

Master's Degree Program 2016-2018

Autumn Semester 2016 Course

International and Comparative Education

Seminar 2

2016

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MA program

International and comparative education

Stockholm University

Overview

- **Working** the research literature
- Reading and break out discussions
- **Doing** comparative education
- Topic examples

How to conduct research? (deductive)

1. Locate the topic of investigation (should be related to body of research in an area)
2. Locate a theory/ontology (can be left out at this point)
3. Review the previous research literature (read widely, assess against topic, evaluate quality of previous research, motivate what is included and excluded and why)
4. Locate the ontological foundation for the chosen topic and approach (what is included in (2))
5. Write research hypothesis or rationale (needs to be generated by (2,3))
6. Collect research data (data collection should be aligned with ontology, ethical conduct)
7. Analyse research data (requires knowledge of methodology and analytic method)
8. Formulate a summative result (is the rationale achieved? Do the findings refute or support the hypothesis?)
9. Draft the report (introduction, review of literature, theoretical background, procedure (method, participants, procedure), results and conclusion, list of references)

How to conduct research? (inductive)

1. Identify a topic (aligned with current literature)
2. Make observations of real life events (ie collect empirical evidence)
3. Alternatively, test the potentiality of the real life observations
4. Find patterns in repeated observations (analyse)
5. Devise or relate to an existing theory on the basis of repeated patterns (draw conclusions)
6. Write up the study (introduction, review of literature and theory, method, results and analyses, conclusion)

Literature based research

- Conducting a systematic review of literature
 1. Frame the topic or question under investigation
 2. Locate underpinning theory
 3. Identify the body of literature
 4. Assess the quality of the literature reviewed (e.g. by comparison)
 5. Summarise the evidence (meta-analyses)
 6. Interpret the findings against the underpinning theory, and make recommendations or implications

Reviewing the literature critically

The author

- Who is the author and how is this reflected in the text contents?

The issue

- What are the main questions the author is trying to answer?

The approach

- In what ways is the author approaching the issues? What are the main concepts? How are these questioned and troubled by the author?

The argumentation

- How does the argumentation appear and why is the author constructing it that way? Are there other ways in which the issues might be addressed?

The conclusion

- How does the author reach a conclusion? How would you recount what you have read?
- How does what you have read relate to yourself and the research issues you are approaching?
- Discuss a piece of literature with a fellow student:

Doing ICE Research

- In groups, discuss how you might approach the following issues of comparison:
 1. Explain the relationship between social aptitude and being a younger sibling (more than 3 siblings)
 2. Do indigenous classrooms have better outcomes than mainstream classrooms?
 3. Does the age of a teacher matter in terms of student achievement?
 4. How does climate affect students' abilities to achieve highly?
 5. Is home schooling better than mass schooling?
 6. What are the main differences between independent and public education systems?
 7. How do political affiliations affect the propensity for leadership development?
 8. Does instruction in mother tongue (as opposed to an SL) affect intelligence?
 9. What is the relationship between religious beliefs and self-esteem?
 10. Do so called international schools outperform public schools?
 11. How globally minded are today's teachers?
 12. What types of educational incentives have been successful in reducing poverty in the past 20 years?
 13. What is happening in Finnish schooling that we might benefit from?

What makes a study comparative?

- Combining within- and across system analyses
- Using inter-, cross-, or multinational studies and combining within-across system analyses
- Avoiding bias and ethnocentrism (assuming the western/non-western divide)
- May or may not lead to educational improvement by influencing policy makers, politicians or mass social movements
- Finding a 'good-fit' between results and their implementational value