COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Education Leadership Program

EDLE 690, Section 001
Using Research to Lead School Improvement
Spring 2016, 3 credit hours

Instructor: Michelle Van Lare, PhD
Phone: 703-993-5855
E-Mail: mvanlare@gmu.edu

Mailing Address: George Mason University
                          4400 University Drive, MSN 4C2
                          Fairfax, VA 22030-4444

Office Hours: By appointment only
Course Times: Wed, 4:30-7:10
Course Term: January 20, 2016 – April 27, 2016
Course Location: Thompson 1020

Course Description

690 Using Research to Lead School Improvement (3:3:0) Develops skills, insights, and understanding of how leaders use research to improve schools, with emphasis on the use of assessment and research data to identify school improvement needs and to design school improvement projects.

Prerequisite(s): EDLE 620. EDLE 690 must be taken concurrently with EDLE 791.

Course Delivery Method

Using Research to Lead School Improvement helps students to identify opportunities to improve student achievement and focus their efforts to change and restructure schools. Through workshops, discussions, case studies, and presentations, students will learn how to conduct library and field-based research, how to bridge theory and research to practice, and how to design school improvement projects based on sound theory and research.

Vision: The Education Leadership Program is dedicated to improving the quality of pre-K – 12 education through teaching, research, and service. Candidates and practicing administrators engage in course work devoted to experiential learning, professional growth opportunities, and doctoral research that informs practice. We educate exceptional leaders who act with integrity as they work to improve schools.

Course Materials

Required Reading

Bauer, S.C. & Brazer, S.D. (2012). Using research to lead school improvement: Turning evidence into action. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Recommended

The American Psychological Association (2009). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Course Content

The two primary purposes of the course are to help candidates learn how to engage in action research and how to use published research to lead school improvement focused on instruction. All of the EDLE program goals are active, to a greater or lesser extent, in this course. Candidates will begin to:

1. develop the capacity to examine and summarize student performance data and use these data to identify school needs;
2. develop an informed perspective on issues in education administration that is grounded in contemporary research;
3. understand how principals can use research to enhance instructional leadership; and
4. be able to apply technology to the task of reviewing, conducting, and/or presenting education research.

Teaching and Learning

Each class will include a variety of activities and exercises. Out-of-class work will rely on readings and on the use of resource task sheets created to complement the primary text. Specific process goals for the class are as follows:

1. Classes will reflect a balance of activities that encourage the exploration of the use of research in instructional leadership. To promote an atmosphere that allows us to accomplish this, we will:
   a. agree to disagree respectfully during class discussions;
   b. strive to be open to new ideas and perspectives; and
   c. listen actively to one another.

2. Candidate work will reflect what is expected from leaders. Hence, it is expected that candidates will:
   a. write papers that are well researched, proofread, submitted in a timely fashion, and conform to APA guidelines;
   b. participate actively in class discussions in a manner that challenges the best thinking of the class; and
   c. provide constructive feedback to others both on their ideas and on their written work, striving to learn from each other and to test each other's ideas.

3. We will endeavor to create an on-line environment that approximates what we know about

learning organizations. Consequently, it is important that we create a space that allows participants to try out new ideas and voice opinions without fear of ridicule or embarrassment. The hallmark of a learning organization is a balance between openness and constructive feedback; hence, everyone is expected to:

a. demonstrate appropriate respect for one another;
b. voice concerns and opinions about class process openly;
c. engage in genuine inquiry;
d. recognize and celebrate each other's ideas and accomplishments;
e. show an awareness of each other's needs; and
f. maintain strict confidentiality regarding any information shared.

Course Objectives

Candidates taking this course will:

1. understand and apply planning, assessment, and instructional leadership that builds collective professional capacity;
2. understand and apply systems and organization theory;
3. understand and apply management and leadership skills that achieve effective and efficient organizational operations;
4. understand and apply basic leadership theories and knowledge that impact schools.

Candidate Outcomes

Successful candidates will emerge from the course with the ability to:

1. gather and analyze student achievement and demographic data available from their school, school district, and the state;
2. search online databases for recent publications relevant to a specific topic, and prepare a brief summary of applied research on a topic relevant to the improvement of instruction at their school site;
3. use education research to develop a position based on more than one's opinion;
4. understand basic statistics (e.g., measures of central tendency & dispersion; basic inferential statistics) and their application in educational research;
5. understand and be able to evaluate basic research designs, and apply a research design to the study of a problem related to instruction and/or improvement at their school site; and
6. prepare and defend a proposal for a School Improvement Project (SIP) that becomes the blueprint for the capstone project required in the EDLE program internship.

Relationship of Course to Internship (EDLE 791)

Although the internship is a separate course, the Education Leadership program has integrated internship-related activities into course work. During this course, students will prepare and present a proposal for a school improvement project that they will implement and evaluate as a part of their internship activities over the remainder of the program.

Vision: The Education Leadership Program is dedicated to improving the quality of pre-K – 12 education through teaching, research, and service. Candidates and practicing administrators engage in course work devoted to experiential learning, professional growth opportunities, and doctoral research that informs practice. We educate exceptional leaders who act with integrity as they work to improve schools.

National Standards and Virginia Competencies

The following ELCC standards are addressed in this course:

ELCC Standard 1.0: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school or district vision of learning supported by the school community.

      1.2   Articulate a Vision
      1.3   Implement a Vision
      1.4   Steward a Vision

ELCC Standard 2.0: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing an effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning, and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff.

