THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

a place of mind

Teacher Inquiry & Self-Study Guide (Graduating Projects)
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Graduating Project Description:

The Graduating Project is intended as a culminating project that is of personal use to the student and considered educationally valuable by an audience of professional peers. Although a formal written paper may be submitted, we also encourage the production of a variety of educational resource materials, exhibitions, journal and magazine articles, multimedia and oral presentations, performances, videos, etc. that can be shared with an audience of educators. A written document that identifies the need for the project, describes its content, and lists source materials, must accompany all nonprint submissions.

DLC Graduating Project BRIEF Proposal Format

Section	Pages
Working Title	**NA**
1. Introduction: What are your general and more specific interests in what you want to explore across a longitudinal timeline? This reflects your focus on the integration of media and technology in your practice and curriculum. This will likely reflect some aspect of 21st century learning.	**(1 page)**
2. Inquiry Question(s) or Problem: What is the question (or are the questions) that ground(s) your inquiry?	**(1/4 page or less)**
3. Inquiry Purpose: Why is this important? Who is the potential audience or participants that will likely gain from your inquiry?	**(1/4 – 1/2 page)**
4. Key or Critical Concepts: Identify 2-3 concepts that you intend to explore or focus on in your inquiry. Provide a brief description of these or definitions as related to your interests and inquiry.	**(1/2 - 1 page)**
5. Ethical Considerations: Identify any ethical considerations that may arise in your inquiry or ethical problems that will have to be resolved before or during the inquiry (e.g., parental consent).	**(1/2 - 1 page)**
6. References	**Attach**

Generally, in the DLC cohorts, the Graduating Projects have taken the following form:

Table of Contents

1. *Introduction*: Provides a brief background of yourself and your interest in this topic
2. *Inquiry project description*: Description of your project and rationale (what you did, how you did it, why you did it)
   o *Purpose*
   o *Inquiry Questions or Problem*
   o *Terminology* (i.e., brief definitions of Key or Critical Concepts)
3. *Timeline*: A brief overview of your progress over these two years with regard to your project and your thinking around your project
4. *Literature Review*: Literature review, grounds your inquiry in related work
   o *Critical Concepts*: The key theoretical terms you draw on in your project (these form part of your lit review)
5. *Methodology*: Description of the methods and techniques, including instruments, etc. used or customized
   o *Ethical Considerations*: The ethical issues around your project and how you addressed or resolved them
6. *Curriculum Analysis*: Ties to curriculum theory and design, instructional design and innovation, Ministry or official curriculum, hidden curriculum, etc.
7. *Findings, Analysis and Interpretation*: What you found or learned from your inquiry, related back to the rationale and questions guiding your inquiry, and to the concepts, theory, and context discussed in your literature review
8. *Conclusions*: Relates your inquiry to practice, considers what comes next
9. *References:* All references cited in the Report
10. *Appendices:* Any forms, instruments, etc.

