

CIEP 488: Action Research to Improve Teaching & Learning

Summer 2017 Syllabus

Mondays & Wednesdays, 5:00-8:00pm, Corboy Rm 301

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Required texts:

Stringer, E.T. (2014). *Action research* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. ISBN-10: 1452205086; ISBN-13: 978-1452205083

Herr, K. & Anderson, G. L. (2005). *The action research dissertation: A guide for students and faculty*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. ISBN-10: 0761929916

Suggested text:

Pine, G. J. (2009) *Teacher action research: Building knowledge democracies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. ISBN-10: 1412964768; ISBN-13: 978-1412964760

Additional Assigned readings will be provided by the instructor through Sakai

(see course calendar for reading assignments)

Course Description:

Action research provides educators, administrators, and community leaders a method to study localized problems that results in solutions and action plans to address these issues. As defined by Herr & Anderson (2005),

Action research is inquiry that is done *by* or *with* insiders to an organization or community, but never *to* or *on* them...Action research is orientated to some action or cycle of actions that organizational or community members have taken, are taking, or wish to take to address a particular problematic situation (pp. 3-4).

It can also be defined as a way for practitioners to improve the teaching and learning in their own classrooms: "The purpose of action research is for practitioners to investigate and improve their practices" (Hendricks, 2013, p. 3). All throughout the action research process, reflection is critical: why a problem exists/how it came to be, who key stakeholders are and how they can be involved in solution generation, how a solution will affect the context, and what improvements can be made to the solution moving forward.

The reflective aspect of action research helps individuals become aware of their own practices and helps them look for solutions to issues in their organization, building, or classroom.

Through carefully chosen readings and assignments, this course will provide candidates with the knowledge and skills needed to use action research as a basis to make curricular and instructional decisions both school-wide and at the classroom level. Additionally, the course will help candidates learn how to develop an action research project to address a school or classroom problem and increase the dialogue within a learning context. One key goal of this course is to prepare students to use their action research plans in their final practicum courses, and to potentially inform their dissertation studies.

Course Goals:

- Describe how action research differs from other forms of educational research
- Investigate the role action research plays in creating knowledge democracies within organizations
- Use different forms of data to identify organizational problems
- Develop an action research plan
 - Write applicable research questions and sub-questions
 - Determine appropriate data collection methods and analysis procedures to answer research questions
 - Discuss potential obstacles to the plan and determine levels of collaboration with stakeholders to conduct action research
- Become comfortable with quantitative and qualitative data analysis
- Discuss the application of action research as an instructional and/or leadership strategy
- Reflect on the experience of designing an action research plan, and the effects it might have on a real context

Class Expectations:

- **Attendance** of all classes, being on time, prepared, and staying the duration of class. With only 11 class sessions in six short weeks, attendance is critical. Absences should be shared with the professor in advance, and make up work will be assigned
- **Completion of reading assignments** before coming to class, and contributing insights and ideas pertaining to the reading during class discussions and activities. Again, with such a short and fast course, keeping up with course materials is essential.
- **Active presence** during class activities and discussions which includes sharing discerning comments, relevant examples, thought-provoking questions, and appropriate responses to the comments/questions of others. Such participation also requires students to be sensitive to their level of participation in relation to others in the class.

Conceptual Framework:

the SOE's Conceptual Framework (CF)—*Social Action through Education*—is exemplified within the context of the particular course in that action research is all about empowering community members to act to address pressing problems in their communities. For your reference: our conceptual framework is described here - www.luc.edu/education/mission/

Diversity:

Action research is a unique form of research that emphasizes both the specific context and collaborative relationships within an organization. Through this course, we will discuss these aspects of action research with particular attention being paid to the idea that multiple perspectives within an organization provide a stronger foundation for defining problems, and developing actions to solve these problems.

This conceptual framework, along with Dispositions, will be evaluated on LiveText. For more information about LiveText at Loyola, visit:

<http://www.luc.edu/education/admission/tuition/course-management-fee/>. For direct access to LiveText, visit: <https://www.livetext.com/>

Dispositions:

All courses in the SOE assess student dispositions: *Professionalism, Inquiry, and Social Justice*. Full transparency is critical to ensure that students are able to meet the expectations in this area. A description of how we use disposition data in the SOE is included in the [SOE syllabus addendum](#).

