

California State University, Stanislaus
Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Educational Leadership
EDEL 9990 – Dissertation Syllabus

PROGRAM FOCUS

Candidates who complete successfully the requirements of the Doctorate of Education, Educational Leadership will possess the skills and knowledge to serve as exemplary educational and instructional leaders such as administrators, teachers, counselors, and other roles associated with the improvement of instruction and learning in a P-12 or community college setting. They will have the interpersonal skills, oral and written proficiency, planning and organizational capability, and problem solving capacity to provide direction, guidance and support to other educators. The overarching goal is the improvement of the quality of education for children, adolescents, and adult learners.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A culminating, rigorous, applied research study of a significant educational issue that contributes to improvement of public P-12 or community college practice or policy. Dissertation research must evidence originality, critical and independent thinking, and achievement of doctoral program goals. Students progress toward completion of the dissertation beginning with the proposal and advancing toward completed chapters and an oral defense of the dissertation. Independent consultation with dissertation chair and committee members required during research study. Students must enroll in EDEL 9990 for each of three semesters, at 4 units registration for each enrollment.

CORE ELEMENTS

This course includes the following core elements that are threaded throughout the coursework offered in the program. Key: I = Element is Introduced, R = Element is Reinforced, A = Element is Addressed at an Advanced Level

Assessment and Evaluation – R
Applied Quantitative Inquiry – A
Applied Research – A

Data-driven Decision-Making – R
Applied Qualitative Inquiry – A
Professional Practice - R

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will be able to:

1. Provide visionary leadership focused on systemic educational reform for the improvement of curriculum, teaching, and learning. (1.1)
2. Demonstrate ability to foster professional growth in educational organizations that is research-based and dedicated to the improvement of teaching and learning. (2.2)
3. Demonstrate application of research-based models for student learning interventions. (2.3)
4. Employ a variety of qualitative, descriptive, and inferential research methodologies in investigating the effectiveness of school policies and programs and their impact on student learning. (3.2)
5. Apply research on social, emotional and cognitive growth of students and the role of languages and culture to students' academic development and achievement. (3.3)
6. Demonstrate an advanced knowledge of the research literature related to professional practices in education. (4.1)
7. Conduct an original, significant applied research study in areas of focus. (4.2)
8. Publish and present research findings that contribute to the body of knowledge of educational leadership and the improvement of student learning and achievement. (4.3)

PEDAGOGY

Students work primarily with their dissertation chair based on agreed-upon timelines of completion in order to advance through the proposal and later chapter revisions. Upon approval by the dissertation chair, chapters will be forwarded to the other two committee members for review and feedback.

DOCTORAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to demonstrate the highest level of scholarship in all activities and course assignments in keeping with the norms of doctoral-level coursework.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND SCHOLARLY READINGS

Style Manual

Adherence to the style manual of the American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th ed.* Washington D.C. is mandatory.

Research Literature

An extensive review of the research literature is required and accomplished through print and electronic resources as related to the topic of the research inquiry. A sophisticated review of the research literature is essential for education researchers for the study of complex problems with many confounding variables. Further, the researcher must communicate with a diverse audience and cannot assume shared knowledge, methodologies, or problems.

The following important characteristics of students' literature reviews for their dissertation research will be evaluated, (extracted from Boote, D.N. and Beile, P. Scholars before Researchers: On the Centrality of the Dissertation Literature Review in Research Preparation. *Educational Researcher*, August/September 2005. vol. 34, no. 6, pp. 3-15):

- distinguishing what has been done from what needs to be done
- discovering important variables relevant to the topic
- synthesizing and gaining new perspectives
- identifying relationships between ideas and practices
- establishing the context of the topic/problem
- rationalizing the significance of the program
- acquiring subject vocabulary
- understanding the structure of the topic
- relating ideas and theory to applications
- identifying the main methodologies and research techniques used in prior research
- placing the research in a historical context to show familiarity with state-of-the-art developments

IMPORTANCE OF THE DISSERTATION

This course meets the CSU requirements for a culminating activity for the award of a doctorate degree. It also meets campus requirement for demonstration of graduate writing proficiency commensurate with doctoral education. The dissertation illustrates that students, as educational leaders, are able to apply research skills to very real and critically important problems that face professionals working for educational reform. The research project is defined as a written product resulting from a systematic study of a significant problem. The finished product must evidence originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, clarity of purpose, accurate and thorough documentation of major assumptions, significance of the research, sources for and methods of gathering information, data analyses, and conclusions and recommendations.

DISSERTATION QUALITY

The quality of research for the doctoral dissertation is the most critical component of the student's demonstration of having achieved the program's goals. Such research will make a significant and original contribution to discipline, original in both methodological and substantive quality, and becomes part of the permanent body of knowledge for education, serving as a resource for current and future scholars. The dissertation is a *scholarly publication*, with your, the faculty's, and the university's scholarly reputation on display.

