

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
ELPA 725: Research Methods and Procedures in Educational Administration

Fall 2008
Wednesdays, 4:40 pm – 7:10 pm
1252 Education Sciences, UW-Madison

Instructor

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Office Hours

After class as needed and by appointment

Required Text

McMillan, J. H. (2007). *Educational Research: Fundamentals for the Consumer*. 5th Edition. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, Inc.

Purchasing note: A 180-day subscription to this electronic text can be obtained from Coursesmart.com for approximately half the cost of the paperback version.

Texts for Suggested Supplemental Readings

Bernhardt, V. L. (2004). *Data analysis for continuous schoolwide improvement*. 2nd Edition. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

McEwan, E.K. & McEwan, P.J. (2003). *Making sense of research: What's good, what's not, and how to tell the difference*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th Edition), **Highly Recommended**

**Additional required readings may be distributed in class or electronically.*

Course Objectives

This is an introductory course in research methods and procedures related to education. The main purposes of the class are to (1) assist students to become better consumers of educational research, (2) prepare students to use key concepts and methods of quantitative and qualitative educational research to carry out strategic data-driven inquiry for educational organizations in which they might work, and (3) begin to prepare students to conduct research as part of their graduate studies. Using recent texts focused on using educational research and data-driven decision making in schools, web-based resources, and examples from educational research, participants will learn about different ways of measuring educational and school processes, as well as strategies for conducting data-based inquiries within their own institutions or for their own research.

Specifically, as a result of participating in this course, students will learn how to:

- Access, understand, and evaluate educational research;
- Distinguish the characteristics and purposes of different forms of quantitative and qualitative research methods;
- Formulate a hypothesis or question and develop a plan for researching it;
- Prepare a research report;

- Use inquiry and research to inform professional decision making and practice.

Students will develop these skills through reading assignments, lectures, class discussions, in-class activities, and assigned projects.

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation. Attendance and active participation in class are very important and will be part of your grade. To the greatest extent possible, please participate in all class activities, complete all assigned readings and be prepared to discuss them in class. Class time will be an opportunity to build a learning community focused on the goals and topics of this course.
2. Written Critiques of Educational Research. Students will review and critique three educational research articles. The critiques should be no longer than four double-spaced, typewritten pages and should include the complete bibliographic citation of the study (APA format) and any other references you use in the critique. Approximately half of each written critique should be devoted to summarizing: (1) the problem being researched; (2) the hypotheses or research questions; (3) the characteristics of the sample; (4) the research design used in the study; (5) the procedure for collecting and analyzing the data; and (6) findings and implications. The remainder of the critique should evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of items 3-6 in addressing items 1 and 2. The articles should relate to your research proposal assignment (#3).
3. Research Proposal. Each student will complete a detailed plan to conduct an original educational research project. The plan will include: (1) the problem being researched; (2) the hypothesis or research question(s); (3) the characteristics of the sample; (4) the research design used in the study; (5) the procedure for collecting and analyzing the data; (6) potential implications of the study for practice. Items 1 and 2 should be supported by a literature review that includes articles used in your written critiques and other relevant readings. We will discuss this project regularly in class, and students will present and give feedback on their projects during the last class session (December 10th). The final written report in APA format of approximately 10-12 double-spaced, typewritten pages is due on or before December 10th, 2008.

Evaluating Student Work

Each student's final grade for the course will be based on the instructor's evaluation of the following:

1. Class participation, 20 points
2. Written critiques of research (3 X 10 points), 30 points
3. Research proposal, 50 points

General criteria for evaluating student's work are:

1. Construction of Knowledge: Students successfully interpret, analyze, evaluate, or synthesize information.
2. Depth of Understanding: Student understanding of course content is relatively complex and deep, and they demonstrate that understanding through elaborated communication.
3. Connection to Practice: Students successfully connect course content to practice. They explore implications that create value and significance for knowledge.

Full Inclusion

Students needing special accommodations to enable full participation in this course should contact the instructor as early as possible. All information will remain confidential. Department chairpersons at UW-Madison can also assist students with disabilities.

