EDUCATION 685: Action Research

Instructor: Shannon VanHorn
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Face to Face and Online Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays: 1-3 pm; Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-3:00 p.m.
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Course Description: Provides the opportunity to conduct action research related to teaching and technology. Requires a formal, reflective, and planned process.

Curriculum alignment with ND state Standards, NBPTS Core Propositions, and VCSU Core Values
North Dakota State Standard 50081.2: The program requires candidates develop the ability to apply research and research methods relevant to the advanced field of study.
NBPTS Core Proposition 3: Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning
NBPTS Core Proposition 4: Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience. Teachers are responsible for
VCSU Core Value 2: Expertise in Research, particularly Action Research.

Pre-requisite: EDUC 610

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

A. Define action research.

B. Design an action research project involving technology in an area of instruction with technology.

C. Carry out an action research project of their own teaching and/or assessment methods.

D. Analyze the results of the action research project.

E. Reflect and adapt teaching methods as a result of the action research project.

Course Reading and Resources:

Required Text

Strongly recommended text:

A note about the textbook: Please promptly acquire your textbook. I will not grant any extensions on assignments because you have not purchased your textbook or your text has not arrived. I will grant extensions only if the bookstore has run out of texts and is ordering more.

Assessment/Grading Policy: Each major project in class will be graded upon a rubric. I will provide the rubric when I provide the assignment sheet in the unit found in Course Documents. Your final grade is determined by the total percentage of points you earn in this class.

I follow the typical college grading scale: 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, 0-59 = F
Incompletes: I rarely give incompletes. IF I do, it’s under these conditions:

A. At least 60% of the coursework is completed on time, AND
B. The coursework is at a B or better AND
C. An extenuating circumstance occurs (i.e. death in immediate family, extended hospital stay...).

Please note that all three must occur for me to consider granting an incomplete. Also please note that I may not grant an incomplete, even if all three conditions are met.

If I do grant an incomplete, I will e-mail you a contract stating what is left to do and providing you with a completion date. You will need to electronically sign this and e-mail it back to me before I will enter an I as your grade. For more information, please consult VCSU’s Incomplete Grade Policy.

Submission Policies:

• All work should be submitted in the area in which they are assigned. Browse buttons in the area allow for ease of submitting assignments. Please do not e-mail me your assignments.

• Word’s default margins are 1.25 inches for the left and right margins. Please change the default to 1 inch margins for all sides.

• All submissions should be in Times/Roman, Arial, or Calibri font, no larger than 12 pt. font.

Measures of Course Learning Objectives: The following assignments will fulfill the specified learning objectives:

Discussion (A)
Writing Assignments (B, C, D, E)
Peer Review (B, C, D, E)
IRB Training and Approval (B)
Digital Poster Session (E)
Miscellaneous Assignments (A, B, C, D, E)

Description of Major Assignments

Discussion (80 points): Each week I will participate in discussion regarding issues and ideas brought up in the chapter and elsewhere. Each week is worth 5 points. Points will be awarded for completeness and responsiveness to the questions. No late discussion material will be accepted.

Writing Assignments (225 points): You will be completing five chapters of your final research assignment. Chapter 1 is worth 50 pts. Chapter 2 is worth 25 pts. Chapter 3 is worth 30 pts., Chapter 4 is worth 30 pts. and Chapter 5 is worth 20 pts. Front and back matter is worth 25 pts. APA formatting, spelling, grammar, sentence style, etc... is worth 20 pts, and responses to classmates is worth 25 pts.

Peer Review (50 pts): Feedback and discussion over research is an important component of scholarship. You will have the opportunity to read each others’ work and provide feedback as you progress in this scholarly journey.

IRB Training and Approval (20 pts): You will be attending a virtual training seminar in which you will learn about ethical research. You will then complete forms for approval by the Internal Review Board.
Digital Poster Session (35 pts): Good scholarly research is meant to be shared with others. I will do this via a digital, technologically-enhanced creative poster session. I will also look and respond to each others’ projects.

Miscellaneous Assignments (up to 125 pts): These may be short reflections, “getting to know you” assignments, creation of graduate committees, approval of abstracts, and a variety of other assignments. No late assignments will be accepted.

