

## University of Massachusetts at Boston

### College of Advancing & Professional Studies

### Critical & Creative Thinking Program

## Action Research for Educational, Professional, and Personal Change

### CrCrTh693

### Fall 2013 face-to-face & online section

### Syllabus

**Instructor:** Peter Taylor, Critical and Creative Thinking Program

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**Office:** Wheatley 2nd floor, room 157

**Course Dates:** 3 September - 3 December (no class on Oct. 8), 7-9.30pm

**Location:** McC 2-208 or by google+ hangout (with URLs posted on wiki just before session)

**Office/phone call/Google hangout hours:** <http://ptaylor.wikispaces.umb.edu/PTOfficeHours>, by arrangement

**Course Wiki:** <http://crcrth693.wikispaces.umb.edu/>

**Course Discussion Board:** <http://crcrth693.wikispaces.umb.edu/BulletinBoard>

**Hangout URL:** <http://bit.ly/693hang> (posted 10+ minutes before session)

### Description, Preparation before taking the course, Overview, and Objectives

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course covers techniques for and critical thinking about the evaluation of changes in educational practices and policies in schools, organizations, and informal contexts. Topics include quantitative and qualitative methods for design and analysis, participatory design of practices and policies in a framework of action research, institutional learning, the wider reception or discounting of evaluations, and selected case studies, including those arising from semester-long student projects.

**POINTERS** about the preparation assumed for this course (in lieu of formal prerequisites):

Through your previous courses, you should have developed the disposition of experimenting with new tools, even if not every one became part of your toolkit as a learner, teacher/facilitator of others, and/or reflective practitioner. Through courses and other personal and professional experience **you should have an interest in one or more Educational, Professional, or Personal issues that you might delve into with a view to promoting some needed change.** Most importantly, you should be prepared to address the

question: "If you have good ideas [about changes to make] how do you get others to adopt and/or adapt them?" (For CCT students, this course is best taken after Processes of Research and Engagement, but this sequence is not mandatory.)

**OVERVIEW:** The preceding question captures the central motivation for the course in the CCT curriculum. This question can also be expressed as: "How do you build a constituency around your idea? This concern can lead you into evaluating how good the ideas actually are (with respect to some defined objectives) so you can demonstrate this to others. It can also lead you to work with others to develop the idea so it becomes theirs as well and thus something they're invested in. Action Research, in the "Cycles & Epicycles" framework taught in this course, involves group facilitation, participatory planning, and reflective practice, as well as systematic evaluation. Students from a variety of programs should find this course a suitable vehicle to enhance your interests in educational, professional, or personal change.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** By the end of the semester, you will have:

- experienced, learned, and practiced a set of tools and processes to promote participation and reflective practice (including your own participation);
- learned to formulate informative comparisons as a basis for evaluations;
- examined critically the evaluations of others (or the lack of the appropriate evaluations), including the influences of political context on evaluation and research;
- considered the ideal of participatory action research in relation to politics generated from below; and
- undertaken a project in an area of your particular concern in which you design (and, optionally, carry out) an Action Research process using the Cycles and Epicycles framework (and addressing the items listed below under [Requirements](#)).

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** Sections 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 offer guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center (287-7430). The student must present these recommendations to each professor within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of the Drop/Add period.

**CODE OF CONDUCT:** The University's Student Code of Conduct ([http://www.umb.edu/life\\_on\\_campus/policies/code](http://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/code)) exists to maintain and protect an environment conducive to learning. It sets clear standards of respect for members of the University community and their property, as well as laying out the procedures for addressing unacceptable conduct. Students can expect faculty members and the Office of the Dean of Students to look after the welfare of the University community and, at the same time, to take an educational approach in which students violating the Code might learn from their mistakes and understand how their behavior affects others.

**Students are advised to retain a copy of this syllabus in personal files for use when applying for certification, licensure, or transfer credit.**

**This syllabus is subject to change, but workload expectations will not be increased after the semester starts.** (Version 13 Dec. 2013; changes after the start of the semester are [marked in blue](#))

## TEXTS and MATERIALS

Required: [Calhoun, E. F. \(1994\). How to Use Action Research in the Self-Renewing School. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.](#)

Schmuck, R. (either 1997 or 2006). [Practical Action Research for Change](#). Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight. (Used copies of old editions may be available via amazon.com)

Recommended: Taylor, P. and J. Szteiter (2012) [Taking Yourself Seriously: Processes of Research and Engagement](#) Arlington, MA: The Pumping Station (Available from online retailers or as pdf or paperback from <http://thepumpingstation.org>)

- Online guidesheets duplicate pages in the text, so you can choose not to buy the text. If you buy the printed or pdf text you can refer to that instead of reading the guidesheets online and you have a reference work to consult after the course.

Recommended to help with writing: Daniel, D., C. Fauske, P. Galeno and D. Mael (2001). [Take Charge of Your Writing: Discovering Writing Through Self-Assessment](#). Boston: Houghton Mifflin ("[new](#) [copies available](#) well below list price on amazon.com)

(See also Conlin; Elbow; Kanar; Perelman, et al.)

Recommended if you are interested in facilitating group process: Schuman, S., Ed. (2006). [Creating a Culture of Collaboration: The International Association of Facilitators Handbook](#). San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

[Readings for the course](#) consist primarily of individual articles and book chapters, most of which can be downloaded from [password-protected page](#))

## REQUIREMENTS

Your 693checklist wikipage (replica viewable as <http://crcrth693.wikispaces.umb.edu/693checklist>) and links to it provide Notes on the assignments and Examples of previous students' assignments. The Notes link, in turn, to more detailed guidesheets on using the tools, including templates where relevant. These guidesheets duplicate pages in the text, *Taking Yourself Seriously* so you may choose to refer to the printed text instead of reading these guidesheets online. If you do work online, be prepared to click through to the notes and read the guidesheets before getting to the to-do part of any assignment.

