

Emily Meehan

Ed Studies Junior Plan

Educational Studies (Concentration in Educational Inequality) and Art History

April 1, 2015

My proposed research question is “What are the assessment mandates and procedures at the French middle school Ecole Internationale Bilingue and how do they compare to those of American schools? How do assessment mandates affect teachers and school culture at Ecole Internationale Bilingue?” This question is significant to educational studies because measures of assessment affect many aspects of schooling. It affects teachers and how they execute their job, and also how they are held accountable for doing so. In addition, assessment is often used as a measure for student learning and school performance. Therefore, researching assessment procedures is vital for understanding processes of learning in schools. Furthermore, by comparing American assessment to that of France, we can see how these processes work across different nations.

I became interested in testing, specifically standardized testing, while taking part in my Analyzing Schools placement in a fourth grade class at Moylan Elementary school. I was intrigued by how much of the curriculum was designed in order for the students to pass the CMT. Furthermore, I became aware of how large of a problem high-stakes testing can be in schools across America after reading *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education* by Diane Ravitch (2010) in Education Reform: Past and Present. Additionally, after reading *Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools* by Diane Ravitch (2013) in

the class Race, Class, and Educational Policy, I learned how testing can contribute to the existing achievement gap in America. This semester, I am studying abroad in Paris, France and I have had the opportunity to observe classes in a French School. My observations inspired me to want to research how French educators perceive high stakes testing, and what the French system of assessment looks like. I am curious about how testing mandates affect French schooling, and whether or not it is as great of an issue as it is in America, as explained by Ravitch 2010 and 2013.

I took the class Research Methods in Social Sciences with Professor Theresa Morris in the Spring of 2014. In this class we learned how to analyze secondary data, conduct and transcribe interviews as primary sources, and the proper way to write a research based paper. For my senior research project, I plan to use methods of qualitative research. I will take detailed field notes in my observations in French classrooms and use these notes as a primary source. Additionally, I will conduct interviews with teachers and administrators at Ecole Internationale Bilingue, transcribe and code them, and use this to analyze what assessment looks like at EIB and how it affects teaching and school culture.

To complete this research, I will conduct qualitative research with human subjects. I will observe classes and interview teachers and administrators at Ecole Internationale Bilingue. This will be a case study at a typical French pre-baccalaureate institute that follows the general protocol of French middle schools. I will conduct interviews with teachers and administrators and detailed field notes from class observations as my primary sources.

Yes, my research plan requires access to a school. I will be working with Anna Zweede at Ecole Internationale Bilingue Paris, France. I have attached a screen shot of a letter from Mme Zweede confirming my involvement with the school.

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To whom it may concern

Ms Emily MEEHAN, currently on a study-abroad semester in Paris France, has been observing classes here at the EIB Middle School. It is also my privilege to discuss her research with Emily as she works on her Senior Project.

Anna Zweede  
Deputy Head