

Action Research for Educational, Professional, & Personal Change, CCT693, Spring '09

Course evaluation, Part II

Building on/in your comments from the other side, write out neatly a synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) evaluating this course. Please make comments both to help the instructor develop the course in the future and to enable some third party to appreciate the course's strengths and weaknesses. (Imagine a reader who may not be willing to wade through all the notes on the other side, but is willing to do more than look at numerical averages.) Among other things you might comment on the overall content and progression of classes, the in-class activities, and the dialogue around written work.

Strengths

- Dialogue around action research work in progress
- evaluation clock and K+QF
- (New tools - learning how to use them)

Weaknesses

- Too much time spent on work in progress presentations and helping others w/ their projects. Would have appreciated more engagement in AR case studies
- too many steps and tasks to get tangled up with that affect focus on working out your AR project

(example summarized clippings like these)
Sharing but that often happens naturally

we didn't discuss or share these or discuss that class

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~~please~~~~redo~~

examples +

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Overall, this course helped me develop a more nuanced understanding of what action research is and what it can look like in a variety of settings. This course also helped me apply ideas about creative thinking (that were relatively new to me) to a contextualized setting. Part of what made this course effective in these areas was the activities, discussions and tools that were used during this active class. The use of these active strategies, which I could use in and out of my action research progress, helped me understand how action research really functions. The emphasis on reflection helped me both understand the importance of reflection and helped me use new reflection tools.

One struggle in this course was the confusing nature of the syllabus and framework. Once I understood the way the syllabus worked I was able to follow the goals of the course better, but figuring out the syllabus and assignments took a number of weeks. While the examples for assignments were extremely helpful, I really struggled to complete assignments with no examples because I often did not know how to begin. Also, there were many readings that we never discussed - I would have liked to know the priority of the readings to plan my engagement with them more effectively.

Action Research for Educational, Professional, & Personal Change, CCT693, Spring '08

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Dotted lines for writing the synthetic statement.

I think it is very important that professor understand each individual student - just like in many articles that we read for 693. Each articles have it own problem - you can not solve all problem with one solution - I'm sure we all know and can say it - But is it possible for a person to understand and see it?

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This class provided an excellent overview and engagement in the process of making change. We covered a multitude of tools and methods for planning, implementing, and evaluating change on a personal and organizational level. The information covered is transferable to a range of environments and contexts.

The biggest challenge was that sometimes the course structure and activities were a bit unclear, and ~~the~~ ~~process~~ ~~was~~ ~~confusing~~. This is strange to say, since there is so much information available on the wiki, and the syllabus is very detailed. Sometimes it was hard to figure out what information was most important, and to work through it all.

But this is a very new course, and all the info was there and available, it simply took some time to sort out.

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Embracing ambiguity is an important concept in CCT. Though it can be frustrating, in the end when we look back we are able to really see progress. This course reflects this process. Initially, the A.R. Diagram doesn't make a bit of sense, and Peter did indeed warn us about this. We first engaged in a compressed version of A.R. which, to a small degree, clarified some of the stages. We only began to make sense of it all, I believe when we experienced the presentations of others who used the language that Peter had laid out for us (e.g. continuity, epicyclic evaluation).

I think the Buddy System or perhaps Trios would aid in the process by helping with a number of the unnecessarily frustrating pieces that people have the habit of letting get in the way. Trios can email to remind of assignments, share their mid-week "a-ha" or lightbulb moment that can be transformative, and can also review/dit each others' work. This would also put an emphasis on collaborative dialogue and reflection in an ongoing manner (throughout week, not just during the class sessions themselves).

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The overall content of the class is helpful because not only are you learning the Action Research process, but you are learning about how to effectively implement change within your personal life, on your job, etc. Each tool in the process brings clarity and a better understanding of what you need to know in order to affect change. The progression of classes is relatively quick. It's wise to stay on top of ALL assignments and participation items in order to not fall behind and become frustrated.

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The action research class has been more of a semester long journey than a class, in the traditional sense. The experience of developing your ideas and desires into a formative plan, which you then evaluate is a rollercoaster of an experience. There are highs around ideas and planning and lows when roadblocks are met. However, the most valuable part of the class is learning tools to overcome obstacles and to look at them in new ways.

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The more I stuck with the course the greater appreciation I had for it. The course was learning in its best sense - participatory, authentic & hands-on. I feel that many participants in the course actually took away big ideas that they will use in their own life long learning.

I think one comment that I would make is that in the beginning I was completely lost. ~~I'm~~ I'm not sure why. ~~I~~ I think that the compressed AR project could focus around something more relevant - maybe it could be around a simple personal change we wanted to implement. I also think that discussing Schmuck as a class would have made me feel more grounded in the final project.

