School of Education

Research Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Research Program is to cultivate educator-scholars by providing graduate-level instruction and mentorship in writing, evaluating scholarly literature, collecting and analyzing data, and developing evidence-based recommendations. The Research Program promotes social justice, academic integrity, critical thinking, and effective communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester</td>
<td>Spring 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Dr. Dario Almarza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>EDUC/COUN 6327 (Hybrid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Educational Research Design and Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:almarzd@stthom.edu">almarzd@stthom.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>KC22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>SCC-Galena Park – Room N-1.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>TH 5:00-8:00 P.M.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>281-837-5618</td>
</tr>
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</table>

- **Prerequisites**: None


- **Course Description**: Designed to introduce quantitative and qualitative research designs, methods, and data analysis techniques in education. Topics include ethical issues in research, construction and evaluation of measurement tools, critical analysis of research methods, use and interpretation of descriptive and inferential statistics, and analysis and synthesis of qualitative data.
Major Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Describe the values, assumptions, and process of action research.
2. Formulate educational research questions and hypotheses.
3. Create a survey that reflects considerations of sampling, reliability, and validity.
4. Apply various action research designs to typical educational research questions.
5. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data with the appropriate techniques.
6. Develop an action research plan to answer a research question of interest.

Evaluating the Course: IDEA Course Objectives
The research program and your instructor greatly value feedback. In addition to providing informal feedback throughout the course, you are strongly encouraged to complete the end-of-course evaluation. This is one of the main ways we have to assess the quality of the course (and the instructor) and make improvements. The University of St. Thomas uses IDEA Center’s evaluation. As part of this evaluation, you will be asked to rate how effective the course and the instructor were for helping you achieve the following objectives. **Please be thoughtful in your evaluation and provide suggestions for improvement.** We strive for a 100% response rate, with reliable and valid responses!

- IDEA #3: Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions).
- IDEA #9: Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems.
- IDEA #10: Developing a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values.
- IDEA #12: Acquiring an interest in learning more by asking questions and seeking answers.

Professional Association Standards Guiding this Course
The course objectives and outcomes of both research courses (EDUC/COUN 6326 and 6327) are consistent with the American Educational Research Association’s “Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Science Research in AERA Publications” (AERA, 2006). The following areas are covered in the two-course research sequence and conform to AERA’s expectations.

1. Problem Formulation
2. Design and Logic
3. Sources of Evidence
4. Measurement and Classification
5. Analysis and Interpretation
6. Generalization
7. Ethics in Reporting
8. Title, Abstract, and Headings

Social Justice Tenets Guiding this Course
The content and goals of this course are consistent with three tenets of Catholic social justice teaching that inform the School of Education programs.

- **Subsidiarity:** Educational institutions should be organized and governed as much as possible by the community being served; education should only be controlled at higher
levels of society when it cannot be done effectively locally.

- **Dignity and rights of children:** Children possess full human dignity and are bearers of rights which should be recognized and upheld in educational processes.

- **People have a right to an education:** All people have a responsibility, for the good of society, to contribute to and foster education.

