

Kathy G. Short

Office: Education 513, 621-1311

Office Hours: Tues., 4:00-6:00 p.m., Wed., 3:00-4:00 & 7:00-8:00 p.m., by appointment

shortk@u.arizona.edu

LRC 576 TEACHER RESEARCH Spring 2008

Course Description

This course focuses on the rationale, issues, and implications of the current teacher research movement within education and on the research strategies and techniques that can be used by educators in conducting research in their own educational settings (classrooms, libraries, community agencies, etc.) in order to move to action. Historically, teachers have been regarded as decision-makers in their classrooms, but have not been included in decisions about research as knowledge generation. Teachers are expected to learn about their profession by studying the findings of university researchers, not by researching their own experiences. They are viewed as consumers of knowledge created by university researchers and theorists. The teacher research movement is part of a broader movement of action research and is a recognition that teachers can be researchers in their classroom settings, both to add to their own understandings about teaching and learning and to contribute to the broader field of education. We will discuss the theoretical issues as to the value of teacher research to teachers and to the broader field. We will also explore various research strategies used in qualitative and ethnographic research, but with a specific focus on the issues and adaptations involved when these strategies are used by teachers in their own classrooms. Issues of data collection, data analysis, research design, and writing for publication will be addressed in relation to teacher research. Issues of collaborative research where teacher researchers and university researchers work as a team and of students as researchers will also be considered. The format and structure of research proposals and research reports will be examined in depth.

This course is designed as a collaborative, critical examination of teacher research. The course depends on our joint willingness to read and discuss, ask questions, try out research strategies, and critically analyze research methodologies. Our goal is that the participants in this course become a strong working community which supports group and individual intents.

Course Readings:

Hubbard, Ruth & Power, Brenda Miller (1999), *Living the Questions: A Guide for Teacher-Researchers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Brookline Teacher Research Seminar (2004). *Regarding Children's Words: Teacher Research on Language and Literacy*. Teachers College Press.

Articles on electronic reserve (<http://d2l.arizona.edu/>) For LRC 576 <http://d2l.arizona.edu/>

An extensive bibliography on teacher research will be provided, and multiple examples of teacher research studies will be recommended. Also see pages 291-300 of Hubbard and Power. Each course participant will choose at least one article and one book (or equivalent) for additional reading.

Course Projects

1. Research Notebook The research notebook will collect and organize the various research activities and readings in which you engage as part of this seminar. We encourage you to personalize this notebook in your own special way to create what Hubbard and Power call the "artist's toolbox." You can include sketches, photographs, artifacts, and other items to document your process of inquiry this semester.

You will need a looseleaf notebook and dividers for several sections.

a. Reading Reflections: This section of the notebook will be a place for you to keep reflections on your readings, both the required books and the additional supplemental readings that you complete.

b. Research Reflections: This section will contain your reflections on the research strategies that we try in each of our field settings before our next class session.

c. Research Artifacts: This section will contain the artifacts that you collect as we try out research strategies for our class sessions, such as a teaching journal, field notes, student artifacts, interview transcripts, videotape transcripts, or data analysis notes.

d. Project outline and proposal

e. Final project

f. Research artifacts related to final project

g. Bibliographies/Summaries of readings from class members

2. Individual or Collaborative Projects

Based on your objectives for the course, participate in an individual or collaborative project related to teacher research. *Each course participant is strongly encouraged to plan, conduct, and report on a research project in his or her own classroom or field setting.* If you are not currently in a classroom or field setting, other possibilities for course projects will be suggested.

Possibilities for the project include:

- a. Plan, conduct and report on a teacher research study.
- b. Working with another teacher or educator, plan, conduct, and report on a collaborative classroom research study.
- c. Write a detailed grant proposal for a teacher research study.
- d. Examine a particular research methodology--an approach to data collection or data analysis--in a concept paper.
- e. Analyze and report data gathered from an earlier teacher research study.
- f. Critically examine a specific issue related to teacher research in a concept paper.
- g. Write an article or book chapter for publication from a teacher research study.
- h. Design a professional development program or university course on teacher research.
- i. Propose another project of your own design.

