

Logics of Inquiry – Spring 2004

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Introduction

The course is intended to introduce participants to a range of different research methods and to develop a sophisticated understanding of methodological issues and alternatives in urban educational research. The focus will be on issues, paradigms, strategies, and research methods that enable students to better understand what happens in various educational settings, in urban educational settings in particular, and what issues are involved when we collaborate with participants as [co]researchers. In addition, participants will have opportunities to think about their individual research interests and apply what they are learning to the design of a small-scale research project.

We will examine qualitative and quantitative methods and consider criteria for when to use one or the other or both in mixed method designs. This is an introductory course that focuses on the rationale and underlying theoretical rationale for research in urban education. Accordingly, we will not consider research methods in depth. In depth study will occur in subsequent courses. We will explore the advantages and limitations of a variety of methods in relation to critical problems of urban education.

Methodological Issues [discussed in parallel with Research Methods]

- I. Issues of fit: theory, research methods, data resources, and research questions (foci)
- II. Using research methods from different paradigms
- III. Philosophical issues: Empiricism, positivism, constructivism, hermeneutics, phenomenology, semiotics, poststructuralism and postmodernism
- IV. Micro-meso-macro issues: Research across multiple scales of analysis, conceptualizing complex social systems
- V. Diverse Views of Research: Gender- and sexuality-based critiques, Post-colonialist and culture-based critiques, Neo-Marxist and class-based critiques, Educator and policymaker critiques.

Texts

1. Alvesson, M., & Skoldberg, M. (2000). *Reflexive methodology: New vistas for qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

2. Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
3. Shavelson, R. J. & Towne, L. (Eds.). (2002). *Scientific research in education*. Washington, DC: National Research Council. Read on line or buy from:
<http://books.nap.edu/catalog/10236.html>

[Highly] Recommended Text Resources:

1. Alford, R. R. (1998). *The craft of inquiry: Theories, methods, evidence*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
2. *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). (2001). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Readings for Class Discussions

Feb 11th

01. Cole, M., & Engeström, Y. (1993). A cultural-historical approach to distributed cognition. In G. Salomon (Ed.), *Distributed cognitions: Psychological and educational considerations* (pp. 1-46). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press **OR** (<http://www.edu.helsinki.fi/activity/pages/chatanddwr/chat/>).
02. Engestrom, Y. (1999). Activity theory and individual and social transformation. In Y. Engestrom, & R. Miettinen, (Eds.), *Perspectives on activity theory* (19-38). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
03. Sewell, W. H. (1992). A theory of structure: Duality, agency and transformation. *American Journal of Sociology*, 98, 1-29.
04. Sewell, W. H. (1999). The concept(s) of culture. In V. E. Bonell & L. Hunt (Eds.), *Beyond the cultural turn* (pp. 35-61). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Mar 3rd

05. Brown, A. (1992). Design experiments: Theoretical and methodological challenges in creating complex interventions in classroom settings. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 2, 141-178.
06. Eisenhart, M. (2001). Educational ethnography past, present, and future: Ideas to think with. *Educational Researcher*, 30(8), 16–27 . [Available at www.aera.net]
07. Erickson, F. (1998). Qualitative research methods for science education. In B. J. Fraser and K. Tobin (Eds.), *International handbook of science education*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers (pp. 1155-1174).

Mar 17th

08. Guba E. & Lincoln, Y. (1989). The twin failures of positivist science. In E. Guba & Y. S. Lincoln, *Fourth generation evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

March 24th

09. Guba E. & Lincoln, Y. (1989). Judging the quality of fourth generation evaluation. In E. Guba & Y. S. Lincoln, *Fourth generation evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Apr 14th

No Class – AERA Meeting in San Diego

Apr 21st

10. Pea, R. D. (1993). Practices of distributed intelligence and designs for education. In G. Salomon (Ed.), *Distributed cognitions: Psychological and educational considerations* (pp. 47-87). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
11. Mehan, H. (1993). Beneath the skin and between the ears: A case study in the politics of representation. In S. Chaiklin & J. Lave (Eds.), *Understanding practice: Perspectives on activity and context* (pp. 241–268). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
12. McDermott, R. P. (1993). The acquisition of a child by a learning disability. In S. Chaiklin & J. Lave (Eds.), *Understanding practice: Perspectives on activity and context* (pp. 269-305). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

May 5th

None

May 19th

None

Web Resources

[Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/ Forum Qualitative Social Research](http://qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqs-eng.htm) is an important bilingual e-journal on qualitative inquiry.