The Research Program encourages high-quality educational research that can help to improve the education—and thus the lives—of all people, particularly those who are disadvantaged, traditionally underserved, and at-risk. The Catholic social justice tenet **putting the needs of the poor and vulnerable first** underscores the importance of educational research that promotes the elimination of poverty and discrimination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major assignments, due dates, and percentages of course grade</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students must earn a letter grade of <strong>B- or better</strong> to receive credit for this Core class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Written Assignments:</strong> 65% of grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This course is designed to be a practical, hands-on introduction to issues related to action research, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of findings. The major assignments will assess your ability to apply research skills to an educational topic that you are interested in as well as your ability to make sense of others’ research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Survey construction, data collection, and data summary report (15%) – due 4/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Group AR facilitated discussion and reply (5%) - due 4/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Partner interview and mini case study (10%) – due 4/21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Individual Research plan and self-reflection (20%) – due 5/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Research Plan facilitated discussion and reply (15%) – due 5/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details about each assignment are provided below, after the Course Schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments must be submitted to the instructor in Blackboard (BB) before <strong>11:59 p.m.</strong> on the due date. <strong>Please name the file Lastname_Firstname_survey</strong> (for the survey assignment), <strong>Lastname_Firstname_dataset1</strong> (for the first dataset assignment), etc. It is your responsibility to ensure that the instructor receives your documents. Five points per day will be deducted from any assignment turned in late.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In addition, failure to complete any assignment will result in a zero for the assignment grade and a one-half grade decrease of your final grade (e.g., if your final grade was a B, you would receive a B-). If you miss an assignment, please speak with your professor to discuss a plan for preventing future missed work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All work must be written in APA style, using MS Word. Font must be Times New Roman, 12-point, and double-spaced, and margins must be 1-inch. Additional information is provided below about each assignment.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>II. Participation and discussion:</strong> 35% of grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation is defined as active contribution to group activities, completion of Discussion Boards, and completion of Journal assignments (details provided below). You are expected to participate in all activities in a professional manner. Any unprofessional behavior will result in...</td>
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</table>
zero credit for this portion of the grade.

If you miss one participation assignment, you must meet with the instructor to discuss a plan for preventing future missed work. For a discussion board that requires a reply, both the post and reply must be completed on time to receive credit for the assignment. Furthermore, if you miss a participation assignment, you will not receive participation credit for the missed work, regardless of the reason for non-participation. Please keep the instructor informed of any emergency circumstances before an absence occurs so that alternative plans can be arranged. More than one missed assignment may result in administrative withdrawal from the class.

Major Participation activities and percentage of overall course grade

1. Journal 1 (5%) – due 4/6
2. Journal 2 (5%) – due 4/17
3. Journal 3 (5%) – due 4/28
4. DB: Qualitative Research (LM8) (5%) – due 4/17
5. DB: Quantitative Research (LM9) (5%) – due 4/21
6. Participation assignments include other DBs (10%) - due throughout the semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
<th>Numeric Range Set by Instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>93 – 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>90 – 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>87 – 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>83 – 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>73 – 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>70 – 72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>67 – 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>60 – 67</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
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**Student Accommodations**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the instructor will make all possible and reasonable adjustments in policies, practices, services, and facilities to ensure equal and optimal educational programs and activities. Whenever a special accommodation is necessary to ensure access to full participation by students with disabilities, the student must inform the instructor of any disability or needed accommodations.

The University Office for ADA Compliance may ask to seek proof of disability and specify accommodations as requested by students. Students with special needs should inform the instructor within the first two weeks of class. Students must also contact the Office of Counseling and Disability Services (2nd floor of Crocker Center) by calling Dr. Rose Signorello at
713-525-3162 or Ms. Debbie Jones at 713-525-6953; the Office is open 8-5 Monday through Friday.

The accommodations will become official when the instructor receives official, written notification from the officer in charge of ADA compliance. Students should contact the instructor immediately if new needs arise. Students can see the instructor before or after class or request another time to discuss any matters. All information will be confidential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Standards of Behavior for Students and Faculty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic integrity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s-level students in the School of Education demonstrate integrity in all of their activities, both personal and professional. Any unprofessional behavior or failure to adhere to the honor system is a serious violation of integrity and may result in failure of the course.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Plagiarism** involves taking credit for another person’s work. You must cite sources in APA style any time source material (e.g., books, journal articles, internet material, etc.) has been used, paraphrased, or quoted. Quoted material must be placed in quotation marks and referenced appropriately. Please note that copying information directly from a source without giving credit, using friends’ work, buying papers online, re-using one’s own work from previous classes, etc., all constitute plagiarism.

