

CrCrTh 693, Action Research, Spring 2018
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 questions 1-3 listed on <http://bit.ly/CCTEval>

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.

- love the Hybrid format it was great it help me change how I feel about the class as whole. I would like to see you give more detail on some of the topics.
- I have learnt the action research skills through lesson plans, reflective practice and class participations.
- In taking this course you may be indulged with much information during the course of the semester. You must take every assignment and be as detailed as possible. You need to keep steady on the curriculum step by step or you will be thrown off the curve. It hurts to miss an assignment. It also hurts to revise an assignment. Remember this is a capstone course. It is one of the most important courses in the program and is not to be taken lightly. If you have a full time job and/or are taking other courses (with the exception of 694) you must devote most of your life to the course. 692 693 and 694 are all very high skill level courses which require LOTS of time and patience along with hard work and dedication.
- This is not one to rush. This course takes commitment and patience. It also requires a level of trust in yourself and in others as you learn how much you have to learn. There will be times when it feels like you don't understand anything, which makes it that much better when you finally do. Don't expect that your understanding or grasp of concepts will be complete after 13 weeks. You're definitely not done when the course is. The partnering involved in the course is a really useful way to work through frustration or roadblocks in your thinking. Make use of conferences!
- The course is an opportunity to bring your real life concerns to the classroom and make actionable, practical changes. If there's a pressing, nagging or valued issue you want to face, change and evaluate, this is the course for you. Supportive classmates and weekly buddy meet ups allow for meaningful partnerships in the development of your action research project. This course goes beyond typical research methods and inserts the seeker into the equation. The process is sometimes slow and requires a commitment to process and revision, making for definite bumps on the road. Staying organized and engaged each week with the materials, live sessions and assignments is critical for the journey to be meaningful and lasting.
- This course delves into research at its most practical, and the content can be a valuable addition to a researcher's skill-set. The readings are dated, but informative, and the class is structured in a way that emphasizes feedback from classmates as well as the instructor. Finally, the course is

structured in a way that allows work to pile up, and so it's very important to find time to complete assignments thoughtfully.

- Action Research is not easy. It challenges your notions of what it means to "complete" an assignment. It is a process that will go back and forth, up and down, side to side, to test your beliefs, assumptions, and understanding of ideas. But you will walk away with an understanding of how to make a change that will stay with you beyond the course. From developing constituencies, evaluating the process, and taking an idea to action are incredible life skills. The process of Action Research is more important than what happened in this course, which as of right now, due to a heavy course load, a professor who is very demanding, and a little too much emphasis on Action Research as it relates to educational reform. But despite all of that, you are still in charge of your outcome. With Action Research, this is your course, your process, and your life that you can change.
- This course requires the student to be very self-directed in their learning and to seek out information and readings on their own. Coursemates and buddy check-ins are a great support system to the course when encountering difficulties and confusion, which will happen quite frequently. Don't skip the recommended readings.
- This course runs on at least three tracks. Your life as examined through the research lens, your life outside of the research, and the moments when you are both living and being objective. Only some of this will surface at any given time. You have to stay as calm as you know how and trust your note taking. Action Research makes the researcher tweeze issues apart differently than in normal life, and in unusual angles. Seeing things at so many available angles can be emotionally taxing. After a while features begin to become familiar, your own orientation is clear and you can notice your thinking, or the scenario you are intervening becomes cohesive. It's important to continue working with the questions, the KAQF, the Evaluation Clock. Let the process be a puzzle and keep trying different solutions until maybe even a tiny part of the overall appears.

In Critical Thinking and Creative thinking, we are newly (perhaps again) aware of the lens of thinking. In this class, the lens is in full use, sometimes to the extent that we can forget we have it. That's a good thing because it shows that we are integrating our learning, and still we have to let go of the lens sometimes.