# COURSE SYLLABUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number:</th>
<th>EDF 5481</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section:</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prerequisite(s):</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Credit:</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Title:</td>
<td>Introduction To Educational Research Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Hours:</td>
<td>2.5 (lecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College:</td>
<td>College of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
<td>Department of Secondary Education and Foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies:</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Name:</td>
<td>Dr. Endya B. Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term and Year:</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place and Time:</td>
<td>GEC-B 101; Monday, 5:30 - 8:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Location:</td>
<td>GEC-B 204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>850-561-2710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:endya.stewart@famu.edu">endya.stewart@famu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office Hours</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 – 4 p.m.</td>
<td>1 – 4 p.m.</td>
<td>9 – 1 p.m.</td>
<td>By appt.</td>
<td>By appt.</td>
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</table>

## Description of Course

The primary purpose of this course is to introduce students to the concepts, methods, and applications of educational research. The emphasis will be placed on methods and applications most frequently encountered in social science research, especially in the field of education.

## Overall Goals of the Course

The successful completion of the course requirements is expected to result in the increased ability to (a) intelligently read and evaluate research literature, (b) recognize the strengths and limitations of statistical analysis in the conduct of disciplined inquiry, (c) communicate with peers and other professionals on research issues, and (d) compute and apply basic descriptive and inferential statistics to real data.
THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: AN EXEMPLARY PROFESSIONAL

The conceptual framework of the Professional Education Unit (PEU) at Florida A&M University may be described as an integrated approach to providing educational experiences that result in exemplary professional educators. The term "exemplary" describes the kind of graduates the unit strives to produce. Educational experiences include courses, clinical experiences, and support services, all of which are interrelated and integrated and have several strands or emphases that pervade them. The integrated approach of the PEU's conceptual framework is comprised of the component activities and cross-curricular themes described below and illustrated in the following diagram.

Although program components appear as self-contained "orbits" on the diagram, all are dependent on and integrated with each other as to program design, implementation, and evaluation.

The preparation of an exemplary professional at FAMU will be guided and characterized by certain essential measurable qualities (outcomes) as defined in the:

- Educator Accomplished Practices specified by the Florida Education Standards Commission,
- Florida Essential Teaching Competencies identified by the Florida Department of Education,
- Competencies and domains identified by the Florida Council for Educational Management, and
- Competencies set forth by the national specialty organizations for each program in the unit.

The conceptual framework for the FAMU Professional Education Unit is grounded in a combination of directed, constructivist, developmental, and social learning theories derived from the writings of system theorists, educational philosophers, social scientists, practitioners, and developmental theorists. Concepts from these writers and from learned societies for each area of education help form the knowledge base from which the unit gets the curriculum components and principles of its conceptual framework.

In response to Florida's demand for accountability from their public schools, the 1997 State Legislature created the Florida System of School Improvement and Accountability, which is designed to improve student performance. The Professional Education Unit, in response to this initiative, strives to make a positive impact by ensuring that it produces high quality professional teachers who are committed to improving student performance and who will assist students in meeting the Florida Sunshine State Standards.
Specific Behavioral Objectives

Students that successfully complete all course requirements should be able to:

