



UNSW
SYDNEY

Arts & Social Sciences

School of Education

EDST5458
Researching Special Education

Term 1 2019

Contents

1. LOCATION.....	2
2. STAFF CONTACT DETAILS.....	2
3. COURSE DETAILS	2
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES.....	3
PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES.....	3
4. RATIONALE FOR THE INCLUSION OF CONTENT AND TEACHING APPROACH	4
5. TEACHING STRATEGIES	4
6. COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE.....	5
7. RESOURCES	5
8. ASSESSMENT	6

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 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 5458 Researching Special Education (6 units of credit)
Term 1, 2019

2. STAFF CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator: Dr Sue O'Neill
Office Location: John Goodsell 133
Email: sue.oneill@unsw.edu.au
Phone: 9385 2909
Availability: Tuesdays 4:00-4:45pm; by appointment

3. COURSE DETAILS

Course Name	Researching Special Education
Credit Points	6 units of credit (uoc)
Workload	Includes 150 hours including the completion of online activities, readings, assessment, and follow up activities. You should allow 2 hours per week to complete the online activities. Additional time will be required to complete the reading and assessment tasks.
Schedule	Modules online
Lecture	http://classutil.unsw.edu.au/EDST_T1.html

SUMMARY OF THE COURSE

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

THE MAIN WAYS IN WHICH THE COURSE HAS CHANGED SINCE LAST TIME AS A RESULT OF STUDENT FEEDBACK:

Some of material originally in Module 2 has now been moved to Module 1 and Module 5. Module 5 on meta analyses, systematic reviews and evaluating and composing journal articles has now been moved to Module 2.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Outcome		Assessment/s
1	Understand key concepts in special education research including: purpose(s) of doing research, key philosophical and ethical issues, researcher/practitioner positionality/role, and the place of research in teachers' work and in special education more broadly	1, 2
2	Develop critical reading and synthesis skills in the context of critiquing the methodology of published research in special education;	1
3	Build knowledge and awareness of research methods, including different techniques for data collection, analysis, reporting, and engaging with existing special education research literature	1, 2
4	Build skills and understandings as preparation for conducting a small-scale Project in Education	2

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

Standard		Assessment/s
1	Advanced disciplinary knowledge and practices Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the field of education as it relates to their specialist area of study, and the ability to synthesize and apply disciplinary principles and practices to new or complex environments.	1, 2
2	Enquiry-based learning Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of research-based learning and the ability to plan, analyse, present implement and evaluate complex activities that contribute to advanced professional practice and/or intellectual scholarship in education	1, 2
3	Cognitive skills and critical thinking Demonstrate advanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills	1, 2
4	Communication, adaptive and interactional skills Communicate effectively to a range of audiences, and be capable of independent and collaborative enquiry and team-based leadership	1, 2
5	Global outlook Demonstrate an understanding of international perspectives relevant to the educational field	1
6	Ethics Demonstrate an advanced capacity to recognise and negotiate the complex and often contested values and ethical practices that underlie education	1

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 programme outcome.

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 research project relevant to their own special education teaching context(s). The development of procedural as well as declarative knowledge is therefore the core outcome of the course and is prioritised throughout.

Teaching on the course is driven by a critical engagement with readings and the core textbook. In-class discussions, centred 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

- Explicit teaching, including reading and/or listening to audio-visual materials to foster interest and support learning.
- Structured occasions for critical reflection on issues raised in the course and on others' ideas.
- Opportunities for peer and instructor interaction via forums, message boards, and chat, allowing you the opportunity to demonstrate your capacity to communicate, to question, and to problem solve.
- Completion of online modules and activities to permit flexible interaction with course materials.
- Use of quizzes at the end of each module/prescribed readings for students to self-assess your understanding of key concepts.

These activities will occur in a climate that is supportive and inclusive of all learners.

6. COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Week Beginning**	Lecture Topic
Module 1	Introduction to special education research: conducting a literature search, APA style, journal article format Ethical issues in special education: conducting research with vulnerable populations, National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, UNSW HREC Principles of Research: research questions, variables, hypotheses, identifying and recruiting participants
Module 2	Effect size and meta-analysis: effect size, meta-analysis, systematic reviews, PRISMA Evaluating and composing research articles: Selecting a journal, identifying the basic format, reviewing the literature, presenting evidence, getting feedback, making revisions, determining the author's motivation, identifying the contribution to knowledge, theory, or practice, importance of research design and methodology, assessing the findings, conclusions, writing and layout of the article
Module 3	Qualitative Research: epistemologies, paradigms, qualitative research methods, methods of collecting and analysing empirical materials, trustworthiness and validity in qualitative research, presenting qualitative research
Module 4	Quantitative Research: screening and cleaning your data, graphing your data, normal distributions, correlation, regression, comparing means, non-parametric tests, categorical data analysis
Module 5	Small n Designs: ABA, multiple baseline designs

****Modules 2, 3, and 4 are designed to be completed over a two-week period. Module 1 should take 3 weeks, and Module 5 only 1 week.**

7. RESOURCES

Required Readings

Rumrill, P. D., Cook, B. G., & Wiley, A. L. (2011). *Research in special education: Designs, methods, and applications*. Charles C Thomas Publishers.

