

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

EDLE 802-C02: LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING

SUMMER 2021

Instructor: Maureen Marshall
E-mail: mmarsh22@gmu.edu
Office Hours: By appointment
Meeting Location: Peterson Hall 2411
Meeting Times: See below

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
June 28	June 29 EDLE 802 – 1:30-3:30	June 30	July 1	July 2 EDLE 802 – 1:30-3:30
July 5 Holiday	July 6 EDLE 802 – 1:30-3:30	July 7	July 8	July 9 EDLE 802 – 8:30-3:30
July 12 EDLE 802 – 8:30-3:30	July 13 EDLE 802 – 1:30-3:30	July 14	July 15	July 16
July 19 EDLE 802 – 8:30-3:30	July 20 EDLE 802 – 1:30-3:30	July 21	July 22	July 23 EDLE 802 – 8:30-3:30
July 26 EDLE 802 – 8:30-3:30	July 27 EDLE 802 – 1:30-3:30	July 28	July 29	July 30 EDLE 802 – 8:30-11:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Engages students in the study of major leadership and decision theories that inform educational leadership research. Students use theory to help inform their own research interests. Students begin work on analytical literature review.

COURSE MATERIALS**Required text:**

Johnson, B. L. & Kruse, S. D. (2010). *Decision making for educational leaders: Underexamined dimensions and issues*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Supplemental text:

Additional required readings, to include journal articles and book chapters, among other materials, will be available through Blackboard (mymasonportal.gmu.edu). Suggested readings may be added and provided throughout the semester based on student needs and interests.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

EDLE 802 is the second in a two-course sequence designed to provide a firm foundation for students' research in education leadership. The general emphasis in the sequence is on students learning how to explore their research interests in the context of the large sweep of educational leadership as a field with a focus on how leaders at multiple levels and various contexts impact the effectiveness and improvement of schools and systems of schools. EDLE 802 provides a specific focus on theory and research surrounding leader decision making in general and in educational environments in particular.

Additionally, the course is designed to connect theory, research and practice by exploring a variety of leadership decision making perspectives:

1. **Theory.** What are the features and assumptions of the perspective? What content themes are stressed? Does the perspective adequately describe, explain, and predict something of interest in the world of education leaders?
2. **Research.** What kinds of empirical questions tend to be addressed using this perspective? Are there any particular methodological considerations associated with the perspective (i.e., unit of analysis, typical research methods used)?
3. **Practice.** What does each perspective help us understand about school leadership, organizations, and decision-making? What are the limitations of the perspective?

Course Delivery Method

This is 100% Face to Face class unless a change is noted on an individual day. Attendance to each class is mandatory. Consistent with the EDLE program goals and approach to leadership development and preparation, we will engage in a variety of learning activities in class, including exercises, debates, oral presentations, and analyses of cases. Students will serve as critical friends for each other, including providing periodic feedback on written assignments.

Class activities and assignments will emphasize connecting theory and research on leadership and school organization with the realities of professional educator's work in schools. Since an important component of any leader's learning involves balancing action and reflection, assignments will emphasize using theory and research as a lens for reflecting on leadership practice, and on sharing thoughts and opinions about the ways leaders impact teaching and learning in schools.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a solid understanding of formal leadership and decision theory through discourse, presentation, and written paper assignments;
2. Review and summarize research literature and present persuasive written and oral critiques;
3. Engage in conversation to explore topics in their field of interest that represent opportunities for future investigation;
4. Use theory to frame researchable questions and extant literature to inform problems relating to research and professional practice; and
5. Further develop their ability to write doctoral-level papers.

NELP STANDARDS

The following National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) program standards are addressed in this course:

Component 1.1: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to collaboratively evaluate, develop, and communicate a school mission and vision designed to reflect a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community

Component 2.2: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, communicate about, and advocate for ethical and legal decisions.

Component 4.1: Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, develop, and implement high-quality, technology rich curricula, programs, and other supports for academic and nonacademic student programs.

Component 4.2: Program completers understand and can demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, develop, and implement high-quality and equitable academic and nonacademic instructional practices, resources, technologies, and services that support equity, digital literacy, and the school's academic and nonacademic systems

Component 5.3: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to communicate through oral, written, and digital means with the larger organizational, community, and political contexts when advocating for the needs of their school and community.

Component 6.3: Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to reflectively evaluate, communicate about, and implement laws, rights, policies, and regulations to promote student and adult success and well-being.

