

Researching the Practice of Urban Schooling

Urban Education 75100
Program Seminar
Kenneth Tobin (4|202.07; 212-817-8284)
Room 6494—Wednesday 4:15 pm – 6:15 pm

About the Course

The course employs an historical perspective on research in urban schools and the framing of theories and social structures. *Researching the Practice of Urban Schooling* extends beyond the boundaries of schools to explore how culture relates to urban schools and identify and study the institutions that are most salient to learning. Particular foci will explore the role of technology in urban schools and equity across the boundaries of ethnicity, gender, age, and social class. Intensive studies will be undertaken of the ten largest school districts in the United States in an exploration of such issues as the diverse types of schools in the district, the distribution and levels of funding, the impact of choice on factors such as the distribution of students from different ethnic groups and the incidence of out of field teaching, the ethnic distribution of teachers in relation to that of students, the turnover of teachers, employment trajectories for urban teachers, tracking, block scheduling, uses of standards and high stakes tests, and accountability criteria. Other large cities in the world also will be studied in comparative analyses of urban schooling in countries such as England, China, Japan, and Spain. Methodologies that are useful in undertaking research in schools are explored in the context of ongoing research in urban schools and a variety of mixed methods will be studied; designs that incorporate different forms of qualitative and quantitative inquiry.

Weekly Reading

Week 2, September 8th

2. Tobin, K., Seiler, G., & Walls, E. (1999). Reproduction of social class in the teaching and learning of science in urban high schools. *Research in Science Education*, 29, 171-187.
2. Tobin, K. (2000). Becoming an urban science educator. *Research in Science Education*, 30, 89-106.
2. Seiler, G., Tobin, K., & Sokolic, J. (2001). Design, technology, and science: Sites for learning, resistance, and social reproduction in urban schools. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 38, 746-767.
2. Moscovici, H. (2003). The way I see it: Resisting teacher control or canceling the effect of science immersion. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 40, 98-100.
2. Seiler, G., Tobin, K. & Sokolic, J. (2003). Reconstituting resistance in urban science education. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 40, 101-103.

Week 3, September 22nd

3. Gale Seiler (2002). Understanding social reproduction: The recursive nature of structure and agency within a science class.

- 3 Seiler, G. (2001). Reversing the "standard" direction: Science emerging from the lives of African American students. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 38, 1000-1014.

Week 4, September 29th

4. Elmesky, R. (2001). Struggles of agency and structure as cultural worlds collide as urban African American youth learn physics.

Week 5, October 6th

5. Elmesky, R. (2003). Crossfire on the streets and into the classroom: Meso|micro understandings of weak cultural boundaries, strategies of action and a sense of the game in an inner-city chemistry classroom. *Cybernetics and Human Knowing*, 10, 29-50.
5. Elmesky, R., & Tobin, K. (in press). Expanding our understandings of urban science education by expanding the roles of students as researchers. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*.

Week 6, October 13th

6. Tobin, K., Elmesky, R. & Seiler, G. (Eds). (in press). *The world waitin': Reforming urban science education*. NY: Rowman & Littlefield.

Week 7, October 20th

9. Readings on emotional energy and interaction rituals (See chapters by Tobin, Roth and LaVan from Roth & Tobin (2004) – week 13)
9. Olitsky, S. (2003). Balancing equations as collective activity: Interaction ritual, teacher-student roles, and the pursuit of a community of practice. Unpublished manuscript, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

Week 8, October 27th

10. Sarah-Kate LaVan (2004). Cogenerating fluency in urban science classrooms.

Week 9, November 3rd

11. Beth Wassell (2004). More than overwhelmed: How a first-year teacher in an urban high school employs agency to build solidarity in the presence of structural changes.

Week 10, November 10th

12. Sonya Martin (Projected summer 2004, Curtin University) The social and cultural dimensions of successful teaching and learning of science in an urban high school.

Week 11, November 17th

13. Roth, W-M. & Tobin, K. (Eds). *I got yo' back and you got mine: Learning to teach science through coteaching and cogenerative dialoguing*.

Week 12, December 1st

14. MacLeod, J. (1995). *Ain't no makin' it: Aspirations and attainment in a low-income neighborhood*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Week 13, December 8th

7. Neild, R. (1999). *Same difference: School choice and educational access in an urban district*. UMI Microform, 9937765.
7. Neild, R. (2004). *The effects of magnet schools on neighborhood high schools: An examination of achievement among entering freshmen*

Week 14, December 14th

8. Neild, R.C., Useem, B., Travers, E.F., & Lesnick, J. (2003). *Once and for all: Placing a highly qualified teacher in every Philadelphia classroom*.
8. Ingersoll, R.M. (2003). *Out-of-field-teaching and the limits of teacher policy*.
8. Ingersoll, R.M. (2003). *Is there really a teacher shortage?*

Assessment

Participation	30
Analytic Memoranda	40—2(15+5)
Examination or Project	30

Participation

Read assigned readings

Lead discussion on selected chapters/articles

Infuse into discussion scholarly contributions from personal experience, research and reading.

Facilitate contributions of others

Analytic memoranda

Two analytic memoranda should be prepared. Select one resource from the readings assigned for weeks 2-8 and one from those assigned for weeks 9-15 as foci for the analytic memoranda.

The analytic memorandum should be between 1200-1500 words in length and should be reviewed by a peer from the class. A one-page letter should explain how the final draft of the memorandum took into account the peer reviews.

Points to consider

- Identify 3-5 issues that are central to given manuscripts on which the memoranda are based.

- Analyze the theoretical frameworks and the associated methodology in relation to the goals of the research.
- Evaluate the scholarly adequacy of the manuscript and suggest alternatives that would lead to improvement. The evaluation should include an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the research.

Peer review

- Identify a peer to review your analytic memorandum.
- Negotiate timelines with the peer to receive a complete draft of the memorandum and to provide a written review.
- Write a review that identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the memorandum and includes specific suggestions for improvement. Each review should be 300-500 words in length.

Examination or Project

You have the choice of doing a take home examination or a project. Decide and let me know by week 3. If you decide on a project you can change your mind later.

Examination (take home)

- An opportunity to show what you have learned.
- Show understanding of theory and methodology that can be employed in research of urban schooling.
- Undertake scholarly critique of research manuscripts

Project

Depending on your entry status as a researcher of urban schooling you will undertake an approved project germane to your scholarly interests. The project will be situated on a continuum that includes planning, analyses, interpretation and dissemination. The project is due by the last week of the semester.