      2.3 Apply Best Practice to Student Learning

ELCC Standard 3.0: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by managing the organization, operations, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

      3.1   Manage the Organization
      3.2   Manage Operations
      3.3   Manage Resources

ELCC Standard 4.0: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

      4.2 Respond to Community Interests and Needs

ELCC Standard 6.0: Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

      6.1. Understand the Larger Context

This course addresses the following VDOE Competencies:

1) Knowledge understanding, and application of planning, assessment, and instructional leadership that builds collective professional capacity, including:

a) Collaborative leadership in gathering and analyzing data to identify needs to develop and implement a school improvement plan that results in increased student learning;
b) Identification, analysis, and resolution of problems using effective problem-solving techniques; and
c) Communication of a clear vision of excellence, linked to mission and core beliefs that promotes continuous improvement consistent with the goals of the school division.

2) Knowledge, understanding and application of systems and organizations, including:
   a) Systems theory and the change process of systems, organizations and individuals, using appropriate and effective adult learning models;
   b) Aligning organizational practice, division mission, and core beliefs for developing and implementing strategic plans;
   c) Information sources and processing, including data collection and data analysis strategies;
   d) Using data as a part of ongoing program evaluation to inform and lead change;
   e) Developing a change management strategy for improved student outcomes; and
   f) Developing empowerment strategies to create personalized learning environments for diverse schools.

3) Knowledge understanding and application of management and leadership skills that achieve effective and efficient organizational operations, including:
   a) Application of data-driven decision making to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.

4) Knowledge understanding and application of basic leadership theories and influences that impact schools including:
   a) Concepts of leadership including systems theory, change theory, learning organizations and current leadership theory.

Course Requirements, Performance-based Assessment, and Evaluation Criteria

Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class on time and to remain in class until it ends. If you are ill or have an emergency that prevents you from attending class, please call or e-mail me in advance. If you miss more than one class, you arrive late to multiple classes, and/or leave class early multiple times, your participation grade will be affected.

General Expectations

Consistent with expectations of a master's level course in the Education Leadership program, grading is based heavily on student performance on written assignments. The assignments constructed for this course reflect a mix of skills associated with the application of research to

education leadership contexts. Overall, written work will be assessed using the following broad criteria:

1. Application of concepts embedded in assigned readings and other materials and reinforced in classroom activities
2. The quality of analysis, synthesis, and application
3. The ability to write in a clear, concise, and organized fashion

Additionally, a portion of the class grade will be based on participation and the contribution you make to class discussions. The overall weights of the various performances are as follows:

Class participation 10 points
Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions, in group activities, and in serving as critical friends to other students. Arriving at class more than 30 minutes late or leaving more than 30 minutes before the end of class may result in loss of points.

Written assignments - 90 points
Several different types of performance-based assignments will be completed during the semester. Each assignment relates to the application of educational research in your school setting. A description of each assignment and a rubric for grading each assignment are included at the end of this syllabus.

The assignments are designed sequentially to help you define and plan the school improvement project **you will be conducting as your capstone project for the internship**. Thus, in the first assignment, you examine school performance data and define a research topic. In the second and third, you review the available research literature on that topic, and begin to define the specific improvement project you will implement. Finally, for the fourth assignment, you write your School Improvement Project Proposal—the improvement project that will be implemented during your internship. The School Improvement Project Proposal is the program-level Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) for this course.

TK20 Performance-Based Assessment submission Requirement

Every student registered for any EDLE course with a required performance-based assessment (SIP Proposal) is required to submit this assessment to TK20 through Blackboard (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor.) Evaluation of your performance-based assessment will also be provided using TK20 through Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to TK20 (through Blackboard) will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed upon completion of the required Blackboard submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Submitting papers: All papers must be submitted on time, electronically via Blackboard. Feedback on your papers will also be provided via Blackboard. Blackboard will be set up to allow submission of any given assignment up until 12:00 midnight on the date it is due.

Late work: Candidates' work is expected on time, meaning no later than by midnight of the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted except in emergency situations that have been discussed and approved by the instructor in advance of the due date. Please take advantage of instructor office hours and availability to get assistance prior to assignment deadlines. If you happen to be absent on the day a paper is due, the due date remains and the paper must be submitted electronically.

Grading scale:

> A+ = 100 percent
> A = 95 – 99.99 percent
> A- = 90 – 94.99 percent
> B+ = 86 – 89.99 percent
> B = 83 – 85.99 percent
> B- = 80 – 82.99 percent
> C = 75 – 79.99 percent
> F = 74.99 percent or below

George Mason University Statement of Expectations and Resources

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See http://caps.gmu.edu/].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See http://ods.gmu.edu/].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support
- students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/].
- Plagiarism Statement: Statement of English Department at George Mason University Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple

listing of books and articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting. Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions for this include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writers' own insights or findings from their own field research, and what has been termed common knowledge. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious; what is common knowledge for one audience may not be so for another. In such situations, it is helpful, to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being "reader friendly." In other words, writers provide a citation for any piece of information that they think their readers might want to investigate further. Not only is this attitude considerate of readers, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will never be guilty of plagiarism. (Statement of English Department at George Mason University)George Mason University operates under an honor system, which is published in the University Catalog and deals specifically with cheating, attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Please familiarize yourself with the honor code, especially the statement on plagiarism (http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html). If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor or utilize the GMU writing center.

- Plagiarism and the Internet: Copyright rules also apply to users of the Internet who cite from Internet sources. Information and graphics accessed electronically must also be cited, giving credit to the sources. This material includes but is not limited to e-mail (don't cite or forward someone else's e-mail without permission), newsgroup material, information from Web sites, including graphics. Even if you give credit, you must get permission from the original source to put any graphic that you did not create on your web page. Shareware graphics are not free. Freeware clipart is available for you to freely use. If the material does not say "free," assume it is not. Putting someone else's Internet material on your web page is stealing intellectual property. Making links to a site is, at this time, okay, but getting permission is strongly advised, since many Web sites have their own requirements for linking to their material.

