

PROCESS A NON-GENERAL EDUCATION - CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

SCC #04-05- 316

Deadlines

October 8, 2004 to be implemented Fall 2005 - February 11, 2005 to be implemented Spring 2005

PROPOSAL TITLE: ACTION RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

Sponsor(s): T. MONAHAN E-Mail: monahan@rwan Ext: 4748
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DEPARTMENT: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

COLLEGE: EDUCATION

If Liberal Arts & Sciences CHECK: History/Humanities Math/Sciences Social/Behavioral Sciences

UNDERGRADUATE GRADUATE

THE ATTACHED NON-GEN-ED PROPOSAL IS BEST DESCRIBED BY THE ITEM(S) CHECKED

- New non-gen-ed course
- Short-term non-gen-ed course
- Minor curricular changes (fewer than three) to
- Existing non-gen-ed course
- Non-gen-ed degree requirements
- Major
- Minor, specialization, concentration, track, certificate program

THE FOLLOWING SIGNATURES REPRESENT APPROVAL

Department Chair: *[Signature]* Date: 10/05/04
 Department Curriculum Chair: *[Signature]* Date: 10/15/04
 Academic Dean: *[Signature]* Date: 10/15/04

COLLEGE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

OPEN HEARING Date: 11/20/04 Approved: Not Approved:
 COLLEGE CURRICULUM CHAIR: *[Signature]*
 Senate Curriculum Chair Signature: *[Signature]* Date: 12/20/04
 Comments: _____

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/PROVOST Signature: *[Signature]* Date: 3/8/05

Approved Not Approved

Date: 3/31/05 REGISTRAR Course Description Received & Accepted - Reg's Taxonomy, & Course # 0824504

Registrar Signature: *[Signature]*

NOTIFICATION FORWARD

- SCC Chair
- Academic Dean
- Department Chair
- Registrar
- IR
- CAP
- VP Student Affairs
- Others

[Handwritten notes]

NEW COURSE PROPOSAL

Details

Course title: Action Research in Education

Sponsor: Thomas C. Monahan (for the Faculty of the Educational Leadership Department)

Credit Hours: 3 s.h.

Level: Graduate

Prerequisites: Foundations of Educational Policy (0821.501)

Suggested Time Frame and Scale of Implementation: This course will be offered beginning in the fall 2005 and, at a minimum, will be offered during the fall and spring semesters of each academic year.

Curricular Effect

Offerings: This proposed course will replace the course *Procedures and Evaluation in Research* (0824.501) only in the master's programs in (a) school administration and (b) supervision and curriculum development. These two programs serve as our principal and supervisor preparation programs. Reasons supporting this change are offered and explained below in "Rationale for the Proposed New Course".

Adequacy of Present Resources: No new resources – human, material, equipment, space, or library – will be required to support this new course. Our present faculty resources provide a minimum of four individuals who could adequately teach the course. We anticipate that we will be able to meet the demand for this new requirement by offering one section of the course each fall and spring semester. This will result, however, in a reduction of the number of sections of *Procedures and Evaluation in Research* from its present level of 2-3 sections per semester to 1-2 sections per semester.

Recommended Library Resources: We have consulted with our department's library liaison, Dr. Greg Potter, and we have determined that we will not require any substantial influx of new materials to support this course. Further, we have determined that there is an abundance of rich and varied literature and materials that are available to students and professors via the World Wide Web.

Short Term Evaluations: None, does not apply.

Rationale for the Proposed New Course

Introduction: *Procedures and Evaluation in Research* is an introductory, graduate level, course that explores the various quantitative and qualitative approaches to educational research. Within the scope of the course, students learn how to conduct a review of the relevant literature, build a conceptual framework, formulate researchable questions and/or hypotheses, design an approach for data collection and analysis, select a sample, identify or develop appropriate data collection

instruments, ensure validity and reliability, engage in data collection and analysis, synthesize data, and prepare a formal report of findings that add to the existing scholarly literature. The course also helps students to fulfill the requirements of the Research Methods and Educational Statistics bank of the Basic Professional Component of master's degree programs within the College of Education and appropriately prepares students for their traditional thesis/project requirement.

