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WILMINGTON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

COURSE NUMBER: EDD 7106
COURSE TITLE: Disciplined Inquiry I

Doctor of Education Program Attributes

The manner in which we prepare educational personnel is informed by eight essential attributes: (1) Ensuring that programs are knowledge-based; (2) viewing educational personnel as learners, including a focus on deconstructing past experiences as learners in coursework and field experiences and developing appropriate knowledge of the content and discourse of the disciplines to be taught; (3) contextual and cultural sensitivity; (4) enabling authentic participation, collegiality and collaboration; (5) facilitating inquiry and reflection, i.e. providing structured opportunities for critical reflection on and taking action in one’s daily work; (6) building an ongoing developmental program that allows for continuous improvement, experimentation, and professional growth; (7) ensuring that programs are standards-driven; and (8) ensuring that programs promote the effective use of technology.

PROGRAM COMPETENCIES

The effort to craft a model program for school leaders was a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers in partnership with the National Policy Board for Educational Administration. The standards were adopted as Delaware’s School Administrator Standards in 2002, adopted as Wilmington University MED School Leadership Program Competencies during the Spring Semester 2003, and the EDD Program Competencies in Spring 2005. These standards can be accessed at http://www.ncate.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=WfRsXgUvOCl%3dtabid=676 or on the Doctoral Studies blackboard site under the Standards tab. One additional program competency was added to the NCATE standards that pertains specifically to this course. It is:

Can demonstrate “an ability to use information and information technologies to enhance the effective utilization and practice of educational research.”

PROGRAM COMPETENCIES ADDRESS IN DISCIPLINED INQUIRY I & II

Graduation Competency 8: Can demonstrate an ability to use information and information technologies to enhance the effective utilization and practice of educational research.

Note: The goals described for this course also contribute to a knowledge foundation for the following graduation competencies:

GC 1: Vision
1.2 Candidates understand and can collect and use data to identify district/organizational goals, assess organizational effectiveness and implement district/organization plans to achieve district/organizational goals.

**GC 4: Collaboration**

4.1 Can understand and collaborate with faculty/organizational and community members by collecting and analyzing information pertinent to the district’s/organization’s educational environment.

4.3a. Have the skills to conduct needs assessments of families, caregivers (organizational members) and community/organizational partners.

**Goal #1:** Students will gain an appreciation of different ways of knowing and generating evidence to support educational/organizational improvement and innovation.

**Learning Outcome:** Students will be able to identify, characterize and insightfully discuss the paradigms that ground the quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method approaches to disciplined inquiry in education, leadership and innovation.

**Learning Activities:** Students will:
- Read text assignments and selected supplementary journal articles.
- Engage in class and on-line discussion
- Keep a reflective journal in which their ideas about educational and organizational issues, inquiry paradigms and methods are explored and refined.

**Learning Assessment:** Students will:
- Describe their own view of disciplined inquiry and its relationship to education, organizations, leadership and innovation upon entering and completing the course.
- Demonstrate their understanding of different disciplined inquiry traditions in class and on-line discussions.

**Goal #2:** Students will develop disciplined habits of mind that will enable them to think about and frame current educational and organizational problems and issues in systematic, creative and evidence-based ways.

**Learning Outcome:** Students will be able to identify, characterize and frame educational and organizational problems and issues that have relevance for their working situation and provide appropriate evidence regarding the nature and extent of the problem/issue.

**Learning Activities:** Students will:
- Keep a reflective journal in which their ideas about educational problems/issues.
- Investigate problems and issues related to their work context, use concept-mapping software to help characterize the nature or the problem.
- Bring examples of current educational problems/issues to the attention of the class; participate in class and on-line discussions.

**Learning Assessment:** Students will:
• Create a concept-map which illustrates the important variables/factors associated with the identified problem/issue and how they related to one-another.
• Write a detailed description of an educational problem/issue of their choice that characterizes the nature of the problem/issue and brings to bear sufficient and credible evidence to demonstrate the importance and extent of the problem, as well as the need to generate more knowledge regarding the problem/issue.

**Goal #3:** Students will be skilled and critical consumers of educational/organizational research using quantitative, qualitative and mixed method approaches to address educational and organizational problems/issues

**Learning Outcome:** Students will be able to use library and on-line resources to develop a knowledge or evidence base for what is currently known about an educational or organizational problem/issue. They will demonstrate critical acumen in selecting, organizing, and assessing the value of evidence to include in a knowledge-base for: describing the nature of an educational or organizational problem/issue, the rationale for needed inquiry and specific research questions, as well as the framework for a proposed research design for answering the specified research questions.

**Learning Activities:** Students will:
• Participate in various “search for knowledge tasks,” such as a library scavenger hunt that will require using a host of search tools to locate specific kinds/pieces of information.
• Find and review critically a variety of empirical studies using different inquiry methodologies that are focused on a student-selected topic of interest.
• Write an evidence-based paper that describes an educational problem/issue, provides a rationale for needed inquiry, critically reviews a body of relevant research that demonstrates different approaches taken to studying the topic, and concludes with a series of questions not answered in the research reviewed.

**Learning Assessment:** Students will:
• As members of assigned groups, lead class discussion and critiques of empirical research studies illustrating various research traditions (quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods). These group presentation/discussion will allow instructors to gauge the students’ ability to identify, understand, and assess the quality of research from different traditions.
• The final evidence-based paper will demonstrate the students’ ability to find research related to a specific topic of interest, to organize and assess the value of evidence regarding the nature of the problem/issue, what is known about the problem and where the knowledge-gaps exist.

