

EDEC/EDMS/QUAL 7500

ACTION RESEARCH

Spring 2005 (Tuesday 5:00 – 7:45)

Dr. Betty Shockley Bisplinghoff

422G Aderhold Hall

542-4244

bettysb@uga.edu

Course Description

This course addresses action research and participatory action research across diverse contexts. The course includes consideration of the history and definitions of action research and participatory action research, and an analysis of their purposes, processes, and theoretical foundations. Students will engage in practitioner-based research strategies such as observations, interviewing, and document analysis.

Purpose of the Course and Topics

This course most specifically examines action research at the individual classroom, team, school, and inter-school levels. The purpose of this course is to provide opportunities for you to be involved in classroom inquiry while developing 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 and practitioners to analyze the models they use for research and reporting. Throughout our time together, you will be developing your own action research/teacher inquiry processes. We will focus on ways for action research to become “organic” to your practice. The course is about “finding ways to connect research to methods that are part of who you are and how you learn” (Bisplinghoff & Allen, 1998, p. 2). The course is about learning to listen, reflect, document, analyze, and take actions based on evidence.

Course Objectives

To examine the historical and philosophical issues underlying teacher action research.

To analyze the purposes and methods of conducting teacher action research.

To design and implement a teacher action research study based on questions raised by each participant in the class.

To examine the problems and power of teachers doing research in their own classrooms and schools.

Required Texts

Hubbard, R.H., & Power, B.M. (2003). *The art of classroom inquiry: A handbook for teacher-researchers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Project Zero. (2001). *The evidence process: A collaborative approach to understanding and improving teaching and learning*. Cambridge, MA: The President and Fellows of Harvard College on behalf of Project Zero.

Weinbaum, A., Allen, D., Blythe, T., Simon, K., Seidel, S., & Rubin, D. (2004). *Teaching as inquiry: Asking hard questions to improve practice and student achievement*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Suggested Text

Project Zero & Reggio Children. (2001). *Making learning visible: Children as individual and group learners*. Cambridge, MA: The President and Fellows of Harvard College, and The Municipality of Reggio Emilia.

Additional readings will be shared on a class-by-class basis. I encourage you to contribute your reading choices to the class.

Course Standards

The course evaluation process will be guided by two key constructs: professional standards as outlined by the Guiding Principles of the Georgia Systemic Teacher Education project (GSTEP) and the norms of professional collaboration honored by this class.

GSTEP GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Process Principle: <i>Learning to teach is a career-long process of development and growth.</i>
The Support Principle: <i>All educators share responsibility for supporting their colleagues as professional peers.</i>
The Ownership Principle: <i>Teachers design their own career paths.</i>

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.*

CLASS NORMS

STEP UP · MAKE ROOM · SEEK WISDOM · ASSUME GOOD
WILL

Course Evaluation

Responsible Membership in our Learning Community (10%) Continuous

This includes class attendance, adherence to class norms, and completing readings prior to class as evidenced in active participation in text-based discussions. Late assignments, failure to come to class, or evidence that you are not prepared for class results in the subtraction of one point per issue. It is possible to lower your course grade by one letter grade due to problems in this category. An honor statement will accompany all reading assignments.

**An Action Research Plan
(40%) Due: February 15**

A detailed plan for pursuing action research will be submitted for review and feedback (outline attached).

**Inquiry Paper
(50%) Due: April 26**

The inquiry paper represents your effort to study and generate deeper understandings about your practice that result in specific actions toward improved student achievements and/or professional confidence. The format for this paper will be an extension of the Action Research Plan.

Structure of Class Sessions

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

5:00 Openings

Connections
Review agenda
Review norms
Class Meeting

5:30 Learning from texts

6:30 Break/sharing food and ideas

6:45 Learning from experience, collaboration, and evidence
Using protocols to guide meaning making

Class Schedule

PART ONE: PLANNING FOR INQUIRY

Class #1 January 11

Notes:

Protocol: Guided Reflection

Purpose – Finding inquiry in the ordinary

Class #2 January 18

Due: Whole text – The Art of Classroom Inquiry

Notes:

Protocol: Wagon Wheel to support Text-based discussion

Presentation: Under the Wings of Writers
Purpose: Action research as organic to practice

Class #3 January 25 (debrief with Jessica)
Due: Teaching as Inquiry pages xi - 64
Notes: *share Bisplinghoff articles – LA and RT*
Protocol: Text-based Seminar
Protocol: Inquiry Circles
Purpose: Inquiry based on “the good”

Class #4 February 1
Due: Teaching as Inquiry pages 65 – 138
Notes:

Class #5 February 8 (debrief with Alesa)
Due: Whole text – The Evidence Process and Teaching as Inquiry
pages 139 – 155
Notes:

Class #6 February 15 (debrief with Javier)
Due: Action Research Plan
Notes:

PART TWO: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Class #7 February 22 (debrief with Jermain)
Evidence: _____
Readings: _____
Notes:

Class #8 March 1 (debrief with Cindy)
Evidence: _____
Readings: _____
Notes:

Class #9 March 8 (debrief with Rudy)

Evidence: _____

Readings: _____

Notes:

No Class March 15 Spring Break

Class #10 March 22 (debrief with Deirdre)

Evidence: _____

Readings: _____

Notes:

Class #11 March 29 (debrief with Lauren)

Evidence: _____

Readings: _____

Notes:

Class #12 April 5 (debrief with Kim)

Evidence: _____

Readings: _____

Notes:

No Class April 12 AERA

PART THREE: WRITING

Class #13 April 19

Evidence: _____

Notes:

Class #14 April 26

Due: Inquiry Paper

Class #15 May 3

Performance-based Exam

**Note: Responsibility for participating in a class debriefing at the end of each meeting will be an additional expectation of class membership. At least once during the semester, you will meet to discuss the course experience with Dr. Bisplinghoff.*

Writing Criteria: Your writings for the course will be evaluated both on what you write (your essential ideas) and on how well you write. All assignments should be word processed in 12-pt. font, double-spaced, spell checked, and grammatically correct. It is wise to ask someone to proofread your work and for you to read your work aloud in order to prepare high quality presentations.

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).