



# MORAVIAN COLLEGE

## MASTER OF EDUCATION PROGRAM

### EDUC 704-705: Action Research Thesis Spring 2016

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#### Overview

Candidates will work independently under the guidance of a thesis advisor to place action research data within the context of published studies and to report on findings in a final thesis. An oral defense of the thesis will be required. Prerequisites: M.Ed. or M.A.T. degree candidacy, MEDU 702 (Reflective Practice Seminar) with grade of B or higher.

#### Objectives

The student will be able to complete the action research thesis process by:

1. Analyzing, organizing, and displaying trustworthy action research data.
2. Writing the action research thesis.
3. Presenting the action research thesis, including the research method, data, and conclusions, with a committee of educators.
4. Supporting colleagues in the analysis, organization, write-up, and presentation of action research data.

#### Required Texts

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Paley, V. (1997). *The girl with the brown crayon*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wolcott, H. (2009). *Writing up qualitative research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

#### Selected Resources

Bogdan, R.C. & Biklen, S.K. (2011). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th Ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Cazden, C. B. (2001). *Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning* (Rev. ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Clandinin, D. J. (Ed.). (2007). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. (1993). *Inside/Outside: Teacher research and knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. (2009). *Inquiry as stance: practitioner research for the next generation*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Cole, A. L., & Knowles, G. K. (2000). *Researching teaching: Exploring teacher development through reflexive inquiry*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

- Elbow, P. (1998). *Writing without teachers* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Oxford, Great Britain: Oxford University Press.
- Ely, M. (2007). In-forming re-presentations. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 567-598). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ely, M., Vinz, R., Anzul, M., & Downing, M. (1997). *On writing qualitative research: Living by words*. London: Falmer Press.
- Ely, M., with Anzul, M., Friedman, T., Garner, D., & Steinmetz, A. M. (1991). *Doing qualitative research: Circles within circles*. London: Falmer Press.
- Gee, J. P. (2014). *An introduction to discourse analysis: theory and method* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Gubrium, J., & Holstein, J. (Eds.). (2002). *Handbook of interview research: Context and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hendricks, C. (2013). *Improving schools through action research: A comprehensive guide for educators*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.
- Holly, M. L., Arhar, J. M., & Kasten, W. C. (2005). *Action research for teachers: Traveling the yellow brick road*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Hubbard, R., & Power, B. (2003). *The art of classroom inquiry: A handbook for teacher-researchers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1999). *Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mind and its challenge to western thought*. New York: Basic Books.
- MacLean, M., & Mohr, M. (1999). *Teacher-Researchers at work*. Berkeley, CA: National Writing Project.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Newman, J. (1998). *Tensions of teaching: Beyond tips to critical reflection*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (2008). *The Sage handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York: Teachers College.
- Solomon, M. (1999). *The diagnostic teacher: Constructing new approaches to professional development*. New York: Teachers College.
- Witherell, C., & Noddings, N. (1991). *Stories lives tell: Narrative and dialogue in education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Zeni, J. (Ed.). (2001). *Ethical issues in practitioner research*. New York: Teachers College Press.

### **Assignments and Grading**

The thesis committee selected by the degree candidate and approved by the Education Department will award a thesis grade of *A*, *A-*, *B+*, *B*, or *NC* (no credit) based upon the criteria of scholarship, critical reflection, researcher trustworthiness, benefit to candidate's practice, and format of written document as outlined in the "Moravian College M.Ed. Criteria for Thesis Holistic Evaluation" document. According to College policy, a grade of *I* may not be awarded by a thesis committee. Note that the last day for withdrawal from the course with "W" is Thursday, April 2, 2015.

### **Attendance**

Class sessions will consist of two parts and you are expected to participate actively in all aspects of each part. During the first part, we will discuss together the assigned readings and writings. Be prepared to share your thesis writing in progress. During the second part, research groups will meet and work on thesis writing. At the same time, each of you will individually conference with your thesis chair. It is crucial for all degree candidates to attend each session of the thesis seminar ready to share writing in progress as outlined on the course schedule below.

