

“If you’re going through hell, keep going.”
–Sir Winston Churchill

THE COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND/CUNY
DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

EDD 631 SECTION 9759
Educational Research Seminar: (Still) Overcoming Adversity
Spring 2013

Mondays, 6:30 – 8:10 pm
Room 3S-112

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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays, 5:30 – 6:30 pm
And by appointment

COURSE WEBSITE: <http://wesamuels.net/edd631.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 before covered in class in BlackBoard and at the course website, <http://wesamuels.net/edd631.html>.

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 they aren't final courses you take, the EDD 630/631 sequence likely represents the most advanced courses in education you will complete. They provide 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 your 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 631 are:

1. continue our exploration into the field of overcoming adversity to succeed academically,
2. conduct the research you proposed in EDD 630,
3. synthesize these data into an understanding of the events that advances your understanding of your chosen area,
4. present those results and your interpretation of them in your final paper, and
5. lead a class discussion about your area—summarizing your expected findings if you have none yet, or presenting your results if you do.

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.

To this end, our section's objectives are:

Objective	Outcome
Build a working knowledge of the background and current, major concepts within the field of overcoming adversity to succeed academically	Demonstrate strong grasp of field in: - well-organized and detailed introduction section in program and evaluation manuscripts, - course-based discussions, e.g., in class and during conference hours.
Understand the scientific inquiry process that constitutes education's vanguard and hone the skills needed to build knowledge based on primary inquiry.	- Design a cogent, feasible evaluation of your program, - demonstrate scientific thinking during course-based discussions, and - use scientific and critical thinking in the discussion of the outcomes of your program evaluation (during second semester).
Acquire a strong grasp of a specific area within that broad field of overcoming adversity to succeed academically.	Base the program you design on rationale and objectives that are well-supported by a deep review of the area's literature.
Relate the knowledge you gain in this course to other areas of your professional expertise.	Design an educational program that not only supports the resilience of students, but also is grounded in sound pedagogy and students' social and/or cognitive development.

Expected Outcomes of EDD 631

1. Develop an understanding of how students can overcome adversity to succeed academically.
2. Gain strategies that can help students in your classes succeed in spite of troubles in their lives.
3. Develop a sophisticated understanding of the area of research you have chose to investigate last semester.
4. Create a defensible interpretation of the data you collect on this area of research.
5. Present your understanding to the class through a lead discussion and to me in your final paper.
6. You will also present your paper to a small group of colleagues at the Celebration of Research. This event will be held during finals week in 1P, and stands in lieu of a final.

Course Organization

Especially during the first part of the semester—while we are awaiting IRB approval of your proposals and you are then conducting your research—we will explore the facets of academic resilience and how you as a teacher can use this knowledge to help your own students.

As the semester progresses, I will (try to) talk less, and instead let you lead class discussions about the given readings and your areas of research. I do expect you to read the course material before it is covered in class.

Later in the semester, you (or you and your group) will lead the class in a conversation/presentation of your intervention topic. The exact format you use is up to you, and you are free to incorporate hands-on activities, non-primary sources, etc.

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 collect your data and are forming your conclusions

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

Your final proposal 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, below.

Grading Weights

Material	Course Grade Weight
Class Participation and Course Engagement	30%
Designing a Learning Environment to Support Disadvantaged Students	20%
Leading of Class Discussion	10%
Final Research Report	40%

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Event
Jan 29	Syllabus and Course Overview	
Feb 5	Intervention Evaluation Workshop	Begin IRB Submission
Feb 14	Nurturing Adaptive Development, Part I	
Feb 19	Nurturing Adaptive Development, Part II	IRB Proposals Due
Feb 26	Nurturing Adaptive Development, Part III	
Mar 5	School-Based Interventions, Part I	Begin Working on Designing a Learning Environment to Support Disadvantaged Students Assignment
Mar 12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peer Review of the Re-Design Assignment 2. School-Based Interventions, Part II 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Final Version of the Re-Design Assignment Due the Day Before Class
Mar 19	The NativityMiguel Schools	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Visit by John Omernick, principal of the St. Ignatius School
Mar 26	Spring Break	
Apr 2	Class Discussion of the Re-Design Assignments in Light of Our Discussion with Principal Omernick	Bring Reviewed Copy of Your Re-Design Assignment to Class to Present and Discuss
Apr 9	The Teacher's Roles in Student Development	
Apr 16	Student Presentations	
Apr 23	Student Presentations	
Apr 30	Student Presentations	
May 7	Student Presentations	
May 14	Final Paper Workshop	
May 23	No Class	Final Paper Due
TBA	Celebration of Student Inquiry	Held in 1P Atria