- prepare written reports, appropriately formatted and documented, including but not limited to critiques of existing research and proposals for conducting new research.
- select from the literature examples of each of the major methods of conducting research.
- identify, state, and describe a researchable problem in the field of education.
- generate a table or tables depicting data to be collected in a research proposal or project.
- identify and describe the major sections and subsections of a research report or proposal.
- identify and describe features of a research report that are adequate or inadequate and describe how they affect the quality of the report or how they could be altered to enhance quality.
- identify appropriate sources of information on a given topic.
- compare and contrast various sources of information with respect to scope, emphases, location, and utilization.
- utilize a variety of information sources and reference materials in the preparation of oral and written reports.
- make oral reports to the class on assigned topics.
- identify and describe the major steps in conducting research.
- define and describe techniques for scientific sampling, including steps in the use of each technique.
- identify and describe which sampling technique is appropriate under various stated conditions.
- identify and describe the major characteristics of each of the major methods of conducting research.
- identify and describe the processes of measurement, assessment, and evaluation.
- identify and describe the purpose, format, and utilization of the types of measurement techniques or instruments.
- identify and describe the various kinds of test validity and test reliability, including methods of establishing each and consequences of failing to establish validity and reliability.
- identify and describe considerations in test selection, including guidelines to be followed and sources of information to be used.
- identify and describe considerations in making observations and selecting an appropriate observation technique.
- identify and describe the purpose of, and major steps in, designing and conducting each of the major types of research.
- describe sources of historical data with respect to type and to criticism to which historical data must be subjected.
- calculate and interpret correlation coefficients with respect to established criteria.
- identify and describe the various types of correlation coefficients.
- identify and describe considerations which enter into the determination of cause-effect relationships.
- define and identify examples of the three major types of variables.
- identify in research reports those portions related to each of the major steps used in conducting research.
- define statistical procedures for analyzing data with respect to nature and purpose.
- identify specific statistical procedures appropriate for analyzing stated examples of data.
- identify and describe criteria that must be satisfied prior to utilizing various statistical procedures.
- calculate the mean, median, mode, variance, standard deviation, and range for specified data sets.
- calculate the percentile rank of specified scores in a given frequency distribution.
- calculate specified percentiles within a given frequency distribution.
- document according to an accepted format the sources of information used in oral and written reports.

Note. The foregoing list of objectives is comprehensive, but not exhaustive. Students are cautioned not to confine themselves to the list, but to participate attentively in the class and use outside resources in order to maximize their learning. Each chapter in the textbook begins with a statement of objectives for the chapter. The textbook objectives include most of the skills named above, as well as additional skills expected of the student. The student is responsible for achieving both sets of objectives and skills.

EDF 5481 addresses the following competencies and skills of the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), Florida Educational Leadership Core Curriculum (FELE), and Florida Principal Competencies (FPC).

A. NCATE – approved Curriculum Guidelines for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership for Principals, Superintendents, Curriculum Directors, and Supervisors (NCATE).
Area I, Strategic Leadership: The knowledge, skills, and attributes to identify contexts, develop with others vision and purpose, utilize information, frame problems, exercise leadership processes to achieve common goals, and act ethically for educational communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guideline</th>
<th>Skills</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Professional and Ethical Leadership.</td>
<td>1.7 Manifest a professional code of ethics and values.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. Information Management and Evaluation. | 2.2 Use qualitative and quantitative data to inform decisions, to plan and assess school programs, to design accountability systems, to plan for school improvement, and to develop and conduct research.  
2.4 Analyze and interpret educational data, issues, and trends for boards, committees, and other groups, outlining possible actions and their implications. |
| 3. Curriculum, Instruction, Supervision, and the Learning Environment. | 3.9 Assess student progress using a variety of appropriate techniques. |
| 9. Technology and Information Systems. | 9.1 Use technology, telecommunications, and information systems to enrich curriculum and instruction. |

B. Standards of the Interstate Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
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</table>
| 1. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the community. | The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:  
C. effective communication.  
E. information sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies. |
| 2. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and professional growth. | The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:  
F. measurement, evaluation, and assessment strategies. |
| 5. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner. | The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:  
D. professional code of ethics. |

C. The Florida Educational Leadership Core Skills (FELE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communications</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FELE Competencies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| D. Knowledge of the purpose, presentation, and management of information | 1. Identify procedures for collecting, verifying, and compiling relevant information.  
2. Recognize proper interpretation of information.  
3. Select and organize information according to the target audience. |
| G. Ability to write effectively on a topic | 1. Demonstrates a sense of purpose |
2. Write in a logical, clear style.
3. Use appropriate grammar and sentence structure.
4. Use language appropriate for the topic and reader.
5. Correctly apply mechanics of writing: spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.
6. Organize written material effectively.
7. Use standard English in written communication.