### **Written A. Action Research written assignments and work-in-progress presentations (2/3 of grade)**

Project = Design and report on (1500-2500 words) an Action Research Process related to an action or intervention in a specific classroom, workplace or personal teaching/learning practice, an educational

policy, an educational institution, or a social policy. Your design should include all the aspects of the [Action Research Cycles and Epicycles](#), including:

- how you will learn from evaluations of past changes or interventions like yours,
- how you would facilitate the reflective and/or collaborative process in which a constituency comes to join with you in shaping a change or intervention (or at least supporting your efforts), and
- how you would evaluate the outcome with a view to expanding further the constituency for adopting/adapting the change or intervention.

Carrying out the design is applauded, but not required. If you carry out the design (or some of it), you should report on what you have actually done and how you would proceed differently if you were to do it over. It is important that you do not let implementing your action/intervention eclipse attention to designing the other aspects of the Action Research.

The project is developed through a sequence of assignments:

- A1. reflection on introductory action research in sessions 1&2, A2. initial description (based on strategic personal planning), A3. KAQ, A4. evaluation clock, A5. initial work-in-progress presentation with notes on research and planning, A6. narrative outline, A5revised. updated work-in-progress presentation (taking into account comments on initial version and notes), A7. complete draft report, and A7revised. final (1500-2500 words) report.
- Initial submissions of all assignments due on the dates given in the Schedule of sessions below (as well as in your assignment checklist).
- At least five, including the complete report, should be revised and resubmitted in responses to comments until OK/RNR (=OK/ Reflection-revision-resubmission Not Requested).
  - If the complete report is not OK/RNR by the date for submission of grades an incomplete may be submitted (see [policies about incompletes](#)).

### **Participation and contribution to the class process (1/3 of grade)**

B. Building learning community through prepared participation and attendance at class meetings(=13 items; 8 items for online students) and B2. "syllabus quiz" submitted in session 2 and B3. Weekly buddy check-ins (see D1, below) (=3 items for 12 check-ins; 8 items for online students).

C. Summaries of readings for sessions 9, 10, and 12 posted on session wikipage (=3 items)

D. Personal/Professional Development (PD) Workbook compiled throughout the semester (7 items), including:

- D1. Weekly entries, perused at first conference or before mid-semester break, on a. possible application of tools to your project and b. weekly buddy check-ins (2 items)(see also D3)
- D2. [worksheet](#) on PD workbook and research organization submitted in session 6
- D3. Whole PD workbook ready for perusal (in hard copy or on wiki) at the end of the semester (session 13)
- D4. Annotated "Clippings" on [wiki](#)(6 postings before session 13 = 2 items)

- D5. Process review on the development of your work (due session 13) .
  - For CCT students this assignment is suitable for inclusion in the required [Reflective Practitioner's Portfolio](#) because in it you identify the tools, practices, and perspectives from the course that you intend to bring into your specific professional or personal endeavors.

E. Minimum of two in-office or phone conferences on your assignments, PD workbook, personal wikipage, and project -- one before session 6; the other by session 10 (=2 items)

F. Peer commentary on your buddy's work in each 4-week period and on another student's draft report (with copy posted on [peer share wiki](#)) (=4 items)

Students should aim for all writing and presentation assignments submitted on the due date and 5 OK/RNR (=OK/ Reflection-revision-resubmission Not Requested), including the complete report, as well as 27 participation items fulfilled.

If you reach or exceed this target for both parts of the course grade, you get 80 points (which gives you an automatic B+) and the following rubric is used to add further points.

- For each quality "fulfilled very well" you get 2 points or 1 point if you "did an OK job, but there was room for more development/attention." You get 0 points if "to be honest, this still needs serious attention."
- 1. A sequence of assignments paced more or less as in syllabus (and revisions timely),
- 2. often revised thoroughly and with new thinking in response to comments.
- 3. Project innovative, well planned and carried out with considerable initiative, and
- 4. indicates that you will be able to move from design to implementation in your specific situation.
- 5. Project report clear and well structured,
- 6. with supporting references and detail, and professionally presented.
- 7. Active contribution to and reflection on process of learning from session activities around Action Research and semester-long projects.
- 8. Ability to shift between opening out and focusing in as required to complete full Evaluation clock
- 9. Active, prepared participation and building the class as learning community.
- 10. PD workbook shows: Consistent work outside sessions,
- 11. deep reflection on your development through the semester and
- 12. map of the future directions in which you plan to develop.

If you don't reach the automatic B+ level, your points = 10 for each writing assignment (or presentation) that is marked OK/RNR + 3 for each other writing assignment initially submitted by the due date + 1 for each participation item fulfilled up to a maximum of 80.

Overall course points are converted to letter grades as follows: The minimum grade for A is 95 points, for A- is 87.5, for B+ is 80, for B is 72.5; for B- is 65; for C+ is 57.5; and for C is 50.

(In theory it is possible for a student to earn 104 points, but this would still be awarded an A.)

**Plagiarism:** Using another person's ideas or material you did not write without citing the source is plagiarism and is unacceptable (see [library guide](#) and [Academic Honesty policies](#)).

## Session 1 Introduction to Action Research Cycles and Epicycles, I

### *Preparation:*

Purchase [course texts](#)

View [video introduction](#)

Read [introduction](#) to the syllabus

Review instructor's [portfolio and past evaluations](#) for the course

Begin to [get set up technologically](#)

[Participants from a distance using google+ hangout: Practice session to be scheduled at least one day before the class starts.](#)

On the course home wiki page (<http://crcrth693.wikispaces.umb.edu/>), review the introductory box and the list of the relevant pages. (You don't have to thoroughly explore the details of the future weekly sessions before the course starts.)

Review your personal Assignment Checklist (aka Drop Box) and PD Workbook.

For all of the pages above, develop some system for keeping important web links handy (Bookmarks or Favorites organized using your web browser, a document with a list of all important course links, or any other system that helps you to remember web site addresses.)

Participation from a distance using google+ hangout: URL to be supplied 10 minutes before class starts.

See [693LiveMakeup](#) if you miss this session (or any other synchronous session)

See *discussion post on each session's wikipage for additional instructions (if any) before starting this and each other session*

### *Session:*

Overview of course (from Course description through Learning Objectives in [FrontMatter](#))

[Freewriting](#) and [Think-Pair-Share](#) on digesting the overview.

