Master of Education in Teaching, Learning, and Assessment
Student Handbook

Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Program
National College of Education

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**The Master of Education
in Teaching, Learning, and Assessment**

A. Introduction to the Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Program and Its Nine Outcomes

Welcome to the TLA Program!

Launched in the 1980's, the TLA program[•] foreshadowed what would become accepted practice in American teacher education. Its vision was innovative and courageous. The cohort structure, which is now commonplace in higher education, had its origin here, where we have a strong belief in the power of a reflective professional community as a catalyst for learning. In the TLA program, candidates assume high degrees of educational empowerment and professionalism within a model that is strong in proven adult education elements: interaction, autonomy, reflection, dialogue, productivity, and group support.

TLA was also early in offering extensive coursework in action research, well before teacher action research became a prominent practice in teacher education. Over the last 30 years, the IDS program has served an estimated 20,000 teachers in Chicago, Wisconsin, Florida, St. Louis, Washington, DC, and Heidelberg, Germany, equipping teachers of all levels and disciplines to become researchers of their own practice.

In the TLA program, weekly cohort meetings and dialogue journals invite candidates to reflect on and inquire into their teaching practices, contexts, and the larger systemic and cultural factors that impact their students' learning. The field-based cohorts serve as laboratories in which teachers may practice a continuous cycle of action and reflection, which they in turn take back to their classrooms. We maximize our candidates' contact with the resources around them and reinforce and build their skills in learning from a variety of living experiences as well as from texts and technology.

TLA Resource Sessions support candidates' construction of their own knowledge and their integration of theory and practice. They can include attending or participating in local workshops, conferences, presentations, and public lectures; museums, zoological/botanical gardens, and planetarium visits; explorations of natural environments; investigations of community diversities; and attendance at cinema, theater, and other cultural events. Opportunities for local community engagement can also further candidates' connections between learning in traditional formats and across living experience. Finally, Resource Sessions also include synchronous or asynchronous online tutorials or modules to expand both the scope of the cohort and the technology skills of the candidates.

The TLA program fosters candidate progress toward our Nine Outcomes:

1. **Critical Reflection**
Striving to be critically reflective about one's teaching and profession

2. **Issues**
Identifying social, economic, and political issues in teaching, learning, and schooling
3. **Action Research**
Engaging in action research on personally and professionally relevant topics that will contribute to teaching, learning, and schooling

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[•] Previously called Interdisciplinary Studies, or "IDS"

4. Community
Helping build a community of learners that engage in meaningful conversation about critical issues of education and teaching practice

5. History
Reflecting critically on teaching and learning within the context of one's own life history and teaching career

6. Diversity
Engaging with the complexities of diversity and multiculturalism in our culture and our classrooms

7. Technology
Exploring ways to integrate technology with one's professional life

8. Change Agents
Acting as change agents advocating for all learners

9. Student Growth
Integrating assessment into their professional practice to impact and evidence student growth and learning

We want to help each teacher gain a renewed sense of what it means to be a teacher. To this end, the program promotes democracy, diversity, inclusiveness, and personal creativity in as many aspects as possible. Through readings, discussions, and experiences, the program encourages teachers to develop expanded visions, not only for their own teaching, but for their students, schools, and communities as well.

Graduates of this program will be:

- Leaders in differentiated learning – able to develop curriculum and instruction approaches that address social-emotional learning factors, learning styles, cultural and language backgrounds, and cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and developmental differences in multiple-needs general education classrooms. As teacher-leaders, graduates will also be prepared to help others in their schools to improve their own practices in differentiating learning.

- Experts in assessment – adroit in designing assessment approaches to drive effective teaching and learning in real-time ("formative" evaluation) as well as in making appropriate use of standardized testing.

- Accomplished action researchers – agile in applying techniques for observing, documenting, reflecting on, and refining the learning process to create continuous improvement in outcomes for students.

- Exceptional teacher-leaders in their current environments. Since the TLA program is built around enabling candidates to actively address the pressing realities of their classrooms, candidates are able to apply new skills and techniques – and share them with others –to bring immediate value to their classrooms and schools. They also learn how to place themselves in their school systems as facilitators, evolving change agents, and leaders advocating for improving education for all learners.

B. Distinctive Qualities of the Program

The TLA Program has been organized around four conceptual strands that are interwoven throughout the seven quarters of the program. These strands include the implementation of action research models of classroom inquiry, assessment and reflection on teaching and learning, inquiry into historical and current philosophical approaches to teaching and learning, and the art of reaching all learners through engagement and differentiation (see chart below).   While the sequence of courses has been organized quarter by quarter, the work of the courses is grounded in the experiences of the teachers in each group. New coursework each quarter brings about new challenges and opportunities for active engagement, but the effect is cumulative. There is both a collective memory and a collective experience in the group which can revive issues discussed previously with new information and challenge the ongoing inquiry. The integration of the courses during each quarter strengthens the integrity of the classroom inquiry process as teachers experience a variety of possible paths toward student success. While the classes are organized by quarters, the actual work of the classes may overlap the quarter boundaries.

The Program's Conceptual Strands and Coursework

CONCEPTUAL STRAND	COURSE NUMBER & TITLE (QUARTER HOURS)
Action Research	ESR 531: Exploring Action Research: Action Research I (3 QH) ESR 532: Engaging in Action Research: Action Research II (3 QH) ESR 533: Continuing Action Research: Action Research III (3 QH) ESR 534: Completing Action Research: Action Research IV (3 QH)
Assessment	TLA541: Assessing Teaching and Learning: Introduction to Assessment (3QH) TLA542: Linking Assessment of Teaching and Learning: Field Study (variable, to 3 QH) TLA543: Reflecting on Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (3 QH)
Systems of Schools & Societies	FND509: Building on Educational Foundations (4.5 QH) TLA578: Developing School Cultures (3 QH) TLA579: Engaging with Critical Multicultural Perspectives (4.5)
Reaching All Learners	TLA588: Constructing Curriculum for Engaging the Whole Learner (4.5 QH) TLA589: Differentiating for Diverse Learners (4.5 QH) TLA591: Meeting Complex Challenges of Contemporary Classrooms: Field Study (variable, to 3 QH) TBD594: Examining Curriculum Perspectives: Independent Study (variable, to 3 QH)
	TOTAL QH: 48

Face-to-Face, Online, and Blended Learning in TLA

The TLA Program is associated with regional campuses in Chicago, Skokie, Wheeling, Lisle, and Elgin, Illinois; Milwaukee and Beloit, Wisconsin; and Tampa, Florida.

However, because the program is "field-based," faculty travel to hold class in or near schools where TLA candidates work or live. (Occasionally, when possible, cohorts travel to the campuses for library or other resource sessions.) Extending the notion of "the field," we also hold online and blended (a combination of face-to-face and online) cohorts, enabling national and international candidates to take part in our cohorts.

Perhaps counter to one's first guess, an online cohort puts the emphasis on the social learning the cohort members provide for and with each other even more strongly, as online discussions, peer reviews of work, and group activities require engagement throughout the week. In online learning, the interdependence of the group is actually heightened, making being timely with assignments crucial to classmates' work as well as one's own.

Face-to-face cohorts are also expected to engage in some online activities and candidates to have ready access to email and computing.

Note: If you are in an online, blended, or faced-to-face cohort, your instructor is your advisor for the content and process of your program. NLU provides expert technology support through its Office of Information Technology, at 866.813-1177, helpdesk@nl.edu. See also http://oit.nl.edu/

C. Overview of the 7 Quarters of the Program

Below are the courses you will take in the program, listed below first in their sequence quarter by quarter, and then with their course descriptions. Note, however, that in the TLA program, the coursework is taught in an integrated fashion. You will notice that your core instructor will draw materials from the overall program coursework in order to meet the immediate needs and interests of cohort members. Thus, for example, the topic of differentiation may (and will) come up throughout the program, even though it is formally listed as taking place in Quarter 5.

Quarter	Course #	Course Prefix	Course Name	SH	QH
1	1	TLA 578	Developing School Cultures	2	3
	2	ESR 531	Exploring Action Research: Action Research I	2	3
2	3	FND 509	Building on Educational Foundations	3	4.5
	4	TLA 541	Assessing Teaching and Learning: Introduction to Assessment	2	3
3	5	TLA 588	Constructing Curriculum for Engaging the Whole Learner	3	4.5
	6	ESR 532	Engaging in Action Research: Action Research II	2	3
4	7	TLA591	Meeting Complex Challenges of Contemporary Classrooms: Field Study	≤ 2	≤ 3
	8	TLA542	Linking Assessment of Teaching and Learning: Field Study	≤ 2	≤ 3
5	9	TLA589	Differentiating for Diverse Learners	3	4.5
	10	ESR 533	Continuing Action Research: Action Research III	2	3
6	11	TLA 594	Examining Curriculum Perspectives: Independent Study	≤2	≤ 3
	12	TLA 543	Reflecting on Teaching, Learning, and Assessment	2	3
7	13	TLA 579	Engaging With Critical Multicultural Perspectives	3	4.5
	14	ESR 534	Completing Action Research: Action Research IV	2	3
			TOTAL SH/QH	**32**	**48**

Note that for those who begin the TLA program in <u>mid-quarter</u>, the course and quarter sequence are as follows:

Quarter	Course #	Course Prefix	Course Name	SH	QH
1	1	FND 509	Building on Educational Foundations	3	4.5
2	2	ESR531	Exploring Action Research: Action Research I	2	3
	3	TLA578	Developing School Cultures	2	3
3	4	TLA541	Assessing Teaching and Learning: Introduction to Assessment	2	3
	5	TLA588	Constructing Curriculum for Engaging the Whole Learner	3	4.5
4	6	ESR532	Engaging in Action Research: Action Research II	2	3
	7	TLA591	Meeting Complex Challenges of Contemporary Classrooms: Field Study	≤ 2	≤ 3
5	8	TLA589	Differentiating for Diverse Learners	3	4.5
	9	TLA542	Linking Assessment of Teaching & Learning: Field Study	≤ 2	≤ 3
6	10	ESR533	Continuing Action Research: Action Research III	2	3
	11	TLA594	Examining Curriculum Perspectives: Independent Study	≤ 2	≤ 3
7	12	TLA543	Reflecting on Teaching, Learning, and Assessment	2	3
	13	ESR534	Completing Action Research: Action Research IV	2	3
8	14	TLA579	Engaging with Critical Multicultural Perspectives	3	4.5
			TOTAL SH/QH	**32**	**48**

Course Descriptions

Quarter 1

Developing School Cultures

Candidates will understand group theories experientially by studying the group dynamics of the cohort and their own schools in relation to systems theory and social psychology. They will learn how to place themselves in their school systems as facilitators, evolving change agents, and leaders advocating for improving education for all learners. Candidates will explore methods for constructing and collaborating with others to sustain respectful and democratic learning environments in the cohort, their school teaching teams, learning environments, districts, and local and online communities.

Exploring Action Research: Action Research I

This course is the first in a four-course action research sequence. It introduces the nature and processes of teachers' classroom inquiry to enlighten instruction and improve student learning. Towards this end, the course introduces traditions and conceptions of action research and its relation to other forms of inquiry. It emphasizes the role of teachers as researchers of their own practices and contexts in terms of their students' learning and construction of meaning. Candidates begin to explore their classrooms as complex systems shaped by interpersonal,

cultural, and political/structural dynamics. Candidates build a framework for their own action research as they write their autobiography and their action research proposal.

Quarter 2

Building on Education Foundations
Candidates will examine their own educational beliefs, personal values, and instructional practices in light of historical /sociological/philosophical issues, themes, and theoretical approaches to education. This course will emphasize how the structural basis of schooling and what gets taught in schools are deeply embedded in the social, cultural, and political context of a particular time. There will be an emphasis on candidates making connections between current and historical struggles in education in order to analyze alternatives to current practices. Through dialogue, readings, interviews, projects, websites, and activities, educators will explore issues of equity and social justice for all students.

Assessing Teaching and Learning: Introduction to Assessment
Candidates will examine a wide variety of philosophical and practical approaches to school-based assessment. They will learn basic psychometric concepts (e.g. standardized tests; reliability and validity; and formative and summative evaluation) and understand historical and current assessment practices to systematically critique, apply, and interpret various assessment practices relevant to their district, schools, and classrooms. Candidates will focus on how the use of a variety of assessments in their classrooms can highlight student and
classroom learning and needs and direct curriculum and pedagogical choices.

