General information Regarding Course Assignments

All articles, papers, etc that are used for assignments for this class report on empirical research, that is to say, research in which the authors have collected, analyzed, and reported the data. Also, please note that the use of “fun fonts” is inappropriate for any paper submitted in any graduate course.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated on the assignments document and in the course calendar. Assignments received within 24 hours of the original due date/time will be penalized 30% of the total value of the assignment. No assignments will be accepted after that 24 hour period, resulting in a total loss of credit for the assignment.

Oftentimes, things go wrong with computers, disks, and printers. These issues may be avoided if you complete and/or print an assignment ahead of time. While I sympathize with those of you who experience computer problems, such problems will not be considered as a legitimate excuse for late assignments, so please plan ahead.

Please keep in mind that this is a graduate level course, and that my grading will reflect that. All written assignments are expected to be of excellent quality, and free of grammatical and spelling errors! All papers must be typed using a "reasonable" font size (Times, 12-point), use 1” margins on all sides, be double spaced, and stapled in the upper left corner. Do not submit papers in any type of report cover. In matters of usage and citation, adhere strictly to the guidelines in the *APA Manual, 6th Edition*. It would serve you well to take some time to peruse the APA Manual at the start of the semester so you can get a feeling for APA style and the impact it will have on your written assignments. Additionally, it is always a good idea to keep both electronic and hard copies of every paper you hand in.

Please note that there is more to APA style than just citations and bibliographic reference formats. The APA manual specifies the format for the title page, page numbers, running headings, margins, and location/style of headings throughout the paper. You will need to follow this format for the papers you submit for this course. Also be sure that there are no "hanging headings" in your papers -- any text that immediately follows a heading must be on the same page as the heading. Proofread, proofread, proofread!

Through our course website you will find copies of papers (both article abstract/critiques and synthesis papers) from students in past semesters that I consider to be exemplary. These documents are password protected (use the username and password provided in class). Feel free to read these online or at home at your leisure. **Do not rely on these papers for examples of appropriate APA format, page limitations, etc.** These are examples of papers that I feel are particularly well written and exemplify the true nature of these assignments.

Please note that you may not use any papers from St. Xavier University in the work you do for this class.

The key assignment for this class is the Article Abstract and Critique, which must be uploaded to your TaskStream account by midnight of the due date, or a 20-point penalty will be incurred.
ARTICLE REVIEW  
(Learning Outcomes #1, 2, 11) 
10 points, due on Tuesday, 29 SEPTEMBER

Search the published literature and find a research article of interest to you. Ideally, the article should be one that relates to an area of study that is relevant to your job or related to the chosen topic of your research paper. The article must come from a journal (not a magazine) and should be formatted (roughly) according to the format outlined in McMillan, chapter 1. Use the article review form on page 9 of this assignments document. Plan to keep your (word processed) review to the page limit of the one side of the page that is provided – this assignment is limited to a maximum of one side of one page. This may not be the same article you use for your abstract and critique. Please also indicate your research paper topic somewhere on your paper (this may be handwritten on the back and is non-binding). You may not use a meta-analysis for this assignment.

DATABASE SEARCH LISTS  
(Learning Outcomes #1, 2, 11) 
5 points, due on Tuesday, 22 SEPTEMBER

Submit a copy of the first page of the printout of the results you get from at least three ERIC/PsychInfo/other relevant database searches as they relate to your synthesis paper. Highlight the keywords you used in your searches.

PRELIMINARY REFERENCE LIST  
(Learning Outcomes #1, 2, 11) 
10 points, due on Tuesday, 27 OCTOBER

Prepare a reference list of 5 sources that you can use for your research synthesis. All references included in your list MUST conform to APA guidelines. Be sure to use the APA Manual as you prepare your list. Reference lists with 5 or more errors will receive a grade of 0 (zero). Your list should be prepared in such a way that you can easily edit (add to or delete from) it for use as your "References" section in your final synthesis paper. While this list is non-binding, ideally the articles listed in it should form the basis for your final paper. Please note that, should you decide to include more entries, I will only grade the first five reference entries on your list.
ABSTRACT/SUMMARY AND CRITIQUE OF A RESEARCH STUDY

(Learning Outcomes #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11)

