EDUC 780, RESEARCH ON TEACHING
Winter 2016
SEB 2328, MONDAYS, 12:30-3:30 PM

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OVERVIEW

In this course, we will examine different perspectives in the study of teaching as well as approaches to studying major aspects of teaching alongside key research findings. In part one of the course, we will review ways researchers have conceptualized teaching and how that has shaped their studies and findings. In parts two through five of the course we will focus on the conceptualization of teaching in each study as well as researchers’ approaches to inquiry, notions of rigor and relevance, and representations of their work. Pamela Moss’s and Ed Haertel’s forthcoming chapter in the Handbook of Research on Teaching, 5th Edition, will frame our analysis of different research studies as we develop expertise in critiquing research.

In terms of selected topics, I have very loosely based the course on Hawkins’ (1974) instructional triangle, focusing on who teachers teach (“thou”), what they teach (“it”), and how they teach it (my interpretation of “I”) during parts two through four of the course. Part four will focus more on teaching practices that have proven beneficial for student learning; however, this course will by no means offer a definitive or complete list of effective instructional practices. In part five of the course we will attend to the improvement of teaching and research on teacher learning. In each of these sections, I used Sykes’ and Wilson’s (2015) synthesis as well as the forthcoming Handbook of Research on Teaching to guide selection of topics and readings. Given our limited time together, this course gives only cursory attention to the contexts of teaching, another important component of teaching. In choosing among possible readings I have tried to include empirical work, a range of research methodologies, attention to different student populations, historical and current research, and teaching in different subject areas.

Together and individually, we will examine these major questions:
1. What do we know about teaching (that is, the work of helping people learn)? For whom? For what?
2. How do we know? How have people studied these questions in the past? Who has been studied? Who have the researchers been?
3. What do we know about the improvement of teaching?

This course should help you situate and develop your research interests. As you prepare to conduct research of your own, you will need to identify your assumptions about teaching, understand what researchers have found before you, and explain how your work relates to existing research. Participants will develop the following understandings and practices through involvement in this course:
• Understanding how teaching has been conceptualized as well as how they conceptualize teaching.
• Understanding research on teaching—what we know and do not know about teaching, for whom, for what.
• Understanding research on teaching in an area of interest that can support future doctoral work.
• Understanding how we know what we know. This includes developing knowledge and skill in critiquing research as well as an understanding of rigor and appreciation of different perspectives.
• Writing a manuscript review and a literature review on a focused topic.
• Participating productively in and facilitating small-group and whole-class discussions.

I am here to help you learn and succeed, so do not hesitate to contact me with questions, concerns, or ideas. Please make an appointment with me or drop by. Email is the most reliable form of communication with me.

**EXPECTATIONS**

*Participation.* Your participation in this class is important. This class will be conducted as a seminar, requiring thoughtful preparation before class and active participation during it. Be prepared to discuss the readings and your ideas, as well as listen to and engage with the ideas of classmates. Participation also includes working with your writing group in a constructive and supportive manner. I expect all of us to keep the following norms in mind as we work together: listen carefully, treat ideas with respect, raise and respond to questions, share your ideas, and give others a chance to share as well.

*Attendance.* I expect you to make every effort to come to class each week on time. If you must miss class, contact me as soon as possible before class. Speak first with a classmate to figure out what you missed and contact me about how to make up whatever was missed.

*Grading and Evaluation.* As your teacher, I prefer to focus on your learning and growth as a scholar and writer. I expect you to do your best work, to challenge yourself, and to respond to feedback. Grading can distract from these goals; therefore, I will focus on giving you feedback to help you improve your thinking and writing. I will assume your grade is an A- and if your grade departs from that I will let you know. Exceptional work will receive an A. Please let me know if you have any questions about the grading process.

Submit your work by noon on the due date. Post papers to your dropbox on our CTools site. Except in cases of medical or family emergency, clear late work with me via email or phone prior to the due date.

All papers should be in the following format: double-spaced, 1-inch margins, and 12-point font. Proofread your papers for spelling, grammar, mechanics, flow, and clarity. Follow the writing and citation guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA). You are welcome to revise your major papers provided that you turned in the paper on time originally. If you choose
to revise, meet with me to decide on a due date and to discuss plans for revision. If you submit a revision, highlight the changes you make with a yellow highlighter or the track changes function in Microsoft Word (or something like it).

Electronic Etiquette. Laptops and tablets are valuable tools for learning, allowing you to take notes, review readings, collaborate, and check information. However, they can also be distracting and obstruct good listening and participation for you and your peers. I ask that if you use a laptop or tablet you remain focused on class. At times, I may distinguish between “on” and “off” times. During an “on” time, feel free to use your laptop or tablet for the purposes of the class. During “off” times we will have electronics-free discussions. Cell phones should be off and away during class. If you have a reason to have your cell phone out please be in touch with me about it.