The specific disposition or dispositions for each course are listed below, and the descriptions for the expected behaviors for each disposition can be found on the rubric posted in LiveText for this course.

- **Social Justice and Professionalism** are critical components of action research, as the researcher needs to prioritize the needs of the context as opposed to his/her own desired outcomes, and also needs to find ways to collaborate with stakeholders so that they understand the work being done and can voice their concerns and confirmations of understanding with ease.
- **Social Justice Foundation:** Action research has its foundations in solving social problems. Action research places the individuals within an organization, school, and community in the role of the researcher in order to define a problem, study possible solutions, identify or create an intervention to the problem, and study the effectiveness of the solution within their specific context. The emphasis is placed on empowering members of the context being studied to use data (both qualitative and quantitative) as the foundation for examining a problem and solution, and determining a subsequent course of action.
- **Inquiry** is at the heart of action research; stakeholders must inquire about issues in their setting through reflection, after which one program can be selected for cycles of improvement.

IDEA Objectives for online course evaluation:

Of the 13 IDEA objectives, those most essential to CIEP 488 include:

1. Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories)
3. Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)
11. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view

Important IDEA objectives:

4. Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course
8. Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing
9. Learning how to find, evaluate, and use resources to explore a topic in depth
10. Developing ethical reasoning and/or ethical decision making
12. Learning to apply knowledge and skills to benefit others or serve the public good
13. Learning appropriate methods for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting numerical information

Minor IDEA objectives:

2. Developing knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives, global awareness, or other cultures
5. Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team
6. Developing creative capacities (writing, inventing, designing, performing in art, music, drama, etc.)
7. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.)

**Loyola University Chicago
School of Education
Syllabus Addendum**

IDEA Course Evaluation Link for Students

Each course you take in the School of Education is evaluated through the IDEA Campus Labs system. We ask that when you receive an email alerting you that the evaluation is available that you promptly complete it. To learn more about IDEA or to access the website directly to complete your course evaluation go to: <http://luc.edu/idea/> and click on **STUDENT IDEA LOGIN** on the left hand side of the page.

Dispositions

All students are assessed on one or more dispositional areas of growth across our programs: **Professionalism, Inquiry, and Social Justice**. The instructor in your course will identify the dispositions assessed in this course and you can find the rubrics related to these dispositions in LiveText. *For those students in non-degree programs, the rubric for dispositions may be available through Sakai, TaskStream or another platform.* Disposition data is reviewed by program faculty on a regular basis. This allows faculty to work with students to develop throughout their program and address any issues as they arise.

LiveText

All students, *except those who are non-degree*, must have access to LiveText to complete the benchmark assessments aligned to the Conceptual Framework Standards and all other accreditation, school-wide and/or program-wide related assessments. You can access more information on LiveText here: [LiveText](#).

Syllabus Addendum Link

- www.luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/

This link directs students to statements on essential policies regarding *academic honesty, accessibility, ethics line reporting* and *electronic communication policies and guidelines*. We ask that you read each policy carefully.

This link will also bring you to the full text of our conceptual framework that guides the work of the School of Education – ***Social Action through Education***.

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty is an expression of interpersonal justice, responsibility and care, applicable to Loyola University faculty, students, and staff, which demands that the pursuit of knowledge in the university community be carried out with sincerity and integrity.

The School of Education's Policy on Academic Integrity can be found at:

www.luc.edu/education/resources/academic-policies/academic-integrity/

For additional academic policies and procedures refer to: www.luc.edu/education/resources/academic-policies/

Accessibility:

Students who have disabilities which they believe entitle them to accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) office. To request accommodations, students must schedule an appointment with an SSWD coordinator. Students should contact SSWD at least four weeks before their first semester or term at Loyola. Returning students should schedule an appointment within the first two weeks of the semester or term. The University policy on accommodations and participation in courses is available at: www.luc.edu/sswd/

EthicsLine Reporting Hotline:

Loyola University Chicago has implemented EthicsLine Reporting Hotline, through a third party internet & telephone hotline provider, to provide you with an automated and anonymous way to report activities that may involve misconduct or violations of Loyola University policy. **You may file an anonymous report here [on-line](#) or by dialing [855-603-6988](tel:855-603-6988)** (within the United States, Guam, and Puerto Rico).

