

# Clinical Practicum in Elementary School

EDA 770 Spring 2004  
University of Kentucky

## Principals Excellence Program Course Syllabus for Field-Based Disciplined Inquiry

Spring Semester 2004  
Alternate Weeks, One School Day, 8:00 AM-3:30 PM  
Selected Elementary Schools  
Pike County Public Schools, Kentucky  
Johnson County Public Schools, Kentucky

### Contact Information

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## **GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT Elementary School**

The Action Research Project for the Spring 2004 Clinical Practicum in Elementary School will focus specifically on school culture (as we define school culture through our readings, video viewing, discussions) and how culture influences student achievement. The project must begin with an assessment of the stakeholders' (e.g., administrators, teachers, students, parents, community and business representatives) understanding about the selected school's mission and vision and how the mission and vision statements influence the school's culture and student learning performance. The targeted focus of this study will be **mathematics achievement**.

Researchers will select five Leverage Points (i.e., the indicators that vary significantly between low and high performing schools) within Standard 4 of the Kentucky *Standards and Indicators for School Improvement*<sup>1</sup> (SISI) to use as a framework for their studies. The SISI document is used to develop the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. Following are the Leverage Points for SISI Standard 4:

- 4.1a Leadership support for safe, orderly environment
- 4.1b Leadership beliefs and practices for high achievement
- 4.1c Teacher beliefs and practices for high achievement
- 4.1d Teachers and non-teaching staff involved in decision making
- 4.1e Teachers accept their role in student success/failure
- 4.1f Effective assignment and use of staff strengths
- 4.1g Teachers communicate student progress with parents
- 4.1h Teachers care about kids and inspire their best efforts
- 4.1i Multiple communication strategies used to disseminate information
- 4.1j Student achievement valued and publicly celebrated
- 4.1k Equity and diversity valued and supported

Planning for the action research project must be done collaboratively with the mentor principal in order to ensure (a) the research can be conducted and (b) the findings are relevant and appropriate for the school's overall improvement plan. Depending upon the breadth of the project, additional support and involvement by other school stakeholders may be needed, which is encouraged as an opportunity for PEP participants to engage in comprehensive action research.

PEP researchers will integrate into their proposal how they intend to share project findings and recommended action plans with the school community. Appropriate approval from the district is required. Additionally, PEP participants may need to submit a copy of their study proposal to the UK Institutional Review Board for approval in order to disseminate findings to audiences outside Pike County School District.

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<sup>1</sup> Kentucky Department of Education. (2003, June). *School level performance descriptors and glossary for Kentucky's Standards and Indicators for School Improvement*. Frankfort, KY: Author. Copies available by calling (502) 564-3421.

## **Action Research Project: Five-Step Process and Due Dates**

The action research project for Spring 2004 has been divided into a six-step process to assist students in preparing and conducting the disciplined inquiry. Each assignment within the five-step process builds upon the previous one (except for the initial scan of the context of the study setting). The project is a work-in-progress until the Final Report (all three parts) is submitted to the instructors near the end of the semester. Thus, PEP researchers need to complete each step by the due date and integrate recommendations for modification suggested by the instructors and mentor principals during the process.

### **Step 1: Environmental Scan (E-Scan)**

Action research projects are typically conducted in authentic work settings and focused on learning environments. To frame the context of the setting for the inquiry, researchers start by conducting an environmental scan of the various elements of the school setting. For this action research study, the environmental scan will be a preliminary exploration of the host school's culture that is readily evident through observation and minimal searching for evidence from artifacts. The mentor principal is the only individual who would be interviewed, specifically to understand his or her educational philosophy or platform.

The five required elements in the environmental scan of the selected school are:

- Description of school (i.e., its location, history, physical description, size based on enrollment and size of faculty),
- Published school mission and vision statements (readily evident from school marquees, hallway posters, banners on school newspaper or Web site),
- Principal's educational philosophy or platform,
- Action plans for school improvement, and
- Articulated goals for student achievement in **mathematics**.

Additional elements of interest in the environmental scan of the host school include:

- Public relations instruments (e.g., school newsletter, parent handbook, welcome brochure, school's Web site home page),
- Achievement recognition (school, faculty and staff, students),
- School-wide instructional events (e.g., science fair, math competition, arts events, annual productions),
- School governance policies (e.g., SBDM Council rules and procedures, faculty handbook, student handbook, discipline code),
- Curriculum and instruction (e.g., descriptions of "best practices" currently in use, types of instructional strategies to meet diverse learning needs of students currently in use, transitioning activities between grade levels),
- Communication technology (e.g., types, users, level of use),
- Parental and community involvement, and
- Community-support resources available in the area.