Course Schedule:

Topics and Text Readings. Please note, additional readings and/or assignments may be distributed in class or posted on Learn@UW course web site.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic and Assignments</i>
9/3	<p>Introduction Sharing of backgrounds and interests Overview of the course Learn@UW Overview of Educational Research (epistemologies, types and other general topics)</p> <p>Required reading: McMillan, Chapter 1 Supplemental Reading: McEwan & McEwan, Chapters 1 & 2</p>
9/10	<p>Critiquing Educational Research: Identifying important elements of research reports</p> <p>Required readings: McMillan, Chapter 1; ; Kazdin, 1995</p>
9/17	<p>What are you studying? Why are you studying it? Why is it important? <i>Identifying a research topic and establishing the purpose and rationale for a study</i></p> <p>Required Reading: McMillan, Chapters 2 & 3 Supplemental Reading: McEwan & McEwan, Chapters 1 & 2</p> <p>Assignment: Review four research reports of your selection and identify and write a 3-4 sentences describing the topic, purpose and rationale for each study.</p>
9/24	<p>What questions are you trying to answer and what do you hope to achieve? <i>Research Questions and Study Goals</i></p> <p>Required Reading: McMillan, Chapters 2 & 3 Supplemental Reading: McEwan & McEwan, Chapters 1 & 2</p> <p>Assignment: From the articles you selected last week, identify the research questions and/or hypothesis statements.</p>
10/1	<p>Who will you study and what data will you collect from them? <i>Sampling and Data Collection (operationalizing variables)</i></p> <p>Required Reading: McMillan, Chapter 5 Supplemental reading: Bernhardt, Chapters 1-4</p> <p>Assignment: From your selected articles, identify the study sample, data that was collected and procedures for collecting the data.</p>
10/8	<p>How will you collect your data? <i>Data Collection and Measurement in Educational Research</i></p> <p>Required Reading: McMillan, Chapters 6 & 7; Betz, 1996 Supplemental reading: Bernhardt, Chapters 1-4 Example article: Noyes & Sax, 2004; Pitney, 2002</p>

10/15	<p>How will you conduct your study? <i>Nonexperimental Quantitative Research Designs</i></p> <p>Reading: McMillan, Chapter 8; Watson, 1998 Example articles: Williams & Clark, 2004; Reglin & Chisom, 1992; Whyte & Colleagues, 2007</p>
10/22	<p>How will you conduct your study? <i>Experimental and Quasi-experimental Study Designs</i></p> <p>Required Reading: McMillan, Chapter 9 Supplemental reading: McEwan & McEwan, Chapters 3 & 4 Example article: Doherty & Hilberg, 2008 Assignment: <i>Written Critique of Educational Research #1 Due</i></p>
10/29	<p>How will you analyze your data? <i>Quantitative Analyses (yes, statistics) and Reporting</i></p> <p>Required Reading: McMillan, Chapter 10; Lambrecht, 1999 Example article: Doherty & Hilberg, 2008</p>
11/5	<p>How will you conduct your study? <i>Qualitative Study Designs in Educational Research</i></p> <p>Required Reading: McMillan, Chapter 11 Supplemental reading: McEwan & McEwan, Chapter 5 Example article: Noyes & Sax, 2004; Pitney, 2002 Assignment: <i>Written Critique of Educational Research #2 Due</i></p>
11/12	<p>How will you analyze your data? <i>Qualitative Analysis and Reporting</i></p> <p>Required Reading: McMillan, Chapter 11 Supplemental reading: McEwan & McEwan, Chapter 5 Example article: Noyes & Sax, 2004; Pitney, 2002</p>
11/19	<p>Mixed Methods and Action Research Interpreting and Discussing your Findings</p> <p>Required Reading: McMillan, Chapter 12 & 13 Supplemental readings: McEwan & McEwan, Chapters 7 & 8; Bernhardt, Chapter 9 Assignment: <i>Written Critique of Educational Research #3 Due</i></p>
11/26	<p>Research to Practice—Implications of Educational Research Writing a Research Proposal</p> <p>Required Reading: McMillan, Chapter 14 Supplemental Reading: McEwan & McEwan, Chapters 7 & 8</p>
12/3	<p>Responsible Conduct of Educational Research</p> <p>Required Reading: DuBois JM., 2002; Tomkowiak & Gunderson, 2004</p>
12/10	<p>Project Summaries & Feedback Course Wrap-up</p> <p>Assignment: <i>Research Proposal due in class</i></p>