GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Education Leadership Program

EDLE 690, DL2
Using Research to Lead School Improvement
Spring 2021, 3 credit hours
ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE

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Office Hours:	Online --- Mondays, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. and by appointment.
Course Term:	January 25 – May 4
Prerequisite(s):	EDLE 620. EDLE 690 must be taken concurrently with EDLE 791/792.

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.

General Goals: Students in this course will learn how to gather and analyze student achievement and demographic data available from their school, school district, and the state; 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. Students will understand how to use education research to develop a position based on more than one's opinion; understand basic statistics (e.g., measures of central tendency & dispersion; basic inferential statistics) and their application in educational research; 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. Students will 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.

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.

Course Delivery

This is a 100% online course using an asynchronous format via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on January 27, 2021. Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face‑to‑face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technology Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see:
  https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers

  To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see:
  https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
  - The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download: Adobe Acrobat Reader: https://get.adobe.com/reader/
  - Windows Media Player:
  https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player
  Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download: [Add or delete options, as desire.]
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: https://get.adobe.com/reader/
  - Windows Media Player:
  - https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player
  - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

On‑line Expectations

- **Course Week:** Because online courses do not have a "fixed" meeting day, our week will **start** on Wednesday and **finish** on Tuesday.

- **All students are now required to activate and monitor their GMU e-mail accounts**. If you are uncertain about how to do this, please see me. It is my expectation that you will be fully competent to send and receive e-mail messages with attachments. If your computer at school or home has spam blocking that will prevent you from seeing messages with attachments, you are responsible for addressing this problem immediately.

- It is expected that all students will have access to standard word processing software that can be read by Microsoft Office 2010. Students will also need a Google account to access the Google work suite (e.g., word documents).

- **Netiquette:** The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

- **Accommodations:** Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services

Required Readings

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

Hinnant-Crawford, B.N (2020). Improvement Science in Education, A Primer. Gorham, ME: Myers Education Press. Free through the GMU library.

If you go to https://library.gmu.edu/ type in the name of the book ("Improvement Science in Education: A Primer") into the search bar on the library website. The book should be the top or one of the top results. Click on the "Available Online" link next to the picture of the book cover. Then go to the "View Online" section and click on "Ebook Central Perpetual, DDA, and Subscription Titles." You should then see a page that gives you the options for viewing the book online.
Recommended: Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (current edition).

Course Learning Outcomes
Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:
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.

Student Outcomes
Successful students will emerge from the course with the ability to:
- gather and analyze student achievement and demographic data available from their school, school district, and the state;
- 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;
- use education research to develop a position based on more than one's opinion;
- apply the principles of improvement science to design a school improvement plan;
- 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 791/792)

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.

National Standards
The following National Educational Leadership Preparation standard elements are addressed in this course:

NELP Standard 1: Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to collaboratively lead, design, and implement a school mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.
> Component 1.1
> Component 1.2

NELP Standard 3: Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive school culture.
> Component 3.1
> Component 3.2
> Component 3.3

NELP Standard 6: Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to improve management, communication, technology, school-level governance, and operation systems to develop and improve data-informed and equitable school resource plans and to apply laws, policies, and regulations.
> Component 6.1
> Component 6.2

NELP Standard 7: Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to build the school's professional capacity, engage staff in the development of a collaborative professional culture, and improve systems of staff supervision, evaluation, support, and professional learning.
> Component 7.2
> Component 7.4

Virginia Competencies
This course addresses the following Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Competencies:

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.

Teaching and Learning Expectations

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.

Grading and Evaluation Criteria

Students can earn a total of 100 points in this course. Written graded assignments account for 80 points of the overall grade, while online course participation accounts for 20 points.

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 reflected in class discussion and readings
2. Original thinking and persuasiveness
3. The ability to write in a clear, concise, and organized fashion.

Additionally, due to the nature of this online course, a significant portion of the class grade will be based on participation and the contribution you make to class discussions.

The Class participation 20 points
Candidates are expected to participate actively in class discussions, small group activities, and in serving as critical friends to other colleagues. The participation rubric is available on the course site.

Orientation
- Course site tour/Syllabus Quiz

Unit 1
- Discussion Board Posts

Unit 2
- Investigating Your School's Improvement Plan
- Student exemplar analysis/ITP discussion and peer review

Unit 3
- Conduct a Root Cause Analysis/Fishbone exercise
- Source of sampling bias/designing an instrument

Unit 4
- What Works Clearinghouse
- Evaluating your action plan (Logic of Action for 9.3)
- Golden Circle Ted Talk

Written assignments ⋯ 80 points
Three different types of writing 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, 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.

