



**UNSW**  
A U S T R A L I A

Arts & Social  
Sciences

School of Education

EDST5120  
Qualitative Research Methodology

Semester 1

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### IMPORTANT :

For student policies and procedures relating to assessment, attendance and student support, please see website, <https://education.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/courses/course-outlines/>

**The School of Education acknowledges the Bedegal and Gadigal people as the traditional custodians of the lands upon which we learn and teach.**

## 1. LOCATION

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
School of Education  
EDST 5120 Qualitative Research Methodology: Critical Reading and Inquiry (6 units of credit)  
Semester 1, 2017

## 2. STAFF CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator: Dr Phiona Stanley  
Office Location: John Goodsell, Room 109  
Email: [Phiona.stanley@unsw.edu.au](mailto:Phiona.stanley@unsw.edu.au)  
Availability: Please email to arrange an appointment

## 3. COURSE DETAILS

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<b>Course Name</b>	Qualitative Research Methodology: Critical Reading and Inquiry
<b>Credit Points</b>	6 units of credit (uoc)
<b>Workload</b>	Includes 150 hours including class contact hours, readings, class preparation, assessment, follow up activities, etc.
<b>Schedule</b>	
Lecture/Seminar	10-13 April 2017 09:00 – 16:00 each day – see session breakdown below Civil Engineering 109
	<b>Session 1: 9-11am;</b>
	<b>Session 2: 11.15-1.15;</b>
	<b>Session 3: 2-4 pm</b>

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### **Summary of Course**

This course is designed to support students to explore and critique their chosen area of qualitative research by locating it in the context of key issues and approaches in education and viewing it from a diversity of qualitative perspectives. The course provides an introduction to the impact of different epistemological and methodological approaches in qualitative educational research and will also encourage students to build collaboration with others in the course using self and peer review.

### **Aims of the Course**

This course aims to:

- Clarify key concepts in educational research including: purpose(s) of doing research, key philosophical issues, researcher/practitioner positionality/role, and the place of research in teachers' work and in education more broadly;
- Develop students' critical reading and synthesis skills in the context of critiquing the methodology of published research in education;
- Build students' knowledge and awareness of research methods, including different techniques for data collection, analysis, reporting, and engaging with existing literature;
- Build students' skills and understandings to prepare the to conduct a small-scale Project in Education (EDST5888).

## Important Information

This is an intensive course that runs fulltime over four days in the Easter school holidays. In addition, there is a pre-course assessment task and a post-course assessment – see the assessment section for details of these.

This course is one of the Research Methods courses that can be taken in the MEd and MEdLead degrees as preparation for doing the EDST5888 Project in Education. It can be taken either concurrently or prior to undertaking the project – please see the UNSW Handbook for details of courses required for each degree program.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to give priority to university study commitments. Unless specific and formal permission has been granted, failure to attend 80% of classes in a course may result in failure.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Outcome	Assessment/s
1 Demonstrate an ability to explain and discuss philosophical issues, such as epistemological questions, in relation to social and educational research	1, 2
2 Demonstrate the ability to critique published research from epistemological and philosophical perspectives	1
3 Demonstrate the ability to design and conduct critical analyses of textual data	2

### Program Learning Outcomes

Standard	Assessment/s
1 <b>Cognitive skills and critical thinking</b> Demonstrate advanced critical thinking and problem solving skills	1, 2
2 <b>Communication, adaptive and interactional skills</b> Communicate effectively to a range of audiences, and be capable of independent and collaborative enquiry and team-based leadership	1, 2
3 <b>Ethics</b> Demonstrate an advanced capacity to recognise and negotiate the complex and often contested values and ethical practices that underlie education	1, 2
4 <b>Communication, adaptive and interactional skills</b> Communicate effectively to a range of audiences, and be capable of independent and collaborative enquiry and team-based leadership	1, 2

## 4. RATIONALE FOR THE INCLUSION OF CONTENT AND TEACHING APPROACH

Research in education is relevant to all educational contexts and to all teachers. The course will explore and critique a variety of published research texts, and will build participants' skills in engaging with, making use of, and critiquing existing research. The development of theoretical understanding and analytical skill is a key MEd program outcome.

But this course positions teachers as *producers* as well as *consumers* of educational research, and beyond engaging with existing research, participants will learn the relevant skills to conduct a small qualitative research project relevant to their own teaching context(s). The development of

procedural as well as declarative knowledge is therefore the core outcome of the course, and is prioritized throughout.

