UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP & POLICY STUDIES
EDG 7937-291, CRN: 88576
GRADUATE SEMINAR: WRITING THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS OF THE
DISSERTATION/INQUIRY PROJECT
FALL 2009

Class Meetings: Begin Tuesday August 25, and every Tuesday thereafter for ten weeks.
The final class is Tuesday October 27, 2009.
5:15-9:25 PM.
EDU 155

Instructor:

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... There is no such thing as teaching without research and research without teaching. One inhabits the body of the other. As I teach, I continue to search and re-search. I teach because I search, because I question, and because I submit myself to questioning. I research because I notice things, take cognizance of them. And in so doing, I intervene. And intervening, I educate and educate myself. I do research so as to know what I do not yet know and to communicate and proclaim what I discover.

--Paolo Freire, 1998

THEME: There is nothing so practical in life as a good theory

John Dewey

The Theoretical Frame of the College

The College of Education CAREs:

The College of Education is dedicated to the ideals of Collaboration, Academic Excellence, Research, and Equity/Diversity. These are key tenets in the Conceptual Framework of the College of Education. Competence in these ideals will provide candidates in educator preparation programs with skills, knowledge, and dispositions to be successful in the schools of
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today and tomorrow. For more information on the Conceptual Framework, visit: www.coedu.usf.edu/main/qualityassurance/ncate_visit_info_materials.html

How this framework connects to the current class:

In this course, learners will conduct reading, writing, and research with the spirit of excellence in technique, collaboration with participants, and with an awareness of finding ways to address key issues in society through research,

Course Description:
In this seminar graduate students will focus on writing problem statements, questions for research and the review of related literature for the dissertation or project under study. All efforts should be also focused on at least outlining the third chapter, Methodology of the Study. By the end of the semester members will have at least 50 pages written toward their proposal for the dissertation or project. Members will meet with the professor for at least 20 minutes for a consultation session on their respective research proposals during this semester.

Goals:

In this course you are expected to:

1. Extend reflective practice learned in other courses and/or experiences to designing an inquiry project for your dissertation or project specifically the first three chapters or as much as possible.

2. Examine critically the nature of knowledge, and the role of the researcher in creating questions pertinent to your dissertation or project with the idea of studying conditions in schools to improve schools and society.

3. Learn how to design and conduct a research project that brings about greater understanding of and/or change in education.

4. Expand understanding and use of technology to represent your data.

5. Gain experience in reading, selecting and interpreting literature for your dissertation or project with the outcome a draft of the review of related literature.

6. Develop a multicultural perspective of inquiry to provide equitable and sensitive treatment of all participants.

7. Complete 50 pages of work toward your dissertation or project proposal.
8. Meet with the professor for at least 20 minutes for a consultation on the project at hand. (Takes place during class times and will be arranged after our 2nd class)

Methods of Instruction:

Students in this course will be engaged in reading and questioning, writing and reflection, small group work, large group work, whole group discussion and dialogue, library work, analysis of narrative and visual data, journal writing, critique of texts, self- and peer-assessment, individual inquiry, and presentations to the whole group. The intended outcome is a written problem statement, research questions to guide the study and the draft of the review of related literature. If possible at least an outline if not all of chapter three should also be accomplished. Members will critique their own work as well as the work of one another. This is a writing intensive course.

Assignments:

**Classroom attendance and assignments.** You are expected to be present, on time, and prepared for all classes. If you are unable to attend a class, you must make arrangements with a classmate to obtain handouts and information from the class.

All students are expected to participate actively and thoughtfully in all class meetings, including small group discussion and cooperative work. Students will be expected to have completed assigned readings (and demonstrate their knowledge of the readings in small and large group discussion) and prepared materials for classroom work.

Cell phones and pagers are disruptive to classroom discourse and should be turned off during class meetings. Food and beverages are allowed as long as they do not disrupt the class.

All written assignments, except for those completed in class, are to be **word-processed** and handed in on the due date indicated in the class schedule. Written assignments are to conform to APA form and be edited and proofread for grammar, punctuation, and other writing conventions. Work that has not been edited will not be accepted. Any written assignment that has more than five errors in writing conventions will be returned ungraded for rewriting. Twenty percent of the credit for an assignment will be deducted for an assignment that is returned for such a rewriting.

For each calendar day an assignment is late, credit or the grade will be reduced by 5%. Please note that absence from class is **not** an excuse for late work. If you do not come to class on a day when work is due, make arrangements to hand in your work.