Write this analysis in narrative form (3-5 pages) according the *APA Manual* writing guidelines to describe the setting where the action research is being conducted. Include page numbers in the upper right corner and a **running head to identify the paper** (such as the running head in this document). For example, use “Appleton ES Action Research Project” as the first line and “E-Scan 2/12/04” as the second line in the running head. As each paper is developed, only the second line would change.

- The **Environment Scan** is due **Thursday, February 12** (e-copy to Tricia Browne-Ferrigno at [tricia.ferrigno@uky.edu](mailto:tricia.ferrigno@uky.edu) by 2/13/04).

## **Step 2: Inquiry Statement (I-Statement)**

After conducting an environmental scan of the school setting, PEP inquiry team members will draft an Inquiry Statement (3-5 pages) that describes the context where the research will be conducted and provides the preliminary design plans for conducting the study. The Inquiry Statement needs to include the following components:

- **Title page** including the tentative title of your action research project, name(s) of proposed researchers, positions at the selected school, and date;
- **Introduction** (based upon findings your environmental scan of the school) that sets up a compelling issue related to school improvement and provides background on your proposed study;
- **List of research questions** related to student performance in mathematics and at least five Leverage Points in Standard 4 of SISI; each research question needs to be accompanied by a paragraph explaining what you are referring to and why it is important to the study, and
- **List of possible participant groups** you may engage in the research.

**IMPORTANT:** If the inquiry team intends to interview individuals (i.e., teachers, staff members, parents, students), then the inquiry team must submit the appropriate application to conduct human subjects research that needs to be signed by members of the PEP research group, the mentor principal, PEP instructor, and appropriate district official. A template for the application for study approval is attached to the end of this document.

A study about school culture, however, probably needs to include “voice” provided by members of the school community through interviews or questionnaires, particularly from the leadership team, faculty and staff, and parents. **A word of caution:** Asking students (i.e., minors under the age of 18) to provide information **requires** appropriate consent from their parents and approval from the district and UK.

Write this assignment in narrative form using headings to separate the paper into easily identified sections. Please note that the word “Introduction” does appear as a heading at the opening of the paper. Use the manuscript format described in the *APA Manual* to format this assignment.

- The **Inquiry Statement** is due **Thursday, February 26** (e-copy to Tricia Browne-Ferrigno at [tricia.ferrigno@uky.edu](mailto:tricia.ferrigno@uky.edu) on 2/27/04).

### **Step 3: Initial Proposal**

The third step in the action research process builds upon the previous two assignments and requires careful consideration about the breadth and depth of the proposed study. A proposal is the design plan that the inquiry team intends to use in conducting the action research study. The generic components of a study proposal include:

- Title
- Problem Statement (based upon environmental scan)
- Literature Review
- Research Question(s)
- Method and Activities, typically including
  - Data-collection instruments or methods,
  - Data analysis processes,
  - Schedule of activities,
  - Collaborators,
  - Approval to conduct research (i.e., District Human Subjects Review Form)
- Environmental Impact Statement, assessing or anticipating
  - Impact of research on participants and community
  - Possible negative impact of research findings
- Anticipated Future Action Plan

Cohort readings about school culture and the SISI document about school program improvement are intended to assist inquiry teams in developing a portion of the required literature review for the action research study. Action researchers will need to use additional resources (e.g., Web searches, professional books and journals) to develop a complete literature review—focusing on the particular elements about mathematics education—that are the target for this exploratory project.

**IMPORTANT:** Due to constraints of time, PEP researchers may be restricted in the breadth of the study and type of data collected. For example, each hour of interviewing data usually requires approximately three hours to transform into word-processed data for analysis. Be sure your proposal for data collection will be realistic for the time available to complete the data analysis.

Members of the host-school communities may be recruited to assist in conducting this research. The study proposal needs to reflect realistic work and restrictions (i.e., limitations). In other words, study planners need to design the action research in a way that allows them to complete a meaningful project within the timelines of the semester.

