



EDST 571A INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH: RELATING QUESTIONS, THEORIES, AND METHODS

Section: EDST 571 (021)
Term 1, September 2 – November 28, 2014
Mondays 4:30-7:30pm
Location: WMAX 110

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is the first term of a two-term course that introduces Master's students to research on education, where "education" is taken in a broad sense, including discourses and representations of education, schooling, and learning, practices and policies in adult and higher education, K-12 schooling, workplace learning, and informal education. Rather than considering theory separate from research methods, the course considers educational research as a coherent combination of research questions, theoretical perspectives, and research methods. The central question in both terms is: from what theoretical perspectives and with what research methods can educational questions be investigated? The first term of the course will concentrate on introducing you to the culture of educational research by establishing researcher reflexivity, asking questions about research ethics, and reviewing major traditions within educational research. In addition, we will discuss the programmatic steps to completing the research degree, interacting with the research supervisor, and establishing the supervisory committee.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the first term, you should:

- understand the importance of coherence amongst research questions, theoretical perspectives, and research methods;
- be able to identify one or more research questions, theoretical perspectives, and research methods pertinent to your own research interests;
- be able to locate your developing research within (a) paradigm(s), and identify the benefits and limitations of doing so.

COURSE READINGS

All readings are available online through the Library Course Reserves:

<https://go.library.ubc.ca/N9pjmj>

Further notes, .pdfs of PowerPoint slides, and links will be added the course Connect site as we go along, so make sure you check in regularly or set up an alert for new information.

<http://elearning.ubc.ca/connect/login-to-connect/>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Assignment 1: Autobiographical reflection (6-10 pages)

In research, what is seen depends not only on what is being observed but also on who is looking. The social biography of the researcher plays a role in the determination of the research topic, the selection of theoretical perspective and methodology, and the interpretation of results. Today, some kind of autobiographical statement, which may be a paragraph or a more substantial component, is often part of a research study. Regardless of whether you will be required to include such information in your final written thesis, going through the process of situating yourself in the research journey is beneficial.

In this assignment, prepare an autobiographical account that casts light on your selection of an area of research. You are asked to reflect on how your social biography (e.g., cultural heritage, family background, educational and work experience, age, race, gender, class, sexuality, disability, etc.) has influenced or may influence the topic of interest for your research project. How has who you are influenced what you want to know? It is not a problem if you do not yet have a clear idea of what you want to focus on in your research. This assignment can help you question some of the social factors that frame the perceptions and beliefs that you already bring to your research agenda.

Due date: October 13, 2014

Weight: 20%

Assignment 2: Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS2) Online Tutorial

In order to be allowed to conduct “research involving humans,” such as interviews, focus groups, and observations, UBC requires researchers to obtain formal permission from its Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB). As a first step toward this, this assignment asks you to complete the TCPS2 online tutorial via <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education/tutorial-didacticiel/> Completion of the tutorial will result in a certificate. Please submit the certificate (electronically) to Claudia.

More information is available from:

Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans:

http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/pdf/eng/tcps2/TCPS_2_FINAL_Web.pdf

UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board:

<http://www.research.ubc.ca/ethics/behavioural-research-ethics-board>

UBC Researcher Information Services (the online portal that will give you access to the BREB form): <http://www.rise.ubc.ca/>

Due date: October 20, 2014

(required but not weighted in grade calculation)

Assignment 3: Research problem and research question (5-8 pages)

The purpose of this assignment is to justify a researchable problem and formulate a research question by using the following steps:

1. Identify an area that interests you and describe it briefly. Does your area of interest have its source in theory, in a practical issue, or in your own life experience? Use non-technical language as much as possible. Explain specialized terms.

2. Define a research problem. What aspects of your area of interest require further study? For example, what are some of the nagging difficulties that surround a particular practice or course of action? What are the gaps or anomalies in this area of interest? Be sure the problem is amenable to research, and has significance beyond your personal interest. Finish this step with a clear statement that begins, "The purpose of this study is ..."
3. Formulate a research question, or a set of two or three related research questions. Keep in mind that research questions are the questions to which your study must provide an answer. They are neither the larger questions to which your study might contribute a small piece, nor the specific questions you may use in, for example, interviews.

