

ITLS 7360 Design Based Research (DBR) Syllabus

Dr. Lawrence (lu.lawrence@usu.edu)

Course Time: Mondays 12:30-3:30 MT

Course Description

The goal of this course is to introduce the theoretical and methodological principles and practices that form the foundation of Design-Based Research (DBR) methods. DBR is a methodological approach that is continually redefined as it is applied to a variety of learning contexts, content, and, of course, learners. This course supports students' methodological understanding by introducing examples of design-based research methods from prior educational research. As students examine examples of DBR methods and identify defining principles, they will also consider how DBR may be applied to their own educational intervention of interest. This course will emphasize alignment between research questions, methodological choices, and final outcomes (e.g., theory development or refinement, dissemination of educational interventions).

Course Objectives

1. Understand the epistemological stances of DBR and other design approaches and how they play out in methodological choices.
2. Draw lessons from DBR projects and related scholarship that arose from these projects, to apply to one's own research.
3. Workshop different methodological approaches and strategies that have been developed in the field.
4. Develop one's own research proposal that utilizes DBR as a core approach.

Instructor & Contact Information

I'm Dr. Lawrence, an assistant professor in ITLS. I use she/her pronouns. You can check out my work on my website, LuEttaMae.com. (<https://www.luetta-mae.com/>) I'm a trained designer and now leverage those skills into my research focused on how we design learning environments with communities.

The best way to reach me is by emailing me (lu.lawrence@usu.edu (mailto:lu.lawrence@usu.edu)) or messaging me in Canvas. My work schedule is Monday through Friday 9-5. I will not be available to respond on nights and weekends – you can find me hiking, baking, or playing with my dogs during those times. If you have questions, please send me a message whenever it's convenient for you and I will do my best to get back to you when I'm back to my computer.

Course Resources

This course will use the book *Conducting Educational Design Research* by Susan McKenney and Thomas C. Reeves. The text is available via the USU Library or you can order a physical copy of the book. There will be additional peer reviewed journal articles, blogs, and book excerpts that are required each week. PDFs or links to the readings not in the textbook will be shared on Canvas. Additional resources and videos will be posted as we progress through the semester.

Course Overview

I have several hopes for you as learners this semester. First, **I want you to understand how scholars in the field think about design-based research.** DBR arises from a combination of past traditions in education and learning sciences research including design approaches, partnership and participatory methods, and insights about implementation (e.g., from policy implementation, teacher learning, and other areas of education research).

We will be doing a variety of activities including readings, discussions, guest speakers, and design workshops, so that we can build a deeper understanding of ideas and concepts. Students will examine how different researchers define and apply DBR methods to their specific contexts to ultimately be able to articulate their own definition and potential application of DBR methods.

Second, **I want you to begin developing expertise.** As you'll learn through the semester, expertise does not mean just knowing some body of facts and information. It means, being able to apply that knowledge flexibly, creatively, and in novel ways to new situations. What does it mean to develop expertise as a researcher in DBR? It means, deeply understanding what others are saying about DBR and why we do it; doing the activities in designing and thinking and researching problems of practice in education; and practicing this over and over again in iterative cycles (very meta...) throughout the semester.

The design process will be messy and will at times feel uncomfortable. We'll get better at it as time goes by, if you engage intently and in good faith. Your ability to get better at these things over the semester, will determine your success in the course. Most importantly, your ability to learn how to get better at these activities are what you'll hopefully take with you to life and career, after you're done with the course.

Lastly, I want you to take care of yourselves throughout the semester. We all come to this course with a variety of experiences, responsibilities, needs, and emotions and it is important to remember that there are many things happening in the background of our learning. This means that all learners in our classroom (myself included) are not just students/instructors, but people with outside lives that will both inform and sometimes interfere with this class. I want to be very clear: Your health and well being of you and your family, classmates, and community is the most important thing. This includes your physical and mental health. **The course policies offer options for flexibility, but also ask for accountability.** Both are integral to creating a productive learning experience for our entire classroom community. Regarding attendance, you can miss one class in the semester, but beyond that you need to reach out to Dr. Lawrence. Missing more than three classes will result in a failing grade. If you need support or are struggling, reach out and we can figure out a plan.

