

“The world is full of suffering,
it is also [almost] full of overcoming it.”
–Helen Keller

THE COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND/CUNY
DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

EDD 630 SECTION 7863
Educational Research Seminar: Overcoming Adversity
Fall 2010

Mondays, 4:40 – 6:20 pm
Room 3S-113

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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays, 6:20 - 7:20 pm
Wednesdays, 4:40 – 5:30 pm
And by appointment

COURSE WEBSITE: <http://wesamuels.net/edd630.html>

Consistent with our mission to promote quality teaching and learning in P-12 school settings, our Department of Education prepares educators who possess **intellectual autonomy** and **professional responsibility**. To this end we emphasize the following: **the gaining of content knowledge and pedagogy; the engagement of all students; and the demonstration of professional dispositions.**

COURSE MATERIALS

All course materials will be made available two weeks before covered in class online at the course website, <http://wesamuels.net/edd630.html>. They will also be sent to your preferred email address at the same time.

Course materials will mostly be primary sources (e.g., peer-reviewed journal articles) and book chapters, but there will be a few non-primary sources, too.

Course Objectives

Even if not necessarily the final courses you take, the EDD 630/631 sequence likely represents the most advanced course in education you will complete. It provides the opportunity to synthesize your various areas of educational knowledge into an understanding and perspective that is uniquely your own. Therefore, the primary objective of the sequence is the ability to demonstrate the creation of a sophisticated and state-of-the-art position on a specific topic.

To this end, the objectives of EDD 630 are:

1. to familiarize you to the scientific inquiry process that constitutes education's vanguard and to help you hone the skills needed to build knowledge based on primary research,
2. to introduce you to background and current, main landmarks within the field of overcoming adversity to succeed academically,
3. to have you acquire a strong grasp of a specific area within that broad field to the extent that
4. you can fully develop a feasible and interesting research topic that you will conduct in the spring during EDD 631.

In general, I regard students in EDD 630/631 as nascent colleagues. You are, literally, becoming masters of your profession, and I respect your accomplishments. I can lead and teach you, but I believe it is more honest and true-to-life to treat you as fellow professionals who have a lot to offer both me and your fellow class members.

Expected Outcomes of EDD 630

1. Understand what constitutes research and science
 - 1.1. How to think scientifically and objectively about one's profession
 - 1.2. Think critically about empirical information gathering. especially how to ensure maximal internal and external validity
2. Understand how research/the scientific method can be used to improve practice
 - 2.1. Gain an appreciation for the power and usefulness of research, and the desire to use it to help inform practice
 - 2.2. Be able to design a feasible, ethical, and informative research project relevant to one's interests and profession
 - 2.3. Know the limits of scientific inquiry and how to apply it within practical constraints
3. Develop an understanding of the main points and issues within the general field of risk and resilience in P – 12 education.
4. Construct a sophisticated and detailed understanding of an area within that broad field. It is your choice what area to study.
5. Produce a feasible and interesting proposal that investigates one aspect of your chosen area of specialization.

Course Organization

Although I will not be able to avoid teacher-centered lectures fairly often—especially when covering the scientific method— I will incorporate student participation as much as I can when I can—especially when discussing the topics of adversity and resilience. Of course, one cannot participate in a conversation on a topic without information on the topic. Therefore, I will typically assign readings about two weeks before it is covered in class and will expect everyone to have read them enough to discuss them. Given the prominence of topics discussions in this section, a large portion of your final grade (40%) will be composed of class engagement.

In addition to all of our talk, you will also produce a research proposal over the course of the semester. The initial and final proposal requirements are detailed in the two relevant sections at the end of this syllabus. You may create your proposal alone or with a small group of your fellow students.

Throughout the semester, please feel free to come to me outside of class (in person, through email, etc.) with questions, comments, etc., especially as you develop your idea and then the proposal itself. Nonetheless, as the semester progresses, I will expect you to first go to your fellow students one and more for assistance and feedback. As I'm sure you know, one of the best ways to learn is to teach.