ASSIGNMENTS

(1) Careful Reading of Assigned Texts and Participation in Class Discussion (15%)
Engage in close, careful reading of the assigned texts each week and come to class ready to write about them and discuss them. In preparation for class, use Moss & Haertel’s framework for analyzing research as your guide for reading and critiquing individual texts. Develop a system for keeping notes on these aspects of the readings—you’ll find this a useful resource during our course and beyond. Then, use the three questions framing the course to think across the readings.

Moss & Haertel’s Framework for Analyzing Research (p.13 of the draft Handbook chapter)
1. “Aims & Conceptions of the Social Phenomena [i.e., teaching]
   a. the aims or goals of research within the tradition;
   b. the understanding or delineation of social phenomena that are the focus of the tradition;
2. Design & Enactment
   a. the logic of inquiry or nature of research design/decisions as a study evolves from initial conceptualization through reporting of a completed study;
   b. key methods and/or processes through which the research is enacted, including data collection or production, analysis, and interpretation;
   c. the roles of researcher and researched and the relationship among them;
   d. the theorists’ sense of evolving variations within the tradition and how their work is situated among them
3. Reporting & Evaluation
   a. how the research is represented when it is reported to others;
   b. how validity, soundness, rigor, worth or quality are conceptualized; and
   c. conceptions of how knowledge generalizes or is relevant outside the particulars of what was studied…”

Course-Framing Questions
1. What do we know about teaching (that is, the work of helping people learn)? For whom? For what?
2. How do we know? How have people studied these questions in the past? Who has been studied? Who have the researchers been?
3. What do we know about the improvement of teaching?

Come ready to share your thoughts in response to weekly questions, the ideas in the readings that were most meaningful to you, how the ideas in one reading relate to another reading, and questions. At the beginning of every class you will either work on your own (through writing) or
with a group (through discussion) or both to think through the readings. We will rotate the role of discussion facilitator in small groups so that you also get practice with facilitating discussions in graduate courses, an important pedagogy that will be useful in future teaching, administration, and research work.

(2) Writing Group (10%)
Writing groups are an important tool for being successful in graduate school and academia. Writing groups can give feedback on ideas, memos, data, analysis, outlines, or complete drafts. Effective writing groups include 3-4 people and meet regularly. You will meet with your writing group several times during class time so that you can get in the habit of sharing your work, as well as receiving and giving feedback. I encourage you to meet more often and beyond this course. When meeting, you can share anything from a full draft of a paper to an initial set of ideas with examples or a brief memo of your ideas. I will ask you to suggest people you would like to work with in a writing group.

(3) Concept Paper (20%)
What is teaching? In 3-4 pages, share your definition of teaching and compare it to at least two of the readings from the first three weeks of class. Then, use this definition to explain one example of teaching we have looked at in class (either a reading or video). You will share your rough draft with your writing group on February 1. The final draft is due on February 8.

(4) Manuscript Review (20%)
A major responsibility of becoming a researcher is holding others accountable for rigorous research. One way we do this is through the peer review process that top journals use to vet manuscript submissions. Participating in manuscript reviews is also a great way to keep up with current research. You will practice your developing skill in critiquing research by writing a review of a single manuscript. Select a journal article from the first 6 weeks of the course or choose an article on the topic of your Handbook Survey that you’d like to read. We will spend time in class learning the genre of manuscript reviews and examining mentor texts. Then you will write your own. On February 22 bring a draft of your manuscript review to class for feedback from your writing group. On March 7 submit your revised manuscript review to your CTools Dropbox.

(5) Handbook Survey (35%)
For this assignment you will select a topic of interest and survey three of the five volumes of the Handbook of Research on Teaching to gain an understanding of scholars’ thinking about your topic and framing of research on your topic over time. You will also select six-eight empirical studies of your topic cited in the Handbook chapters and critique them. By February 15 send Monte-Sano an email with the topic for your Handbook Survey. By March 14 aim to read and take notes on one Handbook chapter. By March 21 read and take notes on the second and third Handbook chapter and come prepared to share notes and ideas on all three chapters with your writing group. By March 28 read and take notes on the empirical articles for your Handbook Survey. By April 4 construct an outline for your report to share with your writing group during class. Bring a copy for me to look at during class as well. You will then prepare a 10-12 page written report of your work. During the week of April 11, share a draft of your Handbook Survey paper with your writing group and give/receive feedback with one another. You will
schedule a time that works for all of you to meet since we do not have class that week. The final draft is due on April 25 to the CTools Dropbox.

