

Psychology 393 - Fall 2004
Research Methods in Developmental Psychology
“How and Why to Read with Young Children”

Monday: 12:30-2:20, Room PAS 2086

Wednesday: 12:30-2:20, Room PAS 2086

Instructor: Dr. K. Bloom

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Office Hours: Please send an email with your questions or suggestions for appointment times

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Office Hours: e-mail for an appointment

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Required Text:

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th Ed.). (2001).
Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Readings and Other Materials:

Please reserve, for photocopying, overheads, and printing, and so forth, the amount you would have expected to spend on a normal text (approximately \$75+).

Goals of 393:

The purpose of 393 is to learn and to use scientific methods to ask and answer research questions relating to Developmental Psychology, and in particular, early reading.

You will be assisted with:

- Lecture materials
- Published research articles
- Research consultation meetings
- Consultation with practitioners
- Online discussions with group members and consultants
- Developing a research proposal

This is a “hands-on,” active learning course in which goals are achieved through cooperative group work. Students share their mutual interests in child development, and solve the problems of developing a research proposal by working together in small groups. They are assisted by a research consultant and by a practitioner who works in the area of the students’ research topic. In this way, students benefit from each other's knowledge, experiences, ideas, skills, and shared efforts, from the practical experience of someone who is currently working in the field, and from the knowledge of an

experienced researcher. If you have the time and interest this term to learn through group participation, this is the course for you!

During the term, groups will work together in class, outside of class, and online. *Be certain that you have each other's phone numbers and e-mail addresses on the first day of class. Please be flexible in arranging face-to-face meeting times to fit the course schedules of group members. Remember that you can also meet online in your group chat room.* Work together by setting weekly goals, dividing up the labour, and reporting back to the group weekly. To do this you must attend all group meetings, classes, and participate in online group discussions. Each student is expected to bring materials and contributions to the group from your individual weekly work.

Students present their work in written and oral progress reports at three critical research stages during the term: **Introduction, Methods, and Results & Discussion**. Students obtain guidance through materials presented in lecture and through feedback and suggestions from the class as a whole, and from comments on written work from Beatrice and me. At the end of the term you will have created a comprehensive research proposal (some students use them as a basis for a research apprenticeship course or Honours thesis), and will have first-hand experience proposing a study, conducting a study, analysing data, and writing reports of the results. Writing style and effectiveness is a significant learning feature of this course.

Evaluation:

Oral and written progress reports of the research project

3 reports @ 15 points each = **45 pts**
3 oral presentations @ 10 pts each = **30 pts**

Final written research proposal = 25 pts

GUIDELINES FOR ASSIGNMENTS

Please read these guidelines carefully, ask questions about them in class, and refer to them ***before passing in your work***. (Students often forget to use this help when they are busily writing their assignment, so a group member might be assigned at the start to remind the others.) Additional guidelines will be given in class lectures.

Oral Progress Report of Research Project:

The purpose of class presentations is to communicate your research ideas, and to describe your group's proposal. There will be 4 presentations but only 3 of them will be marked. The first presentation will be an informal 10-minute discussion of the topic that your group is interested in pursuing. This presentation will allow you to receive feedback on

your research ideas and preliminary plans. The remaining 3 presentations will relate to your proposal as follows: **Introduction** with purpose, literature review, and hypothesis; the **Method**; the **Results & Discussion**. Thirty minutes are provided for each of these presentations for each group. Presentations should be directed at informing the class about your progress and should not consist of reading written material to the class. Audiences get both bored and impatient when people read what they are meant to say. Use Power Point or overheads of outlines, key words, flow charts, graphs, diagrams, and so forth, to remind yourself and the audience of the points you wish to make. Presentations *are planned and organized by the entire group*, with each member participating during group meetings. All members should be very familiar with each other's portion of the presentation. Divide the components of the presentation, and the time allotted for each presentation, amongst the group members so that each member plays a relatively equal part in the effort. Clearly state your plans, ideas, and any difficulties you have encountered. Use the presentation as a time to receive advice from your classmates, and from Beatrice and me. The Group will be marked on group presentation factors of: organization, distribution of participation across the group, cohesiveness of knowledge amongst group members (e.g., are all members playing a role? and do all members know all of the material being presented?), completeness of strategies relative to guidelines given in lectures and APA manual, and materials including handouts. The individual group members will be marked on knowledge and clarity of presentation, audience appeal, and abilities to anticipate and answer questions (taking audience perspective). Finally, the Oral Progress Reports provide an opportunity for classmates to learn and for you to get feedback about scientific strategies and methods required by each proposal. **Provide each member of the class with a copy of your overheads/slides before you begin your presentation.**