Course Assignments

- Each week there will be readings that everyone will do (to be completed before class).
- We'll take notes on our readings, write responses, and bring ideas to class (more details in the discussion posts). Before class you will be required to post your discussion in Canvas by 11:59 PM every Sunday. You are not required to have made comments on others' posts, although you are welcome to do so.
- The first part of our class time will be dedicated to developing a shared and collective understanding. Led by one to two students each week, we will discuss our readings, pose questions, identify dilemmas, and identify

new inspirations.

- The second part of our class will differ each week. In some weeks we will have guest speakers to bring the concepts to life in a real world example. Other weeks will include workshops using a range of design and research methods and techniques. In some cases we may attempt both.
- Each week you will reflect on, create, or revise what we have done in class and submit it before the next class. ALL assignments must be name "Lastname_ProjectName" For instance, my first assignment would be named Lawrence_ConjectureMap.
- At the end of the semester you will present a DBR proposal that will integrate the assignments together.
- And all through the semester, you should be open and immersed, ready for inspiration, and tuned to create. So you'll always be observing your world, taking notes, writing down ideas, sketching thoughts, and being creative.

Weekly Discussion

Each week, you will be required to participate in the class discussion board on Canvas about the required readings. In class you will elaborate on your discussion post by sharing ideas, questions, and new perspectives. Be thoughtful, ask questions, provide answers, really dig into the texts and ideas! I will not grade the correctness of your post, but I will grade based on the substance of your post.

15%

Evidence: Weekly reading notes and contributions to class discussion.

Discussion Facilitation

You will lead one class discussion as the expert on the readings for that week. You will still write your discussion post like you would any other week, but will synthesize your peers' questions and ideas to discuss during the class. Some ways you could do that include (but are not limited to) making a presentation about ideas and questions, sharing an overview and asking follow-up questions, helping your peers to extend what we're reading a little further, or sharing related resources you've found. The format is flexible to support you, but the content should focus on the overarching topic for that week and it should be a discussion with the entire class.

10%

Evidence: Class facilitation

Workshop & Speaker Participation

Each week, there will be a workshop and/or a guest speaker about the topic of the week. You are expected to actively participate in workshops and activities, including (but not limited to) asking questions, sharing experiences, providing feedback, or providing an example.

10%

Evidence: Weekly workshops, activities, and artifacts created in our workshop days.

Assignments

After each workshop, you will submit something that builds on the design workshops from class for your specific research context. Assignments will be graded and the instructor will provide feedback within a week of submission. The assignment should represent your thinking in class activities related to your DBR proposal (e.g., creating something new, refining something you started in class, or reflect on an activity or discussion). 30%

Evidence: Assignments submitted on Canvas.

Final Presentation

Using the assignments throughout the course, you will create a compelling and convincing DBR proposal for your research area. The proposal should include elements from your assignment (for time sake not all are included) and show a deep understandings about DBR including theory and practice, partnership, design, evaluation, implementation, and research use. 25%

Evidence: Final Research Proposal

Reflection

Lastly, after the final presentation you will write a reflection of the class, the content, and how you applied it. Some questions you might consider include: How did your understanding of DBR and similar approaches change through the course? How will you apply these concepts to your work moving forward? What are you curious about learning more about? 10%

Evidence: End of semester reflection

Interaction Policy

You are expected to have good behavior throughout your online interaction with classmates/instructors. Harmful feedback or harassment will not be tolerated in any form. Everyone will be respectful of each other's writing, process, partnerships, identities, etc.

Grade Scheme

The following grading standards will be used in this class:

Grade Range

A	100 % to 93.0%
A-	< 93.0 % to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 % to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 % to 83.0%
B-	< 83.0 % to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 % to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 % to 73.0%

C-	< 73.0 % to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 % to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 % to 60.0%
F	< 59.0 % to 0.0%

Library Services

All USU students attending classes in Logan, at our Regional Campuses, or online can access all databases, e-journals, and e-books regardless of location. Additionally, the library will mail printed books to students, at no charge to them. Students can also borrow books from any Utah academic library. Take advantage of all library services and learn more at libguides.usu.edu/statewide (<http://libguides.usu.edu/statewide>).

Classroom Civility

Utah State University supports the principle of freedom of expression for both faculty and students. The University respects the rights of faculty to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires classroom conditions that do not impede the learning process. Disruptive classroom behavior will not be tolerated. An individual engaging in such behavior may be subject to disciplinary action. Read Student Code Article V Section V-3 (<https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/article5>) for more information.