Methodology module

Towards an understanding of Arts based/informed research

Office of Doctoral Studies and Office of Research

Semester 2, 2013

This module consists of a series of talks aimed at beginning and established researchers interested in developing their understanding of Arts-based and Arts-informed research. A list of further reading is provided for each topic.

While the anchor is in research in education, the methodological issues discussed have wider currency, and the invitation to participate is extended to staff and research higher degree students in the Faculties of Education and Social Work, Arts and Social Sciences, Law and beyond.

The module is itself part of a series that seeks to promote a vibrant research culture in the Faculty and the Division, by engaging established and emerging researchers to talk about how they go about their own work with a focus on how they conceptualise and enact the research process. The first lecture by Robyn Ewing is part of a broader series of lectures called ‘Foundations of Social Research’ that the Faculty of Education and Social Work will be offering in semester 2, fortnightly on Thursdays from 4-5 pm.

Participants are welcome to attend one, more or all sessions.

Cost: No charge
RSVP: Camilla Pilgrim camilla.pilgrim@sydney.edu.au

Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thurs 25 July, 4-5pm*</td>
<td>An overview of Arts based/informed research</td>
<td>Prof. Robyn Ewing</td>
<td>612, Education Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues 30 July, 4-5.15 pm</td>
<td>Narrative inquiry</td>
<td>A/Prof. Lesley Harbon</td>
<td>612, Education Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues 6 August, 4-6 pm</td>
<td>Portraiture and patchwork</td>
<td>Dr Nikki Brunker and Dr Tony Loughland</td>
<td>612, Education Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues 13 August, 4-6 pm</td>
<td>Performance ethnography</td>
<td>A/Prof. Michael Anderson</td>
<td>612, Education Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues 20 August, 4-6 pm</td>
<td>Visual research methods</td>
<td>Lea Mai and Dr Robyn Gibson</td>
<td>612, Education Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues 27 August, 4-5 pm</td>
<td>Storytelling, identity and early career teachers</td>
<td>Victoria Campbell</td>
<td>612, Education Building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Note that this lecture is on Thursday; all other meetings are on Tuesdays.
Arts informed/based research: An overview
Speaker: Professor Robyn Ewing
Thursday 25th July, 4-5pm

The arts and their forms are as ancient as human existence, yet the emergence of artistic paradigms and their use in educational inquiry has been relatively recent. Arts-informed inquiry is art pursued for inquiry's sake and not for art's own sake. This kind of inquiry is not appropriate for all research questions in the social sciences. But such approaches have the potential to create new epiphanies for the reader/viewer/listener (Diamond & Mullen, 1999; Ewing & Smith, 2004) or to explore the liminal spaces (Conroy, 2004) ... in ways that some traditional research approaches cannot access.

(Ewing and Hughes, 2008, p. 520)

Using artistic processes and forms to collect, analyse or represent findings privileges our imaginations. Different art forms can allow us to engage in creative ways in developing new understandings and perspectives. Like any innovative methodologies, Arts-informed/arts based research has attracted a great deal of controversy and engenders lively debates about rigour, authenticity and appropriateness. This lecture suggests principles for the use of these approaches in exploring relevant educational and social science research questions and examines some of the issues around their use. We will explore how research using arts-informed inquiry when appropriate can contribute perspectives and understandings that are distinctive from other methodologies.

Our personal and professional narratives embody our knowledge, values and understandings. In the case of educational research, we can examine and analyse teachers’ and students’ stories of classrooms, teaching and learning to investigate educational practices and explore different phenomena. Narrative Inquiry research will be examined to shed insights into how best to gather stories, thereby finding meaning within them.


---

**Portraiture and Patchwork**

Speakers: Nikki Brunker and Dr Tony Loughland

Tuesday 6th August, 4-6 pm

In this session we will explore an Arts Informed interpretation of Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot’s methodology, Portraiture, along with the potential Patchworking offers as a form of Arts Informed enhancement to the research process.


Performance Ethnography
Speaker: Associate Professor Michael Anderson
Tuesday 13th August, 4-6 pm

Research methods derived from performance have been recruited by a small but enthusiastic group of researchers over the last few years. In this presentation we will examine the potential for performative approaches to research including performance ethnography to collect and analyse data and disseminate research to diverse audiences.


Visual Research Methods
Speakers: Lea Mai and Dr Robyn Gibson
Tuesday 20th August, 4-6 pm

I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn’t say any other way – things I had no words for. Georgia O’Keeffe

Visual research methods allow us to introduce images into the research process. Artworks, photographs and artefacts can be created as sources of data, often collaboratively with research participants and co-researchers, or as unique aesthetic interpretations of the research. Pre-existing images drawn from society also form part of this method. This session will look at the benefits and limitations of the visual and the ways that visual research methods can frame a study beyond words alone.


Storytelling, Identity and Early Career Teachers
Speaker: Victoria Campbell
Tuesday 27th August, 4-5 pm

The first years of teaching can be a challenging time for many teachers. This session will explore how an Arts-informed approach can be employed to creatively examine teacher identities and emerging pedagogies through the act of storying, oral storytelling and performance. These sorts of artistic practices provide a creative space to defuse, sort through, and find meaningful intersections between the contradictory aspects of teachers’ personal and professional lives.

