Intro to Action Research in Special Education
EDSE 285

Fall 2025   Section 04   Hybrid   3 Unit(s)   08/20/2025 to 12/08/2025   Modified 08/25/2025

👤 Contact Information

Instructor information:

- **Instructor:** Andrea Golloher
- **Office Location:** SH 235
- **Telephone:** (408) 924-5791
- **Email:** andrea.golloher@sjsu.edu (preferred mode of communication)
- **Office Hours:** By appointment

Course details:

- **Class Days/Time:** Mondays, 7:00-9:45 (see course schedule for in-person dates)
- **Classroom:** SH 211
- **Prerequisites:** Admission to the MA program
- **Note:** EDSE 285 satisfies the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)for Graduate Studies & Research (GS&R)

🕐 Course Information

Course Description

This course is designed as an advanced seminar for master's degree candidates to review and analyze literature related to issues in the field of special education with the goal of developing a plan to address a problem of practice experienced in the field. By the end of the semester, students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of and an ability to interpret, apply, and disseminate current and emerging research, theory, legislation, policy, and practice. This course expands upon the scope and depth of the preliminary credential coursework.

Note that we will be working individually and/or in group activities most classes. Bring your laptop and be prepared to work on your project or the assigned activities each week. When there is time left after instruction, you can work on your project in class.

Course Format: Hybrid

This course will adopt a hybrid delivery format, including synchronous in-person meetings and - synchronous or asynchronous online learning opportunities. Students will need access to a laptop computer or tablet device with internet connectivity and video capability.

Canvas Learning Management System

All course materials (announcements, syllabus, handouts, assignment instructions, lecture videos, etc.) will be available on Canvas. You are responsible for regularly checking both Canvas and your SJSU email (the one that ends with @sjsu.edu) to learn of any updates. For Canvas support, please review these [Canvas Student Resources. (https://www.sjsu.edu/cfeti/software/canvas/student-resources/index.php)](https://www.sjsu.edu/cfeti/software/canvas/student-resources/index.php)

Technology Requirements

All written work must be turned in using Microsoft Office Word (or Excel, for the Research Matrix). The Microsoft Office Suite is available *for free* from the university. If you do not have Microsoft Office on your computer, please refer to [IT Services Software to Download (https://www.sjsu.edu/it/services/applications/index.php)](https://www.sjsu.edu/it/services/applications/index.php) for information on how to download the software on your device.

If you do not have access to a computer with the necessary features to participate in class, please look into the [free equipment loaning program](#) offered by SJSU. There are also computer labs for student use located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

Library Liaison

Dr. Mantra Roy, [mantra.roy @sjsu.edu](mailto:mantra.roy@sjsu.edu)

As you seek out literature on your topic, you may wish to speak with our library liaison, who can help you narrow your topic and identify keywords that will significantly reduce the amount of time you spend searching through databases.

Writing Support

Please make use of the writing support available through the university. Resources available on campus include:

- [SJSU Writing Center (http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/)](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/)
- [Peer Connections (http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/)](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/)

Accessible Education Center

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. [Presidential Directive 97-03](#) requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center](#) (AEC) to establish a record of their disability.

SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services

The SJSU Counseling and Psychological Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Carlos in the new Student Wellness Center, Room 300B. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide confidential consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit the [Counseling and Psychological Services website.](#)

🖥 Course Description and Requisites

Review of existing scholarship in special education and appropriate design of an action research project.

Prerequisite(s): Department consent.

Note(s): This course satisfies graduate-level GWAR in this master's program.

Letter Graded

✳ Classroom Protocols

Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

The proliferation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools present both interesting new opportunities for educators and raise concerns regarding developing a teaching practice. Students should be aware of the following:

- AI platforms rely on language patterns to predict what an answer to a prompt should look like. They aren't "thinking" about the right response in a way a student would.
- AI platforms excel at predictive text and pattern recognition but struggle with accuracy. ChatGPT will even make up things (it "hallucinates" information) that sound convincing but aren't true. Internet-connected platforms have not solved this problem. If the user is looking for factual information, assume every output includes stuff that is made-up.
- AI platforms have bias. They have been trained on datasets that contain worldviews and assumptions and will replicate those ways of thinking about the world. Critical thinking strategies are especially important when engaging with AI-generated text.
- Apps such as ChatGPT depersonalize your writing. Overreliance may lead to a lack of voice and distinctive style—rhetorical strategies that are crucial for effective writing.