### Curriculum and Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FELE Competencies</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D. Demonstrates an understanding of the methods of program evaluation.</td>
<td>1. Demonstrates a basic understanding of program evaluation and testing terminology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Demonstrate a basic understanding of common methods used for data collection in program evaluation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Florida Principal Competencies (FPC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Florida Principal Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Information Search: Searches for and gathers many different kinds of information before arriving at an understanding of an event or problems. Uses formal and informal observations, search and interaction to gather information about the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Concept formation is the ability to see patterns and relationships and form concepts, hypotheses, and ideas from information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Self-Presentation is the ability to clearly present one’s ideas to others in an open, informative and non-evaluative manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Written Communication is the ability to write clearly and concisely using good grammar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Course Policies

#### Academic Honesty
You are encouraged to learn and apply yourself in a way that promotes respect for yourself and others. Students are expected to conduct themselves with scholarly integrity. Any type of scholastic dishonesty is prohibited. Perpetrators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of FAMU regulations.

#### Classroom Environment
**NO text messaging during class!** Students are asked to turn off (or place in silent mode) all cell phones before the start of class. Failure to do so will result in a deduction of points from your final course grade.

[NOTE: I do understand that mobile communication devices are useful for emergencies or other serious matters. If such a situation arises, please let me know.]

Students are expected to complete the reading(s) and/or assignment(s) for each class meeting. All students are required to turn in assignments at the beginning of the class on the day on which they are due. Failure to turn in an assignment on the due date or to take a test on the test date will result in a grade of ZERO (no exceptions). Please discuss in advance with me any extraordinary circumstances that may cause a problem in meeting deadlines.

Students are encouraged to ask questions, share experiences, and participate actively in class discussions. Due to the large amount of class discussion that will take place, it is important that you listen while others are speaking and that you be respectful of their thoughts and opinions. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. If you are being disruptive, you will be asked to leave. Disruptive behaviors include talking about material other than that presented in class, reading newspapers or other non-class material, sleeping, playing games, etc.

Class time will not be used to address individual concerns or issues, such as test grades. I will address such inquiries after class or during office hours.
Email concerning the class will be sent to students’ FAMU email accounts. Email topics include frequently asked questions, requests to meet with an individual student, and other vital information. It is important that you check your FAMU email often. If you do not have a FAMU email account, you will need to establish one. I do not know the identity of whoever@yahoo.com, therefore I cannot adequately address concerns submitted via such addresses.

All correspondence will be conducted via email and/or Blackboard. If a class is cancelled or if an exam needs to be rescheduled, you will receive an email from me and I will post this information on Blackboard. At no time will I inform you of such changes through word-of-mouth, by posting a sign in class, or by writing on the chalkboard. It is your responsibility to check your email and Blackboard daily for information regarding this class. If, for some reason, a “hoax” is played (e.g., someone writing on the chalkboard that the exam is cancelled), and you believe it, you will fail the exam. Remember, all correspondence will be transmitted via the Internet.

It is easiest to reach me via email. I check my email account daily. If you need to contact me, you can expect a response within a day. All emails addressed to me must conform to the following guidelines or they will not be answered (i.e., you will not receive a response).

1. All emails must include an appropriate subject heading that identifies you as a student in my class (e.g., “Jane Doe, EDF 1234, Question regarding homework).
2. All emails must include an appropriate salutation that addresses me by Dr. or Professor. Emails that begin with “Hey” or “Hey you” will be ignored.
3. All emails must include your full name (i.e., first name and last name).
4. Within the body of your email, completely describe your question or concern. Do not assume that the instructor knows exactly what you are talking about.

Attendance
Attendance for this course is required. Attendance will be taken each class session. It is in your best interest to attend class. If you miss class, you are responsible for all material covered in class, as well as all announcements and assignments. [NOTE: If you miss a class, I strongly encourage you to borrow one of your classmate’s notes and then talk with me if you need additional clarification on any of the information. I do NOT provide students with my notes.] Keep in mind that poor planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part. FOR EXAMPLE, many students must maintain a high GPA for advancement or acceptance into academic programs. It is the student’s responsibility to work toward this goal. Do not tell me, “I have to get a _____ grade in this class.” You cannot make up missed exams or quizzes. Come to class and participate! I reserve the right to lower your grade if you are chronically late to class, or are disruptive to me and/or other students in class. Do not make a habit of coming to class late or leaving early! If you must miss a class meeting, please speak with me in advance.

