



EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM
California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo

EDUC 586 – INTRODUCTION TO INQUIRY IN EDUCATION

Welcome to EDUC 586. This course fulfills selected requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Education with a specialization in Educational Leadership and Administration as well as requirements for the *California Preliminary Administrative Services Credential*. In lieu of a traditional master's thesis, students in the Educational Leadership and Administration Program (ELAP) complete a rigorous year-long action research project (i.e., EDUC 586, 589, 570, and 590) culminating in an extensive final paper. Unlike traditional research that is typically conducted by individuals (researchers) somewhat removed from the environment being studied, action research is:

- Systematic inquiry conducted by educators with vested interest in the teaching–learning process or environment for purposes of gathering information about how their school operates, how they teach, and how their students learn;
- Research done by teachers and school leaders for themselves with the goal of increasing the utility and effectiveness of the findings.

All course-related activities—readings, session assignments, and in-class learning activities—are designed to provide integrated experiences and to maximize application leadership knowledge and skills. Discussion, lab practical, and large- and small-group exercises will be employed to address course content. *Prerequisite: Admission to the Educational Leadership and Administration Program.*

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Texts

1. American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition). Washington, D.C.: Author. ISBN 1-4338-0561-8
2. Mertler, C. A. (2017). *Action research: Improving schools and empowering educators* (5th edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. ISBN 978-1-4833-8905-9
3. Elliott, R. (2016). *Painless grammar*. Hauppauge, NY: Barrons. ISBN 978-1-4380-0774-8

N.B.: You will use these same texts for EDUC 586, 589, 570, and 590.

How Will You Use the Required Texts?

Textbooks are tools for the mind. As such, you must become skilled in using them for their intended purposes: to provoke thinking and to acquire information. Here is a brief description of intended goals for the use of each textbook:

1. American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition). Washington, D.C.: Author. ISBN 1-4338-0561-8



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The APA Manual provides the set of standards we will use for written expression. It contains formatting rules, grammar guidelines, and other useful information for graduate-level writing. All written work for this and other courses in the ELAP must conform to the standards set forth in this book.

2. Mertler, C. A. (2017). *Action research: Improving schools and empowering educators* (5th edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. ISBN 978-1-4833-8905-9

We will use chapters of Mertler's textbook in all three research courses. It provides a conceptual guide for designing action research studies, and it provides useful examples of how to structure research processes. Absorb as much information as possible from the book, but know there are other equally valuable sources of information available online (e.g., journal articles, other textbooks, etc.) you may use to supplement the course text.

3. Elliott, R. (2016). *Painless grammar*. Hauppauge, NY: Barrons. ISBN 978-1-4380-0774-8

Welcome to graduate school where your instructors will help you perfect your use of English grammar. (And you thought you finished with THAT subject in middle school!) Each written assignment you submit will be reviewed for content and structure (i.e., structure = format, grammar, and spelling). The intent of this process is to help you become a polished writer. READ THE GRAMMAR TEXT, TAKE THE QUIZZES, IDENTIFY AREAS OF WEAKNESS, AND PRACTICE CORRECT USE OF THE LANGUAGE.

CLASS MEETING SCHEDULE

Unless otherwise stated, Saturday course meetings for EDUC 586 will meet at the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education (see Figure 1).

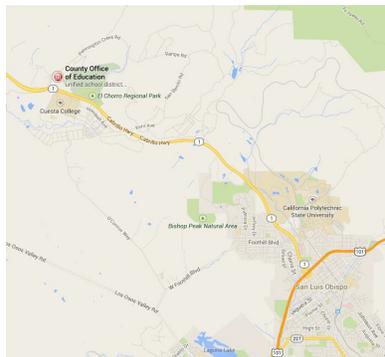


Figure 1. Directions to the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. N.B.: CLASS WILL BEGIN PROMPTLY AT 9:00 A.M. **BE SURE TO ARRIVE ON TIME.**



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COURSE GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

Participation

Attendance and participation in weekend sessions are **MANDATORY**, and students may be dropped from the course for non-approved absences.