The University is committed to the highest ethical and professional standards of conduct as an integral part of its mission of expanding knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith. To achieve this goal, the University relies on each community member's ethical behavior, honesty, integrity and good judgment. Each community member should demonstrate respect for the rights of others. www.luc.edu/ethicsline

Technology:

For this course, students will be expected to use web-based technology to do the following: access information about assignments on Sakai, submit assignments before their due dates and times on Sakai, and to use the LUC Libraries and other internet search tools to perform research. Additionally, it is expected that assignments will be typed and that course presentations will be created in programs such as PowerPoint or Prezi. Lastly, Loyola's email system will be used as the primary means of communication between the professor and students enrolled in CIEP 488.

Electronic Communication Policies and Guidelines

The School of Education faculty, students and staff respect each other's rights, privacy and access to electronic resources, services, and communications while in the pursuit of academic and professional growth, networking and research. All members of the university community are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of integrity, communication, and responsibility while accessing and utilizing technology, information resources, and computing facilities. A link to the Loyola University Chicago and School of Education official policies and guidelines can be found at:

www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/education/pdfs/SOE_Cyberbullying_Policy.pdf

www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/education/pdfs/SOE_Netiquette_Guidelines.pdf

www.luc.edu/its/itspoliciesguidelines/index.shtml

Assignments

For each assignment, a rubric will be provided and reviewed in class. Assignment components and due dates are subject to change as the instructor sees fit in order to meet students' needs.

1. Description of the Context (5 points) – Due by 5/29, 8pm

Each candidate will write a description of their professional context. The following must be included (minimum 3 pages):

- a. Introduction of the Context
 - i. What is the **purpose** of the educational organization in which you work? (this might include the mission, vision, CIWP goals, etc.)
 - ii. What are its **demographics**?
 - iii. Who are the **stakeholders**, and what role does each group play?
- b. Typical Day
 - i. Describe **typical occurrences** for a day at your educational organization (general).
 - ii. Walk the reader through **your daily routine** (specific to you).
- c. Problems & Concerns
 - i. Describe up to 3 problems/issues that impede stakeholders from realizing the purpose of the organization (e.g. what inhibits teaching and learning at your school?). Give each problem its own paragraph so as to elaborate on **why** you think that the problem exists, the **ways** in which it negatively affects the organization, and the **implications** of addressing each issue.
 - ii. Note: The problems described in this paper should inform future assignments, and eventually your final action research plan.

2. Problem Identification & Foundation (10 points) – Due by 6/5, 5pm

Each candidate will select **one** problem within their school/organization that will serve as the foundation for his/her action research plan. Papers should include the following:

- a. **Definition of the problem** as it relates to their professional context and the relevant stakeholders.
- b. A **cause-and-effect fishbone** diagram or **schoolwide problem matrix** of the problem, thus identifying their assumptions and the potential causes of the problem.
- c. A **narrative explanation** of the fishbone diagram or matrix along with **suggested data** or evidence they will need to collect to verify the problem exists.
- d. **Reflection** on what the writer learned about their context and the selected problem through the assignment.

3. Literature Review of the Problem and Potential Solutions – Annotated Bibliography (25 Points) – Due by 6/14, 8pm

Candidates will conduct a review of the literature that relates to their identified problems (substantiate that the problem exists writ large and that it is recognized in “the literature”), and literature that might inform them of the potential actions that could be taken to address the problem within their own context (research about possible solutions which have been tested/measured in published literature). Minimum: 5 sources. Suggestion – 2 articles about the problem and 3 articles about potential solutions.

Candidates will complete 1 Annotated Bibliography entry for each of 5 articles.