Americans With Disabilities Act
Students with disabilities and those who need special academic accommodations should register with the Center for Disability Access and Resources (CeDAR). The Center is located at 667 Ardelia Court, and the phone number is 850-599-3180. Upon registering with CeDAR, please see me and provide a copy of the letter indicating the type of accommodation needed. This should be done during the first 2 weeks of class.

Course Evaluation
The assignments for this course, as well as the total possible points on each assignment, are listed in the following table. Please note that additional work may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>POINTS POSSIBLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Topic</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Peer-Reviewed Research Articles</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation: Chapter Summary</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Analysis</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal: Section One</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal: Section Two</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal: Section Three</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The final course grade will be computed based on points earned from the assignments outlined in the above table.

The examinations are objective in nature and may include multiple-choice items, matching items, short response items, extended response items, and statistical problems to calculate. Students may NOT use books, notes, and other reference materials during the examinations. However, electronic calculators are permitted. Each student should bring their own resources (pencil/pen, paper, calculator) to each examination.

All written material will be assessed on the nature and adequacy of the content, the clarity and organization of the thought processes, and the correctness of grammar and syntax. The instructor will comment and assign a grade to the assignments. Submit the projects following the APA style. The instructor considers spelling, punctuation, and grammar when grading projects.

### NOTE ON PLAGIARISM:
Plagiarism is unethical and unacceptable! Essays, papers, tests, and other similar requirements must be the work of the student submitting them. When direct quotations are used, they must be indicated, and when ideas of another are incorporated in the body of an assignment they must be appropriately acknowledged.
Students who wish to perform well in this course should:
1. Attend all of the class lectures.
2. Arrive to class on time.
3. Take detailed notes.
4. Complete all of the assigned readings prior to attending class.
5. Complete all of the assignments.
6. Study all of the material (class notes and assigned readings) for the examinations.

**Teaching Methods**

Activities in this course may include reading assignments in the textbook, supplemental textbooks, and/or handouts; lectures; group discussions; oral presentations by class members; guest speakers; in class activities, and/or computer-based tutorials. Each student is encouraged to read scheduled topics in advance of their class. **Students will be held responsible for course content on the exams. Students are expected to purchase a textbook, as it is an integral part of the course.**

**DON'T FORGET TO BE PREPARED FOR CLASS.**

**Technology Utilization**

The instructor will use appropriate technology during class lectures and demonstrations (e.g., SPSS, PowerPoint, spreadsheets, internet). Students are required to use technology as need for course assignments (e.g., word processing, spreadsheet, SPSS, internet).

**Course Schedule**

The chapter readings and assignments schedule below is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion. Students will be notified of changes during the regularly scheduled class sessions, through email, and/or through Blackboard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>TOPIC/ASSIGNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01.11.10</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Introduction to EDF 5481</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment: Read chapters 1 and 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.18.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>No class – Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.25.10</td>
<td>1,2</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to educational research; Selecting and defining a research topic</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment: Read chapters 3 and 4</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Assignment: Select a research topic. Write a short paragraph detailing what your</td>
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<tr>
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<td>topic is, what it means, and why you chose it. (Due 02.01.10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>02.01.10</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
<td><strong>Reviewing the literature; Preparing and evaluating a research plan</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment <strong>DUE</strong>: Topic paragraph</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment: Read chapter 22</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment: Find 15 peer-reviewed research articles related to your topic.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prepare an APA formatted reference list of the articles. (Due 02.08.10)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Assignment: From your reference list, select one peer-reviewed quantitative</td>
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<td>research article for the critical analysis assignment. Turn in a complete copy of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the article. (Due 02.08.10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>02.08.10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td><strong>Evaluating a research report</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Assignment <strong>DUE</strong>: Article for critical analysis AND reference list with 15</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>articles</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment: Read chapter 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>02.15.10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td><strong>Preparing a research report</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td>TOPIC/ASSIGNMENT</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>02.22.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment DUE: Section 1 of Research Proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.01.10</td>
<td>Midterm Exam (Chapters 1-4, 21-22)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>03.08.10</td>
<td>Critical Analysis Presentations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment DUE: Critical analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment: Read chapters 5 and 6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>03.15.10</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>03.22.10</td>
<td>5, 6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selecting a sample; Selecting measurement instruments</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment DUE: Section 2 of Research Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment: Read chapters 12 and 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>03.29.10</td>
<td>Statistics, continued</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>04.05.10</td>
<td>No Class-Student Work Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>04.12.10</td>
<td>Proposal Presentations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>04.19.10</td>
<td>Proposal Presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Final Exam (Chapters 5-6, 12-13)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*TBA=To be announced*
Assignments