Component 7.3: Program completers understand and have the capacity to personally engage in, as well as collaboratively engage staff in, professional learning designed to promote reflection, cultural responsiveness, distributed leadership, digital literacy, school improvement, and student success.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

Each class will include a variety of activities and exercises. Broadly speaking, your primary responsibilities are to: 1) read the literature; 2) share your questions, reflections, and engage in productive discussion to make the literature relevant to the world of practice that we experience and understand; and 3) write, share your written work, and provide feedback to others in a respectful fashion.

1. Classes will reflect a balance of activities that enable students to participate actively in the development of their *personae* as scholars. 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. Support our points of view with evidence;
 - d. Strive to be open to new ideas and perspectives; and
 - e. Listen actively to one another.

2. Student work will reflect what is expected from scholars. As such, students are expected to:
 - a. Write papers that are well researched, proofread, submitted in a timely fashion, and consistent with APA guidelines (7th edition);
 - 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 a classroom climate that approximates what we know about learning organizations. As such, 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. Come fully prepared to each class;
 - b. Demonstrate appropriate respect for one another;
 - c. Voice concerns and opinions about class process openly;
 - d. Recognize and celebrate each other's ideas and accomplishments; and
 - e. Show an awareness of each other's needs.

Bias-Free Communications

In course discussions and in your writing, please follow the recommendations outlined in the APA Publication Manual (7th edition) reference "Guide to Bias-Free Communications." Chapter 5.

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://ods.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>

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

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 with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as 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.

Other reminders:

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.

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/>

Other Concerns: If you have concerns or issues relating to the content or conduct of the class, please talk with me directly. As a matter of policy, I do not respond to anonymous e-mails.

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, EXPECTATIONS, & GRADING

Consistent with expectations of any doctoral program, grading is based heavily on student performance on written assignments. The assignments constructed for this course reflect a mix of skills associated with synthesis and critique. Overall, written work will be assessed using the following broad criteria.

- Application of concepts reflected in class discussion and readings, and your ability to pick the most salient concepts and apply them.
- Creativity and imagination; papers provide an opportunity to speculate, to float questions or ideas reflecting your appreciation of the literature.
- Organization and writing. A clear, concise, and well-organized paper will earn a better grade.

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

Class Participation and Facilitation (100 points)

Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions, study group activities, and serving as critical friends to other students. Each student will be expected to **co-teach** during at least one class session. Students will periodically have an opportunity to read and review each other's work in colleague-critical teams, as well.

As stated earlier, **attendance is expected for all classes**. If you must be absent, please notify the instructor by e-mail or phone. Absences WILL result in a reduction in participation points. Likewise, arriving at class more than 30 minutes late or leaving more than 30 minutes before the end of class WILL result in loss of points.

Written Assignments (400 points)

Two different types of papers will be expected of students in this class: one reflecting the skills associated with *critique* and the other *synthesis* of research literature. The **Critique of Research Articles** assignments take the form of analyses of published research papers. The **Bounded Rationality** and **Research Problem and Rationale** papers requires the application of research to a problem you *may be interested in studying*. It is also the program-level Performance-Based Assessment for this course.

Assignment descriptions and rubrics appear at the end of the syllabus. All written assignments must be submitted via Blackboard as Word file attachments. They should be typed, free from grammatical, spelling, and typographical errors and formatted according to guidelines established in the APA Publication Manual, 7th edition.

Because of the nature of this course, there are high standards and expectations for quality writing, so

make sure to consult APA guidelines, colleagues, and/or the GMU Writing Center [<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>] to review and edit your work before turning it in. If you have any questions or concerns about your writing, please feel free to contact me before assignments are due.

- **Late work.** It is expected that student work will be submitted on time (before 11:59 p.m. on the due date). Extensions for emergency situations should be requested in advance, as late assignments will likely receive a considerable deduction in points.

Note: All written assignments must be submitted via Blackboard by 11:59 p.m. on the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted except in emergency situations that have been discussed and approved by the instructor in **advance of the due date**. There are no extra credit assignments in this course. A grade of incomplete will not be assigned unless there are unusual circumstances approved by the instructor prior to the end of the course semester.

Every student registered for any Education Leadership course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit these assessments, [Bounded Rationality Paper, Research Proposal] to Blackboard (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to 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 Blackboard submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

Assignment Expectations and Possible Points:

All papers must be typed (12 pt. font, 1-inch margins, double-spaced in APA format – 7th edition) and submitted electronically via Blackboard.