4. Outline of Action Research Plan (10 points) – Presented on 6/19

Each candidate will present a working outline for his/her final action research plan that is relevant to addressing a problem in each person's context. Outlines can be in the form of a PowerPoint, Prezi, video, handout, or another visual medium and should include:

- a. A description of the problem
- b. Evidence explaining the cause of the problem (from fishbone & literature)
- c. Possible interventions to address the problem (from experience & literature)
- d. Working research questions for the action research study
- e. Working research questions for the first action research cycle
- f. Proposed intervention & data collection strategy
- g. Specific requests for feedback from the class

5. Action Research Plan/Dissertation Prospectus (30 Points) – Due by 6/29, 8am

Each candidate will develop an intervention/action plan to address a selected problem identified and substantiated in the Problem Identification and Literature Review assignments. Action Research Plans must include the following:

- a. A defined problem that is relevant and directly connected to educational leadership
- b. A review of the literature that establishes the presence and importance of the topic
 - i. Evidence explaining the cause of the problem
 - ii. Possible interventions to address the problem
- c. A preliminary argument of advocacy – why the study needs to be conducted – and the implications of the study (how it will contribute to the field of education)
- d. State the purpose of the overall study and the focus of the first action research cycle
- e. Research questions for the overall study and for the first action research cycle
- f. A brief overview of the theoretical framework and how it aligns to the purpose of the study (CPS cohort: leadership framework should be included)
- g. Give an overview of the research methods, data collection, and proposed data analysis strategies and why those data and analysis are appropriate to the study (CPS cohort: self-study methodology)
 - i. Describe the intervention and justify the selection/creation of that intervention
 - ii. Provide a tentative timeline for implementing the intervention, with key activities and data collected in each stage
 - iii. Expected outcomes from this intervention, with accompanying justifications for each based on previous experience and the literature
- h. Reflection on the development of this Action Research Plan, including the alterations you made from Day 1 to Day 11 of class. Also reflect upon what you learned about: your chosen topic, the action research process, yourself as a researcher, and remaining questions/queries you have about course topics. This section of your paper allows me to give you the feedback that you need before implementing your plan!
- i. Proper use of APA (6th Edition) and referencing of the literature is expected

Note: Although the research will not be conducted this term, the Action Research Plans should be detailed enough to allow students to carry out their plans if approved by their organizations in the fall. Candidates are encouraged to pilot some aspect of their interventions during this course as a part of their normal professional experiences.

6. Participation (20 points)

Candidates are expected to attend all classes, demonstrate a professional attitude and demeanor, arrive promptly to class, come prepared for class with assignments and required class materials, contribute constructively to the class, integrate readings into class assignments and activities, listen respectfully, and incorporate and build from others' ideas. Participation for this course will be determined using the following common rubric:

Professional Attitude and Demeanor Part I

- 4-Always prompt and regularly attend classes.
- 3-Rarely late to class and regularly attend classes.
- 2-Sometimes late to class and regularly attend classes. (No more than 1 absence).
- 0-Often late to class and/or poor attendance of classes (More than 1 absence).

Professional Attitude and Demeanor Part II

- 4-Always prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.
- 3-Rarely unprepared for class with assignments and required class materials.
- 2-Often unprepared for class with assignments and required class materials.
- 0-Rarely prepared for class with assignments and required class materials.

Level of Engagement in Class

- 4-Always a willing participant. Contributes by offering ideas and asking questions each class in small groups and the whole class.
- 3-Often a willing participant. Contributes by offering ideas and asking questions each class in small groups or the whole class.
- 2-Rarely a willing participant. Rarely contributes to class by offering ideas or asking questions.
- 0-Never a willing participant. Never contributes to class by offering ideas or asking questions.

Integration of Readings into Classroom Participation

- 4-Often cite from readings; use readings to support points.
- 3-Occasionally cite from readings; sometimes use readings to support points.
- 2-Rarely cite from readings; rarely use readings to support points.
- 0-Never cite from readings; do not use readings to support points.