Chapter Summary
Each student must select **ONE** of the chapters listed below to present in class*. The student must:

a) Read the chapter in its entirety;
b) Prepare a brief, yet thorough, summary of the chapter to be presented and disseminated to the class (PowerPoint or Word documents are preferred);
c) Email the summary to the instructor at least one day before class for posting to Blackboard; and
d) Present the summary to the class and be prepared to answer questions from the audience**

*Depending on the number of students enrolled in the course, groups of 2-3 students are permitted.
**Each student that is **NOT** presenting must prepare at least 1 (one) discussion question for the presenter. Students sitting in the audience will be randomly called to ask their question(s).

Chapter 7: Survey research
Chapter 8: Correlation research
Chapter 9: Causal-Comparative research
Chapter 10: Experimental research
Chapter 11: Single-subject experimental research
Chapter 14: Qualitative data collection
Chapter 15: Narrative research
Chapter 16: Ethnographic research
Chapter 17: Case Study Research
Chapter 18: Qual. res.: Data analysis and interpretation
Chapter 19: Mixed methods research
Chapter 20: Action Research
Each student is required to prepare and submit one critical analysis (or evaluation) of a quantitative study reported in the research literature (i.e., published in a peer-reviewed journal). The purpose of the evaluation is to comment upon the adequacy of the article as a research report by analyzing each component of the study. For example, point out any errors or poor procedures you detect, as well as strengths or desirable procedures.

Use the outline below as a guide in your analysis. For items 2-16, you are to state whether the research report provides adequate information or whether the procedure used in the research study was adequate. It is required that you use a five-point Likert rating scale (very good to very poor) to indicate the overall adequacy of each item. You must justify your position on each item. The last three items (17-19) should reflect your overall opinion about the article.

The date of publication for the peer-reviewed quantitative research article must be within the past three years. You must submit a copy of the article with the critical analysis. The critical analysis should be from 3-5 pages in length, and it must be double-spaced with standard margins and font style. Please staple your paper in the upper left-hand corner. Do not insert it in a binder or a folder.

Items to Include in the Critical Analysis:
1. APA style reference
2. Title
3. Description of the Problem
4. Significance of the Problem
5. Analysis of Literature Relevant to the Problem
6. Identification of Independent Variables and Dependent Variables
7. Statement of Operational Research Question(s) or Hypotheses
8. Definition of Terms
9. Population and Sampling Procedures
10. Data Sources and Data Collection Procedures
11. Instrumentation or Measurement Devices – Validity and Reliability Information
12. Data Tables and Data Analysis
13. Presentation and Interpretation of Findings
14. Conclusions and Recommendations
15. Summary or Abstract of the Study
16. Suggestions for Further Research in the Problem Area
17. Strengths of the Study (your opinion)
18. Weaknesses of the Study (your opinion)
19. Suggestions for Improving the Study (your opinion)
You are going to write a research proposal this semester. Your task is to choose an educational issue that interests you. Be sure it is a topic that you are interested in; nothing will be more boring and difficult for you than to research a topic that you did not take the time to think out.

The research proposal should be a succinct, pointed overview of the problem to be studied and the proposed means of carrying out the study. The proposal should contain the essential facts and concepts needed to enable the reader to comprehend the problem, the planning, and the execution of the research. The proposed research should be described with sufficient detail to enable the reader to visualize completely each major element of the entire study.

While the content of a proposal may vary among institutions or among fields of study or among problems, virtually all proposals contain the same basic elements. These basic elements are named below and are defined in the following pages. Note that all sections are not included in every proposal. (See additional project information after the definitions.)

