



EDUC 450 — INQUIRY SEMINAR I - Revised June 2016 **Elementary/Middle Years (2 credits)**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Inquiry Seminar (I) is designed to engender in teacher candidates:

1. an understanding of teaching as a moral and intellectual activity requiring inquiry, judgement and engagement with multiple others—students, parents, colleagues, scholarly community,
2. an appreciation of the importance of research in understanding curriculum, teaching and learning,
3. a desire to engage in their own educational inquiries—to become students of teaching.

Inquiry is understood as a deliberate, sustained and systematic process—beyond the everyday reflection that is required in teaching—where professionals explore what they do and how they do it, and the reasons for both; it involves professionals sharing their inquiries with colleagues. The notion of teacher inquiry connotes classroom teachers, individually and collectively, in a cycle of questioning, reflection, and action. Teachers take a close and critical look at practice, address problems and issues from a variety of perspectives, consider inquiry alternatives, try out new or revised practices, and evaluate the results; then the cycle begins anew based on the outcomes, responses, and possibilities emerging from the inquiry.

Teacher candidates will develop an inquiry question of their choosing based on a theme (e.g., the cohort theme such as “social and emotional learning” or “community”), a disciplinary topic (e.g., sustainability or health education), a particular curriculum emphasis (e.g., textbooks as cultural objects) or an educational issue (e.g., accessing multilingual resources within BC classrooms), propose an inquiry question and exploration plan and undertake preliminary educational research.

EDUC 450, 451, 452: Inquiry Seminars I, II, III

The inquiry process across the BEd (Elementary/Middle Years) program consists of

- learning about teacher inquiry (EDUC 450 - Inquiry I)
- preparing to explore an inquiry question (EDUC 450 - Inquiry I)
- developing and sharing one’s inquiry process (EDUC 451 - Inquiry II)
- exploring links to practice (EDUC 451 - Inquiry II)
- reflecting on the inquiry process, links to practice, ongoing questions, learning over the year and developing professional learning goals (EDUC 452 - Inquiry III)

Exploration of an inquiry question should demonstrate an emerging ability to

- engage substantively with a selected topic,
- inform their understanding of the topic through careful reading of the literature (including a wide variety of information sources), grounded in an understanding of significant issues,



- perspectives, assumptions,
- position oneself in relation to ideas discussed,
- grapple with and integrate as part of their learning reflections on what they are seeing, hearing and trying in the context of educational practice in schools,
- consider educational issues critically.

COURSE OUTLINE

The guiding questions outlined below are based on the understanding that teaching and learning are interdependent. (*Ten topics in 13 weeks allows for some flexibility, i.e., some topics may require more than one week.*) Instructors may choose from the selection of suggested readings that follows this chart and are available on UBC Connect - Inquiry Instructor Resources and/or identify other readings they deem appropriate.

Theme 1: Reimagining Learning through an Inquiry Lens	
Topic	Inquiry as stance
Guiding Questions	What is inquiry? What do you understand by “an inquiry stance”? What is teacher inquiry? What is student inquiry? What is the purpose and impact of inquiry learning?
Reading/s [Please insert]	
Theme 2: Exploring Teacher Inquiry	
Topic	Understanding and exploring teacher inquiry: developing an inquiry mindset
Guiding Questions	What are some of the key qualities of teacher inquiry? What is the purpose and impact of teacher inquiry? What is the distinction between teacher inquiry and teacher research? What is my understanding of the inquiry process?
Reading/s [Please insert]	
Theme 3: Generating Questions for Inquiry - Initiating a Mini-Inquiry	
Topic	Teachers’ questions
Guiding Questions	What kinds of questions do teachers ask? Where do teachers’ questions come from? What kinds of questions cause me to think deeply?



Reading/s [Please insert]	
Theme 4: Engaging in Professional Learning Through Inquiry	
Topic	Teachers' conversations with children and colleagues
Guiding Questions	Where do teachers go with their questions? What kinds of conversations are possible, with whom, and in what contexts? What is the role of professional learning communities and on-line professional communities in teacher learning? What do teachers (and I) pay attention to? Why?
Reading/s [Please insert]	
Theme 5: Enlarging Perspectives	
Topic	Teachers' conversations with scholarly and professional communities
Guiding Questions	Why and how might teachers, individually and collectively, enlarge their perspectives on a classroom issue or problem? What are some of the key perspectives they use to frame educational research? How do teachers identify and assess arguments in the research literature?
Reading/s [Please insert]	
Theme 6: Generating Observations	
Topic	Observing and Noticing
Guiding Questions	What questions do my observations raise (about curriculum, teaching, learning, students, context)? What questions do my observations raise about particular teachers (and myself) as observers, each with his/her values, assumptions and interests? What impact might observations have on those/that observed?
Reading/s [Please insert]	



