

Reflection – EDRS 810
Problems & Methods of Educational Research
Dr. Rick Brigham
Fall 2008

The purpose of this course is to analyze and investigate a variety of educational research methods. In reality, this course introduced me to the two types of educational research – qualitative and quantitative and helped me start to formulate research questions. I enjoyed this class a great deal, although almost immediately I was drawn to our discussions of qualitative research much more than quantitative research.

When I was taking this course, in fall 2008, I was just starting to consider whether or not I wanted to remain with my original plan for a dissertation. In addition, I had started to think about going to Bath, England, for an internship the following summer. As part of that planning, Dr. Shaklee had suggested that I review the research conducted by IB to date to formulate a plan for the type of work I would like to undertake in Bath. While I was in Dr. Brigham's course, I found in my research, that IB had completed two Diploma Program perception studies and this started to interest me. In the meantime, Dr. Brigham's class was teaching me what a good research question was and why a qualitative study or a quantitative study might be used. As I was learning that, I was trying to apply it to the IB research I was finding and I became more and more interested in the perception studies. I also found that a perception study had not been done in North America and started to become interested in completing one. I think at this point, my dissertation plan started to shift from working on students traditionally under-represented in advanced coursework to a North American perception study.

In terms of an artifact for this course, I chose to include my qualitative methods section. This assignment, a hypothetical qualitative survey of volunteer teachers in American Samoa, came from a real situation. My husband worked as a volunteer teacher in American Samoa for two years following his undergraduate degree and it is from his experiences and lack of educational training that I created my assignment.