

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis
ELPA 825: Advanced Research Methods in Educational Administration
Spring 2009

Class Meets Tuesdays, 4:40-7:10
Room 1252 Educational Sciences Building

Instructor:

Professor Carolyn Kelley
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Office Hours:

I am available by appointment. Please email or talk to me in class to set up appointments as needed.

Course Objectives:

This advanced course in research methods has two distinct, but complementary, objectives. First, the course is designed to build on quantitative and qualitative methods classes that students have completed. This course focuses on helping students develop approaches to inquiry that will enable them to contribute to advancing the theory and practice of educational leadership. Students will recognize the unique contributions of a variety of methodological tools and approaches to understanding complex research questions in education. Second, the course guides doctoral students through the dissertation proposal writing process. Over the course of the semester, students will use the course to build a draft dissertation proposal that may be revised and refined with their faculty advisor. Students who complete this course will:

- ✚ Be prepared to engage in meaningful inquiry that contributes to the knowledge base in educational leadership and policy analysis;
- ✚ Better understand and appreciate the characteristics and purposes of various forms of quantitative and qualitative research methods;
- ✚ Be sensitive to critical ethical issues in educational research;
- ✚ Be able to formulate meaningful research questions and develop research plans to effectively address these questions;
- ✚ Feel prepared for the challenges of the dissertation process.

In Preparation for the Course:

The development of a dissertation proposal, and mastery of research methods is a significant undertaking, and time moves very quickly in this course. Doing some thinking, some reading, and discussing your topic with your advisor before the course

begins, will greatly facilitate your progress during the course. To maximize benefits of the course, you should come to the course with:

- a draft dissertation research question that has been discussed with your advisor;
- access to key research related to your topic, and some general understanding of the knowledge base that relates to the topic.

Course Requirements:

Each student will complete a detailed plan to conduct an original educational research project. For most students, this will serve as a draft of your dissertation proposal. The proposal will include: (1) a problem statement; (2) a literature review; (3) a conceptual framework; and (4) a methodology section. You will have the opportunity to complete and receive feedback on parts of the proposal throughout the course.

Successful students will come to class with a clear idea of the research question or topical area you would like to research. Ideally, you should also have done preliminary reading on your topic. If possible, meet with your advisor to identify and approve the general direction and focus of your specific research question.

Course grades will be based on:

1. Attendance (10%)
2. Successful completion of:
 - (a) Draft Problem Statement (Due February 3) (10%)
 - (b) Revised (a) plus a section of your Literature Review (Due March 3) (20%)
 - (c) Revised (b) plus Conceptual Framework and outline of Methods (Due April 7) (20%)
 - (d) Draft Dissertation Proposal (Due May 5) (30%)
3. Leadership and participation in discussion of course readings (10%)

The best way to receive feedback on your work is to email me your assignments, at Kelley@education.wisc.edu. Please include the assignment number in the subject line. The document should be in a Word (.doc) format, not .docx format. You may turn in hard copies of the assignments, but I will be unable to provide feedback until the following class session.

Accommodations:

I wish to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to fully participate. I will try to maintain the confidentiality of the information you share with me.

Students move through the process of identifying and developing a research proposal at different paces, and with uniquely different obstacles and opportunities throughout the process. Consequently, I try to recognize and accommodate individual student circumstances in assessing student performance in this course. My expectation is that students will commit themselves to successful completion of course assignments in a

timely manner, while recognizing the need for flexibility to accommodate individual circumstances.

Required Texts:

- Green, J.L., Camilli, G. & Elmore, P.B. (Eds.). (2005). *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Education Research*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ridley, D. (2008). *The Literature Review: A Step-by-Step Guide for Students*. Sage Publications.

Assignments by Class Session

January 20: Introduction to Inquiry

- ✚ The dissertation: Fears, hopes, and expectations
- ✚ Building your research tool kit
- ✚ Elements of a research proposal and discussion of course assignments
- ✚ Resources for dissertators: Writing Center and Library Resources
- ✚ Dissertation Calculator:
<http://cimc.education.wisc.edu/help/gettingstarted/disscalc/index.php>
- ✚ Inquiry, Problem Identification, and Problem Statements

Readings:

- Castetter, W.B. & Heisler, R.S. (1988). *Developing and Defending a Dissertation Proposal*, Fifth Edition. Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania.
- Harter, S. (2006). The Challenge of Framing a Problem: What is Your Burning Question? In Conrad, C.F. & Serlin, R.C. (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook for Research in Education: Engaging Ideas and Enriching Inquiry*, pp. 331-348.

January 27: Independent Work on Research Questions

NO FORMAL CLASS SESSION

In lieu of class, you should:

- 1) **Identify two research studies in peer review journals that are related to your topic of interest, and take a look at the research question in these studies**
- 2) **Formulate a draft research question for your study. If you are unsure, reading research related to your topic, and looking for gaps in the literature that you can build on is a useful approach**
- 3) **Contact your advisor to discuss your research question and have him or her sign off on it.**

February 3: The Literature Review

Assignment 1 Due in Class

- ✚ Discussion of Problem Statements
- ✚ Discussion of the purpose, focus, and form of the Literature Review

Readings:

- Ridley, D. (2008). *The Literature Review: A Step-by-Step Guide for Students*. Sage Publications.