Assessment

Attendance

Regular class attendance and participation is expected. As per college policy, a student who is absent for more than four hours, (this includes accumulated time missed due to lateness), will be assigned a grade of WU, unless excused by the instructor.

Electronic Communication

I will post course information online and communicate with you through email. You may use the computers on campus (e.g., in 3S-206) to access relevant websites and email. However, if you do not have ready access to the Internet outside of school and using the college facilities is problematic, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work around this. Please let me know of any problems right away since I will expect you to read or respond to communications sent to your declared e-mail address or made available to you online.

Special Accommodations

Please let me know as soon as possible of any special accommodations you may require. I will happily do all I possibly can to meet any needs you have.

Honor Policy

It should go without saying that you are expected to conduct yourself in an honorable and honest way in all aspects of this course. Of course, any known deviations from this will result in a failing grade for this section and forfeiture of access to this section in the future.

Assignment Submission

As per general EDD 630/631 policy, assignments must be submitted through TurnItIn.com. You must create an account with them, but there is no fee for doing this. I will give you more details in class.

Your initial and final proposals should conform to American Psychological Association guidelines, using either the fifth or sixth edition. More information about how your assignments will be graded are conveyed through the rubrics for each.

Grading Weights

Material	Course Grade Weight
Class Participation and Course Engagement	40%
Initial Proposal Draft	25%
Final Research Proposal	35%

Tentative Course Schedule

Date		Topic	Event
Aug	30	Course overview, goals, strategies, etc.	
Sep	13	Foundations of Science	
Sep	20	Experimental Design	
Sep	27	Library Instruction	Course held in library
Oct	4	Anatomy of an Article	
Oct	18	Statistics and Mathematical Inference	
Oct	25	Risks to Development, Part I	
Nov	1	Risks to Development, Part II	
Nov	8	Discussion of Proposal Topics	
Nov	15	Predictors of Academic Success, Part I	
Nov	22	Predictors of Academic Success, Part II	Initial Proposal Due
Nov	29	Introduction to Resilience	
Dec	6	Resilience and Context	
Dec	13	Resilience and Personality	Final Proposal & Ethics Training Due

Initial Research Proposal

The draft research proposal demonstrates your ability to translate your research hypothesis into a research design. The most important elements of the draft proposal is the methods and results sections. Nonetheless, the draft should include all relevant sections of a full research paper:

1. Abstract

A 100 - 200 word summary of the entire proposal containing parts recommended by APA.

2. Introduction

Background and context of study given related research, justification for the current study, and statement of the hypothesis and its predictions. This section should be at least 300 words long.

3. Methods

Detailed description of the participants, materials, and procedure. This section should be however long it needs to be to sufficiently cover the content.

4. Results

Presentiment of expected results—both in graphical form and in text. Normally, the results section of a proposal covers the statistical analyses one expects to conduct. However, here you only need to discuss the results in lay terms. For example, “I expect that those students who score highly on the self-esteem scale will perform better in group tasks than those who score lowly.” This section should also be as long as needed. In addition, this section should include at least one graphical representation of the results (table, histogram, line chart, box-and-whisker plot, etc.).

5. Discussion

For the draft proposal, this section need only contain a discussion of the implications for practice and theory. Please discuss the implications if you obtain the expected findings as well as the implications if you obtain another, likely set of outcomes. This section should be at least 300 words.

6. References

A properly formatted list of articles cited in the other sections. Please include at least six articles.

Although you are graded on the quality of your initial proposal, your grade is not fully based on your own ability. You will (hopefully) work closely with the other members of the entire class (and your group if you're not working on your project alone) to help your fellow students hone their own proposals into first-rate products. I will not necessarily grade the extent to which you help each other (unless it infringes on cheating, of course), but I hope that this structure will nurture an appreciation for the role of collaboration in research. Research is almost never a solitary endeavor—even beyond the rudimentary collaboration between researcher and participant there is almost always an active and rich arena where ideas, passions, and work flourish through sharing.

