



University of Memphis College of Education

College of Education  
The University of Memphis  
*Instruction and Curriculum Leadership*  
ICL 7992.001  
Master's Project  
Fall, 2009  
Dr. John M. Johnston

### College of Education Norms

- I take 100% responsibility.
- I seek equity of voice.
- I am willing to talk about sensitive issues.
- I listen for understanding.
- I appreciate the strengths and contributions of others.
- I bring positive energy and encouragement to the team.
- I commit to the mission of the college.

### Masters' Project ICL 7992.001 - Fall 2009

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Section 001: Tu. 5:00 – 8:00  
Ball Hall Rm. 207  
Phone: 678-3443

**Our Class Website:** <https://umdrive.memphis.edu/jmjhstn/public/ICL7992/>  
General ICL 7992 website: <https://umdrive.memphis.edu/g-actres/www/>

### Description

Designed as a culminating experience for the M.S. and M.A.T. programs. Direct participation is required for the successful completion of a field-study, on-site project, or other classroom based experience. This course must be taken during the last semester of your Master's program. [Prerequisites: EDPR 7521 or EDPR 7523.]

### Course Objectives

1. Collect, analyze, and report data collected from classroom practice
2. Apply approaches to inquiry which emphasize search for insight
3. To develop the disposition to study one's own practice for the purpose of improving teaching
4. To understand critical reflection as a means for professional development, social change, and school improvement

### Field Experiences

Since the ability to engage in critical reflection and self-study for professional development must be demonstrated in classroom contexts, ICL 7992 requires access to field settings--typically classrooms. Substantial time outside of class will be spent in your classroom or workplace in order to complete the special project requirement. If you are not employed as a full-time classroom teacher or as a full-time substitute teacher, then it is your responsibility to obtain a field setting approved by your instructor in which to conduct your project.

### Required Readings

McNiff, J. (2002). *Action research for professional development: Concise advice for new action researcher.*  
You may download this paper from: <https://umdrive.memphis.edu/jmjhstn/public/ICL7992/>

Holly, M. L., Arhar, J., & Kasten, W. C. (2009). *Action research for teachers: Traveling the yellow brick road* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

*Substantial additional readings of books and periodicals from the McWherter Library are required in order to complete the Master's project requirements.* These readings will represent the grade level and content for each Master's candidate.

### **Class Assumptions**

1. This class is a forum for collaborative inquiry grounded in action. Building community and trust are paramount.
2. Emphasis is placed on critical thinking and creativity: taking risks, asking questions, and listening actively in a manner that is supportive of others in the class.
3. Learning reflects an integration of a professional knowledge base with your personal experience of professional practice.

### **Class Expectations**

1. Complete assigned readings and participate in class discussion of these readings
2. Provide and receive peer critique of all written drafts of your project paper
3. Write frequent, regular entries in your research journal
4. Use the McWherter Library and read continuously from professional literature related to your project
5. Complete multiple drafts as part of on-going revision of a written report of your project
6. Use email and email attachments to communicate and to send and receive drafts and feedback

### **Course Requirements**

**Class Attendance and Professional Conduct:** Class interactions are critical to our professional growth and development. Your absence affects negatively the professional colleagues in our group. Because class attendance and cooperative engagement in class cannot be duplicated in any other way, three or more absences—for any reason—will result in an Unsatisfactory grade for this course.

The *Tennessee Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth* states that professional conduct takes such forms as: the ability to collaborate with colleagues and appropriate others, demonstration of productive leadership or team membership skills that facilitate the development of mutually beneficial goals, maintains accurate and up-to-date records, completes assigned tasks on schedule, maintains punctuality and attendance, follows applicable policies and procedures, maintains confidentiality and fulfills responsibilities, provides evidence of performance levels, and articulates strengths and priorities for growth. The *Tennessee Framework* also establishes standards for professional written and spoken communication. Together these standards will be the basis for assessing evidence of professionalism during this class. Professional conduct accounts for 25% of your grade and is based on a 1 through 3 scale, where 1 = *Unacceptable*, 2 = *Acceptable*, and 3 = *Optimal*.

**Data Collection in the Classroom:** Students spend a minimum of six weeks in a classroom engaged in their action research project. Since the ability to engage in critical reflection and self-study for professional development must be demonstrated in classroom contexts, ICL 7992 requires access to field settings, which are typically classrooms. You must have evidence that documents your six weeks in a classroom setting. Successful completion of this class requires at least six weeks of data collection.

**Researcher's Journal:** Students are required to keep a field journal to record their action research experience. The purpose of your journal is to record your experiences, thinking, and progress as you work through your special project. Entries should be made at a minimum of once per week. Formats are optional and are discussed in class. Your journal should also have evidence to support claims you make in your final report. Journals must be brought to class each week and will be checked periodically.

**Oral Class Presentation:** A dress-rehearsal poster presentation for your peers in class is required, in addition to the Oral Comprehensive Examination. The same criteria used to evaluate the oral comprehensive exam will be used to evaluate your oral presentation in class. This accounts for 25% of your grade and is based on a 1 through 3 scale, where 1 = *Unacceptable*, 2 = *Acceptable*, and 3 = *Optimal*.

**Written Report:** You are required to prepare multiple drafts and a final written report of your action research project. APA format is required. Additional criteria and formats will be discussed in class. This is the report that documents and describes your inquiry project. Grading will be based on a standard rubric used by all sections of ICL 7992. The final written report, including submission of all required drafts, account for 50% of your grade and is based on a 1 through 3 scale, where 1 = *Unacceptable*, 2 = *Acceptable*, and 3 = *Optimal*.