- “When I try to digest the paragraphs and imagine what I will learn in the course, the thoughts/experience/feelings that come to mind include...

The framework of [Action Research Cycles and Epicycles](#) is introduced through a compressed example of Action Research performed by the class members during this session.

- [Case](#): Online students’ experience of the course to focus primarily on the subject, not the technology
- Use this worksheet

[693ARDesign\\_Review.doc](#)

- [Details](#)
- [Download](#)
- 46 KB

to consider this case step-by-step.

At the end, complete the [Critical Incident Questionnaire](#) on the experience of the compressed example of Action Research.

***Follow-up:***

Read and make notes on the [Action Research Cycles and Epicycles](#) framework, which you will need to revisit several times over the course of the semester to appreciate fully.

View [Video guided tour](#) of course materials and processes

Complete the [Syllabus Quiz](#) and submit the resulting file to your wiki assignment checklist.

[Sign up for your Buddy](#) for the first of the 4-week periods.

- Hold your first Buddy Check-in before session 2; this should involve peer assistance in items on the Syllabus Quiz, especially [getting set-up technologically](#), finding your way around the course materials, and articulating questions to get the help you need.

Set up your [PD workbook](#).

If you need help, post questions on the [general discussion board](#) for the course, or send them to the instructor. In particular, don't spend more than about 5 minutes confused by the wiki.

Sign up for your first conference with the instructor, due before session 6.

Look ahead to what preparation is needed for the next session.

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session. Remember that work due in a session should be submitted by time of the session. This means that you will always need to look ahead one week.

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## Session 2 Introduction to Action Research Cycles and Epicycles, II

***Preparation:***

Read Schmuck, 1997, p. vii-29; 2006, p. ix-29. Think about the relationship between his systematic treatment of the topic and your experience in session 1.

Read [final projects](#) by Teryl Cartwright and one other alum of the course: Jan Coe, Alyssa Hinkell, Marie Levey-Pabst, Alison Palmucci, John Quirk, Kathleen Thompson

(Optional) Listen to a [recorded interview with an alum of the course](#) about her experience with the course (as a face-to-face student).

(Optional) Read Noah Rubin's account of the pedagogy in this course.

Participation from a distance using google+ hangout: URL to be supplied [here](#) 10 minutes before session starts. [Students from a distance come online 10 minutes early to practice forming hangouts in pairs, etc.](#)

[https://plus.google.com/hangouts/\\_/e83be2f1fbd3d1f014bd5a0601ec7e86090437d2?authuser=0&hl=en](https://plus.google.com/hangouts/_/e83be2f1fbd3d1f014bd5a0601ec7e86090437d2?authuser=0&hl=en)

***Session:***

[Feedback on Critical Incident Questionnaire I.](#)

Questions on Syllabus, course mechanics, uploading assignments to wikis and other technological competencies

Discussion on use of AR cycles & epicycles framework ([guidesheet](#)) to review and analyze final projects

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by alums of the course, including live guest alum, Teryl Carwright  
Focused Conversation on Action Research experience to date

**Follow-up:**

Review Focused Conversation, [handout](#)

Reading on Focused Conversations: Stanfield, 6-29; (optional) Nelson, [„Focused Conversation for Schools](#)

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

**[Work due this session:](#)**

B2. Syllabus quiz (uploaded to your 693checklist wikipage)

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## Session 3 Strategic Personal Planning

applied to initial formulation of a course action research design project so it incorporates your wider personal and life concerns (and thus recruits you firmly into your constituency)

**Preparation:**

Read Spencer, chaps. 5 & 7, Weissglass, "Constructivist Listening,"

Review Project reports from previous semesters (via [wikipage](#))

For a preview of clustering and naming of clusters (which is part of Strategic planning), peruse [vision charts](#), but note that these are from the course as a whole, not from individuals.

Participation from a distance using google+ hangout: URL to be supplied [here](#) 10 minutes before session starts.

**Session:**

[Supportive Listening](#) (a variant of constructivist listening) with buddy on one's hopes/fears/ideas/questions re: educational, professional, and/or personal change

[Strategic personal planning workshop](#) (underlying the educational/organizational/personal change you want to facilitate/promote)

[Supplementary guidelines for Strategic Personal Planning](#)

In-Session drafting of initial description of AR design project

**Follow-up:**

[Supplementary guidelines for Strategic Personal Planning](#)

(for those interested in Strategic Participatory Planning, of which Strategic Personal Planning is a variant)

Materials from ICA Facilitators Manual, CEDAC, [Our Economy](#), Taylor, "Epilogue," 204-210, Schmuck on "cooperative" action research

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

**[Work due this session:](#)**

\*A\* Asmt. A1: 1st Reflection on your Experience as Novice Action Researchers in relation to the Considered Formulations from Other Sources (in this case, the prescribed readings so far from Schmuck)

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## Session 4 Examining the background and evaluations of previous actions before pressing forward

using tools and interactions with others to open up problems and focus in on needed inquiry

### *Preparation:*

Read Entin, "Reflective Practitioner," Greenwald, "Learning from Problems."

Participation from a distance using google+ hangout: URL to be supplied [here](#) 10 minutes before session starts.

### *Session:*

Use of [KAQ framework](#):

- mini-lecture on KAQ framework
- Draft some lines of KAQ for your project
- Discuss your initial efforts with classmate or buddy and via discussion posts (which the instructor will respond to)

### *Follow-up:*

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

### [Work due this session:](#)

\*A\* Asmt. A2: Initial Paragraph Overview of Project

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## Session 5 Formulating informative comparisons as a basis for evaluations, I

### *Preparation:*

Arrange new buddy for the next 4-week period

Read [Goode article on the effects of a smoking ban](#); [Overview](#) of relationship of evaluation to facilitation of change; Guide to the [Evaluation clock](#)

Optional: Listen to [audio recording](#) on using the Comparison steps (2-4) of the evaluation clock

Participation from a distance using google+ hangout: URL to be supplied here 10 minutes before session starts.

