Mayville State University

SPED 569 Action Research Project
Key Assessment Assignment Description

Due: See syllabus for specific due date.

Purpose: The main purpose of action research is to improve educational programs within schools. There are four general types of action research that are built around the scale of the research and are known as a) individual research, b) collaborative research, c) school-wide research, and d) district-wide research. Action research involves collecting information regarding current educational programs and outcomes, analyzing the information, developing a plan to improve it, collecting changes after a new plan is implemented, and developing conclusions regarding the improvements.

The purpose of this Action Research Project assignment is to demonstrate your ability to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions identified in the InTASC and CAEP advanced standards for the MEd program and fully implement the plan and complete the research. This assignment will require you to use the individual action research model, meaning you will complete the project independently. Another purpose of this assignment is to provide you with the skills and knowledge of action research in order to participate in future action research with your co-workers in the classroom, campus, or district. Your Action Research Project is presented as a final performance measure as evidence of meeting program learning outcomes. Therefore, this assignment is designated as a Key Assessment for the MEd program within the Innovative Teaching Practices track. Because this assignment is a Key Assessment, students must obtain an acceptable target of a C or higher. As indicated in the course syllabus, students who do not meet acceptable targets for this key assessment cannot pass the EDUC 505 course with a grade higher than C.

Objectives:

- Apply the major concepts, terminology, issues, and techniques of educational research (InTASC 4, 5; CEC 4; CAEP A.1.1).
- Identify an issue and apply action research methods to benefit the classroom, school, or organization by designing, implementing, analyzing, and reflecting on a study of an identified topic or strategy in education (InTASC 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; CEC 4; CAEP A1.1).
- Align research design with the needs of a selected action research problem (InTASC 5, 9,10; CEC 4; CAEP A.1.1).
- Design and apply educational research specific to the chosen topic through a literature review aligned to the study and the process of action research (InTASC 4, 5, 9, 10; CEC 2, 4; CAEP A1.1).
- Collect data from the action research project and present findings (InTASC 5, 9, 10; CEC 4; CAEP A1.1).
- Reflect on the action research process (InTASC 9; CEC 3; CAEP A.1.1).
- Apply leadership strategies to support a collaborative learning culture in the classroom, school, or organization by sharing the findings of the action research project (InTASC 9, 10; CEC 5; CAEP A1.1).

Overview: Action research is a specific research methodology that merges inquiry about self and context and provides the opportunity to synthesize information from various sources. In this project, you will identify a question you would like to investigate, explore the current literature relevant to that question, develop a research plan, implement the plan, collect the data, evaluate the results, develop an action plan, and report back the findings. Each of the assignment steps leads to the fulfillment of this project, culminating in a comprehensive presentation of your action research.

Directions:

1. **Identifying a Topic (Week 1):** A template will be provided in Blackboard to help you identify and narrow your action research topic. In this template, you will be asked to include the following:
   a. Make a list of ways in which you believe action research can connect the theory you have been studying to your practice with learners.
   b. Then, you will generate ideas for possible action research projects that will improve student learning or increase your skills as an online teacher. For each of your ideas, make a list of pros and cons for why the idea would be an ideal project to implement this semester.
   c. The final step this week is to identify your specific topic and include that topic on your template. Also, consider listing limits to your project. This will help you be specific and laser-focused.
   d. After you submit your "Identifying a Topic" template to Blackboard, your instructor will provide specific feedback on your topic before you move forward with implementing the project.

2. **Probing the Research Question (Week 1)**: A template will be provided in Blackboard to guide you in thinking about specific aspects of your research question. The goal of the template is to clarify an area of focus for your research so you can move forward with a specific focus on mind. Your research question frames the intended learning of your project, which is the purpose of any action research project. At its core, the research question should address this question: what do we want to learn? Complete the "Probing the Research Question" template and submit it to Blackboard. Your instructor will provide specific feedback on your research question before you move forward with implementing the project.

3. **Reviewing Related Literature (Week 2)**: The purpose of the literature review portion of an action research project is to gain an understanding of the research about your topic that already exists, find gaps in the literature, and use the literature to plan and support your action research study. Use the template in Blackboard to guide your review of literature. The template includes prompts for your introduction, body, and summary. Group or categorize your findings based on similar themes and incorporate those themes into the body of your literature review. For the literature review, you are required to locate at least 5 resources. You may use reliable sources such as TED Talks, professional journals, books, or interviews of a veteran teacher. Using the template, you will synthesize the writings of four or more authors, citing and referencing the researchers or practitioners in APA style. The total literature review template should be between 3-5 pages in length, including the reference page. While reviewing resources, ask yourself these questions (which are characteristics of well-developed resources):
   a. Has the author described an issue?
   b. Is the issue clearly defined?
   c. Has the author evaluated literature related to the issue?
   d. Does the author explain their research design or how they answered their research question?
   e. Are the conclusions of the study based on the data collected and further analysis?
   f. Does the author share findings?
   g. Does the author share limitations?