Student Responsibilities:

Due dates for all assignments are included in the syllabus. Since the due date for written assignments is known from the outset of class, there is no reason why the assignments cannot be completed on time. It is unfair to selectively grant extensions to some students and not others. Therefore, all late assignments will be penalized one grade per day (including weekends) late. **No papers will be accepted more than four days late. Late discussion threads and responses and peer critiques will not be accepted.**

You will notice that due dates for assignments are on Thursdays and Sundays. Please have your initial responses to the discussion questions up by Thursday evening.

You are expected to purchase the book and read the chapters. You cannot pass this class without doing both.

You are expected to put, at a minimum, 10-12 hours a week into this course. The Carnegie rule of thumb for college level courses is three hours per credit for undergraduate courses; more for graduate courses. Yes, I know you are taking other courses, and yes, I know you are active with your work and family. Earning a Masters degree takes work. I will provide tips and hints throughout the semester on how to maintain balance in these areas.

During the course of the semester, if you are experiencing any problems (family difficulties, sick relatives, etc.) which are affecting your academic performance, you must inform us of such problems ASAP if you want us to take them into consideration. The sooner I know about a problem, the more understanding I will be. If you come to us during the last week of the semester, before grades are about to be assigned, to discuss difficulties which have affected you throughout the term, you will find that I am not nearly as understanding and that I can do very little to help you with your grade.

VCSU provides official vacation days throughout the year. Students who go on vacation other than school-designated days are responsible for turning in work **during the time they are absent.** In this world of wireless communication, students should easily have access to the internet via their hotels or cruise ships or area restaurants and libraries. Because of the nature of this course, I will NOT provide any material ahead of time to be completed before going on vacation. Please do not ask. I will say no. If a student chooses to go on vacation on days other than official VCSU vacation days, s/he must be prepared to complete and turn in homework while on vacation. Plan accordingly. No exception.

**Instructor Responsibilities:** My job is to provide a quality course conducive to learning. I will do so in the following ways:

I will place assignments for the following week will be up by Sunday evening.

Assignments will be graded no later than ten days after the end of the week. If I am not able to complete them in ten days, I will post an announcement with an estimate as to when I will have the assignments graded.
I will participate in discussion periodically. You may not get feedback to your responses every week, and I may not respond to everyone’s posts, but I will be reading, following along, and providing guided questions when needed.

I will check the CyberCafe for questions three times a week.

I will also check e-mail at least once a day during week days. If you do not get a response from me within 24 hours, please e-mail me again.

**Course/Program Standards:**

This is a graduate-level college-level course. Therefore, I expect you are knowledgeable in the rules and usage of grammar, punctuation, and sentence style, and I am expecting you to be knowledgeable in the proper implementation of these functions. VCSU has a wonderful Learning Center. Many other places have online writing labs which you may want to visit should you have difficulties, such as Purdue’s Online Writing Lab.

I expect you to be proficient in and use APA style in all papers, including in-text citations and references. If you do not own the APA stylebook, please purchase one. Now. Immediately.

Wikipedia is a wiki—a place where anyone may place his or her ideas, thoughts, and work regarding any subject. Furthermore, other people have the capability of editing other people’s work placed online. While Wikipedia does have a set of standards in accepting submissions, the information submitted does not go through the rigorous peer-review found in scholarly articles.

That being said, Wikipedia, like encyclopedias, may provide you, the student, basic knowledge about the topic. This knowledge may provide you background information or key words to assist you as you pursue more scholarly sources. Therefore, I adhere to the following policy regarding Wikipedia:

Wikipedia is not considered a credible or appropriate source in the academic setting. Wikipedia may be used for initial information about a subject, but will not be accepted as a source in papers, projects, or presentations.

**Academic Integrity Policy: Plagiarism Statement:** Academic integrity is the foundation of intellectual pursuit and participation in a scholarly community. The student handbook describes the expectations for academic honesty and indicates the possible consequences of academic dishonesty. When an act of academic dishonesty is discovered, faculty are required to complete an Academic Integrity Report to document the incident and sanction to the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) as well as the division chair.

I have a zero tolerance policy regarding plagiarism and cheating. All incidents of plagiarism and/or cheating will be immediately reported to the Dean of the School of Education and Graduate Studies, the Director of the Graduate School, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs. For their first offence, students who cheat or plagiarize may receive a reduced grade or a 0 (zero) for that assignment. Second and subsequent offenses (as documented in both the SEGS and VPAA office) over the student’s entire academic career at VCSU will result in failure of the course, and the VPAA may impose additional sanctions, ranging from academic probation to expulsion. Please see VCSU’s Policy.