Theme 7: Generating Questions that Matter	
Topic	Making Judgments
Guiding Questions	What kinds of considerations do teachers make when creating conditions for student learning? How do teachers make good judgments about how to act? What kinds of information might teachers gather to assess their action?
Reading/s [Please insert]	
Theme 8: Formulating an Inquiry	
Topic	Developing a focus and locating sources
Guiding Questions	What are some questions I have about education and schooling, teaching, learning and curriculum? Why are these questions significant, and to whom? How would I explore my particular interest? Which resources shall I consult?
Reading/s [Please insert]	
Theme 9: Proposing an Inquiry	
Topic	Identifying a framework for understanding
Guiding Questions	What values motivate my inquiry? What do I currently believe about the object of study? How might my inquiry be situated in the context of the particular writers who study similar questions/concerns? What are my personal and professional connections to the topic?
Reading/s [Please insert]	
Theme 10: Sharing a Proposal and Receiving Feedback	
Topic	How will I /we share the inquiry proposal?



Guiding Questions	What ethical issues are raised when a teacher researches? What can I learn from listening to others? What are my next steps?
Reading/s [Please insert]	

COURSE EVALUATION

Students must provide evidence that they have engaged thoroughly and thoughtfully with the subject matter of the course. Assignments will be assessed as Pass/Fail/Resubmit. The course is graded on a PASS/FAIL basis.

Participation is essential to success. If you are not in class, you cannot participate. Your active participation is integral both as a contribution to your own learning and also to the learning of others. During the course, we will deal with a range of ideas, some familiar and others unfamiliar concepts. We hope to enable one another to engage with the ideas and encourage each other to think about our thinking. In light of the above, some questions to consider are:

- *Do I come to class prepared?*
- *Do I read and listen carefully and respond thoughtfully during discussions?*
- *Do I contribute to group discussions?*
- *Do I take the risk of engaging in open dialogue, to formulate and reformulate ideas?*

POSSIBLE ASSIGNMENTS

Instructors assign some or all of the following. May be conducted in class, out of class, as individual, pair or small group tasks, etc.

A) Engaging with Readings: Entrance &/or Exit Slips

Evidence of on-going engagement with readings such as entrance and exit slips, jigsaw reading activities, posts and discussion on a course blog or similar. Entrance or exit slips may take the form of notes and jottings (a paragraph or so) that may provide a starting point to class discussion.

B) Engaging with Readings: Group Facilitation

Engaging in the inquiry process through group facilitation of a reading, e.g., with focus questions and/or an activity to engage understanding about key topics and broadening of perspectives.



C) Mini-Guided Inquiry: An opportunity to engage in a brief inquiry in which teacher candidates investigate a question or questions relevant to their area of focus with guidance from their instructor. Through this initial inquiry, teacher candidates learn how to engage in inquiry as a process while pursuing learning relevant to their area of interest. Teacher candidates share their work in a variety of formats.

D) Lesson with Inquiry Focus: An opportunity to link the teacher candidates' understanding of the inquiry process to their teaching practice. Candidates create a lesson, or connected lessons, considering links to curriculum content, essential understandings, objectives, question development and the inquiry procedure. Examples of lessons with an inquiry focus are available in several of the resources listed in the readings list, notably Alvarado and Herr (2003) and Harvey (2015).

E) Inquiry Proposal: A proposal to explore an inquiry question may consist of a brief context (how the question arises and why it is significant), a statement of the inquiry question, an outline of the approach taken, including possible sources of supporting information (literature, media and other resources). Typically, a proposal is 3-5 pages in length but may also take the form of an oral presentation (with one-page summary), small group presentation (with summary), and guided discussion with others in the cohort, a post on a professional blog, or other.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING ABOUT EXPLORING YOUR INQUIRY QUESTION

Exploring one's inquiry question during field experiences, e.g., sharing with school and/or faculty advisors during your weekly visits and/or practica in schools) is one way to learn – in addition to consulting the literature, considering media, policy statements, and other sources of information.

