Pitt Education

Doctor of Education (EdD) Program
Practitioner Inquiry 2: EDUC 3006 Section 1010
Fall 2024

This syllabus is a living document.
We reserve the right to change the syllabus to meet class needs

Class Times	
Please reserve 8am- 12pm for face-to-face classes in **Posvar 1502:** Saturday, Sept 7 Saturday, Oct 5 Saturday, Nov 2 Saturday, Dec 7	**Online activities will be conducted** via canvas.pitt.edu and Zoom when necessary. For assistance with instructional technology, contact the University helpline available 24/7, 412-624-HELP.

Instructional Team	
Jill A. Perry, PhD Professor of the Practice Educational Foundations, Organizations, & Policy Executive Director, CPED jperry@pitt.edu 5310 Posvar Hall **Office Hours:** https://calendly.com/jillalexaperry/30min **Cell:** 301-204-2644 (text works well)	**Rosa Acevedo, PhD** **Assistant Professor of Practice** Educational Foundations, Organizations, & Policy Program Coordinator, Higher Education EdD racevedo@pitt.edu 5509 Posvar Hall **Office Hours:** Wednesdays by appointment Email is the best form of communication for me

Grading: Letter

The syllabus is a required text. Please read it carefully!

Mission/Vision of the School of Education

We ignite learning. We strive for well-being for all. We teach. We commit to student, family, and community success. We commit to educational equity. We advocate. We work for justice. We cultivate relationships. We forge engaged partnerships. We collaborate. We learn with and from communities. We innovate and agitate. We pursue and produce knowledge. We research. We disrupt and transform inequitable educational structures. We approach learning as intertwined with health, wellness, and human development. We address how national, global, social, and technological change impacts

learning. We shape practice and policy. We teach with and for dignity. We think. We dream. We lead with integrity. We are the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh.

Doctor of Education (EdD)

The University of Pittsburgh is a center for excellence in professional programs, and the School of Education school-wide Doctor of Education (EdD) program is grounded in this **commitment to excellence**. The program prepares working professionals to become **leader scholar practitioners** to develop *specialized knowledge in their area of concentration* and *apply their intellectual and practical skills to address and mitigate enduring problems affecting children, families, and communities*.

Program Learning Goals

As a result of attending the EdD program at Pitt, students and graduates become leader scholar practitioners who:
1. Identify problems of practice, including questions of equity, ethics, and justice.
2. Use data to inform decisions in daily operations and improvement projects.
3. Communicate and collaborate to work with diverse communities and build partnerships.
4. Lead change that improves practice.
5. Are committed to use improvement science to address problems of practice.

Course

I. **Rationale:**
Practitioner Inquiry II is the second course in the four-course series designed to teach students to understand and utilize improvement science in the process of improving their actionable problem of practice.

II. **Description:**
Students will engage with the research methods and exercises utilized in improvement science. Students will practice/apply their understanding of improvement science in developing their Applied Inquiry Plan (AIP) specific to their individual context and actionable problem of practice.

III. Course Aims and Outcomes:
Aims
This course will move you through the improvement process focusing on Understanding the Problem and Seeing the System. In particular, we will define "users" in our context and our positionality in relation to these persons of interest. We will understand the uniqueness of your organization and how that contributes to understanding your actionable problem of practice. We will move deeper into defining your problem of practice based on the work you have completed in year one. We will also introduce you to research methods that will be used to collect and analyze data.

Specific Learning Outcomes:
By the end of this course, students will:
- Understand the perspectives of users (those affected by the problem)
  - Conduct empathy interviews to better understand user-centered problem-definition
  - Understand how to define your system

- Conduct an equity audit
- Define your system through systems analysis and document analysis
- Understand the research process
- Learn basic methods of qualitative research design, data collection, and analysis
- Conduct an in-depth, semi-structured interview
- Conduct document analysis
- Analyze data from interviews and document analysis to generate an evidence-based root cause analysis of a problem in their site of practice.
- Fishbone your problem of practice using user knowledge, literature, systems understanding.

