

ORLD 6918 Introduction to Advanced Research -- AEGIS -- Fall 2011

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I. Introduction/Purpose of the Course

This is the first in a sequence of courses that are designed to develop your competencies in conducting and assessing research. Our overall goals are to become conversant with current discourse on research and with the most fundamental research designs encountered in practice. The course has four broad purposes:

- 1) Developing a familiarity with the ongoing dialogue/debate around the different ontological and epistemological frameworks that comprise the research landscape in adult education and related fields of professional practice.
- 2) Cultivating competence in applying criteria for evaluating high quality research within these diverse paradigms.
- 3) Understanding the implications of different paradigms for the relationship between research and practice.
- 4) Becoming conversant with basic research designs.

Underlying these four purposes are more specific objectives:

- 1) To have you critically assess your own beliefs about the research process and what it means to establish trustworthy knowledge.
- 2) To have you demonstrate working familiarity with “traditional” foundational concepts of research.
- 3) To foster sensitivity to the political context of the research act.
- 4) To become capable of matching fundamental research designs to researchable questions.
- 5) To articulate how research contributes to effective practice.

We begin with a discussion of research paradigms in order to place the remainder of the course topics in context. From this context we will consider issues around experimental design, survey design and analysis, and field/case study research – all forms of research design and methods with which adult educators and human resource development

professionals need competence in order to meet the requirements of funding agencies, evaluate programs, produce valid data for purposes of enhancing their practice, and contribute to the knowledge base of the field.

II. Assignments

There are two assignments for this course:

First Assignment – Literature Review on Frameworks of Research Practice

The purpose of this assignment is to familiarize you with the three major paradigms of research that are prominent in the literature and to have you assess your own thinking against these frameworks. Write a paper reviewing the literature on research paradigms and the implications of each for major dimensions of the research process. This review should be descriptive of the three major paradigms around which discourse on research is currently centered — postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism. Be wary of terms since some writers use “interpretative” to refer to constructivism, others consider themselves to be interpretative, but would not assume the mantle of constructivism per se. The term “naturalistic” has been used to refer to rather traditional postpositivistic research while Guba and Lincoln use the term in their 1980’s writing on program evaluation to describe their qualitative approach to assessment and research. The term “positivism” is commonly used to refer conventional postpositivistic research practice, often in a negative context. In short, it’s a semantical thinket out there. Begin your work with the Guba, Phillips, and Lincoln chapters (in *The Paradigm Dialog*) using the Guba and Lincoln framework on paradigms as a starting point for Post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism. Then the Guba and Lincoln chapter in the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*.

Your paper should include the following:

- 1) A description of the chief characteristics of each of the three paradigms. How would you define, describe, differentiate, explain, or conceptualize each to someone who didn’t know anything about them? Include in your discussion a critical assessment of the assumption underlying each.
- 2) A discussion of the important issues of trustworthiness (validity and reliability) of research findings in each. How would someone assess or evaluate a piece of research conducted in each of the paradigms? Include in your discussion a critical assessment of assumptions that underlie these various warrants of trustworthiness.
- 3) A discussion of what, if any relationship, can exist between the paradigms. Can a researcher move between the paradigms? – are they exclusionary?, can they be complimentary? In what ways, if any, can researchers speak to one another across paradigms?

- 4) A statement of which paradigmatic assumptions are most predominant in your practice setting. What are the implications (benefits and limitations) of this for your practice?
- 5) A statement of the paradigmatic assumptions you presently hold. Justify these assumptions.

Due date: First Class Meeting. Page Guidelines 20 pages. Follow APA guidelines for organizing your paper. Give complete bibliographic information on the sources cited in your paper.

Second Assignment – Review of a Research Methodology

Due date: Third Class Meeting. Page Guidelines – 10 to 12 pages. This paper will involve writing a literature review, utilizing the conceptual and research literature in an integrated fashion in support of an argument related to a research problem (as opposed to a paper on a conceptual topic). More explicit instructions will be provided during the first class meeting. Follow APA guidelines for organizing the paper and give complete bibliographic information on the sources cited. Creswell Ch. 2 is a resource, in addition to various readings provided by David Severson during his course last summer.

III. Session Topics

- Session One: Windows to knowledge and knowing: The paradigm dialogue (or Wars). The terminology of research, (i.e. validity, reliability, research problem, research questions, hypotheses, generalization, etc)
Creswell, Chs. 1, 3, 7; Robson, Chs. 1-2; Guba; Lincoln; Phillips; Guba & Lincoln; Howe, Heron & Reason, 1997; Conklin; Rodwell & Byers;
- Session Two: Traditional designs: Experimental, Quasi-Experimental, and Survey Research
Robson, Chs. 4-5, 8; Argyris, 1968; Cresswell Chs. 8, 10. Jick.
- Session Three: The Case Study as method, including multi-case design, and comparative analysis. “What is a case” Fit with grounded theory, ethnography, etc.
Yin, Robson Ch 6; Gold; Eisenhardt; Dyer; Yorks, et. al. 1996; Baldwin; Flyvbjerg, Yorks & Whitsett, White; Denzin.

Session Four: Action research.
 Yorks, 2005; Yorks & Nicolaidis, Heron & Reason, 2008; Reason, 1994; Argyris, 1996; Elden & Chisholm; Kowalski, et. al.; Yorks, et. al. 2007; Yorks, et. al. 2008

IV. Reading

We have selected three core books for this course. We recommend that you purchase these as a basic library. No one book provides a thorough and comprehensive coverage of research methods because of the diverse approaches to professional research practice. You will find these will serve as good references throughout your career at AEGIS and beyond.