With this being said, Students are encouraged to use AI tools to support their learning, such as brainstorming ideas, conducting research, or drafting assignments. Final submissions must reflect the student's own understanding and adhere to the academic integrity standards of this course.. Students are invited to use AI platforms to help *prepare* for assignments and projects, e.g., to help with brainstorming or to get ideas for how to start a project. You are also welcomed to use AI tools to help *revise and edit* your work, e.g., to help identify flaws in reasoning or spot confusing or underdeveloped paragraphs. However, because the AI does not and cannot know your students, you must use your professional knowledge to refine the output to reflect the needs of the very real children in your classroom.

When using AI for these purposes I ask that you include an AI statement that reveals which model you accessed (Poe.com, You.com, Copilot, ChatGPT-o, DALL-E-3, Claude, Bard, Perplexity, etc.) with correct citation (you can ask the AI to cite itself in APA7 to help you). The [AI Writer Toolbox (https://sites.google.com/sjsu.edu/aiwritertoolbox/home?authuser=0)](https://sites.google.com/sjsu.edu/aiwritertoolbox/home?authuser=0) provides guidance on using AI tools ethically and effectively in academic work. **Teacher candidates should never input specific details about the students they serve into an AI tool.**

We also understand that some students may have concerns about using AI tools in this course, whether due to privacy, ethics, or personal reasons. Your choices are valid and respected. I am committed to supporting your success, whether you choose to use AI tools or not. You can also access resources like the SJSU Writing Center or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Please feel free to contact me via email or before or after class if you would like to discuss these issues. I'm here to help.

▤ Program Information

LCOE Department of Special Education Mission
We prepare candidates to be transformative leaders in the field, and lifelong learners who respond to racism, ableism, bigotry, and prejudice in their schools and communities. To this end, we center anti-racist and anti-ableist policies and practices in our teaching, research, and service to disrupt systemic racism that has historically prevented full inclusion and equity for students with disabilities including our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) students, staff, and faculty. We engage culturally sustaining pedagogies and the principles of UDL in our coursework and fieldwork, partnering with our local districts to push for the success of students with disabilities in inclusive settings.

LCOE Department of Special Education Program Learning Outcomes
- **PLO 1** Assess and identify the educational needs and strengths of students with disabilities from diverse socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- **PLO 2** Critically evaluate pedagogy, curricula and instructional materials grounded in quality indicators of evidence-based practices for students with disabilities.
- **PLO 3** Plan, design, implement, and monitor linguistically and culturally appropriate instruction that meets the unique needs of students with disabilities.
- **PLO 4** Apply knowledge of the purpose, characteristics, and appropriate use of different types of assessments used for special education eligibility, placement, and service selection.
- **PLO 5** Utilize research-based knowledge and theoretical, conceptual and evidence-based practices related to individuals with disabilities to improve services and instruction in the field.

◎ Course Goals

Course Goals

This course is designed as a supervised study in the field of special education. At the core of the course is a commitment to professional excellence and fostering inclusive, culturally sustaining, democratic principles of education for students with disabilities.

Graduate students in this master's program, as professional educators, must be able to make informed and effective decisions, promote asset-framed practices, and respect and value differences across the intersections of disability, race, culture, language, gender, sexuality, and class. We expect that graduate students will be well prepared in understanding conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underlie special education and disability as well as effective practices that meet the individual needs of all learners. Graduate students will develop leadership skills and act as change agents in schools for students with disabilities, families, and other educational stakeholders.

As the first of two courses in the Master's in Special Education program, this course will provide graduate students with an overview of (a) action research in special education, (b) current research and theory in the field of special education, and (c) the knowledge and skills to effectively set up an action research project with appropriate attention to the existing scholarship in the field of special education.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO):

This course is designed to address PLO 5: Utilize research-based knowledge and theoretical, conceptual, and evidence-based practices related to individuals with disabilities to improve services and instruction in the field (TPE 3)

📊 Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

To support students' development of the skills required to demonstrate mastery in the PLOs above, this course will target the following CLOs. By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of how to search for and review literature related to questions of teaching practices for students with disabilities
2. Interpret, apply, and disseminate current and emerging research, theory, legislation, policy, and practice for students with disabilities
3. Discuss the organization and processes of instruction in programs serving individuals with disabilities
4. Review, critically analyze and synthesize research to reflect on one's practice and commitment to equity and social justice in the classroom.
5. Develop and apply an academic writing style to compose an action research project.