1. **Inquiry**
   a. Inquire. v., 1. The act of exploration and discovery. 2. To ask questions; to be open to seeing new potentials and possibilities. Synonyms: DISCOVERY, SEARCH, RESEARCH, and SYSTEMATIC EXPLORATION.
2. **Teacher Inquiry**
   a. Definitions and Taxonomies
      i. Teacher Inquiry
         1. Samaras & Roberts (2001, p. 43): Self-study teacher research is designed to encourage teachers to be agents of their own reform initiatives while working collaboratively with school colleagues. It has proven useful to an array of educators coming from multiple disciplines and programs (Kosnik, Beck, Freese, & Samaras 2006). In self-study, teachers critically examine their actions and the context of those actions as a way of developing a more consciously driven mode of professional activity, as contrasted with action based on habit, tradition, or impulse. Self-study allows teachers to plan, enact, and assess their pedagogical strategies with the support and critique of professional colleagues while examining the impact of their efforts on student learning.
         2. Samaras & Roberts (2001, pp. 42-43):
            a. Imagine if teachers were given these prompts:
               i. What question do I most wonder about in my teaching practice?
               ii. What causes me to wonder about this question?
               iii. Why is this question important to me? What experiences and perspectives brought me to ask this question?
               iv. Who would benefit from addressing this question (e.g. me, my students, my school, a school division, society at large)?
            b. Samaras & Roberts (2001, pp. 43-45) offer the following method:
               i. STEP 1: Author your own question.
               ii. STEP 2: Work with a critical friends team.
               iii. STEP 3: Plan new pedagogies for improved learning.
               iv. STEP 4: Enact, document, and assess your research process.
               v. STEP 5: Generate and share what you learned.
      ii. Appreciative Inquiry
         1. More (2010): Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a method for discovering, understanding and fostering innovations in organizations through the gathering of positive stories and images and the construction of positive interactions. AI seeks out the very best of "what is" to help ignite the collective imagination of 'what could be'. The aim is to generate new knowledge which expands the 'realm of the possible' and helps members of an organization envision a collectively desired future and to carry forth that vision in ways which successfully translates images of possibility into reality and beliefs into practice.
      iii. Practitioner Research
         1. Dadds (2004, p. 3): Practitioner research, therefore, is not seeking generalisations in the way some large-scale forms of research attempt to do. Rather, it is seeking new understandings that will enable us to create the most intelligent and informed approach we can to improving our provision for those in our care. Stenhouse claimed that 'we are concerned with the development of a sensitive and self-critical subjective perspective and not with the aspiration to unattainable objectivity' (1975:157). In accepting the mantle, as researchers, of professional communicators in a more public arena, therefore, we seek to share our research stories with others so that colleagues can, if appropriate, engage with them and relate them to their own work. In this sense, the notion of relateability becomes more appropriate for practitioner research than the traditional research concept of generalisability. This is how the influence of the small-scale, particular project, shared across the profession, can work its way into the larger fabric.
      iv. Practitioner Action Research
         1. Reason & Bradbury (2001, p. 1): Action research is a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes…It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and

practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally to the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.

    v. Self-Study
        1. Lewison (2003, p. 100): [A self-study is] a generally agreed upon set of insider research practices that promote teachers taking a close, critical look at their teaching and the academic and social development of their students… [A self-study] involves classroom teachers in a cycle of inquiry, reflection, and action. In this cycle, teachers question common practice, approach problems from new perspectives, consider research and evidence to propose new solutions, implement these solutions, and evaluate the results, starting the cycle anew.

  b. Methodologies
    i. Samaras & Roberts (2010, pp. 43-44):
        1. STEP 1: Author your own question.
        2. STEP 2: Work with a critical friends team.
        3. STEP 3: Plan new pedagogies for improved learning.
        4. STEP 4: Enact, document, and assess your research process.
        5. STEP 5: Generate and share what you learned.
    ii. **Backwards Design**
        1. McTighe, J. (2004). Introduction-- The logic of backwards design. In *Understanding by design professional development workbook* (pp. 1-27). Washington, DC: ASCD.

3. Research Ethics
  a. Definitions
    i. Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS 2) governs formal research ethics across Canada. http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/Default/
        1. The TCPS 2 defines **research** as "a systematic investigation to establish facts, principles or generalizable knowledge" (p. 17). http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/archives/tcps-eptc/section1-chapitre1/#1A
    ii. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) is the primary federal research policy and funding agency for educational researchers and is bound to the TCPS 2.
        1. SSHRC's "Definitions of Terms" elaborates on **research / creation**: "Any research activity or approach to research that forms an essential part of a creative process or artistic discipline and that directly fosters the creation of literary/artistic works. The research must address clear research questions, offer theoretical contextualization within the relevant field or fields of literary/artistic inquiry, and present a well-considered methodological approach. Both the research and the resulting literary/artistic works must meet peer standards of excellence and be suitable for publication, public performance or viewing."
  b. TCPS 2 (*Tri-Council Policy Statement: Research Ethics)*
    i. The following distinguishes research requiring REB review from non-research activities that have traditionally employed methods and techniques similar to those employed in research. Such activities are not considered "research" as defined in this Policy, and do not require REB review. Activities outside the scope of research subject to REB review (see Articles 2.5 and 2.6), as defined in this Policy, may still raise ethical issues that would benefit from careful consideration by an individual or a body capable of providing some independent guidance, other than an REB. These ethics resources may be based in professional or disciplinary associations, particularly where those associations have established best practices guidelines for such activities in their discipline.
    ii. "Exempt from REB Review"
        1. **Article 2.3** REB review is not required for research involving the observation of people in public places where:
            a. it does not involve any intervention staged by the researcher, or direct interaction with the individuals or groups;
            b. individuals or groups targeted for observation have no reasonable expectation of privacy; and

        c.   any dissemination of research results does not allow identification of specific individuals.

