

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
Education Leadership Program**

EDLE 690, Section 001: Using Research to Lead School Improvement  
3 Credits, Spring 2017

Meeting Day: Wednesdays; January 23-May 17, 4:30-7:10  
Fairfax Campus-Thompson Hall-Room L018

**Faculty**

Name: Beverly M. Woody Ed. D.  
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:30 to 3:30 and by appointment  
Office Location: Thompson Hall, Suite 1300  
Phone: 703-819-6256 (Cell) Office (703-993-3643)  
E-mail address: bwoody@gmu.edu

**Prerequisite(s):** EDLE 620 (may be taken concurrently if application has been submitted to the MEd in Education Leadership program or the MEd in EDLE with a Concentration in Special Education Leadership program)

**University Catalog 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.

**Course Overview**

The two primary purposes of the course are to help students learn how to engage in action research and how to use published research to lead school improvement focused on instruction. 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.

**Nature of Course Delivery**

This course will be delivered using workshops, discussions, case studies, and presentations.

*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.*

## **Learner Outcomes**

This course is designed to enable candidates to do the following:

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 **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**

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.

## **Professional Standards (National Standards and Virginia Competencies)**

Upon completion of this course, candidates will have met the following professional ELCC Standards: 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2,3,, 3.1,3.2,3.3, 4.2, 6.2 and 6.3. Virginia competencies include:

- a. Knowledge understanding, and application of planning, assessment, and instructional leadership that builds collective professional capacity, including:
  - (2) Collaborative leadership in gathering and analyzing data to identify needs to develop and implement a school improvement plan that results in increased student learning;
  - (7) Identification, analysis, and resolution of problems using effective problem-solving techniques; and
  - (8) 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.
- b. Knowledge, understanding and application of systems and organizations, including:
  - (1) Systems theory and the change process of systems, organizations and individuals, using appropriate and effective adult learning models;
  - (2) Aligning organizational practice, division mission, and core beliefs for developing and implementing strategic plans;
  - (3) Information sources and processing, including data collection and data analysis strategies;
  - (4) Using data as a part of ongoing program evaluation to inform and lead change;
  - (5) Developing a change management strategy for improved student outcomes; and

- (6) Developing empowerment strategies to create personalized learning environments for diverse schools.
- c. Knowledge understanding and application of management and leadership skills that achieve effective and efficient organizational operations, including:
  - (8) Application of data-driven decision making to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.
- f. Knowledge understanding and application of basic leadership theories and influences that impact schools including:
  - (1) Concepts of leadership including systems theory, change theory, learning organizations and current leadership theory.

### **Required Text**

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* (6<sup>th</sup> edition). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

### *Outside-of-Class Resources*

Candidates are required to use Blackboard as a part of this course. This is the site at which I will post vital information for the course and through which we will communicate from time to time. Handouts, reading material, and web links that will be helpful to you will be posted to this site also. **All students are required to activate and monitor their GMU e-mail accounts.**

Cancellation Policy: The class will be made up via an electronic activity, if a cancellation is necessary.

It is my expectation that all students have access to Microsoft Office. We will be using Word and Excel for this course.

### **Course Performance Evaluations**

Candidates are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, TK20, hard copy)

### **Assignments**

#### *Written Assignments (90 points)*

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:

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

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:

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

Candidates should refer to the assignments and rubrics for guidance on preparing assignments. The Improvement Target Proposal and Research Brief will be submitted via Blackboard. The School Improvement Project Proposal must be submitted to TK20.

1. Improvement Target Proposal (ITP) (20 points)
2. Research Brief (30 points)
3. School Improvement Project (SIP) Proposal (40 points)

*Participation and Attendance (10 points)*

1. Candidates 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 you leave class early multiple times, you will lose participation points. The hallmark of a learning organization is a balance between openness and constructive feedback; hence, everyone is expected to:
  - a. come fully prepared to each class;
  - b. demonstrate appropriate respect for one another (avoid side conversations, multi-tasking, etc.)
  - c. present professional behavior
  - d. engage in genuine inquiry;
  - e. maintain strict confidentiality regarding any information shared in the classroom.

**Grading**

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

### *Grading Policies*

Papers are due as indicated in the course schedule. All assignments must be submitted **electronically, either through Blackboard or TK20.**

All work is expected on time, meaning no later than by midnight of the due date. If you happen to be absent on the day a paper is due, the due date remains and the paper must be submitted electronically. Assignments are not accepted after the due date though at the discretion, and unusual and compelling circumstances (e.g. serious illness) due dates may be negotiated.