40 points, due on Tuesday, 17 NOVEMBER (hard copy, via email, & through TaskStream)

Prepare a summary and critique of one journal article that you have located in your search of the published literature. Choose a study that relates to your own practical or research interests. The article must be a report of an empirical research study – one in which the author(s) collected, analyzed, and reported the data. You may not use the same article you used for your initial article review, nor may you use a meta-analysis for this assignment. Paper clip a copy of the rubric to your paper. Your paper should consist of the following parts and must be labeled accordingly:

Introduction (5 points)
Provide an introduction to your paper. State what it is that you are interested in learning about and why you selected the article you are reviewing. First-person language is appropriate here.

Abstract (15 points)
• State the purpose or goal of the study – what were the researchers trying to accomplish?
• Provide the research question(s) or hypothesis.
• Describe and characterize the research design that was employed (e.g. single subject study, qualitative case study, experimental). Describe the methodology used: how the researchers determined their sample, and collected and analyzed data.
• Summarize the main findings, conclusions, and/or recommendations.
• Please look to abstracts we have examined in class, the exemplar papers online, and those you have read throughout your research for examples of the appropriate writing style for your abstract. Additionally, the text of the abstract itself should not exceed 2 pages.

Critique (15 points)
Write a critique of the study, providing your assessment of how valid it is as a research study and how valuable it is to practicing educators. Address both the strengths and weaknesses in your critique. Comment on all of the methodological aspects of the study – purpose, hypothesis and/or research questions, research design (including sample, data collection, and analysis), and findings.

Conclude your critique by providing an overall assessment of both the value and limitations of the study from your personal perspective – Was the study useful to you? How are its findings limited in their application to your situation or experience? Finally, comment on how the article contributes to your statements from your introduction – What new information did it provide for you, and what questions still need to be examined? Again, first-person language is appropriate here.

Citation (2 points)
Provide a complete APA citation that would allow you to find the article again or use it in a list of references.

Papers must conform to APA guidelines and may not exceed 5 pages of double spaced text in a reasonable font size (with 1” margins on all sides). Three points will be allocated to general writing conventions (see rubric). Paperclip a copy of the article and the rubric (see page 12 of this document) to your paper.
LITERATURE REVIEW
(Learning Outcomes #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)
75 points (plus 20 points for presentation)
paper due on Tuesday, 1 DECEMBER, both in hard copy and electronically (via email)

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you with the opportunity to apply all that you have learned about educational research to a synthesis of a set of studies that focus on a topic that is of interest to you.

As a result of having completed this assignment, it is my goal that you will
• understand how educational research is done, what information it provides, and what its limitations are;
• know a great deal more about a topic that is relevant to you as an educator;
• identify additional questions for further research raised by the studies you review and suggest what type of further study might provide answers to those questions.

You are welcome to work with a partner on this project. All of the stated guidelines apply, however I will take into account that two people have worked on the project together and will adjust the rigorosity of my grading appropriately. If you choose this option, you will also do your presentation together, however all other assignments must be done individually, and you may not use the same article (as each other) for the article review or abstract and critique. Additionally, your reference list assignments may not include any duplicate entries. Should you be interested in pursuing this option, please be sure to meet with me in person and in advance so we can discuss specifics.

The following outline is intended to serve as a guideline for your reference. Please format your paper accordingly, labeling each section as I have below. You must analyze a minimum of six (6) empirical research articles (nine [9] for groups of two) in your synthesis. This does not necessarily mean that you will have a maximum of 6 (9) references, but only that you must report on at least that many empirical research studies. Each of these articles must report on the collection and analysis of data done by the authors, and ALL must have been published within the past 5 years. If you are unable to locate recent research, you should select another topic.

Remember that all papers must conform to APA format (please refer to your APA Publication Manual), must be stapled in the upper left corner, and must not be in any type of report cover! Papers must be no more than 13 (16 for pairs) pages of double spaced text in a font of "reasonable" size (no smaller than 12 point in most cases). Margins must be 1” on all sides. Please ask me about this if you need guidance. I will read only the first 13 (16) pages of your paper, so it is important that you heed the paper length restrictions.