### **Academic Honesty**

All work must adhere to strict ethical guidelines for teacher action researchers. See chapter 6 in the Hendricks text for a review of validity and ethical guidelines for teacher action research. The Moravian College policy on academic honesty as stated in the *Comenius Center Graduate Studies Handbook* will be followed. Academic dishonesty will result in notification of the Academic Dean, in accordance with Moravian College policy.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Tues., Jan. 19: Introducing Yourself to Your Thesis Reader**

In Class: Writing Workshop: Purpose Statement, Delimitations  
Reading Workshop: Sample M.Ed. Thesis Openings  
Chair Conference: Review of Purpose and Delimitations; Initial Committee Selection

#### **Tues., Jan. 26: Providing Your Research Methodology**

Due: Wolcott, Chapters 1 and 2  
McNiff, Chapter 2  
Preliminary Table of Contents  
Thesis Opening Pages (possibly Researcher Autobiography, Stance, Pilot Studies)  
In Class: Reading Workshop: Wolcott and McNiff Discussions  
Writing Workshop: Drafting the Research Method  
Chair Conference: Drafting the Research Method and Committee Selections

#### **Tues., Feb. 2: Beginning Your Research Narrative**

Due: Paley, *The Girl with the Brown Crayon*  
McNiff, Chapter 3  
Wolcott, Chapter 3  
Methodological Approach and Trustworthiness Statement  
Committee Declaration Form with required signatures  
In Class: Reading Workshop: Paley, McNiff, & Wolcott Discussions  
Writing Workshop: Introducing the School, Setting, and Participants  
Chair Conference: Feedback on Thesis Opening Pages, Beginning This Year's Story

#### **Tues., Feb. 9: Sharing Your Review of Salient Literature and Telling This Year's Story**

Due: McNiff, Chapter 4  
Wolcott, Chapter 4  
Synthesized Review of Salient Literature  
In Class: Reading Workshop: McNiff & Wolcott Discussions  
Writing Workshop: Anecdote, Vignette, Drama  
Chair Conference: Methodological Approach and Trustworthiness Statement

#### **Tues., Feb. 16: Exploring Narrative Forms**

Due: McNiff, Chapter 5  
Ely, "In-forming re-presentations" Handout (re-reading of EDUC 506 article)  
In Class: Reading Workshop: Ely Discussion  
Writing Workshop: Drafting the Explanation of Data Analysis  
Chair Conference: Literature Review

#### **Tues., Feb. 23: Explaining Your Analysis of Data**

Due: McNiff, Chapter 9  
Explanation of Data Analysis  
This Year's Story, Part 2  
In Class: Reading Workshop: McNiff Discussion  
Writing Workshop: This Year's Story Continues  
Chair Conference: This Year's Story

**Tues., March 1: Presenting Your Findings**

Due: Sample M.Ed. Thesis “Findings” Section Readings  
This Year’s Story, Part 3  
In Class: Reading Workshop: Sample Thesis Selections Discussion  
Writing Workshop: Findings Section  
Chair Conference: This Year’s Story

**Tues., March 8: No Class: Spring Recess**

**Tues., March 15: Revising Your Write Up**

Due: Wolcott, Chapter 5  
McNiff, Chapter 10  
**Google Docs Working Draft of Action Research Thesis**  
In Class: Reading Workshop: Wolcott & McNiff Discussion  
Writing Workshop: Peer Response to Thesis Draft  
Chair Conference: This Year’s Story in its Entirety

**Tues., March 22: Following APA Style**

Due: Wolcott, Chapter 6  
Revised Google Docs Draft of Action Research Thesis with Table of Contents, Works Cited, and Appendixes  
In Class: Reading Workshop: Wolcott Discussion  
Writing Workshop: APA Style  
Chair Conference: Findings Section, Reflective Assessment of Progress to Date

**Tues., March 29: Editing Your Write Up**

Due: Edited Google Docs Draft of Action Research Thesis with Table of Contents, Works Cited, Appendixes, and Abstract  
**Final Google Docs Draft due to Committee for those sharing on 4/14.**  
In Class: Oral Defense Discussion; Chair Conferences as needed

**Tues., April 5: Preparing to Present Your Study and Its Findings**

Due: **Final Google Docs Draft due to Committee for those sharing on 4/21.**

**Tues., April 12: Sharing Teacher Action Research I.**

In Class: Presentation and Conversation #1, 2

**Tues., April 19: Sharing Teacher Action Research II**

In Class: Presentation and Conversation #3, 4

**Friday, May 6: Submitting the Thesis**

Final copies of the “publication ready” thesis must be approved by the Director of the Graduate Education program and placed on file with Jennifer Pagliaroli, administrative assistant, by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, May 8. See “Final Graduate Education Thesis Submission Guidelines.” Notify thesis committee chair if, for any reason, you plan NOT to be in attendance at Commencement exercises, so that your name may be announced *in absentia*. Note that Commencement exercises begin promptly at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 16.

**Wed., May 11: Graduation Rehearsal**

6:00 p.m. UBC Room, Haupt Union Building

**Sat., May 14: Commencement Exercises**

8:30 a.m. Class Picture, Priscilla Payne Hurd Courtyard  
9:00 a.m. Robing, Athletic & Recreation Center  
9:40 a.m. Processional  
10:00 a.m. Commencement Ceremony