Foundations of Teaching and Learning
ED 791 (PSYCH 958)
Thursdays, 1:00-4:00, Room 2334

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Introduction

The purpose of this course is to engage us in collective and individual inquiry regarding teaching and learning. This is a huge and very rich “problem space.” Typically, teaching and learning are presented and studied in discrete ways. However, we will approach teaching and learning as a “field of study.” This is legitimate to the extent that: (a) there have been innovative and influential contributors to this area; (b) there are theories that have been elaborated in this area; (c) there are “findings” associated with this area of inquiry; and (d) there are investigative practices that reflect norms, conventions, and tools that have currency within communities studying teaching and learning.

In this course, we will:

• read about and from these contributors;
• explore the theories that have shaped teaching practices, curriculum design, and assessments of learning;
• explore the range of investigative practices that have been used in the study of teaching and learning, noting their strengths and limitations; and
• attend to the ongoing - as well as historical - conversations in this field (regarding, for example: the study of teaching, the preparation of teachers, the assessment of teachers and teaching).

As is true of any field, the study of teaching and learning takes place in a larger social (cultural, political, and economic) context that plays its role in shaping the field. Hence, we will consider the role of social context in the study of teaching and learning. Finally, since a number of contributors to this field typically foreground either teaching or learning, part of our task will be to adjust the spotlight such that we position teaching and learning in interplay with one another.

We will begin by studying a set of key learning theorists. We will examine a complement of five theories that make unique contributions to the study of teaching and learning, and examine learning theories in interplay. As we explore these learning theories, we will consider how they have shaped, failed to shape, and might shape curriculum and pedagogy. In the second half of the course we will turn our attention from learning to teaching, and specifically to central topics in the study of teaching. Though the focus will be on teaching, we will continue to examine its relationship to learning, and to the theories of learning we study in the first half of the course.

The following are a list of some of the central questions we will consider:

1) What is the relationship between teaching and learning? What influences this relationship?
DRAFT: SUBJECT TO CHANGE

2) What is the relationship between development and learning?
3) How is “mind” conceptualized and where is it found?
4) How is teaching practiced and studied?
5) How does learning occur and how is it studied?
6) How do the answers to the above questions vary according to different theoretical perspectives on teaching and learning?

In addition to the substantive areas discussed above, this course will provide some foundation in various forms of scholarly practice – writing (including analyzing individual articles and generating a review/synthesis of literature in one thematic area), engaging in discussion, and teaching. Though we will not conduct empirical research, we will analyze empirical studies in ways intended to support you to do conduct your own research in the future. In particular, we will study what makes a “researchable question” and methodological decisions that are related to the kinds of questions asked. Moreover, we will consider how the theoretical perspective of the researcher informs both research questions and the research methods used.

Course Topics and Related Readings

Most readings will be available on our ED 791 site in CTOOLS (https://ctools.umich.edu) in the “Resources” folder. I am expecting you to purchase only one book: Dewey, J. (1938). Experience and education. New York, N.Y.: Macmillan Publishing Company. This is available in paperback at reasonable rates and is worth owning.

Framing the Issues

The Relationship Between Teaching & Learning


Evolving Frameworks: Historical, Psychological, & Personal Perspectives on Teaching & Learning


Major Theorists and Theories

Skinner & Thorndike: Behaviorism


Piaget: Cognitive Theory


Vygotsky: Sociocultural Theory


Dewey: Progressivism


Freire & Giroux: Liberatory Pedagogy and Critical Theory


**Theories in interplay**


**Teaching and Learning**

**Studying Teaching**


**Recommended (NOT required):**


**Learning to Teach**


Reforming Teaching Practice


Assessing Teacher/Teaching Quality


Recommended (not required):

Course Assignments

**Reading Responses:** You will be asked to complete reading responses regularly. For most readings, specific guiding questions will be provided that will serve us well in class discussion. For the remainder of the readings, you are asked to: (a) identify the idea(s) that are most meaningful to you, in the sense that they advance your thinking about issues of teaching and learning, (b) explain how these ideas relate to another reading or learning in which you have engaged, and (c) construct a question (or two) that you propose the class wrestle with. This question might be one that you would address to the author; it could be a question that will serve to clarify an issue for you; or it could be a question that will build connections among ideas with which we are working. We will often begin class sessions by sharing these reflections in small groups and then reporting out to the class as a whole.
Reading responses should be typed using 12-point font, single-spaced, with 1-inch margins, and **not more than two pages in length**. At the top of the first page (preferably as a header), please place list your name, the date, and the readings discussed in the paper. Save and submit your paper as MS Word (.doc or .docx) document format, and use the following file name format: “ED791_Yourlastname_WeeklyTheme.doc”; for example, “ED791_Ronfeldt_Behaviorism.doc”.

Reading responses must be submitted electronically to the “Assignments” folder in our CTOOLS class site **by noon** on the Wednesday preceding the class for which the readings are assigned.

**Grading Criteria:** The reading responses will be evaluated on: a) compliance with the guidelines outlined above, b) whether you adequately respond to all guiding questions, c) the instructor’s assessment of the clarity, organization, and meticulousness of your writing, d) your depth of engagement with the ideas you are encountering, and e) the degree to which you substantively address all required readings in crafting your responses. It may be that you focus primarily on one or two readings; however, it is expected that you attend to all readings in your submissions.