The rubric for this paper is located at the end of this document. You must paper clip a copy of the rubric to your paper.
Introduction (9 points)
It is here that you should explain the topic that you have explored, tell why it is important for educators to think about, and why it is important to you (thus you may use first person voice here). The introduction must also provide an overview of what follows in the rest of the paper. The overview should be more than simply a restatement of your topic or a list of the section headings in the paper – provide some information about the research you conducted and how you organized your paper. Remember that this will be my initial impression of your paper. Take the opportunity to provide a bit of framework for the research you are presenting.

Findings of the Research (25 points)
You will need to examine each of the studies you include with as much detail as you used for the "Abstract and Critique" assignment. This does NOT mean that you must provide an abstract and critique for each study (no space for that!), just that you will need to be very familiar with all relevant facets of each. I will need to see a clear indication in your writing that you have given each article close scrutiny. This will be evident in your discussion of the problems, methods, results, and limitations of each of the studies you report. If studies are similar in scope, it is natural and acceptable to group them together for discussion purposes. I will be glad to help you with an organizational strategy for this section of the paper should you need help.

Keep in mind the questions on which we have focused: What were the researchers trying to learn, and how did they operationalize the key concepts? What methods did the various researchers employ? How did they collect and analyze data? What did they find out? What limitations due to methods or other factors can you identify?

Discussion of the Findings (25 points)
Explain here what you think the findings mean, what the findings say to you as an educator. This section should include both a synthesizing summary of the results of all the studies and your evaluation of what those cumulative findings mean to you as an educator. If the results of all your studies are in agreement, identify the ways in which their different findings or approaches provide a richer explanation than would an individual study. If they conflict, explain why you think they do and comment on what that means for educators.

The writing in this section may seem redundant, but it is not. This section should be both thorough and thoughtful. This is where you provide an analysis of all the research you have read. You will not necessarily bring in new information here – this is the place where you need to discuss and synthesize all the findings presented in the preceding section. The purpose of this section is to answer the question “so what do I know now that I’ve done this research?”

Implications for Further Research (11 points)
Given the findings of research to date, what are the next steps that researchers ought to take in exploring the issue or topic that you investigated? What kinds of information would be most useful for teachers? After you have addressed these questions, briefly but thoroughly outline one study you would do and explain why it would contribute something new and important to our knowledge base. Include a description of all relevant facets of educational research that we have discussed throughout this semester—purpose, design, sampling, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis, and should reflect the use of reasonable resources.
Please keep in mind that when writing a paper of this type, the sources you cite in your references must also be cited in the text of your paper, and those cited within the text must be listed in the references section. This is not a "research paper" in which you find all the information you can on a specific topic and then describe what you have found. It is a synthesis of research in which you describe what you have found within the context of all of the criteria for good research on which we have focused throughout the semester.

Note again that there is more to APA style than just citations and bibliographic reference formats. The APA manual specifies the format for the title page, page numbers, running headings, margins, and location/style of headings throughout the paper. You will need to carefully follow this format for this paper. Also be sure that there are no "hanging headings" in your papers – any text that immediately follows a heading must be on the same page as the heading.

Five points of the total of 75 will be allotted to style and format. Please proofread your papers carefully (or ask a dear friend who owes you a favor to proofread for you). A 10-point penalty will be applied to any paper that contains more than 5 typographical, grammar, spelling or other writing errors. There is absolutely no reason, in the day of word processors and spelling/grammar checkers for anyone to hand in a paper with these types of errors. Also, a 10-point penalty will be applied to any paper that does not conform to APA guidelines. Please be aware that I will strictly adhere to this policy. Attach a copy of the rubric to your paper.

**Presentation of Papers in Class (20 points)**

You will have 20 minutes to present your results to the class. Presentations will be judged based on timing, completeness, preparation/organization, and professionalism. Highlight 3 of your studies and provide a one-page handout (an original piece of writing that you have developed – not something photocopied out of a book!) to your classmates. Your handout should consist of information related to your topic that will be useful to teachers, and not merely a listing of websites or references. Please find someone in the class to act as your timekeeper so that your presentation does not exceed the allotted time and your grade does not suffer as a result.