### *Session:*

Use the Comparison steps (2-4) of the evaluation clock to

- analyze published evaluations of past actions (e.g., smoking ban clipping), then
- design evaluations that may be part of students' projects

***Follow-up:***

Re-read guide to the [Evaluation clock](#)

Allow time to listen to the mini-lecture before we meet for session 6 (in 2 weeks time).

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

[Work due this session:](#)

\*A\* Asmt. A3: KAQF assignment

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## Session 6 Evaluations II & Constituency Building

***Preparation:***

Topic for buddy check-in: Using the comparison steps (2-4) in the evaluation clock to design evaluation as part of your project (Asmt. 4a)

Reading: Teryl Cartwright's [project report](#) for a review of approaches to Constituency building and Mike Wienke's [Constituency-building funnel](#)

Participation from a distance using google+ hangout: URL to be supplied [here](#) 10 minutes before session starts.

(Optional) Listen to [recording of mini-lecture](#), to accompany [text on statistical formulations of comparisons and background assumptions](#)

***Session:***

Mini-lecture on statistical thinking, comparisons and background assumptions

Constituency building: An introduction to facilitation

Peer coaching on Evaluation clock assignment and its extension to students' Projects, wiki use, KAQF, and PD workbooks.

***Follow-up:***

Review Facilitation Notes (in readings) to stimulate your thinking about developing skills in that area beyond what is introduced in this course

Schedule second conference by session 10 to discuss your projects and use of evaluation clock

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

[Work due this session:](#)

A Asmt. A4a. Use the "stripped-down" version of the evaluation clock (comparison steps 0 to 5) design evaluation as part of your project

E1. First conference must be completed before session 6 to discuss your Action Research ideas, the course thus far, and your PD workbook (which you commenced working on after session 1; see D1.)

D2. Submit [worksheet](#) on PD workbook and research organization (you can use the template document: [crerth693-PDworksheet-D2.doc](#))

D4. You should have at least two annotated web-"Clippings" on Clippings Page by this point in semester.

**There is no spring break for this course.**

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## Session 7 Work-in-progress presentations, I

### *Preparation:*

Work-in-progress Presentation I on Project; post working title on [wikipage](#); prepare visual aids and hide as many toolbars as possible before uploading to [wikipage](#); (students from a distance only) practice using screenshare on google+ hangout

Participation from a distance using google+ hangout: URL to be supplied [here](#) 10 minutes before session starts.

### *Session:*

Work-in-progress Presentations on Project

[Plus-Delta](#) feedback on each presentation (on paper or via [online form](#))

### *Follow-up:*

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

### Work due this session:

\*A\* Asmt. A5a, initial: Work-in-progress Presentation I on Project and A5b. Notes on Research and Planning for Student Projects

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## Session 8 Reflection on your Experience as Novice Action Researchers with the Considered Formulations from Other Sources, II

### *Preparation:*

Read Schmuck, pages 29-146, [Calhoun, How to Use Action Research \(especially chapters 1-3\)](#), Weiss, chapter 1, and (optional) Weiss, chapters 2 &4.

Preview [Small group work](#) roles.

Video on work in heterogeneous groups: <http://vimeo.com/16218630> (password-access)

Participation from a distance using google+ hangout: URL =

[https://plus.google.com/hangouts/\\_/7acpilooseb80gk6h4pe6tsbqo?authuser=0&hl=en](https://plus.google.com/hangouts/_/7acpilooseb80gk6h4pe6tsbqo?authuser=0&hl=en)

### *Session:*

[Small group work](#) on [two activities](#): a) lessons about cooperative work and b) comparison of frameworks for Action Research: Cycles and Epicycles vs. [Schmuck's Co-operative](#) [Calhoun's](#) Action research.

[Critical Incident Questionnaire II](#) on course to date

### *Follow-up:*

Review if needed: video on work in heterogeneous groups: <http://vimeo.com/16218630>

Discussion post on this wikipage of your own synthesis from session activity a) and your own comparison from activity b).

(optional) Read other accounts of Action Research: Madison Metropolitan School District, "Classroom action research," Spina, "Six key principles," Winter, [Learning from Experience](#)

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Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

[Work due this session:](#)

\*A\* Asmt. A4b due: Use the full evaluation clock to design the evaluation part of your project.

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## Session 9 Reflection on your Experience as Novice Action Researchers with the Considered Formulations from Other Sources, II

### *Preparation:*

Arrange new buddy for the next 4-week period

Read at least three from Hitchcock & Hughes, Chap. 3, "Access, ethics, and objectivity," Chapter 5, "Designing, planning and evaluating Research"; Greenwood & Levin, Chaps. 8 & 11, "Action research cases," & "Action science and organizational learning"; Rokovich, et al., "Implementing change"; Jenkins, "Action learning"; CEDAC, [Our Economy](#); Greenwald, Learning from problems, Madison Metropolitan School District, "Classroom action research" (and [linked pages](#)), Penuel et al, , " Organizing Research and Development," [study of CIT](#), Rubin's account of the pedagogy in this course  
Submit summaries for one reading to the discussion post for this session.

Read [guidelines for dialogue process](#).

Read [Feedback](#) on Critical Incident Questionnaire II

Participation from a distance using google+ hangout: URL to be supplied [here](#) 10 minutes before session starts.

### *Session:*

[Dialogue "Hour" session](#) on our thinking and experience and questions about action research in contrast to conventional research, drawing on readings and including issues about ethics of research and people's engagement in the situations being researched.

### *Follow-up:*

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

[Work due this session:](#)

Participation Item C. Summary of one reading submitted to the discussion post for this session.

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## Session 10 Influences of Political Context on Evaluation and Educational Research

*Although it is not expected that your projects tackle the larger political context of making changes in education (broadly construed) or draw on sophisticated theories about evaluation and educational change, this Session put these areas on your maps.*

### *Preparation:*

Read at least one of:

Woodhead, "When psychology informs public policy,"

Hunt, "The dilemma in the classroom: a cross-sectional survey measures the effects of segregated schooling,"

Metcalf, "Reading between the lines."

Muir, "Science rules OK: running societies the rational way,"

Rokovich, "Implementing change at SJUSD: an unfinished case study"

Submit summary for one reading to the discussion post for this session.