- Academic Integrity & Inclusivity: This course embodies the perspective that we all have differing perspectives and ideas and we each deserve the opportunity to share our thoughts. Therefore, we will conduct our discussions with respect for those differences. That means, we each have the freedom to express our ideas, but we should also do so keeping in mind that our colleagues deserve to hear differing thoughts in a respectful manner, i.e. we may disagree without being disagreeable. http://integrity.gmu.edu/

- Student Privacy Policy: George Mason University strives to fully comply with FERPA by protecting the privacy of student records and judiciously evaluating requests for release of information from those records. Please see George Mason University's student privacy policy https://registrar.gmu.edu/students/privacy/

- Professional Dispositions: Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See http://gse.gmu.edu/*]*

Proposed Class Schedule:
To accommodate the learning needs of the class, the topic and reading schedule may be amended during the semester. Any changes will be communicated in class and via email or Blackboard.

Session & Date	Topic(s)	Reading (due this session)	Homework (due this session)
Class 1 Jan. 20	* Introduction and overview * How does EDLE 690 fit with EDLE 791? * Looking at Equity Audits	Review syllabus B&B Preface	
Class 2 Jan. 27	* Instructional leadership, organizational learning *Equity Audits	B&B Chapters 1 & 2 McKenzie & Skrla (2011)	B&B Worksheet 2.1 Secure School Vision/Mission/Goals & Objectives and bring them to class, along with your ideas of a problem on which to focus Read/become familiar with your school's improvement plan and how well the school accomplished its objectives.
Class 3 Feb. 3	*Assessing your local situation *Using technology to collect data	B&B Chapters 3 & 4 Read ITP Student Example	B&B Worksheets 4.1, 4.2
Class 4 Feb. 10	* Using data to tell stories and data workshop * ITP Peer Review Session	B&B Chapter 5 Marsh, Ferrell, & Bertrand (2014)	**Have draft of Improvement Target Proposal ready for peer review** Bring Laptops for library search

Vision: The Education Leadership Program is dedicated to improving the quality of pre-K – 12 education through teaching, research, and service. Candidates and practicing administrators engage in course work devoted to experiential learning, professional growth opportunities, and doctoral research that informs practice. We educate exceptional leaders who act with integrity as they work to improve schools.

			B&B Worksheets 5.1, 5.2, 5.3
Sunday 2/14: DUE - Improvement Target Proposal (ITP)			
Class 5 Feb. 17	*Root Cause Analysis *Review Annotated Bibliography Assignment and bring Qs to class.	B&B Chapter 6 Yeager & Walton (2011) Begin searching/reading articles on your area of focus from ITP.	B&B Worksheets 6.2 – 6.4 Conduct your own RCA Explore "Research Center" on Blackboard.
Class 6 Feb. 24	* What does "Quality" research look like? * How do we analyze research articles? * Effective searching * Preparing the AB	B&B Chapter 7 Find and read literature relevant to your topic. Read AB Student Example	Keep track of your articles using worksheets Review APA guidelines and info in Research Center.
Feb. 28: Due - Annotated Bib Entries (AB)			
Class 7 Mar. 2	* Analyzing Qualitative and Quantitative Research * Research Brief Overview * Cautionary Tales	B&B Chapter 8 Horn (2007)	Review Research Brief assignment/rubric Have your articles available for group discussion
Mar. 9	Spring Break!	Breathe…and find some sun….	
Class 8 Mar. 16	* Making Sense of Your Research * Writing Workshop * Chapter 9 Highlights and SIP Components	B&B Chapter 9 Read research on your topic.	Bring research articles to class
Class 9 Mar. 23	Peer Review Session for RB	Read RB Student Example	**Have draft of Research Brief ready for peer review** Complete worksheets 9.2-9.3
March 27: Due Research Brief (AB)			
Class 10 Mar. 30	* Implementing and Evaluating your SIP	B&B Chapter 10	B&B Worksheet 10.1
Class 11 April 6	SIP Workshop		Bring a draft of SIP to class – at any stage
Class 12 April 13	SIP proposal presentations		Prepare SIP Presentation
Class 13 April 20	SIP proposal presentations		Prepare SIP Presentation
Class 14 April 27	Wrap-Up: From proposals to enactment, managing your project during internship		**School Improvement Project Proposal Due**

Resources

Horn, I. (2007). Fast kids, slow kids, lazy kids: Framing the mismatch problem in Mathematics teachers' conversations. The Journal of Learning Sciences. 16(1), 37-79.

Marsh, J., Ferrell, C., & Bertrand, M. (2014). Trickle-down accountability: How middle school teachers engage students in data use. *Education Policy*. Accessed from doi:10.1177/0895904814531653

McKenzie, K. B. & Skrla, L.E. (2011). Using equity audits in the classroom to reach and teach all students. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Yeager, D. S. & Walton, G. M. (2011). Social-psychological interventions in education: They're not magic. *Review* of Educational Research. 81, 267– 301. doi: 10.3102/0034654311405999

<div align="center">

Writing Assignment 1: Improvement Target Proposal
20 points
</div>

Overview:

Data are tools – they represent a primary source of knowledge-building for school improvement. As leaders in your school, one of your primary tasks is to understand available data relating to your school's performance in meeting its goals and objectives. Additionally, you need to learn how to communicate about these data to various stakeholder groups. In this task, you are asked to assemble some of these data, and prepare a short summary suitable for presentation to a school leadership team.