I liked the use an introduction to a number of tools. I think class presentations should maybe take up one class instead of two. I also think that we could have practiced tools ~~and~~ which are more complex such as teamwork: KAQ.

Another note I thought the wiki was a bit difficult to navigate maybe taking 5-10 min in the beginning would have helped. Thanks so much for the class!

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Get acquainted with confusion and reverse mainstream thinking about outcome and output. Action Research is a course focused on the planning of changes, on undertaking which continues beyond the constraints of the class, including alteration of course work. Approach assignments open-mindedly and with at the assumption that you are to understand immediately what is expected of you. Course work is flexible and deliberate. It is required, and requires of you to reflect on your patterns of thought and action as a practitioner and responsible citizen in society.

After each class, use a cheap journal/notebook to write thoughts/questions/likes/dislikes about what occurred in 693 — and how it relates or doesn't relate to your project. You can track your thinking and actualize change through this method. Resubmit assignments for your own clarification and take heed of the Professor's guidance as your AR has been generated from this course and though you have many freedoms, you are working within an infrastructure that is well-practiced and understood by the instructor. Meet (sat) personal goals to stay motivated; pair up and rely on Buddies to remain accountable & ~~assist~~ obtain resources wherever they are available.

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The AR Course allowed me to ~~use~~ identify & use more readily the tools of the reflective practitioner. Each component of AR Cycle allowed me to identify the specifics of my work; identifying change, designing opportunities for change, evaluating these opportunities and developing both a personal & professional process to encourage systematic growth and change. This course met my expectations and challenged me to reflect on and develop a course of action that was intentional & also practical.

I think the main strength of the course & the process was that it pushed us to design something that we were connected to through ^{classroom} tools & activities, peer connections and also reflective practices. This course allowed me the opportunity to reflect on change systematically and also personally.

I feel that this reflective component helped drive the work and will continue to drive my work beyond the course.

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I feel that by utilizing the AR process I have a better sense of where I want to develop my work (and also myself w/in the work). I think if I were to take this course again, I would reflect more on my own personal process & how it relates to the goal of my work.

What have you learned about making an activity-based class stimulating and productive? What would your advice be to prospective students about how to get the most from a course like this?

For this class to be the most effective, one must come w/ the mindset of relating & connecting personal work to the process of the class. Without a specific focus/and/or ownership of the process, the tasks/activities may lose some of their value!

2. General evaluation: How did the course meet or not meet your expectations? How did your attitude to doing the course change through the semester? How do you think the course could be improved? What was special about this course (negative & positive)? How does it compare with other courses? What would be your overall recommendation to prospective students?

I feel that this course met & exceeded my expectations. I had the opportunity to work through a problem and ^{the reason for} change that I wanted to bring about. I think having a focus on personal commitment & process would be a good addition to the course (ie not only building the engagement of the collective but also the individual and the consistency & perseverance that is needed to see the change/proc.

3. Re-read the course description (from the syllabus). Comment on how well the goals expressed there were met and make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

CATALOG: 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.

I believe that for the most part we were engaged as reflective practitioners in our role as learners, constituency builders, & planners. I would have liked more class time on analysis in thinking further about not only quantitative analysis but also qualitative analysis & how to incorporate this more into our process.

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I worked harder and concentrated on organization as a personal goal in addition to AR objectives to do this course again more efficiently. I would need help with the overload of submissions. Personal obstacles have been time management though more concretely, taking initiatives.

What have you learned about making an activity-based class stimulating and productive? What would your advice be to prospective students about how to get the most from a course like this?

The range of tools and activities are diverse and varied, they challenge students in a variety of contexts and capacities; they incorporate various forms of media, reflection, and interaction. To pay attention; to solicit advice & help from class.

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Different from others - however, I did not have expectations for this class except to implement a desired change - which was not the focus of AR in 693. This should be a goal discussed through class. Inform students of "Dialogue" session criterion, it is a good tool that needs more preamble to work w/in time allotted.

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I would show more tools for evaluation, a struggling point. Validate the creative & innovative aspects of thought & dialogue - especially in constituency building, to broaden interest. Pursue personal change as consistent and contingent with my professional endeavor merit for long-term adaptation / improvement.

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I would have allotted a weekly time to do assignments - I feel that not keeping up on my work made this course unnecessarily stressful.

What have you learned about making an activity-based class stimulating and productive? What would your advice be to prospective students about how to get the most from a course like this?

Take to follow students; your professor - also try every tool out or an idea that came to you because of the course to learn how to have your own facilitation skills.

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It exceeded my expectations in the fun I had in class; the usefulness of the reading; activities. (I want to keep a PD workbook from now on.) I was expected a hard core research course but saw that the course fit into more of my own views of ed. research. (Too bad the dept of ed doesn't have this perspective.)