All presentations must be presented using technology (PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.). Plan your presentation by keeping in mind what YOU would like to listen to as a member of the audience! DO NOT plan to stand and read all of your PowerPoint slides to us; use them to enhance your presentation. Use a limited amount of text on each slide, and include appropriate visuals (that can be seen by everyone in the audience). Be familiar enough with what you are presenting so that you do not need to read verbatim from note cards. Practice ahead of time!! NB – every presenter must make a substantive portion of the presentation. We will have 5 or 6 presentations each night, so please be efficient!

You will need to provide me with a copy of your presentation slides (black and white notes pages are acceptable and preferred) and the presentation rubric at the start of class on the night you are presenting.

As part of the requirement for this assignment, you must also email me a Microsoft Word compatible version of your paper no later than midnight on the day it is due in class.
Examining the Effects of Sampling Procedures

You have been given a "population" of 100 members. Use this population to complete the following exercise.

Describe at least two characteristics that describe EVERY member of your population:

1.

2.

Define at least four strata in your population, and write a clear, specific, detailed description of each.

List each one in the "strata" column in the table. Determine how many members of your population are in each stratum and calculate the percentage of the total for each stratum and record those values.

Now, take samples of your population according to each of the following procedures.

**Convenience Sampling**
Have each person in your group choose some of whatever they want from your population so that there are 20 members in your sample. Record the totals of what each person chose and compare the numbers and percents to the strata in your population. Which strata, if any, are over- or under-represented?

**Simple Random Sampling**
Choose a sample from your population by randomly selecting 20 members (one at a time, without replacing those previously chosen) from the population. Record the results in Random #1. Now, replace those members and draw a second random sample in the same way, recording those results as Random #2.

**Proportional Stratified Sampling**
Choose a sample of 20 members of your population so that the proportion of each stratum in the population is preserved in the sampling process. Make a written record of your results.

**Disproportional Stratified Sampling**
Choose a sample of 20 members by taking the same number of subjects from each stratum. Compare the sample obtained here with the one above.

**Systematic Sampling**
Arrange all of the members of your population in a row in some systematic way (e.g. all silvers together, all golds together, all filled together, etc.) Calculate the sampling interval that you will need to obtain a sample of 20 members from your population. Choose a two digit number at random. Beginning with the member of your population that corresponds to the chosen number (they are numbered 00-99), use your sampling interval to select your sample of 20. Record the number and percent of the members from each stratum of your population. Comment on the over-or under-representation you observe, if any. Note whether you experienced any periodicity as a result of your sampling processes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strata</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conveniency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random #1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random #2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disproportionate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Random</td>
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<tr>
<td>Random</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sampling Table
Education 604 Article Review Summary

Name ________________________________

APA Citation ____________________________________________________________

Why did you choose this article? Why was it of interest to you?

________________________________________________________________________

What were the researchers trying to find out?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

How did they go about investigating their problem? What did they DO?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What data did the researchers collect? How did the researchers analyze their data?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What about the article was most interesting to you?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What parts of the article were most confusing or difficult to understand?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

What will you need to learn in order to better understand and make use of research reports?

________________________________________________________________________
Cookie Experiment Consent Form

You are invited to participate in the "Cookie Experiment" in Education 604. In this experiment you will be asked to rate two different chocolate chip cookies on several criteria and to complete a short questionnaire about how well you like each of the cookies.

The experiment will take approximately 15 minutes and will be completed in class tonight. There are no risks associated with participating in this experiment, however you should know that the cookies contain both chocolate and sugar. The benefits of taking part in this experiment include the opportunity to participate in the research process as a research subject and to have some fun in class!

Although in real life, your participation in this experiment would not affect you in any way, your participation tonight will account for 5 points of your grade. (In a real life survey, you may choose not to participate, or you may choose to participate and then change your mind.) All responses will be kept anonymous; therefore it is important that you do NOT put your name on your response sheet. Once you have turned in your response sheet, it will not be possible for you to withdraw from the study because none of the response sheets will have names on them. The consent forms will be collected and kept separate from the response sheets. The data will be analyzed as group data.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

_____ I agree to participate in the "Cookie Experiment."

_____________________________  ____________________________
Date                                      Signature of Participant

You will be given two chocolate chip cookies to evaluate. Please use the data collection sheet to report your evaluation of each of the cookies. Please read the questions first so that you know what aspects of the cookies are to be evaluated. You will be given 10 minutes to evaluate both cookies and record your responses.