Assignments

1. Students are required to submit all written assignments in MS Word format (Mac or PC versions). All written assignments must follow the American Psychological Association (APA) writing style guidelines. **Use a consistent 12-point font and double space all work. Use a one-inch margin on all sides.**
2. All assignment submissions must contain your last name. Save your files using this format:

LAST NAME_TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT
3. All assignments submitted to instructors must be the original work of the student and shall not have been submitted for credit in any other course.
4. All assignments must be completed and presented to the instructor on the due dates and times listed in this syllabus. One-half credit will be given for late submissions.
5. Students are required to maintain an electronic portfolio of their work (hereafter referred to as an "e-portfolio"). All assignments must be included, and students will submit their e-portfolios for assessment purposes at the end of spring quarter.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Let's begin with a frank discussion about student grade expectations. You were selected to participate in this program because you are an intelligent high achiever. Based on your past academic performance, you most likely strove to earn an 'A' grade in your undergraduate or other graduate courses. Achieving an 'A' grade in this course is entirely possible, but it will be a challenging undertaking. Here are examples of common misconceptions new graduate students have about earning high marks in the ELAP:

- ***"Everything I read in textbooks and other materials is unquestionably correct; therefore, I will use the 'digest-and-regurgitate' model when I write papers or take tests."***

FALSE. Textbooks and other written material often contain errors, opinion, and bias. You are expected to CHALLENGE THE AUTHORS when you read. Do not accept surface validity just because something appears in print, electronically or otherwise. When you write papers, DO NOT TELL US WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW. We have read the textbooks, so do not copiously quote the authors in your writing. We are most interested in your original thinking in response to what you read and study. ORIGINAL THINKING IS HIGHLY VALUED AND WILL BE REWARDED.

- ***"If I want to learn and earn high marks, I must NEVER make mistakes, fail, or receive extensive correction on my work."***



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FALSE. The path to success is littered with failures. This may be the most challenging concept to accept as you begin your work in the ELAP, but it is the most important. Learning is essentially trial and error, and there can be no progress without making mistakes. The lesson here is simply this: TAKE RISKS AND MAKE MISTAKES. You will learn more from your failures than from your successes if you are willing to leave the psychological safety of the “I-must-always-be-perfect-and-never-make-errors” mindset. RISK-TAKING AND INNOVATIVE THINKING, EVEN IF THEY FAIL TO PRODUCE A DESIRED OUTCOME, WILL BE REWARDED.

- **“B means bad.”**

FALSE. On the ELAP grading scale, a 'B' grade is given for scores that fall within the 80% to 92% range. This grade means significantly above average performance; demonstrates full understanding and complete mastery of subject matter. THE AVERAGE QUARTERLY GPA FOR ELAP STUDENTS IS 3.50. This means the probability of receiving one or more B grades each quarter is relatively high for most students. B GRADES MEAN YOU ARE ACHIEVING AT THE EXPECTED LEVEL FOR TALENTED GRADUATE STUDENTS.

So, how will your work be assessed in this course? Course grades will be based upon successful completion of the following:

- Online discussion posts
- In-class projects and presentations
- Written assignments

Online Discussion Posts

This class is an exercise in peer learning. Therefore, the QUALITY of your posts and responses to peer posts will help your classmates learn more effectively. Your contributions are essential to this process, so become an active member of the virtual discussion board.

In-Class Projects and Presentations

The number and type of these activities vary by course and quarter, but you will be required to work in teams to solve problems and present your learning. A sample presentation may involve one team teaching the class how to create and upload a YouTube video. EVERYONE IS EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE EQUALLY IN TEAM PROJECTS.

Written Assignments

You will be required to write several short papers during the quarter in response to various prompts or case studies. YOU WILL BE GIVEN A SPECIFIC WORD COUNT FOR EACH PAPER – DO NOT EXCEED IT. The goal of limiting the number of words is to teach you to write concisely. You will not earn points for verbosity when you write academic papers, and almost all publications (e.g., journals, magazines, newspapers, etc.) limit the number of words that can be contained in an article. We will follow this model in our class. THIS MEANS YOU MUST EDIT, REWRITE, EDIT, AND REWRITE. I am not interested in first drafts and rough copies, and the submission of papers in this form will earn low marks. BECOME A SUPERIOR EDITOR OF YOUR WORK.



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Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences.