Tasks:

1. Identify the variety of published data relating to your school's demographic characteristics (e.g., enrollment, attendance, composition of the student body, staffing); measures of student learning; and any perceptual data that might exist relating to such things as school climate. These data may be available on your school or school system's website, on related websites (e.g., state education department), or in published material.

2. Determine your school's primary performance objectives: What is the school expected to achieve? Dig deeper than routine accountability requirements; examine the school's current improvement plan, for instance, to identify one or more current improvement priorities.

3. Examine relevant assessment data for at least a two-year period. To do this, you will need to triangulate the data available to you – look across various sources to answer the question: How well are we doing? As a leader in your school, you will add value to your analysis by using your craft knowledge to interpret what these data means. You may limit your focus to one or more areas identified as priorities for your school (in other words, you do not need to present data on each and every curricular objective, but you should provide a reasonable synopsis of "how well we're doing.")

4. Identify any areas that reflect priorities – for instance, areas in which students are achieving at a level below your school's goals and objectives. Be careful to identify performance indicators that clearly relate to the objective(s) you've identified. The goal here is NOT to "solve" an identified problem, but to highlight areas that are in continued need of attention in your school's improvement plan.

5. Prepare a short paper intended to inform and persuade your team regarding an area that requires attention. Includes a brief overview of important school demographic characteristics (particularly characteristics of the student body); information related to the school's improvement goals; data relevant to current levels of performance; and a clear statement of the challenge area(s) you believe require attention in your improvement planning. Use the attached rubric as a guide to structure your paper.

This is an exercise in leadership communication. Be selective – you cannot provide an overview of all of the data that might be available. Craft your examination to focus on important areas of concern. NOTE – the tone of the paper is persuasive: you are providing your expert judgment based on your analysis of school performance data, and in the end you are lobbying the team to adopt the focus you identified as important. Direct the paper to your school's leadership team as the audience – the team may include new members, including one or more parents or community members. Avoid jargon, and be aware of the clarity of your presentation – if you confuse your audience or present a lot of disparate data that don't connect to your school's objectives, you've failed to add value to the discussion. Use tables or graphs sensibly -- to briefly summarize the discussion and direct the reader's attention.

This paper should be no more than eight (8) pages (not including the cover page) and should be written in a fashion that is suitable for the audience described above.

EDLE 690 Improvement Target Proposal

Assessment Rubric Levels/Criteria	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Meets Expectations (3)	Approaching Expectations (2)	Falls Below Expectations (1)
Introduction and thesis (10%) Any written statement should begin with an introduction that draws the reader into the topic and includes a one-sentence thesis. The thesis states what the author intends to prove or demonstrate in the body of the written work. For this paper, the thesis must name the focal area(s) for improvement.	The paper starts with an introduction that provides a clear roadmap for the reader, foreshadowing what the Improvement Target Proposal is intended to provide in the way of information. The thesis appears as the last sentence of the introductory paragraph.	The paper starts with a brief introduction that alludes to the purpose of the paper and provides a general foreshadowing of what is to be included in the document. The thesis may not be entirely clear or appropriate.	The introduction provides only the barest hint about the purpose of the paper and the information to be shared. The thesis is either confusing or missing.	The paper lacks an introduction entirely, or the introduction fails to provide useful information that is linked to the intended purpose of the document.
Characteristics of the school and diversity of the school community (25%) (ELCC 4.2) This section is intended to help the reader understand the nature of the school so that the priority area will make sense	The paper includes a thorough and concise overview of the demographic characteristics of the school, school staffing, and the school community. The school's current improvement objectives are highlighted, and (if available) data related to characteristics of the	The paper includes a general overview of the demographic characteristics of the school, school staffing, and school community; the school's current improvement objectives, and measures of school climate. Some important demographic data are not evident.	The paper includes a limited review of demographic and staffing data; the school's current improvement objectives, and measures of school climate. Important data are omitted or inaccurately presented.	The presentation of demographic data is missing or wholly inadequate.

	school climate are described.			
Use of data to analyze school performance related to the school's vision and objectives (25%) (ELCC 1.2) This section explains where the school has been in terms of student achievement.	The paper includes a clear and concise summary of the school's performance based on an assessment of important educational outcomes reflecting the school's vision and objectives, over at least a two-year period.	The paper includes a summary of the school's performance over a two-year period, using general measures of important educational outcomes.	The paper includes a summary of the school's current performance in general terms. Specific indicators or educational outcomes are unclear or missing.	The assessment of school performance is missing or wholly inadequate
Identification of improvement area (20%) (ELCC 1.3) This is the most important point of the	The paper concludes with a recommendation of one or more focal areas to improve instruction. The identified achievement	The paper concludes with a recommendation of one or more focal areas to improve instruction. The	The paper concludes with a general recommendation of one or more focal areas to improve	The recommendation is missing or wholly inadequate.

Writing Assignment 2: Annotated Bibliography
10 Points

Overview: As emerging leaders in your schools, you need to develop the skills associated with accessing the knowledge base on questions that are important to the understanding and improvement of teaching and learning. An annotated bibliography provides you with the opportunity to learn how to sift through existing research on a question that interests you and to begin to organize the knowledge that you are gaining by reading this literature.

