

EDEC/EDMS 8070 Research Perspectives on Teacher Education: PK-8

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5:00 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.
Wednesday
Aderhold 306

Teacher Education is a big field, encompassing (among others) questions about the ways people come to be teachers, the ways teachers learn over the course of their careers, the ways teachers relate to their students, and the content-area disciplines that teachers work within. Exploring each (and certainly all) of these broad questions could be courses in themselves. To focus our work this semester, we will be emphasizing the research perspectives that scholars in teacher education have drawn on to inform their work. The goal is for students both to gain some familiarity with current and historical problems in teacher education and to develop a sense of some of the theorists who have informed research, not only in teacher education, but in the broader field of education.

Some of the big questions we will be thinking about this semester include:

- What problems, topics and contexts are considered relevant to Teacher Education?
- How do different research perspectives go about producing truth?
- What relationships can be seen between research perspectives, methods, and conclusions?
- How do authors go about defining their research perspectives?

The course has been set up to encourage participants to think about major issues in teacher education (such as the roles of collaboration or content knowledge) from multiple perspectives. I hope you will use this opportunity both to learn how others are thinking and to begin to define the perspectives you will adopt in your own work. In choosing the readings, I had several criteria. First, I wanted to include some of the major players in the field of teacher education. These are people who have played big roles in defining the key issues in the field. Second, I wanted to include original work by some of the theorists commonly cited in teacher education research. I believe it is critically important for scholars to read original works. Third, I wanted to highlight some recent research in teacher education that shows how particular research perspectives inform empirical work. Finally, I wanted to include both very recent work and some pieces that would give you a sense of the history of the field.

TEXTS

All of the texts for the weekly class sessions will be provided electronically through WEB CT. You will be asked to purchase one book from a selected list from an online book seller such as amazon.com or bestbuybooks.com. I would like to ask you to wait to make this choice, though, until you have had time to get a better sense of your interests.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Critical Summaries

Each week (except the first and the last) you will turn in a critical summary of the readings to me by 9 a.m. the day of class (Wednesday). This can be sent electronically to my UGA email (amyparks@uga.edu). These summaries should be singled-spaced, 1-page, 1-inch margins, 12-point font. I will not read summaries that do not comply with these requirements. The purpose of these summaries is both to highlight key issues from the readings and to make some sort of argument in relation to them. The goal is not simply to restate what the authors' say. You may deal with each reading in separate paragraphs or deal with them both together. Each summary will be graded Full Credit/Partial Credit/No Credit.

Lynn Fendler has this very-good advice on critical summaries:

A critical summary does **not** have as its main focus any of the following questions:

- 1 Do you like the articles?
- 2 Do you agree with the authors?
- 3 Are the premises realistic?
- 4 Do the assertions reflect your personal experience?
- 5 Is this kind of research useful for your doctoral dissertation?

A critical summary may address any of the following questions:

- 1 Is the research method appropriate to the claims?
- 2 What significant factors have been ignored in the analysis?
- 3 What perspective do the articles fail to account for?
- 4 What counts as evidence? What doesn't count?
- 5 What rhetorical strategies make the argument compelling, provocative, and/or weak?
- 6 How does the article advance our understanding of what constitutes teaching and learning?

2. Journal Review

You will review a journal in Teacher Education with the goal of helping yourself and your classmates prepare to publish there in the future. We will choose journals together in class to prevent overlap. Those to be considered include:

- ✓ Journal of Teacher Education
- ✓ Teaching and Teacher Education
- ✓ Teacher Education Quarterly
- ✓ Teaching Education
- ✓ Studying Teacher Education
- ✓ Theory into Practice
- ✓ Teachers & Teaching/Theory & Practice
- ✓ Action in Teacher Education

If you have a journal in mind that is not on this list, please suggest it. As long as it is primarily about teacher education, it would be an appropriate choice for this assignment. To find out about the journal, you will do three things: browse through several issues,

read the guidelines for authors (often available online), email one of the journal editors to ask any questions you were not able to answer for yourself.

Here are the questions that you should use to guide your analysis:

1. What are the guidelines for submission of manuscripts?
2. What issues/problems in Teacher Education has the journal addressed in the last several issues? Are there topics it does not deal with? Does it include content outside of Teacher Education?
3. What research methods are preferred by this journal? Are their particular viewpoints or theoretical frames that seem to be valued?
4. How many manuscript submissions does this journal receive each year? What is the publication frequency (monthly, quarterly)? How many articles are published by this journal in a year? What is the acceptance/rejection rate for this journal?
5. What is the turn-around time for reviews? What's the average time between submission and publication?
6. What are the most usual reasons for rejection of a manuscript? What common mistakes do authors make?
7. What does the journal *really* want? This is an interpretive question that requires you to read between the lines across several of these answers. Think about both problems and issues in Teacher Education as well as dominance of particular research perspectives and/or methods.

