

Education 429-4 Research for the Classroom Teacher

Summer 1985 July 1 - August 10

Tue - Thu 8:30-12:20

MPX 8620

Instructor: Robert E. Stake
University of Illinois

This is a course for certificated teachers on research practices in the classroom with emphasis on action research and self-study. The primary orientation will be on observational inquiry leading to a better understanding of one's own pedagogy. Curriculum evaluation and evaluation of teachers will be side-issues of interest. The enrollees in this class are expected to read perhaps 50 pages of weekly assignments plus other materials they will select, complete one small writing assignment each week, plus design a small research study suitable for their own practice, plus participate in daily discussions of educational problems.

The textbook for the course is The Complexities of an Urban Classroom by Louis Smith and William Goeffrey, 1968. (It is out of print and we expect to photocopy copies for students who want their own copy.) The critical feature of the classroom Smith and Goeffrey studied is not that it is urban, but that the students share little of the cultural experience of the teacher, and among themselves, the students have quite different cultural backgrounds. In spite of our various interests in curricula, teaching process, and classroom management, we are frequently drawn toward an ethnographic consideration of what is going on. To put those concerns into a more disciplined and personally useful design for inquiry is the purpose of this course.

The outline of topics follows the chapters of the book:

- Week 1 -- The Nature of Classroom Microethnography
- 2 -- School Begins
- 3 -- Classroom Processes
- 4 -- Reconceptualizing Teaching
- 5 -- The Flow of the Semester
- 6 -- Activities
- 7 -- The Culturally Deprived Child
- 8 -- Reflections on Classroom Analysis

A major concern will be the identification and presentation of a problem or issue that is worthy of study and amenable to research. By the end of the course each of us should have a technical statement of one good researchable problem within our own practice situation.