### Grading

S = Satisfactory

U = Unsatisfactory

A satisfactory grade is based on achieving *Acceptable* or *Optimal* evaluations in all areas. All students are expected to complete the above requirements by the final day of class. Grades of either *Incomplete* or *In Progress* are monitored by the graduate school and are not automatic alternatives.

### Tentative Schedule, Readings and Due Dates

9/01 - Class Introductions, expectations, and assignments.

**Read:** McNiff, J. (2002). *Action research for professional development: Concise advice for new action researcher*.

<https://umdrive.memphis.edu/jmjhnstn/public/ICL7992/>

--Overview of how to write the research proposal and the required approval process.

9/07– **Due:** First draft of action research proposal. **NOTE: 9/07 is Monday, the day before our regular 9/8 class date. You must email your proposal to me at [jmjhnstn@memphis.edu](mailto:jmjhnstn@memphis.edu) no later than 4:30 pm Monday 9/07/09.** This way I can provide individualized feedback on your proposal in class Tuesday 9/8. Because the proposal will be only one page, please COPY your proposal document and PASTE it into the body of an email.

9/08 – Revising your action research project proposal; and, planning for what you need to learn about to complete your master’s project.

**Read:** Holly, et. al., Section I and Section II (Pgs. 1 – 56).

9/10 – **Deadline:** Thursday, September 10th is the last day the Graduate School will accept the *Application for Master’s Candidacy Form* ([www.people.memphis.edu/~gradsch/mdc.html](http://www.people.memphis.edu/~gradsch/mdc.html)). The Candidacy form may be filled out online, but must be PRINTED, and then signed by your advisor and submitted to the ICL office for final approval. It is your responsibility to have this form filled in and signed by the posted due dates—so this means don’t wait until a couple of days before and expect your advisor to be available to sign this at a moment’s notice.

·In addition, it is your responsibility to complete and submit the *Intent to Graduate Form* ([https://www.memphis.edu/intent\\_to\\_graduate/](https://www.memphis.edu/intent_to_graduate/)). The Intent form may be filled out and SUBMITTED online.]

9/15 - Understanding and accessing professional knowledge for problem-solving action.

#### **Due:**

·2 copies of the Final Draft of your action research proposal,

·2 completed copies of the appropriate proposal coversheet. See the ICL 7992 website for the coversheet form you need: <https://umdrive.memphis.edu/g-actres/www/> Only one copy needs original signatures, the other can be a photocopy. **NOTE:** The coversheets must be machine printed, they may **not** be handwritten.

·*If you are a Memphis City School teacher*, then you must also include 2 completed copies of the [Johnstons sample parent notification letter.doc](#) found on our class UMDrive site:

<https://umdrive.memphis.edu/jmjhnstn/public/ICL7992/>

·*If you are a Shelby County School teacher*, then you must send me your proposal and the coversheet as attachments to an email (not in the email, but as attachments).

**Read:** Holly, et. al., Section III (Pgs. 57 – 78).

9/22 - Locating and using new professional knowledge to make a plan for action.

**Due:** The first draft of the: **(1) Research Question, (2) Context and Rationale section A-Who I am as a professional, (3) Context and Rationale section B-Context and setting of my work, (4) Context and Rationale section C-How my research question relates to my work context; and (5) a reference list including at least 10 references not counting resources found only on the Internet.**

**Read:** Holly, et. al., Section IV (Pgs. 79-116).

**9/29** – Discussion of *Context and Rationale* draft progress to date

**Due:** Draft of *Context and Rationale Section D–Professional Knowledge, and References*

Try to begin implementing your action project and collecting evidence—only if permission has been received!

**Read:** Holly, et. al., Section V – Chapters 10 and 11 (Pgs. 117 – 166).

**10/06 - Due:** Draft of your *Action Plan, and Data Collection*

Try to begin implementing your action project and collecting evidence—only if permission has been received!

**Read:** Holly, et. al., Section V – Chapter 12 (Pgs. 167 – 184).

**10/13** - Revise *Context and Rationale Section D–Professional Knowledge*, and refine your *Action Plan*. Collecting evidence about your actions and the impact of your actions on others.

**Read:** Holly, et. al., Section VI – Chapter 13 (Pgs. 185 – 216).

**10/20** – Fall Break, No class tonight!

**LAST POSSIBLE WEEK TO BEGIN IMPLEMENTING YOUR ACTION PLAN AND COLLECTING DATA—IF PERMISSION HAS BEEN RECEIVED.**

**10/27** - Discussion of evidence (data collection) to date

**Due:** Revised draft of the *Research Question, Context and Rationale, Action Plan, Data Collection, and References.*

**Read:** Holly, et. al., Section VI – Chapter 14 (Pgs. 217 – 228).

**11/03 - Due:** Expanded analyses, Findings, Patterns

Discussion of format for class poster presentation

**Read:** Holly, et. al., Section VII – Chapter 15 (Pgs. 229 – 241).

**11/10** - Writing and Sharing the Research Story

**Read:** Holly, et. al., Section VII – Chapters 16 and 17 (Pgs. 241 – 268).

**11/17** - Half of the In-Class Poster Presentations - Abstracts due from presenters

**11/24** - Half of the In-Class Poster Presentations - Abstracts due from presenters

**◆12/01 - Oral Comprehensive Exams – Lobby of the Rose Theater. Plan to be set up no later than 4:00.**

**Due:** First draft of the *complete* written report of your Master's project including title page, appendices, etc. [Online sections will complete the Oral Comprehensive Exam on 12/02 via phone interview and PowerPoint presentations.]

**12/08** – Celebration of your accomplishments, final revisions, and reflections and feedback.

**12/15 – Final Exam: DUE:** Two (2) bound copies of the final, corrected copy of your report are due.