

## EDU-928: Action Research: Empowering Your Practice

### Independent Study Online Course Syllabus

**Instructor:** Bonnie E. Walker, EdD, NBCT  
**Phone:** (717) 756-0931  
**Email:** [bonnie.walker@fresno.edu](mailto:bonnie.walker@fresno.edu)  
**Zoom:** Conferences Available upon request

**Number of Graduate Semester Units:** 3 units  
**Target Audience:** K - 14<sup>th</sup> grade  
administrators and teachers  
**Course Access:** [ce-connect.fresno.edu](https://ce-connect.fresno.edu)

*"Start where you are ... Explore what you want ... Go as far as you need".  
Action Research is systematic and intentional; it is intrinsically rewarding, meaningful, and fulfilling.*

*- B.E. Walker (PDHed.com)*

*Action Research "seeks to build a body of knowledge that enhances professional and  
community practices and works to increase the well-being of the people involved"*

*-Stringer (Action Research, 2014, p. 1)*

### Course Description

A course that lets you start where you are, explore what you want, go as far as you need, and improve your environment – You frame your own professional development, improve your practice, and impact your classroom and/or organization. Whether you teach grades K-12, are a specialized teacher, are a professor of higher education, or lead in an administrative capacity – Action Research will help you to impact your own practice and your schools, districts, and education as a whole. Through the exploration of intentional research, participants will target an area of personal concern and explore possible solutions and interventions that can improve practice. Course content will include carrying out a literature review, collecting and analyzing data, and developing the first cycle of an action plan with the purpose of enriching an educational setting.

**Note:** Required book must be acquired separately.

### Required Texts and Course Materials

**Book:** Mertler, C.A., (2020). *Action Research: Improving Schools and Empowering Educators* 6 ed. (Paperback). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: ISBN-13: 978-1544324395; ISBN-10: 1544324391. [https://www.amazon.com/dp/1544324391/ref=cm\\_sw\\_em\\_r\\_mt\\_dp\\_U\\_UBJaFb2J8DQ0T](https://www.amazon.com/dp/1544324391/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_U_UBJaFb2J8DQ0T).

**Note:** Students are responsible for purchasing their own textbook, analyzing the content, and applying what they learned to the course assignments. You are welcome to purchase used, e-book, or new versions to save money. You can order the book directly from the publisher or from one of several discount aggregators (for example): <https://amazon.com>

**Online Resources:** Relevant online resources that support the course content and encourage further investigation will be available throughout the course assignments. Active hyperlinks are utilized throughout the course and will link to the appropriate information when clicked. These include videos, podcasts, worksheets, online activities, journal articles and other resources.

**Moodle:** Moodle is a web-based learning management system used to support flexible teaching and learning in both face-to-face and distance courses (e-learning).

<https://moodle.org> // <https://moodle.org/demo> // <https://docs.moodle.org>

## Course Dates

Self-paced; students may enroll at any time and take up to one year, from the date of registration, to complete assignments. Students may complete assignments in no less than three weeks for a 3-unit course (one week per unit).

## National Standards Addressed in This Course

### National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)

<http://www.nbpts.org/standards-five-core-propositions/>

This course uses the Five National Board Core Propositions. First published in 1989 and updated in 2016, *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do* articulates the National Board's Five Core Propositions for teaching. The Five Core Propositions – comparable to medicine's Hippocratic Oath — set forth the profession's vision for accomplished teaching. Together, the propositions form the basis of all National Board Standards and the foundation for National Board Certification. Course assignments have been designed so educators can demonstrate excellence against these professional teaching standards whenever possible. The propositions are as follows:

#### Proposition 1: Teachers are Committed to Students and Their Learning

- Teachers are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They believe all students can learn. They treat students equitably. They recognize the individual differences that distinguish their students from one another, and they take account for these differences in their practice. They understand how students develop and learn and respect the cultural and family differences students bring to their classroom. They are concerned with their students' self-concept, and their motivation, and the effects of learning on peer relationships as well as being concerned with the development of character and civic responsibility.

#### Proposition 2: Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students.

- Teachers have mastery over the subject(s) they teach. They have a deep understanding of the history, structure and real-world applications of the subject. They have skill and experience in teaching it, and they are very familiar with the skills, gaps, and preconceptions students may bring to the subject. They are able to use diverse instructional strategies to teach for understanding.

#### Proposition 3: Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning.

- Teachers deliver effective instruction. They move fluently through a range of instructional techniques, keeping students motivated, engaged and focused. They know how to engage students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to meet instructional goals. They know how to assess the progress of individual students as well as the

class as a whole. They use multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding, and they can clearly explain student performance to parents.