IV. Doctoral Program Requirements:
Students will create and revise the first part of their Applied Inquiry Plan (AIP).

V. Format and Procedures:
This is a hybrid course with four face to face meetings and weekly assignments and readings in between classes. We expect that you will come to class prepared and ready to engage the materials and your colleagues. In between face to face meetings, we expect that you will complete and upload assignments in accordance with the dates outlined in this syllabus.

At the beginning of the term you will be assigned to a peer-debriefing group of 4-5 students. Several times throughout the term, you will work together. Peer debriefing is a popular and effective method of building trustworthiness in qualitative research; it is also an effective teaching and learning tool for understanding the various processes associated with research methods and improvement science.

See https://www.coronavirus.pitt.edu/healthy-community/pitts-health-rules for the University's updated health rules.

VI. Course Requirements:

1. Course readings and where they are available:
 (a) Required texts:

Bryk, A., Gomez, L.M., Grunow, A., & LeMahieu, P.G. (2015). *Learning to improve: How America's schools can get better at getting better.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press. Access e-book at:
https://pitt.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01PITT_INST/t5l303/alma9992171133406236

Hinnant-Crawford, B. N. (2020). *Improvement science in education: A primer*. Gorham, ME: Myers Education Press. Access e-book at:
https://pitt.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01PITT_INST/g3767l/alma9998874550006236

Mertens, D. (2015). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology,* 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. This text is not available as an e-book. *Used 3rd and 4th editions are available online at a substantial discount (as low as $11 including shipping). Search by ISBN number for either the 3rd edition (978-1412971904) or 4th edition (978-1452240275). The newer 5th edition is available at a premium price of $85, $42 to rent the e-book. There is no need to purchase the new text -- these three editions have identical chapter organization and are essentially the same. The earlier 1st and 2nd editions of this text are not quite the same. The first chapter (from the 3rd edition) is posted on Canvas. Amazon has many used copies. Ebay has many copies of the 3rd edition and 4th edition.*

Perry, J.A., Zambo, D., & Crow, R. (2020). *The improvement science dissertation in practice: A guide for faculty, committee members, and their students*. Access e-book at:
https://pitt.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01PITT_INST/g3767l/alma9998620040906236

Booth, W.C., Colomb, G.G., & Williams, J.M. (2008). *The craft of research,* 3rd ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Access e-book at:
https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/pitt-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4785166&pq-origsite=primo

NOTE: you can access this book by Multi user ebook via pittcat.pitt.edu

(b) Other readings:

Additional readings are available within the Course Canvas site.

2. **Assessments of Learning**

As part of the learning process, students are expected to complete assignments/exercises throughout the semester that will inform their thinking, learning, and their AIP. Students will earn grades for completion and will receive instructor and/or peer feedback.

A. **Applied Inquiry Plan (AIP) Part A (50% total)**
Applied Inquiry Plan (AIP) Part A is made up of several components. Each component will receive some form of feedback and students will be expected to submit the revised components as a cohesive whole for the final AIP Part A due at the end of the semester. Students will further develop their AIPs in their next two Practitioner Inquiry courses. See the calendar for specific due dates.

> *A1 Problem Statement & Ishikawa Fishbone Diagram Draft #1 (10%):* Using evidence generated from literature, empathy interviews, and systems understanding, students will complete an analysis for their problem of practice using a Ishikawa Fishbone Diagram (aka root causes analysis). Students will turn in their description and Ishikawa Fishbone Diagram, receive feedback from an instructor, and then submit a final Ishikawa Fishbone Diagram as part of the final AIP: Part A submission.

> *A2. User Description & Ishikawa Fishbone Diagram Draft #2 (10%):* Students will use information gathered through their own experience, empathy interviews, equity audits, understanding of their system, and other forms of understanding to identify and describe "users" -- those individuals who are most affected by their problem of practice. Students will turn in their description, receive feedback from an instructor, and then submit a 3-5 pages final description as part of the Final AIP Part A submission.