Historically and for more than two decades, *Procedures and Evaluation in Research*, which is housed within the Educational Leadership Department, has been required to serve primarily the department's master's degree principal and supervisor preparation programs. However, most recently, as master's degree programs have grown or have been transformed, the course has taken on a decidedly service orientation for the College of Education. The course is now required not only in these programs (e.g., school administration and supervision and curriculum development), but it is also a required course in the master's programs in (a) higher education, (b) environmental education and conservation, (c) school and public librarianship, and (d) educational technology. It is also an elective in master's degree programs in (a) special education, (b) elementary school teaching, (c) subject matter teaching, and (c) learning disabilities. Moreover, while 5 years ago, demand for the course was such that the department could offer a single section of the course in both fall and spring semesters, current demand requires 2-3 sections per semester (exclusive of a section that is generally taught off-campus through the Education Institute).

At the same time, the faculty of the Educational Leadership Department has recognized the increasing importance and desirability of the use of action research as the preferred method of empirical research among educational practitioners. Designed essentially to provide a vehicle for teachers (at several levels within the P-20 domain) to research best practices for the benefit not only of their students, but also for their own instructional improvement, action research draws from rich traditions of both quantitative and qualitative educational research. In doing so, it relies on a methodological approach that differs from the more structural/positivist approach that is the hallmark of *Procedures and Evaluation in Research*. Rather than following a linear approach of problem identification-data collection and analysis-reporting, action research commonly uses a reflective practice technique that is cyclical and recursive and uses multiple cycles of act-observe-evaluate-reflect.

What has prompted this proposal for a new course in action research is simply this: while the Educational Leadership faculty recognizes and values the content of *Procedures and Evaluation in Research*, and while we will continue to offer the course as a service to the other master's programs in the College of Education, we have determined that a more focused action research course better serves the needs of the students in our principal and supervisor preparation programs. And so, we propose that the new course in action research will become a required course only within our principal and supervisor preparation programs and will replace the requirement for *Procedures and Evaluation in Research*. We will continue to offer *Procedures and Evaluation in Research*, on a slightly scaled-back schedule, as a service to the other master's programs in the College of Education.

Essence of the Course

Objectives:

1. Students will learn and become familiar with the vocabulary of action research.
2. Students will acquire the skills necessary to negotiate the professional periodical literature especially as it relates to action research. Additionally, students will be able to utilize electronic informational databases in the field of education.
3. Students will acquire the skills necessary to plan and design action research projects, including those necessary to identify and use appropriate data collection instruments and approaches commonly found in action research (e.g., interviews, observations, archival data, and journaling).
4. Students will acquire the skills necessary to critically analyze action research and other research articles with reference to their design, findings, and interpretation.
5. Students will understand the processes for engaging in reflective practice
6. Students will acquire the skills necessary to interpret data collected in action research projects for data-based decision-making.

Topical Outline:

1. Action research and its place in educational research: The role of practitioner research in systematically improving educational practice.
2. History of action research, types of action research, and educational purposes of action research.
3. Strategies for beginning action research: Developing questions and thematic concerns for action research: Identifying the project focus.
4. Beginning the Reconnaissance cycle: research, relevance, and application to the professional context.
5. Taking the first actions: plan and act; observe and reflect.
6. Interpreting the data and selecting the next action(s).
7. Involving others in the process of improving teaching and learning: the potential for collaboration and developing learning community.
8. Applying action research to other contexts.

Evaluation of Students and Grading Procedures: Student performance will be evaluated on the basis of an assessment of designated course products. Grading will be on a A-F scale. Consistent with present practice and policy established by the University through the Graduate School, students whose performance is assessed to be below the grade of “C” will receive no credit for the course.

Course Evaluation: The adequacy of the course will be determined using multiple measures from multiple data sources. At the conclusion of each semester, the course will be evaluated through an analysis of student-completed course evaluation forms. In addition, beginning with the year immediately following its first full year of implementation; that is, beginning in the spring of the second year, the course will be evaluated through an analysis of survey forms administered to course alumni (i.e., students who have previously completed the course). Finally, as part of its annual curriculum review, the Educational Leadership faculty will assess the adequacy of the course through syllabus review, review of pertinent student data, and anecdotal records regarding the efficacy of the course.

Results of Consultations: Insofar as the approval of this proposed course does not duplicate any existing course within the College of Education, is not inter-disciplinary, and will not have any detrimental effect on any other department, program, or student, no consultations outside the department have been solicited.

Catalog Description:

0824.xxx

Action Research in Education

3. s.h.

(Prerequisite: 0821.501)

This course introduces students to the cyclical and recursive approaches to action research. Student will engage in reflective practice and will complete a field-based action research project in an appropriate educational setting. This course is offered annually and includes a field experience component.