**Proposition 4: Teachers Think Systematically about Their Practice and Learn from Experience.**

- Teachers model what it means to be an educated person – they read, they question, they create and they are willing to try new things. They are familiar with learning theories and instructional strategies and stay abreast of current issues in American education. They critically examine their practice on a regular basis to deepen knowledge, expand their repertoire of skills, and incorporate new findings into their practice.

**Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities.**

- Teachers collaborate with others to improve student learning. They are leaders and actively know how to seek and build partnerships with community groups and businesses. They work with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development. They know how to work collaboratively with parents to engage them productively in the work of the school”.

**Continuing Education Student Learning Outcomes (CE-SLO)**

CE-SLO 1	Demonstrate proficient written communication by articulating a clear focus, synthesizing arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to inform and persuade others, and present information applicable to targeted use.
CE-SLO 2	Demonstrate comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
CE-SLO 3	Reflect on their personal and professional growth and provide evidence of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and professional improvement.
CE-SLO 4	Apply critical thinking competencies by generating probing questions, recognizing underlying assumptions, interpreting and evaluating relevant information, and applying their understandings to the professional setting.
CE-SLO 5	Reflect on values that inspire high standards of professional and ethical behavior as they pursue excellence in applying new learning to their chosen field.
CE-SLO 6	Identify information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, organize that information, identify the best sources of information for a given enquiry, locate and critically evaluate sources, and accurately and effectively share that information.

## Course Student Learning Outcomes (C-SLO)

<b>Student Learning Outcomes for This Course</b> By the end of this course student will be able to:		<b>National Standards Addressed*</b>	<b>CE-SLO Addressed**</b>
C-SLO 1	Carry-out a critical search of related literature with the purpose of writing an annotated bibliography associated with a selected topic of interest that supports further work	NBPTS 4	1, 4, 6
C-SLO 2	Recognize and define different cultural perspectives within the educational setting	NBPTS 1	2, 5
C-SLO 3	Develop a research plan with deep understanding of existing research through contextual background data gathering and an initial literature review	NBPTS 2	2
C-SLO 4	Integrate understanding of environmental and instructional techniques in developing methodologies and instruments in gathering data.	NBPTS 1,3	2,4,5
C-SLO 5	Use the reflective learning logs to clearly and concisely describe behaviors, demonstrated skills, and instructional practices used to introduce or reinforce student learning	NBPTS 5	3, 4
C-SLO 6	Understand the interrelationship between different components of an action research project, specifically, topic/concern/problem, literature review, method, data collection, analysis, implementation, results, implications, and significance.	NBPTS 4, 5	2, 4, 5
C-SLO 7	Explore both qualitative and quantitative research methods and be able to utilize both methods to resolve a research problem	NBPTS 4, 5	1, 6
C-SLO 8	Integrate facets of newly acquired knowledge in teaching and learning, and clearly align these with professional standards and/or core propositions.	NBPTS 4, 5	2, 4, 5
C-SLO 9	Be an agent of change in his/her school, district, and state.	NBPTS 5	1, 2, 6

\* Please refer to the section on **National Standards Addressed in This Course**

\*\* Please refer to the section on **Continuing Education Student Learning Outcomes**