Participation/Attendance	100 points
Critique of Research Article #1	75 points
Critique of Research Article #2	75 points
Bounded Rationality Paper	100 points
Research Problem and Rationale	150 points

TOTAL POSSIBLE **500 points**

A+	=	500 points
A	=	475 - 499
A-	=	450 - 474
B+	=	435 - 449
B	=	415 - 434
B-	=	400 - 414
C	=	375 - 399
F	=	Below 375 points

COURSE CALENDAR

All required readings are to be completed PRIOR to the class session in which they are listed. Please note that this calendar will be updated with additional readings made available via Blackboard. Assignments are to be turned in by 11:59 p.m. on the day under which they are listed. Note that this is a tentative course schedule that will be flexible and subject to change.

Lesson	DATES	TOPIC	READINGS/ ASSIGNMENTS DUE
1	Tuesday 6/29 1:30-3:30	Welcome, Introductions and Course Overview	Reading: Syllabus and course calendar See lesson in Blackboard for readings and videos shared on Blackboard
2	Friday 7/2 1:30-3:30	Leadership, Decision Making and the Theories	See lesson in Blackboard for readings and videos shared on Blackboard <i>Read : Decision Making for Educational Leaders Johnson & Kruse (J&K) – Ch. 1 and 2</i>
3	Tuesday 7/6 1:30-3:30	Rational Decision Making	See lesson in Blackboard for readings and videos shared on Blackboard
4	Friday 7/9 8:30-3:30	Organizational Context of Decision Making;	See lesson in Blackboard for readings and videos shared on Blackboard Read: J&K - Ch. 3 and Ch. 5
5		Decision Making in Groups Logic, Inferences and Assumptions; Risk and Uncertainty	
6	Monday 7/12 8:30-3:30	Politics and Decision Making	See lesson in Blackboard for readings and videos shared on Blackboard Read: J&K Ch. 4 and Ch. 6
7		Intuitive Decision Making How Your Brain Makes Decisions	See lesson in Blackboard for readings and videos shared on Blackboard
8	Tuesday 7/13	Data Driven Decision Making in Schools	See lesson in Blackboard for readings and videos shared on Blackboard

	1:30-3:30		Read: J&K – Ch. 7 Article Critique #2 due @ 11:59pm on July 13th
9	Monday 7/19 8:30-3:30	Emotions and Affect in Decision Making	See lesson in Blackboard for readings and videos shared on Blackboard Read: J&K – Ch. 8 Bounded Rationality Paper due @ 11:59pm on July 19th
10	Tuesday 7/20 1:30-3:30	Making Difficult Educational Decisions	See lesson in Blackboard for readings and videos shared on Blackboard Read: J&K – Ch. 9
11	Friday 7/23 8:30-3:30	Shared Decision Making with Multiple Stakeholders	See lesson in Blackboard for readings and videos shared on Blackboard Read: J&K Chapter 10
13	Monday 7/26 8:30-3:30	Decision, Decision, Decisions Peer Critique	See lesson in Blackboard for readings and videos shared on Blackboard Research Problem and Rationale Paper due @ 11:59pm on July 26th
14	Tuesday 7/27 1:30-3:30	Research Problem and Rationale Paper Presentations	See lesson in Blackboard for readings and videos shared on Blackboard
15	Friday 7/30 8:30-11:30	Research Problem and Rationale Paper Presentations Reflections and Culminating Activity	See lesson in Blackboard for readings and videos shared on Blackboard

Critique of Research Articles

75 points each

Article Critique #1 due @ 11:59pm on July 9th

Article Critique #2 due @ 11:59pm on July 13th

As scholars using published research to bolster your arguments, it is important you become a discerning reader. The purpose of these two papers is to give you opportunities to select, analyze and criticize published work in terms of the contribution it makes to both the knowledge base and methodology. Instructor feedback is intended to help you to hone your criticism skills.

Expected Length: 5-6 pages per critique, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 pt. font

To complete this writing assignment, follow the steps below:

1. Select a research article from a peer-reviewed professional journal that addresses one of the topics covered in this course. Carefully read the article with an eye toward understanding the contribution the work makes to the knowledge base and the methodological soundness of the work.
2. Write a critique of the article in terms of its usefulness to scholars. Include in your critique a discussion of the structure of the paper; the value of the research question(s) addressed; the appropriateness of the methodology used to address the question; and the reasonableness of the claims made regarding the conclusions. Be certain to begin your critique with an introduction that draws the reader into your paper and ends with a **clear thesis** for your paper. The thesis must establish your burden of proof for the paper.
3. Conclude your paper with a re-statement of your thesis and a brief discussion of the implications of your critique in terms of policy and practice.

