Background:
Action Research is systematic, thoughtful inquiry focused on learning about one’s (or another’s) teaching practice for the purpose of continuously improving professional expertise. Unlike traditional education research modes where an outside “expert” diagnoses problems and prescribes remedies, action research is conducted from the “inside” by the teacher who develops a neutral stance and wider lens for self assessment and reflection on beliefs and practices imbedded in philosophical, historical, political-sociological foundations.

Conceptual Framework
The teacher education programs at the University of North Dakota are grounded in the progressive tradition. Three themes are woven throughout our programs: teacher as learner, teacher as active agent of learning and teacher as articulate visionary. The cornerstones of our programs facilitate the development of teachers inspired to learn, to collaborate, to assess, and to reflect on their role as professional educators through the intertwined processes of teaching and learning.

Objectives:
The Action Research course is designed to meet the following objectives:
- Develop an understanding, grounded in theory and the work of teaching, of the principles and practices of action research. (INTASC 2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10)
- Analyze action research articles and related readings and apply them to one’s teaching and research practices. (INTASC 1,4,7,9 and others depending on project readings)
- Identify a problem, concern, or interest area for research. Design, implement, and evaluate an Action Research project. Also, provide a scholarly presentation of the Action Research project. (INTASC 1,2,6,7,8,9,10 and other INTASC principles depending on the focus of the project).
- Collaborate with other teachers in developing and critiquing action research. (INTASC 9, 10).
Required Readings

Examples of Action Research (Johnson, Zidon).
Various website articles indicated on course calendar.

Recommended Readings
Erb, T. (Ed.), (2001). *This we believe...and now we must act.* Westerville, OH: National Middle School Association.

Recommended Web Sites: http://ericir.syr.edu/Eric/ and http://askeric.org/
Evaluation Criteria: Points
Weekly assigned questions ~60
Quizzes ~40
Field Notes (6; one is an interview) 60
Article Review (6) 60
Lit. Review Matrix and Write-Up 20
Plan for Action Research Project 10
Action Research Project Write-up 150
Action Research Project Presentation 20
Reflection Paper 10

A = 90-100%, B = 80-89%, C or less (don’t go there!).

Description of Assignments:
Weekly Assigned Questions
Responding to the assigned questions will insure that you are ready to participate in each lesson. Only typed responses will be accepted.

In-Class Participation
Action research knowledge and application, critical thinking, improved communication skills, improved knowledge of your teaching area, and collegial exchanges of ideas and information are accomplished through preparation prior to class, listening and responding to others, articulating your ideas and thoughts and a willingness to learn. This aspect is not graded, but it is an expectation.

Field Notes (6)
Typed, double-spaced refined notes of classroom/field observations. One of these is an interview with another teacher. Further guidelines will be provided during class.

Article Reviews. (6)
Typed, double-spaced summary/analysis and application of various literatures related to your topic.

Plan for Action Research Project
To be submitted February 13. The plan will include background, purpose of study, literature related to study (at least 3 resources), research design and methods. Further guidelines will be provided during class.

Literature Matrix and Write-Up. You will submit a matrix of literature-related aspects (that you create) along with a literature review that will become part of your final paper.

Write-up of Action Research Project
Due May 1. You have several exemplars for what is expected. We will go over, several times, expectations for this “capstone” assignment.

Presentation of Action Research Project
On May 1, you will present your action research project to 4 or 5 of your peers during class. Further guidelines will be provided.

Reflection Paper
By May 8, you are to submit a reflection paper that encompasses your choice of research topic, the processes you followed (field notes, literature reviews, research design and methods, data collection and analysis) along with reflective,
evaluative comments on each of these. Comment on your findings, whether you think that they are valid and reliable or credible. Also comment on the action plan that you constructed and the direction that you see yourself going with further time. Further guidelines will be provided for this assignment.

**Some Comments Before We Start:**

Graduate work requires more work and time than undergraduate work. If it were easy to acquire a master’s degree, more people would continue their education. I say this to let you know that you will be expected to dedicate several hours of hard work every week and good thinking to this course throughout the semester. I realize that many of you are in your first year of teaching while simultaneously working on a master’s degree. I recognize this situation, but be assured that I will require of you what you need to learn about classroom research.

Here are some other expectations. I want you to:

1. provide me with your best work at all times. I accept word-processed work only.