The faculty have created the *Dissertation Requirements* to guide students in their dissertation research, available in the *Student Handbook*. In addition, faculty have created scoring rubrics to guide faculty in their review of the quality of the dissertation research. These rubrics were devised through an examination of the research literature, including research conducted of nine research universities in which experienced faculty across ten disciplines were asked to identify dissertation quality ranging on a continuum from outstanding to not acceptable (Lovitts, B. How to Grade a Dissertation. *Academe*, vol. 91, no. 6, pp. 2005). The finished written dissertation must demonstrate evidence of the following components to receive final approval and award of the graduate degree:

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| Independent endeavor | Originality and critical thinking |
| Significant research endeavor | Clarity of purpose |
| Thoroughness of literature review | Completeness of documentation |
| Methodological soundness | Critical analyses of data |
| Clear explanation of relevancy of results to existing body of knowledge | |
| Completeness of discussion, conclusions, and recommendations | |
| Appropriate organization following style manual | |
| Advanced written communication skills – clarity of expression, grammatical correctness, coherence, and rhetorical sophistication | |

First Enrollment

Dissertation Timeline. Each student must meet with his or her dissertation chair to discuss an appropriate timeline for the completion of the dissertation. (Addresses Student Learning Outcome 4.2)

Proposal. Each student will work closely with his or her dissertation chair to develop and submit a proposal to the Institutional Review Board. The proposal will also be submitted to the other members of the dissertation committee for review. See the *Student Handbook* for more information regarding the proposal. Students may not advance to the oral defense of the proposal until he or she has made satisfactory progress on the proposal. Criteria used in determining satisfactory progress include originality and significance to the reform of P-14 education, a scholarly written presentation of the research idea, and appropriate writing mechanics. The *Dissertation Proposal Rubric* reflecting evaluation criteria is included in the *Student Handbook*. (Addresses Student Learning Outcome 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 4.1, and 4.2)

Peer Review of Proposal Drafts/Support Group. Each enrolled student is required to participate in peer review of proposal drafts. Much of the review will be completed via Blackboard. Additional review and support will occur via face-to-face sessions. (Addresses Student Learning Outcomes 2.2 and 4.1)

Oral Defense of the Proposal. Each student will complete an oral defense of his or her proposal. All members of the dissertation committee will be present at the defense. The *Oral Defense of Proposal Rubric* reflecting evaluation criteria is available in the *Student Handbook*. (Addresses Student Learning Outcomes 2.2, 4.1, and 4.2)

Second Enrollment

Dissertation Chapters 1, 2, and 3. Each student will refine and complete drafts of the first three chapters of the dissertation, in consultation with the dissertation chair. Once the chair approves a chapter, the document will be distributed to the other committee members for additional feedback. Criteria used in determining satisfactory progress include a scholarly presentation of the problem, an exhaustive review of literature, and a comprehensive description of the research methodology, and sophisticated statistical analyses. The *Dissertation Chapters 1, 2, and 3 Rubric* reflecting evaluation criteria is included in the *Student Handbook*. (Addresses Student Learning Outcomes 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3)

Peer Review of Chapter Drafts. Each enrolled student is required to participate in peer review of chapter drafts. Much of the review will be completed via Blackboard. Additional review and support will occur via face-to-face sessions. (Addresses Student Learning Outcomes 2.2 and 4.1)

Third Enrollment

Completed Dissertation. Each student will finalize chapters 1, 2, 3 as well as complete drafts of chapters 4 and 5, in consultation with the dissertation chair and other committee members. After drafts of chapters 4 and 5 are approved by the chair, they will be forwarded to the other two committee members for review and feedback. Criteria used in determining satisfactory progress include a scholarly presentation of the collected data, a thorough analysis and discussion of the results, exemplary writing mechanics, and compliance with both APA and University guidelines. The *Dissertation Scoring Rubric* reflecting evaluation criteria is included in the *Student Handbook*. (Addresses Student Learning Outcomes 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3)

Peer Review of Chapter Drafts. Each enrolled student is required to participate in peer review of chapter drafts. Much of the review will be completed via Blackboard. Additional review and support will occur via face-to-face sessions. (Addresses Student Learning Outcomes 2.2 and 4.1)

Oral Defense of Dissertation. Each student will complete an oral defense of his or her dissertation after receiving approval of the Dissertation Draft from the committee chair. The *Oral Defense of Dissertation Rubric* reflecting evaluation criteria is available in the *Student Handbook*. (Addresses Student Learning Outcomes 2.2, 4.1, and 4.2)

RESEARCH WITH HUMAN SUBJECTS

All research conducted by faculty, staff, or students, or using University facilities, personnel or students must comply with relevant federal, state, and University policies. Under University policy, all research involving live human beings as research subjects must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research. This approval must be obtained in writing prior to any data collection (e.g., pilot work, field testing). Research involving human subjects in P-14 educational institutions must also be conducted in compliance with the regulations of these institutions and approval secured before data collection commences.