Due date: November 3, 2014

Weight: 30%

Assignment 4: Literature review (12-15 pages)

Over the course of the term, you will develop a literature review. Reviews of relevant literature form an integral part of any graduate degree program and are particularly important for research proposals, graduating papers, theses, and dissertations. We will discuss in class what distinguishes a literature review from an annotated bibliography—as it is the former we are after in this assignment, not the latter—and various ways to organize material in a literature review.

Due date: November 24, 2014

Weight: 50%

General Writing Requirements

For ease of reading and evaluating, please make all your assignments double spaced, left justified, in a reasonable font size (Times 12 is a good indicator, but you may wish to use other fonts, such as Cambria or Palatino, for aesthetic reasons). Use 1-inch margins and number your pages (but not a cover or title page if you use one). We will discuss expectations around genre, structure, clarity, grammar and spelling in class. **Please submit all assignments via email as Word documents (attachments).**

Document all sources of information you use in your writing. The reference style currently used most commonly in our Faculty of Education is APA (6th ed.):

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

If you want to use a different recognized reference format, such as MLA or Chicago, please check with your research supervisor to make sure s/he will accept this format in your dissertation. Get used now to the format you will be using in your dissertation, as it will save you time later on.

Academic Integrity

One of the things I value in academic work is understanding how none of us comes to know what we do on our own. As educational scholar Madeleine Grumet (1988) writes,

Lodged right in the middle of this term that we extend to honor the people who have influenced and cared for us, is the word 'knowledge.' An acknowledgment is an admission. It makes explicit what is tacit, or sometimes denied, in every scholarly monologue: none of us knows alone. (p. ix)

Please acknowledge the people through whose knowledge you have come to know what you do. My main concerns in referencing are a) that you honour other people's ideas and wording, and b) that you are consistent in the way you note your sources.

The integrity of academic work depends on the honesty of all those who work in this environment and the observance of accepted conventions such as acknowledging the work of others through careful citation of all sources used in your work. Plagiarism—including self-plagiarism—and other forms of academic misconduct are treated as serious offences at UBC, whether committed by faculty, staff or students. You should be aware of the sections of the University Calendar that address academic integrity (<http://students.ubc.ca/calendar>) and plagiarism (<http://vpacademic.ubc.ca/integrity/ubc-regulation-on-plagiarism/>). UBC also has a useful Guide to Academic Integrity that explains what plagiarism is and how to avoid it (<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoiding-plagiarism/>). If you have questions or concerns about any of these policies or conventions in relation to how they apply to the work you do in this course, please discuss them with me.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a letter from Disability Resource Centre (DRC) indicating that you have a disability that requires specific accommodations, please present the letter to me so that I can discuss the accommodations that you might need for class. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, you should first meet with a DRC advisor to determine what accommodations/services you are eligible for. You can find more information at:

<http://www.students.ubc.ca/access/disability-services/?page=current>

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

You will not be penalized because of observances of your religious beliefs. Whenever possible, you will be given reasonable time to make up any academic assignment that is missed due to participation in a religious observance. It is your responsibility to inform me of any intended absences for religious observances in advance.

SCHEDULE

Week 1 (September 8): INTRODUCTION

Week 2 (September 15): EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND RESEARCH PARADIGMS

Required reading:

Palys, T., & Atchison, C. (2007). Getting started. In *Research decisions: Quantitative and qualitative perspectives* (pp. 31-50). Toronto, ON: Nelson.

Donmoyer, R. (2006). Take my paradigm ... please! The legacy of Kuhn's construct in educational research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(1), 11-34.

Lather, P. (2006). Paradigm proliferation as a good thing to think with: teaching research in education as a wild profusion. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(1), 35-57.

Week 3 (September 22): WHO IS THE RESEARCHER?

Required reading:

England, K. V. (1994). Getting personal: Reflexivity, positionality, and feminist research. *The Professional Geographer*, 46(1), 80-89.