> *A3. Organizational Systems Description & Ishikawa Fishbone Diagram Draft #3 (10%):* Students will use information gathered through document analysis, systems/process analysis exercises and other forms of understanding to write a "thick" description of the organizational system. Students will turn in their description, receive feedback from peers in class, and then submit a final description as part of the Final AIP Part A submission.

> *A4. Final AIP Part A Submission & final Ishikawa Fishbone Diagram (20%)*: Students will need to revise all components based on feedback from peer-debriefing groups and instructors, all methods of data collection, and new learning and submit as a cohesive whole document.

B.   **Empathy Interviews (10%)**

Students will conduct six to eight short-form empathy interviews in their study site. Each interview should be only 10-15 minutes. Students will identify interested persons within the organization and conduct empathy interviews to gain quick, varied, informative, and intentionally limited views of the problem of practice. This exercise will help students to learn the empathy interview process for their EdD dissertations-in-practice, and students should anticipate that they may need to conduct multiple additional empathy interviews to provide a more holistic understanding of the problem and/or potential solutions in their system. See Canvas for more specific instructions on how to conduct empathy interviews, record notes, and write their user description (see above) based upon these interviews. Students will receive feedback from their peer-debriefing groups on their interview protocols and interview notes. Instructors will respond to questions as you progress and provide specific feedback on your user description. To get credit for this assignment, indicate with a text entry on Canvas when you have completed the interviews and completed your peer-debriefing exercise. See the calendar for due dates.

C.   **Equity Snapshot (10%)**

Utilizing a series of questions that will be provided, students will investigate their organization from an equity viewpoint. The aim of this assignment is to learn where the gaps and needs are based on representative information. While this will not be a full equity audit, this snapshot will provide an understanding of your organization from an equity lens and how any gaps or inconsistencies might be contributing to your problem of practice. Students will work alone and in peer debriefing groups on this assignment.

D.   **Semi-Structured Interview (25% total)**

Students will design, conduct, transcribe, and analyze at least one semi-structured interview of 50-60 minutes in length (the interview should be at least 50 minutes and should ideally occur in one sitting). Students are encouraged to identify a respondent whose perspective will be helpful toward developing their applied inquiry plans. The respondent could be someone within their organization, a constituent, a community member, and/or a professional in a similar organization. The interview is an opportunity to practice qualitative methodology and to gain an in-depth perspective about the problem of practice. In order to maximize the learning opportunity, do not interview anyone under the age of 18, a family member, or a very close friend. See the calendar for specific due dates for the following components.

> ***D1. Interview Protocol (5%):*** Students develop an interview protocol with the guidance of their instructors and small group. Developing the protocol is an important step in learning and executing qualitative methods. Students will have the opportunity to pilot their interview protocols in their peer-debriefing groups.

> ***D2. Transcription (10%):*** Students will audio-record their interviews and then transcribe at least 50 minutes of the semi-structured interview with the aid of voice-recognition software. In order to learn and reflect upon the process of transcribing, it is important that you do not enlist someone else to transcribe the interview. Be sure to do the following:
> (1) Replay the recording to edit the Zoom transcription to get it as close to word-for-word as possible.
> (2) Work toward a transcription that captures the interview word-for-word, including your questions and anything else you say. Leave in uhs, ahs, and grammar and syntax mistakes.

(3) To practice anonymity and greater confidentiality, assign pseudonyms to your interviewee and anyone mentioned during the interview.

(4) At the beginning of the transcript, add about a 100-word description of the interviewee, the setting of the interview, and all non-verbal communication that occurs during the interview. Students will receive structured feedback on their transcripts from their peer-debriefing groups. Instructors will check on its completion and respond to questions as you progress.

D3. Preliminary Analysis (Analytic Worksheet) (10%): Students will conduct a preliminary analysis of the interview transcript through a process of thematic analysis by way of a structured worksheet posted on Canvas and explained there in greater detail. Peers and instructors will provide specific feedback on your analytic worksheet. Students will incorporate the themes generated through this process into their AIP Part A.

(**Note:** While one interview is required for this course, students should anticipate the need to conduct multiple semi-structured interviews to provide a more holistic understanding of the problem and/or potential solutions.)

