

Department of Teaching, Learning and Sociocultural Studies (TLSS)

LRC 576: Teacher Research, COE Room 331,

Tuesday, 4:15 – 6:45 p.m.

Spring 2012

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Course Description

This course will take a critical look at the current literature and the theoretical trends and frameworks in teacher research and its transformative potential in improving the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom as well as addressing critical issues in the field of education. Ultimately, our goals are to become critical and responsive *consumer-interpreters* of research studies as well as *producer-practitioners* of research.. Consequently, in addition to reading and analyzing teacher research, we will also design and conduct a teacher research project.

LRC 576 is designed to introduce students to teacher research as *systemic* inquiry into and documentation of classroom teaching practices--those inquiry activities and strategies used in the process of designing, conducting, analyzing, and sharing teacher research. Throughout the course we will read and analyze the teacher research literature to identify key aspects of the inquiry paradigm and process, engage with the working typology of qualitative and ethnographic methods, consider our own biases and assumptions about students and schools, and examine our own life experiences as learners and their influence on us as teachers. You will be asked to think of yourself as “‘theorists’ who articulate your intentions, test assumptions, and find connections with practice” (Goswami et al., 2009, p. 3), and as “producers” of knowledge about teaching and learning as we move toward a more nuanced understanding of the role of teachers in the process of student learning and as contributors to the body of knowledge.

The principal outcomes are to:

- (1) Design and conduct an action research project;
- (2) Synthesize the analysis of course readings, relevant scholarly literature, fieldwork data, and personal experiences as a written inquiry project report;
- (3) Examine the implications of teacher research for transformative change.

The course will follow a seminar format in which ideas, approaches, and advances in teacher research will focus on the practical and sociocultural issues of designing a teacher research study in our own teaching contexts. In preparation for conducting the study, we will explore research design, methodologies and data collection and analysis strategies through critical reading, analysis, and discussion of teacher research, and through the experiences of veteran and novice teacher researchers. The following members of the LRC and TLS community—veteran faculty teacher researchers as well as former LRC 576 students—will assist in presenting the significance, benefit, and potential of teacher research: Dr. Mary Carol Combs; Dr. Ana

Christine Iddings, Dr. Norma González; Graduate Students: Darden Bradshaw, Fine Arts; Jessica Sleeper, LRC, and Kathy Zeleski, LRC.

Required Texts:

- Hubbard, R.S. & Power, B.M. (2003). Revised Edition. *The art of classroom Inquiry: A handbook for teacher-researchers*. Portsmouth: Heineman.
- Goswami, D., Lewis, C., Rutherford, M. & Waff, D. (2009). *On teacher inquiry: Approaches to language and literacy research (An NCRL volume)*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- González, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Frank, C. (1999). *Ethnographic eyes: A teacher's guide to classroom observation*. Portsmouth, NH: Heineman.

Articles and supplementary readings to be posted on D2L or provided in class.

Course and University Policies

Attendance and Tardiness/Leaving Early (please read carefully)

The outcomes of this course are dependent on establishing a strong community of support—from your instructor and colleagues who have a vested interest in helping you develop your ideas, providing feedback to your research proposals, critiquing your research design, and encouraging you in confronting your inquiry challenges. Thus, absences and/or tardiness not only have a significant impact for you but for your class colleagues as well.

That said, it is understood that students lead complicated lives (involving family, work, health, or other academic responsibilities) sometimes making absences or tardiness unavoidable. Therefore, one excused absence (no points deducted) will be allowed. Please use it wisely. After that, 3 points will be deducted for every class period missed. Arriving to class more than 15 minutes late or leaving over 30 minutes early will be counted as an absence. After four absences, you will be asked to drop the course. The following are exceptions to this policy:

- (1) Holidays or special events observed by organized religions for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion.
- (2) Medical or health emergencies (you must provide a doctor's note).
- (3) Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean's designee).
- (4) Absences due to pre-scheduled academic projects involving travel, for example conference presentations..

Incompletes (please read carefully)

University of Arizona policy states that a grade of **I** may be awarded only at the end of a term, when all but a minor portion of the course work has been satisfactorily completed. I intend to follow this policy; consequently, I strongly discourage incompletes and will allow them only for

extreme emergencies. However, if you do need an incomplete, you must inform me by mid-April and have completed all work except the final paper. Students who receive incompletes can expect to earn only a grade of B or below.