## Topics, Assignments, and Activities

MODULE No & FOCUS	MODULE STUDY ACTIVITIES	MODULE ASSIGNMENTS	POSSIBLE POINTS
1. Orientation & Introduction	<u>Reading Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check Out the APA Style Guidelines</li> <li>Take a Quick Look at the Moodle Student Tutorials Page</li> </ul>	1.1 Target Activity: APA Style References Formatting Activity Assignment	10
		1.2 Target Activity: The Research Process	5
		1.3 Target Activity: Orientation Assignment	2
		1.4 Discussion Forum [DF]: Introduce Yourself Forum	7
2. Reflective Practice	<u>Reading Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action Research Best Practices Statement</li> <li>Step-by-Step Process of Action Research Organizer</li> </ul> <u>Multimedia</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"A Conversation with Dr. C. Mertler"</li> <li>SURVEY: Are You a Connected Knower or a Separate Knower?</li> <li>Reflective Practice Web Search</li> </ul>	2.1 Introduction to Learning Log [LL]	10
		2.2 [DF] 3-2-1 Entry / Reflective Practice	15
3. Introduction to Action Research	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chapter 1: Introduction to Action Research (Mertler, e6 2019)</li> <li>"The Case for Action Research: Is it Legitimate?" (Walker, pp. 1-4)</li> </ul> <u>Multi-Media</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mertler &amp; AR Practitioner Vignettes</li> </ul> <u>Interactive Activities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate the Interactive CCAR Site/Tutorial 2: Understanding Action Research Overview</li> </ul>	3.1 [LL] / Learning Log: Define Action Research	10
		3.2 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: Traditional Research vs Action Research	16
4. Overview: The Why and How of Action Research	<u>Reading Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Chapter 2 (Mertler, pp. 35-50)</li> </ul> <u>Multi-Media</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mertler, AR Practitioner Vignettes</li> <li>CCAR Tutorials 1 &amp; 2</li> </ul>	4.1 [LL] / Learning Log: A Simulation	10
		4.2 [QZ] / Quiz 1 (retakes available)	10
		4.3 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: Brainstormed Topics	22
<b>The Planning Stage</b>			
5. Step 1: Identifying and limiting the topic	<u>Reading Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Chapter 3 (Mertler, pp. 53-84)</li> <li>The 5 Why Process [Graphic Organizer/Template]</li> </ul> <u>Multi-Media</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mertler, AR Practitioner Vignettes &amp; CCAR Tutorial 3 &amp; 4</li> </ul>	5.1 [LL] / Learning Log: Topic Refinement	20
		5.2 [QZ] / Quiz 2: The Literature Review	10
		5.3 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: Share & Gather Input	7
6. Steps 2 & 3: Gathering & Reviewing Information	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mertler &amp; Walker</li> <li>Examining Background Information &amp; Related Literature [Graphic Organizer]</li> </ul> <u>Multi-Media</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mertler &amp; AR Practitioner Vignettes</li> </ul>	6.1 [LL] / Learning Log: Literature Review	50
		6.2 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: The Site Context	7
7. Step 4: Developing a Research Plan	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mertler (Chapter 4, pp. 85-123)</li> <li>Developing a Research Plan [Graphic Organizer/Template]</li> </ul>	7.1 [LL] / Learning Log: The Research Plan	20

MODULE NO & FOCUS	MODULE STUDY ACTIVITIES	MODULE ASSIGNMENTS	POSSIBLE POINTS
	<u>Multi-Media</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mertler's Overview and CCAR (Tutorial 3)</li> </ul>	7.2 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: <i>Ethics in an AR</i>	7
<b>The Acting Stage</b>			
8. Step 5: Collecting Data	<u>Reading Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mertler (C5) &amp; Walker</li> <li>Decision-Making, Data-Gathering, and PB&amp;Js</li> </ul>	8.1 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: Observation Exercise	7
	<u>Multi-Media</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mertler &amp; AR Practitioner Vignettes</li> </ul>	8.2 [LL] / <i>Learning Log: An Interview Protocol</i>	10
9. Step 6: Analyzing Data	<u>Reading Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mertler (C6)</li> <li>Planning for Data Analysis [Graphic Organizer/Template]</li> </ul>	9.1 [LL] / <i>Learning Log: Coding Qualitative Data</i>	20
	<u>Multimedia</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gapminder: Making Data "Sing" (Hans Rosling's Gapminder)</li> <li>Mertler &amp; AR Practitioner Vignettes</li> <li>CCAR: Analyzing Data/Evidence</li> </ul>	9.2 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: <i>Analyzing Data/Making Quantitative Data Sing</i>	7
<b>The Developing Stage</b>			
10. Step 7: Developing an Action Plan	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mertler C7</li> <li>Steps to Action Chart [Editable Chart]</li> </ul>	10.1 [LL]: <i>Steps to Action Chart</i>	20
	<u>Multimedia</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mertler &amp; AR Practitioner Vignettes</li> </ul>	10.2 [QZ] Assessment Check: Quiz 3 (Cs 5-7)	10
		10.3 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: <i>Action Planning for Practice and Future Cycles of AR</i>	7
<b>The Reflecting Stage</b>			
11. Step 8: Sharing and Communicating	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mertler C8Page</li> <li>Read/View CCAR: Writing Your Report</li> </ul>	11.1 [LL]: <i>Outline of An AR Report (with Reflective Narrative Notes)</i>	50
	<u>Multimedia</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mertler &amp; AR Practitioner Vignettes</li> <li>Optional: Sage's Student Study Site (Action Research Samples)</li> </ul>	11.2 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: A Favorite Color Survey	7
12. Step 9: Reflecting on the Process	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Chapter 9 (Mertler, pp. 243-266)</li> </ul>	12.1: Course Project – <i>Publishing Your Findings: Your Creative Choice</i>	50
		12.2: [DF]: Final Reflective Forum	7
13. I'm Done, Now What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Reflection Forum</li> <li>Course Evaluation</li> <li>Course Completion Checklist</li> <li>Grade Request / Transcript Request</li> </ul>	Course Evaluation	0
		Submit Grade form	0
<b>TOTAL POINTS:</b>			<b>433</b>

