

ED 500A: EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
Winter Semester 2008

3 credits

Course Description:

ED 500A is an introduction to the field of educational research for students who seek an understanding of the skills necessary for doing research in education. These skills include how to design a research study, interpret research results, and present research findings.

Purpose of the Course:

The purpose of this course is to introduce professional educators to the basic concepts and techniques to make informed judgments about the value and validity of educational research. Students will learn of various tools for conducting a thorough review of the literature for a research topic. Participants in this course will understand and use the basic steps in research design sufficient to undertake a graduate level research paper.

Course Goals Aligned with National Standards:

KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT – Accomplished teachers and counselors draw on their knowledge of subject matter and curriculum to make sound decisions about what is important for students to learn within and across the subject areas of the middle childhood curriculum.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROFESSION – Accomplished teachers and counselors work with colleagues to improve schools, advance knowledge and practice in their field, and contribute to the school's intellectual life and overall quality....

REFLECTION – Accomplished teachers and counselors regularly analyze, evaluate, reflect on, and strengthen and refine the effectiveness and quality of their practice and are open to new ideas.

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY – Accomplished teachers and counselors help students learn to respect and appreciate individual and group differences.

Additional information about these standards and corresponding goals are available for each program area on WebCT.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will:

Know the important characteristics of both quantitative and qualitative

research.

Know basic statistics sufficient to understand and interpret research results.

Know how to use the various tools available for a search of literature and bibliographic research including Internet and other electronic sources.

Know how to critically review and analyze educational research.

Know how to develop a literature review.

Know how to develop a research proposal (e.g., possibly for the ED 500B Capstone course, ED 599 Thesis, a grant proposal, etc.).

Develop a major draft of a literature review OR a research proposal in a topic of choice.

Assess the work completed in ED 500A with national standards in participants' areas, using an assessment rubric.

Thoughts on Writing a Literature Review:

In ED 500A, you will obtain extensive library research skills necessary for researching topics in any class in your graduate program. Librarian Mike Strahan (mstrahan@nmu.edu) developed a series of 2-minute videos on how to search NMU Olson Library's educational research databases. WebCT contains links to these short video clips.

In ED 500A, you will learn a systematic procedure for how to write an up-to-date literature review on an educational research topic of your choice. In the process of writing a literature review, you will attempt to "demonstrate you have a thorough command of the field you are studying" (Galvan, 2006, p. 13). Your literature research topic should conform to two important criteria. First, you should find the topic interesting. Fascinating is even better. If the research articles are boring, switch topics quickly. Second, you should pick a topic associated with your graduate program area (e.g., EdAdmin, Learning Disabilities, Elementary/Secondary Education, Guidance & Counseling, Reading, etc.).

The level of accuracy expected in your literature review is quite high and requires you to conform to the APA style used in educational research. Contact the Olson Librarians if you cannot find your answers on the Olson Course Guide for ED 500A. The Olson Librarians are APA citation experts. Use the textbook by Galvan (2006) for helpful hints on writing a literature review. Your paper must be free of mechanical errors. Edit your writing before submitting your drafts. Grading Matrixes are on WebCT.

Textbooks (3) – If possible, buy used textbooks from NMU's bookstore,

amazon.com, half.com, etc.

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). [Researchers in education use APA formatting. You must format your ED 500A article critiques and literature review drafts in APA style. An APA style textbook is required for ED 500B–Seminar in Educational Research and ED 599–Thesis.]

Galvan, J. L. (2006). *Writing Literature Reviews: A Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (3rd ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Pub.

Patten, M. L. (2005). *Understanding Research Methods: An Overview of the Essentials* (6th ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Pub. [I recommend the sixth edition. However, I created equivalent assignments for the fifth edition. “Ed.5” on our roadmap means fifth edition and “ED.6” means sixth edition. Do assignments only for the edition you have.]