

04/04

LDR 8562
RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN CREATING AND LEADING
AN INTENTIONAL ORGANIZATION

Course Syllabus
by
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Revised Summer 2004
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A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will engage in research activities in support of LDR 8520, Creating and Leading an Intentional Organization. The research skills that will be emphasized in this course are selection of topics, review of literature, and ethical research practices. These basic mechanics of research will be related to the topics in LDR 8520 and the dissertation process. Research activities will include extensive use of current web-based technologies.

B. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss ethics in research and the role of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), implications, and process.
2. Justify the selection of a significant research topic.
3. Perform a preliminary literature review of the topic.
4. Use technology resources to select and research a significant research topic.
5. Apply appropriate conventions of form and style to written scholarly work.
6. Locate critical course and program information.
7. Successfully complete course assignments in an online environment.

C. REQUIRED TEXTS/IMPORTANT WEB LINKS

Charles, C. M., & Mertler, C. A. (2002). *Introduction to educational research*. (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*. (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Applied Research Office Home: <http://www.fgse.nova.edu/aro/index.htm>

FSG/Educational Impact Electronic Textbook. To be purchased at the Educational Impact Web site: <http://www.educationalimpact.com>

FGS/Organizational Leadership Homepage:
<http://www.fgse.nova.edu/orgleader>

Mills, P. K. (2002, August). *Form and style guidelines for course papers*. Fort Lauderdale, FL: Nova Southeastern University.
<http://www.nova.edu/fgse/orgleader/resources/formnstyle.pdf>
(Note that on page 4 regarding levels of headings, the third level heading should be indented, italicized, and the first word and proper nouns only should be capitalized. The third-level heading should be followed by a period and then text on the same line. These levels of headings correspond with APA Levels 1, 3, and 4 as per the discussion in APA on pages 114-115, section 3.32.)

Mills, P. K. (2003). *Guide to the applied dissertation process*. Fort Lauderdale, FL: Nova Southeastern University.
This resource can be found at the Applied Research Office:
<http://www.fgse.nova.edu/aro/pdf/guidedol.pdf>

Mills, P. K. (2003, June). *Style guide for the applied dissertation*. Fort Lauderdale, FL: Nova Southeastern University.
This guide can be found at the Applied Research Office:
<http://www.fgse.nova.edu/aro/pdf/sgad.pdf>

NSU Library, Research, and Technology Center's Electronic Resources:
<http://www.nova.edu/library/eleclib>

NSU WebCT: <http://www.nova.edu/webct/>

The primary text used in LDR 8562, *Introduction to Educational Research*, is intended to provide you with a review of basic principles of research. In LDR 8562 you are responsible for reading Chapter 9 and re-reading Chapters 1 through 6.

D. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Three Chats – 15 points (5 points each maximum – attendance and participation)
Assignment #1 - Selection of the Research Topic – 35 points
Assignment #2 - Literature Review - 50 points

Your instructor for LDR 8562 will provide you with more detailed information regarding the grading criteria for each assignment.

Chats

The purpose of chat 1 is to discuss ethics in research and the role of the IRB in the dissertation process. Make sure that you review Chapter 1 in the text prior to the chat and read the summary of the IRB protocol in this syllabus. In addition, during chat 1 Chapters 2 and 3 in the text will be reviewed with special emphasis placed on the process of topic selection and refinement. Assignment #1 also will be discussed.

The purpose of chat 2 is to review Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 9 in the text in preparation for assignment #2.

The purpose of chat 3 is to discuss assignment #2. You will be expected to (a) discuss the technology and other resources used in your search for sources, (b) explain the specific sources you included in the literature review and (c) discuss form and style issues related to written scholarly work. Make sure that you review Chapter 9 before you begin working on assignment #2 and attend the chat.

Your instructor for LDR 8562 will notify you of the dates and times of chats. More specific guidelines regarding the specific topics and issues to be discussed also will be provided prior to each chat.

E. GRADING

Work completed in LDR 8562 is graded according to the NSU grading policy. In LDR 8562 final grades will be assigned as follows:

- ◆ A = 100-90 points
- ◆ B = 89-80 points
- ◆ F = 79 points or below
- ◆ I = Incomplete
- ◆ AW = Administrative Withdrawal

No plus or minus grades (e.g., A-, B+) are used in the Organizational Leadership (OL) doctoral program. A grade point average of at least 3.0 ("B") is required for retention in the program. A grade of Incomplete ("I") must be negotiated with the course instructor. The "I" grade is assigned when the student has completed the majority of the assignments. A student who has not completed any assignments at the end of the course is not eligible for an "I". An "I" must be made up by the date stipulated by the course instructor. The longest period of time that may be granted to a student is one term. A grade of "F" will automatically appear on a student's permanent record, if course requirements are not met on time.

For additional information regarding grade assignments in the OL program, see the *Student Handbook of Policies and Procedures*.

F. ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments 1 and 2 are intended to provide additional understanding of the research process and skills that will be needed to conduct dissertation research. The assignments are designed to help you select a research topic and conduct a literature review of the topic. You will follow a similar process and format later on in the program when you begin your dissertation.