Tasks:
1. Use the problem, challenge, or gap you identified in the previous writing assignment. With this focus, articulate a research or guiding question. For example, "Why do second language learners experience disproportionately low achievement in mathematics?" That might be a bit broad, so your research problem or question is likely to narrow as you read relevant literature.
2. Find a number of research articles (theoretical works, empirical studies, and syntheses) that speak to the question you selected. This is an iterative process; as you examine the literature, you will narrow your search by stating (and restating) the research question that defines what you want to know and why. You might identify several articles that are review pieces or syntheses of the literature themselves, but you should also concentrate on identifying primary research (i.e., papers that present an analysis using quantitative or qualitative methods to contribute to the knowledge base on the question). Most of your research can be accomplished on the Internet, with support from your school library, the public library, and/or GMU libraries.

Vision: The Education Leadership Program is dedicated to improving the quality of pre-K – 12 education through teaching, research, and service. Candidates and practicing administrators engage in course work devoted to experiential learning, professional growth opportunities, and doctoral research that informs practice. We educate exceptional leaders who act with integrity as they work to improve schools.

3. Prepare an ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY using at least five (5) of the most important papers you found. An annotated bibliography is a list of articles (or books) that includes a brief description of the work and an evaluation of its usefulness. The purpose of an annotated bibliography is to provide information about the relevance, utility, and quality of the source **for your purposes**.

4. Your annotated bibliography should include a statement of the topic and research question you are investigating; five or more annotated entries using the format presented on Worksheet 6.1 (page 164) from the text (one form per reference), and a complete reference list showing all of the papers you consulted (at least 10). References must be in APA format.

Annotated Bibliography Assessment

Rubric *Levels:*	**Exceeds Expectations (4)**	**Meets Expectations (3)**	**Approaching Expectations (2)**	**Falls Below Expectations (1)**
Criteria:				
Statement of problem: (ELCC 1.2) (10%) A clear statement of the problem helps to guide the reader.	The paper begins with a clear statement of the question or problem, which specifically relates to a performance gap identified using assessment results, demographic data, and analysis of school and community needs.	The paper begins with a statement of the question or problem which relates generally to a performance gap identified using assessment data.	The statement of the research question or problem is evident, but is vaguely worded or poorly spelled out. It is difficult to discern a clear focus for the research.	The statement of research question or problem is missing or wholly inadequate.
Bibliographic entries - content (ELCC 2.2) (40%) Articles read and reviewed should contain original research or useful reviews of research.	Annotated entries provide a clear and concise summary of each research source. Each entry includes an overview of the research (including method and findings); and an assessment of its utility.	Annotated entries provide a summary of each research source. Each entry includes a brief overview of the research and an assessment of its utility, but may be lacking in specificity.	Annotated entries provide a general overview of research sources, but lack detail or are missing significant elements needed to make the entries useful.	Annotated entries are severely lacking in detail, rendering them of little use.
Bibliographic entries – focus (10%) Articles read must focus on the research problem.	All entries clearly and specifically relate to the research question or problem.	Most entries relate clearly to the research question or problem.	Most entries relate only generally to the research question or problem.	The connection between annotated entries and the research question or problem is difficult to discern.
Bibliographic entries – quality (10%) Articles used must be worthwhile.	Sources are well balanced, including original research and synthesis pieces from high-quality, credible sources.	Entries are included from quality sources, but are dominated by synthesis pieces; original research is not evident.	One or more entries are included from questionable sources, reflecting largely opinion pieces rather than original research or syntheses of	Entries are dominated by material from questionable sources; a review of research is not evident.

			research.	

Writing Assignment 3: Research Brief
20 Points

Overview: A research brief is a short literature review or compilation and thematic summary of published work on a topic that both summarizes and evaluates what is known on the topic. The main difference between a research brief and a formal literature review is the intended audience: address your research brief to a practitioner audience (e.g., your principal or a school leadership team). The research brief is intended to use published research to make a persuasive case regarding the **root causes** of the problem, challenge, or gap you have identified in your school and one or two promising solutions. Use your annotated bibliography and the papers you collected to provide a synthesis of the knowledge base and to identify what is known, what is not known (gaps in the literature), and what is missing (unanswered questions) in the extant research.

(Note – the material you presented in the AB is a minimum – you will likely need more sources to do a good job here! Remember, you are trying to present a trustworthy document that school leaders will rely on to formulate actions.)

Tasks:
1. Write an introductory paragraph that includes a clearly-worded, one-sentence guiding question that describes the purpose of your investigation. This should be a reformulation (if needed) or restatement of the question you framed for your annotated bibliography. Your introduction must also include a thesis that clearly states in one sentence the argument you are putting forward in the paper with respect to root causes and promising solutions that would address them.
2. Using the research literature you collected to prepare your annotated bibliography, along with any additional sources you might identify, write a review of the literature that addresses the question and supports your thesis. The body of the document should summarize and analyze the existing research. Remember that this is not simply a listing of the research cited – your review adds value by organizing various studies, and identifying strengths and weaknesses of established work.
3. For purposes of this exercise (and the intended audience – your school's leadership team), conclude the paper with a section that briefly summarizes what is known and provides a recommendation based on the available research. For instance, if your question was, "Why do second language learners experience disproportionately low achievement in mathematics?" and the research focuses your attention on the need to teach mathematics vocabulary prior to introducing new concepts, you might recommend that your school's improvement team work toward an improvement objective that addresses the mathematics curriculum in this way. Be as persuasive as you can – this recommendation will connect to your School Improvement Project (SIP) proposal (the next writing assignment).

Your paper should be no more than eight (8) pages (excluding title page and references), and must include citations and a reference list in APA format.

Vision: The Education Leadership Program is dedicated to improving the quality of pre-K – 12 education through teaching, research, and service. Candidates and practicing administrators engage in course work devoted to experiential learning, professional growth opportunities, and doctoral research that informs practice. We educate exceptional leaders who act with integrity as they work to improve schools.