February 10: Independent work on Literature Review

NO FORMAL CLASS SESSION

In lieu of class, you should:

- 1) **Work to identify the areas of literature you plan to include in your literature review**
- 2) **Select one area of focus to develop for Assignment 2**
- 3) **Read and begin to prepare literature review**

February 17: Quantitative Research Designs

- ✚ Discussion of Progress on Literature Review
- ✚ Discussion of Chapters from the Handbook of Complementary Methods in Educational Research.
- ✚ Quantitative and Causal Research Designs

Readings:

Green, Camilli & Elmore, Chapters 25, 31, 32, 33, 35

February 24: Qualitative Research Designs

- ✚ Discussion of Chapters from the Handbook of Complementary Methods in Educational Research.
- ✚ Qualitative Inductive and Explanatory Research Designs

Readings:

Bickman & Rog, Chapter on Qualitative Research Designs

Green, J.L., Camilli, G. & Elmore, P.B. (2006). Chapters 16, 28, 29, 30, 43, 44, 45

March 3: Conceptual Frameworks

Assignment 2 Due in Class

- ✚ Conceptual Frameworks
- ✚ Theoretical and Conceptual Lenses to Inform Research Design

Readings:

Green, J.L., Camilli, G., & Elmore, P.B. (2006). Chapter 1

Shields, P.M. (1998). *Pragmatism as a Philosophy of Science: A Tool for Public Administration*. Texas State University.

March 10: Instrument Design

- ✚ Survey Design
- ✚ Electronic and Mail Surveys
- ✚ Establishing Instrument Validity and Reliability
- ✚ Interview Protocol Design

Readings:

Green, J.L., Camilli, G., Elmore, P.B. (2006). Chapters 21, 22, 23 and 37.

March 17: Spring Break – No Class

March 24: Case Study, Mixed Methods and Policy Research Designs

- ✚ Issues in Case Study and Mixed Methods Designs
- ✚ Cross-Case Analysis
- ✚ Discussion of Conceptual Frameworks

Readings:

Green, J.L., Camilli, G., Elmore, P.B. (2006). Chapters 6-7, 27, 40-41.

Recommended Readings:

- Floden, R. E. (2006). What Knowledge Users Want. In Conrad, C.F. & Serlin, R. (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook for Research in Education: Engaging Ideas and Enriching Inquiry*, pp. 23-36.
- Plank, D.N. & Harris, D. (2006). Minding the Gap between Research and Policymaking. In Conrad, C.F. & Serlin, R. (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook for Research in Education: Engaging Ideas and Enriching Inquiry*, pp. 37-52.

March 31: Ethical Considerations

- ✚ Complete Human Subjects Training if you have not done so already at <https://my.gradsch.wisc.edu/citi>
- ✚ IRB Submission, <http://www.grad.wisc.edu/research/hrpp/edirb/ed.TrainingAndEducation.htm>
- ✚ Ethical Standards

Readings:

Ethical Standards of the American Educational Research Association

April 7: Data Collection

Assignment 3 Due in Class

Readings:

- Cresswell Chapter
- Green, J.L., Camilli, G., Elmore, P.B. (2006). Chapter 38

April 14: Data Analysis

- ✚ Data Analysis
- ✚ Coding
- ✚ Qualitative Software
- ✚ University Resources and Supports

Readings:

- Cresswell Chapter
- Green, J.L., Camilli, G., Elmore, P.B. (2006). Chapters 17 & 34

April 21: Indicators of Quality

- ✚ Designing Research for Quality

Readings:

- National Research Council. (2003). *Scientific Research in Education*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press. Chapters 3 & 4.
- Phillips, D.C. (2006). Muddying the Waters: The Many Purposes of Educational Inquiry. In Conrad, C.F. & Serline, R.C. (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook for Research in Education: Engaging Ideas and Enriching Inquiry*, pp. 7-22.

April 28: Role of the Researcher

- ✚ Supporting your Research: Dissertation Grants Programs
- ✚ University Resources
- ✚ Building a Network to Support Your Work
- ✚ Taking Ownership
- ✚ Researcher as Instrument

Readings:

Green, J.L., Camilli, G., Elmore, P.B. (2006). Chapter 46

May 5: Panel of Dissertators

Assignment 4 Due in Class

Additional References

- American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Bickman, L. & Rog, D.J. (Eds.). (1997). *Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Conrad, C.F. & Serlin, R.C. (Eds.). (2006). *The Sage Handbook for Research in Education: Engaging Ideas and Enriching Inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cresswell, J.W. (2008). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.). (2005). *The Sage Handbook for Qualitative Research (Third Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kaplan, D.W. (Ed.). (2004). *The Sage Handbook of Quantitative Methodology for the Social Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Locke, L.F., Spirduso, F.F. & Silverman, S.J. (2007). *Proposals that Work: A Guide for Planning Dissertations and Grant Proposals (Fifth Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Rea, L.M. & Parker, R.A. (2005). *Designing and Conducting Survey Research: A Comprehensive Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schneider, B., Carnoy, M., Kilpatrick, J., Schmidt, W.H. & Shavelson, R.J. (2007). Estimating Causal Effects Using Experimental and Observational Designs. American Educational Research Association. Available at <http://www.aera.net/AERAShopper/ProductDetails.aspx?productID=AERWECE>
- Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (1998). *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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