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, you review the available research literature on that topic, and begin to define the specific improvement project you will implement. Finally, for the third 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.

*Every student registered for any EDLE course with a required performance-based assessment (designated in the syllabus) is required to submit this assessment to TK20. In EDLE 690, the required performance is the SIP.* Evaluation of the performance-based assessment will also be completed in 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 TK20 submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

### **Professional Dispositions**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

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. start and end on time;
  - b. maintain (flexibly) a written agenda reflecting objectives for each class;
  - c. agree to disagree respectfully during class discussions;
  - d. strive to be open to new ideas and perspectives; and
  - e. listen actively to one another.

2. Candidate work will reflect what is expected from leaders. Hence, it is expected that students will:
- write papers that are well researched, proofread, submitted in a timely fashion, and conform to APA guidelines;
  - participate actively in class discussions in a manner that challenges the best thinking of the class; and
  - 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.

### Class Schedule

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.. Any changes will be communicated in class and/or in the weekly class email.

Date	Lessons	Reading/ Activities/Assignments
Jan 25	Course Overview Leading Change	Read: B&B (Bauer & Brazer), Chapters 2 & 3 Complete: B&B Worksheet 2.1 B&B Worksheet 3.1 Review: Assignment #1 Improvement Target Proposal
Feb 1	Framework for Leading School Improvement: Theory, Research & Practice	Read: B&B Chapters 4 & 5 Complete: B&B Worksheets 4.1,4.2 & 4.3 B & B Worksheets 5.1, 5.2 & 5.3
Feb 8	Improvement: Making a Case for Change	
Feb 15 & 22	Improvement Target Proposal	Research and Fieldwork
<b>Assignment #1 Improvement Target Proposal due Monday, Feb 20</b>		
Mar 1	Understanding Research Design and Analysis (1)	Selected Research Reports Read: B&B Chapter 8 Review: Assignment #2 Research Brief
Mar 8	Understanding Research Design and Analysis (2)	Read: B&B Chapter 6 &7 Complete: B&B Worksheets 6.2, 6.3, & 6.4
March 13-17 GMU Spring Break (no class)		

Mar 22	Getting to the Root of the Problem Finding Supportive Research (1)	
Mar 29 & April 5	Finding Supportive Literature (2)	
<b>Assignment #2 Research Brief due Monday, April 10</b>		
April 12	School Improvement: Solutions, Action Planning, and Evaluation Assignment #3 SIP Proposal Review	Read: B&B Chapter 9 & 10 Complete: Review: Activities 9.1 & 9.2 B&B Worksheet 10.1
April 19 & 26	SIP Proposal Action Plan: Work Session	
May 3	SIP Proposal Action Plan: Presentations	
May 10	Course Wrap-up: From Proposals to Enactment: Managing your Project during Internship	
<b>Assignment #3 Research School Improvement Project Proposal due Monday, May 8</b>		

### Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Candidates are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

### GMU Policies and Resources for Students

#### *Policies*

- Candidates must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- Candidates must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Candidates are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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.

- Candidates with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Candidates must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

### *Campus Resources*

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/>.
- The Writing Center 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/>).
- The 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/>).
- The Student Support & Advocacy Center staff helps students develop and maintain healthy lifestyles through confidential one-on-one support as well as through interactive programs and resources. Some of the topics they address are healthy relationships, stress management, nutrition, sexual assault, drug and alcohol use, and sexual health (see <http://ssac.gmu.edu/>). Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone at 703-993-3686. Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to <http://ssac.gmu.edu/make-a-referral/>.

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/>.**



## Writing Assignment 1: Improvement Target Proposal Assessment (20 points)

### 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**

<b>Levels/Criteria</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations (4)</b>	<b>Meets Expectations (3)</b>	<b>Approaching Expectations (2)</b>	<b>Falls Below Expectations (1)</b>
<p><b>Introduction and thesis (10%)</b></p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The paper lacks an introduction entirely, or the introduction fails to provide useful information that is linked to the intended purpose of the document.</p>
<p><b>Characteristics of the school and diversity of the school community (25%)</b> (ELCC 4.2)</p> <p>This section is intended to help the reader understand the nature of the school so that the priority area will make sense</p>	<p>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 school climate are described.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The presentation of demographic data is missing or wholly inadequate.</p>