ELAP Grading Scale

Grade	Grade Point	Description	Percentage Range
A	4.0	Excellent – superior performance; demonstrates exceptional understanding and comprehensive mastery of subject matter.	97 - 100
A-	3.7		93 - 96
B+	3.3		89 - 92
B	3.0	Very Good – significantly above average performance; demonstrates full understanding and complete mastery of subject matter.	85 - 88
B- CR	2.7	Minimum grade required for credit-no credit (CR/NC) courses.	80 - 84
U NC	0	Unsatisfactory or no credit (NC) – results in a failing course grade.	< 80
I	0	The "Incomplete" ("I") grade signifies that a portion of required coursework has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed period due to fully justified reasons. There is still a possibility of the student earning credit once missing coursework has been submitted.	

STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY

The faculty and students of the Educational Leadership and Administration Program (ELAP) are committed to creating and maintaining a learning community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach her or his own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, we seek to develop and nurture diversity, believing that it strengthens the program, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and the Disability Resource Center, Building 124, Room 119, at (805) 756-1395, as early as possible in the term.



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INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY



James L. Gentilucci, Ph.D. - Dr. Gentilucci is a Professor Emeritus of Educational Leadership. He served for 23 years as a K-12 teacher, principal, chief business officer, and assistant superintendent before becoming a university professor. His writing and research interests include student perceptions of schooling and learning; instructional leadership of school principals; and national and international K-12 school reform and improvement. He is President and Director of Research at the Veritas Research and Evaluation Group.

Dr. Gentilucci received his bachelor's degree in Geography from California State University Northridge and master's and Ph.D. degrees in Educational Leadership and Organizational Theory from the University of California Santa Barbara. He also holds three additional master's degrees in the areas of Information Management (M.S.), Business Administration (M.B.A.), and Computer-Based Education (M.A.). Dr. Gentilucci holds California Multiple and Single Subject Teaching Credentials as well as the California Professional Administrative Services Credential.

THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

VISION	MISSION
<p>The School of Education develops and supports qualified, competent, and caring education professionals who prepare a diverse student population to become active and thoughtful participants in a democratic society.</p>	<p>The School of Education leads the campus in an all-university approach to preparing education professionals. These professionals create, assess, and modify environments, practices, and policies to foster the achievement of each and every learner; they strive for equity in schools and society; and they are committed to inquiry and professional growth for themselves and the advancement of P-20 education.</p> <p>School of Education faculty models leadership in its teaching, scholarship, and service through a grounded, reflective, learn-by-doing approach and through sustained collaborations with its education partners: P-12 schools, families, community colleges, universities, and local, state, and national agencies.</p>

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Be qualified, competent, and caring professional educators: Demonstrate subject mastery, pedagogical and professional knowledge, and dispositions toward ethical practice that shape change as well as promote educational equity and equal access to learning for all students.
2. Integrate principles and practices of professional fields to support student learning: Demonstrate the ability to translate theory into practice and utilize knowledge-building technologies to foster learning, mentoring, and leadership.
3. Engage in cross-disciplinary and collaborative practices: Understand the relationships of one discipline to another within their particular profession, and demonstrate the ability to establish collaborations and partnerships to enhance professional practices and support student success.
4. Demonstrate authentic assessments designed for student success, individual growth, and program improvement: Develop and use assessments that are data-driven, involve multiple sources and opportunities, are linked to professional standards; and are used to modify programs and practices.
5. Effect sustainable communities in a multicultural environment: Assume leadership roles in schools, communities and their professional associations to shape change, ensure tolerance and inclusion, and advance principles of social justice; promote comprehensive schooling to support education equity and access to college and career preparation.
6. Engage in professional practices: Demonstrate reflective practice, uphold professional standards, and enact dispositions for both personal growth and advancement of the education field; initiate the practice of life-long learning by engaging in professional associations and establishing personal, professional growth plans.



