ISBN: 0807740004

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

You are expected to be an active member of our learning community. Your attendance is expected at each class meeting and you should come to class having read the assigned course readings. In class, you will be expected to discuss these readings with each other while observing our agreed upon class norms.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. *Final Paper*: There are two options (see final project handout page)

Option A: *Practitioner Inquiry Project* -Working with a partner, you will develop and carry out a practitioner inquiry project. This inquiry project will require you to spend time collecting data in yours or a classmate's actual classroom. Using the tools introduced to you in class, you and a classmate will design an inquiry project where you record fieldnotes, audio/videorecord the teaching of lessons, interview students/families/other school personnel, and/or collect student work samples or other supporting artifacts. You will be expected to write a report of your inquiry project at the end of the semester. This can either be a paper or involve some other way of representing your research (eg., a film, cd/dvd, multimedia presentation, etc.). We will spend some of our class time discussing the research studies of class members. We will devote some portion of each class meeting or certain weeks to these discussions. The topic you and your partner choose to investigate will be agreed upon by you and the instructor.

Option B: *Research Proposal Paper* -Working independently, you will write a research proposal paper (25 double-spaced pages) where you pursue in more depth a topic covered in class.

NOTE: Each person should choose between option A or B and do one of them. On February 1 a proposal for your final paper/project is due. For either option A or B, you will be expected to present your paper to class at the end of the semester.

2. *Reading Log* - Our course is divided into four thematic parts. For each part, you will keep a journal in which you record your thoughts on course readings and in-class discussions. This is your time to make personal connections to the text, to extend your thinking on class discussions, and to pose potential discussion questions. This log will be turned in three times throughout the semester (February 8, March 1, April 5). A set of guiding questions will be passed out to help guide your reflection/writing/connection building.

3. *Class Notetaker* - As part of class participation and in order to keep a running history of our class discussions, each week two members of our learning community will be responsible for taking notes on our class discussion. These notes should be typed into a one-page summary. Class each week will start with reviewing the notes from the previous class. We will sign up for notetaking shifts at our first class meeting.

4. *Small Learning Communities* - To manage participation, we will form small learning communities (SLC) of 3-4 students. We will use these communities for discussing course topics, for making personal connections to texts, and for responding to each other's inquiry projects, writings, and ideas.

5. *Presentation on Action Research/Reflective Teaching Texts*- Each SLC group is expected to present and lead a class discussion about a text that is chosen from among the books listed below. If you want to propose an alternative to

these texts that is okay as well. The discussion of these texts will be scheduled to take place in class during the second half of the semester. Brief abstracts of each text to be discussed should be provided to the class. The purpose of these readings and presentations is to further inquire into the nature of practitioner-generated knowledge. A set of guiding questions will be provided to structure these inquiries.

As a group choose one of the following texts to present to the class:

1. Allen, J. (Ed). (1999). *Class Actions: Teaching for Social Justice in Elementary and Middle School*. New York: Teachers College Press.
2. Ashton-Warner, S. (1963). *Teacher*. New York: Simon and Shuster.
3. Fishman, S. and McCarthy, L. (2000). *Unplayed tapes: A personal history of collaborative teacher research*. New York: Teachers College Press.
4. Gallas, K. (1994). *The languages of learning: How children talk, write, dance, draw, and sing their understanding of the world*. New York: Teachers College Press.
5. Gitlin, A., et al. (1992). *Teachers' voices for school change: an introduction to educative research*. New York: Teachers College Press.
6. Graham, P., et al. (1998). *Teacher/Mentor: A Dialogue for Collaborative Learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.
7. Hankins, K.H. (2003). *Teaching Through the Storm: A Journal of Hope*. New York: Teachers College Press.
8. Lehrer, R., and Schauble, L. (Eds.) (2002). *Investigating real data in the classroom: Expanding children's understanding of math and science*. New York: Teachers College Press.
9. Paley, V. (2000). *White teacher*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

GRADING

Grades for the course will be based on the major project completed for the class, your reading log, your text presentation, and class participation and attendance.