Any instance of plagiarism will result in failure of the course and may result in dismissal from UST. Ignorance is no excuse; if you remain uncertain about the guidelines for using and citing source material after these issues are addressed in class, you should seek input from the instructor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology Requirements and Guidelines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This course relies heavily on Blackboard 9, which is best viewed in the Firefox or Chrome browser. (A free download can be obtained at <a href="http://www.firefox.com">www.firefox.com</a> or <a href="http://www.google.com/chrome">www.google.com/chrome</a>.) Please familiarize yourself with Blackboard through the tutorial (in the Start Here! menu).</td>
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</table>

Additional information about technology requirements, skills, and Netiquette can be found on the Start Here! page in Blackboard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of UST email accounts</th>
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<tr>
<td>You are encouraged to use your UST email accounts</td>
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</table>
account. The instructor may send messages to through Blackboard, which uses your UST address. If you have linked your UST account to another account, be sure to periodically clean out your UST mailbox so that it doesn’t become overloaded (which can prevent you from receiving new emails).

**Instructor availability**
The instructor will be available for consultation during office hours and during scheduled appointments. It is strongly recommended you not wait until too late in the course before seeking guidance. Please come prepared with questions so that the consultation time can be spent effectively.

**Language diversity**
The University of St. Thomas values the ability to speak more than one language. The Master’s programs at UST are especially sensitive to issues of language diversity. The instructor is available to meet with you if you need help with written English. In addition, computer support is available if you need additional review of English fundamentals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Module</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Instructional Focus</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Assignments due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Orientation     | N/A  | Orientation and Introduction | ✓ Review syllabus.  
                           ✓ Read course policies carefully (in syllabus). | ✓ Discuss syllabus and policies  
                           ✓ Mini-lecture – Action Research (AR)  
                           ✓ Take orientation quiz  
                           ✓ Select group members for Ethics Project and for Group AR project  
                           ✓ Reading (see Blackboard) | ✓ Complete Orientation Quiz  
                           ✓ Complete 6327 Pre Survey  
                           ✓ DB: Meet & Greet |
| 1               | 3/24 | What is action research?  
                           Values, assumptions, and process Ethics in research | 1 | ✓ Discuss syllabus and policies  
                           ✓ Mini-lecture – Action Research (AR)  
                           ✓ Take orientation quiz  
                           ✓ Select group members for Ethics Project and for Group AR project  
                           ✓ Reading (see Blackboard) | ✓ Complete Rokeach Values Survey Due: 3/30 |
| 2               | N/A  | Who am I as an action researcher?  
                           Developing your research identity | 1 | ✓ Reading (see Blackboard)  
                           ✓ Watch assigned video on Ethical Issues, take notes, & be prepared to discuss  
                           ✓ Complete Rokeach Values Survey (linked in Blackboard).  
                           ✓ Review overview of reflective journaling. | ✓ DB: Ethics in Research (Grp post and individual reply)  
                           ✓ Post Rokeach Values Survey Due: 3/30 |
| 3 | 3/31 | **What would happen if...?**  
Formulating action research questions and hypotheses | 2 | ✓ Mini-lectures  
✓ Read Group AR Project Overview  
✓ Class discussion of ethics videos  
✓ Class discussion of values survey  
✓ Select topic and research question for Group AR project | ✓ Be prepared to discuss your group's ethics videos in class |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | N/A | **What do people think about...?**  
Survey data collection | 3 | ✓ Mini-lecture  
✓ Finalize and administer survey (see instructions in BB).  
✓ Watch Video on data management  
✓ Enter data into spreadsheet (See BB for instructions) and bring to class | ✓ AR Grp Project – Lit Review (Grp posts & individual replies)  
✓ AR Grp Project – Survey Questions (Grp post & Individual replies)  
✓ Post Journal 1 – Due 4/6 |
| 5 | | **What are the data telling me?**  
Getting to know your data – descriptive statistics and graphing | 3 | ✓ Reading (see Blackboard)  
✓ Mini-lecture  
✓ Video on descriptive statistics  