Listening Skills

- 4-Listen when others talk, both in groups and in class. Incorporate or build off of the ideas of others.
- 3-Listen when others talk, both in groups and in class.
- 2-Rarely listen when others talk, both in groups and in class.
- 0-Does not listen or interrupt when others talk, both in groups and in class

Grading Scale (Percentages)

94-100	A	77-79	C+
90-93	A-	73-76	C
86-89	B+	70-72	C-
83-85	B	60-69	D
80-82	B -	<60	F

Day	Class Focus & Activities	Assigned Reading for following class	Assignments Due for following class
5/22/17	<p>Introductions: Identity Charts, Compass Points</p> <p>Syllabus & Course Expectations</p>	<p>Stringer, 1-35 (Ch. 1); 230-246 (Ch. 9)</p> <p>Herr & Anderson, 1-7 (Ch. 1)</p> <p>Read sample Description of the Context on Sakai</p>	<p>Journal p. 34 Reflection/ Action prompts</p> <p>Begin Description of the Context</p>
5/24/17	<p>Overview of Action Research Paradigm</p> <p>Reflection & Identifying the problem</p> <p>Types of action research (examples)</p>	<p>Stringer, 36-98 (Ch. 2-3)</p> <p>Herr & Anderson, 8-28 (Ch. 2)</p> <p>Pine, Ch. 2 (PDF posted)</p>	<p>Description of the Context due by 5/29 at 8pm</p>
5/29/17	Memorial Day – No Classes		
5/31/17	<p>Selecting a problem – Cause & Effect Fishbone & Schoolwide Action Research Matrix</p> <p>Review sample Problem Identification & Foundation assignment on Sakai</p>	<p>Stringer, 99-134 (Ch. 4)</p> <p>Pine, Ch. 11 (PDF posted)</p>	<p>Problem Identification & Foundation due by 6/5 at 5pm</p>
6/5/17	<p>Action research questions Hendricks 70-74</p> <p>Self-Study & Action Research</p>	<p>James, Milenkiewicz, & Bucknam, 65-95; 97-124</p>	<p>Literature Review search</p>
6/7/17	<p>Tools for data collection Hendricks 88-122</p> <p>Qualitative data collection & analysis</p> <p>Quantitative data collection & analysis</p>	<p>Stringer, 135-165 (Ch. 5)</p> <p>H & A, 29-68 (Ch. 3-4)</p> <p>McNiff & Whitehead 155-174</p>	<p>Literature Review search – at least 2 Annotated Bibliography entries should be done by 6/12</p>
6/12/17	<p>Collaborative action research and knowledge democracies</p> <p>Validity and Action Research - Data Collection, Analysis, and Validity planning</p>	<p>Stringer, 166-209 (Ch. 6-7)</p> <p>H & A, 69-88 (Ch. 5)</p>	<p>Literature Review search</p> <p>Annotated Bibliography due by 6/14 at 8pm</p>
6/14/17	<p>Review sample presentation of AR Outline (Sakai)</p> <p>Submit Annotated Bibliography by 8pm.</p> <p>AR Outline work time</p>	<p>Stringer, 247-292 (Appendix) – read at least 2 Case Examples</p>	<p>Action Research Plan Outlines due 6/21</p> <p>Be ready to conference re: AR Plan Outlines on 6/19</p>

6/19/17	Sample Action Research Plans and planning Professor conferencing on final AR Plan/Dissertation Prospectus	Read sample Action Research Plan (on Sakai)	Action Research Plan Outlines on 6/22
6/21/17	Action Research Plan Outlines – presentations	H & A, 89-111 (Ch. 6) Stringer, 210-229 (Ch. 8)	Final Action Research Plan/Dissertation Prospectus due 6/29 (8am)
6/26/17	Communicating Action Research Turning your AR Plan into a dissertation	No new reading	Final Action Research Plan/Dissertation Prospectus due 6/29 (8am)
6/28/17	Optional conferencing day Final Action Research Plans/ Dissertation Prospectuses due by 8am on 6/29	Before 620: Read H & A 112-138	

This schedule is subject to change per professor's discretion