Please note that citations or any other data collected from students, teachers or others from the field may NOT be included in any written material related to your inquiry.

Citing an article that is already publicly available is part and parcel of academic practice; no permissions are necessary because the author(s) have, of their own volition, represented their ideas in a public manner.

Citing a human subject (e.g., expert) involves a researcher recording, interpreting, and representing the ideas of the human subject in the public where the human subject has no control over that interpretation or representation; to protect the human subject, therefore, protocols (ethical approval by UBC's Behavioural Research Ethics Board) are required in advance, including demonstration that the researcher has fully informed the human subject about the purpose of the research and the research questions; that conditions of anonymity will be created in so far as possible, etc. Such ethical approval and, therefore, direct citation is beyond the scope of the inquiry process outlined in EDUC 450 & 451.



POSSIBLE READINGS FOR EDUC 450 AND 451

- Aoki, T. (2005). Interests, knowledge and evaluation: Alternative approaches to Curriculum evaluation. In R. Irwin & W.H. Pinar (Eds.), *Curriculum in a new key: The collected works of Ted T. Aoki* (pp. 137-150). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Alvarado, A., & Herr, P. (2003). *Inquiry-based learning using everyday objects: Hands on instructional strategies that promote active learning in Grades 3-8*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Blumberg, A. (1990). Toward a scholarship of practice. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 5(3) 236-243.
- Burnafford, G., Fischer, J., & Hobson, D. (2001). (Eds.) *Teachers doing research: The power of action through inquiry*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Cecil, N. L., & Pfeifer, J. (2011). *The art of inquiry: Questioning strategies for K-6 classrooms*. Portage & Main Press.
- Clarke, A., & Erickson, G. (2006). Teacher inquiry: What's old is new again. *BC Educational Leadership Research*, 1, 44-68.
- Clarke, A., & Erickson, G. (2003). *Teacher inquiry: Living the research in everyday practice*. London, UK: Routledge Falmer. [available online via UBCLib]
- Cole, A. & Knowles, J. G. (2000). *Researching teaching: Exploring teacher development through reflexive inquiry*. Part III. Toronto, ON: Allyn & Bacon.
- Coulter, D. (1999). The epic and the novel: Dialogism and teacher research. *Educational Researcher*, 28(3), 4-13.
- Davis, B. (2004), *Inventions of teaching: A genealogy (Selected Chapters)*. London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service and Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Fenwick, T. (2000). Expanding conceptions of experiential learning: A review of the five contemporary perspectives on cognition. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 50(4), 243-272.
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- Fichtman Dana, N. & Yendol-Hoppey, D. (2009). *The reflective educator's guide to classroom research: Learning to teach and teaching to learn through practitioner inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Halbert, J., & Kaser, L. (2013). *Spirals of Inquiry*. Vancouver, BC: BC Principals and Vice Principals Association.
- Harvey, S. (2015). *Comprehension & collaboration: Inquiry circles for curiosity, engagement and understanding*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Henderson, J. (1992). *Reflective teaching: Becoming an inquiring educator*. Toronto, CA: Maxwell Macmillan Publishers.
- Mclsaac, Scott. (2004). Free-run children. *Educational Insights*, 8(3), 177.
- McKeown, M. & Beck, I. (1999). Getting the discussion started. *Educational Leadership* (57) 3, 25-28.
- Osborne, K. (2009). Education and schooling: A relationship that can never be taken for granted. In D.L. Coulter & J.R. Wiens (Eds.), *Why do we educate? Renewing the conversation* (pp. 21-41). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Ritchhart, R (2011). *Making thinking visible how to promote engagement, understanding, and independence for all learners*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Romano, M.E. (2004): Teacher reflections on 'bumpy moments' in teaching: A self study. *Teachers and teaching: Theory and practice*, 10:6, 663-681.
- Shamsher, M., Decker, E., & Leggo, C. (2003). *Teacher research in the backyard: Kitimat-Terrace teacher research*. Vancouver, BC: BC Teachers' Federation.
- Sims, M. (1993). How my question keeps evolving. In Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (Eds.) *Inside- out: Teacher research and knowledge*, (pp. 283-289). NY: Teachers College Press.
- Watt, J., & Colyer, J. (2014). *IQ: A practical guide to inquiry-based learning*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.



WEB RESOURCES

BC Teachers Federation: [Teacher Inquiry](#)

[Networks: An online journal of teacher research](#)

Carnegie Foundation: [Inside teaching: A living archive of practice](#)