

## ETAP 680 ONLINE CLASS OVERVIEW

This course is designed to introduce you to the results of educational research (e.g., research reports) as a process to assist you in conducting your own educational research. You will be both a consumer and creator of educational research. We will spend time analyzing the format and technical writing style of research articles (chosen for you and included in the course materials online); you will be writing the beginning three sections and bibliography of your own educational research project. Caution: a research project is very different from a researched term paper.' You will basically be proposing a quantitative or mixed methodology. We will look at a variety of topics from different viewpoints to read and discuss differing viewpoints on some controversial issues. In different semesters, these include multiple intelligences, instructional pedagogy of mastery learning, cooperative learning, motivational interactions of self-esteem and self-efficacy, alternate assessments, and components of thinking skills.

There are two textbooks for this course: I have chosen an online textbook which also is available as a printed version. It is Trochim, W. M. K., & Donnelly, J. P. (2006). *The Research Methods Knowledge Base*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Thomson Publishing (Atomic Dog), Mason Ohio.

ISBN: 1-592-60291-8; or 1-592-60291-6 (electronic or electronic and print). The purpose of this book is for your knowledge base both as a consumer and as a creator. It sets forth principles and perspectives of the types of research, the methodologies, and the analysis of data. It is available as an electronic version for around \$45, and as a printer version for around \$65. There are online activities to accompany the course and as soon as you purchase either of the two versions, you have access to the electronic version AND the activities. No waiting for a textbook as a barrier to getting started early in the course! You can print anything you want from the electronic version.

The second textbook is Ellis, A. K. *Research on Educational Innovations*. (2005). Eye on Education publishers: Larchmont, NY. You may use either the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> edition as the course map will give you the parallel chapters and/or PDF files needed. Take the opportunity to get a used version of this text. We will use this resource to establish background base knowledge of the content of the research issues.

YOUR research plan can be on any topic and one of the first activities will be to assist you in finding a topic. The type of research that you propose: a) may NOT include a type of research categorized as Action Research. Action Research is the focal point of ETAP 681. b) May NOT include a type of research (Chapter 17 in text) referred to as Ethnographic Research. This latter type of research takes years for data collection and analysis. It is a doctoral level project. c) May NOT use grounded theory or case studies in methodology section of your research project. d) May NOT

do a meta-analysis where your 'subjects' are studies and not humans. However, you can include qualitative methodologies like surveys, interviews, observations as PART of your data collection strategies, along with more traditional quantitative methods like test scores, Likert scales, motivation inventories. e) May NOT involve the subject of No Child Left Behind nor Home school Instruction. There are a lot of topics and methodologies which are acceptable so you will not find these restrictions devastating.

This course is very time consuming. You will have lots of readings each week from both textbooks and online articles, discussion items and responses to your classmates discussions (due basically on Sunday night of each week), as well as written submissions AT THE SAME TIME you are reflecting, thinking, and preparing your own research project which is due at the end of the course.

It is my goal that you will begin to make connections between what we investigate in this class and your teaching practices and that you will emerge from the course more confident and competent regarding the role of research in teaching and learning.

The course has evolved over the course of many semesters with my colleagues, Peter Shea and Carla Meskill. I have taken from their work and suggestions. I revise constantly and many of the 'new' aspects each semester come from direct suggestions from students. The Spring 07 semester students told me the three hardest CONTENT aspects of the course were: a) finding a topic, b) discerning the appropriate type of references for the project, and c) the statistics unit. To that end, I have revised and added more information (but not more activities), and am offering the OPTIONAL, repeat OPTIONAL, meeting for those of you near UA campus for two sessions. I intend to do parts a and b in the first meeting and part c in the second meeting. There will be a release from specific online activities for those who can participate as this face to face meeting will cover some discussion topics for the first meeting and will remove the necessity to 'learn' the statistics independently from the lectures for the second meeting. The mode of your obtaining the information and process of internalizing it will be in a live group rather than in a virtual group or independently.

I hope that you are all still reading this information at this point. This last paragraph is vital to your understanding of the time commitment to this course. Unlike any other course you may have taken, this WILL take 9-12 hours on average, each week for successful completion. It is not a course to take while working full time, involved with after school groups on a daily basis, planning a week's vacation, and probably not wise to be taking a second academic course. The Carnegie standard of 3 hours each week for EACH credit allotted in the course is the standard I use to plan. Previous students have survived and admit they were glad of the warning. Because of the 'blended option' of both meeting face to face and online, I WILL be adhering to the UA class schedule (which you can download from the UA website).