

Educational Enquiry 1

Dr Pat McLaughlin

Credit Rating : 10 credits, SCQF Level 11

Rationale

This ten credit course reflects the need for students to understand fundamental concepts that underpin educational enquiry in order to be able to critically engage with issues discussed throughout their programme of study. The course will contrast different philosophical approaches that epitomise quantitative and qualitative approaches to enquiry and discuss fundamental issues that determine the quality of educational enquiries and the conclusions drawn from them. The course will also consider issues related to writing and using research literature for academic purposes.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- identify the main traditions/paradigms of educational enquiry;
- analyse the ways in which the different methodological positions affect research questions, research design and the choice of data collection instruments and analysis techniques;
- discuss the contribution of systematic enquiry to the understanding of educational issues and the developing public policies to address these issues;
- identify, retrieve and manage relevant literature and
- demonstrate an awareness of the values and ethical debates inherent to educational enquiry.

Indicative Content

This will include:

- modes of philosophical, historical and empirical enquiry
- the concept of paradigms
- research values and research ethics
- using literature for educational enquiry
- the relationship between theory, methodology, enquiry and public policy

Mode of Delivery

The course will use a combination of seminars, guided reading, and supported self-study.

Assessment: Tasks and Contexts

Students should submit an essay (2,500 words) that explores the nature, the context and the goals of social enquiry. The essay should be illustrated with

references to the student's own area of research interest and/or professional expertise.

Some Recommended Course Readings

Bell, C. and Roberts, H. (eds) (1984) Social Researching, Politics, Problems and Practice, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

Bryman, A. (1988) Quantity and Quality in Social Research, London: Unwin Hyman

Burgess, R.G. (ed) (1989) Investigating Society, London: Longman

Chalmers, A.F. (1982) What is This Thing Called Science, Milton Keynes: OUP

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison K. (2000) Research Methods in Education. (5th edition) London: Routledge

Clough, Peter. (2002) Narratives and fictions in educational research. Buckingham: OUP

Docherty, T. (1993) Postmodernism: a reader. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Giddens, A. (1976) New Rules of Sociological Method, London: Hutchinson

Hakim, C. (1987) Research Design: Strategies and choices in the design of social research, London: Allen & Unwin

Hammersley, M. (ed) (1993) Social Research: Philosophies, policy and practice, London: Tavistock

Harvey, L. (1990) Critical Social Research. London: Unwin Hyman

Holmwood, J. (1995) 'Feminism and epistemology: What kind of successor science?',

Sociology, Vol 29, No. 3

Homan, R. (1991) The Ethics of Social Research, London: Longman

Hughes, J. (1980) The Philosophy of Social Research, London: Longman

Keat, R. and Urry, J. (1975) Social Theory as Science, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

Kerlinger, F.N. (2000) Foundations of Behavioural Research, (4th edition) London: Harcourt college.

Kuhn, T.S. (1970) The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2nd edn., Chicago: University of Chicago Press

May, T. (1993) Social Research: Issues, methods and process, Milton Keynes: OUP

Pring, R. (2000) Philosophy of educational research, London: Cassell

Popkewitz, Thomas S. Franklin, Barry M.Pereyra, and Miguel A. (Eds) (2001) Cultural history and education : critical essays on knowledge and schooling. London: Routledge Falmer

Roberts, H. (1981) Doing Feminist Research, Oxford: Blackwell

Sarup, M. (1993) An introductory guide to post-structuralism and postmodernism. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf

Silverman, D. (2000) Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook, London: Sage

Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1993) Breaking Out Again: Feminist ontology and epistemology, London, Routledge

Stronach, I. (1997) Educational research undone: the postmodern embrace. Buckingham: OUP

Swann, J and Pratt, J (eds), (2003) Educational research in practice. London: Continuum.

Wright Mills, C. (1959) The Sociological Imagination, Oxford, Oxford University Press

