

Research Designs in Education

Office: EDB8635

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Thursdays, 16:30 - 21:20 in EDB8680

Class #10779

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Course Description:

This course focuses on the design, interpretation and meaning of research in the field of Education. We will start with fundamental questions such as what is research, why do we do it, and what do we hope to produce from the endeavor? We will then explore different research traditions and approaches, looking at the underlying assumptions they make about the world (theories of reality) and how we make meaning of it (theories of knowledge). These assumptions have a major impact on how we will design a study, collect data, and analyze / interpret the results. In addition our choice of research traditions determines the criteria by which the legitimacy of our knowledge claims will be judged. On a more practical level we will address some of the fundamental challenges and decisions in designing research: how to come up with interesting, viable and worthwhile research questions; how to use past research to inform our studies; how to select an appropriate research approach to answer our questions; and how to craft research methods within this approach to collect appropriate data. We will also discuss specific issues related to both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.

Course Format:

This course will run as a seminar and workshop, revolving around students' actual (or anticipated) projects. We will strive to develop a research community culture in our class—throughout the semester students will work on their own projects and share their discovery and progress with others. Peer feedback will be a core component of the class.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course you will be able to do two things:

1. Critically evaluate educational research studies
2. Design and plan your own educational research studies

In order to do these successfully, you will need to be able to do the following:

1. Identify viable and interesting research questions
2. Distinguish among a variety of educational research approaches based on their assumptions, major concepts, and central methods
3. Assess the validity / trustworthiness of different quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis strategies
4. Evaluate the coherence between research questions, approach, methods, and interpretation of results
5. Identify and address ethical concerns relating to the use of human participants

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

- Participation in Reading Discussions / Class Activities (10%)
- Article Critique (15%)
- Research Proposal
- > Literature Review (25%)
- > Research Design (30%)
- > Peer-critique of Research Proposal (10%)
- > Research Proposal Presentation (10%)

Required Reading:

Creswell, J.W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall. ISBN-10: 0136135501.

Optional Reading:

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: APA. ISBN: 1557987912.

PLEASE NOTE: Students in all Faculty of Education courses are responsible for knowing policies pertaining to academic integrity available on the website:

<http://students.sfu.ca/academicintegrity/policy/index.html>

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