Assignment #1: Problem Identification

The focus of Assignment #1 is the selection of a research topic and the process involved in identifying and refining a topic worthy of scholarly study. The process of selecting a topic is an orderly one designed to help you hone your research skills. It is very similar to the problem identification process in which you will engage for your dissertation research.

There are many sources for a research topic. The previous course LDR 8510 and the current course, LDR 8520, provide much food for thought in the field of organizational leadership. As practitioners, you also have knowledge of issues and problems that you encounter in your places of work. Additionally, you are aware of current topics and issues in the professional literature that need further study and research. The Internet provides yet another venue for learning about significant issues in the OL field. These and other sources are places you may choose to explore in conducting your search for an appropriate research topic or problem.

The topic/problem area you select should be significant, broad in scope, and worthy of academic study. You also should focus on selecting a real topic or issue that may help to solve a problem in or improve your work place. Stay away from trying to test a novel approach or a new product just because you think it's a neat idea. Avoid projecting solutions to any problem you identify at this stage. Here are some suggestions about how to proceed with this assignment:

1. Do research and identify a topic/problem you would like to use for this assignment.
2. Following the directions given for attaining topic approval, contact your research instructor, present your statement/topic in the format required by your instructor, and watch for feedback from your instructor. Do this prior to your first chat.
3. Once your topic is approved, thoroughly explore and “get to know” your topic by providing information pertinent to the topics listed below. Organize your responses (content and text) into a 5 to 8 page, double-spaced paper. (Assignment cover/title sheets and reference pages are additional pages to the 5 to 8 content page requirement.)

Use the following subheadings to organize your paper. Only information pertinent to each section should be discussed within the section.

Setting

In applied research types, a description of the setting is critical to understanding the nature of the problem identified. Discuss the attributes and traits, historical trends or experiences, and/or other pertinent demographic information about the organization and its location that are relevant to the topic and/or problem that lead one to ask the question(s) to be studied.

Statement of the Problem

A discrepancy model is used to express the problem statement, that is, the discrepancy between “what is?” and “what should be?” The problem statement is used to describe the

problem focus in clear and understandable terms. A discussion should be included in this section that clarifies how the problem is known to be, how the problem is documented, and what hard evidence supports the problem. This section clearly places the problem into context for the reader and typically incorporates some reference(s) to the professional literature. In addition, terms and concepts associated with the topic are defined. Finally, this section details the target group(s) and parties associated with the problem.

Nature and Significance of the Problem

Two major types of information are included in this section: (a) broad reference to the problem outside of the target site, as it exists in society or other organizations and (b) site-specific descriptions. The professional literature should be consulted to explain the problem as others have found it in their situations. When describing the local, site-specific problem, efforts should be made to discuss the existence of the problem (not any potential solution), its effects, impacts, origins, or other relevant explanation as it is manifested in the target organization.

Purpose of the Study

This section should summarize what one hopes to learn or accomplish by conducting the research. In this section, the research focus should be made clear (development, evaluation, or experimental, for example) and the intended outcome/benefit to the organization, as well as the rationale for proposing the project should be discussed. It is important to think ahead so that the proper method will be paired with the proposed research activities that will be described later. Careful review of the research types in chapter two of the text will be helpful in ensuring this match.

- To propose a development project (where a product or process to help the organization will be created), one would say that the purpose of the development research project is to, solve the identified problem. (Leave the selection of the best way to solve the problem for after the literature review. It would be premature to state a preferred method you believe would work at this point.)
- To propose an evaluation study, one would state that the purpose of the study is to evaluate the program described or to determine its effectiveness or worth.
- When the researcher wants to determine which of two methods is more efficient, an experiment would be proposed to determine which of the two methods would have the better outcome.
 - One would not propose an evaluation and then later describe development research activities.
 - One would not propose an experiment and then describe research activities intended to show the effectiveness of the existing method.
 - Similarly, one would not state that the purpose of a study is to implement some favored practice when one is intending to solve an organizational problem. For example, if the problem were low employee morale, the purpose of the study would be to increase morale and heighten organizational effectiveness (not to implement a particular solution strategy such as a merit pay system).

Research Questions

The research questions guide your research needs and procedures. The questions posed further establish the foundation for later discussions about methodology and procedures. Avoid closed (yes/no) questions. Focus instead, on seeking answers about the content/information as well as the methodology and procedures to be used in the study. Five to seven substantive research questions are typical. While asking each question, keep in mind (or better write down), the data source from whom you will collect the answer(s) as well as the projected data analysis procedure. Sample questions might include

- What have similar organizations done to solve the problem of low employee morale? (the data source(s) here could be the professional literature and/or interviews with members of successful organizations)
- What are the largest barriers within the organization to high employee morale? (a likely data source here would be the employees)
- What is the best way to improve communication within the organization? (the literature as well as targeted groups within the organization may best be consulted to answer this question)

Methodology

In this section, detail the focus and method you would intend to use to address your primary question(s). Of the eight methods/types of research described in the Charles and Mertler text, those that most commonly become OL dissertations include development (a form of action, or problem solving, research), evaluation, or experimentation. Describe the type of research you believe would best be used to answer the questions you have posed and explain why you have selected this type of research.