2. **Article 2.4**   REB review is not required for research that relies exclusively on secondary use of anonymous information, or anonymous human biological materials, so long as the process of data linkage or recording or dissemination of results does not generate identifiable information.

3. **Article 2.5**   Quality assurance and quality improvement studies, program evaluation activities, and performance reviews, or testing within normal educational requirements when used exclusively for assessment, management or improvement purposes, do not constitute research for the purposes of this Policy, and do not fall within the scope of REB review.

4. **Article 2.6** Creative practice activities, in and of themselves, do not require REB review. However, research that employs creative practice to obtain responses from participants that will be analyzed to answer a research question is subject to REB review.

iii. **In most cases**, self-study and teacher inquiry fall under a category of "Exempt from REB Review" (see above from TCPS 2). One of the revisions from TCPS 1 to TCPS 2 was a close look at the Exemptions as it became clear that many practices, including most of teaching, is self-governed by professional Codes of Ethics (e.g., BCTF). And in most cases what is submitted to Reviews Boards (e.g., UBC BREB) falls under the category of Minimal Risk.

iv. For **media productions** or Graduating Projects, **in most cases** as you broadcast, present, report, write, etc., you will be paraphrasing your students' comments. Or, in terms of the TCPS 2, directly quoting comments that are "publicly accessible" with "no reasonable expectation of privacy" (e.g., blog comments, etc.). That's fine and well within exemption. However, some of you may deem it necessary to quote written comments your students make in the more private forums created for your innovations (e.g., Moodle).

1. If you prefer not to paraphrase in these cases, it's good practice to request consent.
2. For the GPs, it is not advisable to quote students under 14 years of age. Those able to give Consent under Minimal Risk are 14 years or older. Under 14 requires parental assent.
3. Of course, **all and any names** (students, classes, schools, etc.) should be changed with pseudonyms as you broadcast, present, report, write, etc.

c.   Forms
    i.   Assent Form (Images)
    ii.   Consent Form (Images)
    iii.   Consent Form (Extended Participant Quotation)

Guides
1. Review of Literature & Research Guide
   a.   Critical Reviews (Brief Summary)
2. Research Ethics
   a.   Forms
       i.   Assent Form (Images)
       ii.   Consent Form (Images)
       iii.   Consent Form (Extended Participant Quotation)
   b.   TCPS 2 (*Tri-Council Policy Statement: Research Ethics*)
3. Style (APA) Guide
4. Abstracts
5. Writing Guide (includes Stating a Thesis, Review of Research, and Theoretical Frameworks)
6. UBC Library Research Resources
7. **Templates**
   a.   Graduating Project Title Page
   b.   Table of Contents for Graduating Projects
8. **Forms & Guidelines**

References
1.   British Columbia Teachers' Federation (2008). *Teacher Inquiry in the BCTF: A focus for supporting teachers' professional development*. Vancouver, BC: BCTF.
2.   Ezer, H. (2009). *Self-study approaches and the teacher inquirer*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense.
3.   Lewison, M. (2003) Teacher inquiry. In E. P. St. John, S. A. Loescher, & J. S. Bardzell (Eds.), *Improving early reading and literacy in Grades 1–5* (pp. 95–109) Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
4.   Hammond, S. A. (1996). *The thin book of appreciative inquiry*. Plano, TX: CSS.
5.   Samaras, A. P. & Roberts, L. (2011). Flying solo: Teachers take charge of their learning through self-study research. *Learning Forward, 22*(5), 42-45.
6.   Wilhlem, J. D. (2009). The power of teacher inquiry. *Voices From the Middle, 17*(2), 36-39.
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