✓ Videos on APA tables and figures  
✓ Begin data analysis in class  
✓ Work on individual research plan topic, question, and hypothesis. | ✓ DB: AR Grp Data Analysis (Grp post and individual replies)  
✓ Individual AR Project – Topic, Question, & Hypothesis (Individual post) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Completed Activities</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Are my results meaningful? Sampling, reliability, and validity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>✓ Work on individual research plan literature review, question, and hypothesis&lt;br&gt;✓ Reading (see Blackboard)&lt;br&gt;✓ Mini-lecture&lt;br&gt;✓ Self-check quiz&lt;br&gt;✓ Post group summary report, survey, and data spreadsheet&lt;br&gt;✓ Work on group facilitation and PowerPoint</td>
<td>✓ Post Group AR Survey, data spreadsheet, and summary report due 4/13&lt;br&gt;✓ Self check quiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4/14</td>
<td>What is this person’s experience? Qualitative research methods</td>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>✓ Group facilitated discussion of AR Project in class&lt;br&gt;✓ Group discussion on group effectiveness feedback in class&lt;br&gt;✓ Work on research plan – literature review and finalize question and hypothesize&lt;br&gt;✓ Reading (see Blackboard)&lt;br&gt;✓ Mini-lecture&lt;br&gt;✓ Refine individual research question, and hypothesis&lt;br&gt;✓ Choose partner for mini case study&lt;br&gt;✓ Develop questions for</td>
<td>✓ Grp AR Project Facilitated Discussion Grp PowerPoint Post 4/14&lt;br&gt;✓ Grp AR Project facilitated discussion in class (Grp post ppt)&lt;br&gt;✓ Post Group Member Assessment for professor only – Individual assignment&lt;br&gt;✓ Bring group member effectiveness for to class and discuss with members&lt;br&gt;✓ DB: Individual Project – refined question and hypothesis (individual reply to original post in LM5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8  | N/A | **Application and evaluation of qualitative research** | 4,5 | ✓ Work on research plan – literature review  
✓ Watch video on qualitative research  
✓ Conduct partner interview for mini case study and post mini case study interview summary (see example in BB).  
✓ Complete Journal 2  
✓ Qualitative research article summary | ✓ Post Journal 2  
4/17  
✓ DB: Qualitative Research (individual post and reply) 4/17 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 4/21 | **Are these two factors related?**  
Non-experimental research methods | 4,5 | ✓ Work on research plan – literature review  
✓ Discuss qualitative and quantitative research  
✓ Reading (see Blackboard)  
✓ Mini-lecture  
✓ Find and read a quantitative article on your research topic and post summary | ✓ DB: Quantitative Research (individual post and reply)  
✓ Mini case study due 4/21 |
| 10  | N/A | Application of non-experimental research methods | 4,5 | ✓ Work on research plan – finalize introduction and literature review and begin work on methods  
✓ Reading (see Blackboard)  
✓ Tutorials & videos descriptive statistics, correlation coefficient, and chi square  
✓ Complete assignments on Chi Square and Correlations  
✓ Continue working on research plan  
✓ Dataset practice (optional, ungraded) | ✓ Chi Square assignment (Individual post)  
✓ Correlation assignment (Individual post) |
| 11  | 4/28 | Did this group improve?  
Quasi-experimental research methods | 4,5 | ✓ Discuss statistical interpretation assignments  
✓ Work on research plan - methods  
✓ Reading (see Blackboard)  
✓ Mini-lecture, tutorial, and video on t-test and one-way ANOVA  
✓ Complete assignments on interpreting independent an (unpaired) t-test, one-way ANOVA, and factorial ANOVA | ✓ Independent t-test, one-way ANOVA, and factorial ANOVA assignments (individual posts)  
✓ Journal 3 due 4/28 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Application of quasi-experimental research methods</td>
<td>✓ Work on research plan&lt;br&gt; ✓ Reading (see Blackboard)&lt;br&gt; ✓ Video on paired t test and repeated measures ANOVA&lt;br&gt; ✓ Video on effect size&lt;br&gt; ✓ Complete assignments on interpreting a paired t-test and repeated measures ANOVA&lt;br&gt; ✓ Dataset practice (optional, ungraded)&lt;br&gt; ✓ <strong>Course evaluation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>Does this intervention work? Experimental research methods and data analysis</td>
<td>✓ Complete individual research plan and post&lt;br&gt; ✓ Individual facilitated discussion on research plan&lt;br&gt; ✓ Research plan and self-reflection due 5/10&lt;br&gt; ✓ Individual facilitated discussion due in class&lt;br&gt; ✓ Post facilitated discussion ppt, handouts, and/or outline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Course wrap-up</td>
<td>✓ Complete 6327 Post Survey 5/10&lt;br&gt; ✓ Review all required assignments and make sure they are posted to BB 5/10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus during the semester. Please check Blackboard on a regular basis for updated information, announcements, and handouts.