The last page of your literature review should include a "References" page. Your Reference page needs to adhere to APA guidelines. All articles, websites, podcasts, etc. need to be cited in proper APA format. Be sure to adhere to grammar and mechanics throughout the writing of the text.

4. **Developing a Research Plan (Week 3)**: This stage of the action research process requires you to develop a plan for conducting your research. You are encouraged to use the template provided and adjust it to make sense as it pertains to your action research project. Design the project by identifying your topic, describing the purpose, listing your research questions, explaining how data (qualitative or quantitative) will be collected and analyzed, and what instruments will be used to collect data (interviews, observations, surveys, pre-posttest, etc.). All aspects of your study and its design must align. When designing your research plan, be sure you are collecting the right kind of data to answer your question. Your instructor will provide feedback on your research plan before you begin implementing your research.

5. **Implementing the Plan, Collecting Data, and Analyzing Data (Weeks 4-6)**: This portion of your action research project will be done over several weeks. You will collect, organize, and analyze your data, based on your research design. Use the templates in Blackboard to guide your data collection and analysis. This step of the process will also include three submissions titled, **Week 4 Check-in, Week 5 Check-in, and Week 6 Check-in**. Each "Check-in" assignment will require you to reflect on where you are in the research process and how to best move forward.

6. **Action Plan Chart (Week 7)**: Now that you have implemented the study, collected data, and analyzed that data, you are ready for the ACTION part of your action research project. What action will you take based on your findings? Who will be responsible for completing the action? What is the timeline for completing the action(s) and what resources are necessary for the action to be taken? Use the template found in Blackboard to guide thinking about the action research cycle. Consider what revisions to make, what changes need to occur, or what improvements need to be made so that future actions are meaningful.

7. **Findings Poster and FINAL Action Research Project (Week 8)**: Through a written reflection, you will analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the entire project, make predictions as to how the findings will influence your future teaching or work in the organization, and explain what you believe to be the value of action research as professional development. Your reflection will be included as the last heading when you submit the FINAL Action Research Project using the template provided.

   Also, a poster template will be shared in Blackboard to guide your creation of the Action Research Findings Poster and when you save it, it should be titled Action Research Findings-First Last Name. The final step will be for you to create an 8–10-minute video recording that explains each portion of the Action Research Findings Poster that captures the main highlights of your project. Prior to your final submission, complete the **Self-Assessment Rubric** (found within the FINAL Action Research Project template) to evaluate your own work towards meeting assignment expectations. This rubric will be a part of your final submission.

8. On or before the due date, submit the following items to the dropbox:
   - URL of 8–10-minute video describing your Findings Poster
   - Your FINAL Action Research Project template and a copy of the self-assessment rubric

9. Use this assignment description and rubric to guide your quality work on this assignment.

EDUC 505 Action Research Project
Key Assessment Rubric

Category	Distinguished (4)	Proficient (3)	Basic (2)	Unsatisfactory (1)	Points
Identify a Topic x2 InTASC 4, 5; CAEP A1.1	Clearly identifies the topic, purpose, and rationale of overall project in the introduction.	Introduction to topic is adequate and includes purpose and rationale of project.	Topic and introduction are included but do not clearly state purpose and rationale of project.	Topic and introduction are not included or addressed.	/8
Probing the Research Question x2 InTASC 9, 10; CEC 4; CAEP A1.1	Research question is relevant to professional practice, clearly relate to the topic of the action research project and is written using detailed and explicit language.	Research question is clearly related to the topic of the action research project and is written using concise and explicit language.	Research question lacks details and may or may not be related to the topics of the action research project.	No research question or focus is included.	/8
Reviewing Related Literature x5 InTASC 4, 5, 9, 10; CEC 2; CAEP A1.1	Summary of research provides thorough background information aligned to research question(s); Review of literature analyzes and synthesizes more than five current and relevant research sources.	Summary of research provides adequate background information aligned to research question(s); Review of literature summarizes at least 5 current and relevant research.	Summary of research is incomplete and not aligned to the research question(s). Review of literature provides limited evidence of current and relevant research with 1-4 sources.	No background information or review of literature is included.	/20
Developing a Research Plan x3 InTASC 4, 5; CEC4; CAEP A1.1	Study design and methods are written in a comprehensive, detailed, sequential, logical, and easy to follow manner; research design is clearly articulated.	Study design and methods written in a sequential, logical, easy to follow manner; research design is included.	Study design methods are not clear, sequential, logical, or coherent; requires more in-depth explanation.	Study design and methods are not included.	/12
Findings (from Data Analysis) x5 InTASC 9, 10; CEC 4; CAEP A1.1	Analysis techniques used are appropriate for the purpose and scope of the project. Findings from raw data are summarized in a clear and systematic format. Valid interpretation of data. Trends or patterns in the data clearly identified. Analysis is reflective in terms of the context and relates to professional and personal development. Findings	Analysis techniques used are appropriate for the purpose and scope of the project. Findings are summarized in a clear and systematic format. Valid interpretation of data. Analysis is reflective in terms of the context and relates to professional or personal development. Findings include clearly articulated graphs or tables in APA format	Analysis techniques used are minimally appropriate for the purpose and scope of the project. Findings from raw data are summarized but need a clearer and more systematic format. Partial interpretation of data. Analysis may or may not relate to professional and personal development. Findings section includes graphs or tables without APA format	Analysis techniques are not appropriate for the data. Findings from raw data are not well summarized. Findings are not clearly articulated. Invalid or incomplete interpretation of data	/20

