

RSCH 9870
Dissertation Topic Conceptualization
3 SEMESTER HOURS

Dewar College of Education
Valdosta State University
Department of Curriculum, Leadership, and Technology
Conceptual Framework: Guiding Principles (DEPOSITS)
(adapted from the Georgia Systemic Teacher Education Program Accomplished Teacher Framework)

Dispositions Principle: Productive dispositions positively affect learners, professional growth, and the learning environment.

Equity Principle: All learners deserve high expectations and support.

Process Principle: Learning is a lifelong process of development and growth.

Ownership Principle: Professionals are committed to and assume responsibility for the future of their disciplines.

Support Principle: Successful engagement in the process of learning requires collaboration among multiple partners.

Impact Principle: Effective practice yields evidence of learning.

Technology Principle: Technology facilitates teaching, learning, community-building, and resource acquisition.

Standards Principle: Evidence-based standards systematically guide professional preparation and development.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Galvan, J. L. (2012) *Writing Literature Reviews: A Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (5th Edition). Glendale, CA: Pycszak Publishing.
ISBN-13: 978-1936523030

Harris, R. A. (2011). *Using Sources Effectively: Strengthening Your Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism* (Third Edition). Glendale, CA: Pycszak Publishing.
ISBN-13: 978-1884585937

Roberts, C. M. (2010). *The Dissertation Journey: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending Your Dissertation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. ISBN-13: 978-1412977982

Other Recommended Readings

- The 6th edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* is required for this course and all others in the Doctoral Program. Online resources related to the manual are not sufficient for successful completion of the program. If you do not already own the book, purchase it before this class meets.
- A major text from the field in which you will be completing your dissertation that you do not already own and have not already read; to be identified through contact with a librarian, a content expert, or research in the area.
- *Education Doctoral Program Handbook* and/or *The Thesis and Dissertation Guide*.
http://www.valdosta.edu/coe/edd/COE_Doctoral_Programs/COEDoctoralStudentResources.shtml
CURRENT: <http://www.valdosta.edu/gradschool/TDInformationPage.shtml>
- Locke, L. F., Spirduso, W. W., & Silverman, S. J. (2000). *Proposals that work: A guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Punch, K. F. (2000). *Developing effective research proposals*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Research seminar for the development of the doctoral dissertation topic.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK STANDARDS (CFS)

- I. CONTENT AND CURRICULUM: Educators demonstrate a strong content knowledge of content area(s) that is appropriate for their certification levels.
- II. KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENTS AND THEIR LEARNING: Educators support the intellectual, social, physical, and personal development of all students.
- III. LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: Educators create learning environments that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- IV. ASSESSMENT: Educators understand and use a range of formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous development of all learners.
- V. PROFESSIONALISM: Educators recognize, participate in, and contribute to teaching and learning as a profession.

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR VSU'S CORE CURRICULUM

N/A

SELECTED EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES (EO)

1. Doctoral candidates will demonstrate inquiry skills in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research methodologies.
2. Doctoral candidates will demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the knowledge, research, and theories appropriate to their major field by completing a comprehensive examination.
3. Doctoral candidates will demonstrate the ability to engage in focused inquiry by researching a topic, evaluating relevant literature, writing a comprehensive dissertation and presenting the results of their study.

COURSE OBJECTIVES (CO): Given the syllabus, course materials, and guidance from a professional, the candidate will accurately and/or appropriately:

1. Demonstrate skill in locating and annotating professional literature. (I, VI)
2. Demonstrate professional level reflection skills, presentation skills, and criticism skills. (I, III, VI)
3. Demonstrate skill in organizing, documenting, and reflecting upon assigned and self-generated activities. (I, VI)
4. Demonstrate clear competence in oral, graphic, and written communication and comprehension. (I, VI)
5. Work effectively and efficiently both as a leader and member of a group. (I, III, VI)

COURSE ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS/REQUIREMENTS

A number of course activities are inherent in completion of the processes and products described in the Course Evaluation methods generally described below. These activities include: research and writing (Course objectives 1-5); reading, thinking, and discussing (Course objectives 1-5); reviewing and revising (Course objectives 1-5); creatively representing concepts and orally presenting them (Course objectives 1-5).

COURSE EVALUATION

Professional ethics, behavior, and quality are expected in all products and performances. A description of each assignment and their related point values are provided below. Course grades are based upon a traditional grading scale, as shown below:

100-90 = A 89-80 = B 79-70 = C 69-60 = D Below 60 = F

Policy on Late Submissions: Late work will automatically be dropped by one letter grade (i.e., 10% of the assignment's value). For each additional week it is late, another letter grade will be lowered. Assignments not received by the end of the semester will receive a zero.

Dissertation Preparation Project (75% of course grade)

Through a series of self-directed activities, students will conceive and formulate an educational research study suitable for execution as a doctoral dissertation. The specific activities for this project are summarized below.

- **Dissertation Prospectus (40 points)**
This 10-page, double-spaced narrative (not including cover page or bibliographic references) will summarize an educational problem appropriate for dissertation research and the accompanying research questions, literature, methods, bibliographic references, etc. commonly found in doctoral dissertations.
- **Annotated Bibliography (15 points), which will be Appendix B to your Prospectus**
Students will conduct a focused literature review necessary to identify and summarize (i) underlying theoretical frameworks for their proposed study, and (ii) current findings of research related to that framework, variables/issues associated with their study, etc. The references emerging from this review will be annotated and integrated with the research concept map, described below.
- **Concept Map (10 points), which will be Appendix A to your Prospectus**
As part of their literature review work for their prospectus, students will analyze and visually organize the conceptual issues emerging from the research literature as it relates to their proposed study. Students, in turn, will integrate build their annotated bibliography and resulting literature narrative for their prospectus from this concept map.
- **Oral Presentation (10 points)**
Students will explain the conceptual framework and supporting literature for a proposed dissertation research project and substantiate the framework with an explanation of the theory behind the framework and the connection it has to the proposed study. The presentation should *sell* the research idea to classmates and the instructor as if it was being presented to a dissertation committee.