Ahmed, S. (2004). Declarations of whiteness: The non-performativity of anti-racism. *Borderlands*, 3(2). Retrieved from http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol3no2_2004/ahmed_declarations.htm

Week 4 (September 29): RESEARCH ETHICS

Required reading:

Smith, L.T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Dunedin, New Zealand: University of Otago Press. (Introduction, pp. 1-18, and Chapter 2, "Research Through Colonial Eyes," pp. 42-57)

Spyrou, S. (2011). The limits of children's voices: From authenticity to critical, reflexive representation. *Childhood*, 18(2), 151-165.

Sikes, P. (2006). On dodgy ground? Problematics and ethics in educational research. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 29(1), 105-117.

Week 5 (October 6): LITERATURE REVIEW

Required reading:

Boote, D. & Beile, P. (2005). Scholars before researchers: On the centrality of the dissertation literature review in research preparation. *Educational Researcher*, 34(6), 3-15.

Recommended reading:

Maxwell, J. A. (2006). Literature reviews of, and for, educational research: A commentary on Boote and Beile's "Scholars before Researchers." *Educational Researcher*, 35(9), 28-31.

Boote, D. & Beile, P. (2006). On “Literature Reviews of, and for, Educational Research”: A response to the critique by Joseph Maxwell. *Educational Researcher*, 35(9), 32-35.

Week 6 (October 13): THANKSGIVING (NO CLASS)

Week 7 (October 20): THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Required reading:

Edwards, R. (2012). Theory matters: Representation and experimentation in education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 44(5), 522–534.

Anfara, V. A. & Mertz, N. T. (2006). Introduction. In V.A. Anfara & N.T. Mertz (Eds.), *Theoretical frameworks in qualitative research* (pp. xii-xxxii). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ravitch, S.M. & Riggan, M. (2012). Chpts 1 and 2, “Introduction,” and “Why Conceptual Frameworks?” in *Reason and rigor: How conceptual frameworks guide research*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage. pp. 1-14; pp. 15-26.

Recommended reading:

Ball, S. J. (2006). The necessity and violence of theory. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 27(1), 3–10.

Sikes, P. (2006). Towards useful and dangerous theories. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 27(1), 43-51.

Week 8 (October 27): METHODOLOGY

Required reading:

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). Research design issues. In *Research methods in education* (pp. 73-90). New York, NY: Routledge.

Harding, S. (1987). The method question? *Hypatia*, 2(3), 19-35.

Week 9 (November 3): ESTABLISHING CONFIDENCE IN YOUR DATA AND CLAIMS

Required reading:

Andres, L. (2012). Validity, reliability, and trustworthiness. In *Designing and doing survey research* (pp. 115-128). London, UK: Sage.

Phillips, D. C. (1987). Validity in qualitative research: Why the worry about warrant will not wane. *Education and Urban Society*, 20(1), 9–24.

Lather, P. (1986). Issues of validity in openly ideological research: Between a rock and a soft place. *Interchange*, 17(4), 63-84.

Week 10 (November 10): BRINGING QUESTIONS, THEORY, AND METHODS TOGETHER

Choose at least **one** of the following articles. In class on November 3rd, we will make sure the readings are evenly distributed so that we can do a jigsaw exercise this week. Of course you're welcome to read more than one of these if you're interested!

Schugurensky, D. & Myers, J. P. (2003). A framework to explore lifelong learning: The case of the civic education of civics teachers. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 22(4), 325-352.

White, P. (1999). Political education in the early years: The place of civic virtues. *Oxford Review of Education*, 25(1/2), Political Education, 59-70.

Pinto, D. (2004). Indoctrinating the youth of post-war Spain: A discourse analysis of a fascist civics textbook. *Discourse & Society*, 15(5), 649-667.

Mitchell, K. & Parker, W. C. (2008). I pledge allegiance to... Flexible citizenship and shifting scales of belonging. *Teachers College Record*, 110(4), 775–804.

Week 11 (November 17): PEER REVIEW WORKSHOP

The readings for this week are the drafts of the literature reviews (final assignments) of two of your classmates.

Week 12 (November 24): 3MT CHALLENGE (not graded)

No required readings, but you may want to have a look at past 3MT finalists for inspiration: <http://3mt.grad.ubc.ca/videos-images/>