Failure to follow these policies may lead to a research misconduct inquiry and/or may result in student research not being accepted in fulfillment of a degree requirement. Additionally, failure to comply with University or P-14 schools' requirements means that the researcher is not acting as an employee or student of the University, and he or she will be personally responsible for any legal actions resulting from the research activity. Additional information on policy and procedures for conducting research under the auspices of CSU Stanislaus may be obtained from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, (209) 667-3493.

STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

The College of Education adheres to the professional ethics and standards of the education profession and the larger academic community. Both faculty and students are responsible for practicing and enforcing professional standards of conduct and scholarship. Such standards are defined by the faculty; the professional accrediting bodies; policies of the University and the CSU; and relevant statutes of federal, state, and local governments.

Students must adhere to scholarly and ethical standards in all courses, fieldwork, and research endeavors. Specifically, the College enforces academic integrity of research, most commonly referred to as plagiarism, normally defined as expropriation of another author's ideas, interpretation, or text without proper attribution to its original source. Students may be placed on probation or disqualified for program continuance based on unsatisfactory scholastic progress or failure to adhere to professional and ethical standards.

GRADING POLICY AND STANDARD OF SCHOLARSHIP

To meet the standard of scholarship for doctoral study, a "Credit" (CR) grade is awarded for the completion of the dissertation equivalent to a B or better. A grade of "Report in Progress" (RP) will be given to demonstrate that satisfactory progress is being made for each enrollment in the dissertation courses. A grade of "No Credit" (NC) will be given if satisfactory progress is not being made in each enrollment in the dissertation courses. After the student has successfully completed the oral defense of the dissertation, the student's grades of RP will be changed to grades of CR. RP grades that are not changed to grades of CR within the allowable period of program enrollment will be changed to a grade of NC, as per university policy.

APPROVAL AND BINDING OF DISSERTATION

Faculty exercise final authority for the intellectual content and bibliographical components of the dissertation. The Graduate School has established policy and procedures for uniformity in the physical format and mechanics of the manuscript. The template for the doctoral dissertation may be found on reserve in the University Library and on the Graduate School website at www.csustan.edu/graduate_school.

Once the dissertation is accepted by the student's dissertation committee, one copy is to be submitted to the Graduate School for reader review by the deadline date established by the Graduate School. Once the reviewed copy is returned to the student and any editing changes requested have been made, two copies of the approved dissertation are to be submitted to the Graduate School no later than the deadline for final submission. Binding expenses are the student's responsibility. The Enrollment Services Office will not record a grade until the Dean of the College of Education has given final approval for the dissertation. Contact the Graduate School for detailed information on the review, approval, and bindery process.

A student may arrange to have the dissertation published in microfilm form, with an abstract of the project published in the quarterly periodical, Dissertation Abstracts. Further details of the microfilming and copyright procedure may be obtained from www.lib.umi.com.

California State University, Stanislaus
Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), Educational Leadership
Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes Addressed in Doctoral Courses

Course Number and Title: **EDEL 9990 Dissertation**

Program Goal 1: Visionary Leadership	Addressed
1.1 Provide visionary leadership focused on systemic educational reform for the improvement of curriculum, teaching, and learning.	X
1.2 Create a philosophy for implementing collaborative management practices that involve the active participation of stakeholders in educational improvement.	
1.3 Demonstrate effective cross-cultural written and oral communication skills appropriate for internal and external communities.	
1.4 Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of educational policy within the context of state and federal school accountability mandates.	
1.5 Demonstrate skills required to balance human, material, and fiscal elements of complex educational organizations.	

Program Goal 2: Teaching and Learning	Addressed
2.1 Demonstrate ability to establish an ethical educational environment and a commitment to high academic achievement for diverse students.	
2.2 Demonstrate ability to foster professional growth opportunities for professional staff that are research-based and dedicated to the improvement of teaching and learning.	X
2.3 Demonstrate application of research-based models for student learning interventions.	X
2.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity and cultural contexts of schools and communities, and primary languages as they relate to academic development and educational equity.	

Program Goal 3: Program Evaluation	Addressed
3.1 Demonstrate skill for establishing educational accountability measures through the use of a variety of print and technology-based sources related to instructional leadership and reform.	
3.2 Employ a variety of qualitative, descriptive, and inferential research methodologies in investigating the effectiveness of school policies and programs and their impact on student learning.	X
3.3 Apply research on the social, emotional, and cognitive growth of students and the role of language and culture to students' academic development/achievement.	X
3.4 Demonstrate assessment skills to promote and evaluate student learning.	
3.5 Demonstrate ability to lead internal and external education organization reviews through evidence-based decision-making.	

Program Goal 4: Applied Research	Addressed
4.1 Demonstrate advanced knowledge of the research literature related to professional practices in education.	X
4.2 Conduct an original and significant applied research study in areas of focus (P-12 Leadership or Community College Leadership).	X
4.3 Publish and present research findings that contribute to the body of knowledge of educational leadership and the improvement of student learning and achievement.	X