GRADING RUBRIC FOR INITIAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL

N.b., criteria within each section are listed in general order of importance, the most important being first

Element	Percent Weight	Target/Criteria
Abstract	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contains all requisite parts - Is requisite length - Succinctly, comprehensibly summarizes proposal
Introduction	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates a thorough understanding of pertinent background - Background well-presented and sufficiently covered - Connection between background and current study well-made
Methods	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All major, relevant sources of bias, confounds, and barriers addressed - Variables are operationalized in practical and relevant ways - Addresses hypothesis - Is simple - Contains all requisite parts
Results	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Makes expected outcomes easy to understand - Covers all important aspects of results - Graphics strike a good balance between amount of information and clarity - Text compliments graphics without being unnecessarily redundant
Discussion	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connections between expected results and both hypothesis and theory are well-reasoned and clearly presented - Implications for practice and theory are sufficiently discussed and thought out - Implications of at least one other, possible set of outcomes are addressed
References	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles are well-chosen given topic - At least six are given - Are properly formatted
Overall Writing Quality	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is well-organized (paragraphs build on each other, each paragraph has a topic sentence that is supported by all other sentences, etc.) - Is strongly succinct, clear, and engaging - Adheres to APA style - Is grammatically correct and spelled correctly
Overall Quality and Sophistication of Thinking	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates an expert grasp of the scientific process and scientific thinking - Logic is flawless while implementation is practical - Demonstrates sophisticated critical thinking about sources, hypothesis creation, and implementation - Demonstrates encyclopedic understanding of field and its relation to topic

Final Research Proposal

The final research proposal describes the study you will conduct next semester, as the foundation for the hands-on component of EDD 631. It is therefore the culmination of both the literature studies you will have done this semester and a final demonstration of the extent of your ability to apply that which you have learned in class where it matters.

The final proposal contains all of the same parts as the draft proposal and will likely cover much of the same ground as well. The difference is primarily in quality and depth. The reasoning—including the hypothesis and research design—should be more solid and thorough. Biases, confounds, and barriers should be better addressed. Your understanding of the field and how your study both grows from it and connects back to it should be more sophisticated and thorough. Your hypothesis and design should be tighter. All of this, unless, of course, it was fine in the draft: I'm not going to be grading you on how much it's improved, but how good it is against an ideal, student proposal.

Of course, another difference between the final and draft proposal is how much each section is worth. In the final proposal, all sections are weighted more evenly, reflecting my hopes that your final proposal is a balanced product in which the parts complement each other to create an organized, well-thought-out whole. Don't worry, you can do it.

GRADING RUBRIC FOR DRAFT FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL

N.b., criteria within each section are listed in general order of importance, the most important being first

Element	Percent Weight	Target/Criteria
Abstract	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contains all requisite parts - Is requisite length - Succinctly, comprehensibly summarizes proposal
Introduction	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates a thorough understanding of pertinent background - Background well-presented and sufficiently covered - Connection between background and current study well-made
Methods	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All major, relevant sources of bias, confounds, and barriers addressed - Variables are operationalized in practical and relevant ways - Addresses hypothesis - Is simple - Contains all requisite parts
Results	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Makes expected outcomes easy to understand - Covers all important aspects of results - Graphics strike a good balance between amount of information and clarity - Text compliments graphics without being unnecessarily redundant
Discussion	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connections between expected results and both hypothesis and theory are well-reasoned and clearly presented - Implications for practice and theory are sufficiently discussed and thought out - Implications of at least one other, possible set of outcomes are addressed
References	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles are well-chosen given topic - At least six are given - Are properly formatted
Overall Writing Quality	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is well-organized (paragraphs build on each other, each paragraph has a topic sentence that is supported by all other sentences, etc.) - Is strongly succinct, clear, and engaging - Adheres to APA style - Is grammatically correct and spelled correctly
Overall Quality and Sophistication of Thinking	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates an expert grasp of the scientific process and scientific thinking - Logic is flawless while implementation is practical - Demonstrates sophisticated critical thinking about sources, hypothesis creation, and implementation - Demonstrates encyclopedic understanding of field and its relation to topic