

Douglas Fish

Feedback on coursework provided by Professor Paul Dowling

*Critical Review of Gorard & See and Lupton*

This is certainly a thoughtful piece of work that demonstrates a good grasp of the methodological issues that it raises and makes a number of relevant methodological points about the papers. It does, however, spend too much time on the substantive findings of the research at the expense of a more extended engagement with methodology. This is particularly the case with the discussion of the Lupton paper. This is an issue in respect of the assessment of this coursework because the module concerns methodology and not school effectiveness (the general area of the reviewed research here).

*Research Proposal*

The proposal is viable, in general terms, and the discussion of relevant research literature is good, in this context, and linked appropriately to the project. I would have liked to see rather more on the approach to interviewing, for example, some indication of the initial question to be put to the groups. The discussion of the grounded theory approach exhibits appropriate understanding. There are some minor issues: i) all of the year 12 students will be over the age of 16 and so parental consent is not a requirement and obtaining it may be taken as infantilizing by the participants (some of the year 10 students may be over the age of 16 as well, though I would suggest treating the whole of this group in the same way); ii) at one point the issue of representativeness is raised as a possible limitation of the study; in general, qualitative research does not rely on establishing a representative sample and I think this is the case here; iii) I think there may be some confusion between prompts—offering possible responses to an interview question—and probes—seeking further information; the latter, I think, is appropriate here.

*General comments*

These essays are generally well presented, clear and well organized.