## Grading Policies, Rubrics, and Requirements for Assignments

### Grading Policies

- Assignments will be graded per criteria presented in the course rubrics.
- A = 90-100% and B = 80-89%, (anything below 80% will not receive credit.)
- The discernment between an A or a B letter grade is at the discretion of the instructor based on the quality of work submitted (see course rubrics).
- Coursework falling below a B grade will be returned with further instructions.
- All assignments must be completed to receive a grade and are expected to reflect the quality that teacher-training institutions require of professional educators. If completed assignments do not meet this standard, students will be notified with further instructions from the instructor.

### Grading Rubrics

Grade	Percent	Description	Rubric
A	90-100%	Excellent	Meets all course / assignment requirements with significant evidence of subject mastery and demonstration of excellent graduate level professional development scholarship.
B	80-89%	Very Good	Adequately meets criteria for all course/assignment requirements - demonstrates subject competency with very good graduate level professional development scholarship.
NC	Below 80%	Unacceptable	Does not meet the minimum criteria for all course/assignment requirements and demonstrated little, if any, evidence of acceptable graduate level professional development scholarship.

### Writing Requirements

- **Superior:** Writing is clear, succinct, and reflects graduate level expectations. Clearly addresses all parts of the writing task. Maintains a consistent point of view and organizational structure. Includes relevant facts, details, and explanations.
- **Standard:** Writing is acceptable with very few mistakes in grammar and spelling. Addresses most parts of the writing task. Maintains a mostly consistent point of view and organizational structure. Includes mostly relevant facts, details, and explanations.
- **Sub-standard:** Writing contains noticeable mistakes in grammar and spelling. Does not address all parts of the writing task. Lacks a consistent point of view and organizational structure. May include marginally relevant facts, details, and explanations.

### Lesson Plan Requirements

- **Superior:** Instructional goals and objectives clearly stated. Instructional strategies appropriate for learning outcome(s). Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is clearly delineated and authentic. All materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson clearly listed.
- **Standard:** Instructional goals and objectives are stated but are not easy to understand. Some instructional strategies are appropriate for learning outcome(s). Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is present. Most materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson are listed.
- **Sub-standard:** Instructional goals and objectives are not stated. Learners cannot tell what is expected of them. Instructional strategies are missing or strategies used are inappropriate.

Method for assessing student learning and evaluating instruction is missing. Materials necessary for student and teacher to complete lesson are missing.

## **Instructor/Student Contact Information**

Throughout the course participants will be communicating with the instructor and their classmates on a regular basis using asynchronous discussion forums. Students are provided with instructor contact information in the event they want to make email or phone contact. In addition, students are encouraged to email or phone the instructor at any time. Students will also receive feedback on the required assignments as they are submitted.

## **Forums**

Participation is an important expectation of this course and all online courses. Online discussions promote reflection and analysis while allowing students to appreciate and evaluate positions that others express. While students may not be engaging with the same students throughout this course, they will be expected to offer comments, questions, and replies to the discussion question whenever possible. The faculty role in the discussion forum is that of an observer and facilitator.

## **Coursework Hours**

Based on the Carnegie Unit standard, a unit of graduate credit measures academic credit based on the number of hours the student is engaged in learning. This includes all time spent on the course: reading the textbook, watching videos, listening to audio lessons, researching topics, writing papers, creating projects, developing lesson plans, posting to discussion boards, etc. Coursework offered for FPU Continuing Education graduate credit adheres to 45 hours per semester unit for the 900-level courses. Therefore, a student will spend approximately 135 hours on a typical 3-unit course.

## **Services for Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities are eligible for reasonable accommodations in their academic work in all classes. In order to receive assistance, the student with a disability must provide the Academic Support Center with documentation, which describes the specific disability. The documentation must be from a qualified professional in the area of the disability (i.e. psychologist, physician or educational diagnostician). Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Support Center to discuss academic and other needs as soon as they are diagnosed with a disability. Once documentation is on file, arrangements for reasonable accommodations can be made. For more information and for downloadable forms, please go to <https://www.fresno.edu/students/academic-support/services-students-disabilities>.