Intended Procedures

Describe the events and actions associated with the research method/focus/model you have selected. Describe the broad tasks that would need to be accomplished to carry out your research.

Potential Outcome

Describe the potential accomplishments, by-products, or outcomes that are likely within the organization given your research activities. (For example, after successfully implementing a development project to improve employee morale, the work place would become more satisfying to employees and organizational effectiveness may improve.)

Assignment 2

Assignment 2 is a mini-literature review related to your topic/problem. You are expected to review at least 10 resources related to the selected research topic. Your search must include a review of Educational Impact resources. The resources you select must be scholarly in nature and drawn from professional journals, books, and other “refereed” documents. Students also often use popular publications, conference papers, and other dissertations. You are cautioned to use these latter resources sparingly, because they are not subject to review by professional and/or editorial boards. All resources should be

published within the last 5-7 years. Older works generally recognized as classics are acceptable.

The review of each source should be two to three paragraphs long. The idea is to summarize the information by mentioning the problem, the setting, the format of the project or research and the results. It is also important to discuss the relationship of the selected source to your topic/problem. The entire paper should be 4-6 pages of double-spaced writing including the reference list.

Assignment 2 ends with a reference list. Every source mentioned in the text of your literature review must be listed alphabetically according to the author's surname. Each listing should be single spaced within the reference and double-spaced between references. APA form and style are required. Be sure to consult your APA manual and the OL guides for the correct format for various types of references. (Program guides supercede APA in the event of conflicts.)

The review of literature usually includes use of citations in the form of direct and indirect quotes. You are required to follow the American Psychological Association (APA) form and style when using quotations in your writing. If you are unsure of the proper formats, please consult your APA manual before you start writing. It is also recommended that you use the historical present in your writing because research is considered timeless. Review Chapter 9 in the text for additional information.

Here are some common examples of citations:

Indirect Quotes:

Example 1:

According to Hagner and Smith (1996) the collaborative efforts emphasized by the Japanese industry were not easily transportable to other cultures (p. 213).

Example 2:

Nursing care for residents is provided by registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and nursing assistants. (Wilson, & Smith, 1998, p. 37).

Example 3:

Jamieson's book, Better Bodies After 35 (1995), includes information related to fitness and nutrition for people over 30 (p. 36).

Example 4:

Simpson (1995) states that data obtained under laboratory conditions did not support Maxwell's research (p. 412).

Please consult the APA manual for additional formats.

Direct Quotes:

The most important thing to remember about direct quotes using APA style is that direct quotes of four lines or less have a very different format than quotes that are more than four lines long. Here are the examples:

Example 1 (more than four lines long):

The Florida Department of Health (1996) in their most recent report about the state of public health facilities has documented:

The effects of poor health habits on care costs are significant. Employee illnesses and injuries produce both direct and indirect costs to employers. Direct costs include salaries paid to absent employees, health care costs, expenses related to rehabilitation and workers' compensation awards. Indirect cost may be incurred due to disruption of work routines because of absentee employees and hiring and training of either temporary or full-time replacements. (p. 8)

(Notice that the direct quote of more than four lines does not have quotation marks and is single-spaced and blocked.)

Example 2 (up to four lines):

“In the context of vocational education, accountability represents a relationship between a service provider and its constituents. This is one of the premises on which the Perkins Act is based.” (Keller & Hanser 1997, p. 37).

(Notice that a quote of four lines or less is included in the text and that the quotation marks are used.)

Summary of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Process for the Protection of Human Subjects (For additional information, see http://www.fgse.nova.edu/aro/online_guides/index.htm)

The IRB process is designed to comply with federal regulations as well as conform to the guidelines of Nova Southeastern University's IRB regarding the use of human subjects in research. The researcher (student or faculty member) who wishes to use human subjects in his or her project is expected to follow the university protocol for the IRB. Any research that may involve individual subjects/clients/patients and/or cooperative research initiatives that involve human subjects from one or more institutions must be approved through the IRB process. For that purpose, the researcher is required to submit special forms to the IRB department for approval. No research project (dissertations included) may progress beyond the proposal stage without the approval of the IRB. Each approval, granted for a specific time frame, must be renewed if the time frame is exceeded by the researcher.

IRB approval is sought if the researcher wishes to use fetuses in utero, non-viable fetuses, new born infants, children ages 2-12, adolescents ages 13-18, adults over 18, pregnant women, and special populations such as prisoners or mentally disabled. Information must be provided regarding the number of subjects, approximate time of commitment, compensation terms, and the use of drugs or other substances. Periodic reports on the progress of the study must also be provided to the IRB. Consent forms from the subjects or from individuals acting on their behalf must also be provided. Confidentiality procedures must be explained as well as the subjects' right to withdraw.