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DISPOSITIONS

Professionalism

- 1.1 Responsibility and Accountability — Acts ethically, responsibly, and with integrity, and is considerate, respectful, punctual, and appropriate in appearance, in conduct, and in all interactions with students, families, mentors, and colleagues. Is creative and self-reliant in finding solutions to problems and managing dilemmas. Is open to constructive feedback from others, manages situations of conflict and their own stress appropriately, and takes responsibility for own actions.
- 1.2 Creating Positive Climate — Develops curricula and programs that provide equitable access to learning opportunities for each and every student and educator through both content and processes. Promotes a climate in which learning is valued and on-going. Provides choices to enable all to share in and contribute to social and intellectual life. Upholds fair and equitable standards for conduct that encourage responsibility, mutual respect, and civic values, and that safeguard the physical, intellectual, and emotional well-being of each and every student and education professional.

Ethical Practice

- 2.1 Cross-Cultural Competence — Promotes respect for self, students, families, and cultures. Demonstrates belief that everyone can learn and values human diversity and equity in the learning environment. Examines own biases and prejudices and develops necessary awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and skills for effectively and respectfully teaching and mentoring people whose culture differs from their own.
- 2.2 Collaboration — Actively engages in a community of learners that develops relationships, programs, and projects with colleagues in P-20 schools and educational agencies designed to improve the quality of education for each and every student and education professional. Contributes professionally to the field at local, regional, state, and national levels.

Shaping Change

- 3.1 Inquiry and Innovation — Is prepared to engage in and fosters in others life-long learning, continuous reflection, and research (on own practice or beyond). Creates learning opportunities for self and others. Maintains currency with professional knowledge, effective and ethical practices, and scholarship in the field. Tries new methods and tools. Incorporates knowledge-building technologies; critical, creative, and metacognitive thinking; conceptual understanding; independent and interdependent problem-solving; and experiential approaches to learning.
- 3.2 Social Justice — Seeks to understand own privileges and prejudices, the stereotypes embedded in educational materials, and the cultural bias institutionalized in schools and other education-related organizations. Works toward realizing a nation and world where all have basic human rights and actively seeks to eliminate social, political, and economic inequities. Promotes social and environmental responsibility. Independently and collaboratively identifies opportunities, goals, and avenues for social and organizational development toward excellence and equity. Empowers others to achieve organizational and personal goals.



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Session One: The Challenge of Academic Writing

(N.B.: Each learning session covers a two-week period. The instructor reserves the right to modify this outline based on cohort progress.)

One of the most important skills you will develop throughout the year is the ability to write at the **graduate level**. There is a substantial difference between undergraduate and graduate writing, and even the best undergraduate writers struggle with academic writing.

As you begin your graduate education, you should ask, "How can I improve my writing?" or "What is meant by writing in an academic voice?" The transition from every-day writing to academic writing can be accomplished with practice. Look carefully at Figure 1 and the five levels of formality in language identified by Joos (1972). Most new graduate students are familiar with and communicate in the lower three language registers. The intimate register is often used in texting (e.g., LOL, L2G, <3). The casual register encompasses most of the conversations that occur among friends and coworkers. This includes phrases such as, "I'll deal with it later" and other similar colloquial expressions. The consultative register is used most often in undergraduate writing and is peppered with abbreviations, contractions, colloquial wording, and clichés. This is the register with which most of you write at present.

One of my course objectives is to help you transition your writing from the consultative to the formal register. At first, writing in the formal register may feel stilted, but it is important to elevate your written discourse to a level commensurate with graduate-level expectations. The transition will be the focus of this learning session.

FIGURE 1. Levels of Formality of Language

Level	Characteristics of Language
Frozen	The words are always the same. Examples: The Lord's Prayer, The Pledge of Allegiance.
Formal	The word choice and sentence structure used by the business and education community. Uses a 1,200-word to 1,600-word spoken vocabulary. Example: "This assignment is not acceptable in its present format."
Consultative	A mix of formal and casual register. Example: "I can't accept the assignment the way it is."
Casual	Language used between friends, which comes out of the oral tradition. Contains few abstract words and uses nonverbal assists. Example: "This work is a no-go. Can't take it."
Intimate	Private language shared between two individuals, such as lovers or twins.