Teaching on the course is driven by a critical engagement with readings and the core textbook. In-class discussions, centered around the key readings, allow for theory and analysis to be developed but also **applied**, with the aim of producing active, engaged student-researchers who will subsequently be well equipped to apply the knowledge and skills developed in their own teaching/research contexts.

## **5. TEACHING STRATEGIES**

Guided reading, small group discussions, whole-group and clarification of key concepts – these support the development and application of the skills and understandings outlined above.

## 6. COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

<p>Session 1</p> <p><b>What is research?</b></p>	<p><b>O'Toole &amp; Beckett Ch1, Ch2</b></p> <p>Lim, M. S. C., Hellard, M. E, and Aitken , C. K. (2005). The case of the disappearing teaspoons: Longitudinal cohort study of the displacement of teaspoons in an Australian research institute. <i>British Medical Journal</i> 331, 1498-1500.</p> <p>Unger, D. L. (1998). Does knuckle cracking lead to arthritis of the fingers? <i>Arthritis &amp; Rheumatism</i> 41(5), 949-950.</p>
<p>Session 2</p> <p><b>Asking good (research) questions</b></p>	<p><b>O'Toole &amp; Beckett Ch 5</b></p> <p>*Bryman, A. (2007). The research question in social research: What is its role? <i>International Journal of Social Research Methodology</i> 10 (1), 5-20.</p> <p>White, P. (2013). Who's afraid of research questions? The neglect of research questions in the methods literature and a call for question-led methods teaching. <i>International Journal of Research and Method in Education</i>, 36(3), 213-227.</p> <p>*Morgan, J. and Sengedorj, T. (2015). 'If you were the researcher what would you research?' Understanding children's perspectives on educational research in Mongolia and Zambia. <i>International Journal of Research and Method in Education</i>, 38(2), 200-218.</p>
<p>Session 3</p> <p><b>Positionality</b></p>	<p><b>O'Toole &amp; Beckett Ch 3</b></p> <p>*Feiker Hollenbeck, A. (2015). The familiar observer: Seeing beyond the expected in educational research. <i>International Journal of Research and Method in Education</i>, 38(2),149-165.</p> <p>*McGarry, O. (2015). Repositioning the research encounter: Exploring power dynamics and positionality in youth research. <i>International Journal of Social Research Methodology</i>, DOI, 10.1080/13645579.2015.1011821</p> <p>*Stanley, P. (2012). Superheroes in Shanghai: Constructing and living transnational Western masculinities. <i>Gender, Place and Culture, A Journal of Feminist Geography</i> 19(2), 213-231.</p> <p>*Thomson, P. and Gunter, H. (2011). Inside, outside, upside down: The fluidity of academic researcher 'identity' in working with/in school. <i>International Journal of Research and Method in Education</i> 34(1), 17-30.</p>
<p>Session 4</p> <p><b>Locating your study in the literature</b></p>	<p><b>O'Toole &amp; Beckett Ch 6</b></p> <p>Dunne, C. (2011). The place of the literature review in grounded theory research. <i>International Journal of Social Research Methodology</i>, 14(2), 111-124.</p> <p>Nakata, Y. (2015). Insider–outsider perspective: Revisiting the conceptual framework of research methodology in language teacher education. <i>International Journal of Research and Method in Education</i>, 38(2), 166-183.</p>

	<p>*Tornerio, B. and Taut, S. (2010). A mandatory, high-stakes National Teacher Evaluation System: Perceptions and attributions of teachers who actively refuse to participate. <i>Studies in Educational Evaluation</i> 36, 132–142.</p>
<p>Session 5</p> <p><b>Epistemologies, methodologies, and methods:</b></p> <p><b>Part 1 – An overview</b></p>	<p><b>O’Toole &amp; Beckett Ch 4</b></p> <p>Brannen, J. (2005) Mixing methods: The entry of qualitative and quantitative approaches into the research process. <i>International Journal of Social Research Methodology</i>, 8(3), 173-184.</p> <p>*Pelchar, T. K. and Bain, S, K. (2014). Bullying and victimization among gifted children in school-level transitions. <i>Journal for the Education of the Gifted</i> 37(4), 319–336.</p> <p>De Bot, K. and Stoessel, S. (2000). In search of yesterday’s words: Re-activating a long-forgotten language. <i>Applied Linguistics</i> 21(3), 333-353.</p> <p>Vidal, K. (2011). A Comparison of the effects of reading and listening on incidental vocabulary acquisition. <i>Language Learning</i> 61(1), 219–258.</p>
<p>Session 6</p> <p><b>Epistemologies, methodologies, and methods:</b></p> <p><b>Part 2 – Qualitative research</b></p>	<p>*Lee, E. (2015). Doing culture, doing race, Everyday discourses of ‘culture’ and ‘cultural difference’ in the English as a second language classroom. <i>Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development</i>, 36(1), 80-93.</p> <p>*Hutcheson, V. and Tieso, C. L. (2014). Social coping of gifted and LGBTQ adolescents. <i>Journal for the Education of the Gifted</i> 37(4), 355–377.</p> <p>*Abramson, C. M. and Modzelewski, D. (2011). Caged morality: Moral worlds, subculture, and stratification among middle-class cage-fighters. <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> 34,143–175.</p>