Each participant will complete a research proposal outline (1-2 pages) and a research proposal (6-10 pages) and will receive responses from the instructor and class members. Final projects will be shared with other class members as well as submitted in a written research report form.

3. Seminar Readings

The Hubbard and Power book on teacher research, Brookline teacher research book, and teacher research articles will give us a body of common readings to discuss during class sessions. Since these readings will form the basis of our discussions, each class member will need to prepare for these discussions weekly in some way such as writing notes in the margins of the book, using post-its to mark particular pages, or writing reflective journal entries on the readings. In some cases, you will be asked to write reflective responses to particular readings and these entries go into your research notebook along with any other reflective entries that you choose to write.

Additional, self-selected readings will be based on your own interests and course project. Books and articles on teacher research will be available for check-out during class sessions. Each course participant must choose at least *one* teacher research article and *one* additional book (or collection of related articles) to read and discuss with others and *prepare 1-2 page summaries/responses of each to be shared with all course participants*. A bibliography on teacher research will be provided along with summaries of teacher research books and articles from previous class members.

4. Participation in the LRC Colloquy

The LRC Colloquy is a significant professional experience for all LRC graduate students. The colloquy is organized by graduate students to provide an opportunity for graduate students to present their work to each other as well as to hear a major speaker in the field. The colloquy brings together all members of the department, students and faculty, as a community to think about current research and larger political issues related to language, literacy and culture. The colloquy begins with sessions at 3:00 where students present to students, followed by a meal together and then the keynote presentations in the Kiva. You are encouraged to attend the entire colloquy but are required to attend either the afternoon sessions or evening keynotes as part of our course and then write a reflection connecting the sessions you attended to the issues of research we are discussing in our class.

5. Class Participation and Sharing

This course depends on the active participation of class members by reading, reflecting, and trying out research strategies to prepare for class sessions and by participating in class discussions about these readings and research strategies. Preparation and participation in class sessions is essential, not only for your learning, but for the learning of others.

If you are absent or not prepared for a class session, your actions will have a significant impact on others in the class as well as on your own learning. If you absolutely must miss a class session due to illness, leave a message for Kathy in advance at the LRC office (621-1311) or on e-mail. Contact a class member so that you are fully prepared for the next class meeting. **More than one absence or excessive tardiness/leaving early will affect your grade for the course.** Your attendance and active participation in course engagements is highly valued and an essential aspect of the course.

6. Evaluation

At the beginning of the course, you will be asked to make a list of personal goals that you hope to accomplish in the course. As the course develops, you will be asked to reflect upon the progress you make toward your goals. Class members will complete a midterm reflection on their own learning and their goals for the remainder of the semester. Class members will also write a formal self-evaluation of their projects, their process of learning, and the quality of the product. Your final grade will be holistically based on both our and your own evaluation of your growth and learning, the quality of your work, and your attendance, participation, and preparation for class sessions. We assume you will complete all of the projects listed on the syllabus to fulfill course requirements, unless you have negotiated another option. Your final grade will be based on the thoughtfulness and quality of this work with a B reflecting the completion of all course projects at a satisfactory level. Incompletes will not be given for the course except in extreme situations and only with prior approval by the instructor.

Course Format

The course is divided into three parts. The course will begin with an introduction to teacher research and some of the broader issues involved in teacher research. We will then move to the major focus of the seminar on the practical issues of designing a teacher research study, focusing particularly on data collection strategies, types of data analysis, and design issues. We will try out strategies of collection and analysis in our own teaching contexts and/or in class sessions. We will also address specific issues involved in adapting these strategies within a teacher research study. In addition, we will discuss writing proposals for research. The third part of the class will focus on individual and small group projects and on data analysis and writing research reports. The second and third parts may significantly overlap for class members, both in time and focus.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Department of 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 our purposes in education - and ultimately 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. Learners bring a variety of linguistic and cognitive strengths from their families, communities and nations into the classroom; these strengths are resources to be appreciated as such by educators. Education must expand on the linguistic and cognitive strengths that learners already possess and bring with 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 the opportunity to hear and study as many of these voices as possible. Such an accommodation must include those communities which 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.