Participation from a distance using google+ hangout: URL to be supplied here 10 minutes before session starts.

***Session:***

["Jigsaw"](#) digestion and discussion of readings, with special attention to the ways that politics shapes educational research and evaluation studies at the stages of: origins and design of the research; the implementation; the interpretation of results; and their dissemination or application.

***Follow-up:***

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

**Work due this session:**

\*A\* Asmt. A6: Narrative Outline for Project Report

E2. Second conference with instructor on your assignments and projects, before Session 10.

Participation Item C. Summary of one reading submitted to the discussion post for this session.

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## Session 11 Work-in-progress presentations, II

(taking into account comments on previous presentation & notes on research & planning)

***Preparation:***

Work-in-progress Presentation I on Project; post working title on [wikipage](#); prepare visual aids and hide as many toolbars as possible before uploading to [wikipage](#)

Participation from a distance using google+ hangout: URL to be supplied here 10 minutes before session starts.

***Session:***

Work-in-progress Presentations on Project

[Plus-Delta](#) feedback on each presentation (on paper or via [online form](#))

***Follow-up:***

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

**Work due this session:**

\*A\* Asmt. A5a, updated: Work-in-progress Presentation I on Project and A5b. Notes on Research and Planning for Student Projects

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## Session 12 Generating politics from below in relation to Educational and Action Research

### *Preparation:*

Read at least two of:

Carr & Kemmis, *Becoming Critical*, CEDAC, *Our Economy*, Couto, "The promise," Greenwood, "Action science and organizational learning," Taylor, "Epilogue," McLeod, et al., "Changing how we work," Senge et al., "Fostering communities"

Submit summary for one reading to the discussion post for this session.

[Review Facilitation Notes \(in readings\) to stimulate your thinking about the role of structured facilitation in generating politics from below](#)

Participation from a distance using google+ hangout: URL to be supplied here 10 minutes before session starts.

### *Session:*

Video segment on Myles Horton and the Highlander Center, a longterm source of educational and social change: <http://vimeo.com/16215282> (password-access)

[Dialogue Process session](#) on "Generating politics from below in relation to Educational and Action Research," including participatory action research, theory in relation to action (incl. reflective practice), and structured facilitation

### *Follow-up:*

Look ahead to what work is due in the next session.

### [Work due this session:](#)

\*A\* Asmt. A7: Complete Draft of Design Project (on peer share wikipage as well as your 693checklist wikipage)

Participation Item C. Summary of one reading submitted to the discussion post for this session.

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## Session 13 Taking stock of course & of change: Where have we come & where do we go from here?

### *Preparation:*

Read Cashin, "Student ratings of teaching"

Review [samples from previous years](#)

Read: Tuecke, "Creating a wall of wonder," Rubin on the pedagogy in this course

Participation from a distance using google+ hangout: URL to be supplied here 10 minutes before session starts.

### *Session:*

Selected taking stock activity, either [Historical Scan](#) (aka Wall of Wonder) or Process Review or Practical

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Vision of Future Personal and Professional Development or [Sense of Place Map](#) (Sense of Place Map) [Evaluation](#) that starts with a self-evaluation (to be administered by [survey gizmo](#)).  
[CAPS course evaluation](#)

**Follow-up:**

Review [previous semesters' evaluations](#)

Read excerpts (TBA) from Stanfield, [Courage to Learn](#), Stanfield, [The Workshop Book](#)

**Work due this session:**

\*A\* D3. PD workbook (on wiki) for perusal, including D5. Process review.

- For CCT students the Process review is suitable for inclusion in the required [Reflective Practitioner's Portfolio](#) because in it you identify the tools, practices, and perspectives from the course that you intend to bring into your specific professional or personal endeavors.

\*A\* F. Make comments on draft design project of another student (not necessarily your buddy); upload comments back to the peershare wiki page and email the author that you have done so.

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## One week after session 13

**Work due:**

\*A\* Asmt. A7 revised: Final Project report

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## Action Research for Educational, Professional, and Personal Change

### NOTES ON TEACHING/LEARNING INTERACTIONS

(last update 13 Dec '13)

including

- guidelines for [written assignments and presentations](#)
- guidelines for [participation and contribution to the class process](#)
- [other processes used in the course](#)
  - all of which link to webpages that duplicate pages in the text, *Taking Yourself Seriously*. (You may choose to refer to the printed version instead of reading these webpages online.)

Refer also to

- [Schema and Overview of Action Research Cycles and Epicycles](#) to remind you of the framework behind each assignment
- [links to examples of previous students' work](#)

and [additional details in green for students in completely online sections](#).

- **If you are reading a printed version of this, visit the actual webpage, <http://crcrth693.wikispaces.umb.edu/693Notes>, for live links.**

### Stages of development for Action Research Design project

From the course syllabus:

- Project = Design and report on (1500-2500 words) an Action Research Process related to an action or intervention in a specific classroom, workplace or personal teaching/learning practice, an educational policy, an educational institution, or a social policy. Your design should include all the aspects of the [Action Research Cycles and Epicycles](#) (<http://www.faculty.umb.edu/pjt/ARcycling2.html>), including:
  - how you will learn from evaluations of past changes or interventions like yours,
  - how you would facilitate the reflective and/or collaborative process in which a constituency comes to join with you in shaping a change or intervention (or at least supporting your efforts), and
  - how you would evaluate the outcome with a view to expanding further the constituency for adopting/adapting the change or intervention.

Carrying out the design is applauded, but not required. If you carry out the design (or some of it), you

should report on what you have actually done and how you would proceed differently if you were to do it over. It is important that you do not let implementing your action/intervention eclipse attention to designing the other aspects of the Action Research or to redesigning the AR steps you have already taken.

The design project should not be seen as a "final term paper," but as a process of development that involves:

- i) [dialogue with the instructor](#) and other students and
- ii) revision (re-seeing) in light of that dialogue.