Assessment Rubric for Critique of Research Articles

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Below Expectations
Introduction (15%)	Orients reader to purpose of paper, describes article critiqued and purpose of critique itself, and foreshadows significant findings through the thesis.	Provides adequate description of the paper critiqued and purpose of the critique itself.	Vague; does not adequately orient the reader to the paper.	Missing or insufficient; little consideration of reader's perspective.
Research Topic & Literature Review (20%)	Extensive discussion of research questions and their appropriateness, importance of topic for theory and practice, merits of literature review.	Adequate treatment of research questions, importance of topic for theory and practice, and adequacy of literature review.	Superficial treatment of research questions, importance of topic, and merits of literature review.	Discussion of research questions, topic elements of this criterion are missing, confusing, and/or insufficient.
Research Design (20%)	Extensive analysis of research methods design and their appropriateness for addressing research questions.	Adequate analysis of research methods and design and their appropriateness for addressing research questions.	Superficial or incomplete critique of research methods and design and their appropriateness for addressing research questions.	Analysis of research methods and design used is missing, incomplete, or unclear.
Data & Findings (20%)	Extensive critique of presentation, quality, and appropriateness of research findings; some discussion of gaps or inaccuracies; alternative ways of presenting data.	Adequate discussion of research findings in terms of presentation, appropriateness, and/or accuracy.	Superficial discussion of research findings in terms of presentation, appropriateness, and/or accuracy.	Discussion of findings is missing or incomplete.
Conclusion (15%)	Closes with a restatement of thesis; summarizes main points of critique (i.e., whether conclusions were reasonable and research questions were answered.) Persuasive in presenting implications of critique.	Adequate summary of main points of critique and its implications; but not necessarily persuasive.	Merely summarizes content of critique absent implications.	Critique ends without a discernible conclusion.
Mechanics & APA (10%)	Accurate and precise. Nearly error-free. Reflects clear understanding of APA format and thorough proofreading.	Occasional errors in grammar or word choice. Minor APA errors.	Spelling is check, but errors in grammar or punctuation exist; not conforming to APA rules.	Frequent errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and APA format.

Bounded Rationality Paper

100 points

Bounded Rationality Paper due @ 11:59pm on July 19th

The purpose of this paper is for you to put the concept of bounded rationality to use as a tool for examining an organizational decision you have experienced. Although some description is required, keep in mind that the paper is intended to be primarily analytical. Your thesis must be analytical and must be demonstrated through the body of your paper.

Estimated length: 6-7 pages, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 pt. font

1. Introduce the paper by briefly describing a decision made in your school or organization that had an impact—either positive or negative. Your thesis must explain your perspective on how the rationality (or reasonableness) of that decision was limited or bounded under the circumstances.
2. In the body of the paper, provide enough narrative description of the decision for the reader to understand its most important features. **DO NOT GO INTO EXCESSIVE DETAIL.** Subsequent to the description, demonstrate the validity of your thesis by using bounded rationality and related concepts to construct logical arguments that show the limitations of human reasoning in the decision-making process. Your task is to demonstrate how the concept of bounded rationality **helps to explain why the decision you chose came out as it did.**
3. Conclude by restating your thesis and explaining how decision makers and organizations might cope with or mitigate the effects of bounded rationality.

Assessment Rubric for Bounded Rationality Paper

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaching Expectations	Below Expectations
Introduction (20%)	Introduction draws reader into the paper effectively. Thesis is clear and analytical dealing directly with the concept of bounded rationality, and requires demonstration through coherent arguments and support based on what the author has read, class sessions, the author's experience, or sound reasoning.	Introduction orients the reader to the paper. Thesis is apparent, though not entirely clear. It may be more descriptive than analytical. The thesis may not include bounded rationality.	Introduction explains what is in the paper, but lacks a clear and analytical thesis.	Introduction is weak. The paper lacks a clear thesis.
Developing Arguments (50%)	Author presents arguments that are clear, logical, persuasive, and easy to follow. Each argument relates directly to the thesis. Any debatable assertions are supported with evidence. Quotations or citations may be used judiciously to make especially difficult or powerful points.	Arguments are clearly linked to the thesis, but they may not be entirely persuasive.	Arguments are presented, but they may be unrelated to one another and/or to the thesis. Assertions and opinions are left largely unsupported.	Clear arguments in support of or related to the thesis are not made.
Conclusions (20%)	The conclusions drawn at the end follow logically from the body of the paper, and begin with a re-worded statement of the thesis. The author explains how a leader could mitigate or better cope with the effects of bounded rationality in the decision examined.	Conclusions are related to the thesis but are not entirely persuasive. Mitigation and coping are not adequately discussed.	Conclusions follow from the body, but may not relate directly to the thesis. Mitigation and coping are not adequately discussed.	The conclusions drawn do not appear to be related to the thesis or supported by logical arguments.
Mechanics (10%)	The paper is nearly free of errors.	The paper has some errors.	The paper has numerous errors.	The paper appears not to have been proofread.