Dutch linguist Martin Joos (1972) identified these five levels of formality of language. Adapted from *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* (p. 27), by R. Payne, 1996, Highlands, TX: aha! Process. Copyright 1996 by aha! Process. Adapted with permission



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Common Writing Problems

Beginning graduate-level writers make a host of errors in their first papers. Some of the more common and troublesome errors include:

- Writing in an intimate, casual, or consultative register;
- Disorganized or illogical “flow” of ideas;
- Failure to place a clearly articulated thesis statement at the beginning of the paper; Use of opinion without supporting evidence;
- Use of jargon (e.g., SSTs, NCLB, IEPs, PLCs) without definitions;
- Overly long paragraphs (i.e., not understanding when to transition between thoughts); Misuse of punctuation (especially commas) and capitalization;
- Other errors in mechanics (quotations, italics, etc.);
- Faulty parallelism in verb construction;
- Poor transitions between paragraphs;
- Anthropomorphism;
- Wordiness and redundancy (i.e., “In order to” instead of “To”);
- Economy of expression (i.e., writing to take up space in a paper).

In addition to these errors in structure and mechanics, the following grammar “goblins” seem particularly noisome for graduate students:

Common Grammar Problems

- their (possessive form of they) versus they’re (contraction of they are);
- that versus which (restrictive versus non-restrictive clauses);
- accept (meaning to receive or to admit) versus except (meaning but or only);
- who’s (contraction of who is or who has) versus whose (possessive form of who);
- its (possessive form of it) versus it’s (contraction of it is or it has);
- your (possessive form of you) versus you’re (contraction of you are);
- affect (meaning to influence) versus effect (meaning result);
- than (used in comparison) versus then (refers to a time in the past);
- were (form of the verb to be) versus we’re (contraction of we are) versus where (related to location or place);
- to (a prepositional phrase) versus too (meaning also).

Do you recognize any of these common problems in your writing? If so, take the time to review the grammar and usage rules in *Painless Grammar* and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. One of the most effective methods for improving your writing is proofreading the writing of others, and that is your task for this learning session.

REQUIRED READING:

- 1) [What is graduate level writing? \(PDF available on PolyLearn\)](#)
- 2) [How to Read a Research Article \(PDF available on PolyLearn\)](#)



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Session Two: Introduction to Action Research

One of the most common complaints about educational research is that it has limited practical value for classroom teachers and school leaders. Moreover, much traditional research seems to be divorced from the realities of practice. While this is a legitimate grievance, research is an integral part of education that has, in many instances, great value for practitioners. Action research (or what I prefer to term as “actionable research”) is one response to this problem. Kurt Lewin (1946) has been credited with the conceptual framework that underlies action research. His ideas have been refined and expanded over the years, and action research is now widely recognized as a valid form of practitioner inquiry.

The material in this learning session will introduce you to several concepts including the value of research, differences between traditional and action research, and identifying a researchable topic. Be sure to study the material carefully. It will form the basis of future work in the research course sequence.

OBJECTIVES:

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- Define action research;
- Explain the role of the teacher researcher in action research;
- Define action research and explain why it is used;
- Explain the “intelligent consumption of research”;
- Use the CLEAR process to evaluate research articles;
- Compare and contrast action and traditional research approaches;
- Describe the steps in the action research process;
- Compare and contrast researchable and non-researchable problems;
- Identify a researchable problem and develop one or more research questions;
- Describe factors that limit action research.

REQUIRED READING:

- 1) Pages 61-86 in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Sixth Edition
- 2) Chapters 1-2 in Mertler
- 3) Labaree, D. F. (2003). The peculiar problems of preparing educational researchers. *Educational Researchers*, 32(4), 11-22. (PDF available on PolyLearn)

VIDEOS AND PODCASTS

- Action Research in the Classroom, Part I: <http://youtu.be/MDVH0u4tUW0>
- Action Research in the Classroom, Part II: <http://youtu.be/ZZHvpgU7pc8>

Commented [VM1]: EDUC 586 is the first part in the EDUC Research Series. In this course, students are introduced to Action Research projects that will develop over the course of the year. As students develop their individual Action Research projects, they will think about their leadership vision and their vision for effective teaching and learning (1A, 1B, 2B). By developing Action Research skills, students will also develop their capacity for continuous improvement, and supporting personal and professional learning (2A).



