

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SAN MARCOS

EDUC 622

Research and Evaluation Methods in Education

Fall 2000

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**OFFICE HOURS:** Wednesdays, 2:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

**CLASS MEETING TIME/PLACE:** Mondays, 7:30 p.m. to 10:15 p.m., UH 439

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course is designed to introduce educational practitioners to the fields of educational research and evaluation. As such, it explores quantitative and qualitative methods of designing and conducting research and evaluation in the context of classroom settings. It further examines measurement, assessment, common statistical techniques and methods for critiquing research and program evaluation studies.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** This course enables students to become good consumers of research and evaluation by providing a foundation of knowledge in the area of research methods that will enable them to read research and program evaluation reports with enough understanding to determine a study's merits. Therefore students will:

- Develop a working understanding of research methods and designs for educational settings;
- Learn formal and informal approaches to classroom assessment that can be applied to improve pedagogy and enhance accountability;

- Enhance their practical understanding of both quantitative and qualitative research methods (descriptive statistics, ethnography, case studies, etc.);
- Be able to analyze the strengths and limitations of educational research studies;
- Be able to refer to appropriate sources to find the answers to research and evaluation problems and produce a comprehensive review of the literature; and
- Design and conduct an original research project.

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The mission of the College of Education Community is to collaboratively transform public education by preparing thoughtful educators and advancing professional practices. We are committed to diversity, educational equity, and social justice, exemplified through reflective teaching, life-long learning innovative research, and ongoing service. Our practices demonstrate a commitment to student centered education, diversity, collaboration, professionalism, and shared governance. (*adopted by COE Governance Community October, 1997*).

**ATTENDANCE POLICY.** The Governance Community of the College of Education adopted the following policy on 12/19/97: Due to the dynamic and interactive nature of courses in the College of Education, **all** students are expected to attend all classes and participate actively. At a minimum, students must attend more than 80% of class time, or s/he may not receive a passing grade for the course at the discretion of the instructor. Individual instructors may adopt more stringent attendance requirements. Should the student have extenuating circumstances, s/he should contact the instructor as soon as possible.

This course deals with complex material processed in a variety of ways. Structured interactions, group processes, oral presentations,

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guided discussion of readings, and self-disclosure exercises are the norm. Students are expected to have read assigned materials by the date indicated in the syllabus, and should be prepared to discuss readings individually or in variously structured groups. The degree of your engagement in these processes forms the basis for points assigned. Due to the fast paced and highly interactive nature of the course, regular attendance and full participation are expected: teaching and learning is difficult (if not impossible) if one is not present for and engaged in the process. Therefore, College Policy is amplified as follows:

1. Missing more than 2 class meetings will result in the reduction of one letter grade.
2. Arriving late or leaving early on more than two occasions will result in the reduction of one letter grade.
3. Illness and emergency circumstances will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

Students are expected to establish appropriate personal, academic and career-ladder priorities. These measures should not be considered punitive. Rather, they should be viewed as taking appropriate individual responsibility for one's own learning in a democratic, collaborative and reciprocal learning environment.

#### REQUIRED TEXTS:

Charles, C. M. (1998). *Introduction to educational research* (Third Edition). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Pyrzczak, F. (2000). *Writing empirical research reports* (Third Edition). Los Angeles, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

Ulanoff, S. H. (2000). *Research methods*. San Marcos, CA: Customized materials. This packet will be available at the beginning of October.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** All students are expected to attend every class session unless otherwise arranged. Students are further expected to be prepared for class and to participate accordingly. Reading should be completed before the class meeting. **All assignments must be handed in on the due date.** Assignments

must be typed and double-spaced. Please note: in order to receive a grade of A or B students must turn all assignments in on time.

- 1 Hanging Around Activity 20 points
- 2 Article Analyses 30 points
- 1 Human Subjects Protocol 10 points
- 1 Research Paper/presentation 30 points
- Attendance and participation 10 points

#### GRADING (plus or minus grades at the discretion of the instructor):

A = 100-90

B = 89-80

C = 79-70

#### ASSIGNMENTS:

*Hanging Around Exercise* : This assignment is designed to prepare you as a future ethnographer. An ethnographer uses a variety of data collection methods and forms of inquiry in order to "make sense" of a given setting, event, or set of occurrences. A good ethnographer asks this initial question to guide her inquiry: what is going on here? This is followed by: what is going on here that may be of some sort of significance? Each of these are important questions, in that, the ethnographer seeks to gain meaning and understanding from events that are often "common" to her set of experiences; the challenge is to address these common occurrences in ways that make the events, settings, etc., "strange" or "uncommon." It is a challenge to the educational ethnographer to gain meaning and make sense out of events, situations, settings, (e.g., playtime, reading time, sharing time, the school community, a game of jump rope) that are in fact, "commonplace." As ethnographers we are asked to look at common events as "exotic" and/or "new."

An underlying notion of the ethnographic method is to begin to make meaning, by describing events, settings, interactions, etc., in ways that are value-free and unbiased. This is our challenge for this assignment -- to describe in a value-free context. Good luck!

