

EDEC/EDEL/EDMS/ESOC 9000
Writing Seminar
SYLLABUS

Fall 2005
5:00 p.m.–7:45 p.m. Wednesdays

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College of Education Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the College of Education states that the college “prepares exemplary, reflective professionals to serve a diverse global community; it achieves that end through teaching, scholarship, outreach, and partnership at the local, national, and international levels.” This seminar supports the work of the college.

Overview of the Seminar

The seminar is designed to help you develop your professional writing skills. I do not mean to draw a sharp distinction between professional writing and other sorts of writing, but I do mean to emphasize the kind of writing that involves trying to answer a clear question by making an argument on the basis of empirical, verifiable evidence. Although you should try to create a complete document in this seminar, the focus of the seminar will be more on writing clear sentences, paragraphs, and pages than on the structural aspects of various sorts of documents (such as a chapter in a dissertation, the dissertation as a whole, or various kinds of journal articles).

I assume that you already understand the nature of educational research, that you are aware of the purposes and procedures of various approaches to research, and that you have knowledge of the research literature in your area of interest (in particular, that you can find, read, and interpret research studies related to your professional interests). I expect you to be willing to share your own writing with everyone in the seminar, and I expect you will take seriously the crucial task of reading and responding to the writing of your colleagues.

The class sessions will consist of your sharing and discussing your writing. I also am willing to meet with you individually to work on text you have written. I will not, however, collect your text, write comments on it, and return it to you. Every page I read, I intend to read with you, in your presence, whether in class or outside of class.

I do not write or edit text joyfully; I suffer when I engage in writing and editing. This seminar represents my willingness to suffer over your text with you. You will hear much more about what should be revised or reconsidered in your text than you will about what you are doing well. I do not expect you to accept every bit of feedback you receive, but I expect you to take all feedback seriously.

I cannot overemphasize how important it is that you let go of your own writing enough to help your colleagues in the seminar with their writing. You represent the audience that will try to

make sense of each other's writing in the future, and you need to be a conscientious audience member in this seminar. You need to get over any reluctance you might have to tell someone that you do not understand her text or that you disagree with his interpretation of the research literature.

You will read—I mean *read*, not simply leaf through—most of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* in this course. It is not the only manual we could use; it does not cover every writing situation you will confront; and not all of its rules are appealing to me. It is, however, a widely used and very helpful guide. Good professional writing is a matter of being willing to work at it, and working at it includes both knowing when one should look something up and caring enough to look at such moments.

For every class period, I expect you to create 2-3 new pages of text, and I expect you to use the feedback you receive in class to revise that text. I am not going to collect a final document at the end of the course, but you should be able to use the course experience to create a document that is of some value to you.

I expect you to show up every week and to engage faithfully in the process I have described. If you read this syllabus and can already see that this seminar will not meet your expectations, please drop the course. If you begin the seminar in good faith but then come to be disappointed in it, I will arrange for you to get course credit through an independent writing task of some sort, but I will not offer you in such an independent activity what I am offering to the seminar.

Grading

The seminar has an *S-U (Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory)* grading system. If you show up, write, revise, and give feedback to others, you will receive an *S*. If you become disenchanted with the seminar, ask for an independent writing task, and complete it, you will receive an *S*. If you do not meet either of these sets of expectations, you will receive a *U*.

Required Text

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