You will summarize your answers to these questions in a 1-page handout and present the information to the class. The Journal Reports will be graded Full Credit/Partial Credit/No Credit.

3. Book Club

Adopting a theoretical perspective in research requires significant reading beyond the scope of this course. We can't all be experts in everything, which means we need to choose the areas where we will study more deeply. To encourage you to begin (or continue) your own theoretical journey, you will choose a theoretical text to read in more depth. You should choose the book based on your own interests, keeping in mind that these may change as we go through the course.

In class, we will discuss these books and form groups based on interest. I would like there to be at least 2 people in each group. You will have time to meet in class and discuss your text during the last few weeks of class. You will also plan a 30-minute activity for the last week in class to teach the rest of us about your book. Ideally, this would not be a 30-minute PowerPoint march through the text, but some sort of engaging activity or activities designed to help others learn more about the text you spent extra time studying.

The books to choose from are:

Discourse by Sara Mills

How People Learn by the National Research Council

Communities of Practice by Etienne Wenger

Apprenticeship in Thinking by Barbara Rogoff
The Social Construction of What? By Ian Hacking
Classroom Discourse by Courtney Cazden

Book Club presentations will be graded Full credit/partial credit/no credit.

4. Paper

You will propose and write a research paper arising from issues explored in the course. There are many ways of doing this and I am happy to talk with you about your ideas. The paper should be approximately 6,000-words, double-spaced and use a 12-point font.

A good paper will:

- Challenge your assumptions/demonstrate awareness of multiple viewpoints
- Make use of course readings and conversations
- Substantiate claims in scholarly ways
- Make a substantial argument or explore a serious question in relation to current conversations in teacher education
- Use standard academic conventions

My goal is for you to produce high-quality academic work. To support you in this goal, I am requiring the paper to be turned in a few weeks before the end of the semester. I will give you rigorous feedback and a grade. My expectation is that you will not be happy with the grade at that point and will revise the paper to turn in at the end of the course. However, the choice to revise is yours. The paper will be assigned a point value and a grade by the instructor.

POLICIES

Grading

Class grades will be based on a 100-point total and distributed as follows:

Critical Summaries	15 Points
Journal Presentation	10 Points
Book Club Presentation	15 Points
Paper	30 Points
Participation	30 Points

Grading Distribution

Grade	Points
A	100 – 95
A-	90-94
B+	86-89
B	82-85
B-	78-81
C+	74-77
C	70-73

Attendance & Participation

Advanced graduate seminars require significant participation from students in order to be successful. To this end, I would ask that you make every human effort to come to class each week prepared for the discussion (i.e., having done the readings and being prepared to discuss them in a civilized manner.) That said, occasionally, life gets in the way.

I would like to get out of the business of judging absences. To do this, I will not reduce your participation grade the first two times you miss class. I will not ask for the reasons. However, on the third absence, I will reduce the participation grade by 5 points. This is significant. But in a 15-week course, 3 absences constitute missing 20 percent of the class. Students who miss 4 classes will be administratively withdrawn from the course. Even if the reasons for the absences are excellent, missing more than a quarter of the class means you cannot be said to have actually taken the class. For the sake of courtesy and planning, I *would* ask that you let me and any affected group members know about any absence as soon as you are able.

Participation is a part of this course. However, this does not mean that you must speak a certain number of times. Rather, I expect you to be seriously engaged in the work of the course, whether it is through active listening, sharing your ideas, or reflecting quietly. I also expect that you treat others with respect and that you come prepared to class each week. Failure to meet these expectations will impact your participation grade.

Academic Honesty Policy

You are expected to comply with UGA's academic honesty policy. This may require you to get more familiar with standard academic rules for citing the words and ideas of others in writing. Please see me if you are uncertain about how to do this. In general, it is always better to give too much credit to others than not enough.

Butterfly Wings

As with any syllabus, this document reflects my best estimate of how the course will go. Changes may be required to adapt to unexpected circumstances.

