

**Department of Learning and Teaching  
Action Research Summary  
Fall 2009, Spring 2010, Summer 2010**

**I. Overall:**

The Action Research rubric is included in the *Learning and Teaching Research Handbook*. The new rubric provides the opportunity for faculty to give detailed feedback to students and to determine who passed and who did not. Reviewers score each criterion 1-4 according to well-specified descriptions for each number. Criteria are weighted after scoring takes place; readers do not see the weighting as they score. The rubric was piloted in Fall 2009 and refined for Spring and Summer 2010.

For 2009-2010, the passing score was set at 62.5. Of the 32 candidates who completed an action research project (4 in Fall 2009, 21 in Spring 2010, and 7 in Summer 2010), 28 met this cut off score and four did not. The four candidates who did not achieve the cut score for 2009-2010 were given feedback on how to improve their AR projects. At this time, three of the four have revised and resubmitted their AR projects and all passed. The fourth candidate has not yet re-submitted the AR project and has been contacted by a faculty member.

Scores had to be reconciled in two cases because of widely disparate scores. A third reader scored the rubric and that score was averaged with the higher score of the first two readers.

**II. Cut Scores:**

The committee determined the cut score schedule to “raise the bar” each year until it is 75%. At that time, faculty will determine whether to continue increasing the cut score or to maintain at 75%. Following is the schedule of cut scores:

2009-2010 = 62.5%

2010-2011 = 68.75%

2011-2012 = 75%

Further analysis was undertaken to check 2009-2010 scores against these cut scores. As mentioned above, four candidates did not reach the cut score of 62.5 in 2009-2010. Their scores were well below the cut score (37.5, 45.5, and 50). Three of these are included in the following analysis of rubric criteria.

Comparing 2009-2010 candidate performance with the cut scores planned for the next two years:

2010-2011 (68.5% cut score) – two more candidates (6 total) would not have passed (65 and 66.5 scores)

2011-2012 (75% cut score) – five more candidates (9 total) would not have passed (65, 66.5, 71.5, 71.5 and 74)

### III. Analysis of Rubric Criteria for Spring and Summer 2010:

Following is a frequency distribution of number of scores by rubric criterion.

	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Statement of Problem, Understanding of Context and Research Question</b>	20	29	7	0
<b>Literature Review (Guiding Theories and Research )</b>	19	25	11	1
<b>Action and Assessment Plan: First Iteration</b>	18	27	9	2
<b>Evolution of Research question, Identification of Problem, Rationale, and Significance</b>	19	28	7	2
<b>Action and Assessment Plan: Second Iteration</b>	24	24	6	2
<b>Data Analysis, Reflection, and Presentation of Findings</b>	15	32	7	2
<b>Discussion</b>	17	29	8	2
<b>Overall Reflection &amp; Conclusion</b>	12	30	11	3
<b>Quality of Writing</b>	17	25	14	0

### IV. Inter-rater Reliability:

In Spring 2010, four full time faculty and one adjunct faculty member participated in an inter-rater reliability exercise with the director of Assessment Support. Each of the faculty reviewed the same action research paper and then met to discuss how each of the criteria were rated and to resolve any differences in scoring. This was a very useful exercise in terms of consistency in scoring among these evaluators. It had the additional benefit of informing some refinements to the rubric. The rubric used for Spring and Summer 2010 was finalized in March 2010.

### V. Refined Reporting to Students:

**Advancement to Candidacy:** Following successful completion of EDUC 500 and the AR or Thesis proposal, students advance to candidacy. The AR committee refined the letter to candidates that is formally sent from the department chair. A record of the candidates is maintained in the department and in the Office of Assessment Support.

**AR Results:** Rob Rankin, Office of Assessment Support, developed an on-line version (in Qualtrics) of the Action Research Rubric, which was piloted in Summer 2010. Based on the letter that had previously been sent to candidates, Rob developed a letter

that will pull the data that have been input into Qualtrics. The related mail merge permits the direct mailing of the rubric criteria scores and the final score to be sent to the candidate with a copy for the advisor. Rob also entered Spring 2010 scores; the database now has Spring and Summer 2010.

#### IV. Recommendations:

1. Require that all reviewers participate in at least one inter-rater reliability session. Reviewers were very consistent in rating these categories:
  - Literature Review
  - Evolution of Research Question, Identification of Problem, Rationale, and Significance
  - Data analysis, Reflection and Presentation of FindingsFor these categories, there were a number of instances where one reviewer rated the work a 2 and the other reviewer rated the work a 4, or a 1 versus a 3:
  - Understanding of Problem, Understanding of Context and Research Question (5 discrepancies between readers)
  - Action and Assessment Plan: First Iteration (3 discrepancies between readers)
  - Action and Assessment Plan: Second Iteration (1 discrepancy between readers)
  - Discussion (1 discrepancy between reviewers)
  - Overall Reflection and Conclusion (2 discrepancies between readers)
2. Ensure the use of the existing AR rubric for IMPP and M.Ed. Special Education candidates' projects. Determine if modifications need to be made for Montessori and finalize that rubric if changes are made.
3. Track outcomes for those who do not pass. Do they revise their AR projects and pass later? Do they graduate?
4. Examine data from Master's thesis option candidates. Compare results to ensure that the rigor and quality of both routes are comparable.