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ASSIGNMENTS:

1. For the Labaree (2003) article (available on the EDUC 586 PolyLearn), respond in writing to the following questions. **Limit your response to 400 words.** The purpose of restricting you to word limits is to develop your economy of expression (also known as "getting to the point"). To accomplish this, you must carefully select your words and succinctly express your ideas. Upload your paper to your electronic portfolio folder for EDUC 513.
 - a) What have you learned about action research that you did not know before reading this article?
 - b) Are there aspects, or specific points, made by the author with which you strongly agree? Describe those aspects with which you agree.
 - c) Are there aspects, or specific points, made by the author with which you strongly disagree? Describe your basic disagreements.
2. On the EDUC 586 Discussion Board, post your response to the prompt, and comment on the responses of at least two colleagues. **Kindly DO NOT skip ahead and reply to future learning session prompts. You should respond to ONE prompt and ONE prompt only for each two-week learning session.**



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Session Three: Problem Identification and Research Question Formulation

The skill of action research is essential for effective educational leadership. Leaders must know how to investigate problems, evaluate solutions and policies, and communicate findings to relevant publics. To that end, the ELAP divides the culminating research project and paper into three parts: (1) problem identification, significance, and research question; (2) research methodology, including data collection and analysis; and (3) presentation and discussion of research findings. Each part of the process is addressed in a corresponding course: EDUC 586 during fall, EDUC 589 during winter, EDUC 570 during spring, and EDUC 590 during summer.

One key outcome of EDUC 586 is the production of the first part of your action research paper. This requires you to do the following:

1. Describe your research topic;
2. Outline the problem, challenge, or issues that are relevant to your research by answering the following questions:
 - a. What is the problem?
 - b. Why and for whom is it problematic?
 - c. What is known or has been written about the problem? (Note: this is where you include your brief literature review.)
3. State the specific research question(s) that will guide your investigation;
4. Discuss the relationship of the question(s) to the topic/issues/problems described in numbers 1 and 2 by answering the following questions:
 - a. What is the relevance of your question to the broader issue/problem?
 - b. What differences will finding an answer make, both in your setting and more globally (if generalizable)?

At first glance, these four tasks seem rather simple and straightforward, but do not be fooled. The most difficult tasks for researchers (action and traditional) are problem identification and research question formulation. Clearly identifying the “what” and “why” of research always precedes the “how,” yet students and other novice researchers tend to focus on the “how” and begin their work with “fuzzy” problems and poorly formulated research questions. This is where most research efforts fail. Take your time and practice this skill. Remember: a problem well-stated is a problem half-solved.

OBJECTIVES:

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- Explain what is meant by evidence-based inquiry;
 - Describe the genesis of most research problems, especially those for action research;
 - Demonstrate how to identify an empirically researchable problem;
- Define “theory competition” and provide an example of it;
 - Identify at least one researchable problem in a case study;
 - Write at least one empirically researchable question for the problem;
 - Identify one or more possible topical areas for your action research project;
 - Outline the problem, challenge, or issues that are relevant to your research project using the four-question model;

Commented [VM2]: Developing individual Action Research project will help students to develop their vision for effective teaching, learning, and leadership (1A, 1B, 2A, 2B)



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- State the specific research question(s) that will guide your investigation;
- Discuss the relationship of the question(s) to the topic/issues/problems that you identified.

REQUIRED READING:

- 1) Chapter 3 in Mertler.

VIDEOS AND PODCASTS

- Violent Video Games—What Does the Research Say?
<http://www.thepsychfiles.com/2010/01/episode-115-video-violent-video-games-what-does-the-research-say/>

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. After you watch the video, write your responses to the following questions. **Limit your response to 400 words. Upload your paper to your electronic portfolio folder for EDUC 513.**
 - a) What is the problem?
 - b) Why and for whom is it a problem?
 - c) What is known or has been written about the problem?
 - d) State a research question that could guide an investigation of the problem.
2. On the EDUC 586 Discussion Board, post your response to the prompt, and comment on the responses of at least two colleagues. **Kindly DO NOT skip ahead and reply to future learning session prompts. You should respond to ONE prompt and ONE prompt only for each learning session.**