<p>Session 7</p> <p><b>Data collection Part 1: Human participants</b></p>	<p><b>O'Toole &amp; Beckett Ch 7</b></p> <p>*Drake, P. (2010). Grasping at methodological understanding: A cautionary tale from insider research. <i>International Journal of Research and Method in Education</i>, 33(1), 85-99.</p> <p>Sultana, F. (2007). Reflexivity, positionality and participatory ethics: Negotiating fieldwork dilemmas in international research. <i>ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies</i> 6(3), 374-385.</p> <p>Lee, M. C. Y. (2015) Finding cultural harmony in interviewing: The wisdom of the middle way. <i>International Journal of Research and Method in Education</i>, DOI, 10.1080/1743727X.2015.1019455.</p> <p>Menard-Warwick, J. (2011). A methodological reflection on the process of narrative analysis: Alienation and identity in the life histories of English language teachers. <i>TESOL Quarterly</i> 45/3: 564-574.</p> <p>Sinclair Bell, J. (2011). Reporting and publishing narrative inquiry in TESOL: Challenges and rewards. <i>TESOL Quarterly</i> 45/3: 575-584.</p>
<p>Session 8</p> <p><b>Data collection Part 2: Other sources</b></p>	<p><b>(No textbook chapter for this session)</b></p> <p>*Ideland, M. and Malmberg, C. (2014) 'Our common world' belongs to 'Us': Constructions of otherness in education for sustainable development. <i>Critical Studies in Education</i>, 55(3), 369-386.</p> <p>*Firminger, K. B. (2006). Is he boyfriend material? Representation of males in teenage girls' magazines. <i>Men and Masculinities</i> 8(3), 298-308.</p> <p>Brinkmann, S. (2014). Doing without data. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 20(6): 720-725.</p>
<p>Session 9</p> <p><b>Analysing data</b></p>	<p><b>O'Toole &amp; Beckett Ch 8</b></p> <p>Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2016). Data wants and data entanglements (ch3 of <i>Reconceptualising qualitative research</i>, Sage – see reading list below for full citation).</p> <p>*Stewart, M. (2015). The language of praise and criticism in a student evaluation survey. <i>Studies in Educational Evaluation</i> 45, 1-9.</p> <p>Wilson, A. L. (2009). Learning to read: Discourse analysis and the study and practice of adult education. <i>Studies in Continuing Education</i> 31/1: 1-12.</p> <p>Maclure, M. and Stronach, I. (1993). Jack in two boxes: A post-modern perspective on the transformation of persons into portraits. <i>Interchange</i> 24(4), 353-380.</p>
<p>Session 10</p> <p><b>Ethics, relational ethics, &amp; writing</b></p>	<p><b>O'Toole &amp; Beckett Ch 9</b></p> <p>Canagarajah, A. S. and Stanley, P. (2015). Working with linguistic minority populations: Ethical considerations. In F. Hult and D. C. Johnson (Eds.) (2015) <i>Research methods in language policy and planning</i> (pp.33-44). Hoboken, NJ, Wiley-Blackwell.</p> <p>Barton, B. (2011). My auto/ethnographic dilemma: Who owns the story? <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> 34, 431-445.</p> <p>Colyar, J. (2009). Becoming writing; Becoming writers. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> 15(2), 421-436.</p> <p>Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. Denzin &amp; Y. Lincoln (Eds.) <i>Handbook of qualitative research</i>. London &amp; New Delhi: Sage (pp.923-948).</p>