Student Conduct

General expectations for student conduct are described on the U of A website on academic policies (<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policiesandcodes/studentcodeofconduct>). Beyond these expectations, a passing grade in this course assumes regular and on-time attendance, reading the assigned chapters, articles, or handouts before class, active participation in class discussions/activities, and attentiveness to and respect for the instructor, guestspeakers, and fellow students. In addition, the increasing use of personal technology—cell phones, iPhones, iPads, and laptops—in the classroom has become an instructional issue, particularly in terms of appropriate and respectful use. Answering, speaking, or text messaging on cellular phones, and laptop computer email correspondence, internet surfing, or working on non-course-related material are not acceptable.

Plagiarism

Section 5-308 of the University of Arizona Student Code of Conduct forbids all forms of student academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, (1) cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism as set out and defined in the Student Code of Conduct, ABOR Policy 5-308-E.6, E.10, and F.1; (2) Submitting an item of academic work that has previously been submitted without fair citation of the original work or authorization by the faculty member supervising the work; (3) Violating required professional ethics rules contained or referenced in the student handbooks (hardcopy or online) of undergraduate or graduate programs, or professional colleges. For more information and a list of possible sanctions, please see the U of A's webpage on student academic conduct expectations and the Code of Academic Integrity (<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policiesandcodes/codeofacademicintegrity>).

Students with Disabilities

It is university policy to provide reasonable accommodation(s) to students with disabilities, as required by law to ensure equal access to educational opportunities, programs, services, and activities in the most integrated settings. In general, it is the responsibility of the students to make their disability status and subsequent need for an accommodation known (<http://drc.arizona.edu/ada/accommodation.html>). If you need accommodations, please communicate this to us and we will do our best to meet your needs.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Program in Language, Reading and Culture
University of Arizona

The term “multicultural education” expresses the essential mission of the department and the university. Multicultural education is not just “about” certain subjects; it does not merely offer “perspectives” on education. It is an orientation to life, one that values diversity of viewpoints and experiences and sees people as valuable contributors to the experience of school and society. Life in universities is a self-consciously multicultural experience, from the varieties of cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds represented in it to the full spectrum of ideas and disciplinary traditions that compose the community of scholars. Our recognition of this central tenet leads us to commit ourselves to the following general principles.

- Learners bring a variety of linguistic and cognitive strengths from their families and communities into the classroom; these strengths are to be appreciated as such by educators.
- Education must expand on the linguistic and cognitive strengths that learners already possess and bring them to the classroom, rather than ignore or try to replace them with others.
- Respect and appreciation for cultural and community knowledge means that universities serve the interest of education when they allow for an exchange of views, rather than rely exclusively on a transmission model of instruction.
- We recognize the existence of a variety of communities – each with its own voice and interests – both within and outside the university; a broad education offers both the opportunity to hear and study as many of these voices as possible. Such an accommodation must include those communities that have traditionally been excluded or underrepresented in the university.

Recognition of the validity of these general principles must be reflected in our courses, our relations with students, staff, and other faculty members and in the community life of the Department.

Course Requirements

Class Attendance and Preparation for Participation

I believe learning to be the outcome of social activity, interaction, and experiences. Every class member gains from the “funds of knowledge” (González et al, 2005)—the multiple and diverse perspectives—that each member of the class “community of practice” (Wenger, 1998) bring to the teaching and learning situation we will establish.

Regular attendance and *active* (in class) participation/involvement in course activities/assignments is essential to your personal and our collective experience(s). As a courtesy, if missing a class session is unavoidable, leave a message for me *in advance* at by e-

mail; however, however, this advance notice is not necessarily an excused absence (See Section: Course and University Policies--Attendance and Tardiness). Partner with a class member with whom you can keep updated and fully prepared for each weekly “research chat” and in-class participation activity assignment.