3. Re-read the course description (from the syllabus). Comment on how well the goals expressed there were met and make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

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I think it's pretty accurate. I don't think we really learned any quantitative methods of research - so I wouldn't include that part. ~~But~~ I would highlight the participatory focus of the course both in practice & in the study of AR - which is lacking in many ed-research models. I'm not sure if we looked so much on the evaluation of changes as I think we focused on designing an AR project.

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Frustration with myself was my major obstacle, I feel as though I was partially able to overcome that in terms of my project. However in terms of organization and staying on-top of assignments I was not able to be successful or overcome my frustration with continually falling behind.

What have you learned about making an activity-based class stimulating and productive? What would your advice be to prospective students about how to get the most from a course like this?

A mix of individual and collaborative activities maintains interest/focus on your own project but also allows for outside opinions. My advice would be to learn how to work with a syllabus from the beginning and ask questions.

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I had no idea what to expect from this course but now feel I have an understanding of what action research is. The personal journey this class forces you to take, through evaluation, revisions and overcoming obstacles is very unique.

3. Re-read the course description (from the syllabus). Comment on how well the goals expressed there were met and make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

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That syllabus description is accurate. However I was under the impression by the description I read that the course would be more education focused.

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1. Start with a self-evaluation: Did you achieve your personal goals? How would you have proceeded differently if you were doing this course again? What have been your major personal obstacles to learning more from this course?

Yes I achieved my goal of staying on task with the assignments and working diligently to learn as quickly as I could to move on. One thing I would do differently is to keep up with more of the participation items in a timely manner. A personal obstacle is staying organized.

What have you learned about making an activity-based class stimulating and productive? What would your advice be to prospective students about how to get the most from a course like this?

I have learned to take the time to pick a meaningful topic. This way the activities are closer to you and you'll be more invested in your project. This would be my advice to prospective students.

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The course met my expectations by producing new interesting tools that could help me move along in my project. My attitude shifted many times. I became frustrated at one point when I was trying to build a constituency. My recommendation for other students is to make sure you read and re-read the course description.

3. Re-read the course description (from the syllabus). Comment on how well the goals expressed there were met and make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

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The course description sounds very complicated, but in all actuality the course turns out to be more exciting. Goals were met. Everything expressed above was touched on. These ideas could possibly be better met by describing which tools in the course fit where.

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Obstacle - Time (isn't it always?) I initially thought that my work in 693 would directly support my synthesis work which I felt needed more of my attention (maybe 6590-3590). However, once I realized that 693 could also indirectly support my synthesis I turned out the balance.

What have you learned about making an activity-based class stimulating and productive? What would your advice be to prospective students about how to get the most from a course like this?

Stay ahead and do not get too focused on the end product or bogged down w/ part assignments getting behind and consequently playing catch-up, devalues the intention behind the assignments.

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I always experience this hill (or maybe it's a plateau) where I need to be re-energized about 2/3 of the way through. Buddy system was a great suggestion and it's wonderful for us to navigate the course through collaboration and problem-solving.

3. Re-read the course description (from the syllabus). Comment on how well the goals expressed there were met and make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

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-> I feel that there is a large emphasis placed on evaluation and perhaps more tools need to be explicitly linked to this focus. I wonder if informal (personal) contexts can effectively be explored in this course.

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I did get a lot out of the course, and found it very useful. But I ~~feel~~ felt far short of my goals, and didn't engage in ~~the~~ the level of work and commitment I wanted.

What have you learned about making an activity-based class stimulating and productive? What would your advice be to prospective students about how to get the most from a course like this?

Having clear specific steps in the process, and tools for each step is great. My advice to students would be to ~~stay~~ stick to the process outlined in the syllabus, and not go off track.

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The course met my expectations and provides some great information! materials. In terms of improvements: the syllabus/wiki can be overwhelming, making it challenging to find materials and sometimes being confusing.

3. Re-read the course description (from the syllabus). Comment on how well the goals expressed there were met and make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

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The goals are generally met well. Possible improvements → I'm sorry, more really came to mind! It was a very effective class.

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1. Start with a self-evaluation: Did you achieve your personal goals? How would you have proceeded differently if you were doing this course again? What have been your major personal obstacles to learning more from this course?

Yes I have achieved my personal goals. I would do many things differently. I would spend more time reflection on my experience with ^{non action} research. My major obstacle has been asking for clearer direction and reach out for clarification.

What have you learned about making an activity-based class stimulating and productive? What would your advice be to prospective students about how to get the most from a course like this?

Plan at the beginning of the course and try to stay on task by using the syllabus as a guide. Do not miss more than 2 assignments or you'll fall through the cracks.

