

Research Seminar in Early Childhood/Middle School/Social Studies Education
EDEC/EDMS/ESOC 6990
Fall 2008

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Aderhold 417

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to provide you with an opportunity to deliberately and systematically inquire about your teaching practice. This inquiry will be reflective in nature and will contribute to your ongoing development as a future/practicing teacher. To this end, this course will

1. introduce you to educational research,
2. familiarize you with the library and with electronic data bases and ways of searching them,
3. suggest sources of educational research,
4. prepare you to read and critique reports of educational research,
5. outline some of the research methodologies employed by educational researchers,
6. familiarize you with human subject requirements, and
7. assist you in crafting a research proposal.

Our Project – Knowledge for Teaching

Our work in this course will be imagined much like Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) imagine a knowledge base for teaching - “one that is not designed so that teachers function simply as objects of study and recipients of knowledge but also function as architects of study and generators of knowledge” (p. 2).

My Pedagogy

My pedagogy is democratic as long as democracy is in keeping with Hartoonian and Lensmire. For Hartoonian, democracy is essentially an argument (at times a paradox) between value tensions such as diversity and unity. Democracy, then, is contested and never finished. For Lensmire, democracy is what John Dewey called “a way of life — a way of life that embodies a generous belief in the possibilities of human nature and that entails the obligation to work to create the conditions that would allow human capacities to develop and flourish” (retrieved August 6, 2007 at <http://www.education.umn.edu/CI/Faculty/Lensmire.html>)

To these ends, I aim to teach democratically. For me, this means that I will try to create conditions and opportunities for you to identify and in turn pursue something you find desirable. This, of course, must fall within the frame of the course. However, the frame is a value tension of sorts in that it provides parameters, but hopefully does not stifle or limit (too much) what you want to take up. The best image I have for this frame is a rubber band. It can be stretched, moved, adjusted – as long as the rubber band does not break.

From a methodological perspective, I will attempt to exercise a pedagogy that focuses on dialogue and deliberation- allowing for divergent viewpoints and shared learning. In a practical sense, this pedagogy will include a significant amount of small and large group talk, workshop based experiences, and some lecture.

Readings

Required:

Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2005). *Practical research: Planning and Design (8th ed.)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall

Optional:

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American psychological association (5th ed.)*. Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Tentative Schedule

(Note: This syllabus is a guide for the course. It is subject to change as we progress through the semester. You will be notified in advance of any changes.)

Session One: August 18

Introductions and Expectations

A glimpse at qualitative research: interviews, observations, and artifact analysis

Beginning to Inquire: Webbing activity

Session Two: August 25

Inquiring about Teaching Practice in Context: What Difference Might it Make?

Bridling as a Teacher and as a Researcher

Assignment for August 25:

- Read “Bridling Paper” on WebCT
- Research journal entry #1: Write a 2-3 paragraph introduction of your partner using the data you collected. What do you think of this process (the data collection in class and your writing here—1 paragraph)? (graded)

September 1—No Class: Labor Day

Session 3: September 8

Introduction to Online Data Bases

Individual Searches

Assignment for September 8:

- If you have a laptop please bring it to class
- Read the Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2 in *Practical Research*.

Session Four: September 15

Purpose for research: What is a research question?

Introductory dialogue about the purposes of a literature review

Workshop: Defining purpose; Developing questions

Assignment for September 15:

- Read Chapters 3 and 4 in *Practical Research*
- Research journal entry #2: Reflect on possible research question/problem (it can be written as free-flowing ideas at this point--graded)

Session Five: September 22

Basic concepts in research: Validity, Reliability, Epistemology, Methodology, Quantitative/Qualitative Approaches

Workshop: Writing a purpose and research question

Assignment for September 22:

- Read Chapter 5 in *Practical Research*

Session Six: September 29

Qualitative Research Methodologies: Case study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory

Historical Research

Qualitative Data Collection

Assignment for September 29:

- Read Chapters 7 and 8 in *Practical Research*
- Write a purpose for your research proposal and a research question – bring a word processed copy to class (write it as a polished draft--graded)

Session Seven: October 6

Qualitative Data Collection continued

Qualitative Data Analysis

Workshop: Practice analyzing qualitative data; Readings for literature review dialogue (articles 1 - 3)

Assignment for October 6:

- Readings for the Literature Review: Summary, evaluation, and significant quotes for reading 1 – 3. Bring a word processed copy to class (graded)
- Research Journal Entry #3: Think about researching in your own classroom. What possibilities do you see in collecting and analyzing qualitative data? What limitations do you see? (graded)
- Journal exchange with partner (via email or in person)

Session Eight: October 13

Qualitative Article Critique

Workshop: Journal Conversation with partner

Assignment for October 13:

- Read Qualitative Article
- Respond to partner's journal (i.e., give your partner feedback and be prepared to discuss journal with partner in class)

Session Nine: October 20

Quantitative Research Methodologies: Descriptive Research, Experimental, and Ex Post Facto;
Quantitative data collection

Workshop: Readings for literature review dialogue (articles 4-5)

Assignment for October 20:

- Read Chapters 9 and 10 in *Practical Research*
- Readings for the Literature Review: Summary, evaluation, and significant quotes for reading articles 4 – 5. Bring a word processed copy to class (graded)

Session Ten: October 27

Quantitative Data Collection/Analysis continued

Workshop: Writing the Review of the Literature

Assignment for October 27:

- Read Chapter 11 in *Practical Research*.
- Research Journal Entry #4: Think about researching in your own classroom. What possibilities do you see in collecting and analyzing quantitative data? What limitations do you see? (graded)