The listing goes as follows:

- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative and mix method approaches*. (3rd Edition.) San Francisco: Sage Publications Inc..
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA.: Blackwell Publishers.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Revised 4rd Edition). San Francisco: Sage Publications, Inc.

In addition, the following are suggested readings for the class. As you will see, I am especially partial to exchanges among authors in the literature since such exchanges honor the principle of critical discourse, providing for point/counter point conversation that elucidates important distinctions and raises questions that might otherwise lie dormant. Such exchange is, or at least should be, at the center of productive research and intellectual activity. Accordingly, read Eisenhardt (1989), Dyer and Wilkins (1991), and Eisenhardt (1991) in sequence – Whyte (1996a), Richardson (1996), Denzin (1996), and Whyte (1996b) in sequence – and Yorks et. al (1996) and Baldwin (1996) in sequence.

- Argyris, C. (1968). Some unintended consequences of rigorous research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 70, 185-197.
- Argyris, C. (1996). Actionable knowledge: Design causality in the service of consequential theory. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 32, 390-406.
- Baldwin, T.T. (1996). Invited reaction: Comments of feature article. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 7, 331-334.
- Conklin, T. (2007). Method of madness: Phenomenology as knowledge creator. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 16, 275-287.
- Connell, A.F. and Nord, W.R. (1996). The bloodless coup: The infiltration of organizational science by uncertainty and values. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 32, 407-427.
- Denzin, N.K. (1996). The facts and fictions of qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2, 230-241.

Dyer, Jr., W.G. and Wilkins, A.L. (1991). Better stories, not better constructs, to generate better theory: A rejoinder to Eisenhardt. *Academy of Management Review*, 16,

613-627.

- Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 532-551.
- Eisenhardt, K.M. (1991). Better stories and better constructs: The case for rigor and comparative logic. *Academy of Management Review*, 16, 620-627.
- Elden, M. and Chisholm, R.F. (1993). Emerging varieties of action research: Introduction to the special issue. *Human Relations*. 46, 121-141.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12, 219-245.
- Gold, R. L. (1958). Roles in sociological field observations. *Social Forces*, 36, 217-223.
- Gold, R.L. (1997) The ethnographic method in sociology. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3, 388-402.
- Guba, E. C. (1990). The alternative paradigm dialog. In E. G. Guba, *The paradigm Dialog* (pp. 17-27). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Guba E. C. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Heron, J. and Reason, P. (1997). A participatory inquiry paradigm. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3 (3), 274-294.
- Heron, J. & Reason, P. (2008). Extending epistemology within a co-operative inquiry. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (Eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice* (pp. 366-380). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Howe, K.R. (1998). The interpretative turn and the new debate in education. *Educational Researcher*, 27 (8), 13-20.
- Jick, T.D. (1979). Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods: Triangulation in action. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24, 602-611.
- Kowlaski, R., Yorks, L. & Jelinek, M. (2008). The workplace stress and aggression project: Ways of knowing—our Rosetta Stone for practice. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (Eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice* (pp. 497-508). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Lincoln, Y.S. (1990). The making of a constructivist: A remembrance of transformations past. In E. G. Guba, *The paradigm Dialog* (pp. 17-27). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Phillips, D. C. (1990). Postpositivistic science: Myths and Realities. In N.K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 105-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Reason, P. (1994). Three approaches to participatory inquiry. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 324-339). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rodwell, M.K. & Byers, K.V. (1997). Auditing constructivist inquiry: Perspectives of two stakeholders. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3, 116-134.
- Whyte, W.F. (1996). Qualitative sociology and deconstructionism. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2, 220-226.
- Whyte, W.F. (1996). Facts, interpretations, and ethics in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2, 242-244.
- Yorks, L. (2005). Action research methods. In R. A. Swanson & E. Holton, III (eds.) *Research in organizations: Foundations and methods of inquiry*, (pp. 375-398).

- San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Yorks, L., Aprill, A., James, L., Rees, A.M., Hofmann-Pinilla, A., Ospina, S. (2008). The tapestry of leadership: Lesson from six cooperative-inquiry groups of social justice leaders. In P. Reason & H. Bradbury (Eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice* (pp. 487-495). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Yorks, L., Neuman, J. H., Kowalski, D., & Kowalski, R. (2007). Lessons learned from a 5-year project within the Department of Veterans Affairs: Applying theories of interpersonal aggression and organizational justice to the development and maintenance of collaborative social space. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 43, 352-372.
- Yorks, L. & Nicolaidis, A. (2007). The role conundrums of co-inquiry action research: Lessons from the field. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 20, 105-116.
- Yorks, L., O'Neil, J., Marsick, V.J., Nilson, G. and Kolodny, R. (1996). Boundary management in Action Reflection Learning research: Taking the role of a sophisticated barbarian. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 7, 313-329.
- Yorks, L. and Whitsett, D.A. (1985). Hawthorne, Topeka, and the issue of science versus advocacy in organizational behavior. *Academy of Management Review*, 10, 21-30.

Obviously you should feel free to explore and incorporate other sources. Consider the above readings as providing a window to the diverse literature on research. Locate and utilize additional sources as appropriate. I invite you to suggest any readings you find especially helpful or engaging.