<p><b>Use of data to analyze school performance related to the school's vision and objectives (25%)</b> (ELCC 1.2)</p> <p>This section explains where the school has been in terms of student achievement.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The paper includes a summary of the school's performance over a two-year period, using general measures of important educational outcomes.</p>	<p>The paper includes a summary of the school's current performance in general terms. Specific indicators or educational outcomes are unclear or missing.</p>	<p>The assessment of school performance is missing or wholly inadequate</p>
<p><b>Identification of improvement area (20%)</b> (ELCC 1.3)</p> <p>This is the most important point of the paper in which you explain exactly where the school ought to be focused in its effort to improve student achievement</p>	<p>The paper concludes with a recommendation of one or more focal areas to improve instruction. The identified achievement gap(s) are well supported by the analysis of school data, and are clearly connected to the school's vision, improvement objectives, and the emerging needs of the school community.</p>	<p>The paper concludes with a recommendation of one or more focal areas to improve instruction. The identified achievement gap(s) are generally supported by the analysis of school data, and are at least loosely connected to the school's vision and improvement objectives.</p>	<p>The paper concludes with a general recommendation of one or more focal areas to improve instruction. The identified achievement gap(s) are not clearly supported by the analysis of school data.</p>	<p>The recommendation is missing or wholly inadequate.</p>
<p><b>Use of tables and graphs to summarize data (10%)</b></p> <p>Tables and/or graphs should appear as support to the text. Data should be organized for ease of understanding.</p>	<p>Tables and/or graphs are powerfully used to present demographic and/or school performance data.</p>	<p>Tables and/or graphs are used sparingly, but effectively, to present demographic and/or school performance data.</p>	<p>Tables and/or graphs are used somewhat effectively, but in some instances they are distracting, mislabeled, or otherwise confusing.</p>	<p>Tables and/or graphics are not evident.</p>
<p><b>Mechanics and APA (10%)</b></p> <p>Your written work should always represent you as accurate and precise.</p>	<p>The paper is nearly error-free which reflects clear understanding and thorough proofreading.</p>	<p>There are occasional grammatical errors and questionable word choice.</p>	<p>Errors in grammar and punctuation are present, but spelling has been proofread</p>	<p>There are frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.</p>

## **Writing Assignment 2: Research Brief (30 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.

### **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 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.

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 Assessment Rubric

<i>Levels:</i>	<b>Exceeds Expectations (4)</b>	<b>Meets Expectations (3)</b>	<b>Approaching Expectations (2)</b>	<b>Falls Below Expectations (1)</b>
<i>Criteria:</i>				
<p><b>Introduction: research problem, overview (15%)</b> The introduction must be very clear about the direction and focus of the paper.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The paper starts with a brief introduction that alludes to the research question and provides a general thesis.</p>	<p>An introduction is provided that gives only the barest hint about the research question or the information to be shared.</p>	<p>The paper lacks an introduction entirely, or the introduction fails to provide useful information that is linked to the research question.</p>
<p><b>Body: Application of research to school improvement (ELCC 1.3) (40%)</b> For the research to be meaningful, it must be directly related to a specific question and argument.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The body of the paper provides a loosely organized synthesis and analysis of published work related to the research question and the thesis.</p>	<p>The body of the paper describes published work generally related to the research question, but provides a limited synthesis or analysis of published work.</p>	<p>The synthesis and analysis of published work is wholly missing or inadequate.</p>

<p><b>Conclusion and recommendation (ELCC 2.2) (20%)</b> A conclusion should be both summative and analytical. Restating the thesis is an important vehicle for tying the paper together.</p>	<p>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).</p>	<p>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 recommendation is not entirely persuasive.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The conclusion is missing or wholly inadequate; the paper ends abruptly.</p>
---	--	--	---	---

<p><b>Quality of research support (ELCC 2.3) (15%)</b> The best way to make a persuasive argument is with high quality research.</p>	<p>Research cited is well balanced, including original research and synthesis pieces from high-quality, credible sources.</p>	<p>Research is cited from quality sources, but lacks specificity or is not connected in a set of coherent arguments.</p>	<p>General supporting research evidence is referenced, but appears dominated by syntheses or opinion pieces, or material from questionable sources.</p>	<p>Few solid supporting ideas or evidence from research are included.</p>
<p><b>Organization of paper (5%)</b></p>	<p>The paper is powerfully organized and fully developed.</p>	<p>The paper includes a logical progression of ideas aided by clear transitions.</p>	<p>The paper includes most required elements, but lacks transitions.</p>	<p>The paper lacks a logical progression of ideas.</p>
<p><b>Mechanics and APA (5%)</b></p>	<p>The paper is nearly error-free, including strict adherence to APA format. Proofreading is thorough.</p>	<p>Occasional grammatical errors and questionable word choice are present. Some APA errors may be present.</p>	<p>Errors in grammar and punctuation are present, but spelling has been proofread. Adherence to APA format is weak.</p>	<p>Frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation are present.</p>