<p>Session 11</p> <p><b>Theorizing from and towards data</b></p>	<p>Jackson, A. Y. and Mazzei, L. A. (2013). Plugging one text into another: Thinking with theory in qualitative research. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 19(4): 261–271.</p> <p>Stanley, P. (2013). Theorizing transnationals in China. (Ch3 of <i>A critical ethnography of 'Westerners teaching English in China: Shanghaied in Shanghai</i>. Abingdon &amp; New York: Routledge.)</p> <p>Honan, E. and Bright, D. (2016). Writing a thesis differently. <i>International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education</i>, 29(5): 731-743.</p>
<p>Session 12</p> <p><b>On being a researcher</b></p>	<p><b>(No textbook chapter for this session)</b></p> <p>*Stanley, P. (2015b). Writing the PhD journey/s, An autoethnography of zine-writing, angst, embodiment, and backpacker travel. <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> 44(2), 143-168.</p> <p>Gristy, C. (2014). Engaging with and moving on from participatory research, A personal reflection. <i>International Journal of Research and Method in Education</i>. DOI, 10.1080/1743727X.2014.940306.</p> <p>*Badley, G. F. (2014). Hunting roaches: A sort of academic life. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> 20(8), 981-989.</p> <p>Ellis, C. et al (2008). Talking and thinking about qualitative research. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> 14(2), 254-284.</p>

**Important note – for assignment 1: The papers marked with a \* are the ones that present original research – not all published papers do this. For assignment 1, choose ONLY from the papers marked with a star.**

## 7. ASSESSMENT

Assessment Task	Length	Weight	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed	Program Learning Outcomes Assessed	Due Date
<p>Task (1)</p> <p><b>Critical reflections on published research</b></p>	2000 words	40%	1 & 3	1, 2, 3 & 4	<p>5pm,</p> <p><b>Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;"> <p><b>NOTE:</b> this is a pre-course task!</p> </div>
<p>Task (2)</p> <p><b>Design a qualitative research proposal</b></p>	4000 words	60%	1 & 2	1, 2, 3 & 4	<p>5pm,</p> <p><b>Monday 1<sup>st</sup> May</b></p>

Students are required to follow their lecturer's instructions when submitting their work for assessment. All assessment will be submitted online via Moodle by 5pm. Student no longer need to use a cover sheet. Students are also required to keep all drafts, original data and other evidence of the authenticity of the work for at least one year after examination. If an assessment is mislaid the student is responsible for providing a further copy. Please see the Student Policies and Procedures for information regarding submission, extensions, special consideration, late penalties and hurdle requirements etc.

**Both assessment tasks need to be posted on Moodle by 5pm on the due date.**

### **Assignment 1: Critical reflections on published research.**

This task requires you to select two of the starred (\*) research papers from the session-by-session reading list. The ones without stars are methodology papers, which do not present original research – so please don't try to analyse those!

Answer critically the following questions for each of the two starred\* papers:

1. *Briefly summarise* each of the two texts in terms of their topic(s) and where they 'fit' into the landscape of educational research (e.g. 'this is a paper in the area of gifted education that found...'). You can use any of the session-by-session research papers for this task – not all are education-specific – if it's not a paper about education, say what it IS about.
2. *Briefly describe the research method* used in each paper and each paper's *main finding/s* (e.g. 'this is a qualitative paper that used student focus groups and interpretive data analysis to show that...');
3. For each paper, *critique the research method used as it relates to the topic* – what are the strengths and weaknesses of using this method for this research problem, what other way/s might have been better, and how might *you* have approached the research problem?
4. Comment briefly on the *writing and layout of the paper*: to what extent did you find it easy or difficult (and/or interesting or not interesting!) to read? How might the writer have improved it?

### **Assignment 2: Design a qualitative research proposal**

This task requires you to develop a proposal for a qualitative research project that you might conduct in education. You do not need to conduct the project for this task, but it is a good idea to write this task with EDST5888 in mind.

To do the proposal you will have to read beyond the papers supplied in the set readings for this course. You can (and are expected) to re-use readings you have used in other courses in MEd or MEd Lead, but please remember that *you cannot recycle your own writing* as submitted for other assignments in this degree at UNSW or any other degree/course you have taken, either here or elsewhere (this is called 'self plagiarism', and you can find information about it here: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism>).

Include in your research proposal the following components:

- **Project title**
- **Abstract** – a brief summary of the project (approximately 250 words). You should include the research question/s, the rationale for the study, the research method, and planned data analysis.
- **Aims and background** – this is where you situate the project within the wider debate, and you explain what your project aims to do that has not yet been done adequately in the literature.