**OUTLINE**

**Title (on title page only)**

**Table of Contents**

**Introduction**
- Introduction
- Statement of the Problem
- Purpose of the Study
- Research Questions or Hypotheses
- Significance of the Study
- Delimitation of the Study
- Definition of Terms

**Review of Related Literature**
- Brief Introduction
- Literature Review by Section

**Design of the Study**
- Brief Introduction
- Population, Sample, and Sampling Procedures
- Variables
  - Independent
  - Dependent
  - Control
- Instrumentation
- Data Collection Procedures
- Treatment of the Data
  - Data Analysis
  - Data Tables

**Possible Outcomes**

**Summary**

**References**
Definitions:

**Title** - The title of a research project should well inform the reader of the subject to be studied, yet not overpower her or him with detail. A major criterion for a good title is clarity; the reader must understand its meaning. Another criterion for a good title is brevity. Sufficiently descriptive titles sometimes are long, but length is secondary to clarity.

**Table of Contents** - Major headings and their beginning page numbers should be listed

**Introduction** - This serves to introduce the reader to the general setting of the study and should show the relation of the study to the general stream of educational thinking in the topic area. The introduction should prepare the reader to understand the importance of the study.

**Statement of the Problem** - The exact nature of the problem should be described. Provide specific details about the problem. The nature of the problem must be stated clearly, as the remainder of the study flows from this element.

**Purpose of the Study** - Identify the purpose for the study. Provide details about the part of the problem that will be addressed in this research study.

**Research Questions or Hypotheses** - Sometimes a researcher states questions to be answered, rather than research hypotheses. The hypotheses of a study set forth the relationship among the variables being analyzed. A research hypothesis is usually stated as a null hypothesis indicating that there is no significant difference between the conditions or treatments tested.

**Significance of the Study** - In short, why is the study worth undertaking? What will the researcher and the readers of the study learn that isn’t known already? The researcher should be able to provide three to four important reasons for conducting the study.

**Delimitation of the Study** - The delimitation of the study essentially identifies what the researcher will not be concerned about while conducting the study. The delimitation of the study describes the boundaries of what will be studied and sharpens the focus of the study.

**Definition of Terms** - Any key terms, concepts, and variables requiring operational definitions should be defined. Unless the reader understands what the writer is attempting to convey, communication probably cannot proceed beyond a superficial level.

**Review of Related Literature** - The purpose of this section is to familiarize the reader more completely with the setting of the problem and to summarize other research findings relevant to the problem. For this course, the review of literature relevant to the problem must include at least 10 - 15 references.

**Design of the Study** - In this section, the logic of the study and the approach to solving the problem is explicated. Why was this approach chosen? Why is it superior to other potential solutions? This section also describes the methods to be employed in carrying out the project.

**Population, Sample, and Sampling Procedures** - The definition of the population indicates the group to whom the results of the study will be generalized. Once the population is defined, the researcher must draw a representative sample from the population; this sample will constitute the subjects (individuals or groups) who will actually participate in the study. Identify how the sample was drawn from the population.

**Variables** - The researcher identifies and describes the variables in the study. The researcher often identifies the level of measurement (i.e., nominal, ordinal, interval, or ratio) of each variable.
**Independent Variables** - These variables that are manipulated, or at least measured (if only for classification), in order to observe their relationship to, or effects upon the dependent variable. The researcher should describe what would be done to the sample during the study.

**Dependent Variables** - These variables represent the results of the study or outcome; these variables show the effects of the independent variables.

**Control Variables** - These variables that are not studied, but which might interfere with the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. These variables are controlled so as not to confuse or confound the analysis of the variables that are being studied.

**Instrumentation** - The precise nature of the instruments to be used should be described. If ready-made instruments are used, full reference information should be given. If instruments are to be constructed by the researcher, the instruments should be included. Regardless of where the instruments are derived, validity and reliability information about the instruments should be reported in the proposal.

**Data Collection Procedures** - The general methods to be used in collecting the data should be stated, together with a brief explanation of why these methods are appropriate for the study.

