

**Master of Science in Education Program
MSED 406: Inquiry and Analysis into Teaching and Learning I**

Fall Quarter 2021
Tuesdays 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm via zoom



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Office Hours for Melanie and Kavita: Fridays, 9am – 10am CST via zoom and by appointment

“Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.”—Paulo Freire

Course Description & Objectives

Teaching is complex, intellectual, and iterative work. Skilled teachers continually take experiences from the field in the form of observations, curiosities, and challenges to inform structured inquiry—with the purpose of improving conceptual and pedagogical understandings for themselves and their students. MSED 406 & 407 are grounded in a model of action research. In our view, action research is not distinct from the work of teaching, rather when done well it *drives* the work of teaching. Data we use in action research is precisely that which we encounter in our classrooms on a daily basis—we are responsible for mining and learning from it. As a result of these courses you will not only have designed and conducted action research— your Master’s Project —but more importantly, you will have a set of stances and tools to embark on a career as a *teacher scholar* who continues to notice various aspects of teaching and learning, ask important questions, and engage in meaningful, guided examinations of practice to evolve learning.

During MSED 406, you will identify a dilemma of practice, informed by collaboration with your mentor teacher. The topic you choose to explore for the purpose of this course should be situated in the particulars of practice but also inform and be informed by the general. That is, the area that you ultimately select should have personal and professional relevancy and also be connected to a larger issue in the field of education. At the same time, it should be something you can reasonably explore during practicum and student teaching.

Once you select a dilemma, and begin refining your question, you will review relevant literature. You will also begin to identify different potential types of classroom data to investigate this question that will result in a project and data collection plan to culminate our fall work together. Please know that we will come together during winter quarter to support and check in on your data collection process. In addition to meeting as a whole class, a central component of the 406 and 407 courses is working in coaching and small groups. Your coach, along with your instructors, will be your guide throughout this process.

Descriptions for the fall quarter final assignment, along with the entire master's project paper outline (due in Spring) can be found here: <https://canvas.northwestern.edu/courses/149601>

Course Texts

Required Texts (these texts are available electronically through NU)

Dana, N. F., & Yendol-Hoppey, D. (2019). *The reflective educator's guide to classroom research: Learning to teach and teaching to learn through practitioner inquiry*. 4th Edition. Corwin Press: Thousand Oaks, Calif.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/northwestern/reader.action?docID=6261743&ppg=1>

Altrichter, H., Posch, P., & Somekh, B. (1993). *Teachers investigate their work: An introduction to the methods of action research*. 3rd edition. London: Routledge.

https://search.library.northwestern.edu/permalink/01NWU_INST/h04e76/alma9980961772702441

General Session Overview

For a detailed instructional schedule and related course documents, see our weekly modules on canvas:

<https://canvas.northwestern.edu/courses/149601>

We will be adjusting our course plans in response to your needs throughout our quarter, so please consider the weekly class modules on canvas, rather than the outline below, to be most current.

Prior to Sept 21	Week 0	Course Pre-work; Setting the Stage for our time together
Tues Sept 21	Week 1	Goals & purposes of action research
Tues Sept 28	Week 2	Examples of action research/dilemmas of practice
Tues Oct 5	Week 3	Conducting a Literature Review
Tues Oct 12	Week 4	Library Session, Literature Review continued
Tues Oct 19	Week 5	Mapping and Synthesizing your Knowledge
Tues Oct 26	Week 6	Identifying classroom data sources
Tues Nov 2	Week 7	Developing a Data Plan
Tues Nov 9	Week 8	Ethical Considerations and Bias
Tues Nov 16	Week 9	Peer Review
Tues Nov 23	Week 10	Summary Presentations and Next Steps
Tues Nov 30		Final MPQ Summary and Data Plan due

Course Expectations, Policies, and Grading

Weekly Assignments

Throughout the quarter, you will be engaged in a series of readings, reflections, observations, analyses, and writing outside of class which will be maintained in an inquiry log/journal. The assignment for each class will vary depending on the topic. It will be your responsibility to track your assignments, which are designed to provoke your thinking and prepare you to undertake your project. Your coaches will be setting aside time to review your weekly entries and plan their next coaching sessions based on what they are reading and responding to. For this reason, and also to help you stay on top of building towards this large project, assignments should be completed by Canvas by 5pm on their due dates (unless otherwise noted). All assignments should use 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. Page number guidelines refer to double-spaced work. Please use APA style throughout.

