

**Department of Educational Administration
College of Education
The University of Texas at Austin
Dr. Martha N. Ovando**

**EDA f396R: Dissertation Seminar
First Summer Session, 2004**

Introduction

The purpose of this course is to guide students in the preparation of their doctoral research proposal that ultimately will lead to their dissertation. This is not a research methods course. Therefore, students must have completed the required research courses including Introduction to Systems of Human Inquiry, Quantitative Research, and Qualitative Research. It is assumed that these research courses provided students with considerable information, basic knowledge and conceptual understanding of the mysteries of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and other related topics.

Experts in the field of research suggest that while individuals may be familiar with different systems of inquiry, they do not necessarily know how to undertake the task of planning and effectively proposing their own investigations (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987). Others argue that what is important is to ask the right questions which will give direction to research activities (McEwan & McEwan, 2003). Conducting research is a complex, demanding, and time consuming task. Locke and his colleagues remind us that “creating a plan for investigation, is hard work, but in the end it demands a different type of intellectual ability and may yield less satisfaction than the process of planning the research and developing the proposal. Creating a plan for research is one fountainhead of the essential fascination that keeps talented men and women at a task more often characterized by frustration and tedium than by romance and excitement” (1987, p. 10).

Given the challenge and complexity of writing proposals and conducting research, it is assumed that students may benefit from a support system which can facilitate the task of planning a dissertation research proposal. Further, a collegial group may create opportunities to engage in the exchange of professional wisdom and experiences, to give each other constructive and relevant feedback, and to share resources, concerns, and insight in a supportive and trusting environment. Thus, this course is designed to encourage all students to engage in collaborative activities in a productive way in order to develop the

competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes & dispositions) to conceptualize a sound dissertation proposal.

Course Objectives

Students are expected to act as members of the “Collegial Research Support Team.” As such, they will actively participate in class discussions, class presentations, and individual searches. Upon completion of all requirements and learning experiences, students will:

1. Enhance their inquiry capacity and the ability to critically analyze research proposals, research reports and reviews of literature.
2. Design a dissertation proposal draft that includes the major components of a research plan.
3. Provide constructive and meaningful feedback about specific proposal components to their peers.
4. Understand the importance of the dissertation committee chairperson and other members.
5. Become familiar with the University of Texas and the Department of Educational Administration policies and procedures associated with presenting a proposal, advancing to candidacy and conducting research.
6. Develop a network of peers for mutual encouragement and support as they conduct their dissertation research activities.

General Guidelines

Each member of this seminar must:

1. Attend all meetings and actively engage in class discussions.
2. Submit all specific assignments according to schedule.
Late assignments will not get full assigned credit. All written assignments must follow APA Manual Style.
3. Extend respect and courtesy to their peers, their ideas and their contributions to class.
4. Assess their peers' proposals and provide meaningful and constructive feedback.
5. Present their dissertation proposals drafts (Chapters I, II and III).

Assessment and documentation of student performance

Students must complete all assignments on time and be prepared for in-class presentations and discussions. In-class presentations should be well organized, clear and consistent with quantitative or qualitative research guidelines. All components and parameters of each assignment must be included. Student performance will be assessed as follows:

| Student responsibilities/assignments | % |
|--|----------|
| 1) Class attendance and active participation in class activities and discussions. | 15 |
| 3) Critique at least 3 recent publications that claim to be based on research. (Appendix B) | 15 |
| 2) Critique at least 3 pieces of literature relevant to the central theme of the dissertation proposal. (Appendix C) | 15 |
| 4) Presentation in class of each complete chapter of the dissertation proposal | 30 |
| 5) Submit the complete dissertation proposal by the due date | 25 |

Grading Criteria

Grades will be assigned using both qualitative and quantitative considerations. Assignments will be discussed in class to assure understanding of expectations and to make the criteria for acceptable work explicit. Students should attend all sessions and complete all assignments in a timely fashion in order to avoid grades of "Incomplete." Such symbols, approved for exceptional circumstances, are generally changed to "B" when assignments are submitted.

The final grade for each student will be estimated according to the percentage value of each assignment and qualitative estimates of the professional significance they deserve. The following scale will be used to determine final grades: A=100-95, B= 94-87, C=86-80.