Quarter 3

Constructing Curriculum for Engaging the Whole Learner
Candidates examine the theoretical, historical, multicultural, social, and political foundations of curriculum which serve as frameworks for examining the curriculum and instruction experienced by students and teachers in classrooms. The course consistently investigates the personal dimensions of curriculum decision making and instructional methodology as contexts for interpreting these frameworks. Specific topics include integrated assessment, classroom management, brain-based strategies, differentiated instruction, student motivation, and the roles of emotion, movement, and artistic expression in learning.

Engaging in Action Research: Action Research II
This course is the second in a four-course Action Research sequence. It focuses on candidates becoming teacher researchers and change agents in their classrooms. Candidates begin collecting data based on their Action Research plan. They analyze these data and search for resources that can give alternative viewpoints and interpretations of their plans and of their data. Candidates also examine appropriate technology as they collect, document, analyze, and report the progress of their study as it transpires.

Quarter 4

Meeting Complex Challenges of Contemporary Classrooms: Field Study
This action-based course encourages candidates to conduct an organized exploration of a topic, issue, or problem related to their current field of work (e.g., classrooms, schools, communities, and/or other learning environments). Candidates are encouraged to move beyond their commonly held beliefs and practices in order to grow professionally and to more effectively address the increasingly complex challenges of contemporary work environments.

Linking Assessment of Teaching and Learning: Field Study
This course builds upon concepts, strategies, and assessment practices introduced in TBD 555, Assessing Teaching and Learning: Introduction to Assessment. Candidates will choose to study in depth a situation or issue of their choice in their own classroom, school or district and will develop a plan of action with the goal of improving assessment, instruction, and student learning in their setting. The plan will include engaging in relevant reading and identifying additional relevant resources, developing an assessment or series of assessments, collecting and interpreting the data, and communicating the results, or similar activities, as approved by the instructor.

Quarter 5

Differentiating for Diverse Learners
This course addresses the characteristics of a differentiated classroom, curriculum adaptations to the needs of various learners, instructional strategies that support differentiation, and the development of learning environments for diverse learners. An understanding of social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development of children lays the groundwork for the differentiated classroom. Learning styles of students, cultural background, linguistic differences, gender, and social class are explored to deepen understanding and guide classroom practice. Instructional strategies are articulated that target different levels of student learning and understanding. The course will be examined through the values of equity.

Continuing Action Research: Action Research III
This course is the third in a four-course action research sequence. In this course candidates continue their action research study, collecting and analyzing data, writing responses to their research questions, and critiquing, synthesizing, and reflecting on relevant literature. Through recursive cycles of planning, implementing, observing, reading, conversing, and interpreting, they use their emerging analyses to make meaning of the classroom experiences of their students and of themselves. Incorporating appropriate technology throughout these processes, candidates explore ways to enrich student experiences and enhance classroom success.

Quarter 6

Examining Curriculum Perspectives: Independent Study
The purpose of this independent study is to provide candidates the opportunity to investigate a topic, issue, or problem with singular focus and depth that is related to their understanding of curriculum and/or instruction. The topic of choice may or may not be directly linked to a candidate's immediate classroom assignment and practice, but should be of relevance to his or her individual goals and professional aspirations as a teacher.

Reflecting on Teaching, Learning and Assessment
This is the culminating course in sequence with TLA 541 and TLA 542 and is closely linked to the four action research courses. This course is the candidate's final synthesis and reflection on the work he or she has accomplished through the action research and the assessment work, plus an opportunity to share this work with a wider audience. Candidates will analyze and reflect upon their assessment practices in relation to student growth, and link their work to the research of others. Candidates will document their understandings and communicate the results in a variety of ways.

Quarter 7

Engaging with Critical Multicultural Perspectives
This course guides teachers in examining their values, beliefs, dispositions and biases regarding their own cultural identity and that of others. Candidates critically analyze factors of

cultural diversity within a variety of social environments and institutions and through a variety of curriculum resources and guided field observations. Within the framework of critical pedagogy theory, candidates evaluate how intercultural intersections of race, ethnicity, nationality, socio-economic status, gender, religion, language, and sexual orientation impact relations among people and access to quality education. Candidates develop practical, pedagogical strategies that empower their students and themselves to become change agents in their own multicultural environments.

Completing Action Research: Action Research IV
This course is the last course in a four-course action research sequence. It marks the completion of the candidates' action research projects as they become more aware of the relationship of the research process to personal, professional, and institutional change. Candidates reflect on their data, construct patterns, note changes in their practices, and prepare a final product communicating what they have learned about their work and student learning. The final product from the action research is completed in appropriate technological formats as candidates explore uses of their inquiries to enrich professional and institutional change. They explore ways to continue, in an ongoing fashion, the self-assessment processes of reflective practitioners.

D. Expectations of Students

Reading

Reading is an essential component of this program as it vitalizes and stimulates thinking and broadens perspectives on the issues that all teachers face. It provides a stimulus for dialogue. We feel that in recent years there has been an outpouring of "texts" that capture the energy of reform, renewal, and assessment efforts in schools. To capture this energy, many types of texts are used, including transcriptions of dialogue, essays, narratives, fiction, film, autobiography, and poetry. While there are both core and choice books for the program, students should also expect to read a variety of other texts to capture current issues and speak to immediate needs.

Reflecting

None of us has "arrived" yet; we are all working on becoming better at what we do. Reflection helps us along our path of professional development. Reflection takes many forms and is the basis of building community and self-understanding. Reflective thinking is shared with colleagues and is welcomed during class sessions as part of the ongoing interaction and dialogue of the group.

Journaling

Journaling is part of the reflective process. It provides the opportunity to form your ideas and express reactions, philosophy, experiences, and emotions. It is a constructive and communicative process, first with yourself and then, depending on the format, with others. The process includes response, sometimes solely from the instructor and sometimes with colleagues in the group. This can be through traditional methods and/or online.

Researching

While teachers typically engage in reflective practice in their classrooms all the time, this program offers them the opportunity to do so in a more structured and critical way. We think about the word "researching" as "looking again" at (re-searching) ourselves, the curriculum, the students and the school environment. Teacher research is a cycle that involves exploring, questioning, acting, observing, analyzing, and reflecting. It is making conscious those

processes which teaching requires minute by minute, and ideally leads to action and change. Teaching and researching are reciprocal, ongoing, and take place throughout our professional lives; they are best done with the support of other teachers engaged in the same process.

Participating

The group, as a learning community, is central to every process of this program. The social component of large and small group participation vitalizes learning and allows for the kinds of processing of new perspectives and information that help integrate new learning, while providing for professional development and renewal. Hence, active participation, both face-to-face and online, is seen as fundamental to learning and group development in this program.

Scheduling

There will be Research Roundtables, multi-group resource sessions, and class visits to the NLU library. Sometimes groups decide to visit cultural or political events and these often take place outside the regular class time, as negotiated by the group.

The program takes seven quarters to complete. While there is a principal day or night of the week on which the cohort's sessions generally fall, there will be the need for some flexibility in day of the week, date, or meeting place, according to the needs of the group and the instructor. Some possible reasons for change are suggested above.

Field Experience

The University requires six hours of class contact time per week for this program. We believe that a four-hour class each week provides an optimum amount of time for working together. The two additional hours occur when you take what you have learned from your graduate cohort back to your classroom. Field hours are considered to be separate from homework or reading time; they are an extension, a connection, an application of the coursework to your own classroom, school, and learning. You will document these activities as part of your program. See the Field Experience appendix.

Attendance and Grading

This program is a time for formative evaluation, reflection, and conversation about learning expectations, growth and development. There are a variety of ways that self-assessment, shared expectations, and "authentic assessment" might be determined. Some examples of typical kinds of assessment used in this program are: reflective journals, classroom logs, learning portfolios, written and oral responses to readings, and active participation in class. Self-assessment strategies to be used are discussed and agreed upon by the instructor, group, and individual, so that learning experiences are natural, fulfilling, and beneficial to all.

<u>Attendance at all class meetings is required</u> as this program relies on collaborative and interactive learning with your peers. Therefore, if you miss class, you are affecting your peers' learning as well as your own. For unavoidable absences, students should talk with their instructor before or as soon as possible after the absence and expect to make up the time and assignments in a timely way.

Program Assessment to be announced

Checking NLU email

NLU provides email accounts to all full-time and part-time students as soon as they register for

a class. Once a student account is established, NLU will send official communications to each student via his or her NLU student email account. Messages sent to this account will not be duplicated via paper mailings. It is the student's responsibility to monitor his or her NLU student email on a regular basis. Failure to meet a deadline because a student did not read the student's email in time will not be considered an extenuating circumstance. (For further information, please see the NLU Student Guidebook.)

II. GUIDE TO THE TLA ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

A. THE EMOTIONAL LIFE OF THE TEACHER RESEARCHER
Susan Handler

From your previous school experiences, you likely have brought into the Program a belief about research that includes objectivity, precise outcomes, and a methodology that promises to *prove* something. Of course, this makes perfect sense, and we agree that traditional research is essential to many sciences, particularly the medical. We are introducing you to another paradigm of research that is more appropriate to the social sciences. Teaching and learning are part of the social sciences because they are enacted through humans in social contexts.

The exploration of human interactions is well served by a paradigm of research named qualitative. Though the differences in research paradigms between traditional and qualitative can be expressed in terms like research design, hypothesis, control group, methodology, the differences are truly more profound. They are based on differences in worldviews and values.

Our research orientation in the TLA program is an extension of our beliefs about curriculum and instruction. Unlike traditional curriculum, we have not broken the curriculum into fragments that you must memorize for tests. The professors are not transmitters of knowledge; they are facilitators. The students' role is active and collaborative, and knowledge is socially constructed through the experiences of your group.

These same beliefs drive the premises of qualitative research in the following dimensions. The nature of knowledge is not finite, but constructed by human beings in multiple perspectives. It is presumed that there is not a single, measurable reality. We are not aiming to prove anything; rather, we are looking to gain more insight into a classroom phenomenon. Qualitative research honors the complexity of social interactions, not fragmenting behavior into discrete parts, but understanding them in patterns. Most importantly, qualitative research values the interrelatedness of the researcher to what she is studying. It is the teacher, herself, who becomes a participant-observer in the topic under investigation. In this important way you become the subject of your own research.

At the beginning of your action research project, you will most likely do battle with the notions of qualitative research. You will resist the notion that you as researcher are central to the process, that your values, beliefs, and interpretations are, in fact, part of your data. You might feel that the research is too subjective. You will wonder what is meant by gaining insight into a phenomenon. That feels a little mushy. You will want more direction in searching for a topic of interest, leery of taking the responsibility of finding your own passion. Without such clarity of design, what actually will you be doing in your research? At the beginning, you will have little sense of the end product of your research; how can you then proceed?

In traditional research, as least you know what you are trying to prove and the methods that you need to use. The path of qualitative research seems so ill defined and messy. Your instructor will tell you not to worry, that your path will emerge through the help of your readings, your colleagues in your group, and the students themselves. (Easy for the instructor to talk when he doesn't have to experience a sense of feeling lost, vulnerable, and overwhelmed!) How will you know that you are doing the right things when the instructor does not tell you what to do, how to do it, or how well you have done it? Is this really graduate school? Can you pursue your own research project in which you don't have to come up with an "answer"? What, then, will be the results?

The process of doing qualitative research in your classroom can leave you feeling emotionally at risk, especially since, from your starting point, you cannot envision your destination. If you planned a trip in this manner, who knows where you could end up? Here the research is your journey, from one place to another, without having a roadmap ahead of time. What will determine the turns of your journey will be you and your students. Since this is the first time you are engaged in action research, you will need to develop some trust in the process, your instructor, and in yourself. You can't be wrong. It doesn't matter if you choose to go one way or another. We trust in your abilities to be compelled by what there is to see. We trust that you will develop the confidence that seeing with more astute eyes will allow yourself to ask questions that never entered your mind at the beginning of the project. We trust that you will alter your curriculum and research project along the way in response to what you are observing, what you are feeling, and what your students tell you. We trust that you will tolerate the ambiguity of the beginning and find your bearing along the way. The strong, reciprocal connection between your teaching and your research plants you firmly in the middle. It is not something that you do, but a way of looking and knowing that informs your teaching each day.