Use the Inquiry Statement as the framework for drafting the Initial Proposal. Write this paper in narrative form using headings to separate the paper into easily identified

sections. Be sure to use appropriate in-text citations and after-text references according to guidelines in the *APA Manual* to present the literature that supports this study.

- The **Initial Proposal** is due **Thursday, March 11** (e-copy to Tricia Browne-Ferrigno at [tricia.ferrigno@uky.edu](mailto:tricia.ferrigno@uky.edu) on 3/12/04).

#### **Step 4: Preliminary Report, Information Handout, & PowerPoint (Prelim Report)**

The Preliminary Report is structured upon a well-developed proposal and is a draft of the final study report. The additional components of the report not found in the proposal include (a) reporting of findings, (b) recommendations for action linked to findings and appropriate literature, and (c) researcher reflections. The Preliminary Report is basically a draft of the study report and needs to be written in the manuscript form specified in the *APA Manual*. A study report usually includes the following elements:

- Title (including cover page with researchers' names and date)
- Problem Statement (based upon environmental scan)
- Literature Review
- Research Question(s)
- Method and Activities
  - Data-collection instruments or methods,
  - Data analysis processes,
  - Schedule of activities,
  - Collaborators,
  - Limitations
- Findings
- Recommended Action
  - Based upon findings, and
  - Linked to appropriate literature
- Researcher Reflections

**IMPORTANT:** The report of findings should be written in a style that engages the reader and provides participant "voice" in a way that makes the culture of the school and the target of interest easily understood. Participants (i.e., individuals who respond to surveys or questionnaires or participate in interviews) should never be identified by name in the report. Rather, they may be identified by their sex, work responsibilities or experience, such as "a veteran female mathematics teacher" or "a novice male primary-grade teacher." The only exception may be the principal, who can be identified **only if** prior permission is granted.

Additional requirements for the study report are (a) a one-page, tri-fold summary of the action research project and findings and (b) a PowerPoint presentation. The handout will be shared with cohort peers and distributed to the school community during presentation of findings. Inquiry teams will also develop a PowerPoint presentation to use during public reporting of findings. Exemplars of the final action research report, information handout, and PowerPoint presentation can be provided, if needed.

- The **Preliminary Report, Information Handout, and PowerPoint** are due **Thursday, April 22** (e-copy to Tricia Browne-Ferrigno at [tricia.ferrigno@uky.edu](mailto:tricia.ferrigno@uky.edu) on 4/23/04).

#### **Step 5: Final Report, Information Handout, & PowerPoint (Final Report)**

The last step in completing the PEP action research project development is revision and editing of the final versions of the study report, information handout, and PowerPoint presentation that incorporate modifications recommended by the instructors, mentor principals, and cohort peers.

- The **Final Report, Information Handout, and PowerPoint** is due on **Thursday, May 6** (e-copy to Tricia Browne-Ferrigno at [tricia.ferrigno@uky.edu](mailto:tricia.ferrigno@uky.edu) on 5/7/04).

#### **Step 6: Presentation to Pike County School District**

PEP Inquiry Teams will make formal presentations to the entire PCSD administrative community during a luncheon on **Thursday, May 20, 2004**.

**Johnson County School District: Approval to Conduct Research**  
***Principals Excellence Program (PEP)***

Johnson County school personnel participating in the PEP are required to complete two school-based action research projects as requirements in their clinical practice experiences. PEP cohort members are working in teams to conduct the research with approval from school and district administrators. The purpose of this form is to insure that the research being conducted by PEP participants conforms to the Federal regulations and guidelines as well as Johnson County School District's regulations and guidelines. Submit the following documents with this completed and signed form:

- \_\_\_ (a) Interview and/or survey questions for study participants,
- \_\_\_ (b) Copy of Participant Consent Form (for individuals over age 18),
- \_\_\_ (c) Copies of Parent and Student Consent Form (for individuals under age 18).