	include clearly articulated graphs or tables in APA format				
Reflection x5 InTASC 9, 10; CEC 3; CAEP A1.1	Reflection on action research includes all items in proficient category AND: • how the action researcher was transformed to be a wiser and more effective practitioner through the research experience • how the action researcher could initiate leadership in the field • how the action researcher benefited from collaborating with other professional in the field and intends to continue the collaboration in her/his professional life	Reflection on action research includes: • what the study has shown and how the problem or issue has been resolved • limitations of the study or ways the research study could be improved • suggestions for future research • most impactful thing learned from conducting the study	Reflection on action research process does not adequately include: • what the study has shown and how the problem or issue has been resolved • limitations of the study or ways the research study could be improved • suggestions for future research • most impactful thing learned from conducting the study	Little or no reflection is included. Reflection offered is superficial and focuses on the personal journey of action research. Limitations are not recognized.	/20
Grammar and Mechanics x1	The project is free of grammatical errors and spelling and punctuation.	Grammatical errors or spelling and punctuation errors are rare and do not detract from the project.	Some grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors interfere with reading the project.	Several grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors interfere with reading the project.	/4
Self-Assessment Rubric x1	Provides a thorough summary of the self-assessment by indicating a rating for each criterion and including detailed comments.	Provides a summary of the self-assessment by indicating a rating for each criterion and including comments.	Provides a limited summary of the self-assessment by indicating a rating for some of the criteria and/or including limited comments.	Self-assessment is not included or does not include ratings for all items and lacks comments.	/4

References/APA x1	Documentation of sources is included and accurately reflects APA guidelines and style, and flow are consistent throughout the project. All resources listed in the reference section are cited in the text.	Documentation of sources is included and accurately reflects APA guidelines.	Documentation of sources contains many errors, is missing details, and uses incorrect APA formatting.	APA citations are not included.	/4
Comments:					**Total:** /100

Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Standards (InTASC) (as referenced in the objectives and rubric)

1	The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.
2	The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards
3	The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
4	The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.
5	The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.
6	The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.
7	The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.
8	The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.
9	The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.
10	The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

Source: Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013.

Advanced CEC Standards (as referenced in the objectives and rubric)

1	Assessment	Special Education specialists use valid and reliable assessment practices to minimize bias.
2	Curricular Content Knowledge	Special education specialists use their knowledge of general and specialized curricula to improve programs, supports, and services at classroom, school, community, and system levels.

3	Programs, Services, and Outcomes	Special education specialists facilitate the continuous improvement of general and special education programs, supports, and services at the classroom, school, and system levels for individuals with exceptionalities.
4	Research and Inquiry	Special education specialists conduct, evaluate, and use inquiry to guide professional practice.
5	Leadership and Policy	Special education specialists provide leadership to formulate goals, set and meet high professional expectations, advocate for effective policies and evidence-based practices, and create positive and productive work environments.
6	Professional and Ethical Practice	Special education specialists use foundational knowledge of the field and professional ethical principles and practice standards to inform special education practice, engage in lifelong learning, advance the profession, and perform leadership responsibilities to promote the success of professional colleagues and individuals with exceptionalities.
7	Collaboration	Special education specialists collaborate with stakeholders to improve programs, services, and outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families.

Advanced CAEP Standards (as referenced in the objectives and rubric)

A1.1	Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions	Candidates for advanced preparation demonstrate their proficiencies to understand and apply knowledge and skills appropriate to their professional field of specialization so that learning and development opportunities for all P-12 are enhanced, through: • Applications of data literacy; • Use of research and understanding of qualitative, quantitative and/or mixed methods research methodologies; • Employment of data analysis and evidence to develop supportive school environments; • Leading and/or participating in collaborative activities with others such as peers, colleagues, teachers, administrators, community organizations, and parents; • Supporting appropriate applications of technology for their field of specialization; and • Application of professional dispositions, laws and policies, codes of ethics and professional standards appropriate to their field of specialization.

Source: Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2021.