HINT: Your paper should be closely related to your Improvement Target Proposal, leading you to write your guiding question in a manner that suggests a potential course of action for your School Improvement Proposal. Remember, to get the most out of your efforts, you should use the literature and your own investigative work to identify likely *root causes* of the performance challenge and ways to reduce or eliminate these *root causes*.

Research Brief Assignment

Rubric *Levels:*	**Exceeds Expectations (4)**	**Meets Expectations (3)**	**Approaching Expectations (2)**	**Falls Below Expectations (1)**
Criteria:				
Introduction: research problem, overview (15%) The introduction must be very clear about the direction and focus of the paper.	The paper starts with a clear and concise statement of the research question and an introduction that provides a clear thesis for the reader that lays out the author's main argument. The thesis should be related to the achievement problem, challenge or gap identified in your Improvement Target Proposal.	The paper starts with a brief introduction that alludes to the research question and provides a general thesis.	An introduction is provided that gives only the barest hint about the research question or the information to be shared.	The paper lacks an introduction entirely, or the introduction fails to provide useful information that is linked to the research question.
Body: Application of research to school improvement (ELCC 1.3) (40%) For the research to be meaningful, it must be directly related to a specific question and argument.	The body of the paper presents a systematically organized synthesis of research directly relating to the question and supporting the thesis. Analysis is provided that reflects an awareness of and judgment about the quality of published work.	The body of the paper provides a loosely organized synthesis and analysis of published work related to the research question and the thesis.	The body of the paper describes published work generally related to the research question, but provides a limited synthesis or analysis of published work.	The synthesis and analysis of published work is wholly missing or inadequate.
Conclusion and recommendation (ELCC 2.2) (20%) A conclusion should be both summative and analytical. Re-stating the thesis is an important vehicle for tying the paper together.	The paper concludes with a clear and concise summary of research directly related to the research question (including a re-statement of the thesis), and a recommendation and rationale advocating for a possible course of action that could effectively result in the desired improvement(s).	The paper concludes with a general summary of research related to the research question and the thesis. A recommendation advocating for a possible course of action that could effectively lead to desired improvement(s) is presented in general terms, but the rationale for the	The paper concludes with a general summary of research on the research question. A recommendation advocating for a possible course of action is not evident.	The conclusion is missing or wholly inadequate; the paper ends abruptly.

		recommendation is not entirely persuasive.		

Writing Assignment 4: SIP Proposal
Performance-Based Assessment
40 points

Overview: School leaders are increasingly expected to engage in short-term action research projects to demonstrate the efficacy of school programs and practices. As a part of your internship, you will propose a School Improvement Project (SIP) that addresses a problem or "achievement gap" identified through research on your school. Your proposal will describe a specific improvement project that you will **design, implement**, and **evaluate** during your internship, and later analyze in one of your concluding courses. The expectation is that you will lead a team in implementation of this project.

Tasks:

1. OVERVIEW: The proposal should start with a concise and well thought out description of the achievement gap you have identified through your assessment of student performance and achievement data, followed by a clear **statement of purpose** that generally demonstrates how you intend to address the performance gap. After stating this purpose, include an **overview** of the project that provides a brief description of what you intend to do to implement your proposal.

2. RATIONALE: Include a concise and well thought out **rationale** that describes why it is important to address the performance gap you identified, and your espoused theory of action that suggests why taking the proposed action will lead to improvement in the targeted area. Be sure to describe how your SIP connects to or reinforces your school's vision and objectives. Use the research literature to support your strategy for addressing the achievement gap you identified.

3. OUTCOMES: Provide a short description of the **specific outcomes** you are seeking by implementing your project. Be specific; identify the performance indicators you intend to track in order to measure the educational outcomes that are important in your improvement area.

4. INVOLVEMENT: The expectation is that you will be engaging members of your school community in designing and enacting your improvement project. Provide a short summary of who you involved in the creation of this proposal, and which stakeholders you envision involving in the enactment and assessment of the SIP. Describe how you plan to enlist their

support and build your team, including means you will use to maintain effective communication throughout the project.

5. ACTION PLAN: The proposal must include a clear, step-by-step **action plan** that defines the objective of the project (i.e., restates your purpose as an action objective), and delineates each of the major tasks that need to be completed during the project; when each task will be completed; who is responsible for each task; the resources needed to complete each task; and specific "success signals" that serve as indicators of the completion of major steps in the project. Use worksheets 9. 1 – 9.4 from *Using Research to Lead School Improvement* to help you prepare your action plan.

6. BUDGET: Following the action plan, a clear, well thought out budget summary should be presented. This can be a short narrative presentation (you do not need budget codes, etc.) The narrative should include a synopsis of the funding needed to complete the project; a description of any existing resources that will be devoted to the project, and a discussion of how authority to use these resources has been (or will be) procured.

7. EVALUATION PLAN: Include a narrative explanation of how you plan to **evaluate your project**, which includes a) the specific indicators you will be examining to determine impact of the project on student performance or on the learning environment; b) a description of how and when you plan to collect data about these indicators, and c) a brief description of the analysis you plan to conduct to examine these data in order to ascertain the impact of the project on your intended outcomes.

8. CONSEQUENCE ANALYSIS: In closing, briefly discuss the advantages and the potential limitations of the project. In particular, conduct a **consequence analysis** to predict any issues that might arise during implementation, or any limitations you might face in terms of using the evaluation design to draw trustworthy inferences about the effectiveness of the project. If possible, include reference to issues raised in the literature.