Description of Assignments

Please note that failure to complete any assignment will result in a zero for the assignment grade and a one-half grade decrease of your final grade (e.g., if your final grade was a B, you would receive a B-).

I. General information: Unless otherwise noted, all assignments must follow APA format, including title page, page headers, section headers, citations, and references. Please use Times New Roman 12 point font, double-spaced text, and 1-inch margins.

II. Major Assignments (65% of grade)

1. Group Action Research Project* - Survey construction, data collection, and summary report (15% of grade*):
   - Your team will create a brief (6) item survey and administer to the class on a topic of interest to the team. For the group project, the topic does not have to be on education, but can be. The survey must include at least two quantitative (numeric) items and at least two qualitative (open-ended) item.
   - Using techniques you learn in class, your team will organize this information in a spreadsheet and select two techniques for summarizing the data (e.g., frequencies and percent, mean quantitative items and summary of themes for qualitative items).
   - You will then apply these techniques to the dataset and present the results in a report.
   - The report should be 2-3 pages (title page is not included in the page count). The report must include the following: research topic and research question; description of participants; analysis of findings and results; conclusions; and reflection on what the group learned from working on the project together. Place your tables and figures at the end of the report. Tables and figures are also not included in the page count of the report. Your team will post three separate files to BB—Excel spreadsheet containing the data, your group survey, and the summary report that includes the items listed above.
   - Based on your findings, your group will facilitate a discussion using PowerPoint.

*Note: This assignment is a group grade.

2. Group AR Project Facilitated Discussion assignment* – Design a PowerPoint (6-8 slides max and use the notes section to provide brief comments as necessary) to present your group’s findings. Read carefully information on how to facilitate a discussion. Be
creative in the activities/activity you choose to include in your facilitated discussion. 
Post your PowerPoint as a group.

*Note: This assignment is a group grade.

3. **Partner interview and mini case study (10% of grade):** You will choose a partner from the class and identify 4-5 questions that you would like to ask him/her related to your individual research topic. You will then conduct the interview by phone, web conference, or in person (a written survey is not acceptable) and write a 2-3 page summary of your findings, not including your title page. If you want to tape the interviewee’s responses, you must obtain written consent before the interview is conducted. It is recommended that you think of a few questions that are related to your research topic, but keep in mind that not all people will have experience with your topic. Be sure to keep your research questions flexible and probe as appropriate. Conclude by discussing whether or not the information you obtained from your interview provided a different perspective on your research and if that perspective changed your approach.

4. **Research plan (20% of grade):** See examples posted in BB. Use same format as shown in examples. After selecting an educational topic of interest (which can be the same topic that you wrote about in 6326 or a new topic), you will create a brief research plan describing a practical research study that you could conduct in the future. (Note: You will not conduct the study as part of this class.) The plan should involve quantitative methods and qualitative methods. Use action research to guide the development of your research plan. Include collaboration with others and include self-reflection on your choice of topic and methods. The plan should be 6-9 pages include the following sections:

- **Introduction & brief literature review (2-3 pages):** Introduce your topic and synthesize the findings of four or more peer-reviewed journal articles on this topic. You may use the same articles that you used in the annotated bibliography that you wrote in 6326, if you are examining the same topic. At least one of the articles must have contradictory findings or present a different perspective. Of the four articles you chose, you must include at least one quantitative and one qualitative article in the literature review. End this section with a **statement of the research question and/or hypothesis.**

- **Description of method (2-3 pages):** Present your plan for collecting data. You should include paragraphs that answer the following questions (structure this section using APA Level 2 headings for each paragraph):
  - **Participants:** Who would participate in your study?
  - **Measures:** What questionnaires, tests, interview questions, or other instruments would you use to collect data? Be sure to explain how you would improve the reliability and validity of these methods.
  - **Design and Procedure:** What type of research design would you use, and what steps would you take to collect data? Use mixed methods approach.
• **Data analysis:** What data analysis techniques would you use to make sense of your data? Include quantitative and qualitative analyses.

