EDUC 500: Research Methodology in Education
Activities
Clustering: Theme Generator 5.0
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Have you ever wondered how the experts create such impressive themes for their organization? Or how catchy app, company or domain names are created? They use the Theme Generator, version 4.0, 4.0 or 5.0.[1] Using this device, you too can quickly become an expert and offer your theme as a wave of the future. Here's how it works:

Roll an ordinary pair of dice. Use the resulting number (2 thru 12) to choose a word from Group A. Repeat the process to choose a word from Group B and another from Group C. For example, rolling 5-8-9 would result in Dynamic Poststructural Reform. Add "Millennium" or 21st Century as a qualifier and promote this theme as the future!

Specialists often criticize the Theme Generator, 3.0 for its faults in probability. Note that the probability of rolling a 5, 6 or 7 is 5 or 6 times that of rolling a 2 or a 12. High rollers who love to bet against the odds will overlook this minor defect in the Theme Generator, 3.0. Those more comfortable with equal odds will want to adopt the Theme Generator, 4.0 or 5.0 for their needs.

Group A	Group B	Group C
2. Creative	2. Perceptual	2. Change
3. Systemic	3. Modular	3. Thinking
4. Flexible	4. Diagnostic	4. Management
5. Dynamic	5. Situational	5. Teaching
6. Complex	6. Revolutionary	6. Learning
7. Responsive	7. YouTubed	7. Subversion
8. Alternative	8. Poststructural	8. Strategy
9. Outrageous	9. Podcasted	9. Reform
10. Profound	10. Cosmopolitical	10. Engagement
11. Virtual	11. Sustainable	11. Consciousness
12. Meta-mediated	12. Performative	12. Research

Lesson #1 of research is that we try to communicate and write as clearly as possible, to avoid opacity, yet researchers by definition deal with dense data and theory while negotiating realities of technobabble. These realities mean that acronyming and eponyming, coining new words and phrases, and abilitating and verbing are common practices of our participants and settings (Berry, 1993, pp. 82-88). Berry (1993, p. 83) dates theme generators to the mid 1980s to the "mix and match process" of technology upstarts challenged coin catchy names for their companies and products.

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[1] The Theme Generator, version 3.0 was adapted from John A. Berry, Technobabble (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 82-83; Jerry Taylor, "Creating Your Own Jargon," *Educational Digest* (September 1998) http://oldspouse.wordpress.com/2011/02/21/rolling-the-jargon-dice/. Taylor dubbed his version the MANURE (Mechanism to Advance New Understanding for Renewal in Education) Generator.

Partially tongue-in-cheek he proposed: "Stumped for a name for your company? Just select one item each from columns A, B, and C. In some cases, you could combine parts of words from the first and second columns (e.g., lntertech Solutions):"

International	Technology	Corporation
Integrated	Software	Associates
Parallel	Development	Partners
Innovative	Hardware	Solutions
First	Generation	Systems
Worldwide	Enterprise	Configuration
Digital	Functions	Group

Research Clusters

Random Theme Generator, 5.0: Thought experiment in Clustering
1. Groups of 4 = Research Cluster
2. Demonstrate the Theme Generator, 3.0, 4.0 & 5.0
3. Generate Theme for each cluster
   a. Random Theme Generator 4.0, 5.0 or
   b. *Wheel Decide*
4. Ask everyone to state a one word description of their research.
5. Mix them up in a cluster generator.