Further Readings

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th Ed.). London: SAGE.

Field, A. (2015). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics*. London: SAGE.

Pallant, J. (2016). *SPSS survival manual*. Sydney, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. London: SAGE.

*****All students are expected to access the course's LMS on a regular basis for course materials, information, and announcements.**

8. ASSESSMENT

Assessment Task	Length	Weight	Learning Outcomes Assessed	Due Date
Critical Reflections on Published Research	2,000 words	40%	1, 2, 3	Monday 25 th March 2019 by 5pm
Data Analysis and Report	4,000 words	60%	1, 3, 4	Monday 6 th May 2019 by 5pm

Assessment Details

Assignment 1: Critical reflection on published research.

This task requires you to select two of the published original research papers from the session-by-session reading list – you must NOT use the textbook for this assignment, and you must select from the papers starred as research papers (as opposed to methodology papers, which do not present original research*). Answer the following questions critically:

1. *Briefly summarise* the two texts in terms of their topic(s) and where they 'fit' into the landscape of special education research (e.g. 'this is a paper in the area of autism that found...'). You can use any of the research papers included in the course readings for this task – not all are education-specific.
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?

Assessment 2: Research Proposal. This task requires you to develop a research proposal for a project that you might conduct in education. You do not need to conduct the project, 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>). You may very well also have to read beyond the materials from other courses, and to help you do this, the UNSW library offers plenty of resources – please see information here: <http://info.library.unsw.edu.au>.

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.

- **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 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 methodology/approach. Then, within this, you will outline and again justify the exact methods you will use to gather and analyse data. (You make 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/please 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.

- **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 assessments

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. 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. <https://education.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/courses/course-outlines/>

UNSW SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
 FEEDBACK SHEET
 EDST5458: Researching Special Education

Student Name:

Student No.:

Assessment task 1: Critical reflection

SPECIFIC CRITERIA	(-) —————> (+)				
Understanding of special education and the key concepts involved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding of the task and its relationship to relevant areas of theory, research and practice • summaries of texts • representations of writers' arguments and methods • understanding of and issues with research methodologies used 					
Depth of analysis and/or critique in response to the task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • depth of discussion of texts • depth of analysis and critiques of journal articles • clarity and depth of implications/recommendations 					
Familiarity with and relevance of professional and/or research literature used to support response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • range of research and professional literature on special education; resources are current and relevant 					
Structure and organization of project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriateness of overall structure of reflection paper • clarity and coherence of organisation, including use of section headings and summaries to enhance readability. 					
Presentation of response according to appropriate academic and linguistic conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarity, consistency and appropriateness of writing conventions • clarity and consistency in the format of the plan • clarity and appropriateness of sentence structure, vocabulary use, of spelling, punctuation and word length • Clarity and consistency of use of APA style 					
GENERAL COMMENTS					

Lecturer

Date

Recommended: /20 (FL PS CR DN HD)

Weighting: 60%

NB: The ticks in the various boxes are designed to provide feedback to students; they are not given equal weight in determining the recommended grade. Depending on the nature of the assessment task, lecturers may also contextualize and/or amend these specific criteria. **The recommended grade is tentative only, subject to standardisation processes and approval by the School of Education Learning and Teaching Committee.**

UNSW SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
 FEEDBACK SHEET
 EDST5458: Researching Special Education

Student Name:

Student No.:

Assessment task 2: Research proposal

SPECIFIC CRITERIA	(-) → (+)				
Understanding of special education and the key concepts involved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding of the task and its relationship to relevant areas of theory, research and practice • extent to which each of the components was addressed adequately • coordination and cohesion between sections, particularly research problem and research design 					
Depth of analysis and/or critique in response to the task <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • depth of understanding of research methodology, methods, and underlying issues • adequacy of consideration of ethical and positional issues 					
Familiarity with and relevance of professional and/or research literature used to support response <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • range of research and professional literature on special education; resources are current and relevant 					
Structure and organization of essay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriateness of overall structure of essay • clarity and coherence of organisation, including use of section headings and summaries to enhance readability. 					
Presentation of response according to appropriate academic and linguistic conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity and consistency of use of APA style • clarity, consistency and appropriateness of writing conventions • clarity and consistency in the format of the plan • clarity and appropriateness of sentence structure, vocabulary use, of spelling, punctuation and word length 					
GENERAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT TIME 					

Lecturer

Date

Recommended: /20 (FL PS CR DN HD)

Weighting: 40%

NB: The ticks in the various boxes are designed to provide feedback to students; they are not given equal weight in determining the recommended grade. Depending on the nature of the assessment task, lecturers may also contextualize and/or amend these specific criteria. **The recommended grade is tentative only, subject to standardisation processes and approval by the School of Education Learning and Teaching Committee.**