Research Problem and Rationale Paper

150 points

Research Problem and Rationale Paper due @ 11:59pm on July 26th

This paper requires students to establish a research focus. It serves as a precursor to a statement of research problem appropriate for a dissertation proposal or dissertation. As with all other papers in this course, the Research Problem and Rationale Paper requires a thesis and supporting arguments intended to persuade the reader. This time, however, the topic is your own research. Most important, this paper requires extensive literature support to demonstrate how you have situated your thinking in established theory and empirical research.

Many of the articles and books we have provided for this course may be useful to you in the development of this paper. It is also true that the course readings will miss the mark for many topics that interest you. Students should expect to spend at least some time during the semester searching for sources relevant to their own research interests. A good strategy would be to explore the reference lists of articles and books we have assigned to check for sources that align with and are relevant to your research focus.

Expected Length: 8-9 pages, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 pt. font

Paper Components

1. **Introduction.** Write an introduction that orients the reader to the type of research you wish to conduct. The introduction must include a question (or set of questions) that guides your thinking about your topic. This could be a viable research question, but we are not yet holding you to that standard. The introduction must also include a thesis statement that explains why it is important to conduct a study within your topic.
2. **Purpose Statement.** The body of your paper begins with a statement of purpose, answering the question: What is it you wish to learn about your topic? The purpose may be supported with literature citations if others have pursued or recommended a similar purpose, but it may not be possible or appropriate to support the purpose with literature.
3. **Significance.** The majority of the body should focus on significance, the “so what?” question that all researchers must answer. It is usually helpful to think in terms of research (or academic) significance and practical significance. How would the study contribute to both scholarship and practice?
4. **Future Research.** The final portion of the body should be a listing of potential research questions that flow logically from your statement of purpose and significance. Be inclusive and imaginative. This is a list you should want to carry forward and refine for portfolio 3 and beyond.
5. **Summary and Implications.** Conclude your paper with a restatement of your thesis and brief discussion of the implications of your potential study. Be sure to include discussion of gaps in the literature you have been able to locate and read up to this point. What should be the next steps in your work?

Assessment Rubric for Research Problem and Rationale Paper

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaching Expectations	Summers Below
Introduction (10%)	Draws reader into the paper. Thesis is clear and analytical, dealing directly with significance, and requires demonstration through coherent arguments and support from published literature.	Introduction orients the reader to the paper. Thesis is apparent, though not entirely clear; may be more descriptive than analytical and unclear in terms of significance.	Introduction explains what is in the paper, but lacks a clear and analytical thesis.	Introduction is weak. The paper lacks a clear thesis.
Purpose (25%)	Clear, compelling, and well supported by published literature (if possible) and explained from multiple perspectives (e.g., practical and academic) in a logical and persuasive manner.	Purpose of research is clear and engaging.	Purpose is apparent, but confusing.	Purpose is missing or unclear.
Significance (25%)	Clear, compelling, and well supported by published literature; explained from multiple perspectives (e.g., practical and academic) in logical, persuasive manner linked to purpose.	The author weaves together persuasive arguments regarding the significance of the topic that follow logically from the stated purpose.	Significance is apparent, but not well supported by literature and/or seems unrelated to purpose.	Significance is unclear or missing.
Potential Research Questions (15%)	Inclusive and stimulating; clearly and persuasively linked to purpose and significance.	Reasonable set of questions is presented; clearly follow from purpose and significance.	List of questions is brief and not very imaginative. Links to purpose and significance unclear.	List of questions is inadequate.
Conclusion (15%)	Begins with restatement of thesis in new language and summary of main points; broadens to discuss study's direction and future literature needs to support purpose and/or significance.	Conclusion summarizes the content of the paper well and restates the thesis in a manner that seems to flow logically from the body of the paper. Future direction is apparent.	Conclusion merely summarizes what has come before. Thesis may be stated in same words as at the beginning or altogether missing from conclusion.	Paper fails to conclude properly.
Mechanics & APA (10%)	Accurate and precise. Nearly error-free. Reflects clear understanding of APA format and thorough proofreading.	Occasional grammatical errors, questionable word choice. Minor APA errors.	No spelling errors, but issues with grammar and punctuation; difficulty conforming to APA rules.	Frequent errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and APA format.