**Date of submittal:**

**Course Title:** EDA 770 Clinical Practice in Elementary Schools

**University Instructor:** Dr. Tricia Browne-Ferrigno, tricia.ferrigno@uky.edu, 859-257-5504

**PEP Inquiry Group Members** (*full names, e-mail addresses, phone numbers*):

**Elementary School Site:** \_\_\_ Porter ES

**Mentor Principal** (*name, e-mail address, phone number*):

**Title of Research:**

**Study Abstract** (*In 100-120 words provide an abstract of proposed research that includes the question driving the study, purpose of the research, description of the study participants and setting, description of data sources, activities timeline*)

**Please answer the following questions.**

1. Does the research involve normal educational practices such as regular or special educational strategies or the effectiveness of instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods?  
\_\_\_Yes    \_\_\_No

Consent forms for any study participants must include the following statements:

- (a) Why the research is being conducted,
- (b) That research participation is voluntary,
- (c) That a participant may withdraw at any time without penalty,
- (d) Identification of potential risks or discomfort the participant might experience as well as possible benefits,
- (e) The amount of time the participant will be involved in the research (e.g., minutes, hours, days, weeks),
- (f) What the participant's role will be in the research project (e.g., interviewed, asked to complete survey, observed),
- (g) That the adult participant or parent/guardian of participating P-12 student may contact the Johnson County School District office, school principal, or course instructor about the participant's rights,
- (h) That the identity of the participant will be kept confidential, and
- (i) That the data collected during the study will be stored in a secure location and destroyed three years after close of study.

2. Does the research design include a consent form for participants over age 18?  
 Yes     No

3. Does the research design include a consent form for parental approval of a child's participation?  
 Yes     No

4. Does the research design include an assent form for the child to sign that includes the same information as the parental consent form but in child appropriate language?  
 Yes     No

5. Do the researchers promise to keep data collected from the research for at least three years after the study is completed in a safe place before destroying it (i.e., shred, burn)?  
 Yes     No

**Signatures of Researchers:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Mentor Principal:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of UK Instructor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Johnson County School Board Approval to Conduct Research**

**Signature of District Administrator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of District Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pike County School District: Approval to Conduct Research**  
***Principals Excellence Program (PEP)***

Pike County school personnel participating in the PEP are required to complete two school-based action research projects as requirements in their clinical practice experiences. PEP cohort members are working in teams to conduct the research with approval from school and district administrators. The purpose of this form is to insure that the research being conducted by PEP participants conforms to the Federal regulations and guidelines as well as Pike County School District's regulations and guidelines. Submit the following documents with this completed and signed form:

- (a) Interview and/or survey questions for study participants,
- (b) Copy of Participant Consent Form (for individuals over age 18),
- (c) Copies of Parent and Student Consent Form (for individuals under age 18).

**Date of submittal:**

**Course Title:** EDA 770 Clinical Practice in Elementary Schools

**University Instructor:** Dr. Tricia Browne-Ferrigno, tricia.ferrigno@uky.edu, 859-257-5504

**PEP Inquiry Group Members** (*full names, e-mail addresses, phone numbers*):

**Elementary School Site:**  G. F. Johnson ES  Phelps ES  Southside ES

**Mentor Principal** (*name, e-mail address, phone number*):

**Title of Research:**

**Study Abstract** (*In 100-120 words provide an abstract of proposed research that includes the question driving the study, purpose of the research, description of the study participants and setting, description of data sources, activities timeline*)

**Please answer the following questions.**

6. Does the research involve normal educational practices such as regular or special educational strategies or the effectiveness of instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods?  
 Yes  No

Consent forms for any study participants must include the following statements:

- (j) Why the research is being conducted,
- (k) That research participation is voluntary,
- (l) That a participant may withdraw at any time without penalty,
- (m) Identification of potential risks or discomfort the participant might experience as well as possible benefits,
- (n) The amount of time the participant will be involved in the research (e.g., minutes, hours, days, weeks),
- (o) What the participant's role will be in the research project (e.g., interviewed, asked to complete survey, observed),
- (p) That the adult participant or parent/guardian of participating P-12 student may contact the Pike County School District office, school principal, or course instructor about the participant's rights,
- (q) That the identity of the participant will be kept confidential, and
- (r) That the data collected during the study will be stored in a secure location and destroyed three years after close of study.

7. Does the research design include a consent form for participants over age 18?  
 Yes     No

8. Does the research design include a consent form for parental approval of a child's participation?  
 Yes     No

9. Does the research design include an assent form for the child to sign that includes the same information as the parental consent form but in child appropriate language?  
 Yes     No

10. Do the researchers promise to keep data collected from the research for at least three years after the study is completed in a safe place before destroying it (i.e., shred, burn)?  
 Yes     No

**Signatures of Researchers:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Mentor Principal:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of UK Instructor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pike County School Board Approval to Conduct Research**

**Signature of District Administrator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of District Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_