TK20 Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirements
Every student registered for any EDLE course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, The School Improvement Project Proposal, to Tk20 through Blackboard (regardless of whether the student is taking the course as an elective, a onetime course or as part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor 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 the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required Tk20 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**.

Grading scale:
A+   100 points
A   95---99
A-   90---94
B+   87---89
B   83---86
B-   80---82
C   75---79
F   Below 75 points

Course Policies

Assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on the dates listed on the syllabus. 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.

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/

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

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code
  (see https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/)

- 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 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.

- Students 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://ds.gmu.edu/).

- Students 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 or https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20. Questions or concerns regarding use of
  Blackboard should be directed to http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus
  - Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

    As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all
    disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator
    per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, please contact one of
    Mason's confidential resources, such as the Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-
    380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek
    assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing
    titleix@gmu.edu.

    For information on the College of Education and Human development, please visit our
    website **https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/ .**

Other reminders:

GMU Add/Drop Policy: The last day to drop this class without any penalty is provided on
the GMU academic calendar page http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendar/. It is the student's
responsibility to check to verify that they are properly enrolled, as no credit will be
awarded to students who are not.

Plagiarism Statement: 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 (Statement of English Department at George Mason University).

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.

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.

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, meaning 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/

Diversity, Religious Holiday: Please refer to George Mason University's calendar of religious holidays and observations (http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious -holiday-calendar/). It is the student's responsibility to speak to the instructor in advance should their religious observances impact their participation in class activities and assignments.

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/ferpa

Other Concerns: If you have concerns or issues relating to the content or conduct of the class, please talk with me directly. Although the specifics of these conversations are entirely confidential, they may provide me with useful suggestions that may be shared indirectly with the class to improve the learning experience for all students. As a matter of policy, I do not respond to anonymous e-mails.

Proposed Course Schedule (Spring 2021)

Note: Please refer to the Weekly Schedule on Blackboard for the most up‑to‑date version of the course schedule.

Week	Date	Lesson	Activities/Reading /Assignments
	Jan 25	Synchronous pre-class meeting on BBCU	Attend 1 of 2 sessions: 4:00 – 4:30pm or 6:30 – 7:00pm
1	Jan 27 – Feb 2	Orientation, Unit 1 Lesson 1: The Big Picture and Unit 1 Lesson 2: Organizational Learning	B&B Chapters 1 and 2, syllabus quiz, participation activities
2	Feb 3 - 9	Unit 1 Lesson 3: Building Your Team and Unit 2 Lesson 1: Assessing Your Local Situation	B&B Chapters 3 and 4, participation activities
3 ‑4	Feb 10 - 23	Unit 2 Lesson 2: Communicating A Message with Data	B&B Chapter 5; Rough draft of ITP due to peer, participation activities
5	Feb 24 – Mar 2	Unit 3 Lesson 1: Root Cause Analysis	B&B Chapter 6, **Improvement Target Proposal Due Feb 23**, participation activities
6	Mar 3 - 9	Unit 3 Lesson 2: Finding Supporting Literature.	B&B Chapter 7, Literature Search; participation activities
7	Mar 10 - 16	**Research week.** Individual conferences with Dr. D.	Continue reading research for Annotated Bibliography
8	March 17 – 23	Reading and Writing Research Week	**Annotated Bibliography Due March 23**, participation activities
9‑11	Mar 24 – Apr 13	Unit 3 Lesson 3: Understanding Research Design & Analysis	B&B Chapter 8; Sampling bias, designing an instrument, statistics, participation activities
12	April 14 - 20	Unit 4 Lesson 1: Identifying Solutions and Action Planning	B&B Chapter 9, participation activities
13	April 21 - 27	Unit 4 Lesson 2: Implementation and Evaluation	B&B Chapter 10, participation activities
14	April 28 – May 5	SIP Writing Week Epilogue: Managing Your SIP	Rough Draft of SIP Participation activities
			Final SIP Proposal due no later than May 5

Writing Assignment 1: Improvement Target Proposal Assessment Rubric
(30 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 <u>at least</u> a two-year period. To do this, you will need to <u>triangulate the data</u> 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 school climate are described.	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.
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 paper in which you explain exactly where the school ought to be	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,	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	The paper concludes with a general recommendation of one or more focal areas to improve instruction. The identified achievement gap(s)	The recommendation is missing or wholly inadequate.