Grades

Each assignment this quarter is designed as an essential scaffold towards building your final Master's Project ideas and design for your inquiry. In order to ensure you are making consistent progress, it is important that you complete each assignment by the due date indicated so that your coach can provide feedback. Specific rubrics will be used to provide feedback for your weekly work. After you receive feedback (either in class or from your coach after class), you are welcome to conduct revisions on your inquiry log. It will be to your benefit to clearly label and date each assignment so that you can easily draw upon them as needed for the final assignments of the quarter. Your final grade for the course will be determined based on the following:

Weekly assignments (including ability to revise and incorporate feedback as needed)	20%
Literature Review	40%
Master's Project Summary and Data Plan	40%

Guidance on Class Recordings

This class or portions of this class will be recorded by the instructor for educational purposes and available to action research courses during the quarter. Your instructor will communicate how you can access the recordings. Portions of the course that contain images, questions or commentary/discussion by students will be edited out of any recordings that are saved beyond the current term.

Prohibition of Recording Classes by Students

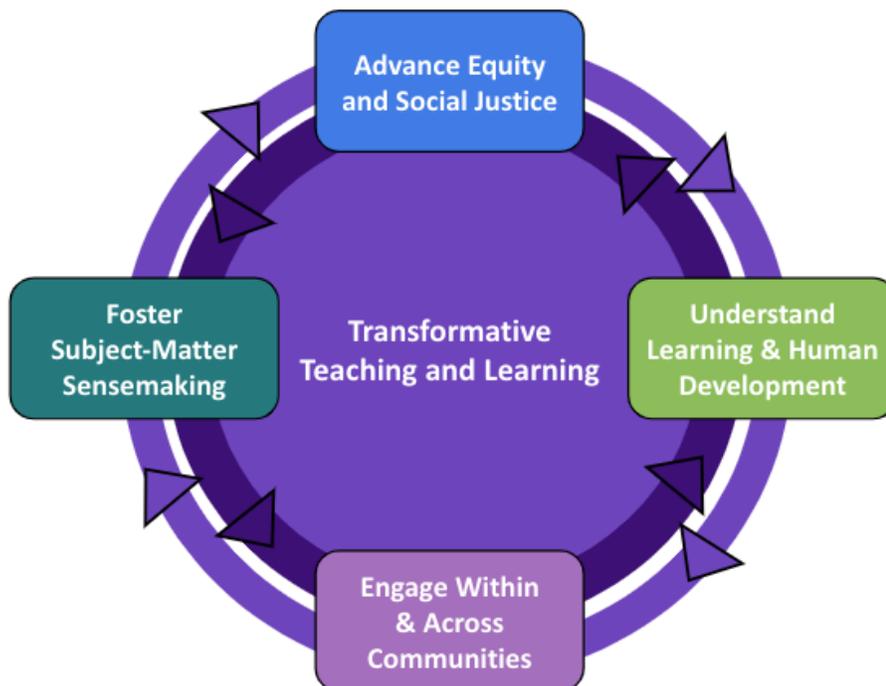
Unauthorized student recording of classroom or other academic activities (including advising sessions or office hours) is prohibited. Unauthorized recording is unethical and may also be a violation of University policy and state law. Students requesting the use of assistive technology as an accommodation should contact [AccessibleNU](#). Unauthorized use of classroom recordings – including distributing or posting them – is also prohibited. Under the University's [Copyright Policy](#), faculty own the copyright to instructional materials – including those resources created specifically for the purposes of instruction, such as syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, and presentations. Students cannot copy, reproduce, display, or distribute these materials. Students who engage in unauthorized recording, unauthorized use of a recording, or unauthorized distribution of instructional materials will be referred to the appropriate University office for follow-up.