“Research Chats”. Forming a community of colleagues as a support network is a critical aspect of teacher research. Our weekly class sessions will incorporate “research chats” as a venue for establishing such a support group where we will:

- Sit with our peers and discuss the real work of the classroom or educational setting through our inquiry projects;
- Bring the classroom/educational setting “to the table” with the intentions of digging deeper into our questions motivated by a desire to improve our teaching practices and to gain a better understanding of our students and their academic needs;
- Listen with sincerity and respect along with a sense of humor;
- Shape—giving form and function to—our inquiry;
- Share the wisdom and knowledge we have gained; and
- Become a network of support for each other.

In-Class Participation Activity Assignments. There are a number of out-of-class assignments to be completed as preparation for in-class activities designed for aspects of the inquiry process: Professional Timeline, Quest for the Question, Design Queries, First Draft Thinking, Taking a Cold Look, Making the Familiar Strange, Dinner with Theorists.

Participation assignments/activities will not be given points after the Due Date.

Notebook Portfolio

A notebook/binder (3 inch) and section dividers will be used to organize the collection of assignments and research activities used in documenting your journey toward becoming a teacher researcher. Notebooks as the Final Portfolio is DUE: May 1, 2012. A Portfolio Cover Sheet will be provided to assist in organizing the Portfolio and for grading purposes.

Notebook Sections:

1. **Teacher Research (TR) Journals:** TR Journals (total 10) are to facilitate discussion at the scheduled “Research Chats.” The first five journals (single spaced, 1 full page minimum) should focus on the connections to and highlights of course readings, assignments and presentations that you want to bring to the weekly “research chat” sessions. As we move into implementing our Research Design, the remaining five journals will serve as the venue for reflection on the inquiry process underway—emerging themes and patterns, insights, challenges, and personal transformations—that you want to “bring to the table” for sharing and feedback. The purpose of the TR Journals and “research chats” are to assist in shaping—giving form and function to our inquiries, for reflection in writing up the research, and for future classroom inquiry projects.
2. **In-Class Participation Assignments.** There are a number of out-of-class assignments to be completed as preparation for in-class activities: Professional Timeline, Quest for the Question, , Taking a Cold Look, Cooking up the Notes, Dinner with Theorists. These

activities will be turned in on the due date as part of the participation points. They are also to be included in the Notebook Portfolio as reference material for future classroom inquiry projects.

3. Inventory of Influential Readings. This section is comprised of two parts and will have two Due Dates: 1) Students will engage in literature search activities as a means of collecting and looking at the existing body of work that relates to their specific research topic/ interest/ issues. Students will begin to compile a personal Inventory of Literature (10-15 references which may include the course articles and texts by the DUE DATE, Feb. 21; 2) Students will begin to select the most relevant literature for their inquiry project and provide a brief annotation for the selected literature, DUE DATE, March 10. The final paper should draw heavily on the literature from the Inventory. The Inventory list of cited material should follow APA style.

4. The Research Design: Each student will design a research inquiry project that will be implemented at a selected study site. As Hubbard & Power state, “it [the Research Design] is *the plan* for engaging in systematic inquiry. . . innovative rather than imitative and built around very special needs,” (p. 12). (Research Design examples in Hubbard & Power, Chapter 2, Appendix A). A Research Design template will be provided as a guide for this assignment and used as the evaluative rubric. This section will include the sample data collection forms (sample permission forms, surveys, interviews questions, student activity sheets, etc.) developed for data collection.

5. Data Collection: This section will be comprised of the actual data—completed permission forms, surveys, interview transcripts, student works, etc.—collected including any preliminary analysis undertaken of the “inquiry in progress.”

***Getting permission to conduct the study (IRB) is not required for this course project unless the research study will be published or presented at a conference.*

If you are not currently in a classroom or field setting, students must schedule an appointment to discuss other possibilities to meet the Research Study course requirement such as:

- writing a detailed grant proposal for a teacher research study (See Hubbard & Power, Appendix F, pps 212-217) ;
- examining a particular research methodology—an approach to data collection or data analysis—in a concept paper (See examples of the Funds of Knowledge concept applied in other projects: Part III, Chapters 12-15, in González et. al);
- writing an analysis and report of data gathered from a previous research study;
- conducting a critical examination of a specific issue related to teacher research as a concept paper;
- writing an article or book chapter for publication from a teacher research study;
- designing a proposal for another project of your own design.