** Please see Class Schedule spreadsheet for outline of topics, readings, assignments and due dates.**

E.   Participation and Attendance (5%)
Online and in-person activities are planned each week that require students' preparation and participation. As part of a learning community, it is expected that students will come prepared to engage in constructive, respectful, and generous discussions in each class.

VIII. Feedback and Grading Procedures:

Feedback:
Feedback is essential for high quality learning and teaching. We have divided the class into two grading groups. You will have one grading instructor for the duration of the course. We are committed to giving you individual, detailed, and timely feedback so that you can improve your learning on future assignments. Additionally, students will receive feedback from their peers. Please note assignment descriptions for the type of feedback that students can anticipate. Students can expect to receive instructor feedback online within two weeks of assignment submission.

Grading Scale:
Letter grades will be assigned for class participation and assignments. Written work is graded on demonstrated insight, completion of expectations of the assignment, coherence of organization, and grammar, spelling, and syntax. Letter grades with a + and – are also used. Your instructor converts the letter grades to a 4.0 scale using the grading scale built into Canvas. Letter grades have the following meaning:

An "A" signifies work that clearly exceeds expectations. Written work falling into this category will demonstrate clarity of purpose, organization, and communication. It will fully address all aspects of the assignment and be free of grammatical, formatting, and citation errors. It will also demonstrate original interpretation of course material. "A" level participation need not mean a large quantity of participation but should denote the student who prepares for class and consistently indicates having thought about the material.

A "B" signifies work that meets expectations, meaning that all aspects of the assignment are completed, but it lacks some aspects of "A" work, particularly inconsistent preparation for class or written work that demonstrates less significant insight into the material or repeated grammatical, formatting, and citation errors.

A "C" for written work denotes poorly constructed, supported, or inconsistent argument; work that does not address the assignment; or work with multiple grammatical, formatting, and/or citation errors. A "C" for participation signifies a student who regularly misses class or is otherwise unprepared on multiple occasions.

A "D" signifies minimal attention to assignments or class preparation.

An "F" is assigned for undone work or any work that breaches University standards of academic integrity.

G grades and I grades. Under certain conditions you may receive an "G" or an "I" grade for the course. The Graduate Catalog explains the difference between two kinds of Incompletes: the G grade and the I grade as:

> *G Grade: The G grade signifies unfinished course work due to extenuating personal circumstances. Students assigned G grades are required to complete course requirements no later than one year after the term in which the course was taken. After one year has passed, the G grade automatically becomes a non-changeable NG grade (no credit, no impact on grade point average), and the student will be required to re-register for the course.*

> *I Grade: The I grade signifies incomplete course work due to the nature of the course, clinical work, or incomplete research work in individual guidance courses or seminars.*

For this course, a "G" or "I" Grade will be granted only if the student has actively attended to the course requirements but needs extended time to complete the required work to meet minimum expectations. If an Incomplete grade becomes necessary, the instructors will require you to propose a plan of action outlining how you will complete the work within no more than one term from the end of the course (and preferably a shorter period of time).

Please visit the [Pitt Graduate Catalog](#) for the University's grading policy for graduate courses.

IX. Course Format: Hybrid

A hybrid course is not a reduced-time course. According to the University's definition of a credit hour, a one-credit course should have 14 contact hours, where a contact hour is 50 minutes of instruction. Thus a three-credit course should have 2100 minutes of instruction (50 minutes/hour x 14 hours x 3 credits = 42 hours).

X. Policies

Attendance

Regular and prompt attendance at the Saturday class sessions is expected and is essential to the educational experience in the EdD program. Each course meets only four times, so missing one session constitutes a significant portion of face-to face interaction with instructors and peers. Working professionals may find themselves in a circumstance that causes them to miss a class meeting. Exceptions may be made for a required **work-related commitment, illness, or valid emergency**. In

such cases, students need to contact the course instructor and be prepared to complete the make-up assignment that is in Canvas.