**Inquiry project/ dissertation proposal for intended inquiry.** Each student will design an individual inquiry project. The point of the project is to construct chapters one and two of the dissertation or project, including at the minimum: A statement of the problem, questions for research, a context for the rationale for the study and a review of related literature. For those who are able to also do chapter three, methodology all the better.
There are four parts to the inquiry project:

1. Inquiry question and rationale or its importance to the field and description of the setting in which the study is to be conducted;
2. A statement of the problem under study as well as research questions to guide the study for qualitative researchers, or alternately hypotheses for quantitative studies;
3. A review of related literature pertinent to the inquiry question;
4. The selection and implementation of the methodological strategy that addresses the inquiry question and is drawn from or related to the literature reviewed;

This project will be completed in a series of stages, each resulting in a draft that will become part of the final paper. Each student will establish critical partnerships with other students in the class to provide feedback as the project progresses, and the instructor will also provide feedback relative to the attached rubric on each draft or part of the project. The interim drafts will not be graded, but credit will be awarded for drafts submitted by the due dates. Please note that to receive full credit for any draft, it MUST include all of the listed components. Drafts that are not complete or that do not represent an honest effort will not earn full credit.

Inquiry question or topic, problem statement, questions that guide the study. The first step of the project is to identify an inquiry question related to each student’s own classroom practice and appropriate within the context of the particular classroom in which the study is to be conducted. The question must reflect or be aligned with the COEDU framework of CARE, our conceptual framework. This question, along with a full description of the context, and a statement of rationale or explanation of the appropriateness of the question to the classroom context, will be due on

Review of Related Literature. The next step will be to conduct a literature review. The literature review will include at least 12 citations of scholarly research/writing related to your research question. All 12 must be primary sources; textbooks and other “digested” sources are not considered primary sources. You may use as many secondary sources as you wish. A maximum of four of the sources may be electronic. Each source will be listed on a separate page and will include the full citation in APA form; a summary of the source, including its significance to your project; and direct quotes from the source, correctly cited, that may be used later in your final paper. The 12 or more sources will also be organized into a reference page. This will be due on the fifth class meeting. Members must show evidence that they have done a Literature search on line with all additional sources, show evidence that a search was done in Dissertation Abstract through ProQuest, and at least 12 abstracts attached from the searches. Note we will have a library training session in the Library with Ginny Cunningham, our research Librarian for the COEDU sometime before the fifth class meeting. A good deal of he work in that session may be used for this section of proposal.
Research/ Project plan. Students will develop a research plan based on the inquiry question and drawn from the review of the literature. The plan will describe the context and design of the study with appropriate references to the literature, the types and sources of data to be gathered relative to the inquiry question, how and when the data will be gathered and organized, and how the data will be analyzed. The draft will be due on ___________________.

Note: we will agree on a due date sometime after the mid term of class.

Draft final project. Students will prepare a draft of the final project that will include all of the above and present this to the entire class. Due on the final class, October 27, 2009. If anyone completes their work early, they may certainly present their entire project prior to the final class at the date of their choice.

The last class session October 27, will be devoted to research roundtables where students will make short presentations of their projects.

Professional Membership. Each student should be a member of a professional organization. To remain active in your field and as a researcher some good organizations are: American Educational research Association, AERA; your content area professional organization; and others.

Evaluation

Attendance and Participation: 15%

Technology session in LIB 209 10%

Inquiry Question, Rationale, Context, Theoretical Frame 25%

Lit Review drafts and final 25%

Research Plan 10%

Final project, presentation, Membership in professional Organization 15%

Grades will be calculated as follows:

95-100% = A
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90-94% = A-
89-87% = B+
86-82% = B

Required Reading:


Various relevant articles posted on BLACKBOARD.

The course is divided into 3 weeks of work on chapter one, three weeks on chapter two and three weeks on chapter three. The 10th week will be a general research proposal presentation evening with questions nd feedback.

Each week we will meet in small groups to assess each other’s work. Then we will share all the work which has been reviewed and comment on work as needed.

August 25, Sept. 1, and Sept. 8: Chapter one
September 15, 22, and 29: Chapter two
October 6, 13, 20: Chapter three
October 27:

Writing Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exceeds the standard</th>
<th>Meets the Standards</th>
<th>Is below Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Rewrite</td>
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</table>

1. ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________

The title, problem statement, purpose statement, theoretical frame for the inquiry captures the meaning of the inquiry clearly, is supported with evidence, and flows in a narrative style which captures the voice of the researcher. An introduction to the piece adequately captures meaning, content, and the data

2. ____________ ____________ ____________ ____________
The related literature extends the inquiry process and captures key writers, critiques of those writers, and the researcher’s critiques of both. Literature contains primary sources, and is recent (within a 10 year period). APA style is consistent and thorough. The related literature is linked to the purpose of the study and the questions which guide the study.

3. __________ ____________ __________

Description of appropriate methods includes a time line, selection of participants, ethical concerns, IRB statement, role of the researcher, rationale for choice of methods linked to purpose statement and related literature; Clear explanation and description of each strategy. Clear rationale for selection of participants, consent form, outside reader verification form, and any accompanying documents are present.

4. __________ ____________ __________

Researcher voice, fluency, coherence and cohesiveness is present and clear.