Mid-Point Progress Narrative. Students will submit a narrative analysis paper (3-5 pps.) reporting on: 1) emerging themes or patterns and the supporting data; 2) an evaluative reflection

on the process and progress of data collection and analysis; 3) connecting to and grounding your findings in the literature; 4) preliminary answers to the research questions; and 5) a reflection on the questions Why do teacher research? How do I see myself, now, as a researcher? DUE: March 27, 2012.

Evaluation/Course Grade

The ultimate goal of this course is to develop a new vision and perspective of ourselves as teacher researchers interested in improving our teaching practices and documenting learning for ourselves and others. Evaluation will consist of a combination of an accumulation of points earned for weekly assignments as well as course projects, your visible performance—attendance, participation, and preparation for class sessions—but rests largely on how you articulate and demonstrate your progress in the written work outlined in terms of quality of work, serious thought about, and deep interrogation of the issues in order to effect change. *An A grade will reflect an exceptional effort and quality of work with a B reflecting the completion of all course projects at a satisfactory level.* While you can negotiate the ways in which you define the course projects, you must complete all the activities as well as the final project/paper to fulfill course requirements. Incompletes will not be given for the course except in extreme situations and only with *prior approval* by the instructor. If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me. I would like us to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

Attendance and Participation (preparation activities: TR Journals, out-of- class assignments)	30
Research Design	30
Mid-Point Check – Progress Narrative	15
Inventory of Influential Readings	30
The Research Report	70
Presenting the Research Report: Abstract, Powerpoint	<u>25</u>
Total	200 points

Grading Scale:
 92 – 100 = A
 82 — 91 = B
 72 — 81 = C
 62 — 71 = D

Tentative Schedule of Class Sessions

January

- 17 Introduction to the Course
Discuss Assignment, Professional Timeline
Student Survey in class
- 24 What is Teacher Research? Why Do Teacher Research?
Read: Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (Article) Research on Teaching & Teacher Research.
Read: Goswami et al. (2009). Ch. 1: “What’s Going On Here?”: Seeking Answers Through Teacher Inquiry

Activity: Research Chat/World Café (TR Journal #1)
Activity: Professional Timeline

Due: Professional Timeline
Discuss Assignment, Quest for a Question, for class session 2/7/12
- 31 **VHS:** *Stand and Deliver* (1997) **D2L**
Tucson Daily Star Articles and Ed Ops on TUSD Mexican-American Studies Program

Planning Classroom Research

February

- 7 Transforming “Wonderings” and/or “Tensions” into Research Questions
Read: Hubbard & Power (2003) Ch. 1. Finding and Framing a Research Question
Read: (In Goswami et. al) Waff, D.—Coresearching and Coreflecting: The Power of Teacher Inquiry Communities

Activity: Research Chat (TR Journal #2 on movie and readings for 2/7/12)
Guest Speaker: Kathy Zeleski

Due: Quest for a Question

Introduce topic: Theory and Theoretical Frameworks
Introduce Assignment: Creating an Inventory of Theoretical Influences
(Extensions #4, & #5, H&B, p. 143; see also Appendix E, resources for publication pp 216-217)
- 14 **Happy Valentine’s Day!**
More work on Formulating Research Questions
Read: González et. al, Ch. Preface and Introduction
Guest Speaker: Jessica Sleeper

Activity: Research Chat (TR Journal #3—Include Guest Speaker)
Activity: The Process of Making Questions: Making it Operational

LRC Colloquy – February 16, 2012. LRC 576 students are strongly encouraged to participate in the Colloquy as an opportunity to engage with members of the department community and distinguished scholars in the field. Call for papers was distributed

- 21** The Research Design
Read: Hubbard & Power, Ch. 2 Form and Function—**Research Design pp 12-18.**
Read: González et. al,
Ch. 2 Beyond Culture: The Hybridity of Funds of Knowledge
Ch. 4 Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms

Activity: Research Chat (TR Journal #4)