• **Self-reflection (2-3 pages):** Self-reflect on how your research plan reflects your growth as an action researcher include the influence of your values/biases, research ethics, most important learnings, ideas and concepts you may have already incorporated with specific example(s), and how you anticipate using what you have learned about action research in the future (be specific).

5. **Facilitated discussion (15% of grade):** Design a PowerPoint (6-8 slides max and use the notes section to provide brief comments as necessary) to present your research plan key points. Prepare activities that creatively engage the class in a discussion of your research. **Post your PowerPoint, handouts, and/or outline of your facilitated discussion.** **Reply to your partner's post.**

III. **Participation Assignments (35% of grade)**

1. **Participation discussion assignments (10% of grade):** Participation Discussion Board assignments completed and turned in on time. **Original post and reply** must be posted on time for credit.

2. **Major discussion assignments (10% of grade):** The purpose of the discussion assignments of your journal articles is to analyze and interpret the research presented in journal articles as well as to stimulate further conversation about research methods and results. You must use a different article for the qualitative and the quantitative discussion board.

For your qualitative and quantitative articles, you will select an **empirical, peer-reviewed journal articles** on your individual research topic (these can be the same journal articles that you include in the literature review section of your research plan, or they can be different articles). Note that “empirical” means that the article includes a method section and results. Summarize the focus of the study, the authors’ hypothesis or hypotheses (or research question, if qualitative), and what method and test(s) the authors used to test their hypotheses or what techniques were used to examine their research questions. Explain why the article is quantitative or qualitative. Be sure to provide a citation for the source, and include a page number for any material that you quote verbatim. Be prepared to discuss your article with your team mates. Read your team mates posted discussions. Be prepared to comment on their articles.

**Example of article discussion (posted to BB):** Watson, Harper, Ratliff, and Singleton (2010) examined the contributions of holistic wellness and perceived stress to teachers’ perceived job satisfaction. The authors posed four questions:
1. What are the levels of wellness, perceived stress, and teaching satisfaction among beginning teacher participants?
2. What is the relationship among wellness, perceived stress, and teaching satisfaction?
3. To what extent can the variance in teaching satisfaction be accounted for by wellness and perceived stress?
4. To what degree are there differences in wellness, perceived stress, or teaching satisfaction among the study participants based on age, classroom setting, or type of school district? (p. 30).
The authors did not make any specific hypotheses, as it was an exploratory study. They conducted a survey with 53 K-12 beginning teachers. They used multiple regression to examine the roles that holistic wellness (measured by the Five Factor Wellness Inventory) and perceived stress (measured by the Perceived Stress Scale – 10 item version) played in job satisfaction (measured by the Teaching Satisfaction Scale). They also used multivariate analysis of variance to determine whether there were differences in these variables among participants of different ages, different grade levels, or different campus locations. This article is an example of quantitative research because the data was numerical and was analyzed using inferential statistical techniques.

**Example of the summary of the article’s key findings.** First, the authors found that the teachers’ stress levels and job satisfaction levels were similar to those found in previous studies. In addition, the teachers’ well-being levels were higher than those found in previous studies. Second, the authors’ found that perceived stress was negatively related to well-being and to job satisfaction, whereas well-being was positively related to job satisfaction. Third, when both perceived stress and well-being were taken into account, only perceived stress was a significant predictor of well-being. Finally, there were no differences among the demographic groups in terms of the variables.


3. **Journal entries – (15% of grade):** You will complete several journal entries that involve self-reflection about action research and its possible role in your work. These will be shared with the professor, who will grade them in terms of completeness, organization, and writing. The goal of these journal assignments is to encourage you to think about how various action research concepts might be useful in your day-to-day work. See each journal assignment instructions in BB for required length. Journals will only be seen by you and the instructor.