focused in its effort to improve student achievement.	and are clearly connected to the school's vision, improvement objectives, and the emerging needs of the school community.	analysis of school data, and are at least loosely connected to the school's vision and improvement objectives.	are not clearly supported by the analysis of school data.	
Use of tables and graphs to summarize data (10%) Tables and/or graphs should appear as support to the text. Data should be organized for ease of understanding.	Tables and/or graphs are powerfully used to present demographic and/or school performance data.	Tables and/or graphs are used sparingly, but effectively, to present demographic and/or school performance data.	Tables and/or graphs are used somewhat effectively, but in some instances they are distracting, mislabeled, or otherwise confusing.	Tables and/or graphics are not evident.
Mechanics and APA (10%) Your written work should always represent you as accurate and precise.	The paper is nearly error-free which reflects clear understanding and thorough proofreading.	There are occasional grammatical errors and questionable word choice.	Errors in grammar and punctuation are present, but spelling has been proofread	There are frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

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 <u>annotated bibliography</u> 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 <u>research articles</u> (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.
3. Prepare an ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY using <u>at least five (5)</u> of the most important papers you found. An annotated bibliography is a list of articles (or books) that includes a <u>brief description of the work</u> and <u>an evaluation of its usefulness</u>. 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 <u>a complete reference list</u> showing all of the papers you consulted (at least 10). References must be in APA format.

EDLE 690 Annotated Bibliography Assessment Rubric

Levels: Criteria:	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Meets Expectations (3)	Approaching Expectations (2)	Falls Below Expectations (1)
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 research.	Entries are dominated by material from questionable sources; a review of research is not evident.

Bibliographic entries -- quantity (10%)	Five or more annotated summaries are presented, along with a detailed reference list of at least 10 sources consulted.	Five or more annotated summaries are presented, as is a reference list of at least 10 sources consulted. Some references appear incorrect or are in improper format.	Fewer than five annotated summaries are presented, or the annotated entries and reference list contain numerous incorrect or incomplete references.	Annotated summaries and/or reference list are missing or wholly inadequate.
References (10%)	References are complete and presented in APA format.	References are in APA format, but a few (1-3) appear incorrect or contain minor formatting errors.	The document contains numerous incorrect or incomplete references.	References are omitted entirely.
Mechanics (10 %)	The paper is nearly error-free which reflects clear understanding and thorough proofreading.	Occasional grammatical errors and questionable word choice are present.	The paper contains errors in grammar and punctuation, but spelling has been proofread.	The paper contains frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

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 an Internship Improvement Project (IIP) 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 and plan for at least one round of plan-do-study-act (PDSA) short-cycle inquiry to inform implementation of your 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, through a **driver diagram**, that suggests why taking the proposed action will lead to improvement in the targeted area. Be sure to describe how your IIP 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. 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 IIP. Describe how you plan to enlist their support and build your team, including means you will use to maintain effective communication throughout the project.

4. 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.

5. PLAN-DO-STUDY-ACT CYCLES: Describe **at least one PDSA cycle** that will be imbedded into the implementation of your project. Keep in mind that the PDSA cycle should inform how you implement your project, leaving open the possibility that the findings will indicate the need to adapt or abandon part of your plan. It is important to **integrate insights and be open to iteration**. This section should indicate how you will use the results to inform implementation, suggesting how you can change course mid-implementation in response to findings from the PDSA cycle. Specify the exact plan for at least your first PDSA cycle using the provided worksheet as a planning tool.

6. BUDGET: Specify why the project will be cost neutral for your school or, if there are extra costs, how these costs will be covered. This should be a short narrative presentation (you do not need budget codes, etc.). Describe existing resources that are already in your school/division budget, any additional resources that would need to be procured, and how those resources 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 will be some redundancy (e.g., you might describe the PDSA cycle in your action plan and in that section, the description of involvement likely will be reflected in your action plan). 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 IIP 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 IIP Proposal Assessment Rubric

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 IIP topic that relates to and supports the school's vision and objectives (NELP 1.1, 1.2) (10%)	The proposal begins with a clear statement of purpose, which relates specifically to a problem identified by focusing on variation in performance using data that could include assessment results, surveys, empathy interviews, 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 drive improvement.	The proposal begins with a statement of purpose which relates generally to a problem identified using performance data. A brief description of the proposed project is provided.	The statement of purpose and/or description of the project are 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 (NELP 1.1, 1.2) (15%)	The proposal includes a concise and well supported rationale that describes the nature of the problem being addressed, why the problem is important, and how taking the proposed action is intended to drive improvement through a driver diagram. Specific, research is presented in support of the strategy selected to address the identified problem.	The proposal includes a rationale that describes the nature of the problem 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 mitigation of the identified problem. 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 mitigation of the identified problem.