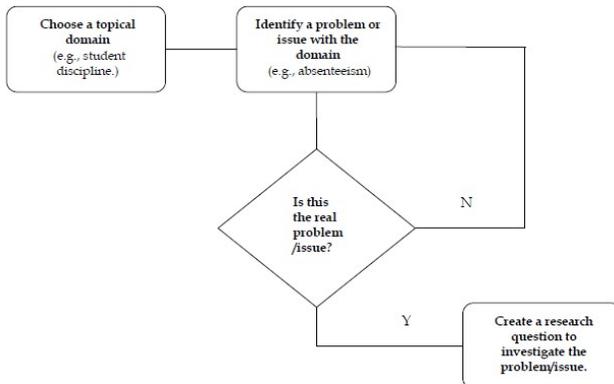


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Session Four: Researching Your Topic and Problem/Issue

At this point in the course, you should have identified a topical area you wish to investigate through your action research project. For example, you may wish to explore student behavior, curriculum, personnel issues, student achievement, etc. The list of possible topic domains is almost limitless. Once you have identified an area of interest, you must then identify a problem or issue within the domain you will investigate. As we discussed in class, clearly articulating the problem or issue is often not a straightforward process. Sometimes what we see on the surface is an expression or symptom of a problem or issue and not the problem/issue itself. We must resist the temptation to rush judgment without asking if there is a problem/issue behind the problem/issue we see.

Library research is one method that helps us “peel the onion” that surrounds most problems/issues. When we read what others have written about our problem/issue, we begin to focus more clearly on what we will actually investigate in an attempt to solve the problem or explore our issue. Not only are we required to consume research intelligently by discriminating between credible, peer-reviewed studies and advocacy research, we are also interested in understanding acceptable standards of adequacy for literature reviews. Note how library research can inform each step of the process depicted below.



OBJECTIVES:

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- Identify one or more possible topical areas for your action research project;
- Outline the problem, challenge, or issues that are relevant to your research project using the four-question model;
- Demonstrate the use of Boolean operators for keyword searching;
- Use the Academic Search Elite, ERIC, and Google Scholar databases/search tools to identify library resources (i.e., extant literature) that can be used to outline your problem, challenge, or issue;
- Compare and contrast primary and secondary sources.



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VIDEOS AND PODCASTS:

- **Writing the Literature Review (Part One): Step-by-Step Tutorial for Graduate Students by the University of Maryland University College**
<https://youtu.be/2IUZWZX4OGI>
- **Literature Reviews: An Overview for Graduate Students by North Carolina State University Libraries**
<http://www.lib.ncsu.edu/tutorials/litreview/>

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Use the Academic Search Elite, ERIC, and Google Scholar databases/search tools to locate at least five (5) resources from the literature that can be used in your research. Upload copies of these articles into your EDUC 586 portfolio folder.
 2. Use the Action Research Paper template located in the EDUC 586 PolyLearn to begin the process of outlining the first draft of your research proposal. You do NOT need to submit the first draft of your paper at this time. EDIT, REVISE, EDIT, and REVISE.
2. On the EDUC 586 Discussion Board, post your response to the prompt, and comment on the responses of at least two colleagues.

Session Five: Research Ethics

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In addition to identifying problems and questions, we examine how research activities are necessarily constrained by ethical and legal standards. We also delve deeper into the topic of literature reviews and their function in expanding our understanding of educational issues. Let's begin with the topic of research ethics.

Although a complete discussion of ethics is beyond the scope of this lesson, I briefly summarize here three major ethical viewpoints: situational (i.e., relativistic), utilitarian, and deontological. Those who adhere to situational ethics argue that no single ethical principle can be applied universally—all ethics are determined by the context of the situation. This ethical viewpoint has been labeled "relativistic" by some because it proposes ethical principles are relative to the problem or the actors involved in the problem.

The second ethical viewpoint is utilitarianism. The adherents of this viewpoint argue that the morality of an action is determined by its outcome, and utilitarianists seek to find outcomes that offer the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Finally, deontological ethicists posit that there are universal moral principles that can and must be applied in all circumstances. This ethical viewpoint is best represented by philosopher Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperative.

Research ethics are based on Kant's deontological principles, and most major research bodies (e.g., American Medical Association, American Research Association, etc.) and government agencies have developed detailed ethical guidelines to which all researchers must adhere. As you read



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through the material about ethical and legal considerations in research, consider how these issues might affect your ideas for a research project.