Activity: Research Designs (H & B, Appendix A, pp. 187-196). **Bring Books.**

Introduce Assignment: First Draft Thinking"-- Research Design Template

Due: Part I. Inventory of Theoretical Influences

- 28** “First Draft Thinking”—Research Design and the Factor of Diversity
Read: (Article) Bisplinghoff, B.S.—Teacher Planning as Responsible Resistance
Activity: Research Chat (TR Journal #5)
Activity: Transforming Tensions—Bisplinghoff article
Guest Speaker: Darden Bradshaw

Due: First Draft Thinking/Research Design

Collecting the Data ~ Theoretical Frameworks

March

- 6** The Researcher’s Toolbox: Strategies for Data Collection—Ethnographic Eyes
Read: Hubbard & Power, Ch. 3 Strategies Data Collection—
Hubbard & Power, Appendix C (pp. 200-204)
Read: Frank, Chps. 2-7
- Activity:** Research Chat (TR Journal #6)
Activity: “Cooking up the Notes” or “Speaking from the Evidence”
Presentation: Focus Groups, Surveys, Self-Assessments as a means of Data Collection
- Due:** Drafts/Samples of Data Collection Methods (forms, etc.)

13 **Spring Break – No Classes**

- 20** More Strategies for Data Collection
Read: (In Goswami et. al) Rutherford, M.—Fostering Communities of
Language Learners: And While We’re At It—Writers, Readers, Speakers & Thinkers!
Read: (Article) Parson, L.—Visualizing Worlds from Words on Page

Read: (Article) Denos, C.—Negotiating for Positions of Power in the Primary Classroom

Activity: Research Chat (TR Journal #7)

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“Who is Your Community of Scholars?” Reading Teacher Research

Read: Hubbard & Power, Ch. 5: Creative Review of the Literature

Read: (In Goswami et. al) Lewis, C.—Using Narrative as Teacher Research: Learning About Language and Life Through Personal Stories

Activity: Research Chat (TR Journal #8)

Guest Speaker: Dr. Norma González

Due: Research Design – begin data collection

Assign Part II. Inventory of Influential Readings—Selected annotated Reference Listing

Making Sense of the Data – Writing Up the Research

April

3

Pentimento: Strategies for Data Analysis

Read: Hubbard & Power, Ch. 4 Strategies for Data Analysis

Read: (In Gonzalez et. al) Ch. 11, Meesing, J.—Social Reconstruction of Schooling: Teacher Evaluations of What They Learned From Participation in the Funds of Knowledge Project

Guest Presenter: Dr. Ana Christina Iddings

Activity: Research Chat (TR Journal #9)

Introduce Assignment: “Taking a ‘Cold’ Look”

Due: Mid-Term Progress Narrative

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Practicing Data Analysis: Categorizing/Coding Fieldnotes

Read: Hubbard & Power, Appendix C

Reading Teacher Research—Teacher Research Applied to Curriculum

Read: (In González et. al)

Ch. 7, Amanti, C.—Beyond a Beads and Feathers Approach

Ch. 9, Sandoval-Taylor, P.—Home Is Where the Heart Is: A Funds of Knowledge-Based Curriculum Module

Activity: Research Chat (TR Journal #10)

Presentation: Anecdotal Notes

Due: “Taking a ‘Cold’ Look

Due: Part II. Inventory of Influential Readings

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Writing up the Research

Read: Hubbard & Power, Ch. 6: Perishable Art: Writing Up Research

Read: (In Gonzalez et. al) Ch. 6, Tenery, M.—La Vista
Guest Presenter: Dr. Mary Carol Combs

Activity: Research Chat
Activity: Dinner with Theorists

Due: Dinner with Theorists

- 24 Reading Teacher Research: Embracing Diversity
Read: (In Gonzalez et. al) Ch. 8, Hensley, M.—Empowering Parents of Multicultural Backgrounds
Read: (Article) Allen & Labbo—Giving It a Second Thought: Making Culturally Engaged Teaching Culturally Engaging
Activity: Research Chat
Due: Final Research Reports

Sharing the Knowledge

May

- 1 Mini-Colloquy: Presentation of Research Report
Due: 1) Research Portfolio
2) Presentation Abstract
3) Printed Powerpoint of Presentation
Complete UA Course Evaluation
- 8 Mini-Colloquy: Complete Presentation of Research Reports
Due: 1) Final Course Evaluation
Return Graded Research Portfolios