SCHEDULE

	DATE	TOPIC	READ BEFORE CLASS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
PART ONE: Introduction	Aug. 20	Introduction		
	Aug. 27	The lay of the land in Teacher Education	Cochran-smith & Fries (2008) Research on teacher education: changing times, changing paradigms	Critical Summary
PART TWO Research Perspectives in Teacher Education (The categories used here were helpful to me in planning the course. They are, of course, problematic. They overlap, and many people would draw boundaries in other ways. The good news is all this gives us something to talk about.)	Sept. 3	Socio-cultural research perspectives	Lave & Wenger (1991), pp. 91-117 Parks (2008)	Critical Summary
	Sept. 10	Socio-cultural research perspectives	New London Group (1996) Johnson (2007)	Critical Summary
	Sept. 17	Discourse research perspectives	Gee (1988) Haviland (2008)	Critical Summary
	Sept. 24	Discourse research perspectives	Tannen (1984) Little (2002)	Critical Summary Choose TE journal (in class)
	Oct. 1	Psychological research perspectives	NRC (2000) Shulman (1986)	Critical Summary
	Oct. 8	Psychological research perspectives	Darling-Hammond (2002) Hoy, Hoy, Kurtz (2008)	Critical Summary
	Oct. 15	Philosophical research perspectives	Lemke (1994) McWilliam (1999)	Critical Summary Choose book (in class)
	Oct. 22	Philosophical research perspectives	Hacking (1999) Walkerdine (1988)	Critical Summary
PART THREE Multiple Perspectives on Issues in Teacher Education	Oct. 29	Subject Matter in TE	Grossman, Shoenfeld & Lee (2005) Popkewitz (2002)	Critical Summary Journal presentations
	Nov. 5	Reflection in TE	Fendler (2003) Loughran (2002)	Critical Summary Book Club Mtg Paper Due
	Nov. 12	Social Class in TE	Payne (2005) Osei-Kofi (2005)	Critical Summary Book Club Mtg
	Nov. 19	Lesson planning in TE	Blake et al (1998) Shen, Poppick, Cui & Fan (2007)	Critical Summary Book Club Mtg.
	Dec. 3	Going deeper into theories	Cochran-Smith (2002)	Book Club Presentations Final Paper Due: Wed. Dec. 9

EXAMPLE CRITICAL SUMMARY

Following Aristotle, Field and Latta (2001) break knowledge for learning to teach into three parts: theory, technical skills and practical wisdom, but although they give a great deal of attention to the later two, they largely dismiss the role of theory. Field and Latta spend much of the article differentiating *experience* from the learning of *technical methods and techniques*. They say that while craft knowledge has a place in learning to teach, the role of learning from experience, or phronesis, ought to be privileged. Defining experience as something that “happens to us beyond what we anticipate,” the authors highlight the ways a beginning teacher came to see her practice differently after teaching a lesson that played out differently than she expected. Field and Latta use this case to argue that the visceral experience of teaching a lesson along with the challenge of the unexpected to previous assumptions is central to beginning teachers abilities to “break out of the routines” they inherit from their mentor teachers; whereas, the learning of craft knowledge is more likely to encourage replication. There is an assumption on the part of the authors that experience alone will cause beginning teachers to explore innovative practice and to reject traditional methods that may be harmful to students. There is no acknowledgment of the way pre-service teachers are shaped by their own experiences as students or of the way the experience of teaching in a traditionally-structured school might affect the ability of student teachers to seriously question their practices, no matter how novel or immediate their experiences might be. In short, the authors ignore the way the experience of pre-service teachers is structured. This is where ignoring the role of theory in learning to teach becomes problematic. Theory allows us to question and analyze our experiences in ways that extend our thinking beyond what we have lived. It allows us to plan lessons, consciously aware of how our actions may affect our students, rather than by making adjustments solely on our own carnal responses to previous lessons. Without theory, a true interrogation of teaching and learning is unlikely to emerge.

Scott (1991) makes the notion of experience problematic much in the same way that Cary (2001) complicates ideas around multi-cultural education. Both note that practices that were designed to be emancipatory have in fact reinforced essentialist ideas about history and education. Scott acknowledges that experience was used originally to challenge traditional stories in history because the record of women’s lives could not be denied, but she points out that while this practice may have changed the way specific stories were told, it also upheld the traditional standards about what constitutes knowledge. She says that “by remaining within the epistemological frame of orthodox history, these studies lose the possibility of examining those assumptions and practices that excluded considerations of difference in the first place” (p. 24-25). What does this mean for educating teachers? Increasingly, we ask pre-service teachers to write autobiographies of their mathematical experiences, their experiences with diversity, their experiences with ability grouping and then use these experiences to build a knowledge of practice. Scott points out that by doing this we treat experience as an empirical fact and lose the ability to question the way that experience is constructed by societal forces, is shaped by discourse and is filtered through the subject’s beliefs (all of which are also constructed). We end up in a place where students accept traditional math teaching because it worked for them and feel free to make racist assertions because they have the experience to back it up. Scott suggests not that we ignore experience but that we “read” it in a more critical manner, looking for multiple possibilities, meanings and contradictions.