You are right to feel a little out of sorts at the beginning. We are asking you to engage in a process that is not predetermined but which evolves. You are neither in control, nor is the aim of the project to control. You need your students as co-researchers because only then, will you be able to develop a deeper insight into the phenomenon that you are studying. So, know that many of the feelings that you are having are normal and typical—and part of the process. We do believe that, once you have done an action research project, you will have the conviction that the uncertainty is essential to the richness of the action research project. You will have the conviction that your students will be the measure of how well you are doing. You will be more willing to give up the notion that there is a "right" way, and focus more clearly on the way that your and your students find together. In the meantime, we acknowledge that we are asking you to suspend certainty about any particular "outcome" to be very present in the process. We realize that this paradigm of research asks a lot of you, both cognitively and emotionally. Indeed, it requires a shift from expecting that you should "know" to trusting that you will find out. We truly believe that such research best equips you to sustain your cognitive and emotional curiosity about your work with children.

The "truths" about any classroom's life are held in the individuals who live inside it. Unlike quantitative research, which gives us generalized information about large populations, qualitative research keeps you alive to the stories particular to you and your students. We believe it is well worth experiencing the ambiguity, lostness, and vulnerability of the paradigm on the way to knowledge that is authentic and revealing. You, as qualitative researcher, will access those truths of classroom life and, in the process, deepen your understanding of you, as teacher.

As a form of qualitative research, Teacher Action Research is mainly interested in understanding the qualities of human phenomena—how learners and teachers are affected by certain incidents, how they think about certain incidents, the kind of experiences they have in the classroom. We are not looking for absolute or measurable truths as in more positivistic, or quantitative, modes of research. We are looking for the qualities of learning and teaching and for the insights and meanings that are emerging from our inquiry process. These we can use to deepen our understandings and to improve the effectiveness of our classroom practices.

B. TEACHER ACTION RESEARCH (INQUIRY)
Eleanor Binstock

As an effective teacher you are always doing research—informally and naturally. This means you think about how teaching and learning functions in your classroom and wonder how things

might be better. Your reflective thinking leads you to recognize clues about the nature of your teaching and your students' engagement with learning, which in turn help you to understand life as it is happening in your classroom and what changes might be beneficial. This is a benevolent and wise model of teaching which functions in a reflective modality: something happens, we recognize and make note of some classroom episodes that resonate with us in certain ways; we "read" these reverberations; and then we make changes that we have come to believe will improve the teaching and learning in our classroom practice.

These stages come out of a reflective teaching model and constitute the fundamental practices of teacher action research, the central purpose of which is to refine how we teach. It is to make more explicit the work that effective teachers implicitly know how to do, bringing to the surface the tacit foundations upon which you formulate the wise judgments and decisions in your practice. Such research is a formalized version of the informal reflective work of successful teaching. It results in a model for analysis and enrichment of teacher and student growth.

Throughout the process of doing research, we contemplate what we and our students are experiencing and we begin to formulate little truths we are coming to realize and depend on in order to further our journey into knowing and understanding. For example, we know that, in very young children's learning, play is a crucial element. We know this from our own experience as parents and teachers, and from the many outside sources of literature. Actually, to say that play is a crucial element of early childhood learning is to formulate a theory! The importance of theory is that it can provide the teacher with a ready principle for potential action, a working idea for how a strategy will best work, rather than having to try out many different approaches or strategies to arrive at best practice. Of course, sometimes we may try out a theory and find that it requires some adjustment to work well. In these ways, theory can facilitate practice but is also derived from practice.

The question we choose to look at in our practice may remain fairly constant throughout the work, or it may more likely be porous and subject to growth and change. But at its heart the question usually represents what the teacher has already wondered about, something connected to teaching, learning, curriculum, classroom interactivity, the functioning of students in the large group and in smaller groups, student attitudes or behavior, and so on. So the research question gets formulated and often reformulated in an iterative process.

Somewhere and sometime in your work, you begin to notice and select specific classroom moments or incidents that relate to your research question or set of questions. This stage is referred to as collecting or gathering data. The word "data" is plural for the Latin word "datum," meaning "the given." The given moments that the teacher chooses from among many constitute her data. The teacher-researcher can record these data usually in writing, but also through photographing or videotaping or other media that capture stories or incidents of classroom life that best represent and respond to what you, the teacher-researcher, are trying to better understand through your inquiry. Throughout the stages of recording and accumulating data, it will become clearer to you how to analyze or make sense of what these data are indicating, what they are pointing at for you to look at and examine for your deeper understanding.

C. THE THREE PARTS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT
Susan Handler

The research project is framed in a narrative in three parts:

A. Autobiography and Topic Focus
B. Engaging with Source Materials
C. The Story (of the data and interpretation and analyses)

A "narrative" implies that you are telling a story. Often, we think of research as scientific, which attempts to sanitize the influence of the researcher who is conducting the research and intends to portray just the facts. Within the TLA Program and the tradition of qualitative research, the active presence of the teacher-researcher is essential to the development and presentation of the research story: it is her perceptions, judgments, and behaviors that determine how curriculum will be actually enacted. Instructional strategies described in the literature do not exist in a vacuum. They become lived experiences within the specifics of the classroom, the teacher, and the students. The research story that unfolds is embedded in the personal story of the teacher-researcher. "You" are actually the center of all three parts of your project. Although your topic may begin "outside" of yourself—as an instructional strategy, a curriculum innovation, or description of student behavior—we believe that there is an organic connection between you as a person and your work as a teacher and, ultimately, as a researcher.

The narrative mode places you, the storyteller, in the center. You are both the teller and the receiver of your story. It makes sense, then, to begin the research project with your autobiography, which gives us a foundation to further understand the meanings you will construct throughout your research. You are filled with experiences that you constantly bring to bear to your teaching and now to your research. We begin with the autobiography to get a sense of who you are. We are often used to a linear format for autobiographies, starting with birth, parents, and so on. Such a chronological rendering does not give us a robust sense of you and the experiences that have shaped you.

We turn for guidance to narrative film and literature. Instead of reading about your characteristics in the abstract, we want to see you "in action." We can then interpret what we see in your actions and what themes might emerge. Certain events from your past take on extraordinary meaning over time as their significance in the overall story of your life comes to be known. Your memory will retrieve those stories that hold such meaning.

We can assume that the memory will cull through human events and remember what has important meaning. As you write the memories, it is not essential that you interpret why the memory is important or how it has impacted your life. Describing three events of various times in your life, not necessarily relating to school, might give you insight into what has impacted you. Through discussion and response, you might begin to construct the personal meaning that the stories reveal.

If you do not find that memories come easily without more prompting, here are several "key event" triggers that might help particular episodes in your life:

1. A peak experience
2. A low point
3. A turning point
4. An earliest memory
5. An important childhood memory
6. An important adolescent memory
7. An important adult memory.

Identifying and writing about "significant people" might also serve as a catalyst to your thinking.

1. Your parents
2. Your grandparents
3. Your siblings
4. Your teachers
5. Your mentors

The autobiography component of your action research might give insight into why you have chosen your topic. At this stage of the research, you might not find a connection between issues within your personal life and the research topic that you have chosen. Often during the process, such connections emerge which help illuminate the motivation that drives your research topic. Your personal relationship with your research topic fuels your inquiry, both at the cognitive and emotional levels. Your research project becomes less an academic assignment in terms of fulfilling a requirement for your graduate work. It becomes an authentic inquiry into yourself as a teacher that propels you forward in your development. The intent of the autobiography is to excavate the "you" that is at the base of your teaching.

D. CHOOSING A RESEARCH QUESTION (TOPIC FOCUS)
Sara K. Schneider

Sometime toward the end of your cohort's first quarter as part of the material you hand in to your instructor and Reader-Advisor, you will write up a very brief "Topic Focus" for your overall action research project, along with a sketch outline of how you might carry it out. Often this statement is quite brief, but it is detailed enough that your instructor and your Reader-Advisor will be able to advise you on some helpful resources and approaches to get you started. It is also detailed enough about its methods that NLU's Institutional Review Board will be able to grant you permission to conduct your specific project in accordance with its ethical guidelines.

Your Topic Focus may include:

- Focus and Rationale—what you're studying and why this topic matters [usually the bulk of your Topic Focus section]
- Action Research Plan—a brief description of your methods for studying your topic
- Possible Resources—where you're going to get started learning about your topic
- Timeline—usually just a sentence or two about when you'll begin your data collection
- The School—a population description and a bit of context-setting about where the research will be conducted.

Why does the development of the Topic Focus come toward the end of the first quarter? You may be familiar with the graduate school model in which candidates enter their master's program knowing exactly what they want to write their major project about. Indeed, their very admission to the program may hinge on their writing an application essay in which they specify their master's thesis topic.

Here in TLA, we take a different tack. We believe that the truest Topic Focus for your action research will come not from your head and from conscious planning (or the attempt to impress a faculty member), but rather from the insight and gut feeling that develop over time, through ongoing journaling and dialogue with your instructor throughout the first quarter. Over time, you will use more of your analytic capabilities to refine your topic focus, and to develop data collection methods that will help you capture how the approaches you study in your classroom really do play out.

The "good for you" Topic Focus: There are many ways to uncover the topic that's right for you. Sometimes your writing of your life history, or the story of yourself as a teacher-learner, makes for a clear Topic Focus, the one that you, and only you, are perfectly poised to undertake. A first grade teacher who was born in South Asia but started kindergarten in America, remembers vividly the experience of being excluded from desirable social activities, scorned by her fair-skinned counterparts. Her project deals with the creation of a level social playing field for the students she currently teaches, many of whom are learning to speak English as a second language. In this case, the teacher's work on her teaching-learning autobiography offered her a

clue to her motivation to help solve a longstanding social and educational problem, and "handed" her her Action Research Topic.

Sometimes the Topic Focus emerges gradually, especially helped by the dialogue journaling you do with your instructor. An experienced and knowledgeable high school English teacher started with an TLA cohort jaded by long years in the classroom, during which she had taught the same literature in the virtually the same way year after year. At the same time as her concerns about maintaining standards echoed in many of her journal pieces, themes of wanting to "get over herself" in the classroom also surfaced, leading her to a topic in which she would search for ways to enliven the literature she still loved for her students through a variety of student-centered learning methods while maintaining the high degree of rigor that she continued to prize. A conference with her instructor helped crystallize the ideas that were somehow forming through her journal writing.

Sometimes a Topic Focus comes out of current trends in American schooling, changes that have been happening at your school, or new roles that you know you will be expected to fulfill. One teacher, knowing she would be entering a new role as a gifted resource teacher, wanted to ensure that her partnership with her classroom teacher colleagues would be as productive as possible, with clearly delineated expectations on both sides. Her project dealt with how to implement a consulting model for resource teachers, and enabled her to start out in her new role on an unusually secure and productive footing.

Because in TLA we don't carve a harsh division between the personal and the professional, we've had some outstanding projects in which teachers worked out a key issue in their own development within the context of their classroom. An inspiring action research project was developed by one teacher who had survived an alcoholic and abusive family. This teacher had done considerable work on her own growth in order to become the most positive and receptive teacher she could be, one who could truly perceive the "inner landscape" of each of her students. Her personal story and the one she divined from her students' behaviors over the course of the year poetically intertwine in her project, offering a stellar example of the ways in which the personhood of the teacher is in many ways the subject of the action research project.

You may be most satisfied with your action research topic if it's one that represents an area in which you can grow, in which you don't already have most of the answers. As you learn to live with the uncertainty, confusion, and ambiguity of writing about the very thing you're learning, you'll find that this kind of topic can bring enormous rewards. One teacher of middle school special education recognized that writing wasn't just a weakness of her students: it was *her* weakest topic as well, making it hard for her to feel she was teaching it well. Over the course of her action research study, this teacher—who admitted to having something of a competitive spirit—incorporated a variety of innovative writing projects that brought her students into such a high level of writing that they were competing against regular education students for schoolwide prizes. This teacher now considers herself a writing teacher.