Other relevant dates:

January 26, Arizona Literacy Teacher Educators Conference. A Place at the Table: Communicating Our Message to the Public, Press, and Policy-Makers. Steven Krashen. www.azlte.org

February 9, 8:30-1:00. TAWL, David Schwartz., Soleng Tom. www.tucsontawl.org/

February 28, LRC Graduate Student Colloquy, College of Education - www.ed.arizona.edu/colloquy/

March 5, Creating a Community of Readers Starting at Birth; Pima County Public Library.

March 8, Journeys of Discover across Time and Place: Conference on Literature and Literacy for Children and Adolescents., 8:00-2:00, College of Education. Ted Lewin, Cynthia Kadohata www.ed.arizona.edu/litconference

May 3, SAWP Teacher/Action Research Conference. Susan Lytle. <http://sawp.web.arizona.edu/>

Tentative Course Schedule: Wednesday, 4:15-6:45

January 16	Course Introduction: The Power of Teacher Research
January 23	What is teacher research? Why do teacher research? Read Hubbard and Power, Chap. 1, and Cochran-Smith & Lytle article Due Professional Time line Reading Reflection Reflection on research categorizing engagement
January 30	Finding and Framing a Research Focus and Question Read Hubbard & Power, Chapter 2 and p. 65-67 Due: Personal goals for the course Brainstorm a list of things you are wondering about Field notes from "hanging around" observation
February 6	Overview of Research Design Read Hubbard & Power, Chapter 3 Due Second observation for "hanging around" Short presentation on "hanging around" experience
February 13	Research Design Read: Teacher research article Due: Analysis of design of research article Reflection on learning from "hanging around"
February 20	Strategies for Data Collection: Teaching Journals, Field notes, Sketching Read Hubbard and Power, Chapter 4 Brookline, Introduction and Chapter 1 and 2 Due: Mini inquiry using a teaching journal and field notes and reflection
February 27	Strategies for Data Collection: Observing through Audiotaping and Videotaping Read Hubbard & Power, Chapter 4, p. 95-99, 89-95,112-114 Brookline, Chapter 3, 6, 7, 8 Due: Mini inquiry with transcription and one page reflection Proposal outline (1-2 pages) and proposal for self-selected book
February 28	LRC Graduate Student Colloquy Attend the afternoon breakout sessions and/or evening keynote

March 5	Strategies for Data: Student Artifacts & Photography Read Hubbard & Power, Chapter 4, p. 99-103; Brookline, Chapters 4 and 5 Carini chapter on descriptive review. Due: Mini inquiry with artifacts or photos and one page reflection Mid-term reflection and Colloquy reflection
March 12	Research Design and Procedures Read: Hubbard & Power, Chapter 3; Brookline, Afterward Due: Research article(s) and 1-2 page summary/response/design analysis
March 19	Spring Break
March 26	Review of Professional Literature Read: Hubbard & Power, Chapter 6 Due: Dinner Table theorists Research Proposal (6-10 pages)
April 2	Writing Research Read: Hubbard & Power, Chapter 7 Due: Self-selected book and 1-2 page summary/response/design analysis
April 9	Data Analysis/Project Groups Read Hubbard & Power, Chapter 5 Due: Data collection for analysis
April 16	Data Analysis/Project Groups: Students as Research Partners Read Hubbard & Power, Chapter 10 Due: Data collection for analysis
April 23	Data Analysis/Project Groups: Trustworthiness and research reports Read: Articles Due: Data collection for analysis
April 30	Support for Teacher Research and Collaborative Research Read Hubbard & Power, Chapter 8 and 9
May 7	Teacher Research Project Presentations Due: Final Projects and Research Notebooks
May 14	Teacher Research Project Presentations Due: Final Self-evaluations