5. __________ ____________ __________

Report is submitted, typed, double spaced, APA style, Appropriate support data such as figures, graphs, illustrations, photos, etc. (researcher’s choice of at least one)

**PLAGIARISM**

Copying someone else’s work is a very serious offense and can bring about a student’s removal from the program and the university. You plagiarize when, **intentionally or not**, you use someone else’s words or ideas without giving them credit. Quotation marks should be used whenever you are using the exact words of another author. Square brackets and ellipses should be used to indicate any words that are deleted from the original material. Summarizing a passage from another source or rearranging the order of a sentence or sentences is paraphrasing. Every time you paraphrase the work of another
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author, you should give credit to the author by citing. If you are using someone else’s ideas, you must give them credit as early as possible in your text. In this course, if you are found guilty of plagiarism, you may receive an F (Failure) in this course and be dropped from the program. You will receive the grade of FF on your transcript which is a red flag that indicates academic dishonesty.

**Web Portal Information:** Why are the NetID and helios account important to students? A helios account, which is the official USF e-mail account, is given to every USF student when enrolled. Every official USF correspondence to students will be sent to the helios account. More information about this and the USF Web Portal can be found at: [http://www.acomp.usf/portal.html](http://www.acomp.usf/portal.html).

**Miscellaneous**

**ADA Statement:** Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with the Office of Student Disabilities Services in order to receive special accommodations and services. Please notify the instructor during the first week of classes if a reasonable accommodation for a disability is needed for this course. A letter from the USF Disability Services Office must accompany this request.

**USF Policy on Religious Observances:** All students have a right to expect that the University will reasonably accommodate their religious observances, practices and beliefs. Students are expected to notify the instructor in writing by the second class if they intend to be absent for a class or announced examination, in accordance with this policy.

**DELPs Policy on Student Conduct:** Go to
WHAT EVERY DISSERTATION PROPOSAL SHOULD CONTAIN

Here is a sample checklist of items for each chapter that you may use as a guide. Of course, depending on your purpose and questions, not all items are appropriate. This is to be a guide, not a slavish recipe, for you as you clarify your research agenda.

CHAPTER ONE: The problem, purpose, theory which guides the study

- Introduction (make this brief—one page is ideal)
- State the need for the study and the problem to be addressed
- THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY- Be precise and accurate
- Questions which guide the study if a qualitative study
- If your study is quantitative use objectives or hypotheses
- Description of the theory which guides your study
- Importance of the study
- Definition of terms if needed
- Outline of the remainder of the dissertation

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

- Organization of the chapter
- Immediately identify the bodies of literature you are reviewing
- Acquaint the reader with the state of the art and explain why you selected this particular set of categories of literature to review
- Identify books, monographs, reports, articles which pinpoint exactly what you want to say relative to your purpose statement, and the theory which guides your study
- Seriously critique your literature looking for gaps, contradictions and criticism of the writing you have selected
- Relate your literature directly to your purpose statement and your study emphasizing how this literature led you to the study
- REMEMBER A LITERATURE REVIEW IS NOT A SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE - IT IS A REVIEW

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

- Overview
- Description of the methodology and the rationale for choosing this method
- Description of the research design
- Description of the pilot study
- Description of how you selected the participants of the study
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- Exact description of how you plan to collect data, under what conditions and the length of time involved
- Any supplemental charts or tables which help the reader to understand your method
- Always relate your method back to your purpose, questions, and literature
- Identify any limitations to your method in this particular study and for your purposes only
- Description of how you will analyze your data
- Summary

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As you can see this is a good way to prepare your dissertation proposal. Realize that it may change throughout the process of data collection and analysis and you simply rewrite as needed. Prior to the proposal meeting, all members of your committee should have your proposal for at least 10-14 days. Your goal at this point is to get your proposal approved after you have a clear idea of what you want to know, what literature relates to your study, and what method is appropriate to your purpose. Never choose a method before you choose a purpose for the study. Once you have this groundwork done, you need only to complete your last two chapters of the dissertation which consists of:

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

In this chapter you present your findings and make sense of them for your reader. Here is your opportunity to analyze and evaluate what you found. This chapter usually is a response to your questions or hypotheses. Be sure to use exact quotations from your participants in the study if doing a qualitative study. These data are from interviews, observations, journals, written documents, etc. Be sure to include a RATIONALE for how you present the data, for example, as cases, as one case study, as a narrative, as a dialogue etc. Include tables and figures as needed. For direct quotations from interviews, indent and single space substantial quotations.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter ties the dissertation together and defends your thesis about the research. Briefly summarize the chapters and come to your conclusions. Now you may make recommendations of a practical nature for your major audience. In a sense, you are describing how the reader may implement your findings. Be sure to INTERPRET YOUR MAJOR AND MINOR FINDINGS in the study.

If you do a qualitative study, you must respond to your EXPLORATORY QUESTIONS in this chapter and DEVELOP A MODEL OF WHAT OCCURRED. Your model may be visually represented by diagrams, tables, etc. or verbally. You need to show the reader that your model is GROUNDED IN YOUR DATA.
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Appendices
Sample of your best section of a transcript
Sample of your best example of a field note
Sample of your best researcher reflective journal entry
Copy of your consent form
Copy of your peer/outside reader form
Copy of any letters you sent out to participants
A page which lists the costs associated with your dissertation
Any other pertinent information related to the study
Your two page vita