## **Plagiarism and Academic Honesty**

All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled per the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalogue and Handbook - <https://handbook.fresno.edu/graduate/academic-policies>



## Technology Requirements

To successfully complete the course requirements, course participants will need Internet access, can send and receive email, know how to manage simple files in a word processing program, and have a basic understanding of the Internet. Please remember that the instructor is not able to offer technical support. If you need technical support, please contact your Internet Service Provider.

**Moodle:** This course will be delivered totally online. Moodle is a learning management system that provides students access to online resources, documents, graded assignments, quizzes, discussion forums, etc. Moodle is easy to learn and has a friendly user interface. To learn more about Moodle, go to [https://docs.moodle.org/33/en/Student\\_FAQ](https://docs.moodle.org/33/en/Student_FAQ). There are also some student tutorials on the Center for Online Learning website at Fresno Pacific University - <https://col.fresno.edu/student>.

**Moodle Site Login and Passwords:** Students will need to have internet access to log onto <https://ce-connect.fresno.edu>. The username and password numbers for Moodle access will be sent to you by the university using the email address you submitted at the time of registration. The instructor will then contact you with a welcome communication. If you need help with your username and password recovery, please contact the Continuing Education office at (800) 372-5505 or (559) 453-2000 during regular office hours - Mon-Fri 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. or email them at [prof.dev@fresno.edu](mailto:prof.dev@fresno.edu).

**Getting Help with Moodle:** If you need help with Moodle, please contact the Center for Online Learning (COL), by telephone or the website. Help by phone (559) 453-3460 is available Mon-Thurs 8:00 am to 8:00 pm and on Fridays from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, or by filling out a "Request Services" form at <https://col.fresno.edu/contact/request-services>. Please identify that you are with the "School = Continuing Education".

## Final Course Grade and Transcripts

When all work for the course has been completed, students will need to logon to the Continuing Education website (<https://ce.fresno.edu/my-account>) and "Request Final Grade". Once the instructor receives the requests and submits the grade online, students may log back in to view their Final Grade Report or order transcripts online. Please allow at least two weeks for the final grade to be posted. For more information, see the Continuing Education Policies and Procedures at <https://ce.fresno.edu/ce-policies-and-procedures>.

## University Policies and Procedures

Students are responsible for becoming familiar with the information presented in the Academic Catalog and for knowing and observing all policies and procedures related to their participation in the university community. A summary of university policies may be found on the university website at <https://www.fresno.edu/students/registrars-office/academic-catalogs>.

## Fresno Pacific University Student Learning Outcomes (FPU-SLO)

FPU-SLO 1	<b>Student Learning Outcomes Oral Communication:</b> Students will <i>exhibit</i> clear, engaging, and confident oral communication – in both individual and group settings – and will critically <i>evaluate</i> content and delivery components.
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FPU-SLO 2	<b>Written Communication:</b> Students will <i>demonstrate</i> proficient written communication by <i>articulating</i> a clear focus, <i>synthesizing</i> arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to <i>inform</i> and <i>persuade</i> others.
FPU-SLO 3	<b>Content Knowledge:</b> Students will <i>demonstrate</i> comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
FPU-SLO 4	<b>Reflection:</b> Students will <i>reflect</i> on their personal and professional growth and <i>provide evidence</i> of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and vocational improvement.
FPU-SLO 5	<b>Critical Thinking:</b> Students will <i>apply</i> critical thinking competencies by <i>generating</i> probing questions, <i>recognizing</i> underlying assumptions, <i>interpreting</i> and <i>evaluating</i> relevant information, and <i>applying</i> their understandings to new situations.
FPU-SLO 6	<b>Moral Reasoning:</b> Students will <i>identify</i> and <i>apply</i> moral reasoning and ethical decision-making skills, and <i>articulate</i> the norms and principles underlying a Christian worldview.
FPU-SLO 7	<b>Service:</b> Students will <i>demonstrate</i> service and reconciliation as a way of leadership.
FPU-SLO 8	<b>Cultural and Global Perspective:</b> Students will <i>identify</i> personal, cultural, and global perspectives and will employ these perspectives to <i>evaluate</i> complex systems.
FPU-SLO 9	<b>Quantitative Reasoning:</b> Students will accurately <i>compute</i> calculations and symbolic operations and <i>explain</i> their use in a field of study.
FPU-SLO 10	<b>Information Literacy:</b> Students will <i>identify</i> information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, <i>explain</i> how that information is organized, <i>identify</i> the best sources of information for a given enquiry, <i>locate</i> and critically <i>evaluate</i> sources, and accurately and effectively <i>share</i> that information.