OBJECTIVES:

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- Explain why research ethics are based upon deontological ethical principles;
- Explain the necessity of codified ethical standards published by government and other research agencies;
- Describe the role and function of an Institutional Review Board;
- Define research ethics, voluntary participation, informed consent, harm and risk, and privacy as they relate to ethical research practices.

REQUIRED READING:

- 1) Read *Ethical Considerations in Your Research* (Mertler)
- 2) Read Cal Poly's Policy for the Use of Human Subjects in Research online at <http://research.calpoly.edu/HS-policy>

VIDEOS AND PODCASTS

- [The Ethics of Psychological Experiments](http://education-portal.com/academy/lesson/ethics-of-psychological-experiments.html)
<http://education-portal.com/academy/lesson/ethics-of-psychological-experiments.html>

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Read the following case study (adapted from the work of Charis Denison at goodcharacter.com).

Brendan was in third grade when he was caught cheating on his math quiz. He had been doing poorly in math, and his parents had threatened that if he did not raise his grades they would not let him play on the baseball team. So he cheated. When the teacher asked him about it he denied it, but he later admitted to writing down the answers ahead of time.

A parent conference was called, and Brendan had to sit with his parents, the teacher, and the principal to discuss the school policy on cheating and lying. On the way home, his father told Brendan he was deeply disappointed in him and expected more from him in the future. That night, Brendan felt like the whole world was against him, and he also felt guilty for letting his parents down.

That weekend, Brendan and his family went to a movie. When they got to the ticket window, Brendan's dad asked for children's tickets for both Brendan and his 16-year-old brother. Brendan looked over at his brother, who stared down at the sidewalk and hunched his shoulders hoping the ticket seller would not notice that he was well above the age for a child's ticket. The ticket seller glanced suspiciously back and forth between the father and the brother and then, with a doubtful look on her face, handed them two child's tickets. This happened every time they went to the movies, and it always made Brendan feel weird.



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On the way home from the movie, **Brendan asked his father why it was okay to lie and cheat the theater out of money but not to cheat on his math quiz.** His dad responded that sometimes it was okay to lie as long as nobody was hurt.

The rest of the way home Brendan just became more and more confused. Cheating on his test hurt no one. He did not steal the answers from any of the other students. If he had not been caught, he would have been praised. How was what he did different from what his dad did over and over again? Should he continue to stay silent the next time his dad lied?

2. Respond to the following questions in **no more than 400 words**. Upload your paper to your electronic portfolio folder for EDUC 513.
 - o Which ethical framework is represented by the behavior of Brendan's father?
 - o Which ethical framework is represented by Brendan?
 - o Which ethical framework would you use to counsel Brendan and his parents?
 3. On the EDUC 586 Discussion Board, post your response to the prompt, and comment on the responses of at least two colleagues.
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Session Six: Preparing Part One of Your Research Proposal

We are nearing the end of the quarter. The final weeks of EDUC 586 will be devoted to the preparation of the first part of your action research proposal.

Your final assignment for this course is to write the introduction to your research proposal. I have posted a detailed proposal template on PolyLearn to guide your writing. You will recognize the questions posed in the template as those we have addressed throughout the quarter. What is different in this final assignment is the challenge to answer those questions in a compelling and logical narrative.

Your second task involves reading Appendices A and B Mertler. These examples will be helpful as you compose the first section of your research proposal.

OBJECTIVES:

After completing this session, you will be able to:

- Write the first part of a graduate-level research proposal, including problem identification, research question formulation, and literature review.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- 1) Read Appendices A and B in Mertler.

ASSIGNMENTS:



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1. PREPARE PART ONE OF YOUR RESEARCH PROPOSAL
 - Download the Action Research Paper Template Part I from the Course Materials section of PolyLearn.
 - Use the template to write the first part of your action research paper (see guidelines in the template).
2. On the EDUC 586 Discussion Board, post your response to the prompt, and comment on the responses of at least two colleagues.



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Date Due	Activities and Assignments for EDUC 586	Word Limit	Points
October 7	Labaree Article Review	400	10
October 21	Violent Video Game Podcast and Research Question Development	400	10
November 11	Upload Research Articles to your EDUC 586 Portfolio Folder	N/A	10
November 18	Ethical Dilemma Case Study	400	10
All Quarter	Discussion Posts	No Limit	10
December 2	Research Proposal	No Limit	50
	TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS		100