(<http://qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqs-eng.htm>)

[The Qualitative Report](http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/). An online journal dedicated to qualitative research and critical inquiry since 1990. (<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/>)

A comprehensive listing of internet resources in and on [phenomenology](http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/) can be found here. (<http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/>)

[Resources for Social Researchers](http://www.soc.umn.edu/~edwards/soclinks.htm). These links provide you with avenues to sources of information that may prove very useful to sociologists and others interested in social issues or sociological activities. (<http://www.soc.umn.edu/~edwards/soclinks.htm>)

Cultural Historical Activity Theory (Yrjö Engeström)

(<http://www.edu.helsinki.fi/activity/pages/chatanddwr/chat/>)

Tasks

Daily Tasks

- Check blackboard website.
- Respond to any email requests from me.

Weekly Tasks

- Read the assigned text reading (see below).
- Read designated recommended articles (see below).
- Read from personal focus area readings.

- Prepare memorandum for class on one of the above readings and plan key discussion points on it.
- Post on Blackboard the key questions to be considered for the materials for which you are designated as discussion leader. All such postings must be on the *Blackboard Discussion Board* **prior to 10 pm on the Sunday before** the class session.

Assessable Tasks & Due Dates

- Active participation. You are expected to prepare good questions, participate in scholarly discussions of the common and recommended readings, and present key features of your evolving research design. If you do not attend a class it is essential that you participate in make-up activities using Blackboard. Prior to the next week you should submit via the drop box a critical analysis of each of the assigned readings for the week you missed and respond to the discussion questions identified by discussion group leaders. [15%]
- Memoranda. Each week you will write a memorandum based on a chapter length piece of reading you have done that is from the recommended articles. Prior to each class session you will submit your memorandum electronically via the drop box associated with our Blackboard course.[30%]

Identify a chapter length piece of scholarly writing from the recommended readings. Identify the 3-5 most salient points or issues. Explain why each is salient in terms of theory, research, policy or other explicit criteria. Provide an interpretive critique of the paper/chapter in terms of explicit theoretical/methodological and empirical criteria. The length of each memorandum must not exceed 250 words. Each week memoranda must be brought to class to frame discussion of the recommended readings.

- Research plan. You are required to submit a written research report that includes (a) the statement of an important problem or issue in your field of scholarly interest and rationale for the salience of the issue or problem in terms of theoretical, empirical and other persuasive criteria (2,000 ± 500 words, due March 3, 10%); (b) a succinct review of relevant (recent) literature (3,000 ± 500 words, due April 21; 20%); (c) a description of the methods and methodological issues to be employed in conducting research on the issue/problem you have identified (2,000 ± 500 words, due May 19, 25%). [55%]

Mode of submission and final grades

Please submit your 3 memoranda in their final forms and the research plan in a portfolio that is to be presented to me by May 19th. This is to be an electronic portfolio, labeled as such, and submitted in the drop box. The final products can be revised to take into account your learning in the course and any feedback from me and others.

Course Calendar, Reading Schedule, & Topics

DATE	ALVESSON & SKÖLDBERG	SHAVELSON & TOWNE	CRESSWELL	ACTIVITY
Feb 4				Introduction to course. Discussion of students' prior research experience in types of research, research interests, goals of education research, and their implications for research projects and methods.
Feb 11	Chapter 1: The intellectualization of method		Chapter 1: A framework for design	Cresswell, p. 24, no. 2
Feb 18	No Class – Monday Schedule			
Feb 25		Chapters 1 & 2: Accumulation of scientific knowledge	Chapter 2: Review of the literature	Cresswell, p. 47, no. 1
Mar 3	Chapter 2: Data oriented methods		Chapter 3: Writing and ethics	Cresswell, p. 68, no. 1
Mar 10		Chapter 3: Guiding principles for scientific inquiry	Chapter 4: Designing research: Introduction	Cresswell, p. 85, no. 2
Mar 17	Chapter 3: Hermeneutics: Interpretation and insight			Cresswell, p. 103, no. 1, 2, or 3
Mar 24			Chapter 5: The purpose statement	
Mar 31		Chapter 4: Features of education and education research	Chapter 6: Research questions and hypotheses	Cresswell, p. 117, no. 1, 2 or 3
Apr 7	Spring Break			
Apr 14	AERA Break			
Apr 21			Chapter 7: The use of theory	Reports
Apr 28	Chapter 4: Critical theory Chapter 5: Poststructuralism and postmodernism			
May 5	Chapter 6: Language/gender/power Chapter 7: On reflexive interpretation		Chapter 9: Quantitative methods	Cresswell, p. 176, no. 1 or 2
May 12			Chapter 10: Quantitative procedures	Cresswell, p. 206, no. 1
May 19		Chapters 5 & 6: Design for education research and design principles for fostering science	Chapter 11: Mixed methods procedures	Cresswell, p. 226, no. 1