

CrCrTh 693, Spring 2017, Action Research for Educational, Professional, and Personal Change Students' Synthetic Statements, from the Final Course Evaluation

The synthetic statement is the fourth question on formal course evaluations for the Critical and Creative Thinking Graduate Program. See the text of questions 1-3 by choosing any evaluation from this page: <http://cct.wikispaces.umb.edu/CourseEvaluations>.

Question 4: "Building on your comments from Questions 1-3 in the formal evaluation, compose a synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) evaluating this course. (Imagine readers who might not be willing to wade through all the answers to Qs 1-3, but are willing to read more than simply the numerical averages of standard course evaluations.) Please make comments that help the instructor develop the course in the future and that enable some third party appreciate the course's strengths and weaknesses. Among other things you might comment on the overall content and progression of classes, the session activities, and the use of mentors to support the learning in the course."

Below are the Synthetic Statements from the respondents who gave permission for these comments to be shared on the web.

- This course allowed me to produce an impactful produce while working through transformative personal reflection. The skills I developed were gained through practical experience, and can be applied to many areas of my personal and professional life. It was a great course for thinking about and applying reflective practice to large projects that require thoughtful break-down.
- This course is a great course to understand how action research works, develop research tools and apply the concepts to something in your own life. Action research is so versatile that you do not have to focus on your work life. You can use it to work on something in your personal life. The readings and assignments supply you with a rounded understanding of the process. The coursework is spaced out nicely so you never feel like you are doing too much at once. There is a very natural flow to the course.
- If you wish to approach personal and professional development in a systematic way that allows you to evaluate your progress, this course will teach it to you.
- Action research provides a framework to develop ideas/projects in a systematic fashion that leads you toward an informed conclusion about the idea/project. The course allow you to find your personal interest and this becomes a key point to complete engagement to the course and your learning.
- This course is really an Action Research in itself. We work out a plan (cycle), get it evaluated, and work in groups (stakeholders), revise our plan and work (epicycle) and get that evaluated .
- The significance of this course (to me) is, I couldn't go back to a life without the knowledge I now have regarding action research. There is life before Action Research, and life after Action Research. Not only did the course meet and surpass my expectations of gaining knowledge of the concepts contained within, I also walked away with a few game-changers in terms of personal development and life-long learning. I still consider myself a novice action researcher, but the course has provided me with the tools to continue my development in all aspects of the discipline beyond this class and the CCT graduate program.
- My goals were basic this semester and for this class: Get through the course in a manner that reflects my commitment to learning and evolving. I did achieve these goals but it wasn't easy. Before taking this class, I had no idea what a profound field of study Action Research is. The course itself is very special. Basically for me, it is an inquiry into what inquiry actually is, an

exploration of research processes. Perhaps at first this may not sound so interesting, but actually the potential is of even looking at life itself in a whole new way. The course exceeded my expectations. I would definitely recommend this class to prospective students. I am leaving this course with a whole new set of "tools" and skills that I can take for the rest of my life. From this class we obtain a whole new set of design skills related to group processes, we analyse evaluation methods and definitely examine these critically. I am leaving this class with additional clarity into who I am in the world - that public life - all of it - is political - in that through our individual inquiries we come to realise particular positions in social contexts. I see more clearly why then so many of us who go through the AR process - either consciously or unknowingly - usually end up wanting to work toward making the world a better place. I realise now as well that I actually have been living my life as an inquiry, but now I have an enhanced vocabulary that allows me to experience this even more fully and better describe it to others. I am truly appreciative of having gained so much from just one course.

- This course can provide a great frame for conducting community, personal, social or organizational action that is intended to facilitate change. In a general sense, action research is similar to poking something to see what happens. That's it. Within the process there is a lot of reflection and dialogue to help you come to a conclusion about what happened after the poke, and where/when the next poke should happen. The buddy-system in the course is a little loose, so it's up to you to make it work. The buddy relationship can be very helpful or not, depends on how it's nourished. Keeping the content and action research framework moving forward with your project and the readings is the challenge in this course. Don't panic.
- This hybrid course allows students on campus and online to interact through weekly live meetings as well as conferences with fellow students and the instructor. In this course, students are immersed in the process of action research through working on a personal or professional project of their choosing. With this project and working through course materials, students will learn about all phases of planning and implementing a change. Rather than the theoretical, this course focuses on implanting real life change.