Support for Wellness and Mental Health

Northwestern University is committed to supporting the wellness of our students. Student Affairs has multiple resources to support student wellness and mental health. If you are feeling distressed or overwhelmed, please reach out for help. Students can access confidential resources through the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Religious and Spiritual Life (RSL) and the Center for Awareness, Response and Education (CARE). Additional information on all of the resources mentioned above can be found here:

<https://www.northwestern.edu/counseling/>
<https://www.northwestern.edu/religious-life/>
<https://www.northwestern.edu/care/>

Northwestern Teacher Education Guiding Commitments



The Northwestern Teacher Education Program's Guiding Commitments are:

- A statement of values about education for dignity, theories of learning as a social, cognitive, ethical and cultural process, and belief in the power of practices that create culturally sustaining & anti-racist learning environments
- Tools for strengthening our cultural life living through Course, "Discipline", Program, and Community
- Opportunities to build knowledge, enact practices/ performances, cultivate dispositions

Northwestern Teacher Education Professional Dispositions

At Northwestern University, we affirm that teaching is a scholarly, complex endeavor that requires an understanding of the intertwined nature of theory and practice. Teachers need to develop knowledge, skills, practices, and critical reflection, while they also actively and consistently demonstrate professional dispositions. We define dispositions as professional attitudes, stances, values and beliefs; we have collaboratively developed our program dispositions for transformative teaching and learning. Through integrated coursework, developmental advising, and field experiences, we commit to supporting educators as they develop both their pedagogy and professional dispositions.

Commitment to Advancing Equity and Justice

- Engage in self-reflection to understand your own identity, internalized biases, positional privileges, and your impact in any space.
- Demonstrate a recognition that teaching grounded in equity and social justice is essential in any setting and in the teaching of all subject matter.
- Work to understand how inequity shows up in different settings and take steps to disrupt those patterns.
- Identify and strive to address inequities and power relations of systemic racism, sexism, socioeconomic classism, heteronormativity, ableism, and other forms of human oppression.
- Cultivate interactions that demonstrably value all students and stakeholders and their ideas.

Sense of Professional Responsibility and Commitment to Ongoing Growth

- Demonstrate self-awareness and self-management.
- Engage in self-reflection to understand your own identity, internalized biases, positional privileges, and your impact in any space.
- Demonstrate an openness to feedback and integrate feedback into action.
- Seek out resources, feedback, and support based on interests and/or needs.
- Engage in critical self-reflection and reflection on practice; explain rationale for decisions grounded in research, theory, and lived experience.
- Apply feedback and demonstrate a willingness to make changes.
- Take action to learn and meet the professional expectations for each context (this includes everything from professional records to attendance to attire).
- Meet all legal and ethical requirements (including related to how to appropriately engage with students, colleagues, and stakeholders).
- Engage in a way that is reliable and trustworthy (this includes being punctual, prepared, present, etc.).

Reverence for Learners and Learning

- Demonstrate a commitment to all students as individuals with unique strengths and experiences; seek to understand and build relationships with all students.
- Maintain high expectations for all students; value and prioritize opportunities to advance learning. Recognize the complexity of teaching and learning.
- Demonstrate a strengths-based perspective and actively question and push back on deficit thinking.
- Value students' contributions and their diverse ways of knowing and being; commit to understanding students' thinking.

Focus on Collaboration

- Seek to build meaningful relationships by understanding, working with, and learning from others.
- Value the contributions of families and community members and actively work to meaningfully connect with them.
- Seek to understand and build relationships with schools, families, and communities as particular types of intersecting systems within a larger ecosystem that shape our students' lives.
- Maintain a focus on recognizing students' strengths, advancing learning (own and others), and finding positive solutions during all interactions.