Peer Assistance and Professionalism Project (PAPP) (25% of course grade)

Students will support, challenge, and assist each other in the process of conceptualizing their dissertations. This will be accomplished by the completion of committee member interview, class presentations, doctoral level contributions to class discussions on a regular basis.

- **Plagiarism quizzes from Harris Text (10 points)**
Online quizzes on the Harris materials are provided in BlazeVIEW. Each quiz can only be attempted once, but may be completed any time throughout the semester prior to a candidate's final presentation in class. Quiz scores will be averaged for the course grade.
- **Faculty Interview and Presentation (10 points)**
Candidates will interview prospective committee members for their proposed doctoral dissertation. Each candidate will report on the interview he/she conducted to the rest of the class. General topic guidelines will be provided but specific questions are to be devised by the students to maximize the potential value to their future committee work.
- **Peer Assistance (5 points)**
Valuable contributions to the development of peer's projects are vital to demonstrating one's ability to function as a Doctor of Education. It is expected that you will come to class prepared to focus and to facilitate the advancement of each other's work.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The College of Education requires that students adhere to the absence regulations as stated in the University's undergraduate and graduate bulletins ("A student who misses more than 20% of the class work of a course will be subject to receiving a failing grade in the course." FYI: In a seminar class that meets 24 hours face-to-face, which represents time that cannot be made up because the interactive-dynamic is a component of the learning, 20% is the equivalent of 4.8 hours.). Because students are being prepared to accept professional duties and responsibilities, attendance requirements are viewed as critical to developing professionalism.

PROFESSIONALISM

Within the coursework and fieldwork, educators expected to respect intellectual property, complete assignments with consistent punctuality, regularly attend class (online and/or face-to-face), make an effort to complete assignments completely and correctly, pay careful attention to detail in following instructions, show willingness to revise based on instructor or peer feedback, strive for creativity in devising products and processes, demonstrate enthusiasm in face-to-face and online endeavors, be helpful to peers, show self-reliance to enable independent progress/ completion of work, display courtesy in written and oral communications, and exhibit cooperation in group work situations. Professional educators should practice fairness based upon a belief that all learners can achieve.

General rule: In all cases, consider what the actions of a responsible professional would be; then practice those actions.

SafeAssign: By taking this course, you agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to SafeAssign, a tool within BlazeVIEW. For more information on the use of SafeAssign at VSU see [SafeAssign for Students \(http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml\)](http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/SafeAssignforStudents.shtml).

DEWAR COLLEGE OF EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

Below is information directly quoted from the Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures:

Academic integrity is the responsibility of all VSU faculty and students. Faculty members should promote academic integrity by including clear instruction on the components of academic integrity and clearly defining the penalties for cheating and plagiarism in their course syllabi. Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the Academic Integrity Policy as set forth in the Student Code of Conduct and the faculty members' syllabi. All students are expected to do their own work and to uphold a high standard of academic ethics.

The full text of Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures is available on the Academic Affairs website (<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyatVSU.shtml>).

The consequences for acts of academic dishonesty in the Dewar College of Education are:

FIRST OFFENSE:

1. The faculty member will administer an academic response (e.g. resubmit / retake assignment, failure of the assignment, failure of the course).
2. The faculty member will complete a Dewar College of Education Concern Form (<http://www.valdosta.edu/coe/studentsinfo.shtml>).
3. The faculty member will complete a Valdosta State University Report of Academic Dishonesty (<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyatVSU.shtml>).

SECOND OFFENSE:

1. The faculty member will administer an academic response (e.g. resubmit / retake assignment, failure of the assignment, failure of the course).
2. The faculty member will complete a Dewar College of Education Concern form (<http://www.valdosta.edu/coe/studentsinfo.shtml>). The Dewar College of Education Concern Form Policy will be followed.
3. The faculty member will complete a Valdosta State University Report of Academic Dishonesty (<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyatVSU.shtml>). According to the Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures document, “after a second (or subsequent) Report of Academic Dishonesty has been submitted to the Student Conduct Office in the Dean of Students Office, official charges will be drawn up and the disciplinary matter will be referred to the Valdosta State University Judicial Committee.”

SPECIAL NEEDS STATEMENT

Valdosta State University is an equal opportunity educational institution. It is not the intent of the institution to discriminate against any applicant for admission or any student or employee of the institution based on the sex, race, religion, color, national origin, or handicap of the individual. It is the intent of the institution to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and subsequent executive orders as well as Title XI in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications due to a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in Farber Hall- South. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V/VP) and 229-219-1348 (TTY).

STUDENT OPINION OF INSTRUCTION

At the end of the term, all students will be expected to complete an online Student Opinion of Instruction survey (SOI) that will be available on BANNER. Students will receive an email notification through their VSU email address when the SOI is available (generally at least one week before the end of the term). SOI responses are anonymous, and instructors will be able to view only a summary of all responses two weeks after they have submitted final grades. While

instructors will not be able to view individual responses or to access any of the responses until after final grade submission, they will be able to see which students have or have not completed their SOIs, and student compliance may be considered in the determination of the final course grade. These compliance and non-compliance reports will not be available once instructors are able to access the results. Complete information about the SOIs, including how to access the survey and a timetable for this term is available at

<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/OnlineSOIPilotProject.shtml>

INSTRUCTOR

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