If you are going to be absent for class because of a required work-related commitment, illness or valid emergency, please follow these instructions:
1.   Email the course instructor(s) with a copy to EdD Director Rachel Roberston (RachelR@pitt.edu) and your advisor with the reason for missing the class.
2.   Complete the course or instructor specific make up requirements for missed classes prior to the next class meeting.
3.   Adhere to the acceptable reasons for missing class outlined in the policy above. Please note that they do not include vacation and/or personal events.

Statement on Classroom Recording
To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

Disability Services
If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both the instructor and Disability Resources and Services (DRS), 140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648--7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu. (412) 228--5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for these courses.

Inclement Weather Policy
Only the Chancellor may officially close the Pittsburgh campus of the University. The University will remain open in all but the most extreme circumstances. Cancellation of classes ***does not imply*** that the University is closed.

The University offers an Emergency Notification Service (ENS) which is used to communicate with subscribers through voice, text, and email messages, as deemed appropriate in the event of an emergency. For instructions on how to register, please refer to CSSD's website: http://technology.pitt.edu/services/emergency-notification-service. Any changes to normal University operations will be announced as early as possible through the ENS, the University's official website (www.pitt.edu), Twitter (@PittTweet), and local news media outlets.

Academic Integrity Guidelines
All students are expected to adhere to the standards of academic honesty. Any student engaged in cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the School of Education Academic Integrity Policy. Please read the policy carefully, including the rights and responsibilities of faculty and students.

Departmental Grievance Procedures

The purpose of grievance procedures is to ensure the rights and responsibilities of faculty and students in their relationships with each other. When a student in the EdD program believes that a faculty member has not met their obligations (as an instructor or in another capacity) as described in the Academic Integrity Guidelines, the student should follow the procedure described in the Guidelines (summarized here):

1. The student should talk to the faculty member to attempt to resolve the matter.
2. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the student should talk to the instructors' department chair, Dr. Lori Delale-O'Connor (if the issue concerns this class), or the department chair of the student's advisor.
3. If the matter remains unresolved, the student should talk to the chair of the EdD program, Dr. Rachel Robertson.
4. If needed, the student should next talk to the SOE Academic Integrity Officer, Assistant Dean Dr. Andrea Zito. If the matter still remains unresolved, the student should file a written statement of charges with the SOE Academic Integrity Officer.

Federal and State Background Checks and Clearances
All SOE students are now required to have federal and state child protection clearances on file if they are working with or observing children as part of any university class or requirement. See how students can get their clearances.

School of Education Policies
The Policies and Forms page on the SOE website explains several policies and procedures, including academic probation, course repeats, leaves of absence, monitored withdrawal, transfer credits, and statute of limitations.

Email Communications
Email directly from Canvas or your *Pitt* email. We do not answer emails that are not from a pitt.edu address. Tell us who you are and help us figure out what you need: In the subject line, it helps if you mention what you need, so we can look it up and respond faster. Pitt email addresses are often unidentifiable, so please sign all emails with your name.

To set up an individual meeting, feel free to arrange a phone, Zoom, or in-person appointment. See contact info on the first page for how to arrange a meeting with each instructor.

XI. Resources
Education Library Guide
See this Hillman Library customized Libguide, a gateway to resources for education students and faculty.

Religious Observances
See the Provost's annual memo about religious observances.

Emergencies
Do you have Pitt Police saved on your mobile phone? 911 works, or Pitt Police, 412-624-2121

Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI)
Resources, consultation, and bias incident reporting: https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/. The Title IX office

provides [resources](#) regarding sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination, and sexual violence.

Catalogs
The University Catalogs have comprehensive information about policies, programs, and courses. There are University-level policies and policies specific to the School of Education. Bookmark these links and review these documents periodically.

- [University of Pittsburgh Graduate Catalog](#)
- [School of Education Catalog](#)

Student Mental Health
The Counseling Center is located in the Wellness Center in Nordenberg Hall:
https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/cc/ Call **412-648-7930** any time.
For Sexual Assault Response: 412-648-7856
For additional community resources: https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/cars/community-resources/
[Faculty and Staff Guide for Helping Distressed Student](#)