To facilitate that process, there is a sequence of seven assignments with the goals described below. The general expectation for these assignments is that you will pull together the work you have done and reflect on the experience in ways that fit the tasks you take on and your own situation and style. *You should submit an initial version of the assignment, however sketchy, on the due date.* Instructor responses will then help you develop your contribution to the AR still remaining. Examples of previous students' work are linked [here](#) as well as to the specific assignment on the assignment checklist webpage and the notes to follow. The examples can be consulted to indicate the range of ways students tackle an assignment; they are not models to be copied. ([Indeed, skip over any that do not help with your particular project](#)) (If the link does not work, the example has not yet been uploaded.)

The course works by building from one step in the Action Research process to the next so late submissions detract significantly from the learning process for the student in question and from the learning possibilities for the other students. Each student can ask for extensions--no explanation needed--on two assignments or participation items, moving the due date back as far as to the last session. The grading system also allows you to skip 2 assignments and 5 participation items altogether. Beyond the 2 extensions, late submissions don't count; instead focus on doing the best you can with the remaining assignments and participation items.

## Assignments

Each assignment will count if marked OK/RNR (=Reflection-revision-resubmission Not Requested) meaning you have met almost all of the guidelines summarized below, but Revision and Resubmission will be requested if you have not. Comments made as part of Dialogue around written work provide guidance tailored to each student's specific interests and needs. [For comments to be helpful to the development of your thinking and writing, they should be read slowly and with the original submission to refer to; do not read them on the fly.](#)

### 1. 1st Reflection on your Experience as Novice Action Researchers

350-500 words that relate your experience in the initial compressed Action Research to some points in the reading from Schmuck. Comment on what we did in the initial compressed Action Research that was or

was not covered by him and what he advocates that we didn't do.

([examples](#))

## 2. Initial paragraph overview and preliminary design

Building on your in-class [strategic personal planning](#), use the review and design template from session 1 to convey how you envisage addressing each of the aspects of the Action Research framework of this course, <http://www.faculty.umb.edu/pjt/ARcycling2.html>. Take this into account to compose an [initial overview](#) of your design project. This overview may, several revisions later, end up setting the scene in the introduction of your project. In one or two *prose* paragraphs (*not* disconnected points a.k.a. "bullets"), an overview should convey the action (i.e., the change or intervention) that you would be interested in making, **why, how, and with whom**. (Carrying out the design is applauded, but not required. If you carry out the design [or some of it], you should report on what you have actually done and how you would proceed differently if you were to do it over. It is important that you do not let implementing your action/intervention eclipse attention to designing the other aspects of the Action Research.)

Previous semesters' projects are available for viewing through [wikipage](#) for CrCrTh693 wiki members only.

([examples](#))

## 3. KAQF (a variant of KNF)

Using the [template and instructions](#), work through the whole K, A, Q and F for each point and use the additional questions in parentheses (perhaps with another student as sounding board) to check your thinking. The expectation for this assignment is that use of this tool won't come naturally and you will need coaching to tease out and then tighten your thinking.

This assignment is an opportunity to tease out knowledge, assumptions, reasoning, and evidence -- and the gaps in them, especially in the Background to the project--the situation that needs changing and evaluations of previous efforts to make change. After you have identified many points and completed KAQF for them, you should be better able to prioritise what is necessary and feasible to Find out in the short time of the semester. This, in turn, may lead you to modify the focus of your project.

([examples](#))

## 4. Evaluation clock

Before attempting the assignment, read the guide to the [Evaluation clock](#). At the end of the guide are the templates for the full clock and the stripped-down clock. For asmt. 4a, scroll down to the stripped-down clock and use the comparison steps 2-4 to identify a specific action (i.e., the change or intervention) and its effects to evaluate. Answer the questions carefully for each step, noticing that the answers for any step relate to the answers to the previous steps. For asmt. 4b, complete the full clock spelled out with actual or plausible steps that relate to the specific comparison. But move on to asmt. 4b only when you have got the hang of asmt. 4a. The expectation for the Evaluation clock assignment is that you will not get it right

the first time, but will need coaching to produce the focused comparison steps and the recursive full clock.

([examples](#))

## 5a. Work-in-progress presentations

Preparing presentations, hearing yourself deliver them, and getting feedback usually leads to self-clarification of the overall direction of your project and of your priorities for further work. In this spirit, 10-15 minute presentations of your work-in-progress are scheduled early in your projects and a bit later on – they are necessarily on work-in-progress. Convey the important features of work you have already done and, to elicit useful feedback during 3-5 minutes of Q&A, indicate also where additional investigation or advice are needed and where you think that might lead you. In the second presentation highlight the work you have done since the initial presentation, especially any rethinking made in response to comments made on the initial presentation, notes on research and planning, and narrative outline. (Reread [short description](#) of design project to remind yourself that your presentation should show how you would design all the aspects of Action Research even if you don't get to carry them out.) (Note: Your presentation time includes setup, 3-5 minutes of Q&A, and packup.)

Upload your visual aids to Peersharing wikipage at least an hour in advance of the session. Before doing so, use the View menu to hide as many toolbars as possible, which reduces the visual distractions.

Uploaded visuals can be shared from one computer for f2f sections and downloaded onto everyone's computers for online sections. (They also serve as a backup if screenshare is being used on google hangout.) Remember to say next slide when you switch slides (not needed if you are using screenshare).

([examples](#))

## 5b. Notes on research and planning

Pull together notes on your reading and your thinking and present it in a form organized so it can elicit useful comments from a reader (in this case, me). To show your planning, you should submit an updated paragraph overview (see #2 above) and an outline and/or evaluation clock. (Reread [short description](#) of design project to remind yourself that your notes should address how you would design all the aspects of the Action Research [cycles & epicycles framework](#) even if you don't get to carry them out.) To show that you are finding out what others have been doing in your area of interest, which includes evaluations of past changes or interventions like yours, you should include annotated bibliography of readings done or planned. Record the full citations for your sources, including those from the WWW. Using a bibliographic database is recommended; e.g., [RefWorks or Endnote Web](#) -- free, or, if you want something that you can keep using after you graduate, [Endnote](#)

These notes should be updated [and submitted at the same time as](#) the second W-I-P presentation, with the goal of showing how your thinking and research has developed in the weeks between presentations.