**Special Needs:** Any student with special needs is encouraged to contact me as soon as possible so that appropriate accommodations may be made. I will work with VCSU’s Disability Services to ensure reasonable accommodations.
Tentative Course Schedule/Course Calendar

You will find the class divided into sixteen folders—one for each week of the course (go to Course Documents). Every Sunday I will post the following week’s material in the folder.

**Week 1: Introduction to the Course and Understanding Action Research**

What to do:
1. Read the syllabus
2. Read “Tips to Survive the Online Course”
3. Complete the Orientation Scavenger Hunt
5. Read Instructor Introduction to the course
6. Read Mills Chapter 1
7. Study outline of action research
8. Read Research Process Sequence
9. Participate in Discussion

What’s due?

Thursday, August 28, Midnight CST:
1. Scavenger Hunt
2. Introduction
3. Response to Discussion Questions

Sunday, August 31, Midnight CST
1. Response to classmates’ discussion responses

**Week 2: Ethics**

What to do?
1. Read Mills Chapter 2
2. Complete NIH training
3. Read VCSU IRB material
4. Respond to discussion questions

What’s due?

Thursday, September 4, Midnight CST
1. Response to questions

Sunday, September 7, Midnight CST
1. Response to classmates
2. IRB Training
Week 3: Deciding on an Area of Focus

What to do?
1. Read Mills Chapter 3
2. Choose your topic of research
3. Complete your Area of Focus Worksheet
4. Read Template for AR paper, CHAPTER 1
5. Begin Writing CHAPTER 1 (Area of Focus section)
6. Respond to questions
7. Respond to classmates.

What’s due?

Thursday, September 11, Midnight CST
1. Topic of research
2. Responses to questions

Sunday, September 14, Midnight CST
1. Responses to classmates
2. Area of Focus Worksheet

Week 4: Writing the Literature Review

What to do?

1. Read Mills pp. 46-69 and Chapter 8.
2. Read lecture on Literature Reviews and library sources
3. Read example Literature Reviews
4. Find 25 sources relating to your topic and create a reference page in APA format
5. Begin writing your Literature Review
6. Respond to Discussion Questions
7. Respond to classmates’ responses

What’s due?

Thursday, September 18, Midnight CST
1. Responses to Discussion Questions

Sunday, September 21, Midnight CST
1. Responses to classmates’ responses
2. Reference page of 25 sources, in APA format.

Week 5: Continuing Literature Review

What to do?

1. Finish writing Literature Review
2. Place CHAPTER 1 in Group area for Peer Review
3. Respond to questions
4. Respond to classmates’ responses
5. Choose your committee members
What’s due?

Thursday, September 25, Midnight CST
1. Responses to Discussion Questions
2. Send out initial e-mail to committee members

Sunday, September 28, Midnight CST
1. Literature Review
2. Responses to classmates’ responses

**Week 6: Data Collection Techniques**

What to do?

1. Peer Critique CHAPTER 1
2. Read Mills Chapter 4
3. Begin writing Data Collection section
4. Look at examples of Data Collection
5. Respond to Discussion Questions
6. Respond to classmates’ responses

What's due?

Thursday, October 2, Midnight CST
1. Peer Critiques of CHAPTER 1
2. Responses to Discussion Questions

Sunday, October 5, Midnight CST
1. Responses to classmates’ responses

**Week 7: Data Collection Considerations: Validity, Reliability, and Generalizability**

**What to do?**

1. Read Mills Chapter 5
2. Respond to Discussion Questions
3. Respond to classmates’ responses
4. Complete IRB paperwork
5. Read and complete the triangulation Matrix, add to Data Collection section.

What’s due?

Thursday, October 9, Midnight CST
1. Discussion Questions
2. IRB Paperwork

**SUNDAY, October 12 MIDNIGHT CST**
1. Classmates’ Responses
2. CHAPTER 2: Data Collection
**Week 8: Data Collection**

What to do?