Tentative schedule of meetings

This seminar will meet the following dates:

| Dates | Topics/Activities/Assignments |
|--------------|---|
| June 2 | General introduction to the course and review the advancement to candidacy process. |
| June 4 | The importance of the dissertation proposal and examination of a "Sample Proposal for a Research Project" (Appendix A) The Writing of Proposals by E. Guba Critique of a Research Report due (Appendix B) |
| June 7 | Chapter I: The Introduction of the study Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the study and Research Questions/Hypothesis due |
| June 9 | The role of the review of the literature Reviews of relevant literature due (Appendix C) |
| June 11 | Individual or team work/consultation sessions |
| June 14 | Presentation of Introduction of the Study (Chapter I due) |
| June 16 | Comprehensive Outline of Review of Literature due |
| June 18 | Research methodology dimensions: design, instrumentation, sampling, data collection and analysis procedures. |
| June 21 | Individual or team work/consultation sessions |
| June 23 | Review of the literature (Chapter II) due |
| June 25 | Individual or team work/consultation sessions |
| June 27 | Presentation of Methodology & Procedures (Chapter III due) |
| June 30 | Putting it all together: A proposal for a dissertation study |

July 2 Individual or team work/consultation sessions

July 7 **Complete Dissertation Proposal due
(Proposals must be submitted by noon)**

Selected References

A. Style Manual

American Psychological Association (2001). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (Fifth Edition). Washington, D.C.: APA.

B. Research Methodology and Proposal Writing References

Allen, G. R. (1973). The graduate student's guide to theses and dissertations: A practical manual for writing and research. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Balian, E. S. (1988). How to design, analyze, and write doctoral or masters research. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Behling, J. H. (1984). Guidelines for preparing the research proposal. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Berg, B. L. (2004). Qualitative research method for the social sciences (5th Ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson, Allyn and Bacon.

Bogdan, R. C. and Biklen, S. K. (1982). Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Borg, W. and Gall, M. (1989). Educational research: An introduction. (Fifth edition). New York: Longman.

Cook, T. J. and Campbell, D. T.. (1979). Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field studies. Chicago: Rand McNally.

Cooley, W. W. and Lohnes, P. R. (1976). Evaluation research in education: Theory, principles, and practice. New York: Halstead Press.

Davis, G. B. and Parker, C. (1979). Writing the doctoral dissertation: A systematic approach. Woodbury, NY: Barron's Education Series.

Drew, C. J. (1976). Introduction to designing research and evaluation. Saint Louis, MO: The C. V. Mosby Company

- Fink, A. and Losecoff, J. (1985). How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Gay, L. R. & Airasian, P. (2000). Educational Research: Competencies for analysis and application. NJ: Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Glanz, J. (1998). Action research: An educational leader's guide to school improvement. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc.
- Geever, J. C. and McNeill, P (1993). Guide to Proposal Writing. The Foundation Center.
- Krathwohl, D. R. (1991) How to Prepare a Research Proposal. (Third edition). Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Leedy, P. D. & Ormrod, J. E. (2001). Practical Research: Planning and Design. (Seventh Edition). New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
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- Locke, L. F., Spirduso, W. W. and Silverman, S. J. (1987). Proposal that work. (2nd Edition). Beverly Hills, Sage.
- Madsen, D. (1992). Successful dissertations and theses. (Second edition). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. (1989). Designing qualitative research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- McEwan, E. K., & McEwan, P. J. (2003). Making sense of research: What's good, what's not and how to tell the difference. Thousand oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Miles M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994). Qualitative Data Analysis. London: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Nardi, P. M. (2003). Doing Survey research: A guide to quantitative methods. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Neuman, W. Lawrence (2004). Basics of social research: Qualitative and quantitative Research approaches. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Northcutt, N. & D. McCoy. (2004). Interactive qualitative analysis: A systems method for qualitative research. Thousand oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Wolcott, H. F. (1973). The man in the principals office: An ethnography. NY, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

Wolcott, H. F. (2001). Writing up qualitative research. CA: Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

C. Selected Research Journals

- American Education Research Journal
- Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
- Journal of School Leadership
- Planning and Changing
- Teacher Education
- Journal of Higher Education
- Research in Higher Education
- Journal of Women in Educational Leadership
- Educational Administration Quarterly
- Journal of Curriculum & Supervision
- Louisiana Education Research
- Review of Educational Research
- Urban Education
- Review of Higher Education
- Planning for Higher Education

Other Information

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Office: SZB #374

Phone: (512) 471-7551

E-Mail: movando@mail.utexas.edu