

University of Edinburgh

School of Education



EDUCATIONAL ENQUIRY I

Course organiser: Dr Lorna Hamilton

**Course tutors: Lorna Hamilton
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Course Content Outline and Timetable

For each seminar you will be given some preparatory work. This can be done individually or you can work in pairs or small groups to read, make notes and discuss the topics given

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Seminar 1 25 th Sept	<p><i>An introduction to Educational Enquiry – presentation and discussion</i></p> <p>Nature, purpose and uses of educational enquiry including a consideration of the different ways in which education may be understood. The history of educational enquiry. Educational research, educational practice and educational policy.</p> <p>Working in pairs report on your topic and reading and then peer evaluate each other's summary</p>
Preparation for seminar 1	<p><i>Identify an area you are interested in. Locate 1 research article related to this topic and read/write a short summary of the main points made in the article.</i></p> <p><i>Extension: locate 2 to 3 articles</i></p>
Seminar 2 2 nd Oct	<p><i>Philosophy, Paradigms and Educational Enquiry - Presentation and discussion</i></p> <p>Introduction to ontological, epistemological, and methodological positions in educational enquiry. The background to paradigms. Ethics and values in educational research.</p> <p>In small groups share your summaries – evaluate and discuss</p>
Preparation for seminar 2	<p><i>Locate a 2nd research article on your topic. This time summarise the main points and identify whether the research is:</i></p> <p><i>qualitative or quantitative or mixed method</i></p> <p><i>Validity of the findings</i></p> <p><i>Extension: locate more articles – consider also the epistemological assumptions being made by the authors</i></p>
Seminar 3 9 th Oct	<p><i>Reading critically and making effective use of literature – presentation and discussion</i></p> <p><i>Qualitative/Quantitative literature</i></p>
Preparation for seminar 3	<p><i>Create a frame for evaluating a research article or articles. What should you consider? How do you know if an article is worthwhile?</i></p>
Seminar 4 16 th Oct	<p><i>Writing for academic purposes – presentation and discussion</i></p> <p>Pair and group work activities: structuring an academic essay etc</p>
Preparation for seminar 4	<p><i>Review the articles you have read and consider the tone/style of the writers</i></p> <p><i>Write a 400 word review of the main ideas – similarities and differences across the articles</i></p>
Seminar 5 23 rd Oct	<p><i>The use of quantitative data in research</i></p> <p><i>What are they for? Advantages and disadvantages; the different stages of quantitative research</i></p>
Preparation for seminar 5	<p><i>In preparation for this session students will read a quantitative article which will be given to them.</i></p> <p><i>In the second half of this class students will discuss in small groups the article read in advance in relation to the theory, the research design, the concepts and indicators, sampling and research methods used.</i></p>

Rationale

Postgraduate students in Education need to have a good awareness of the central and current ideas, concepts, debates, theories, philosophies, and approaches employed in educational research. This provides a foundation for their studies and for the application of different research approaches and data collection methods. The course will contrast different philosophical positions that underlie 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. **Seminars will involve group and pair work and preparatory tasks/reading will be required for each session.**

Assessment: Students should submit an essay (2,000 words) built around a topic which interests or concerns them. It is important to **justify** the reason why this topic would be of interest and **how** it would fit in with existing research. Students must also establish the approach to research which might be taken – which paradigm and why?

Submission

The assignment should be submitted to the Programme Secretary (Diane Prayle), 2.07 St John's Land not later **Noon Monday, 25th November 2008.** Late submissions will not be accepted except where good cause can be shown.

Our aim is to have assignments returned within 3-4 weeks with written comments.

Applications for extensions must be discussed with the course coordinator before the due date.

Some Recommended Reading

Essential texts

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

Cresswell, J. 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design*. London: Sage.

Denzin, N., Lincoln, Y. 1998. *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. London: Sage.

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

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

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

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

Other useful reading

Bassey, M. 1999. *Case Study Research*. Buckingham: Open University Press

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. (1989) *The Ethics of Educational Research*, London: Falmer

Carr, W. and Kemmis, S. (1986) *Becoming Critical*, London: Falmer (reprinted 1988)

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

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

Harding, S. (1991). *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

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

Phillips, D.C. & Burbules, N.C. (2000). *Postpositivism and Educational Research*. Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield

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

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

Ethics

British Educational Research Association (2004) *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*. Available online at: www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guides.php

Scottish Educational Research Association ethical guidelines – sera.ac.uk

Check out the ethical guidelines used by the School of Education and the ethics form which researchers need to fill in – www.education.ed.ac.uk/research/rso/ethics/index.html