([examples](#))

## 6. Narrative outline

A [narrative outline](#) is an outline or plan of your report of the design project (as [described below](#)) with explanatory sentences inserted at key places:

- i) to explain in a declarative style the point of each section;
- ii) to explain how each section links to the previous one and/or to the larger section or the whole report it's part of.

The object of doing a narrative outline is to move you beyond the preliminary thinking that goes into a standard outline or even a nested and connected table of contents. Insertion of explanatory sentences helps you check that your ideas and material really will fit your outline.

(A straightforward default narrative outline would be to walk through all the different steps in the Action Research cycles & epicycles framework.)

([examples](#))

## 7. Report on Action Research design project

1500-2500 words, plus bibliography of references cited.

Whatever form your report takes, it has to describe all the parts of the Action Research process [under the Cycles and Epicycles framework](#), including why you are interested in this Action Research. You should also include material that conveys your process of development during the project and personal/professional development plans for the future. The report should not be directed to the instructor, but conceived as something helpful to readers like your student colleagues. The report should "[GOSP](#)" readers--Grab their attention, Orient them, and move through Steps so that they appreciate the Position you have led them to and how it matches the subject of your project.

For the report to be counted as final, you must have revised in response to comments from instructor and peers on a complete draft. (The draft must get to the end to count as complete, even if some sections along the way are only sketches.) Allow time for the additional investigation and thinking that may be entailed.

The final reports will be uploaded to a password-protected, hidden-to-google, website for future students to read. If you don't want that to happen, you must supply an abstract summarizing your report for uploading instead.

([examples](#))

## Participation and contribution to the class process (33 items)

Learning in this course depends on more than developing your Action Research design project. The items below are designed for you to get and give perspective and guidance from your peers, to reflect on what goes on in and out of class in relation to the different aspects of Action Research, and to check in with the instructor so that guidance can be tailored to your specific interests, concerns, and level of comfort with the tools and technology used in the course.

**B. Building learning community (17 items)**

Prepared participation in class sessions is expected. One item fulfilled for each class you participate in (except not if you are unprepared). Participation includes being punctual, not taking cell phone calls **and, for online students during live sessions, arranging not to be disturbed by people, emails, etc.**

**In fully online sections, participation means that you listen to the audio recordings and join in the live meetings. (You are making a mistake if you think taking an online course allows you to skip or skim the class materials.) If you cannot attend a live meeting, you should refer to the Live Makeup notes, which will be posted after each live meeting and will include both listening to the audio recording of the meeting, and submitting some written material based on the discussion to your wiki Assignment Checklist page.**

Allowance is made for other priorities in your life. You are not required to give excuses for absence, lateness, or lack of preparation (altho' don't expect to get a participation item). Simply make up the 80% of participation items in other ways (C-G).

B2. In order to get oriented to the various course materials and mechanics, complete the "[syllabus quiz](#)" and submit week 2.

([examples](#))

B3. Weekly buddy check-ins (12 check-ins = 3 items for students in face2face & hybrid f2f-online sections & **6 items for students in fully online section**) **Expectation = check in once per week with your buddy and include a note on the check-in in your PD workbook** (more instructions & signup: [face2face or hybrid section](#)). Buddy connections are a valuable complement to the live course sessions as well as allowing for practice in cultivating collaborators who may be quite different from you, which is a challenging aspect of constituency building. If you sign up for a buddy but that person doesn't respond, don't fret; simply record your attempts to connect.

**C. Summaries of Readings (3 items)**

These summaries of issues raised by the readings in session 9, 10, and 12 should be thought of as resources you are providing for other students (current and future), who might not have time to read the article OR who might need stimulation/guidance about what they decide to make time to read. Post them to the discussion posts section for the session in question.

**D. Personal/Professional Development Workbook (7 items)**

In your workbook keep records or products of homework, Action Research tasks, and buddy check-ins, preparation for assignments, weekly journal-type reflections on the course and classes, notes on readings, clippings, e-clippings. Explore, when appropriate, the relationship between, on one hand, your interests and possible projects and, on the other hand, the readings and activities. Think of the PD workbook as something that you imagine going back to in, say, 18 months, and by reviewing what's in it, you get quickly up to steam on Action Research. (In that light, if, for example, including an assignment and my comments and your revision would help a future you, include it.)

You can choose to keep your Personal/Professional Development workbook on this wiki linked to your personal 693checklist wiki page. *Only attempt this if you are comfortable editing wikis.* The alternatives are to keep your PD workbook in a word file and upload that file to your 693checklist wiki page from time to time or, by prior arrangement, in hard copy.

([examples](#))

D1. For each new tool that is introduced during classes, make an entry in your PPD workbook on possible applications of the tool to your project, work, or life. (Unlike the assignments, which are focused on the specific Action for your project, you may see many and varied applications of the tools in your work and lives.) Also include notes on weekly buddy check-ins (2 items). Have this perused during the 1st conference or before the mid-semester break.

If you are using the workbook effectively, it should convey your developing process of preparing to practice the tools and of critical thinking about course readings, activities, and discussions. Those of you who find it hard to make space for journaling/reflection should stay 10 minutes after class and write while your thoughts are fresh. When you first show the instructor the PD workbook for perusal, they will let you know if you need to show more processing and organize the workbook better.

[\(examples\)](#)

D2. The [worksheet](#) submitted in week 6 will allow instructor to make further suggestions about your PD workbook and research organization.

[\(examples\)](#)

D3. During the last session instructor peruses the PD workbooks. Bind together pages with post-its or otherwise indicate which bits you do not want instructor to look at. One item fulfilled if it shows you have responded to suggestions and been working consistently between classes.

