

## 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:** Conference available upon request

**Number of Graduate Semester Units:** 3 units  
**Target Audience:** PreK-12; Administrators and Teachers  
**Course Access:** [connect.fresno.edu](https://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 (2016)*

*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<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: ISBN-13: 978-1544324395; ISBN-10: 1544324391.  
<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1544324391>

**Canvas:** This course will be delivered totally online. Canvas is a web-based learning management system (LMS) that provides students access to online resources, documents, videos, assignments, quizzes, forums, etc. Canvas is easy to learn and has a user-friendly interface.

**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.

## 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/>)

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 students can demonstrate excellence against these professional teaching standards whenever possible.

- Proposition 1: Teachers are committed to students and their learning
- Proposition 2: Teachers know the subject they teach and how to teach those subjects to students
- Proposition 3: Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning
- Proposition 4: Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience
- Proposition 5: Teachers are members of learning communities

## 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)

Student Learning Outcomes for This Course By the end of this course student will be able to:		National Standards Addressed*	CE-SLO Addressed**
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
Welcome Aboard! Let's Get Started	<u>Reading Assignment:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tips for Success</li></ul>	Class Introductions	7
		Where Are You in The Educator's Life?	6
INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE & ACTION RESEARCH			
MOD 1: Navigating Canvas and the Course	<u>Reading Assignments</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>APA Style Guidelines</li></ul>	1.1 Target Activity: APA Style References Formatting Activity Assignment	10
		1.2 Target Activity: The Research Process	5
		1.3 Discussion Forum [DF] Orientation Assignment	7
MOD 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>Separate and Connected Knowing</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
MOD 3: Action Research Defined	<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 (Thompson &amp; Hooper)</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	15
MOD 4: Overview:	<u>Reading Assignments</u>	4.1 [LL] / Learning Log: A Simulation	10

MODULE NO & FOCUS	MODULE STUDY ACTIVITIES	MODULE ASSIGNMENTS	POSSIBLE POINTS
<b>The Why and How of Action Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Read Chapter 2 (Mertler, pp. 35-50)</li></ul>	4.2 [QZ] / Quiz 1(retakes available)	20
	<u>Multi-Media</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mertler, AR Practitioner Vignettes (Reuss &amp; Kelly)</li><li>CCAR Tutorials 1 &amp; 2</li></ul>	4.3 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: Brainstormed Topics	15
<b>The Planning Stage: Steps 1, 2, 3, &amp; 4</b>			
<b>MOD 5 / Step 1: Identifying and limiting the topic</b>	<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 (Kelly &amp; Hooper) &amp; CCAR Tutorial 3 &amp; 4</li></ul>	5.1 [LL] / Learning Log: Topic Refinement	20
		5.2 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: Share & Gather Input	15
		5.3 [QZ] / Quiz 2: The Literature Review (Retakes available)	10
<b>MOD 6 / Steps 2 &amp; 3: Gathering &amp; Reviewing Information</b>	<u>Readings</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mertler (C3) &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>CCAR: Tutorial 5</li><li>What is the Literature Review (and What It Is Not)</li></ul>	6.1 [LL] / Learning Log: Literature Review	50
		6.2 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: The Site Context	15
<b>MOD 7 / Step 4: Developing a Research Plan</b>	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mertler (Chapter 4)</li><li>Developing a Research Plan [Graphic Organizer/Template]</li></ul> <u>Multi-Media</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mertler (Video 4.1) &amp; AR Practitioners (Thompson &amp; Reuss)</li><li>CCAR: Tutorial 3</li></ul>	7.1 [LL] / Learning Log: The Research Plan	20
		7.2 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: Ethics in an AR	15
		7.3 [QZ] Quiz 3: The Research Plan	10
<b>The Acting Stage</b>			
<b>MOD 8 / Step 5: Collecting Data</b>	<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> <u>Multi-Media</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mertler (Video 5.1) &amp; AR Practitioner (Thompson &amp; Reuss)</li></ul>	8.1 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: Observation Exercise	15
		8.2 [LL] / Learning Log: An Interview Protocol	10
		8.3 [QZ] / Quiz #4: Collecting Data	10

MODULE NO & FOCUS	MODULE STUDY ACTIVITIES	MODULE ASSIGNMENTS	POSSIBLE POINTS
MOD 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> <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>	9.1 [LL] / Learning Log: Coding Qualitative Data	20
		9.2 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: Analyzing Data/Making Quantitative Data Sing	15
The Developing Stage			
MOD 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> <u>Multimedia</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mertler &amp; AR Practitioner Vignettes</li></ul>	10.1 [LL]: Steps to Action Chart	20
		10.2 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: Action Planning for Practice and Future Cycles of AR	15
		10.3 [QZ]: Quiz 5 (Cs 6-7)	20
The Reflecting Stage			
MOD 11 / Step 8: Sharing and Communicating	<u>Readings:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mertler C8</li><li>Read/View CCAR: Writing Your Report</li></ul> <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>	11.1 [LL]: Outline of An AR Report (with Reflective Narrative Notes)	50
		11.2 [DF] / 3-2-1 Entry: A Favorite Color Survey	15
MOD 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 – Publishing Your Findings: Your Creative Choice	50
		12.2: [DF]: Final Reflective Forum	15
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>	13.1: Course Evaluation	
		13.2: Submit Grade Form	
TOTAL POINTS:			540

## 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). 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/departments/disability-access-education>.

## **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.

**Getting Help with Canvas:** If you need help with Canvas, please contact the FPU Help Desk by phone: (559) 453-3410 or email: [helpdesk@fresno.edu](mailto:helpdesk@fresno.edu). Help is available Mon-Fri 8:00 am to 7:00 pm.

## 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/departments/registrars-office/academic-catalogs>.

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

FPU-SLO 1	<b>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.
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.