NOTE: The proposal is not an essay, per se; it can be written using each of the sections listed above, and some information can be presented in bullets (e.g., a listing of outcomes measured) or in tables (e.g., the action plan). There is a fair amount of redundancy in this proposal – for instance, the description of the project should provide a brief narrative explanation that matches the project delineated in the action plan; the list of outcomes measured should relate to the evaluation plan (which describes how you will go about collecting these data and what you will look at to know if you were successful). Your audience for this proposal is your principal – imagine that you are presenting this document to him/her, and lobbying for adoption of this project (which you will lead).

Your research proposal should be no more than 12 pages (not including cover page and reference list), and should include citations and a reference list in APA format.

EDLE 690 SIP Proposal

2011 ELCC STDS Levels/ Criteria	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Mets Expectations (3)	Approaching Expectations (2)	Falls Below Expectations (1)
Statement of purpose and overview of project: Use of data to identify SIP topic that relates to and supports the school's vision and objectives (**ELCC 1.2**) **(10%)**	The proposal begins with a clear statement of purpose, which relates specifically to a performance gap identified using assessment results, demographic data, and analysis of school and community needs. A concise, but thorough description of the proposed project is provided that spells out the actions proposed to reduce the identified performance gap.	The proposal begins with a statement of purpose which relates generally to a performance gap identified using assessment data. A brief description of the proposed project is provided.	The statement of purpose and/or description of the project is evident, but is vaguely worded or poorly spelled out. It is difficult to discern a clear focus of the project.	The statement of purpose and/or project description is missing or wholly inadequate.
Rationale: Use of research-supported strategies to promote continual and sustainable improvement (**ELCC 1.3**) **(10%)**	The proposal includes a concise and well supported rationale that describes the nature of the gap being addressed, why the problem is important, and how taking the proposed action is intended to lead to improvement. Specific, current research is presented in support of the strategy selected to address the identified performance gap.	The proposal includes a rationale that describes the nature of the gap being addressed and why the problem is important to the attainment of the school's vision, but it is somewhat unclear about how taking the proposed action is intended to lead to improvement. Research supporting the general improvement strategy is referenced.	The proposal includes a rationale, but only generally connects the proposed action to the reduction of the identified performance gap. Research supporting the proposed action is weakly presented or not evident.	The rationale is weak or wholly inadequate. It is not clear how enacting the proposed project relates to reducing the identified performance gap.
Outcomes: Identification of specific outcomes that will be used to monitor and evaluate progress and plans (ELCC 1.4)	Specific indicators are identified and described that will be used to monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of the project. Each	Specific outcome indicators are identified and described that could be used to monitor and evaluate the impact of the project. Indicators	The proposal makes general reference to the kinds of outcomes sought, but specific measurable indicators of implementation	The outcomes associated with the project are not specified, or outcomes that do not relate to the identified performance gap are

Vision: The Education Leadership Program is dedicated to improving the quality of pre-K – 12 education through teaching, research, and service. Candidates and practicing administrators engage in course work devoted to experiential learning, professional growth opportunities, and doctoral research that informs practice. We educate exceptional leaders who act with integrity as they work to improve schools.

(10%)	indicator is demonstrably connected to either monitoring implementation fidelity of the project or reducing the identified performance gap.	used to monitor implementation fidelity are unclear.	fidelity and/or project outcomes are not clearly identified.	proposed.
Involvement: Identification and formation of team to distribute leadership **(ELCC 3.4)** **(5%)**	The proposal clearly describes which stakeholders will be involved in enactment, monitoring, and evaluation of the SIP. All stakeholders who are important to the success of the project are involved. Team member roles and responsibilities are outlined, as are means that will be used to maintain effective communication among team members.	The proposal describes the primary stakeholders who will be involved in enactment of the SIP. One or more groups whose involvement may be important are omitted. Attributes of team organization are described in general terms.	The proposal is unclear about stakeholders' involvement in enactment of the SIP, or fails to mention groups who are obviously important to the success of the project. Attributes of team organization are referenced in general terms.	Stakeholder involvement in planning and/or implementation is not evident.
Involvement: Understand and sustain a culture of trust, collaboration and high expectations for students **ELCC 2.1** **(5%)**	The proposal clearly describes how the candidate will build a collaborative team to promote improvement goals, and build trust throughout enactment, monitoring, and evaluation of the SIP.	The proposal describes some ways the candidate will build a collaborative team and build trust in enactment, monitoring, and evaluation of the SIP.	The proposal is unclear about ways collaboration and involvement will be fostered throughout the project.	The proposal is silent with regard to stakeholder involvement and/or trust building.

Vision: The Education Leadership Program is dedicated to improving the quality of pre-K – 12 education through teaching, research, and service. Candidates and practicing administrators engage in course work devoted to experiential learning, professional growth opportunities, and doctoral research that informs practice. We educate exceptional leaders who act with integrity as they work to improve schools.