[\(examples\)](#)

D4. (2 items) web- "Clippings" -- To keep up with current developments—and get you into the habit of this for your lifelong learning— look for articles related to educational, professional, and personal change in newspapers, magazines, journals, and websites. [Especially look out for a\) news items that show how commonly evaluation is happening or is needed; b\) initiatives that extend action research beyond education to professional and personal change \(thus supplementing the educational emphasis in course readings\); or c\) research related to one's own course project that might be of wider interest to others.](#)

Find the article on the web, write an annotation, then post it on [face2facers' or hybrid section's page](#) or [onliners' page](#). Annotations should convey your own reflections on specific points in the article and say enough to allow others to judge whether they want to follow the link and read more. Copy the annotations into your PD workbook. Aim for one every 2 weeks. (3-5 postings makes 1 item; 6+ makes 2 items). Read the postings of others and think about the issues raised.

[\(examples\)](#)

D5. Process review -- [After](#) the last class, identify 4-6 examples that capture the process of development of your work and thinking about Action research for educational, professional, and personal change. Journaling, freewriting, drafts, etc. may be included, that is, not simply your best products. Explain your choices in a 250-500 word cover note (~~included also on your wikipedia~~) and through annotations (large post-its are a good way to do this for hard copy version). Submit with your PD workbook.

[\(examples\)](#)

E. In-office or phone Conferences (2 items)

for discussion of comments on assignments (see [Dialogue around written work](#)), ideas for course projects, your PD workbook, and the course as a whole. They are important to ensure timely resolution of misunderstandings and to get a recharge if you get behind. Appointments missed without notifying



instructor in advance count as a participation item not fulfilled.

F. Peer commentary on your buddy's work in each 4-week period (posted on your own assignment checklist) and on another student's draft report (with copy posted on [peer share wiki \(f2f & hybrid\)](#) or [peer share wiki \(ol\)](#)) (=4 items)

Peer commentary on buddy's written assignments: put your feedback right into the file, send it back to your buddy partner by email, and also post it on your own assignment checklist in the box next to Participation item F.

Draft reports (near end of the course): After the draft report is completed, you should comment on another student's draft. Include a copy of your comments in (or linked to) your personal 693checklist. When you decide what approaches to commenting you ask for as a writer or what approaches you use as a commentator, keep Elbow and Belanoff's (2000) variety of responses in mind. (Elbow 1981, chapters 3 and 13 on sharing and feedback is relevant here as well.) After all, although some advisors (instructors) fill the margins with specific suggestions for clarification and changes, the response of students to the suggestions often goes no further than touching up—the desired re-thinking and revising of ideas and writing rarely happen. It seems a better use of an advisor's time to capture where the writer was taking you and make a few suggestions that might clarify and extend the impact on readers of what was written. As writers, we all value comments that show us that we have been listened to and our voice, however tentative, has been heard.

([examples](#) of commentary on draft reports; peer commentary on your buddy's work is new in 2010)

## Other Processes in the Course

### [Submission of Writing in a Professional and Instructor-friendly manner](#)

- Written assignments are due at the time of class (or for completely online sections: on the **first day of the week of the session in which they are due**).

### [Dialogue around written work](#)

Rationale for the Assessment system

The different assignments are commented on then "graded" either OK or revise & resubmit. An automatic B+ is awarded for 80% (approx.) of written assignments OK/RNR and participation items fulfilled. The rationale for this system is to keep the focus of our teaching/learning interactions on your developing through the semester. It allows more space for students and instructor to appreciate and learn from what each other is saying and thinking. My goal is to work with everyone to achieve the 80% satisfactory completion level. Students who progress steadily towards that goal during the semester usually end up producing work that meets the criteria in the syllabus for a higher grade than a B+.

Use the Assignment Check-list to keep track of your own progress. To gauge whether you are on track for at least a B+, simply note whether you have submitted 80% of the assignments by the dates marked and attended 80% of the classes. If you are behind do NOT hide and do NOT end the semester without a completion contract. You are free to do more than 80% of the assignments and fulfill more than 80% of

the participation items, but it does not hurt your grade to choose strategically to miss some in light of your other work and life happenings. Ask for clarification if needed to get clear and comfortable with this system.

[Technological competencies](#) you will need for this course.

Learning Community and comments on the wiki

Individually and as a group, you already know a lot about educational, professional, and personal change. You can learn a lot from each other and from teaching others what you know. Contributing to and responding to entries on the discussion posts feature on each session page can help the community develop.

Activities for "self-affirming" learning

Students already know a lot. If this knowledge is elicited and affirmed, they are more able to learn from others. Activities such as [freewriting](#) bring to the surface students' insight that they were not able, at first, to acknowledge. Over the course of the semester, students are encouraged to recognize that there is insight in every response and share their not-yet-stable aspects. The trust required takes time to establish.

Tools for Action Research Process

Each week introduces a different tool or practice for aspects of the [Action Research](#) process, which, in brief, involves evaluation and inquiry, reflection and dialogue, planning, and constituency building in order to get actions implemented, take stock of the outcomes, and continue developing your efforts. Handouts on the tools are linked to the course website and this wiki when they are ready.

Tools that are introduced for

- Evaluation: [Critical Incident Questionnaire](#), [Evaluation Clock](#), Basic logic of statistical analysis, [+Δ Feedback](#) (appreciation, thing to be developed);
- Inquiry: Inquiry based on Q of [KAQ](#);
- Reflection: [Freewriting](#), [KAQ](#), [Focused Conversation](#), [Supportive listening](#), [Strategic Personal Planning](#), [Historical scan](#);
- Dialogue: Wiki-based probing of [KAQ](#), [Small group process](#), [Focused Conversation](#), [Jig-saw discussion of readings](#), [Historical scan](#)
- Planning: [KAQ](#), [Evaluation Clock](#), Strategic [Personal/Participatory](#) Planning

[Guided freewriting](#)

[Think-pair-share](#)

Taking stock

*during semester ("formative evaluation")*

- Through activities, such as the [Critical Incident Questionnaire](#), I encourage students to approach this course as a work-in-progress. Instead of harboring criticisms to submit after the fact, we can find opportunities to affirm what is working well and suggest directions for further development.

*at end of semester*

- This involves multiple angles on course evaluation, including written evaluations during class, Process reviews and planning for your ongoing PD. With the aim of:
  - a) feeding into your future learning (and other work), you take stock of your process(es) over the semester;
  - b) feeding into my future teaching (and future learning about how students learn), instructors take stock of how you, the students, have learned.