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ECPEL 892 Action Research for School District Leaders

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Department of Educational and Community Programs
Division of Education
Graduate Program in Education Leadership
Queens College, City University of New York

ECPEL 892 Action Research for School District Leaders (ARSDL)

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A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces education leadership candidates interested in serving at the school district level to the concepts and methods of action research. Participants learn to develop skills for problem diagnosis (what is the real issue?); problem analysis (what are the various components of this problem and how they are interrelated) and solving (what kind of action should we take to come up with a sustainable solution?) and what kind of follow up mechanism should we put in place. The course emphasizes the notion that action research is an inquiry process that is site-based and involves all concerned stakeholders. These stakeholders define the problems to be examined, cogenerate relevant knowledge about them, learn and execute social research techniques, take actions, and interpret the results of actions based on what they have learned.

This course is aligned with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards 1, 2, 3, 4 and the appropriate National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards.

This course is also aligned with the Core Values of the Education Unit of promoting *Equity*, *Excellence*, and *Ethics* in urban schools and communities. More specifically, the Education Unit is committed to preparing teachers and other school professionals who: a) build inclusive communities that nurture and challenge all learners; b) demonstrate professionalism, scholarship, efficacy, evidence-based practice and reflection; and c) value diversity, democracy, and social justice.

The Education Unit uses Chalk and Wire as an electronic portfolio and assessment system. When candidates are admitted to one of the undergraduate or graduate programs in the Education Unit, they will be required to register for a Chalk and Wire ePortfolio subscription to submit their assignments as directed until graduation. Faculty will assess all key program assignments submitted

by candidates in Chalk and Wire. Designated course work will be assessed for professional

knowledge and skills through key program courses. The electronic portfolio system is not used to assess for grading purposes. Chalk & Wire is also the integrated edTPA platform provider system used at Queens College.

Your Chalk and Wire ePortfolio helps you collect, organize, and reflect on your academic work. It can contain files, images, and multimedia that document your academic progress, enriching your learning, sharpening your technological skills, and preparing you for certification. You can also share your professional ePortfolio with colleagues, and potential employers. A professional look and feel make the Chalk and Wire ePortfolio a great tool to use when searching for internships, employments and graduate schools.

Do NOT register for a Chalk and Wire subscription until you are specifically asked to do so by your instructor.

B. COURSE GOALS/OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of action research/participatory action research (within the broader context of social science research) versus traditional social research;
- Use scientific research methods to address “practical” problems and organizational issues;
- Reflect on your own practices at work to find areas where there might be opportunities for improvement;
- Evaluate the action research process and its value to the professional development of the educator;
- Design an action research project focusing on:
 - Generating and clarifying a research question;
 - Determining data needed for collection and the methods with which to collect it;
 - Creating a possible means for analyzing the data collected;
 - Generating strategies for taking action regarding data analysis;
 - Creating the delivery method for sharing information with peers.
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C. TEXTS:

Anderson, G. L., Herr, K., & Nihlen, A., S. (1994). *Studying your own school. An educator's guide to qualitative practitioner research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press Inc.

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

Anderson, G. L., & Herr, K. (1999): The new paradigm wars. Is there room for a rigorous practitioner knowledge in schools and universities? *Educational Researcher*, 28 (5), 12-21

Logan, J. P. (2014). *School leadership through action research.* New York: Pearson.

Mertler, C. A. (2012). *Action research. Improving schools and empowering educators*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage

Additional readings

Stringer, E. (2004). *Action research in education*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (Eds.) (2007). *Handbook of Action Research: Concise Paperback Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

D. ASSIGNMENT

1. Describe with as many details as possible what you do at work. Describe a typical day. What are the successes that you have achieved? What are the challenges that you encounter and which ones you can handle and which ones you can't. Identify two areas where they might be opportunity for growth and design an action research plan to do so. Provide specific details.
2. You also have the option to design your own assignment after consulting with the instructor.

E. GRADING

Students in this class receive a letter grade (A,B,C,D...F). In order to pass, a student must submit a satisfactory AR proposal and participate in classroom discussions. Given the nature of the class, attendance and participation are essential and it is imperative that you attend all class sessions.

F. COURSE APPROACH

The method of instruction is dialogical and action research-based. Students' participation is essential. Class activities will include but not limited to short lectures, exploratory discussions, directed discussions and reflective discussions, brainstorming activities, movies, learning experiences and candidates' presentations, guest-speakers etc.

G. COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. **Class attendance and punctuality:** Let me know ahead of time if you will be coming late or missing class.
2. **Assignment:** If you need an extension for any assignment, contact me ahead of time before the due date. **You may redo any of the assignments *one time*, if you are dissatisfied with your grade, but it must be turned in no later than two weeks after the date I return the original.**
3. **Professionalism:** Although this is a difficult quality to assess, it includes such traits as being on time, treating everyone with respect, being responsible with your speech, allowing others to express themselves rather than dominating the conversation, joining

professional education organizations and contributing to your own and others' educational experiences through active participation.

4. **Academic honesty:** I expect a strict academic honesty. Academic plagiarism and dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the assignment. A student who gets a C is excused from the program.

H. CUNY POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Policy on Academic Integrity, as adopted by the Board is available to all candidates. Academic Dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. This policy and others related to candidates' issues are available to you at: <http://qc.cuny.edu/?id=IUHC>

I. USE OF STUDENT WORK

All teacher education programs in New York State undergo periodic reviews by accreditation agencies and the State Education Department. For these purposes, samples of students' work are made available to those professionals conducting the review. Student anonymity is assured under these circumstances. If you do not wish to have your work made available for these purposes, please let the professor know. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

J. REASONABLE ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: 1) register with and provide documentation to the Special Services Office, Kiely 171; 2) bring a letter to me indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information about services available to Queens students, contact: Special Service Office; Director, Miriam Detres-Hickey, Frese Hall, Room 111; 718-997-5870 (Monday-Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. & Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00p.m.).

Tentative Course Outline

Session I Introduction: Course overview and requirements

Session II Action research in schools and school district settings.
What is AR vis a vis social science research?

Session III Problem identification and statement. (General research question and guiding questions)

Session IV Problem identification and statement (continued).

Session V Literature review and literature review development

Session VI Literature review and literature review development (continued)

Session VII Method for action research projects

Session VIII Data gathering collection and organization

Session IX Data analysis and interpretation and developing an action plan

Session X Data analysis and interpretation (continued)

Session XI Developing an action plan; exemplars of action research projects and journals done by students. Instructor will provide samples of students' work and discuss with participants. Exemplars of action research

Session XII Reflecting on the research process. Ethic on AR, Institutional Review Board

Session XIII Students' Presentation

Session XIV Students' Presentations

Session XV Wrap up