6. Apply APA 7th Edition standards when writing literature reviews, professional critiques, and Use APA 7th Edition formatting including double-spaced, Times New Roman, and one-inch margins.

📘 Course Materials

Required Text

Bruce, S. M., Prine, G. J. (2010). *Action research in special education: An inquiry approach for effective teaching and learning.* Teachers College Press.

Recommended Text

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Author. [6th edition is out-of-date]

Additional Readings

Additional Readings Assigned in Canvas Modules

☷ Course Requirements and Assignments

Course Requirements and Assignments

APA 7th Edition formatting must be used for all report components, including Times New Roman Font, 12-point, double-spaced, one-inch margins.

Assignment Name	Description	Point Total

Annotated Bibliography #1: **Empirical Research**	As readings and topics are assigned for sessions of this course, you will select 4 research articles related to your topic of interest in the field of disability and special education. These 4 articles should be **empirical**, meaning they involve research conducted to answer a question. They can utilize any methods (randomized control trials, single-case research design, qualitative, etc.) and should have been published after **2010.**	20 points

You will list the following for each article:

1.   Title of article

2.   Reference - citation using APA 7th Edition

3.   Inquiry question (from the study)

4.   Participants – who was included in the sample

5.   Method – how was study conducted – interventions, interview, etc.

6.   Results – two main findings of the study

7.   Implication of the Findings – what do findings tell us teacher/researchers, etc.

This research will be incorporated into the Introduction and Literature Review Sections of your final paper

Annotate Bibliography #2: **Theory and Framework**	You will select at least 1 article with a specific focus on theory. This article does not have to be empirical and may be older than your empirical research articles or from a textbook. You will list the following for each article: 1. Title of the article 2. Reference - citation of using APA 7th edition 3. First paragraph – briefly describe the theory or conceptual framework used in this study 4. Second paragraph - include how to incorporate this theory or framework into your project. *Used to incorporate into Conceptual Framework Section*	5 points
Literature Review	Using the empirical annotated bibliography that you generated for class, and following the template provided, you will develop a 5–10-page (max) literature review. The review will include 2-3 key areas or themes that you take away from the empirical studies and provide a summary of these articles followed by how these inform your project.	Draft – 2 points Final 40 points
Introduction	You will generate a 2–3-page paper that describes 1. Your teaching experiences that relate to your inquiry project, including your positionality; 2. Your problem of practice statement; and 3. Your inquiry question (see full guidelines below p.7 or on Canvas).	Draft – 1 points Final 10 points
Theoretical/Conceptual Framework	You will include an approximately 1 page paper on the framework you have chosen, highlighting the article you described in the annotated bibliography for this section and then how this framework informs your method/action research approach.	Draft – 1 points Final 5 points

Method/Approach	You will generate a 2–4-page paper (Parts 1- 4) that describes	Draft – 1 points
	1. Participants and Context of study – Who & Where	
	2. Action research design – procedure, steps - How	Final 15 points
	3. Data collection of your dependent variable - What	
	4. Data analysis – what stats will you use to analyze findings/results	
Action Research 285 Paper	You will combine the introduction, conceptual framework, literature review, and method sections into one final project document with a Title page. The final grade will be the total points from each assignment. It is your responsibility to incorporate edits/feedback on draft assignments that you receive from your instructor so that the final action research paper has the most up-to-date changes.	75 points from Assignments #4- #7
TOTAL CLASS POINTS		100 Points

✔ Grading Information

Letter Grade	Total Points
A+	96-100 points
A	95-86 points
A-	85-81 points
B+	80-76 points
B*	75-71 points

*Department grading policy

All MA students must receive GPA of 3.0 with grades of B or better in each MA class to be able to continue the coursework. An "Incomplete" is given only when 80% or more of the work has been completed.

Late Policy

It is part of the ethos of the Department of Special Education to prepare students for the role of special education teacher. This role requires careful attention be paid to due dates (e.g., a late IEP meeting can - and has - led to legal action). It is, therefore, important that you practice the skills necessary to manage your time as part of your coursework.