- **Brief literature review** – summarise literature that is directly relevant to your proposed project to make it clear what is/is not known in this field, and therefore what your project contributes. (You may wish to conflate this section with Aims and background – this is OK.)
- **Research Approach and Methods** – this section should include information about your proposed project and how you plan to conduct it, and you should justify why *this* qualitative method is appropriate for *this* problem. In order to write this, you will need to outline your epistemological stance and your rationale for using your chosen research design. Then, within this, you will outline and again justify the procedure you will use to gather and analyse data. (You may wish to demonstrate, briefly, in this section that you are aware of alternative methods, and to explain why they are less appropriate to this project than your chosen method/s.)
- **Ethical considerations and researcher positionality** – in this section, you should consider the extent to which there are ethical issues in your research, such as gathering data among/from human participants. There may not be ethical issues, for example if your study is a meta-analysis of published research (and it's OK to conflate this section with the methods section if this is the case!) but you need to show that you are aware of any ethical issues in your proposed project. When you discuss positionality, you need to consider how your identity intersects with the research, and whether this raises any ethical or research design issues (for example, if you are a teacher and you intend to interview students at your school, your positionality might raise questions around the extent to which your participants will be honest in what they tell you – might they be trying to impress you, and/or tell you what they think the 'right' answer is!?)
- **Data collection and analysis** – in this section, you will explain and show examples of how you intend to collect and analyse the data you will use in your study. For example, if you plan to interview students, you will include here some examples of the questions you will ask and explain the rationale – what are you hoping to learn with these questions in particular, and what issues are there with these questions? If you prefer, you can attach full interview schedules as an appendix (this way they do not count towards your word limit), but if doing so, you still need to use this section to explain, justify, and discuss these issues, with reference to the appendix. You should also show in this section how you plan to analyse the data. So, for example, if you plan to code for content analysis, you might include a sample of what exactly you propose to do.
- **Theoretical Framework – this section is optional.** You would normally include this section in e.g. a PhD proposal. However, as we touch on theoretical frameworks only briefly in this course, it is unrealistic to expect students to have a thorough grasp of this area at this stage. However, if you do have an idea for a theoretical framework for your project (or if you are using e.g. Grounded Theory, where theorizing is inductive), include, describe and justify your theoretical framework in this section.
- **References** – these don't count towards your word count but are a necessary part of the proposal. In your list of references, you should list all the texts you refer to in your paper. Don't list other any texts that you may have read for, but have not cited, in the proposal.





### *Submission of Assessment Tasks*

Each assessment task needs to be posted on Moodle by 5pm on the due date. This process with submit your assignment via Turnitin, which will check for plagiarism.

### *Feedback*

<b>Assessment Task</b>	<b>Feedback Mechanism</b>	<b>Feedback Date</b>
1	Written	Within two weeks of submission
2	Written	Within two weeks of submission

## **8. RESOURCES**

### *Required Readings:*

<b>TEXTBOOK: O'Toole, J. and Beckett, D. (2013). <i>Educational research: Creative thinking and doing</i> (second edition). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.</b>
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### *Required Readings*

Journal articles are listed session-by-session above, and are all available on the course Moodle site. **You don't need to read every article for each session** – I realise there are a lot of readings listed! Instead, they are ordered, for each session, in my suggested order of how important/useful they are. So if you only have time to read a few additional articles, read the first one for each session, or if you have a bit more time, read the first two for each session, and so on. But make sure you look at the textbook chapter for each session first – we will base our classroom discussions mainly on it.

### Further Readings

Available from **UNSW Library website**: <http://www.library.unsw.edu.au>, and will depend on the topics you select for assignments.

Suggested supplementary textbooks (in alphabetical order – not all will be useful for everyone, so choose discerningly):

- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (There's a much expanded second edition of this out now too!)
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morriison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education* (7<sup>th</sup> Edition). Abingdon & New York: Routledge. (Previous editions of this are also useful.)
- Hooley, T., Marriott, J., and Wellens, J. (2012). *What is online research?* London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Koro-Ljungberg, M. (2016). *Reconceptualizing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kozinets, R. V. (2010). *Netnography: Doing ethnographic research online*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Liamputtong, P. (2013). *Qualitative research methods*. (4<sup>th</sup> Edition). Melbourne: OUP. (Previous editions of this are also useful.)
- Newby, P. (2014). *Research methods in education*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Abingdon & New York: Routledge. (Previous editions of this are also useful.)
- Silverman, D. (2007). *A very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (There are many other useful qualitative research methods books written or edited by David Silverman – this is a good starting point, but do a search for others too).
- Walter, M. (Ed.) (2013). *Social research methods*. (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Melbourne: OUP. (Previous editions of this are also useful.)