

Course Framework

Methods of Research in Education

Please Note: This document serves as an overall framework for the course. It will be a guide for our activities during the term - but it is a living document and may change during the course of the semester as we negotiate the learning process.

Course Facilitators

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Course Overview

Methods of Educational Research (ERSH 6200), created expressly for Master's students in Adult Education and Human Resource and Organizational Development (HROD), is designed to enhance your understanding of educational research and to improve your ability to comprehend and use research reports. To accomplish this, the course introduces you to key concepts and practices in the research process. To provide an anchor for the research concepts and practices studied, you will acquire hands-on experience in critiquing research as well as evaluating and applying research. We will explore different aspects of the research experience during the term as we focus on the overall research process. Throughout, we'll have *activities* to engage your mind in the critical examination of real world research. Our primary goal is to explore how to do and apply research in a variety of contexts to meet multiple purposes.

The philosophical foundation of the course is not that there is **one method** for research, but rather **techniques** that work *better* for a particular situation. As such, we will discuss the research process in the larger context of problem-solving. Further, we'll work within a framework of a resource-based learning environment (Hill & Hannafin, 2001), one in which people, things and ideas are viable sources from which to seek information and assistance. The overall goal is not to become an expert researcher, but to become *more of an expert* in using research to help inform practice. We feel that knowledge of the research process, working in concert with tools and skills determined necessary for a given framework in a particular context, will enable you to accomplish this goal.

Course Procedures and Activities

The course has two major phases, which together contain seven learning units; most units are two-weeks in length.

Phase I: Learning the Basics. The phase consists of four learning units dealing with the fundamental logic of research, literature searching, the common types of educational research, and research concepts and terminology.

Phase II: Mastering Research Reports. This phase consists of three learning units, during which students will critique three articles drawn from the major journals in Adult Education and Human Resource and Organizational Development.

During the first week of class (16 August), you will be asked to complete a "skills" and "interest" inventory to find out more information about you and your area(s) of interest. This is the *Individual Researcher Profile* activity. This initial information will help us better plan for both the group and individual needs of class members.

You will be completing several *Reading and Writing Tasks* throughout the term. The resources for the reading will be posted in *WebCT* for downloading (note: you will need Acrobat Reader to read the information). Both tasks are designed to assist you with building your knowledge base and understanding of the research process.

Being an intelligent consumer of research is an important part of understanding and becoming more of an expert in the research process. As such, you will be asked to complete several *Research Critiques* of published research related to your area of interest. Examples and guidelines for the critiques are fully described in Learning Units 5-7.

Finally, you will engage in a lot of hands-on, minds-on activities during class. We will have research-related activities, discussions of the readings, and general conversations about the research process. *Participation* is a big component of your assessment for the class, so please be prepared to engage.

Course Expectations

Course Goal

Participants in the course will become intelligent consumers and proficient users of research.

Course Objectives

Upon completing the course, each learner will be able to...

Demonstrate the information literacy and technology skills necessary to locate, gather, and synthesize information relevant to a problem-solving scenario, and

Review and provide constructive criticism of the research studies of others

Course Requirements

Completion of several *Reading Tasks*, some of which will be assigned, others of which you will identify to best meet individual needs;

Completion of several *Writing Tasks*, assignments designed to assist with assessing understanding and to engage you in reflection;

Completion of *Research Critiques*, explorations into contemporary research issues in the Adult Education/HROD literature; and

Participation and idea sharing, primarily through *Discussion* in the bulletin boards throughout the course.

Learning Formats

This on-line course will primarily employ two learning formats:

Independent Reading. Because of the online nature of the course, protracted lectures are not an option. Consequently, reading will be the principal learning format for the course. The resources we are using are quite varied and designed to provide a foundation for learning about the research process. The Web is a valuable resource for additional information on the process, along with your colleagues and peers.

Group Discussions. All units will include either a full group discussion or separate small group discussions. The structure and purpose of the groups will vary, but each discussion will be learning-oriented and highly focused.

Course Grading

You will receive feedback and grades for all submitted work, normally within two weeks of submission. Grades will be posted under the Communication icon of “My Grades” on *WebCT*.

During the summer of 2006, UGA implemented the +/- grading system. Under this system, letter grades correspond to the following:

A = 4.0 A- = 3.7

B+ = 3.3 B = 3.0 B- = 2.7

C+ = 2.3 C = 2.0 C- = 1.7

D = 1.0 F = 0.0

Individual assignments will be graded using a scale following the points as outlined below:

A	95-100 points;	A-	90-94 points		
B+	86-89 points	B	83-85 points	B-	80-82 points
C+	76-79 points	C	73-75 points	C-	70-72 points
D	Less than 70				
F	Less than 60				

Each assignment—and each unit’s discussion—is worth a specific number of points, as depicted below.

Phase	Learning Unit	Products	Course Points
I	1	Assignment #1: Essay on Research	5 points
		Discussion	5 points
	2	Assignment #2: Annotated Bibliography	5 points
		Discussion	5 points
	3	Assignment #3: Research Types	5 points
		Discussion	5 points
	4	Assignment #4: Technical Definitions	5 points
		Discussion	5 points
II	5	Critique of Article #1	15 points
		Discussion	5 points
	6	Critique of Article #2	15 points
		Discussion	5 points
	7	Critique of Article #3	15 points
		Discussion	5 points

Grading is based on individual student “mastery” of the content rather than “on the curve.” Consequently, it is possible for all students to get an A in the course. *Assignments must be submitted on time. Failure to do so **without prior notification and permission** will result in lost points for that assignment (1 point for everyday it is late).*

Academic Honesty Policy

All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. For more detailed information about academic honesty visit:

<http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>

Special Needs and Special Accommodations

If you are having trouble with the course, please contact the instructor. Depending on your problem or question, you will receive assistance via email, telephone or face-to-face meeting. If you have special learning needs or need special accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible.

Immediate Responsibilities

Note: The *Immediate Responsibilities* listed below apply to the first week of the course (starting 16 August). Refer to CSM (could, should, must) e-mail notes for guidance with *Immediate Responsibilities* throughout the course.

Play around with the WebCT site and get to know the various components.

Complete the *Individual Researcher Profile*.

Download the readings for the *Learning Unit One* (will begin Monday, 21 August).