### **Writing Assignment 3: School Improvement Project 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)	Meets Expectations (3)	Approaching Expectations (2)	Falls Below Expectations (1)
<p><b>Statement of purpose and overview of project:</b> Use of data to identify SIP topic that relates to and supports the school's vision and objectives (ELCC 1.2) (10%)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The statement of purpose and/or project description is missing or wholly inadequate.</p>
<p><b>Rationale:</b> Use of research supported strategies to promote continual and sustainable improvement (ELCC 1.3) (10%)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The rationale is weak or wholly inadequate. It is not clear how enacting the proposed project relates to reducing the identified performance gap.</p>
<p><b>Outcomes:</b> Identification of specific outcomes that will be used to monitor and evaluate progress and plans (ELCC 1.4) (10%)</p>	<p>Specific indicators are identified and described that will be used to monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of the project. Each indicator is demonstrably connected to either monitoring implementation fidelity of the project or reducing the identified performance gap.</p>	<p>Specific outcome indicators are identified and described that could be used to monitor and evaluate the impact of the project. Indicators used to monitor implementation fidelity are unclear.</p>	<p>The proposal makes general reference to the kinds of outcomes sought, but specific measurable indicators of implementation fidelity and/or project outcomes are not clearly identified.</p>	<p>The outcomes associated with the project are not specified, or outcomes that do not relate to the identified performance gap are proposed.</p>

<p><b>Involvement:</b> Identification and formation of team to distribute leadership (ELCC 3.4) (5%)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Stakeholder involvement in planning and/or implementation is not evident</p>
<p><b>Action Plan:</b> Development of action plan to guide the implementation of SIP (ELCC 3.1) (20%)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

<p><b>Professional development:</b> Inclusion of appropriate human resource development plans (ELCC 2.3) (5%)</p>	<p>The proposal includes clear and well thought out plans for the development and supervision of instructional and other staff needed to enact the plan.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The proposal includes vague or superficial plans for to develop the skills and abilities of stakeholders who are involved in enactment of the plan.</p>	<p>The proposal fails to account for the human resource development needs of stakeholders who are involved in enactment of the plan.</p>
<p><b>Budget:</b> Use of new and existing resources to facilitate SIP (ELCC 3.2) (5%)</p>	<p>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 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.</p>	<p>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 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.</p>	<p>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 resources are undeveloped or missing.</p>	<p>The budget is poorly organized, severely lacking in detail, or wholly inadequate to support the objective and action plan described</p>

<p><b>Evaluation:</b> Plan to monitor and evaluate the project (ELCC 2.2) (10%)</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The evaluation plan is poorly organized, lacks sufficient detail, or is wholly inadequate to support the evaluation of the project.</p>
<p><b>Consequence analysis:</b> 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%)</p>	<p>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 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.</p>	<p>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. 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.</p>	<p>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 only superficially addressed.</p>	<p>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 consequence analysis is not evident.</p>

<p><b>Support:</b> Use available knowledge related to current and emerging trends (ELCC 6.3) (5%)</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Supporting research used to support the project lacks specificity or is loosely developed.</p>	<p>General supporting ideas or evidence are presented.</p>	<p>Few to no solid supporting ideas or evidence from research are included.</p>
<p><b>Organization of proposal:</b> (5%)</p>	<p>The proposal is powerfully organized and fully developed.</p>	<p>The proposal includes logical progression of ideas aided by clear transitions.</p>	<p>The proposal includes brief skeleton (introduction, body, conclusion) but lacks effective transitions.</p>	<p>The proposal lacks a logical progression of ideas.</p>
<p><b>Mechanics and APA:</b> (5%)</p>	<p>The proposal is nearly error-free, which reflects clear understanding of APA and thorough proofreading.</p>	<p>Occasional grammatical errors and questionable word choice are present.</p>	<p>Errors in grammar and punctuation are present, but spelling has been proofread.</p>	<p>The proposal contains frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.</p>