The topic you burn to live with for a year: Overall, we like to distinguish between the topic you *can* write about and the topic you *must* write about. The former is one that you figure you might as well do—you know a lot about it, it appeals to your head, it'll get you through, your principal thinks it's a good idea. By contrast, the topic you "must" write is one that comes from your heart and your gut, out of the rich levels of insight that develop from weekly dialogue journaling with your instructor and from ongoing reflection.

Usually it's something you want to try and to see how it plays out over the course of many months in practice in your classroom. Hence, classroom observation, and the writing of "data reflections" will be a tool that you will use consistently and on which you will rely quite heavily.

The topic does not always play out within your own classroom. We have had many successful teacher action research projects conducted in "borrowed" classrooms. What's important is that the topic be one in which you can investigate the "how" of a classroom practice or approach over time.

What if your Topic Focus changes? It *will* change. That's the nature of this type of research. It's not unusual for a topic to shift slightly—or even quite drastically—after a teacher has had a summer (or a good night's sleep) to think about it. Sometimes teachers enter their first summer of the program, for example, not knowing what their fall teaching assignment will be, or whether the project they've proposed doing will even be feasible in, or relevant to, their new school. In such cases, they wonder whether they should suspend selecting a Topic Focus until they are settled into their new schools.

It goes back to a principle that surrounds just about any creative act—which carrying out a Teacher Action Research Project certainly is. A sculptor of a life-sized figure, for example, will start with an "armature," a wire or metal stick figure posed in the way that the finished clay or fiberglass or bronze figure will be, but in a much more primitive form, of course. For the sculptor, getting *something*—just about anything!—to look at helps her to see and imagine her next artistic moves more wisely. It actually is better that the figure is in this rough form, rather than all prettied up. It makes the next step easier to see, even if the arms and legs are all in the wrong position.

So consider that, even if your topic shifts somewhat over time, having prepared the basic Topic Focus once will make it easier for you to adjust it slightly as you need to.

E. ENGAGING WITH SOURCE MATERIALS
Anne Bennison

Sometime during Quarter 3 & 5 your instructor will ask you to write about source materials you're using in your project. In traditional research projects, it was quite common for the researcher to read an article or a book and then write a synopsis of that reading. In our teacher action research model, we are asking that the reader do much more. We ask you to continue the personal narrative of the project through source materials. We would like the teacher-researcher to be engaged with the source material. For example, if you are reading a book on your topic and you find a passage that really seems to address your classroom situation, stop, and write about that passage. It could be an idea that really resonates with your thinking; it could also be an idea that really challenges your thinking. You may want to keep a special journal of the ideas that you have as you read books and articles. (Always be sure when using the ideas of other people that you write down the full citation complete with page numbers to avoid the chance of inadvertent plagiarism.)

We believe that there are many ways in which to inform oneself through a variety of available resources. Thus, books and articles are not the only source materials that can help you think about your topic. You may want to attend a professional conference or a workshop to hear what other people have thought about your area of interest. Many times conference presenters are only too glad to furnish the written version of their comments.

Perhaps you will want to have conversations with your colleagues, who can often provide valuable insights into practice within the context of your workplace. You may also want to interview professionals who have worked in your area of interest. Interviews with older members of the community may help you see another perspective on your topic. Parent and family interviews can give you other, quite relevant, perspectives. These are all ways in which you can inform yourself about your chosen focus for your classroom action research.

When engaging with source materials, do not forget the importance of the arts. Some of your best ideas and thoughts may come to you through reading novels or poetry or plays, by going to the theater, or by listening to the symphony, jazz, blues, or world music. Radio and films can be very powerful in providing one with ideas, clarifying beliefs, or challenging one's values. Attending an art show, or seeing a photography exhibit or a special museum presentation may profoundly change the way that you approach a particular topic or culture. It may change the way that you look out onto the world. It is often through the arts that one can begin to unravel all the implications of one's cultural context. The arts can provide a valuable lens for viewing your own world and that of others.

Reading books and articles, attending conferences or participating in workshops, having conversations with your colleagues or interviewing individuals, engaging with the various arts are just examples of the many ways in which you can influence your own perceptions, judgments and behaviors. Throughout this ongoing action research project, you will remain the center of your work, both the teller and the receiver of your story.

F. GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE "DATA STORY"
Susan Handler

This should be the fun part, the pay-off, for your struggling to find a topic, reading articles, writing about your sources, keeping your field notes, collecting children's work, and asking your students what they experienced during the project. If you push yourself and your data, you will reveal ideas, patterns, insights, questions that you did not have at the beginning of your project. That is the aim of this work—to learn something about yourself and your teaching, your students, and their learning.

So how should you begin? Spread your materials out on a large table—your field notes, your instructor's responses, your students' work, and students' perceptions. For the last, you might have a conversation with students asking their opinions or checking out your thoughts. You might ask them to write about what the experience has meant to them. You might ask them to respond to three or four questions for feedback on some specifics of the project.

With these varied pieces of data spread out in front of you, take a fresh piece of paper and jot down impressions you have as you read through your field notes and look at the students' work and review what they have said about the project. These impressions might capture some tensions you see in the experience, some contradictions, some breakthroughs, some regressions, some significant moments. You might seek to organize your narrative around three big ideas. Try to do this as you look and re-look. Write down even what may seem like ill-formed ideas that come to your mind. Leave the work and return to it later and see if you can go further with your thinking about the experience.

As you come up with some tentative ways of organizing your data, fill in the themes with examples from your classroom (your field notes, students' work, student perceptions) that help the reader see for herself the evidence for the point you are making. You will be including and excluding incidents on the basis of whether they demonstrate the theme that you are communicating to the reader. Keep in mind that the audience for this piece is you and your fellow teachers. What would the reader need to know to understand what you are saying? How can you communicate the themes you have chosen so that the reader will recognize the moments you describe? Basically, start writing without concern as to the coherence of the piece; the writing might end up at the beginning, the end, or, as film editors like to say, "on the cutting room floor." Many people discover the structure of their story through their writing; others prefer to start with an outline. It is most important just to begin writing! With tentative themes and examples at your fingertips, start writing where you have the most emotion; it doesn't

necessarily have to be the first part. You might find that it leads nowhere. Fine; try another theme. Along the way you might want feedback from your instructor or a peer.

What does the data chapter look like in its final form? Many projects have focused on what the teacher did; they miss the aspect that makes this research—the *students'* voices, including responses to what they did. You want to interweave how you interpreted what the kids did, how the kids felt, and your own self-reflection. There will be children's work, either interspersed throughout the narrative or in an Appendix. You will need to explain to the reader enough of the lesson or curriculum to set the context for the story; however, you do this in service of representing the students' responses and your reflection. Use your "big ideas" as organizing features to your narrative. They hold your stories. You can literally have subheadings that give title to the concepts you have chosen. There are endless ways of rendering your story. Your task is to find one that communicates the quality of your experience, the meaning you derive from it.

If there have been changes in your project since you wrote your Topic Focus (read it again), write a bridge to update the reader on the changes as the beginning of your Data Story write-up. You will want to end this section with some reflection on what you have learned about yourself, your students, and possibly even the curriculum through your project. You might want to comment on the process of researching and how it has informed your teaching. You might want to talk about changes in yourself as a person and teacher.

All your Data Story write-ups will be unique and personal statements of your own experience. They will not be like those of your colleagues except that:

1. They will tell your and your students' story.
2. They will communicate to the reader the major insights you have gained through the project. They will likely not be a chronological diary, unless for some reason, that format makes sense to your particular story.
3. They will be rich with examples (data) so the reader can visualize your and the kids' experience.
4. They will be true and honest, not a polished version of what you think your instructor wants to hear or what you think graduate school requires.
5. They will represent a serious work on your part to which you have devoted an ample amount of time and thought. They will represent you as teacher, at this moment in time, with your present questions, understandings, confusions, hopes, and disappointments.

G. ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF REPRESENTATION FOR THE "DATA STORY"
Karen F. Tardrew

What if your Data Story doesn't fit neatly into a narrative? Or what if you feel there is another appropriate way to share your research? Some researchers, depending on topic or journey, may choose to construct an alternative display of their research. It is important to consider how to tell your research story in an authentic way that reflects who you are as a teacher and learner and that also reflects the nature of your project.

For example, perhaps you are an elementary art teacher, and your Topic Focus was, *How do I create a sense of community through my art program?* Perhaps you determine that the outcome of your work, a community mural accompanied by a video of its creation, with narratives by the participants, most authentically represents your project and captures both the artistic creation and the community process.

Or you are a physical education teacher and your Topic Focus was, *What happens to physical education participation when I create homogenous groups (related to gender & ability)?* You

might decide that you need to "show" your positive participation levels through narrated video, iMovie, and video interviews.

A middle school teacher engaged her eighth graders in literature circles reading Kozol's *Savage Inequalities*. She determined the project was best represented by a videotaped readers' theater showcasing her students discussing the book, local school facilities, and the letters they wrote to public officials.

An alternative high school educator whose Topic Focus was, *How do you create alternative assessments for at-risk high school students?* felt that alternative assessments or portfolios, with accompanying written reflections, faithfully highlighted her research journey.

The key to alternative representation is to stay **true** in the analysis and interpretation of your study to the medium or form of the research itself. Once you have analyzed your data and selected an alternative format, carefully follow the aforementioned research strategies. Also make sure to integrate your source materials or create new ways to "inform" your audience of your research findings. In addition, it is important to highlight, in someway, your professional reflections. This final reflection, more often than not, will take a narrative form.

H. ACADEMIC HONESTY

Like other colleges and universities, National-Louis University has expectations regarding academic honesty on the part of students, faculty and staff, and, indeed, professional people at all levels of academic activity.

With respect to the academic honesty of students, it is expected that all material submitted as part of any class exercise, in or out of class, is the actual work of the student whose name appears on the material or is properly documented otherwise. The concept of academic honesty includes plagiarism as well as receiving and/or giving improper assistance and other forms of cheating on coursework. Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action and may be dismissed from the University. (For further information, please see NLU Student Guidebook.)

Appendix A
The Role of the Cohort's Core Instructor

Your TLA program will have a primary instructor who will be responsible for supervising your Action Research Project and who will teach most or all of your coursework, depending on your cohort's structure. On occasion, other instructors may come in to teach, or co-teach, a particular course, yet the core instructor will continue to guide the cohort's long-term work.

Appendix B
The Role of the Cohort's Reader-Advisor

Each field-based cohort has a Reader-Advisor, a full-time faculty member to help with the development of your research project. The Reader-Advisor offers an additional voice in the research process. The purpose of this advising is to support your action research process. He or she cannot approve or disapprove your project.

Early in your research process, your cohort's core instructor and Reader-Advisor will discuss how they could work together and help you with your research inquiry. This may include collaboratively teaching research sessions and responding to your questions about the action research process. Throughout the project the Reader-Advisor will read and comment in writing on your research. Reader-Advisors may also conference with you individually or in small groups about your projects. The Reader-Advisor may also work with your cohort to explain the Institutional Research Review Board Policies.

The Reader-Advisor reads your research plan and responds in writing. He or she will also read a draft of the completed research project and makes comments. It should be recognized that the reading-advising process is best carried out before you get to the final draft stage of your projects. The Reader-Advisor's comments and interactions will be more meaningful—and more easily acted on—if they come during the draft stages, rather than at the end of the process when you are almost finished with the project.

Your cohort's Reader-Advisor will write up his or her comments on an TLA Reader Response Form, and will provide you and your core instructor with copies of the forms filed about your work with the TLA program office to support your application for your degree.

The Role of the Graduate Academic Advising Center

- Role of the Graduate Advising Center
  - o   Program and degree advising: includes advising on degree and college requirements, options for endorsements, and working with NCE to complete college paperwork.

    o   Case Manager: serve as the student's single point of contact for any question related to their student experience at NLU.

    o   Retention: Use reports to provide consistent outreach to students who have stopped attending or display warning signs of problems that may lead to departure and works with students who are considering leaving a program to explore other program options to meet career goals.

    -        Every NCE graduate student will be assigned an advisor upon admission to the university.

    Each NCE program will have an advisor who is designated as the Lead Advisor for their program.

The Graduate Academic Advising Center serves all graduate students in the National College of Education. The advising staff also works with non-degree seeking students seeking additional endorsements or certifications. Advisors are assigned by academic program.