General Instructions for All Written Assignments:

All progress reports are submitted individually, but it is both appropriate and sensible to consult with classmates or group members for advice and proof-reading, and to share ideas. Follow the APA Manual for guidelines in punctuation, grammar, style, and so forth. For example, use double spacing, Times New Roman 12pt font, sufficient printer ink, proper abbreviation, and reference format. **Staple (no paper clips)** all written work. The Manual has valuable advice regarding the material to be included in each section of a report. Course marks **will reflect** in part your ability to follow the Manual's guidelines, as well as the guidelines given below. Without a medical excuse, late work is penalized as follows: 2 points/day for Proposal final reports; 1 point/day for written progress reports.

Written Progress Reports of Proposal:

There will be three progress reports: Introduction, Method, and Results. Each report should include a **title page and an updated Reference list**. Reports will be evaluated in terms of content, format, **grammar, punctuation**, and so forth, to the guidelines of the APA Publication Manual and those given in class. (Is the word "data" singular or plural? Which words need hyphens and which do not? How do you abbreviate metric units? How do you reference a book chapter? and so forth.) The reports will be

marked on overall quality of content, effort at completeness, and format. The reports will measure your ability to use the instructional material given in lecture. Try to master the stylistic details early in the term so that we can give you more substantive advice on the content and ideas expressed in the report, beyond punctuation and grammar. Ask group members and others in the class including Beatrice, for help.

Final Research Proposal:

Revise progress report and include the following sections: **Abstract, Introduction, Method, Proposed Results, Discussion, References, and Appendices where applicable.** Use the APA Manual to determine whether you have met all of the requirements of each section. Your group is expected to make up a data set of results for your study and actually analyse the data and report of them. Include the statistical analyses and a table or graph(s) to describe the results. Use the Discussion section to **relate your findings back to the literature and theory, and to state possible clinical significance or application of the research.** You might discuss any insurmountable problems in the study, but do not focus on negative aspects of the work; focus on the positive contribution inherent in your project. The Final Research Proposal may be a joint group paper, or you may submit individual reports.

Practical Consultation:

Each group will consult with a practitioner who is currently working in their field of study. The practitioner will participate in online group discussions regarding the development of your research question, the feasibility and practicality of your methodology, as well as the implications of your results. The practitioner will be an excellent resource for addressing what the ‘real world’ issues are surrounding your topic and the practical factors encountered when conducting research in your area.

Research Consultation:

Think of me as your “research consultant” for the project. I am available and expect to help groups with all phases of their presentations and papers, in and outside of class. Students generally find group research advisory meetings significant useful and enjoyable. They can save you a lot of time when you are struggling with a theoretical or methodological stumbling block. See me as soon as possible if you have any questions about your project plans, or simply want to review your plans with me. Please contact me by e-mail first. I may be able to answer your question immediately, or we can meet as soon as possible. Don't delay. I prefer to meet with the entire group, if possible, for consulting on the research proposals. I will meet with any student individually, as well. Beatrice is also available for consultation during class, or by appointment.

Policy #71:

It is assumed by the instructor that all the work that you submit will be your own work. No plagiarism will be tolerated. The Undergraduate Calendar defines plagiarism as “the

act of presenting the ideas, words or other intellectual property of another as one's own". As a result, you are expected to reference any material used in written reports and/or presentations that is not your own. Copying someone else's work, submitting someone else's work, and cheating in any way is not tolerated. A full text version of Policy #71 is available at: <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.pdf>

How and Why to Read with Young Children

Research Topics

Topics have two components: the subject (e.g., educational preschool TV programming) and the outcome (children's early literacy skills). Groups will design a study that links the two components by asking and answering a research question.

Newborn book-gift programs and parents' reading to their children
Educational preschool TV programming and children's early literacy skills
Children diagnosed with autism and learning to read
Parental reading and children's early literacy skills
Gender and preschool children's interests in books and reading