As professionals, however, we can anticipate challenges and request extensions within reason. Therefore, in order to encourage students to engage in proactive planning, I offer no questions asked extensions for requests made in writing (via email or using the Canvas messaging system) at least 48 hours in advance. These requests should include the following information:

- Clear subject line
  - *Requesting extension for [ASSIGNMENT]*
- The specific assignment for which you need an extension
  - *Dear Dr. Andy, I need an extension for [ASSIGNMENT] due on [DATE]*
- A proposal for the new due date, within 2 weeks of the existing due date
  - *I will be able to complete this assignment by [DATE - maximum of 2 weeks late]*
- A request for confirmation that this due date is satisfactory
  - *Will this revised due date work for you?*
- Sign off with your name, student ID number, and class
  - *Sincerely, Jane Doe (#########), EDSE 285*

Note, I will generally grant extensions for up to 2 weeks, BUT the activities in this class are sequenced to maximize learning and engagement. I may suggest an earlier submission date if I believe it would benefit your learning and completion of the rest of the assignments.

If I do not receive a request for an extension 48 or more hours *in advance*, grades will be reduced by 10% for each week late (e.g., days 1-7 late will be docked 10% of earned points, etc.). Late submissions, therefore, are preferable to no submission.

🏛 University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 (PDF) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance,

counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information (https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php)](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

📅 Course Schedule

When	Topic	Notes
In-Person Week #1 08/25/2025 7:00 PM - 9:45 PM SH 211	Introductions	• Syllabus & Canvas Overview • Introduction to Action Research
No Class: Holiday Week 2	Labor Day	No Class
In Person Week 3 09/08/2025 7:00 PM - 9:45 PM SH 211	Choosing a Topic	• Zoom session with librarian, Dr. Roy: How to search for research • How to pick a topic of inquiry: Problem of Pratice • Overview of Annotated Bibliography #1 • Readings: ○ Textbook Chapters 1 & 2 ○ Work assigned on Canvas
Work Week Week 4 - 9/15/2025 Online	Activity: Library Search	• Identify at least five articles related to a potential topic of inquiry • Readings: ○ Chapter 3 • **Due:** ○ Draft topic of inquiry
In Person Week 5 09/22/2025 7:00 PM - 9:45 PM SH 211	In-Class Work Session	• *In-class work*: Bring articles to class. We will complete the first entry for Annotated Bibliography #1 together in class. • Readings: ○ Work assigned on Canvas
Work Week Week 6 09/29/2025 7:00 PM - 9:45 PM Online	Activity: Annotated Bibliography	• Continue to search for empirical articles • Begin looking for theory/framework article

When	Topic	Notes

In Person
Week 7
10/06/2025
7:00 PM - 9:45 PM
SH 211
	Methods	- Developing Methods (Interventions)
		- APA Work
		- Readings:
		  - Work assigned on Canvas
		- **Due:**
		  - Annotated Bibliography #1

Online Week 8 10/13/2025 7:00 PM - 9:45 PM Online	Overview of written assignments	- Literature review - Introduction - Theory/Framework - APA style work - Readings: - Online work assigned on Canvas
In Person OR Work Week Week 9 10/20/2025 7:00 PM - 9:45 PM SH 211	One-on-one meetings	- Sign up for one 20-min appointment with Dr. Andy (8 students) - Work week: Other students, work on inquiry question, literature review, and method
In Person OR Work Week Week 10 10/27/2025 7:00 PM - 9:45 PM SH 211	One-on-one meetings	- Sign up for one 20-min appointment with Dr. Andy (8 students) - Work week: Other students, work on inquiry question, literature review, and method - **Due:** - Draft Method
In Person Week 11 11/03/2025 7:00 PM - 9:45 PM SH 211	Theory and Framework	- Theory and Framework: What are these and how do you use this to guide your work? - Review Annotated Bibliography #2: Theory and Framework - **Due:** - Draft Introduction
Work Week Week 12 11/10/2025 7:00 PM - 9:45 PM Online	Writing Week	- Work on Literature Review - **Due:** - Annotated Bibliography #2

When	Topic	Notes
In Person Week 13 11/17/2025 7:00 PM - 9:45 PM SH 211	Methods	- Continued discussion of methods - Revisit Theory of Action (Annotated Bibliography #2) - APA Work - Readings: - Work assigned on Canvas - **Due:** - Draft Literature Review
No Class: Holiday Week 14 11/24/2025 7:00 PM - 9:45 PM No Class	Thanksgiving	No Class
In Person Week 12 12/01/2025 7:00 PM - 9:45 PM SH 211	In-class work time	- Revising Drafts (time to meet with Dr. Andy) - **Due:** - Draft Theory/Conceptual Framework
Final Week 16 12/15/2025 7:00 PM - 9:45 PM Online	Final Paper	- **Due:** Final paper (title page, introduction, conceptual framework, literature review, and methodology) - *Note: No in-class meeting*