TLA's Graduate Advisor is Alba Isaj, Albana.isaj@nl.edu**, x 5831**, Chicago campus, Room 3013.

Appendix D
Issue Resolution

If you have an issue with your core instructor you should talk to your Reader-Advisor. If that does not work, you should go to the coordinator for the center. (See below.) If neither option works, then go to the University Ombudsperson.

Likewise, if you have an issue with your Reader-Advisor, you should talk to your core instructor. If that does not work, you should go to the coordinator for your center.

If, after following these procedures, you are still unable to get resolution, contact the University Ombudsperson, Brisbane Rouzan, at brouzan@nl.edu, Chicago Campus, Room 2004, 312.261.3461 or 877.435.7658.

The University Student Ombudsperson (USO) is part of NLU's ongoing efforts to be a student-centered university in every possible way. The USO is a dispute resolution practitioner, whose main function is to provide assistance to NLU students for resolving their issues and problems. The USO's role is to help students. The USO works collaboratively with faculty, staff and administration to identify options ands strategies for resolution. The USO monitors the problem-solving process from referral to resolution.

The USO will be the primary contact for students seeking resolution to their problems. Students can self-refer, and NLU faculty and staff can initiate referrals. The USO will route the student concern to the appropriate NLU individual or office.

Appendix E
NLU Library

The mission of the National Louis University Library is to help members of the NLU community develop effective research strategies that will ensure their success in academic programs, professional work, and lifelong learning.

The Library serves as an active partner in the teaching and learning activities of the University. Library faculty teach information literacy and library research skills to classes and individuals. All students and faculty have access to the resources of the library, whether they are teaching or enrolled in on-campus, off-campus or online programs. See the library website (www.nl.edu/library) for additional information.

The link to the information on the library is: http://www.nl.edu.proxy.nl.edu/library/index.cfm. Here you will find frequently asked questions, links to finding articles, books, dissertations/ theses, films on demand, electronic requests, how to request and renew materials as well as information on how to cite references.

INTRODUCING SMARTHINKING: NLU'S NEW ONLINE RESOURCE FOR LEARNING SUPPORT

You may already have heard about Smarthinking, NLU's new web-based tutoring service. Smarthinking doesn't replace in-person tutoring, but it dramatically expands our students' ability to get basic help with core content and learning skills up to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Students can log in to Smarthinking through their NLU portal account anywhere they can connect to the Internet. Smarthinking has a staff of over 1,000 tutors worldwide with the credentials and experience to provide high-quality learning help.

- What it does: assist students in developing successful learning and problem-solving strategies that will help them succeed in class

- What it doesn't do: provide homework or test answers

How does it work?
Smarthinking connects students with certified instructors who provide:

- **Live tutoring**: Students connect and communicate online, in real time, using a whiteboard feature to discuss a specific academic question through text chat. You'll find a schedule of tutoring hours for each subject area in the scrolling box on your Smarthinking home page.

- **Q & A submission**: Students submit a question within a subject area and receive a written response offline within 24 hours.

- **Online writing lab**: Students submit a writing sample (paragraph) or essay and receive detailed written feedback within 24 hours.

Tutoring sessions are recorded so they're available for the student to review / replay in the Archives section of their personal Smarthinking account.

What subjects are available?
- Mathematics: Basic Math Skills, Pre-Algebra through College Algebra, Trigonometry, Geometry, Single-Variable Calculus, Statistics, Math en Español

· Writing: Creative writing, business and technical writing, ESOL, developmental writing

· APA Formatting

· Spanish

· Science: Biology, Anatomy & Physiology, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Physics

· Economics: Microeconomics Principles, Macroeconomics Principles

· Accounting: Accounting Principles, Managerial Accounting, Financial Accounting)

· Introductory Finance

Hours vary slightly by subject, so check the site for specific schedules.

Can I continue to work with our on-campus tutors?
Yes, absolutely! Smarthinking is a powerful tool, but Smarthinking tutors may not be able to answer every question or serve every need. When you're looking for more personalized learning help, please call NLU staff at 312.261.3374 or email them at learn@nl.edu.

How can I access Smarthinking?
Students who are currently enrolled in an NLU class, as well as NLU faculty, staff, and administrators, can access Smarthinking by logging into their NLU portal account at http://my.nl.edu. You'll see the Smarthinking link prominently displayed on the portal page after you log in.

Every NLU student has 15 hours of access to Smarthinking per quarter. If you need additional hours, please email learn@nl.edu or call 312.261.3374. NLU provides Smarthinking free of charge, as another way of supporting our students' success.

There are some minimum technology requirements – a main requirement is that you should have pop-up blockers disabled. You can check the Smarthinking LibGuide (see the next paragraph) for info on how to do this.

How can I learn to use Smarthinking?
Smarthinking is easy to use, but to get the most out of it, it helps to have some basic instruction and tips. You can ask any Library & Learning Support faculty or staff member, or call 312.261.3374 or email learn@nl.edu.

We've also developed a **Smarthinking LibGuide**. You'll find the link to it on the portal page, with the Smarthinking link, or you can go to http://libguides.nl.edu/smarthinking. This LibGuide includes more detailed information, including screen shots and FAQs.

Faculty orientation sessions:
*NLU Library and learning support will be co-hosting several introductory webinars with Smarthinking representatives during the next couple of weeks. The webinars will orient you to Smarthinking functions and answer your questions, as well as providing suggestions on how you might incorporate Smarthinking into your courses. You can connect to any webinar by doing **both** of the following about 5 minutes before the start of the session:*
· *Click on https://www1.gotomeeting.com/join/749228153*

· *Call 877.492.8992 and enter the participant code 624531*

Webinar schedule (all times are Central Daylight Savings):
· *Wednesday, September 14, 10-11 am*

· *Thursday, September 15, 4-5 pm*

· *Thursday, September 22, 1-2 pm*

· *Friday, September 23, 11am – 12 noon*

Do we have any information on the results of NLU's Summer Action Team pilot project on Smarthinking?
We do. Several faculty members were involved in this project, and about 70 students worked with Smarthinking in their courses and / or in individual tutoring sessions. Their reactions have been very positive, as shown by these anonymous comments from students who were asked to complete a brief survey about their experience with Smarthinking:
· *I like the instant feedback and the ability to get an anonymous pair of eyes on my work without feeling embarrassed, like I might with a classmate.*

· *Feedback was given right away and it was explained very well.*

· *I like that the first feedback I received on my writing was what the tutor liked about it. Then the constructive criticism was introduced. Very positive.*

· *I liked the fact that I was able to submit the writing sample from the comfort of my own home and received feedback within 24 hours.*

· *I loved the quick and detailed feedback that allowed me to improve my paper. This was an excellent tool.*

· *The tutor at Smarthinking got back to me with her suggestions within a day. I think that was quite prompt. She also provided descriptive feedback, and excellent suggestions.*

· *Quick response and provided examples and rules for grammar.*

For more information, please contact Sarah Drury (224.233.2277) or Grover Wake (312.261.3083).

Check out Smarthinking's web site at http://www.smarthinking.com.

WI Students may also reference: The "Wisconsin Campus Library Research Guide" found at http://libguides.nl.edu/wisconsin

Appendix F
Completion of the TLA M.Ed. Program, Graduation, and Commencement

Students will need to do a degree finalization for the graduation process to begin. The link that students need to go to is: http://www.nl.edu/oar/services/degrees-diplomas.cfm. There they will find application deadlines, degree dates and approximate mailing dates for their diplomas. There is also a link for transcripts. If a student needs a transcript prior to the diploma date showing that the program has been completed they should use the link at the bottom for completion statements.

Students eligible to walk for graduation will receive information from their respective campuses regarding the procedures to follow for the actual ceremony.

Information on Diplomas and Commencement (from NLU student handbook)
Degrees are awarded four times a year, once at the end of each academic term. Transcripts and diplomas reflect a degree awarded only on one of these dates. Degree finalization is the process of verifying all of a student's degree requirements have been completed, posting the degree to the student's transcript, and ordering a diploma. This process is only initiated after a student submits a "Diploma and Degree Finalization Request" form. Students must submit a "Diploma and Degree Finalization Request" and pay the degree finalization fee, regardless of whether they want to participate in a commencement ceremony. The degree finalization fee is $50 and will be billed to your student account upon submission of a Diploma Finalization Request. Students may also register to participate in the Commencement ceremony on the diploma & degree finalization request.

If a student needs more time to complete coursework, an "I" grade will be given. An I*n-Progress "I" may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor if the student has successfully completed seventy-five percent (75%) or more of the course requirements at a satisfactory level or better. The In-Progress course is completed by the fulfillment of specific written arrangements between the student and the instructor. No student automatically qualifies for an "I" grade; the decision is made by the instructor on an individual basis. Unless otherwise specified, the student is expected to complete the work for the In-Progress no later than 180 days following the last day of the In-Progress course. All "I" grades will be lapsed to a grade of "F" for undergraduate students and a grade of "N" (no credit) for graduate students if the course work is not completed within the specified 180 days. Before an "I" grade can be issued, an In-Progress contract must be completed by the instructor to document the details for completion of the course requirements and sent, by the registrar, to the student's NLU email account.*

In the case of exceptional circumstances, a student may request a one-time only 180-day extension from the appropriate college academic appeal committee.

1 The formal request must include a written letter and documentation of the exceptional circumstances, as well as the support and signature of the Instructor of record or the Associate Dean (if the Instructor is not available). If the student wishes to request an In-Progress Extension, it is the student's responsibility to contact the Instructor who granted the I-grade or the Associate Dean (if the Instructor is not available) at least 60 days prior to the end of the 180-day time limit. The student then works with the Instructor or the appropriate college Associate Dean to submit the request for an extension. The college academic appeal committee decides whether to grant the extension based on the letter and documentation. The chair of the appropriate college academic appeal committee informs the registrar in writing of the decision. The request for the extension and decision must be made prior to the end of the 180-day time limit. Otherwise, the In-Progress grade will lapse to a grad of "F" for undergraduate students and

a grade of "N" (no credit) for graduate students. In the case of exceptional circumstances, the student may petition for withdrawal from the course without academic penalty.

If an "I" is assigned as a grade, the academic record will reflect "I". When the course is completed, the instructor must submit a change of grade form to the Office of the Registrar, and the transcript will reflect a grade. Grades of "I" which are not removed within the 180 day period will automatically be lapsed to "F" (a failing grade) for undergraduate students, and "N" (no credit) for graduate students.

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National College of Education
Foster G. McGaw Graduate School
STUDENT PETITION TO THE NCE GRADUATE ADMISSION AND RETENTION COUNCIL

To petition the NCE Graduate Admission and Retention Council, return the first page of the petition and appropriate documents to NCE Graduate A & R Council at GradA&R@nl.edu . Or, you may fax it to (312) 261-3956. **You must consult with your advisor for counsel and signature before submitting your request.** The Council is composed of representatives of the graduate faculty. It meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month except July and December. Petitions must be received at least **two weeks in advance** of the meeting to enable members of the Council sufficient time to review each petition. The time to present **ALL** information and documentation (including a letter of explanation) is with thepetition**.**
If you wish to appear at the Council Meeting or to teleconference, please check this box.
If you wish to appeal the decision of the Council, please consult the NLU Student Guidebook
http://www.nl.edu/studentaffairs/StudentHandbook
[published annually by the Office of Academic Affairs] for the appropriate procedure.
Name _____ NLU ID #
_____
Last First Middle (If you are a student, please use your NLU ID #.)
Address
_____
_
Street City State Zip
Telephone [Home] _____ [Work] _____ NLU Email _____
(If you are a current student, all correspondence from the Council will be sent via your NLU student email account.)
Date Admitted _____ Degree _____ Program
_____
Please check the reason[s] you are petitioning the NCE Graduate A & R Council
_____ Acceptance of Hours Prior to Admission   _____ Transfer of Additional Credit
_____ Retention in Graduate Study   _____ Acceptance of Additional Workshop Credit
_____ Extension of Time Limitation   _____ Grade Appeal
_____ Core Course Waiver   _____ Other (Please specify)
_____

Please provide the information as described in the Policy Pages, stating what you wish to petition and provide an explanation or justification for your request. **A petition is necessary ONLY if your request is an exception to current policy.**
I grant the NCE Graduate Admission and Retention Council authorization to review my student file as it pertains to this petition. Students must be admitted prior to submitting a petition.
Student Signature _____ Date
_____

Advisor Signature _____ Date
_____

Advisor Name (Printed)_____Advisor NLU
Email_____
Comments
_____
_
Council Action
_____

Date Received _____ Date Heard _____
If the petition is incomplete, it will be returned to the student for the additional required information.