Attendance	10%	
Participation		10%
Reading Log	15%	
Text Presentation		15%
Final Paper	50%	

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The academic honesty policy is in effect during this course. Please refer to the Graduate Bulletin for specific details regarding this requirement. *"All academic work must meet the standards contained in 'A Culture of Honesty.' All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work"* (from page 1, Course Syllabus Policy, Academic Affairs Policy Statement Number 13, University of Georgia).

NOTE: *"The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary"* (from page 1, Course Syllabus Policy, Academic Affairs Policy Statement Number 13, University of Georgia).

STRUCTURE OF CLASS SESSIONS

Generally, the class sessions will be arranged according to the following framework:

- 5:00 Openings
 - Review agenda
 - Review norms
 - Review notes from previous meeting
- 5:30 Learning from texts
- 6:30 Break/share food and ideas
- 6:45 Learning from experience, collaboration, and evidence
 - Data sessions
 - Practice taking fieldnotes, making observations, and asking inquiry questions
 - Meet in Small Learning Communities

Text presentations (second half of semester)

COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS

Part 1: Action Research: Teaching as Inquiry, Reflection, and Research

Date	Topic	Course Readings
January 11	<p>What is practitioner research? Is it "real" educational research or is it "just" a form of professional development?</p> <p>In class we will do introductions and set class norms.</p>	Anderson, G. and Herr, K. (1999). The new paradigm wars: Is there room for rigorous practitioner knowledge in schools and universities? <i>Educational Researcher</i> , 28(5), 12-21, 40.
January 18	<p>What is reflective teaching? Is good teaching reflective teaching?</p> <p>In class we will form Small Learning Communities and develop small group norms.</p>	Zeichner & Liston, <i>Reflective Teaching</i> , Chapters 1-4
January 25	<p>How does engaging in the process of action research have an impact on the researcher, his or her teaching, and the context of his or her work?: Teaching as Reflection & Inquiry</p>	<p>1). Zeichner & Liston, <i>Reflective Teaching</i>, Chapters 5-6</p> <p>2). Fecho, "Is this English?" Chapters 1-3</p> <p>In class we will brainstorm potential inquiry projects/complete inquiry project action plan.</p>
February 1	(Cont'd)	<p>Fecho, "Is this English?" Chapters 4-9</p> <p>In class we will map Fecho's inquiry process.</p> <p>Due: Action Research Plan/Essay Topic</p>

Part 2: Action Research Basics: Tools for Conducting Your Inquiry

February 8	<p>If A.R. is "real" research, as well as professional development, what are the criteria that can help us determine the quality and trustworthiness of the research? Who should be making these judgments about practitioner research?</p>	<p>Cochrane-Smith & Lytle, <i>Inside/Outside</i>, Chapters 1-3</p> <p>In Class Data Session: We will watch and discuss a clip of a teacher's teaching and collaboratively reflect on the technical, practical, and critical aspects of her lesson.</p>
February 15	(Cont'd)	<p>Cochrane-Smith & Lytle, <i>Inside/Outside</i>, Chapters 4-6</p> <p>In Class Data Session: We will watch videorecording of a classroom teacher and practice recording observation notes.</p>
February 22	<p>What tools and methods do practitioner researchers use to collect, generate, and analyze data about their teaching and classrooms?</p>	<p>Cochrane-Smith & Lytle, <i>Inside/Outside</i>, Chapters 7-9</p> <p>In Class Data Session: We will review, analyze, and discuss data from classmates' inquiry projects.</p>

Part 3: Studying Students' Learning

March 1	How do practitioner researchers view the relationship between theory and practice?	Compton-Lilly, <i>Reading Families</i> , Intro-Chapter 4. Presentation group #1 In Class Data Session: We will review, analyze, and discuss data from classmates' inquiry projects.
March 8	(Cont'd)	Compton-Lilly, <i>Reading Families</i> , Chapters 5-8 Presentation group #2 In class we will map Compton-Lilly's inquiry process In Class Data Session: We will review, analyze, and discuss data from classmates' inquiry projects.
March 22	What role can the study of classroom discourse and interaction have in teacher research? What are some barriers to teachers studying classroom discourse and interaction?	Gallas, " <i>Sometimes I Can Be Anything</i> ," Intro- Chapter 6 Presentation group #3 In Class Data Session: We will review, analyze, and discuss data from classmates' inquiry projects
March 29	(Cont'd)	Gallas, " <i>Sometimes I Can Be Anything</i> ," Chapters 7-afterword Presentation group #4 In class we will map Gallas' inquiry process In Class Data Session: We will review, analyze, and discuss data from classmates' inquiry projects