Where

You will visit a store that sells groceries. It is up to you to select the type of store, e.g., mini-mart, supermarket, corner grocery, farmers market, etc. You will spend at least 45 minutes in the setting.

### What

(a). You will spend the first 5-6 minutes “casing/checking-out” the setting. As you walk around the setting, make note of the:

1. physical lay-out of the store;
2. construct a spatial map and attach to your write-up; participants, food sections, etc.;
3. take notes regarding the setting; and
4. include a one paragraph statement that tells the location, time, & date.

(b). Next, you will observe customers as they shop. Take notes on one particular customer. Record how this customer shops, e.g., what section of the store does s/he begin to shop in? What observable behaviors do you note as your shopper selects her/his purchases? Write at minimum a one page description that objectively describes your shoppers behavior.

(c). Classification scheme: How are store items organized in this setting? (e.g., foods, beverages, dry goods) (1-2 paragraphs).

(d) Social Organization:

1. Who goes to the supermarket?
2. What social rules are used in the setting? (1-2 paragraph.)

(e). Reflective Notes: (separate page) Note your impressions and reflections regarding this experience. Reflections may be stated accordingly, *ſe.g.*,

R-1 “I was very tired and had never before shopped at this supermarket. I wondered how everything would turn out.”

(f). Questions: Please note any questions, issues of concern that you might raise if you want to continue as a researcher in this setting.

(g). Synopsis: What did you observe? (1-page)

**This assignment is due September 25, 2000.**

*Article analysis.* Students will be given a specific article to analyze as a means of evaluating ongoing progress in terms of the understanding and application of concepts presented in class. Students will be asked to work in groups of four to use what they have learned in class to analyze two research articles, one qualitative and one quantitative. All students will receive the same article with a set of specific questions to answer one week prior to the actual analysis. Students will read the articles on their own and work in groups to complete the assignment in class. **The analyses will be done November 27 and December 4.**

*Research paper/presentation.* Students are asked to think about a problem, issue, question, or concern that you would like to examine in relation to the education of the students in our schools. This assignment is intended to be open-ended, in order to allow you the flexibility to explore issues of personal interest. We will brainstorm ideas in class and students will be able to discuss issues, problems and progress in their weekly writing group meetings. Students are encouraged to collaborate on a research question.

After you have settled on a question or problem, you will design some way to begin to answer the question. This can involve interviews with students or teachers, observations of individuals or groups, or any other means of gathering “data.”

While there is no specific format for your paper and you will examine various examples in class, each paper must contain specific sections. You will work in writing groups to conference, give and receive peer feedback regarding your research project. The following is a summary of the component parts and due dates for each section of the research paper.

**DUE  
DATE**

**RESEARCH PAPER SECTION**

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- Oct. 2 Question/methodology: This is a one page paper that states the question you are asking and how you intend to go about answering the question, e.g. will you use a survey/questionnaire, observe students, interview students, etc.
- Oct. 9 Setting/sample: In this section you will describe the class population and the specific group with which you will be working during your inquiry project.
- Oct. 16 Theoretical framework/review of the literature: This section situates your research in context. It is an overall glimpse into the existing research that deals with your question both in a general and in a specific manner. You will need to find and read a minimum of eight to ten articles/chapters related to your question and write a three to five page narrative summarizing the literature. You will make global statements that you then support with citations from the research. Be sure to cite the opposing view, if applicable. If you are not done with the literature review at this time, please bring an annotated reading list at this time.
- Oct. 23 Methodology and instrument development: In this section you will describe the methodology you will use in detail, including any questionnaire, survey, interview questions, observational checklist, or whatever other instrument or tool you will use to collect your data. Be sure to bring a copy of your instrument to class.
- Oct. 30 Working draft: For this section you will put together your question, theoretical framework and methodology including your setting/sample and how you are conducting your research. You also need to bring all your "stuff," that is field notes, interviews, surveys, etc., all the data you have collected so far, and a description of how you will analyze this data. You are not expected to have your data analyzed and you may bring scraps of paper, if necessary. Remember that there is no specific format for your paper.
- Nov. 6 Findings: In this section you will report the findings from the analysis of your data.
- Nov. 13 Conclusions: In this section you will report your conclusions based on your findings. Be sure to tie them into your theoretical framework. Do your findings agree or disagree with those studies you read?
- Nov. 13 Rough draft: Here is where you tie all the sections together. Bring a draft of your entire inquiry for process work in your writing group.
- Dec. 4 Final draft**: Turn in the final draft of your research paper. Turn in two copies of your paper. Prepare a 1 page synopsis of your findings to distribute to your classmates, and be prepared to give a brief presentation.
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Be sure to bring two copies of each section to class each week, one to turn in and one for process work in your writing group that you will take home in order to use peer feedback on subsequent sections. This assignment is due **December 4, 2000. Be sure to use APA format for your paper. On December 11 you will make a brief (5 minute) presentation on your research.**

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*Human Subjects Protocol*: In order to prepare you for the completing your final project/thesis in the MA program, you will complete an application for Human Subjects Approval for your research paper. This application will be written according to the CSUSM Institutional Review Board Guidelines available on the CSUSM website. Steps to completing this assignment include:

1. Accessing the CSUSM IRB guidelines on the website;
2. Choosing the appropriate type of application (full review, expedited review or exemption);
3. Completing the protocol;
4. Submitting the protocol to me for review; and
5. Making revisions as necessary.