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Foster G. McGaw Graduate School
STUDENT PETITION TO THE NCE GRADUATE ADMISSION AND RETENTION COUNCIL

Policy Guidelines for Students and Advisors
The NCE Graduate Admission and Retention Council has established guidelines for students and advisors regarding submission of petitions requesting exceptions to graduate policies. The Council frequently receives petitions from students who have been notified of irregularities in their graduate study through a graduation check. The following guidelines are helpful:
1. When discussing the plan of study, consider any possible petitions that may need to be submitted.
2. Students must be admitted to an NCE Graduate program prior to submitting any petition.
3. The academic advisor must be contacted for consultation and a signature prior to submission of the petition.
4. Students must have verification from the Registrar's Office for transfer of credit when requesting more than the maximum allowed by the degree. Verification includes proof that the credit would have fulfilled graduate degree requirements in the institution at which it was taken. After verification is received, the student may submit the petition for acceptance of additional hours of transfer credit.
5. Advisors are asked to await the A & R Council decision on every petition before submitting a Student Adjustment form to the Registrar's Office.
6. Students are always invited to attend meetings of the Council when their petitions are reviewed. Students must indicate on the first page of the petition that they would like to appear.

Students requesting an exception to policy must complete the Petition page. Students then attach a narrative explanation that meets the requirements listed below for each exception to policy.

Exceptions to Policies
1. Retention in Graduate Study – Students are expected to maintain a 3.0 grade point average. Grades of D are not accepted toward completion of degree requirements. A student on a provisional status at the time of admission must maintain a grade point average of 3.0 in the first four graded classes taken after admission to avoid being dismissed from the graduate program.

2. Extension of Time Limitation – M. Ed.; M.S. Ed.; M.A.T.; C.A.S.; and Ed. S. candidates must fulfill all degree requirements and apply for degree within a six-year period. This time period is calculated from the date of the first course to be counted toward the degree whether or not the candidate was admitted to NLU/NCE at the time the class was taken. Ed. D. candidates must fulfill degree requirements within an eight-year time period.

On a separate attachment, the petition must document the reasons for the failure to maintain the required grade point average.
The petition must also provide an in-depth explanation why an exception to policy should be approved.
On a separate attachment, please provide all of the following information:
1. Date admitted _____; Degree _____; Program _____ as indicated on Graduate Study Plan
2. When did you take the first course toward your degree: Quarter ____ Year ____
3. Total semester hours completed in your program at this time? _____
4. Total semester hours remaining in your program? ____
Please provide an in-depth explanation for not completing the degree within the time limitation.
Please create a term-by-term, course-by-course plan of action to complete the degree including the date you anticipate graduating.

3. Core Course Waiver – Core courses reflect the importance of being exposed to current theory, research, and practice in education. Core courses also emphasize integration, a process that typically occurs at the graduate level. Previous undergraduate courses generally do not promote this level of synthesis. These core courses are designed to have students construct a higher level of knowledge and understanding. Waiving these requirements denies students the opportunity to engage in such a process.

Courses taken more than three years prior to the date of the petition are not considered to be current. Readings in the substitute or equivalent course must extend beyond a single textbook. Readings must also be drawn from primary sources and/or scholarly secondary sources. If a core course waiver is approved, the academic advisor must complete a **Student Adjustment Form** and send it to the Registrar's Office. A waived course is NOT an automatic transfer of credit. Requests for transfer of credit are handled through the Registrar's Office on a separate form. Based upon these understandings, the Council has established guidelines specific to each core course:
a. EPS500A *Contemporary Survey of Child Development with a Focus on Early Childhood*
b. EPS541 Cognition and Instruction

c. EPS511 Human Learning & Development in Instructional Contexts
d. ESR502 Research Analysis Methods for Educational Psychologists
e. ESR503 Applied Research Methods for Educational Psychologists
f. ESR505 Educational Inquiry and Assessment
g. ESR508 Research for School Leaders
h. ESR514 Research in Action: Becoming Practitioner Researchers
i. FND503 Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Early Childhood Education
j. FND504 History and Philosophy of Education/History & Philosophy of American Education
k. FND505 Contemporary Issues in Education
l. FND510 Social Justice Perspectives on the History & Philosophy of American Education
m. FND511 Social & Cultural Politics of Education: Personal & Contextual Perspectives
n. EDL546 Perspectives on and Administration of Educational Policies

Non-core classes are deliberated at the program level. Please consult with your academic advisor for program policies.

4. Acceptance of Hours Prior to Admission – A maximum of 9 semester hours taken at National College of Education prior to your admission to an approved program may apply toward an M.Ed., M.A.T., M.S.Ed., C.A.S., or Ed. S. degree. Courses taken during the term you are admitted are not considered hours prior to admission.

On a separate attachment, please identify which core course[s] in NCE that you are requesting be waived:
1. NCE Course #
2. NCE Course Name
Please identify the course[s] you wish to be considered as equivalent:
3. Institution
4. Course #
5. Course Name
6. Credit Hours
7. Quarter/Semester and Year Taken
8. Grade Received
Course equivalency must be documented with all of the following:
a. Catalog description
b. Class syllabus
c. Transcript showing grade received
Please provide an explanation why you believe that the course you took elsewhere is equivalent to the core course required at NLU/NCE.

On a separate attachment, please list every course you have completed at NCE prior to the date you were admitted that you wish to apply to your graduate degree. Include the following information for every class:
1. Course #
2. Course Name
3. Credit Hours
4. Quarter/Year Taken
5. Grade Received
Please provide a detailed explanation of why you did not apply for admission prior to completing more than 9 semester hours of credit toward your degree.

5. Transfer of Credit – A petition for transfer of credit is required only if you wish to transfer credits beyond the maximum for the degree you are seeking. Transfer credit to NLU must be graduate credit that would have fulfilled graduate degree requirements at the institution in which you took the class. Transfer credit must also be completed within the time limits of the degree you are completing at NLU/NCE. The Registrar's Office must verify that the course meets all requirements prior to submission of a petition.
Upon verification by the Registrar's Office and approval by the academic advisor, a maximum of 6 semester hours of graduate credit for a master's degree or a specialist's degree, a maximum of 1/3 of the required credit for a C.A.S. degree, and a maximum of 12 semester hours for the Ed. D. degree may be transferred from another institution. Requests for transfer of credit beyond these maximums require a petition.

6. Acceptance of Workshop Credit –
Workshop Credit – In some degree programs, a maximum of 6 semester hours of workshop credit may be applied. Consult with your academic advisor regarding limits in your program.

7. Grade Appeals – The following grade appeal procedures apply to all graduate classes at National College of Education. These
procedures are congruent with the appeal procedures for National-Louis University as described in the NLU Student Guidebook [published annually by the Office of Academic Affairs]. Request for a grade appeal must be based on evidence that supports a change of grade for the student.

a. **STEP 1** – Instructor/Person Responsible for the Grade

The student will attempt an informal resolution of the problem with the person responsible for the grade within 30 business days of the time that the grade was assigned – the last day of the quarter/term in which the class was taken. The initiation of the appeal process and terms of all agreements reached by the two parties must be documented in writing. The person responsible for the grade must respond in writing to the student's request within 5 days of receipt of the request. The person responsible must have documentation to support the assigned grade or a change of grade [e.g., syllabus, rubrics for evaluation of student performance, student assignment record] and provide an explanation why the grade is unchanged or changed. Copies of the written response are to be distributed to the student, the person responsible for the grade, and the Program Coordinator.

b. **STEP 2** – Program Coordinator for the Program in which the Course is Offered (College Academic Level Review)

If the problem is not resolved, the student may submit a written request for a review of the grade by the Program Coordinator within 45 business days of the assignment of the grade – the last day of the quarter/term in which the class was taken. This request for review must include:

1. The course and grade being appealed
2. The name of the individual responsible for the grade

On a separate attachment, please list all courses that meet the maximum of allowed transfer credit. Include the following information for each course:

1. Institution
2. Course #
3. Course Name
4. Credit Hours
5. Term/Year Taken

Please list the additional course[s] that exceeds the maximum of allowed transfer credit. Include the following information for each course:

6. Institution
7. Course #
8. Course Name
9. Credit Hours
10. Term/Year Taken

Please provide an in-depth explanation why additional transfer credit beyond the maximum should be accepted toward your degree.

On a separate attachment, please list the workshop credits that meet the maximum allowable credit in your program. Include the following information about each:

1. Institution
2. Course/Workshop #
3. Course/Workshop Name
4. Credit Hours
5. Term/Year Taken

Please list all additional courses that exceed the maximum of allowed credit. Include the following information about each:

6. Institution
7. Course/Workshop #
8. Course/Workshop Name
9. Credit Hours
10. Term/Year Taken

Please provide an in-depth explanation why additional credit beyond the maximum allowed should be accepted toward your degree
at NCE/NLU.
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3. The date the grade was assigned
4. The copy of the STEP 1 attempt to resolve the grade appeal
5. Documentation to support the request for a change of grade [e.g., copies of evaluated work; syllabus; rubrics]

The Program Coordinator will review the materials submitted with the written appeal to determine if the appeal follows the guidelines for the grade appeal process. If so, the Program Coordinator will schedule a meeting with the student, the person responsible for the grade, and others who might contribute to the record in an attempt to resolve the problem within 5 business days of the receipt of the grade appeal from the student. The Program Coordinator's decision will be documented in writing with an explanation why the grade is changed or unchanged.

c. **STEP 3** – NCE Graduate Admission and Retention Council

If not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student may submit a petition to the Council within 60 business days of the assignment of the grade – the last day of the quarter/term in which the class was taken. The student must contact his/her advisor for assistance in submitting the petition.

CALENDAR - Sequence for Grade Appeals

Grades are assigned no later than five days after the last day of the quarter/term.
Student has 30 days from the day the grade was submitted to submit a written appeal to the person responsible for assigning the grade presenting their reasons why a change of grade should be made. All notifications in this process are to be sent through university email.

Step I Instructor Receives Appeal
The instructor has five (5) business days to arrange a meeting with the student to attempt to find a resolution to the grade appeal. If no resolution is found, the instructor will document in writing the basis for the decision and send such documentation or explanation to the student. If the instructor is unavailable or unresponsive within 15 business days, the Program Coordinator may authorize an extension or initiate step II.
Student Receives Instructor Decision
After the student has received written notification from the instructor regarding the disposition of the grade appeal, and the student wishes to appeal this decision, the student then has ten (10) business days to submit a written appeal to the Coordinator of the program in which the class is offered. In cases where there is no program coordinator or if the coordinator is the course instructor this appeal should be sent to the Department Chair of the program which offered the class.

Step II Program Coordinator Receives Appeal
After receiving the written appeal, the Program Coordinator has five (5) business days to arrange a meeting between the course instructor and the student to attempt to find a resolution. The Program Coordinator should determine a resolution if none is found, and must document in writing the basis for the decision. This notification will be sent to the student and faculty member.
Student Receives Coordinator Decision
If the student wishes to appeal this decision, the student has ten (10) business days to submit a petition to the NCE Graduate Admission & Retention Council.

Step III NCE Graduate Admission & Retention Receives Petition
This council will hear the appeal at the next scheduled A & R meeting following deadlines for appeal submission.
Student Receives A & R Decision.

8. **Other** – If students wish to submit a petition for an exception to a policy not listed above, they must consult with the Chair of the NCE Graduate Admission and Retention council with regard to the appropriate documentation to be provided.
The NCE Graduate Admission and Retention Council decision is communicated to the petitioner within 10 working days of the date that the petition is considered. Communication will be sent via the petitioner's NLU student email account; otherwise, a letter will be sent through US Post to the home address listed on page one of the petition.