2. General evaluation: How did the course meet or not meet your expectations? How did your attitude to doing the course change through the semester? How do you think the course could be improved? What was special about this course (negative & positive)? How does it compare with other courses? What would be your overall recommendation to prospective students?

I enjoyed the course and the dynamics of the classroom. I learned my strengths and weakness as a prospective researcher. I appreciate how supportive students are.

3. Re-read the course description (from the syllabus). Comment on how well the goals expressed there were met and make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

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The goals were clear and explained. In spite of that, I would recommend discussing them again mid semester.

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No -

If I have to redo this class, I would pick a different topic. Personal obstacles - pretty much everything.

What have you learned about making an activity-based class stimulating and productive? What would your advice be to prospective students about how to get the most from a course like this?

2. General evaluation: How did the course meet or not meet your expectations? How did your attitude to doing the course change through the semester? How do you think the course could be improved? What was special about this course (negative & positive)? How does it compare with other courses? What would be your overall recommendation to prospective students?

Not meet - hate myself even more. Things got worst.

I don't have problems in other class but I do with this class - why?

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I feel that professor need to make students feel comfortable

coming in to class and understand assignments & materials.

(eg. maybe pro. need to explain what the next assignment is

and what he expects from that assignment) => by going through the syllabus w/ the students.

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1. Start with a self-evaluation: Did you achieve your personal goals? How would you have proceeded differently if you were doing this course again? What have been your major personal obstacles to learning more from this course?

My ~~goal~~ primary goal for this course was to develop and carry out a plan of action that I found useful. This course forced me to stop & reflect more than I would have on my own. If I were to take it again I would see how each assignment builds on the next.

What have you learned about making an activity-based class stimulating and productive? What would your advice be to prospective students about how to get the most from a course like this?

I have seen how having activities that are both useful in the development of the course and can be utilized in other areas is useful and interesting. However, this requires both student engagement and letting go of "the grade".

2. General evaluation: How did the course meet or not meet your expectations? How did your attitude to doing the course change through the semester? How do you think the course could be improved? What was special about this course (negative & positive)? How does it compare with other courses? What would be your overall recommendation to prospective students?

In some ways this course met my expectations - I leave with a stronger & deeper understanding of how critical & creative thinking relates to action research. However, I also feel like the struggle to understand the nature of the assignments sometimes got in the way of the deeper thinking.

3. Re-read the course description (from the syllabus). Comment on how well the goals expressed there were met and make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

CATALOG: 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.

Met: the participatory nature of action research.

Not met: the evaluation of changes in practice, policy & ~~more~~ info on institutional learning. While the mini-statistics day was helpful, it would have been more useful to talk more about how to utilize both informal & formal eval.

Action Research for Educational, Professional, & Personal Change, CCT693, Spring '09

Course evaluation Part I -- The primary goal of here is to make notes as prep. for Part II, a synthetic statement. Nevertheless, try to be legible because some reviewers might read these as well.

1. Start with a self-evaluation: Did you achieve your personal goals? How would you have proceeded differently if you were doing this course again? What have been your major personal obstacles to learning more from this course?

(AR)
 I set out to learn how to do action research. I did develop understanding of the process, but because I am not currently engaged or implementing the AR, I feel the rewards of "learn by doing" were not reaped. I appreciated in-class modeling and practice with AR tools.
 Personal obstacle: the open-ended aspects of assignments caused me to fall behind initially.
 What have you learned about making an activity-based class stimulating and productive? What would your advice be to prospective students about how to get the most from a course like this?

Have a sense of what you want to do ahead of time (hence reflect + dialogue first). Do a "condensed" AR even at individual personal level * so you can gain confidence with tools and fully engage in AR timed to cycle of semester. Real-world constraints in implementation caused

2. General evaluation: How did the course meet or not meet your expectations? How did your attitude to my doing the course change through the semester? How do you think the course could be improved? What was special about this course (negative & positive)? How does it compare with other courses? What would be your overall recommendation to prospective students?

The cycles and tools really "clicked" for me as I wrote my outline and paper - applying experiences and research to a coherent plan + evaluation, so I appreciate the course goals and progression from "abstract" to something I can own-plan-
 Course: is less structured so students need to have learning style that fits

3. Re-read the course description (from the syllabus). Comment on how well the goals expressed there were met and make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

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there was clear and techniques [framework]
 Ongoing connection of tools and ~~reading~~ to cycle, epicycle.
 I ~~was~~ have appreciated reading case studies of AR but would have liked stronger connection in class. Participatory design of tools - there was general participation w/ colleagues but no small group work to suggest collaboration in design of practices. For example, practice in designing evaluation w/ other tool or creating a question to evaluate