**Treatment of the Data** - This section describes what will be done with the data in preparing to test the hypotheses or to answer the questions, and includes two steps:

**Data Analysis** - The statistical procedure or statistical procedures employed in the study to answer the research questions or hypotheses should be identified. It is a good idea to state the reason for selecting the particular analysis technique.

**Data Tables** - All data collected during the study should be presented in appropriate tables. Data might be condensed (e.g., showing means rather than individual scores). Indicate what data will be included in the data tables.

**Possible Outcomes** - The researcher should describe what conclusion she or he would draw if each hypothesis were rejected or the researcher failed to reject each hypothesis (or what conclusion he or she would draw if each question were answered in various possible ways). This section does not focus upon what the researcher expects to find, but should demonstrate that, for each possible outcome, the researcher knows how to interpret the information obtained and draw appropriate conclusions there from.

**Summary** - This should be a brief recap of the entire proposal. Usually a few paragraphs will suffice. It should remind the reader of at least the following topics: the problem, the hypotheses or questions, the treatments, the instrumentation, and the analysis.

**References** - All documents used in preparing the proposal should be listed, whether or not they were cited in the paper. Rules for preparing the list of references can be found in numerous style manuals. However, in education the style manual employed is the 5th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*.

*Note: The proposal should be formatted in accordance with APA style. However, the APA manual allows for much latitude in the preparation of thesis, dissertation, and term papers. Thus, students should ascertain the rules to be followed in their class or institution.*
SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

• Part #1: Write a paragraph that introduces your topic. Mention your topic in the first sentence. What are you planning to study? What is the purpose of the study?

• Part #2: Fully discuss your topic. What specifically interests you? Think of a specific research question (or questions) and state it clearly and precisely. You can also begin to formulate your ideas on how you might study your research question, though you need not be very specific in this section. For example, if you plan to study attitudes toward school vouchers, suggest what characteristics influence how individuals feel about school vouchers (e.g., income, location, etc.).

• Part #3: Explain to the reader why it is important to study your topic and put it into a larger educational context. Here is where you answer the “So what?” question. That is, you plan to study XYZ. So what? Why is it important to study this topic? What is the educational importance of this research? Why is this study significant? This is your opportunity to be broad, general, and theoretical in your thinking.

This section should be at least 3-5 pages. Based on the outline provided in the course syllabus, you must utilize sub-headings within this section. You must cite articles within this section to support your topic and/or claim.

DUE DATE: February 15, 2010 [NOTE: A title page must be submitted with Section One.]

SECTION TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this section is to find and summarize qualitative or quantitative research studies that directly relate to your research question(s). Use library databases to start searching for articles, but employ other resources when necessary (e.g., www.scholar.google.com). In addition, ask for help: reference librarians are always available. [NOTE: For the literature review, utilize the 15 research peer-reviewed research articles that you collected for an earlier assignment.]

When looking for articles you need to adhere to the following guidelines:

• Use scholarly journals rather than popular magazines, newspaper articles, or the internet.

• Rely on the educational literature. If you are unsure whether an article or journal is included in the discipline, ask me.
• In general, select recent articles (i.e., 1960 or later). However, if an article written in 1952, for example, is extremely pertinent to your proposal, then use it.

• **Choose only research articles (qualitative or quantitative research) for the literature review. Do not include theoretical works, editorials, book reviews, program reports, etc.** If you are unsure about an article, I will gladly take a look at it.

**Your task is to:**

• Briefly restate your research topic in an opening paragraph. Provide a short introduction about what question(s) you are trying to answer, why this is **educationally** interesting, and why you chose it. Also, provide a brief overview of the topics you will cover in your literature review.

• Divide the literature that you have into sections of like studies. Then, for each section, write an essay summarizing the studies. Be sure to state the **research purpose, method(s), and findings** ONLY for the studies that are paramount to your study. [NOTE: Use transitions within your essay so that it flows and does not appear like disjointed blocks of information.]

• Write a concluding paragraph that summarizes the articles. For example, how will these articles inform your research?

• **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.**

This section should be at least 4-6 pages. You must turn in your original and edited “Introduction” section along with your “Literature Review” section.