Part 4: Teacher/University Researcher Collaboration

April 5	Is there a role for college and university academics in the world of P-12 teacher research? If so, what should that role be?	Obidah & Teel, <i>Because of the Kids</i> , Chapters In class we will map Obidah & Teel's inquiry process Presentation group #5
April 12	(Cont'd)	Brookline Teacher Research Seminar, <i>Regarding Children's Words</i> , Intro + choose 2 chapters. In class we will map BTR's inquiry process & review how to give a stellar academic presentation Presentation group #6
April 19	Student Project Presentations	
April 26	Student Project Presentations	

FOLLOWING IS A BIBLIOGRAPHY ON REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN TEACHING & TEACHER EDUCATION THAT WAS COMPILED BY KEN ZEICHNER

Boud, D., Keogh, R., & Walker, D. (1985). Reflection: Turning experience into learning. London: Kogan Page.

Calderhead, J. (1989). Reflective teaching and teacher education. Teaching & Teacher Education, 5(1), 43-51.

Calderhead, J., & Gates, P. (1993). Conceptualizing reflection in teacher development. London: Falmer Press.

Clift, R., Houston, W.R., & Pugach, M. (Eds.). (1990). Encouraging reflective practice in education: An analysis of issues & programs. New York:

- Teachers College Press.
- Dewey, J. (1933). How we think. Chicago: Henry Regnery Co.
- Grimmett, P., & Erickson, G. (Eds.). (1988). Reflection in teacher education. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Handal, G., & Lauvas, P. (1987). Promoting reflective teaching: Supervision in action. Milton Keynes UK: Open University Press.
- Henderson, J. (1992). Reflective teaching: Becoming an inquiring educator. New York: Macmillan.
- Pollard, A., & Tann, S. (1987). Reflective teaching in the primary school: A handbook for the classroom. London: Cassell.
- Schon, D. (1983). The reflective practitioner. New York: Basic Books.
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- Tabachnick, B.R., & Zeichner, K. (Eds.). (1991). Issues and practices in inquiry-oriented teacher education. London: Falmer Press.
- Tom, A. (1985). Inquiring into inquiry-oriented teacher education. Journal of Teacher Education, 35(5), 35-44.
- Valli, L. (Ed.). (1992). Reflective teacher education: Cases and critiques. Albany NY: State University of New York Press.
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- Altrichter, H., Posch, P., & Somekh, B. (1993). Teachers investigate their work: An introduction to the methods of action research. London: Routledge.
- Ashton Warner, S. (1963) Teacher. New York: Simon and Shuster.
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- Ballanger, C. (1999) Teaching other people's children. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Bell, G. (Ed.) Action research, special needs and school development. London: Fulton Publishers.
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- Burns, A. (1999) Collaborative action research for English language teachers. Cambridge, U.K. : Cambridge University Press.
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OTHER INFORMATION ON ACTION RESEARCH (ALSO COMPILED BY KEN ZEICHNER):

1. Electronic Journals that publish practitioner research studies and articles about practitioner research

- Networks- <http://education.ucsc.edu/faculty/gwells/networks>
- The Ontario Action Researcher- <http://nipissingu.ca/oar>
- AR Expeditions <http://www.arexpeditions.montana.edu/docs/about.html>
- Action Research International

<http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gem/ar/ari/ari-papers.html>

2. Print journals that publish action research studies and papers about action research (complete sets of these 2 journals are available in 574a TEB).

- Action Research (Sage Publications)
- Educational Action Research (Triangle Publications).
- Studying Teacher Education (Carfax)