Involvement: Identification and formation of team to distribute leadership (NELP 6.2) Understand and sustain a culture of trust, collaboration and high expectations for students (NELP 7.2) (10%)	The proposal clearly describes which stakeholders will be involved in enactment, monitoring, and evaluation of the IIP. All stakeholders who are important to the success of the project are involved. Team member roles and responsibilities are outlined. 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 IIP.	The proposal describes the primary stakeholders who will be involved in enactment of the IIP. One or more groups whose involvement may be important are omitted. Attributes of team organization are described in general terms. The proposal describes some ways the candidate will build a collaborative team and build trust in enactment, monitoring, and evaluation of the IIP.	The proposal is unclear about stakeholders' involvement in enactment of the IIP, or fails to mention groups who are obviously important to the success of the project. Attributes of team organization are referenced in general terms. The proposal is unclear about ways collaboration and involvement will be fostered throughout the project.	Stakeholder involvement in planning and/or implementation is not evident. The proposal is silent with regard to stakeholder involvement and/or trust building.
Action Plan: Development of action plan to guide the implementation of IIP (NELP 6.1) (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 IIP. The plan thoroughly delineates each of the major tasks to be accomplished in enacting the project; approximately when each task will be completed; who is involved in accomplishing each task; the resources needed to complete each task.	The proposal includes an action plan that describes how human, fiscal, and material resources will be used to implement the IIP. The plan delineates most of the major tasks needed to enact the project; approximately when various tasks will be completed; who is involved in accomplishing each task; the resources needed to complete each task. Some necessary tasks or implementation details are vaguely described or missing.	The action plan includes details tasks, timelines, persons responsible, and resources, 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.

Plan-Do-Study-Act Cycles: Inclusion of appropriate inquiry cycle plans (NELP 7.4) (10%)	Clear mapping of at least one PDSA cycle that is inserted within the implementation phase of the proposed internship improvement projects. Specify what data will be collected, by who, from whom, when the data will be collected, how the data will be analyzed, and how the results will inform continued implementation of the internship improvement project.	At least one PDSA cycle is described with complete information except it is unclear how the results of the PDSA cycle will inform changes to the implementation of the internship improvement project.	One or more essential elements for planning the PDSA cycle is missing.	The PDSA cycle is not described.
Evaluation: Plan to monitor and evaluate the project (NELP 1.2, 3.1, 3.3, 7.4) (10%)	Specific lagging, leading, process measures 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 of the project or mitigating the identified problem. 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, approximately 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 assess summatively the efficacy of the project in terms of reducing the identified performance gap.	Specific measures are identified and described that could be used to monitor and evaluate the impact of the project. Measures used to monitor implementation fidelity are unclear. 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, approximately 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 assess summatively the efficacy of the project.	The proposal makes general reference to the kinds of outcomes sought, but specific measures of implementation fidelity and/or project outcomes are not clearly identified. 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 IIP. 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 outcomes associated with the project are not specified, or outcomes that do not relate to the identified performance gap are proposed. 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 (NELP 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 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.	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 is explored, though some important potential issues are not identified.	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.	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.
Budget: Use of new and existing resources to facilitate IIP (NELP 6.2) (5%)	The proposal includes a brief budget summary that describes how the project will be cost neutral with an explanation for why the project comes at no additional cost, or specifically demonstrates the ability to identify and procure resources to facilitate the implementation of your project. Include a discussion of how authority to use these resources has been or will be procured for both in-kind and additional expenditures. This description includes all aspects of the action plan that would involve additional or in-kind expenditures.	The proposal includes a brief budget summary. 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.	A budget summary is presented, but it is lacking 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.	The budget is poorly organized, severely lacking in detail, or wholly inadequate to support the objective and action plan described.
Support: Use available knowledge related to current and emerging trends (NELP 3.1, 3.2, 3.3) (5%)	Specific, developed ideas and/or evidence from research are used to support the selection of the improvement target 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:	The proposal is powerfully organized and	The proposal includes logical progression of	The proposal includes brief	The proposal lacks a logical progression

(5%)	fully developed.	ideas aided by clear transitions.	skeleton (introduction, body, and conclusion) but lacks effective transitions.	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.

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***.