**Goal #4:** Students will develop an understanding and appreciation of how different research questions drive the selection of different inquiry methods and how to evaluate the quality and validity of inquiry results and conclusions.

**Learning Outcome:** Students will be able to characterize and distinguish among different quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methodology research traditions in terms of suitable research questions, types of data, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, validity or credibility issues and reporting.
Learning Activities: Students will:

- Critique journal articles from different research traditions using guidelines provided by the instructor, paying particular attention to the questions posed and methods used to answer them.
- Discuss validity/credibility issues associated with different methodologies in class and on-line.
- Pose appropriate research questions for qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method approached to inquiry.

Learning Assessment: Students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of how to assess the quality and validity of research results and conclusions reported in research papers and peer-reviewed journal articles in the final literature review paper for the course.

Goal #5: Students will have an appreciation for linkages among research questions, measures, sample size and data analysis techniques. Students will be knowledgeable consumers and users of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. They will also have an appreciation for the difference between descriptive and inferential statistics.

Learning Outcome: Students will be able to critique the appropriate use of data analysis techniques in research reports and peer-reviewed literature. They will also be able to prepare, analyze and report on qualitative and quantitative data, using techniques such as thematic analysis, constant comparative analysis, descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency and dispersion), and other data analysis techniques using appropriate software.

Learning Activities: A combination of reading, class discussion and laboratory exercises will be used to facilitate an understanding of the relationships between the various aspects of the inquiry process and data analysis, what descriptive statistics can reveal about quantitative data, and how to report statistical findings. Students will also engage in collecting and analyzing qualitative data. Students will work with a variety of data sets in a laboratory setting to learn the art of data analysis using both EXCEL and SPSS. Individually and in small groups, students will practice:

1. Preparing data for analysis (cleaning, editing, coding, etc.)
2. Computing and using simple univariate and bivariate statistical analyses including: Frequency Distributions & Percentages, Measures of Central Tendency, Measures of Dispersion and Correlation. In Disciplined Inquiry II—Inferential statistics will be introduced and practiced, along with regression analysis techniques.
3. Presenting and reporting data through appropriate tables, graphs and charts.

Learning Assessment: Students will:

- Take assessments during the course to gauge their understanding of and ability to use basic descriptive statistics to analyze typical sets of organizational and school district data.
- A final exam of the instructor’s choice will be given on the data analysis component of the course. For example, Participate in a collaborative exam that will be given during the 7th week of class. It will include both an individual and group component. The individual assessment will include a combination of forced choice response items, similar to the ones appearing on the initial assessment, taken as students entered the course. The collaborative component of the exam.
will involve group members in demonstrating their data analysis and reporting skills using appropriate software packages.

METHODOLOGY

Together these two courses aim to develop habits of mind that will enable students to employ a variety of research approaches in the service of educational and organizational improvement and innovation. Students will gain an understanding and appreciation of how well-designed research studies employing a variety of quantitative, qualitative and mixed inquiry methods can inform the processes of educational and organizational planning, decision-making, change and evaluation. Additionally, the course will promote the development of a cohesive and supportive learning community among the members of the Cohort.

In Disciplined Inquiry I students will concentrate on: selecting a topic for inquiry, developing a rationale for the inquiry, discovering what is already known and where knowledge gaps exist, assessing how others have approached the topic and the validity of their results and conclusions.

In Disciplined Inquiry II students will explore and experience different qualitative, quantitative and mixed approaches to framing research projects dealing with a topic of interest. Students will be asked to frame at least three different research projects focused on the same topic but with different research questions, requiring different types of data, and different approaches to data collection and analysis.

A variety of instructional methods will be employed during both terms, including: journaling and reflective written exercises, class and on-line discussions, small group exercises and problem-solving, student reports and presentations. It is expected that students will complete the tasks listed in the syllabus, as well as those assigned during the course. Both graded and ungraded assignments will be used in these two courses. All assignments, whether graded or ungraded must be completed by the final class to obtain a passing grade in the course.

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION ATTENDANCE POLICY:

The Doctor of Education attendance policy is in addition to the Wilmington University attendance policy which can be found on the University Website or through Blackboard.

Doctor of Education Policy:
In the Doctor of Education program, faculty must approve all requests for exceptions to the College policy. Faculty must be contacted prior to class in all cases except valid emergencies. Failure to obtain approval for exceptions may result in lowering the final passing grade or assigning a FA (failure due to absence).

Course Policy:
Unexcused absences, other than for bona fide emergencies, will result in a one-letter final grade reduction for each such absence.

Representative texts and/or supporting resources:

GENERAL RESEARCH METHODS


THE LITERATURE REVIEW


SPECIFIC RESEARCH METHODS

Action Research


**Case Study Research**


**Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Research**


**Mixed Methods Research**


**Needs Assessment /Evaluation Research**


Qualitative Research


Survey Research


Gordon, J. (Ed.) (2004). Pfeiffer’s class inventories, questionnaires, and surveys for training and development: The most enduring, effective, and valuable assessment for developing managers and leaders. New York; Pfeiffer/Wiley.


**DATA ANALYSIS AND STATISTICS**


Additional Course Information and Schedule of Class Activities will be posted on course blackboard sites by individual instructors.