1. Peer Critique CHAPTER 2
2. Choose survey instrument
3. Get instrument up on Survey Monkey
4. Respond to questions
5. Respond to classmates

What’s due?

Thursday, October 16 Midnight CST
1. Peer Critique
2. Response to questions

Sunday, October 19, Midnight CST
1. Response to classmates
2. Choice of survey posted and up on Survey Monkey

**Week 9: Data Analysis and Interpretation**

What to do?

1. Read Mills Chapter 6
2. Continue collecting data
3. Look at examples of Data Analysis and Interpretation sections
4. Begin writing CHAPTER 3 from collected data
5. Revise CHAPTERS 1 and 2
6. Respond to Discussion Questions
7. Respond to Classmates’ Responses

What’s due?

Thursday, October 23, Midnight CST
- Responses to Questions
- Responses to classmates’ surveys

Sunday, October 26, Midnight CST
- Responses to Classmates’ Responses
- Revised CHAPTERS 1 and 2

**Week 10: Continue Analyzing and Interpreting Data**

What to do?

1. Read Appendices B and C
2. Complete writing CHAPTER 3 and place in group section
3. Respond to Discussion Questions
4. Respond to classmates’ responses
What’s due?

Thursday, October 30, Midnight CST
1. Responses to Questions

Sunday, November 2, Midnight CST
1. Responses to Classmates

**Week 11: Action Planning for Educational Change**

What to do?

1. Peer Critique classmates’ CHAPTER 3
2. Read Mills Chapter 7
3. Begin writing CHAPTER 4
4. Respond to Discussion Questions
5. Respond to Classmates’ responses

What’s due?

THURSDAY, November 6, MIDNIGHT CST
1. Classmates’ Peer Critiques CHAPTER 3
2. Response to Discussion Questions

SUNDAY, November 9, MIDNIGHT CST
1. Response to Classmates’ responses

**Week 12: Writing Up Action Research**

What to do?

1. Read Mills Chapter. 8 (yes, you read it earlier; review again!)
2. Read Appendix A
3. Complete CHAPTER 4 and place in group area
4. Respond to Discussion questions
5. Respond to Classmates’ responses

What’s due?

Thursday, November 13, Midnight CST
1. Response to questions

Sunday, November 16, Midnight CST
1. CHAPTER 4
2. Responses to classmates
Week 13: Reflection

What to do?
1. Peer Critique Classmates’ CHAPTER. 4
2. Read Mills Chapter 9
3. Begin writing CHAPTER 5
4. Respond to discussion questions
5. Respond to classmates’ responses

What’s due?
Thursday, November 20, Midnight CST
1. CHAPTER 4 Peer Critiques
2. Discussion Questions

SUNDAY, November 23, MIDNIGHT CST
1. Responses to classmates

Week 14: In the beginning and the end...

What to do?
1. Read mini-lecture on front and back matter
2. Complete front and back matter
3. Read assignment sheet for presentation
4. Complete CHAPTER 5 and put in group area
5. Respond to discussion questions
6. Respond to classmates

What’s due?
Thursday, November 27, Midnight CST
1. Response to discussion questions
2. Chapter 5 and Front and back matter draft

Sunday, November 30, Midnight CST
1. Response to classmates
2. Peer Critique Chapter 5 and Front and Back matter

Week 15 Sharing, Critiquing, and Celebrating Action Research On-Line

What to do?
1. Revise CHAPTERS 3, 4, and 5 and front and back matter draft
2. Work on Presentation
3. Respond to discussion questions
4. Respond to classmates’ responses

What’s due?
Thursday, December 4, Midnight CST
1. Draft of CHAPTERS 3, 4, and 5, front and back matter
2. Response to discussion questions
Sunday, December 7, Midnight CST
   1.  Response to classmates’ responses

WEEK 16: THE END!

What to do?
   1.  Revise CHAPTERS 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, and front and back matter
   2.  Upload Presentation
   3.  Respond to Discussion
   4.  Respond to classmates’ presentations
   5.  Revise Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 and Front, and Back matter

What’s due?

Thursday, December 11, Midnight CST
   1.  Response to discussion questions
   2.  Presentation

Sunday, December 14, Midnight CST
   1.  Response to classmates’ responses
   2.  Response to FIVE presentations

Final:  Due Tuesday December 16, Midnight CST
   Final Draft Of Action Research Paper