Appendix H
TRANSFER CREDIT INFORMATION

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Transferring credits is a two-step process. It requires verification by the Registrar's Office and approval by your advisor before it is accepted. The Office of the Registrar will contact your advisor, who must approve the inclusion of these courses in your Master's Degree.
2. The decision will be made only **after** you are admitted to the University.
3. **Six** semester hours of graduate level credit may be transferred. They would replace the following elective courses: CIC 591 Field Study/Curriculum and Instruction & CIC 594 Independent Study/Curriculum and Instruction.
4. Transferred courses can be **no older than four years** prior to the beginning of your program. All Master's degree requirements, **including transferred courses**, must be met **within six years of the first course taken.**
5. Transferred courses **must:**

- Have a grade of **B or better.**
- Not have been used for another degree.
- Be bona fide **graduate credit** (500 level courses or above) that would have fulfilled degree requirements at the institution at which it was offered. Such institutions are those approved by one of the regional accreditation associations.

6. Courses taken in quarter hours will be converted to semester hours.

PROCEDURES:
If you would like the Registrar's Office to consider transfer credit from another institution toward your degree, please note the following five items.

1. **Have the institution send official transcripts (sealed)** of the course(s) you wish to transfer. If we already have these transcripts, you do not need to send another set.
2. **Student Adjustment Form** – you can download the form from the NLU website: http://www3.nl.edu/oar/services/transfer-credit.cfm. **You do not need your advisor's signature.**
3. It takes 6-8 weeks to process transfer credits. You will be notified via your **NLU e-mail account** after the transfer credit decision has been made. Do not assume they were accepted if you have not heard from the Registrar's office. If you have questions regarding your transfer credit, contact the Registrar's office at registrar@nl.edu.
4. Once your credit is transferred, you may view this by going to the Academic Services tab on the portal.

Please forward the required documentation to:
National Louis University
Attn: Registrar/Transfer Credit
1000 Capitol Drive
Wheeling, IL 60090

Who to contact?

Registering for courses	Academic Advising Center
http://www.nl.edu/advising/	
Understanding requirements for graduation	Academic Advising Center
http://www.nl.edu/advising/	
Options for earning credits	Academic Advising Center
http://www.nl.edu/advising/	
Resolving student concerns	Academic Advising Center
http://www.nl.edu/advising/	

University Ombudsperson, Brisbane Rouzan
        brouzan@nl.edu, Chicago Campus
        Room 2004, 312.261.3461 or 877.435.7658.

Financial Aid questions	Financial Aid
800-443-5522 ext 5350	
Portal login problems	Help Desk
866-813-1177 or helpdesk@nl.edu	
Ordering transcripts	Registrar
www.getmytranscript.com	

TLA coordinators:

Illinois, Lorri Davis	Lorri.davis@nl.edu
	(800) 443-5522 ext 8055
Florida, LuzCarime Bersh,	Luzcarime.bersh@nl.edu
	(813) 491-6123
Wisconsin, Dr. Karen F Tardrew	Ktardrew@nl.edu
	(608) 332-9697
Online, Eleanor Binstock	Eleanor.binstock@nl.edu
	(800) 443-5522 ext 5143
TLA (ISTTI) Department Chair, Dr. Tom Fox	Tfox@nl.edu
	(312) 261-3140
Administrative Assistant-NCE Illinois	
Barb Azzolin	Barbara.azzolin@nl.edu
	(800) 443-5522 ext 5724
Office Manager NLU Wisconsin	
Jennifer Petersen	Jennifer.petersen@nl.edu
	(800) 443-5522 ext 6202
Administrative Assistant NCE Wisconsin	
Sue Degenhardt-Milwaukee Campus	Susan.Degenhardt@nl.edu
	(800) 443-5522 ext 6211
Administrative Assistant NCE Wisconsin	
Tami Kaske-Beloit Campus	Tammy.kaske@nl.edu
	(800) 443-5522 ext 6805

There are many links on the NLU website at: http://www.nl.edu/students/viewall.cfm

Appendix J
CELL PHONE POLICY

The university designates cell phone areas at each campus and cell phones should be on vibrate in all classes, meetings and university sponsored events to avoid disrupting university business and the learning environment.

Assessment of Student Performance: General Considerations

Philosophical Orientation

The assessment of student performance is conceived within the parameters of the philosophy of the TLA program. This philosophy emphasizes the tenets of constructivism. As such, candidates are viewed as co-constructors of knowledge, as co-learners and facilitators, and as "practitioner experts" in their respective fields.

Course Assessments

Candidates will receive a letter grade at the end of each quarter for each class taken during that quarter. Although your instructor is responsible for posting grades at the end of each quarter, the assessment of your work will be derived through a combination of self, peer, and instructor evaluation. The grading scale follows the official policy of NLU, using letter grades of A, B, C, D, F, I (incomplete), and W (withdrawal). To earn an A, candidates must show and maintain a high degree of academic rigor expected of students at the graduate level. It assumes that all work will be complete and submitted in a timely manner, and will include any revisions, additions, and/or other changes requested by the instructor.

Program Assessments
In addition to course assignments, each candidate is expected to complete periodic TLA program assessments (i.e., end-of-quarter reflections, online program outcome survey, research protocol assessment tool, etc.). Your instructor will make available to you a schedule of these assessments, as well as directions to access online assessments.

Citation Format
Students are expected to use APA format for all formal written documents. Assignments that do not show proper citation, synthesis or summarization will be returned for additional corrective work. Information on APA style is available through the NLU library portal, where a number of APA guides and websites are listed.

Policy on Academic Honesty
National-Louis University subscribes to the principle that academic quality and a productive learning environment are inextricably linked to academic honesty. Like other colleges and universities, National-Louis University has expectations regarding academic honesty on the part of students, faculty and staff, and, indeed, professional people at all levels of academic activity. With respect to the academic honesty of students, it is expected that all material submitted as part of any class exercise, in or out of class, is the actual work of the student whose name appears on the material or is properly documented otherwise. The concept of academic honesty includes plagiarism as well as receiving and/or giving improper assistance and other forms of cheating on coursework. Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action and may be dismissed from the University. Please consult the Student Guidebook, 2011-2012 for a complete description of this policy.

Assessment of Student Performance: Grade Percentages

Class Attendance: 15 % of grade
You are expected to be present for all scheduled classes. In the event you are not able to attend a class, please let your instructor know ahead of time. In the case of an emergency and you are unable to contact your instructor ahead of time, please let your instructor know why you were absent within 24 hours of the missed class. In the case of such an absence, not only are you expected to keep up with current readings and assignments, but also, upon instructor discretion, to complete additional assignments for your absence. For more than one absence per quarter, you are expected to devise a plan with your instructor that outlines how you will complete both regularly assigned coursework and any make-up work as well.

Class Participation: 35 % of grade

You are expected to be an active contributor to class activities and discussions. Along with being an active contributor, you are expected to be a substantive one as well, meaning that the quality of your response is as important as the frequency of them. In this light, contributions that connect to the course readings, that relate to previous topics discussed in the course, and that are tied to specific and relevant experiences are encouraged and valued more than random statements with limited and tentative connections to course topics and materials.

Course Assignments: 50% of grade

You are expected to complete any and all assignments in a timely manner and with the same of vigor and thoroughness expected of your class participation. All assignments must meet both the format parameters and the stated objectives set by the instructor. Assignments will be assessed using a combination of instructor-, peer-, and self-assessment.

Appendix L
TLA Field Experience Portfolio Reflections

Field Experience Context: Every student in the TLA program is required to document 20 hours per quarter (10 hours per course) of field experience or classroom applications. These activities will document your applications of the theories and practices encountered in your coursework, as well as your growth and application of the Nine Outcomes of the TLA program. The purpose of field experience is to help you to make connections to your thinking, deepen your insights into these new connections, and ultimately guide you in discovering how these insights can, have, or will transform your professional practice.

Directions:
You may create it in any electronic environment or format of your choice, however, if looking for a suggestion, I'd recommend you use your personal page on the group WIKI if you are comfortable knowing your colleagues will have access to it.

Include _evidence_ and a written reflective *component* that describes the evidence demonstrating:

1. Key learning you have done and/or experienced related to your field experiences.
2. In your field experiences, how you have worked toward meeting at least 4 of the 9 TLA program outcomes?
3. What you have learned/experienced through the use of technology?
4. What you have learned (and applied to your own teaching *if applicable*) creating change in your classroom from your field experiences?
5. What student outcomes have been affected as a result of your field experiences?
6. How at least one experience, assignment, this quarter has impacted your personal and/or professional life in some way?
7. What new goals you have for yourself for next quarter?

Please complete a self-assessment of your portfolio and its contents based on the portfolio criteria. Include this in your electronic portfolio as well.

Criteria: The teacher:

- used technology in a manner that is easy to navigate in portraying her/his portfolio overall
- shows appropriate and meaningful evidence that demonstrates she/he reflected on all aspects of learning in the program as listed in the directions
- demonstrates that he/she has worked meaningfully toward meeting at least 4 of the 9 TLA outcomes
- demonstrates that he/she has been highly reflective throughout the quarter related to the learning of content of the quarter
- demonstrates that she/he has applied some aspect of learning from this quarter into her/his own professional life and teaching
- demonstrates how the learning and experiences he/she has had during the quarter have made an impact on his/her own students' learning in some way
- has formulated goals for the next quarter that are personally and professionally meaningful

TLA Field Experience Documentation

Field Experience: In the TLA program, one-third of every course is composed of Field Experience, that is working with your students on features of the course that are being addressed within the course(s) you are taking. Every student in the TLA program is required to document 20 hours per quarter of field experience or classroom applications (that is 10 hours per course). The purpose of documenting your field experience is:

- to help you make connections to your work with students, especially about your understanding of your students and their learning.
- to deepen your insights into these new connection, and ultimately guide you in discovering how your insights can, have, or will transform your professional practice.

Your Field Experience will be documented via the Blackboard system. Field Experience Activities, for example, may be activities and/or lessons that you are trying out to see how they work with specific students in your classroom, or they may be features of your work with students that you are bringing to your group for discussion, analysis, and new possibilities or perspectives. You instructor will provide specific guidelines for activities that will support this portion of your work in the TLA program.

The following TLA Field Experience document has four purposes. One, it gives you a place to record your field experiences. Two, perhaps more importantly, it provides an opportunity for you to reflect on those experiences. Three, it provides evidence for your instructor to discuss your classroom work as you and your students have experienced it. Four, it provides data for the TLA program faculty to assess their performance in terms of the field experiences of their students (that is, you and your colleagues).

For each Field Experience activity, please complete the introductory information, and then answer the Reflective Questions below. You and use the Reflection Questions as a structure for your reflection on the Field Experience activity; your reflection should include as many of these questions as possible, but need not be limited to these questions. This form can be downloaded.

Thank you.

Field Experience Documentation

Quarter (20 hrs./quarter)	Please check quarter: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7					
Course(s)						
Date(s) of Activity						
Duration (approximate time spent doing activity)						

Field Experience Reflection Questions

Describe the activity	
Why did you choose this activity for your students and/or you?	
What was the result of this activity?	
What were the TLA outcomes that you addressed?	
What did you learn about your students, yourself, and the learning process?	
What did you learn about the curriculum, and what changes (if any) would you make next time?	
If possible, provide an artifact for documentation.	

Introductory information on the Field Experience documented

Quarter _____   Course(s) _____

Date(s) of Field Experience _____

Approximate time spent on doing the Field Experience _____

Reflection Questions:

Describe the Field Experience activity:

How or why did you choose to document this activity?

What was the result of this activity?

What TLA Outcome or Outcomes (if applicable) did this activity provide you more insight into?

What did you learn about your students, yourself, learning, or curriculum as a result of this activity?

Appendix M
NLU Contact information

We have provided office hours, telephone hours, email addresses and web sites for all of the offices that a student would need to contact.

