Instructor: Dr. Megan Babkes Stellino
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Credit hours: 3    Location: Online course
Office hours: By appointment

IMPORTANT! From the outset it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to understand all contents of this syllabus.

Course Description
This course provides an introduction to self-inquiry and pedagogical reflection through coach/teacher action research. The material covered will focus on the historical background, purpose, instruction and guidance needed for teachers and coaches to conduct action research.

Overview
Although there are many types of research that may be undertaken, action research specifically refers to a disciplined inquiry done by a teacher or coach with the intent that the research will inform and change his or her practices in the future. This research is carried out within the context of the teacher’s or coach’s environment – that is, with the students or players and at the site in which the teacher or coach works – on questions that deal with matters at hand.

Implicit in the term action research is the idea that teachers or coaches will begin a cycle of posing questions, gathering data, reflection, and deciding on a course of action. Many action research projects are started with a particular problem to solve, whose solution leads into other areas of study. While a teacher or coach may work alone on these studies, it is also common for a number of teachers or coaches to collaborate on a problem, as well as enlist support and guidance from others.

Text (Required):

Student Learning Outcomes
Students will be able to:
1. Identify key characteristics of action research.
2. Formulate an action research problem.
3. Describe methods of collecting and analyzing data.
4. Plan an action research project to be conducted and written during an internship.
Course Outline

I) Understanding Action Research
   i) The relationship between research and teaching/coaching
   ii) Key terms and the importance of action research
   iii) Examples of action research and problem solving

II) Developing a Research Problem
   i) Selecting an appropriate area of focus
   ii) Performing a reconnaissance
   iii) Reviewing related literature
   iv) Formulating a question or problem to investigate

III) Gathering and Interpreting Data
   i) Methods of collecting qualitative and quantitative data
   ii) Methods of analyzing qualitative and quantitative data

IV) Putting a Plan Into Action
   i) Developing a research plan that will guide the action research project
   ii) Collecting data
   iii) Performing initial data analyses

Teaching Methods: The following may be used during this course to provide variety in student learning: student-centered discussion/debate via discussion boards and blogs, readings, video, online tasks, and small group work.

Course Requirements/Evaluation

1. Tasks and Assignments (30%)

In an online course, it is very important to set aside time to complete all assigned tasks in a timely manner. Each task or assignment will be worth a specified amount of points. The point total will constitute 30% of your final grade. In fairness to you, me, and your classmates, all written assignments (i.e., quizzes, reflections, activity write-ups) will be reduced a letter grade for each day late.

More specifically, evaluation of your tasks and assignments will be based on your ability to:
   • Respond completely and thoughtfully to all guiding questions and assigned tasks;
   • Communicate in a professional manner (clear, concise, free of mechanical errors)

2. Action Research Plan (70%)

Due dates appear in the following schedule. Some items in the schedule (e.g., “Define your problem/Area of focus) may be awarded points under the other evaluation category: Tasks and Assignments.
### Summary of Action Research Plan Details

1) **Initial and Revised Research Plans** should include the following:
   - Problem, rationale, research question
   - References and abstracts of at least 5 resources (scholarly articles) on your research topic
   - Participants
   - Data collection plan and timeline
   - Anticipated research instruments

2) **Final Action Research Report** (due during internship)
The final report should be 15-20 pages in length (excluding appendices), written mainly in paragraph form with charts and tables inserted as necessary. Include the following:
   - Revised problem/area of focus, rationale for the study; clearly stated research question
   - Literature review
   - Setting
   - Outline of research participants and recruitment strategies
   - Data collection methods
   - Data Analysis
   - Description and interpretation of findings/results, and resultant plan for action
   - References – in APA format

Stay focused to your topic throughout the report. Writing should be clear, coherent, and focused in order to contribute to the overall quality of the report.

An evaluation rubric for the final report will be posted online.

- **A** = 100-90
- **B** = 89-80
- **C** = 79-70
- **D** = 60-69
- **F** = below 60
Student Expectations/Course Policies

Although I will do my utmost to provide you with valuable knowledge and experiences, little can be gained unless you are making a concerted and noticeable effort to be a self-motivated, responsible, and active learner. In an effort to guide the goal of responsibility, motivation and participation, I offer the following as class operating guidelines:

1. **Be present.** The class includes interactive and participatory components. These types of experiences cannot be made up. You should plan to stay abreast of course assignments and dialogue.

2. **Participate with effort.** This asks that you are prepared and put forth a solid and consistent effort in class. This includes giving input and feedback when appropriate, as well as producing graduate level work. Do what you have to do to be ready.

3. **Take initiative for yourself.** Most of your learning will be the result of your own initiative, not the prodding of the instructor or rewards (or threats) of grades. You alone must be responsible for creating value for yourself in this course. How well you do will be, in large part, the result of how well you are able to carry on without direct supervision. Taking initiative means asking questions when material, concepts, or expectations are not clear. (It is OK not to know, but it not OK to continue not knowing). For this class, reading beyond the assignment is necessary to achieve markedly superior work.

4. **Help others.** The ultimate success and reward for each of you depends on your ability to help and support your classmates in their learning and in their attempts to be responsible for their own learning. This also includes creating a safe learning environment; that is, one in which the confidentiality of one another’s sharing is respected, where complaints are directed only to someone (and received only by someone) who can do something about the situation, and where differences of opinion and healthy debate are prized.

**UNC's Policies** - UNC's policies and recommendations for academic misconduct will be followed. For additional information, please see the Dean of Student’s website, Student Handbook link [http://www.unco.edu/dos/handbook/index.html](http://www.unco.edu/dos/handbook/index.html)

**Honor Code** - All members of the University of Northern Colorado community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility. These core elements foster an atmosphere, inside and outside of the classroom, which serves as a foundation and guides the UNC community's academic, professional, and personal growth. Endorsement of these core elements by students, faculty, staff, administration, and trustees strengthens the integrity and value of our academic climate.

**Disability Support Services** - Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services at (970) 351-2289 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. (updated per DSS 8-24-09)