**Readings**

You will read portions of three books for this course. These books will be on Course Reserve in the “Askwith Media Library” on the second floor of the Shapiro Library (Room 2002 Shapiro). You will be able to check the books out for four hours at a time. Or, you may purchase them from a major retailer like Amazon for under $30 (if used). All of these books are important to read in preparation for the TTE Preliminary Exams.


All other readings are available on our CTools site.

**Course Schedule**

**(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)**

**PART I: CONCEPTUALIZING TEACHING**

1/11 Class 1  
What is teaching? + Course overview  


Recommended (these were read in EDU 775):


1/18 No Class  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
**Class 2**

**What does it mean to study teaching? + The history of teaching**


Read four analyses of Secretary Bennett’s teaching. Before reading, view the video of Secretary Bennett teaching: [http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/Tea](http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/Tea).


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**Class 3**

**Historical approaches to studying teaching**

DUE: Concept Paper draft. Bring copies to share with your writing group.


Recommended:


**PART II: WHO TEACHERS TEACH (“THOU”)**

### 2/8 Class 4  
**Teaching English learners and students with disabilities**  
**DUE:** Final version of your Concept Paper. Submit to CTools Dropbox.


### 2/15 Class 5  
**Teaching African American students**  
**DUE:** Send Monte-Sano an email with the topic for your Handbook Survey by this date.


**PART III: HOW TEACHERS TEACH “I”**

**2/22** Class 6 Structuring Learning
DUE: Rough draft of your manuscript review. Bring to class to share with your writing group.


**2/29** No Class U-M Spring Break

**3/7** Class 7 Assessment
DUE: Final draft of manuscript review. Submit to CTools Dropbox.


Supovitz, J. (2012). Getting at student understanding—The key to teachers’ use of test data. Teachers College Record, 114(11), 1-29.


3/14  Class 8  Strategy Instruction
DUE: Aim to read and take notes on one Handbook chapter for the Handbook Survey.


3/21  Class 9  Facilitating Discussion
DUE: Read two Handbook chapters for your Handbook Survey. Be prepared to share & discuss your ideas and notes about all three Handbook chapters with your writing group.


PART IV: WHAT TEACHERS TEACH (“IT”)

3/28  Class 10  Teaching Subject Matter
DUE: Aim to read and take notes on the empirical articles for the Handbook Survey assignment.
4/4  Class 11  The Role of Curriculum in Teaching
DUE: Handbook Survey outline. Bring copies to share with your writing group and with me during class.


*Jigsaw:*

Halvorsen, Duke, Brugar, Block, Strachan, Berka, & Brown. Narrowing the achievement gap in second-grade social studies and content area literacy: The


**4/11 No Class-AERA Final Project Preparation With Writing Group**

DUE: Rough draft of your Handbook Survey. Meet with your writing group sometime this week to share your rough draft and give/receive feedback.

Read the 2016 Handbook chapter this week, if possible, to balance next week’s reading.

**PART V: HOW TEACHERS IMPROVE**

**4/18 Class 12 Teacher Learning**


**4/25 No Class Exams**

DUE: Final draft of your Handbook Survey. Submit to CTools Dropbox.

**POLICIES**

*Religious observances.* You will not be penalized in any way for participation in religious observances. However, it is your responsibility as a student to notify me of the projected absence
in writing within two weeks of the start of the semester. In such cases, we will arrange an opportunity to make up work that is missed due to such absences.

*Accommodations.* If you are a student with a disability, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can make the appropriate academic accommodations.

*Academic integrity.* You must give proper attribution when you use the ideas or words of others. Therefore, you must cite your sources and use appropriate methods to quote the language of others. If you have any questions or are uncertain about plagiarism issues, please ask, or visit the University of Michigan’s site on academic integrity: [http://www.lib.umich.edu/acadintegrity/students/index.htm](http://www.lib.umich.edu/acadintegrity/students/index.htm). Plagiarism in the past has resulted in students receiving no credit for an assignment or the entire course.

*Inclement weather.* The University of Michigan rarely cancels classes due to weather. If the University cancels classes we will not have class. If the University does not cancel class but the weather is questionable, we will most likely have class. If the weather is questionable I will send an email to confirm that we’ll have class. If you have any doubts or questions, please e-mail me.

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4 In constructing the first version of this syllabus, I drew heavily on the work of the following people and appreciate their good thinking and willingness to share their ideas: Bob Bain, Deborah Ball, Hilda Borko, Donald Freeman, Pamela Grossman, Annemarie Palinscar, Matt Ronfeldt, Linda Valli, and Jennie Whitcomb.