Session Eleven: November 3

Quantitative Article Critique

Workshop: Peer response to introduction and literature reviews

Assignment for November 3:

- Read quantitative article
- Develop a draft (can be very rough) of your Purpose, Literature Review, and References. Bring it to class for peer response

Session Twelve: November 10

IRB Process

Workshop: Research Methods

Assignment for November 10:

- Read Chapter 6 in *Practical Research*
- Research journal entry #5: Identify at least one data source. Think through how you might collect data and analyze it. (graded)

Session Thirteen: November 17

Workshop: Methods Section and Data Collection

Assignment for November 17:

- Prepare draft (can be very rough) of methods section and data collection instruments

November 24: No Class- Thanksgiving Break

Session Fourteen: December 1

No regularly scheduled class meeting. Meet with journal partner (via email, via phone, or in person) to review each others proposals. Follow the protocol distributed in class.

Assignments for December 1:

- Write rough draft of entire proposal.

Session Fifteen: December 8

Presentation of Proposals

Assignments for December 8:

- Prepare handout for presentations (graded)
- Final draft of research proposal due on December 12 via email (graded)

Summary of Assignments and Activities

(Note: The summaries below are general descriptions of the course assignments/activities. I will distribute more specific descriptions throughout the semester as appropriate.)

Research Journal

The purpose of keeping a journal is to cultivate the questions/ideas/concerns/wonderings/reactions you have and to provide you with a space to explore your thinking. Each entry should be between ½ and 1 single spaced page and must be word processed.

Purpose for Inquiry/Research Question

The purpose for your inquiry and a clearly stated research question is paramount when conducting educational research. You must be committed to your purpose and love your question! You are required to identify a purpose and a research question that is relevant to your current and/or future practice as a teacher. On **September 29** you will share your purpose and question with your colleagues.

Reading Summaries for the Literature Review

You will summarize 5 articles between **October 6 and October 20**. Each summary should include: (1) the citation in APA style; (2) a brief (one paragraph) description of the study, including relevant but not detailed information; (3) a (one-two paragraph) evaluation of the study; (4) if appropriate, significant quotations including page numbers. A format for the summaries will be provided in class. Always write the number of the selection at the top of the page (e.g., Reading #4).

Qualitative and Quantitative Article Critiques

These two tasks will require you to read and critique an article. In each case, you and two or three colleagues will evaluate the article based on the protocol distributed in class. **October 13** (qualitative) and **November 3** (quantitative).

Research Project Proposal (Final Draft Due via email, December 12)

The proposal will have four components, and should be written in APA style:

- A. Purpose of the Project. Description of the problem or issue you are studying and the purpose of and rationale for the project.
- B. Literature Review. In this section, you will write a preliminary outline (expanded) of the literature related to your project. For this class you will be required to review a minimum of 5 articles. The review of the literature should align with your research topic/question.
- C. Methods Section. In this section you will describe your project plan including the research question and at least one data source; information on the teaching context (i.e. number of students, setting, school, type of course, etc.); the key features of your instruction (i.e. how the project relates to your instruction)
- D. References. Here you will provide references for all citations you have made in both the Literature Review and the Methods sections.

Presentation and Presentation Handout

Please be prepared to “walk” your colleagues through your study. You should prepare a one-page handout for the presentation. The handout should include: (1) The Purpose of the Project; (2) Significant Themes in Your Literature Review (3) Description of the Research Method that includes your research plan (question, data source(s), teaching context, relationship to your instruction) **December 8.**

Evaluation of Student Performance

My goal will be to provide you with useful and meaningful feedback on assignments. The criteria for each assignment will be made explicit during class sessions. Generally speaking however here is what I will be looking for in all assignments.

1. Is there evidence that you were fully engaged in the work (exploring the concepts, applying what you are learning to your practice, treating issues in a critical manner)?
2. Is there evidence that you communicated your arguments/critiques in a clear and cogent manner?

Your final grade will be calculated based on the following point values:

Purpose for Inquiry/Research Question	5
Participation	5
Research Journal (5 entries, 2 pts/entry)	10
Presentation and Handout	10
Summaries (5 summaries, 3 pts/summaries) for Literature Review	15
Qualitative and Quantitative Article Critiques (10 pts/critique)	20
Research Proposal	35

Grading Scale:

93-100 = A
90-92 = A-
87-89 = B+
83-86 = B
80-82 = B-
77-79 = C+
73-76 = C
0-72 = F

Extra work submitted to enhance a course grade will not be accepted.

Late Assignments – Submitting your work after the deadline may influence your course grade. If for some reason you need an extension contact me.

Attendance Policy

Your attendance is imperative.

1. Notify me prior to any absence.
2. Being late to class or leaving early three times is equivalent to missing one class meeting.
3. Students are excused for religious holidays.
4. You are responsible for all class meetings (e.g. assignments, content) whether present or not.
5. You will be asked to complete an alternative assignment if you miss a class.
6. Absences may affect your final course grade.

Academic Honesty

The University of Georgia's policies on academic honesty are strictly enforced in this class (see the UGA Graduate Bulletin). Please familiarize yourself with these policies.

Equity and Accessibility

It is my goal to fully include everyone in our classroom. If you have any special circumstances that you believe may affect your performance in class or on the course requirements, please meet with me to make the necessary accommodations. I will try to maintain complete confidentiality of any information that you choose to share with me.



College of Education Conceptual Framework

The College of Education prepares exemplary, reflective professionals to serve a diverse global community; it achieves that end through teaching, scholarship, outreach, and partnership at the local, national, and international levels.