*DUE DATE: March 15, 2010*

**SECTION THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN**

The purpose of this section is to describe and explain your research design. This can be the hardest part of the proposal for some students; therefore, do not wait until the last minute to write this section. Think about your design when you write your literature review.

**Your task is to:**

• In a brief introduction, precisely restate your research problem(s)/question(s).

• Discuss the ways in which your research will fulfill any of the purposes of research mentioned in class and in the text. Which purpose is most important to your topic?

• Indicate the following elements of your research design:
  
  o What is your mode of observation? How will you collect your data? Examples: If you are designing a survey, what types of questions will you ask? If you are going to perform in-depth interviews, what will you ask of your interviewees?

  o What is your population of interest? Do you have a sampling frame? If so, what is it? How will you select your sample? What kind of sampling technique will you use?

  o How will you analyze your data? What unit of analysis best fits your project, and why?
What type of time dimension is best for studying your topic, and why?

- If you plan to conduct qualitative research, discuss the following issues (be as detailed and specific as possible):
  - Clearly define the theoretical constructs you will be using.
  - What is the main concept you are investigating? What other concepts will be examined (note the concepts’ potential structures, processes, causes, and consequences)?
  - What type(s) of qualitative analysis will you conduct?

- If you plan to conduct quantitative research, discuss the following issues (be as detailed and specific as possible):
  - Clearly state your hypotheses.
  - Identify and operationalize your variables. What are the levels of measurements of the variables? Discuss the causal relationships between the variables; that is, identify the independent variables and the dependent variable.

- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of your design.

- Finally, write a concluding paragraph that summarizes the research design and proposal.

When writing this section, imagine that you have received millions of dollars from a federal agency or a private company to study your topic. You have unlimited resources for your research design. Since you will not actually perform the research be creative, but appropriate, with your design.

This section should be 4-5 pages. Make sure to turn in your original and edited “Introduction” and “Literature Review” sections along with your “Research Design” section.

**DUE DATE: April 12, 2010**

**SECTION 4: REFERENCES**

On the last page of your proposal, include an APA-formatted bibliography of the articles, books, websites, etc. that you refer to in the text. This page should be titled “REFERENCES” [in capital letters, centered, and no quotation marks]. The references should be listed alphabetically by the last name of the first author.

**DUE DATE: April 12, 2010** *(NOTE: A table of contents must be submitted with Sections Three and Four.)*

Please carefully note the following issues:

Only printed versions of your work will be accepted. Do NOT send email attachments of your work. The entire proposal should be no more than 15 pages excluding the title page and the “References” section. Any page(s) over the 15th page will not be read. All of the sections must be typed, double-spaced, in a 12-point font, with 1 inch margins on all four sides of each page. Make sure to number your pages. No
late sections will be accepted for full credit. For each day that a particular section is late, you will lose ten points on the assigned section.
**(Course Artifacts and Standards in Course Syllabi)**

**Faculty Name**  
Dr. Endya B. Stewart

**Course Prefix, Number and Title**  
EDF 5481 (Section 301): Introduction to Educational Research Methods

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<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Artifact 1: Critical Analysis of one educational research article</th>
<th>Artifact 2: Proposal/Prospectus</th>
<th>Artifact 3: Chapter Review and Presentation (represents individual and/or group work)</th>
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*Legend: PEU CF= Professional Educational Unit Conceptual Framework; FEAP=Florida Educator Accomplished Practices; INTASC=Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium; FELE=Florida Educational Leadership Examination; NCATE= National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education; FPC=Florida Principal Competencies.*
References


STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

Student’s Name: ______________________________________________________________

Student’s Email: ______________________________________________________________

Student’s Primary Phone Number: ________________________________________________

Today’s Date: ___________________________________________

By signing my name below, I certify that I have received a copy of the syllabus for EDF 5481: Introduction to Educational Research Methods, and I understand the policies and requirements set forth for this course. Furthermore, I understand that this syllabus is not a contract. The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus at any time throughout the semester and it is my responsibility to stay abreast of any changes made.

_______________________________________________

Student’s signature