**This assignment is due October 23.**

**COURSE OUTLINE:** Readings are expected to be done prior to class meeting. Please read the Pyczak book in accordance with assignments.

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS
8/28	Introduction/overview of educational research; similarities and differences between qualitative and quantitative types of research	Charles, Ch. 1.
9/4	Labor Day Holiday, no class	
9/11	Types of educational research; Introduction to qualitative research; Choosing research topics; Intro to human subjects regulations	Cochran-Smith and Lytle; Ch. 2 & 3;
9/18	The tools of qualitative research; Examining published research	Charles, Ch. 4 & 5; Heath (class).
9/25	Ethnography; instrumentation; Designing a research project	Charles, Ch. 6; <b>Hanging around exercise due!</b>
10/2	Procedures and tools for data collection	Charles, Ch. 7; <b>Question/methodology due!</b>
10/9		Types of research: Descriptive and Historical Research; Correlational research; Questioning techniques
10/16		Types of research: Action & evaluation research
10/23		Experimental, quasi-experimental, and causal-comparative research
10/30		Data analysis; emic and etic approaches; Coding, patterns, categories and hypotheses
11/6		Presenting findings, writing up research; teacher research
11/13		Data analysis: mediating and spurious factors; quantitative analyses: statistical concepts and procedures
11/20		Working session on research papers

11/27	Validity, reliability and generalizability	Charles, Ch. 2 revisited; Charles, Ch. 14; <b>Article analysis 1</b>
12/4	Presenting your research; Mixing qualitative and quantitative research;	Charles, Ch. 9; <b>Article analysis 2</b> <b>FINAL DRAFT DUE!</b>
12/11	Recap and closure; <b>Research presentations</b>	

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### Scoring Rubric for Inquiry Paper (adapted from Hafner and Ulanoff, 1994)

This paper will be holistically scored according to the following rubric. In order to receive 40 points, papers must receive a score of 5 or 6.

**6** = The paper contains all required sections and attempts to answer the inquiry question posed by the author. The author demonstrates ease and facility in expressing ideas, observations, and feelings. The writing flows smoothly and naturally, and is understandable. The author remains generally on topic, but may digress and shifts in thought are logical and can be easily followed. The writing shows development of ideas that are interesting or provocative and creates a vivid image of thoughts or feelings through the use of details. The writing demonstrates insightful and reflective thinking that is implied or stated. The author uses lively and concrete language appropriate to the paper's purpose.

**5** = The paper contains all required sections and attempts to answer the inquiry question posed by the author. The author demonstrates ease and facility in expressing ideas, observations, and feelings. The writing flows smoothly and naturally, and is understandable. The author remains generally on topic, but may digress and shifts in thought may not be easily followed. The writing shows development of ideas that are interesting or provocative but may not create a vivid image of thoughts or feelings. The author explores ideas, but may be unwilling to take risks or to reshape his or her thoughts. The writing may demonstrate insightful and reflective thinking that is implied or stated. The author uses lively and concrete language appropriate to the paper's purpose. The writing is conversational and natural.

**4** = The paper contains all required sections and attempts to answer the inquiry question posed by the author. The author demonstrates proficiency in expressing ideas, observations, and feelings. The writing is generally understandable and coherent, but lacks complete control. The main idea may shift and be difficult to follow. He or she develops ideas in a somewhat predictable

fashion but shows some exploration of thoughts. The author may attempt to convey interesting ideas or vivid images, but fails to develop ideas fully. The writing may show some evidence of insightful and reflective thinking.

**3** = The paper contains some of the required sections and attempts to answer the inquiry question posed by the author. The author develops few ideas and thoughts, and has difficulty expressing his or her ideas in a fluent manner. The author may construct rambling sentences or lists of ideas, is sometimes confused, and frequently presents an unfocused collection of generalized details. He or she makes weak or ineffective attempts to explore or create vivid impressions. The writing rarely shows evidence of insightful or reflective thinking.

**2** = There is limited evidence that the paper contains some of the required sections and attempts to answer the inquiry question posed by the author. The author demonstrates halting, fragmented expression of ideas resulting in unconnected and somewhat incoherent writing. It is brief, thin or insubstantial. Ideas and thoughts are barely developed and the author often relies on merely the title or a single word. There is little or no exploration of ideas. The author shows little or no evidence of insightful or reflective thinking.

**1** = There is little or no evidence that the paper contains some of the required sections and attempts to answer the inquiry question posed by the author. The author demonstrates little or no evidence of fluency and little or no coherence. The writing may be garbled and impossible to understand, except for occasional words or phrases. The author relies on the title or a single word without development of ideas or thoughts.