Action Plan: Development of action plan to guide the implementation of SIP (ELCC 3.1) (15%)	The proposal includes a clear and well thought out action plan that focuses on effective deployment of human, fiscal, and material resources to guide the implementation of the SIP. The plan thoroughly delineates each of the major tasks to be accomplished in enacting the project; when each task will be completed; who is involved in accomplishing each task; the resources needed to complete each task; and specific "success signals" or process indicators that will be tracked to monitor completion of each stage of the project, including evaluation of the project.	The proposal includes an action plan that describes how human, fiscal, and material resources will be used to implement the SIP. The plan delineates most of the major tasks needed to enact the project; when various tasks will be completed; who is involved in accomplishing each task; the resources needed to complete each task; and specific "success signals" or process indicators that will be tracked to monitor completion of each stage of the project. Some necessary tasks or implementation details are vaguely described or missing.	The action plan includes details tasks, time lines, persons responsible, resources, and success indicators proposed to implement the project, but does so in a fashion that is unlikely to result in successful deployment of human, fiscal, and material resources to accomplish the stated purpose. Significant tasks are inadequately spelled out or are missing entirely.	The action plan is poorly organized, severely lacking in detail, or wholly missing. It is entirely unclear how any proposed actions can result in successful implementation of the project.
Professional development: Inclusion of appropriate human resource development plans (ELCC 2.3) (5%)	The proposal includes clear and well thought out plans for the development and supervision of instructional and other staff needed to enact the plan.	The proposal includes plans for the development and supervision of instructional and other staff needed to enact the plan, but lacks specificity or fails to anticipate the learning needs of some stakeholders.	The proposal includes vague or superficial plans for to develop the skills and abilities of stakeholders who are involved in enactment of the plan.	The proposal fails to account for the human resource development needs of stakeholders who are involved in enactment of the plan.
Budget: Use of new and existing resources to facilitate SIP (ELCC 3.2) (5%)	The proposal includes a detailed and well thought out budget summary that demonstrates the ability to identify and procure new and existing resources to facilitate the implementation of	The proposal includes a budget summary that spells out in general terms how resources will be identified and procured to facilitate the implementation of the SIP project. Funding needed to	A budget summary is presented, but it is lacking in sufficient detail or is missing necessary components. The use of existing resources is not well thought out, and/or procedures for leveraging these	The budget is poorly organized, severely lacking in detail, or wholly inadequate to support the objective and action plan described.

Vision: *The Education Leadership Program is dedicated to improving the quality of pre-K – 12 education through teaching, research, and service. Candidates and practicing administrators engage in course work devoted to experiential learning, professional growth opportunities, and doctoral research that informs practice. We educate exceptional leaders who act with integrity as they work to improve schools.*

	your SIP project. The budget includes a synopsis of the funding needed to accomplish the project; a description of any existing resources that will be devoted to the project; and a discussion of how authority to use these resources has been or will be procured.	accomplish the project is identified; a description of any existing resources that will be devoted to the project is outlined; and a discussion of how authority to use these resources has been or will be procured is described.	resources are undeveloped or missing.	
Evaluation: Plan to monitor and evaluate the project **(ELCC 2.2)** **(10%)**	A clear, well developed plan to monitor and evaluate the project is presented, which specifies how data related to each educational indicator will be collected, when these data will be collected, and how they will be analyzed. The evaluation plan includes steps that will be taken to examine and adjust the project during enactment (i.e., monitor implementation) and to summatively assess the efficacy of the project in terms of reducing the identified performance gap.	A plan to monitor and evaluate the project is presented, which specifies how data related to most of the identified educational indicators will be collected, when these data will be collected, and how they will be analyzed. The evaluation plan includes general steps that will be taken to monitor implementation and to summatively assess the efficacy of the project.	A plan to monitor and evaluate the project is presented, but it lacks specificity and/or is not clearly connected to the espoused objectives of the SIP. Steps that will be taken to collect and analyze various data are unclear, as are methods that will be used to monitor implementation and to summatively assess the efficacy of the project.	The evaluation plan is poorly organized, lacks sufficient detail, or is wholly inadequate to support the evaluation of the project.
Consequence analysis: Identification of potential issues related to enactment of plan within the school and school community to positively influence the school context **(ELCC 6.2)** **(10%)**	The proposal concludes with a detailed analysis of the benefits and limitations of the proposed project design, highlighting possible issues relating to enactment of the plan within the school and school	The proposal concludes with a general analysis of the benefits and limitations of the proposed project design, including issues relating to the support and involvement of important stakeholders.	The proposal concludes with a cursory analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed design. Issues of stakeholder involvement, implementation fidelity, and trustworthiness are	The proposal concludes with a general restatement of the project's purpose and/or description, but lacks any reasonable reflection on the strengths or weaknesses of the proposed design. A

	community. Advantages and disadvantages of the project and evaluation design are highlighted, including an assessment of issues relating to the involvement and support of important stakeholders within the school community. Issues relating to implementation fidelity and the trustworthiness of the evaluation research design are clearly spelled out.	Obvious advantages and disadvantages of the project and evaluation design are identified. Select issues related to implementation fidelity and trustworthiness of the research evaluation design are explored, though some important potential issues are not identified.	only superficially addressed.	consequence analysis is not evident.
Support: Use available knowledge related to current and emerging trends **(ELCC 6.3)** **(5%)**	Specific, developed ideas and/or evidence from research are used to support the selection of the achievement gap and the strategy identified for addressing it	Supporting research used to support the project lacks specificity or is loosely developed.	General supporting ideas or evidence are presented.	Few to no solid supporting ideas or evidence from research are included.
Organization of proposal: (5%)	The proposal is powerfully organized and fully developed.	The proposal includes logical progression of ideas aided by clear transitions.	The proposal includes brief skeleton (introduction, body, conclusion) but lacks effective transitions.	The proposal lacks a logical progression of ideas.
Mechanics and APA: (5%)	The proposal is nearly error-free, which reflects clear understanding of APA and thorough proofreading.	Occasional grammatical errors and questionable word choice are present.	Errors in grammar and punctuation are present, but spelling has been proofread.	The proposal contains frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Vision: *The Education Leadership Program is dedicated to improving the quality of pre-K – 12 education through teaching, research, and service. Candidates and practicing administrators engage in course work devoted to experiential learning, professional growth opportunities, and doctoral research that informs practice. We educate exceptional leaders who act with integrity as they work to improve schools.*