While reading responses provide opportunities for you to synthesize and critically examine the readings, they are also opportunities for you to develop your writing. These reading responses are a major portion of your grade, so you are expected to approach them with the same care and thoughtfulness that you would give to major course assignments/projects. As part of this, you are expected to review and revise your reading responses before submitting them; this will require that you complete readings well in advance of when the responses are due. Below are some specific expectations for your writing:

- **Clarity of your communication:** Is the writing comprehensible? Does it enable the reader to understand the argument? Is the paper organized well both within and across paragraphs/sections? Do arguments build progressively across the reading response in logical and deliberate ways?
- **Meticulousness:** Has the paper been proofread carefully? Does the paper follow linguistic conventions in terms of spelling, grammar, syntax, etc.? Does it meet formatting guidelines?

Each reading reflection will receive up to 5.0 points depending upon how well you meet the evaluative criteria (see above). There are ten assigned reading reflections throughout the semester, but you can skip submitting one reading reflection without penalty. Thus, you can receive a maximum of 9 X 5 = 45 points for all reading assignments (combined). If you choose to submit all ten assignments then your lowest score will be dropped.

**Program of Research Paper:** The second assignment is to choose a program of research related to learning, curriculum, and/or pedagogy. You will be asked to do a close analysis of this program of research. This program can be by researcher (e.g., the research conducted by David Berliner or Liping Ma), by content/focus (e.g., teaching for conceptual change in science or reading comprehension), or by program (e.g., culturally relevant pedagogy or reciprocal teaching). I will help you to select an appropriate focus, given your area of specialization, and you are also encouraged to consult your advisor regarding your selection. Once you have identified the program of inquiry, you will find five empirical studies related to this area of inquiry. I will provide you with specific guidelines for critiquing each of these studies. You will also be guided to write about the theoretical perspective(s) that seem most prominent in the program of study you have selected. You will be asked to describe how the application of a different theoretical perspective (one of your choosing) might change the nature of the inquiry, and you will be asked to write
about the implications of this program of study for preparing teachers or conducting professional development in your area. In order to stagger the assignment and to support your completion of this assignment, it will be broken down into five sections—each with its own due date (see Course Schedule below). More detail, including requirements for each section and evaluation criteria, will be provided in an assignment handout.

**Late Policy:** You are expected to submit all assignments by the listed dates/times. An assignment that comes in late will be marked down a grade level (e.g., B+ to B) for each day that it is late. If it is absolutely necessary for you to turn an assignment in late, please request permission from the instructor by email, at least 24 hours in advance of its due date, giving your reasons.

**Participation**

This 3-credit course is organized primarily in a seminar format, in which the essential feature will be the in-class discussion of the weekly readings or texts and active participation in other instructional tasks by all the attendees. Supportive, productive, and critical inquiry into the study of teaching is both an aim and a means for the course. The quality of this course will largely depend upon the quality of your participation. Thus you are expected to contribute thoughtfully, actively, and regularly across class sessions and across participation structures (whole-group discussion, small-group conversations, pairwork, etc.) within a given class session.

Participation begins long before you sit down in class. Reading is a critical component of the course, and as an advanced graduate-level course, the reading load is substantial. It is expected that students will come to class having read the assigned material thoroughly and thoughtfully and that they be willing to share their understandings of the readings in order to contribute to the learning of all class members.

In class, the quality of discussion hinges on participants’ formulation of thoughtful arguments. This involves both making conjectures and providing justification for those conjectures. Sometimes justification comes from the texts -- specific references to an argument that an author has made well. At other times, justification is based on the logical analysis of a term or set of ideas. Unpacking ideas is difficult work, requiring you to draw upon previous experience, your own ideas, and current thinking that the class is doing. Sometimes you may choose to connect the texts we are studying to ideas that have been raised in your other classes. I encourage you to do this, examining the interrelationships, complementarity, or contradictions of issues and ideas that you encounter in your doctoral work.

**Attendance Policy:** Because attendance is a prerequisite for participation, it is expected that you attend ALL class sessions. For each class missed (unexcused) your participation grade will be lowered by one grade level (e.g., from B+ to B). If it is absolutely necessary for you to miss a class, please request permission from the instructor by email, in advance, giving the reasons. You are also expected to arrive to class on time and to stay in class until the session ends.

**Grading**

Your course grade will be determined according to the following distribution:

- **45% Program of Research Paper**
- **45% Reading Responses**
- **10% Participation**
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading due</th>
<th>Assignment due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 9</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading Response 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 23</td>
<td>Framing the Issues: Evolving Frameworks</td>
<td>Labaree (2005); Berliner (1993); Shulman (1992)</td>
<td>Reading Response 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 6</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
<td>BREAK</td>
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<td>Apr. 3</td>
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<td>Apr. 10</td>
<td>Reforming Teaching Quality</td>
<td>Elmore (1996); Coburn (2001); Cobb &amp; Jackson (2012); Cohen (1988)</td>
<td>Reading Response 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 17</td>
<td>Assessing Teacher/Teaching Quality (in relation to learning; value-added)</td>
<td>Shulman (2004); MET report (2012); Hill et al. (2011); Grossman et al. (in review)</td>
<td>Program of Research Paper: Part 6</td>
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Note: The document is a draft and subject to change.