2. be aware that *late assignments are not accepted*

3. submit work that includes good writing conventions

4. be prepared for in-class participation by having done your reading and assignments

5. phone me in advance if you are unable to attend class or as soon as possible afterwards. I frown on absences and tardiness. (See # 2).

6. ask me, if you do miss class, what you missed (not *if we did anything*)

7. use APA writing style on all written work, unless I say otherwise

8. *not* wear caps

9. listen carefully and respectfully to others’ opinions

10. have a “buddy” to check with on assignments, directions, handouts, etc.; however, please check with me if either of you is unsure about expectations.
The following calendar is subject to change as need be. I will announce any changes at the beginning of each class.

**Calendar for Action Research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics and Activities</th>
<th>Assignments (Due on date indicated)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 9</td>
<td>Introductions&lt;br&gt;Overview of Action Research&lt;br&gt;Action Research Text&lt;br&gt;Course Overview</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 16</td>
<td>Introduction to AR&lt;br&gt;Answer Questions 1-5 on pp. 19-20&lt;br&gt;Print out and read Rory O’Brien article, p. 18. Print out Madison website pages as indicated on pp. 17-18 in Mertler&lt;br&gt;Read Zidon article</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 23</td>
<td>Overview of AR Process&lt;br&gt;IRB Presentation&lt;br&gt;Answer Questions 3,4,5 on page 33&lt;br&gt;Read Duckworth article: “Teacher as researcher”&lt;br&gt;Select one quote from Duckworth article and write a one-page reflection.</td>
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<td>Jan. 30</td>
<td>Planning for AR&lt;br&gt;Related Literature: CFL&lt;br&gt;Resource person&lt;br&gt;Identifying a research topic&lt;br&gt;Writing a literature review</td>
<td>Read Chapter 3&lt;br&gt;Study pages 45-47; be ready for a quiz on ERIC system&lt;br&gt;Print out and read: “Research practice guidelines for planning action research projects: (Mertler, p. 56 – N. &amp; G. Pakak)</td>
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<td>Feb. 6</td>
<td>Re-read Chapter 3&lt;br&gt;Read and write summaries/analyses of 3 articles related to research topic Questions 1,2,5&lt;br&gt;Read Johnson’s paper up through literature review.</td>
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<td>Feb. 13</td>
<td>Developing a research plan&lt;br&gt;• Qualitative/quantitative&lt;br&gt;• Informed consent&lt;br&gt;Quiz on Terms</td>
<td>Submit 2-3 page plan for AR project&lt;br&gt;Read Chapter 4&lt;br&gt;Print out and read “Guidelines for developing a question” (p. 88). Questions 1,2,3,5,6 (Mertler, p. 90)&lt;br&gt;Literature summary/analysis</td>
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<td>Feb. 20</td>
<td>Collecting data&lt;br&gt;Fieldnotes</td>
<td>Know the terms on pages 101,103,105 as well as validity, reliability, correlation, dependent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb.27</td>
<td>Collecting data – cont’d</td>
<td>Literature write-up, 1 Field Notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 6</td>
<td>Collecting Data</td>
<td>Answer questions 1,2 (Mertler, p. 121)</td>
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<td>Mar.13</td>
<td>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK!!!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar.20</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Read Mertler, Chapter 6, Look at questions 3,4 (Mertler, p. ); We’ll do the 2 questions together in class. Field Notes (1)</td>
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<td>Mar.27</td>
<td>Developing an Action Plan</td>
<td>Read Mertler, Chapter 7, Print out and read “Action research: A strategy for instructional improvement” (Mertler, p. 171) 2 Field Notes</td>
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<td>Apr. 3</td>
<td>Continue discussion of AR implementation, data gathering. Preliminary data analysis Sharing and Reflecting</td>
<td>Read Chapter 8 and become familiar with presentation guidelines on page 176</td>
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<td>Apr.10</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
<td>Continue implementation and data gathering.</td>
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<td>Apr.17</td>
<td>Writing it up Early Bird Opportunity</td>
<td>Read Chapter 9, You may turn in one copy of your paper for comments from me.</td>
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<td>Apr.24</td>
<td>Writing it up</td>
<td>First draft ready for peer review; Bring 2 copies.</td>
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<td>May 1</td>
<td>Presentation Night Course Evaluation</td>
<td>Submit 2 items: Outline of presentation, Action Research Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 8 or sooner</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Submit Reflection Paper</td>
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