Main NLU Number: 1-888-NLU-Today (658-8632)

Campus Student Services (main)/Student Finance Office Hours	
Chicago: Monday-Thursday 8:00 am-7:00 pm Friday 8:00 am-5:00 pm Skokie, Lisle, Elgin and Wheeling: Monday-Thursday 9:00 am-6:00 pm Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm Telephone: Monday-Thursday 9:00 am-7:00 pm Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm 1-888-658-8632 ext 5350 FAX: 1-847-465-5894 Email: StudentFinance@nl.edu Web: http://www.nl.edu/studentfinance/	On campus general information, financial aid, student billing, book advances, financial aid refunds, student loans, work-study, Graduate Assistantships, Veterans Services

Academic Advising **Office Hours-Hours vary by location**	
Chicago: Monday-Thursday 8:00 am-7:00 pm Friday 8:00 am-5:00 pm Wheeling: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9:00 am-7:00 pm Wednesday and Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm Skokie and Lisle: Monday and Wednesday 9:00 am-7:00 pm Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm Elgin: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm Thursday 12:00 pm-7:00 pm Additional hours by appointment 1-888-658-8632 ext 5900 FAX: 1-312-261-3044 Email: Advising@nl.edu Web: http://www.nl.edu/advising/	Graduate and Undergraduate advising and registration, drop/add appeals, student accommodation requests

Library/Tutoring/Testing Services **Office Hours**	
Regular staffed hours: Chicago, Lisle, North Shore, Wheeling: Monday-Thursday 10:00 am-6:00 pm Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm Elgin: By appointment only Library Telephone Monday-Thursday 10:00 am-6:00 pm Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm 1-312-261-3376 Email: Library@nl.edu Tutoring and Testing Telephone Monday-Thursday 10:00 am-6:00 pm Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm 1-888-658-8632 ext 3374 Email: learn@nl.edu Additional library, tutoring, and testing hours by appointment Library Web: http;//www.nl.edu/library Library contact information can be found at: http://www.nl.edu.proxy.nl.edu/library/about/contacts.cfm	Library services, academic success, assessment testing, CAD resources and workshops
Office of Admissions and Records **Office Hours**	
Chicago: 9:00 am-5:00 pm Wheeling: 8:00 am-5:00 pm Telephone: Monday-Thursday 9:00 am-7:00 pm Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm 1-888-658-8632 ext 5718 FAX: Records: 1-847-465-4746 Admissions: 1-847-465-5730 Email: Records@nl.edu Admissions@nl.edu Web: http://www.nl.edu/oar/	Transcript requests, enrollment verification, degree audits, teacher certifications, diploma requests, apply to graduate

Response Center **Office Hours**	
Monday-Thursday　　　　　　9:00 am-7:00 pm Friday　　　　　　　　　　　9:00 am-5:00 pm 1-888-658-8632	All inquiries

Technical Student Support	
Help Desk: On campus: ext 4357 from any phone Off campus: 1-866-813-1177 (toll free) Internet: direct request entry http://hdo1.collegis.com/nlu/ Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week Instructional technical analyst: All campus hours:　　　　　5:00 pm-10:00 pm 1-888-658-8632 ext 888	On and off campus technology support, NLU Portal and password reset, Blackboard, NLU email, Live Text

Student Affairs/International **Hours vary by location**	
Telephone: Monday-Thursday　　　　　　9:00 am-7:00 pm Friday　　　　　　　　　　　9:00 am-5:00 pm Student Affairs: 1-888-658-8632 ext 3568 Email: Studentaffairs@nl.edu Web: http://www.nl.edu/aboutnlu/studentservices.cfm	CTA U-Pass, commencement, counseling, student activities, Ombudsman, student accommodation requests, student visas

Career Services **Hours vary by location**	
Telephone and FAX: 1-312-261-3270 Email: Careerservices@nl.edu Web: http://www.nluvirtualcareernetwork.net	Career development, job search tools and resources, virtual career network, career blog

Textbooks and other course related materials **Office Hours**	
Monday-Friday　　　　　　　8:30am-4:30 pm 1-888-658-8632 ext 4483 Email: Lfedele@nl.edu Web: http://www.ecampus.com/nlu	Textbooks, Gift Shop, eCampus, textbook buy back

Facilities				
Student ID cards, vending, room assignment, campus directions, lost and found, copy center, parking validation (Chicago)				

	Monday-Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Chicago				Per the academic calendar
Elgin	7:30 am-10:00 pm	7:30 am-10:00 pm	7:30 am-5:30 pm	Closed
Lisle	7:30 am-10:00 pm	7:30 am-5:00 pm	8:00 am-5:00 pm**	Closed
North Shore	7:30 am-10:00 pm	7:30 am-6:00 pm*	8:00 am-5:00 pm**	Closed
Wheeling	7:30 am-10:00 pm	7:30 am-6:00 pm*	8:00 am-5:00 pm**	Closed
	7:30 am-10:00 pm	7:30 am-6:00 pm*	8:00 am-5:00 pm**	

*Hours may be extended based on the academic schedule
**Based on the academic schedule, hours may be reduce; additionally between terms and during the summer term campuses may be closed on Saturdays as well as per the academic schedule

For service call ext 999. If staff is not on campus and immediate assistance is needed, call any of the following:
Chicago ext 3333   Lisle ext 4444   Elgin ext 8888   Wheeling ext 5555   Skokie ext 2222

Enrollment
Office Hours
Chicago and Lisle:
Monday-Thursday   9:00 am-7:00 pm
Friday   9:00 am-5:00 pm
Telephone:
Monday-Thursday   9:00 am-7:00 pm
Friday   9:00 am-5:00 pm
1-888-658-8632 ext 4636
FAX:
Chicago: 1-312-261-3407
Lisle: 1-630-874-4491

Harrison Scholars Program (Office of the Provost Suite 4006)
Office Hours
Monday-Friday   9:00 am-5:00 pm
Traci Dennard
Undergraduate Initiatives Manager
1-888-658-8632 ext 3845
Email: Traci.dennard@nl.edu

Monica Haydee Ramos
Student Success Coach
Tuesday-Friday   9:00 am-5:00 pm
1-888-658-8632 ext 3064
Email: Monica.ramos@nl.edu
(Multilingual: Spanish-English-German)

College of Arts and Sciences
Chicago:
Monday-Friday   9:00 am-6:00 pm

Lisle:
Monday-Friday   9:00 am-5:00 pm
888-658-8632 ext 3378

College of Management and Business
Hours vary
1-888-658-8632 ext 3609

National College of Education
Hours vary
1-888-658-8632 press 6

IV. Completion Forms

IDS/TLA SIGNATURE and COMPLETION FORM
Permission for Use of Research Project (*Insert at the end of the project*)

Author_____
Student ID #_____
Title of Project_____
NLU Field Based Group Name and Number_____
Instructor_____
Reader_____

PROJECT & INSTRUCTOR ACCESS
Designate the appropriate category/ies that you wish for your research project. Please be sure to sign below.

   A. ☐ **PROJECT PRIVATE.**
      This means my project will always be closed to all readers
      without my expressed and direct approval.

      OR

      ☐ **PROJECT PUBLIC.**
      This means my project can be read by faculty and students
      of the M. Ed. Field based program of the Department of
      Interdisciplinary Studies.

If you chose Project Public above, please choose one or both of the categories below:

   B. ☐ *My core instructor may use portions of my project and/or coursework* to cite
      as "sample" pieces for assisting other M. Ed. students to
      better understand the components of the teacher action research.

      ☐ *My core instructor may use portions of my project and/or coursework* to cite
      as "sample" pieces for research and scholarship data.

Student signature & date_____

C. COMPLETION OF PROJECT
_____(Student)
 has met all action research project requirements in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Education, Interdisciplinary Studies/Teaching, Learning & Assessment in Curriculum and Instruction, National College of Education, National-Louis University.
Instructor Signature & Date_____

ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT ABSTRACT

The abstract is a maximum 500 word description of your Action Research. The purpose is to capture the critical elements of what you and the students experienced and learned. Recommended elements could include:

- Focus of Action Research
- Context – such as type of learning environment, grade level, suburban or rural school
- Description of how you proceeded with implementing your Action Research
- Examples of how you collected data and strategies employed in this process
- Major learning experiences for you, the teacher, and for your students, if appropriate
- Anticipated future work related to topic
- Way of reporting

Sample:

Student Name: _____**Student ID #:**N00_____ **Graduation Date**: _____**Group #:**_____
Phone Number: _____ **Email:** _____ **Address:**_____
Employment: _____ **Core Instructor**: _____ **Reader:** _____

The Power of Prediction: Using Prediction Journals
to Increase Comprehension in Kindergarten

Purpose: The purpose of this action research project is to discuss how explicit comprehension instruction can take place along with writing, in the kindergarten classroom. Methodology: This action research project took place in a suburban kindergarten with learners of diverse ability levels and ESL students as well. In this classroom small group instruction was the vehicle for literacy. The teacher worked with a small heterogeneous group of kindergarten readers. The group size was about 4-6 on a given day. This took place within the second semester of the kindergarten year. The documentation of the strategy was anecdotal and based on the principles of action research. Results: This prior knowledge activation strategy presented benefits of the children using the vocabulary from the story in their journal entries. Another benefit was that the children were forced to use their inventive spelling skills and explore the grapheme-phoneme relationship. The final benefit of this strategy was that the children were motivated more and more each time the strategy was presented to listen and have their own independent discussion of the story, the characters and its events. They even modeled the strategy when participating in center time at the reading center, independently. This strategy is one that is simple yet effective. It allows optimal participation from all members of the group and a constant flow of communication about the story. Conclusions: The outcome of analyzing and using this strategy in the classroom is that it plays upon the natural curiosity of young children as a motivator for reading. Another outcome is that the teacher found a strategy that adheres to the ability levels of all children. The relationship of this strategy to the purpose of the research is manifested in the rich discussion and authentic work samples of the students. Recommendations: It is imperative that teachers offer more strategies that activate the prior knowledge of the beginning reader. These and other developmentally appropriate strategies with regards to cultural and linguistic diversity make for lifelong learners and independent readers.

Action Research Project Focus:

LEVEL Check one:
- □ *ECE* Early Childhood Education   □ *SEC* Secondary Education
- □ *ELED* Elementary Education   □ *ADLT* Adult Education
- □ *MLE* Middle-level Education   □ *GEN* General

SUBJECT Check one:
□ Mathematics _____	□ Literature _____	□ Industrial Arts _____
□ Science _____	□ Special Ed _____	□ Consumer & Family Sci _____
□ Social Studies_____	□ ESL/ Bilingual_____	□ Technology _____
□ English _____	□ Physical Ed _____	□ Curriculum/Instruction _____
□ Literacy _____	□ Health _____	□ Criminal Justice _____
□ Reading _____	□ Foreign Lang _____	□ Other _____
□ Writing _____	□ Fine Arts _____	

GRADUATE M.ED.
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES/TEACHING,LEARNING & ASSESSMENT
RESEARCH AREA TITLES

_____
Group Number

_____   _____
Student's Name   NLU ID

ESR 510/ ESR 511/ ESR 591

LEVEL Check one:

□	*ECE*	Early Childhood Education	□	*SEC*	Secondary Education
□	*ELED*	Elementary Education	□	*ADLT*	Adult Education
□	*MLE*	Middle-level Education	□	*GEN*	General

SUBJECT Check one:

□ Mathematics _____   □ Literature _____   □ Industrial Arts _____
□ Science _____   □ Special Ed _____   □ Consumer & Family Sci _____
□ Social Studies_____   □ ESL/ Bilingual_____   □ Technology _____
□ English _____   □ Physical Ed _____   □ Curriculum/Instruction _____
□ Literacy _____   □ Health _____   □ Criminal Justice _____
□ Reading _____   □ Foreign Lang _____   □ Other _____
□ Writing _____   □ Fine Arts _____

Electives: CIC 591/CIC 594 (Only if elective course was taken)

LEVEL Check one:

□	*ECE*	Early Childhood Education	□	*SEC*	Secondary Education
□	*ELED*	Elementary Education	□	*ADLT*	Adult Education
□	*MLE*	Middle-level Education	□	*GEN*	General

SUBJECT Check one:

□ Mathematics _____   □ Literature _____   □ Industrial Arts _____
□ Science _____   □ Special Ed _____   □ Consumer & Family Sci _____
□ Social Studies_____   □ ESL/ Bilingual_____   □ Technology _____
□ English _____   □ Physical Ed _____   □ Curriculum/Instruction _____
□ Literacy _____   □ Health _____   □ Criminal Justice _____
□ Reading _____   □ Foreign Lang _____   □ Other _____
□ Writing _____   □ Fine Arts _____

Submitted by _____   Date _____
                           Instructor Signature
For Office Use Only:
Data Processed By: _____
Date: _____
Attachment C