A Better Place to Be: Designing a Learning Environment to Support Disadvantaged Students

Overview

For this assignment, you will use what you have learned so far in this and last semester to design a new or revised learning environment or teaching strategy to better nurture one or more aspects of the development of at least one population of disadvantaged students. Your re-design may be for a single classroom, a grade/cohort of students, or an entire school. Although I would prefer your re-design pertain to an actual place (say, the classroom in which you're student teaching in), it can be for any realistic environment in which you would likely be working with children and/or adolescents.

We're nearly done covering intervention strategies, so it's a good time to review and reflect upon them and devising a workable way to help the children we've been talking about it one way to do just this.

There is another reason to spend the time doing this now. Most likely on March 19th, a principal from a school that has implemented a lot of good ideas will be talking with us, and I'd like you all to have thought about how *you* would "mix things up" before talking with someone who actually has.

Assignment Components

In general, you will describe the environment and students, and then detail the changes you would make, why you chose them, and the evidence (research, statistics, etc.) that guide these changes.

1. **Location:** Explain the setting of the re-design, e.g., a given class, school, etc. Provide whatever details are relevant to your re-design.
2. **Population:** Describe the population of students targeted with this re-design. Again give sufficient details to place the re-design in context.
3. **Summary:** Provide a one paragraph summary of your re-design.
4. **Detailed Explanation:** Create a 1 – 2 page description of your re-design. make sure you give enough detail so that the reader could accurately implement the changes you suggest. Consider practical constraints– like time, personnel, and resources– when detailing the re-design. Support each aspect of your re-design with APA-style citations of research, population statistics, etc. Of course, you can rely on what we've already covered in class: The point of this assignment is to process what we've talked about.
5. **References:** Provide an APA-styled reference section on a separate page.
6. **Optional Material:** *If* you have any additional materials for your re-design (e.g., diagrams of a new classroom, mock flyers to be distributed at community centers, sample management plans, etc.), please give them as appendices at the end of your assignment.

Grading Rubric for Re-Design Assignment

Please consider these criteria by which I'll grade this assignment when you peer review each other's assignments in class. Having someone else look at your work before handing it in is a great way to help them do better– and yourself to learn the content and get some more good ideas.

Element	Percent Weight	Criteria
Summary	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Succinctly, comprehensibly summarizes re-design
The Re-Design Itself	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Re-design is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feasible, e.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any additional personnel, resources, expenses, uses of people's time are accounted for ○ Outcomes are likely to be achieved in the given time-frame ○ Etc. ○ Creative ○ Sufficient explanation is given about the various components of the re-design (location, population, method of implementation, resources considerations, etc.)
Justification and Supporting Evidence for Re-Design	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support is pertinent to the elements of the re-design ○ Support cogently defends the efficacy of the proposed re-design ○ Evidence and reasons why the re-design may <i>not</i> attain its stated goals are sufficiently considered and addressed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.g., if some researchers find an intervention succeeds while others find it doesn't, explanation is given why it is believed that it will work here.
References	5	Citations are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Well-chosen given topic ○ At least four in number ○ Properly formatted
Overall Writing Quality	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Writing is strongly succinct, coherent, and engaging ○ Ideas and clearly communicated ○ Ideas are well-organized within paper (paragraphs build on each other, each paragraph has a topic sentence that is supported by all other sentences, etc.) ○ Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains all requisite components • Is grammatically correct • Is spelled correctly • Adheres to APA style
Overall Quality and Sophistication of Thinking	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrates a strong understanding of the relevant topics and support ○ Addresses <i>at least</i> two different topics discussed in class ○ Demonstrates sophisticated critical thinking about sources and implementation ○ Demonstrates sound logic and sophisticated thinking about evidence when explaining the re-design

Final Paper

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. Intervention

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 FINAL PAPER

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

Element	Percent Weight	Target/Criteria
Abstract and Introduction	5	<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
Intervention	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All major, relevant sources of bias, confounds, and barriers addressed - Outcome variables are operationalized in practical and relevant ways - Addresses hypothesis - Is clear and well-organized - Contains all requisite parts
Results	20	<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	20	<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