Be sure NOT to mix up the cookies!

Each time you taste a different cookie you must rinse and swallow with the water that has been provided. You may go back and forth between Cookie A and Cookie B as many times as you like as long as you rinse and swallow in between.
Cookie Data Collection Sheet

Please rate "Cookie A" and "Cookie B" using the scale given below. Circle the number that best reflects your evaluation of the characteristic next to each item on this sheet. Please answer all questions. There are no right or wrong answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Pretty good</td>
<td>Not Bad</td>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>Very Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like mom makes!</td>
<td>A good cookie.</td>
<td>Like Mrs. Fields makes!</td>
<td>A bad cookie.</td>
<td>Wouldn't feed it to my dog!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. How would you rate Cookie A with regard to appearance?

1 2 3 4 5

2. How would you rate Cookie A with regard to texture?

1 2 3 4 5

3. How would you rate Cookie A with regard to moistness?

1 2 3 4 5

4. How would you rate Cookie A with regard to flavor?

1 2 3 4 5

5. How would you rate Cookie B with regard to appearance?

1 2 3 4 5

6. How would you rate Cookie B with regard to texture?

1 2 3 4 5

7. How would you rate Cookie B with regard to moistness?

1 2 3 4 5

8. How would you rate Cookie B with regard to flavor?

1 2 3 4 5

9. Overall, which cookie did you like better? __________ Cookie A __________ Cookie B

10. Do you like chocolate chip cookies? ________ Yes ________ No

Please return your questionnaire to the research assistant when you are done. Please check to see that you have answered all of the questions.
**Rubric for Article Abstract & Critique**

**Complete the information at the top of this form and paper clip it to the back of your Abstract & Critique**

*Write Your Name ________________________________*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Format</th>
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<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate citation in APA format</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report of empirical research study</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper conforms to APA format</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper is free of typo, style, format, &amp; grammatical errors</td>
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</table>

**Comments:**

**Introduction**

| Statement of topic                                  |   |   |   |
| Purpose for selecting article                      |   |   |   |

**Comments:**

**Abstract**

| Purpose/goal of the study                           |   |   |   |
| Research question or hypothesis                     |   |   |   |
| Type of research design identified                  |   |   |   |
| Description of methodology                          |   |   |   |
| Summary of main findings and conclusions            |   |   |   |
| Researchers’ recommendations based on findings      |   |   |   |

**Comments:**

**Critique**

| Value to practitioners                              |   |   |   |
| Strengths/weaknesses noted                          |   |   |   |
| Comments on methodology                             |   |   |   |
| Overall assessment of personal usefulness           |   |   |   |
| New information provided in article                 |   |   |   |
| Information that still needs to be examined         |   |   |   |

**Comments:**

**Totals**
Rubric for Research Synthesis

**Paper clip me to the back of your Research Synthesis**

General (5 points)
- conforms to APA format
- limited to 13 pages for individuals, 15 pages for groups
- free of typographical, style, format, and grammatical errors
- minimum of 6 (individuals) or 8 (pairs) articles reviewed

Introduction (9 points)
- Explanation of topic
- Statement of why topic is important to educators
- Statement of why topic is important to you
- Overview

Findings of Research (25 points)
- Purposes of research clearly outlined
- Methods employed are discussed
- Statement of findings
- Limitations noted

Discussion of the Findings (25 points)
- Synthesis and discussion of results of the studies
- Evaluation of cumulative findings
- Benefit of a variety of studies conducted on this topic

Implications for Further Research (11 points)
- Next step for researchers
- What is most useful for practitioners
- Outline of potential study
- Statement of why your study would contribute new and important info
**Research Synthesis Presentation Rubric**

**Paper clip me to your PowerPoint notes pages on the day of your presentation**

*Write Your Name______________________________*

**Timing** (1 point)

**Preparation, Organization and Professionalism**

- Presentation is clearly well planned and organized (1 point)
- Slides are relevant and appropriate (1 point)
- Handout is relevant and appropriate (1 point)
- Slides are used to enhance talk, not read word for word (2 points)
- An attempt is made to interest and engage the audience (2 points)
- Presentation is made at a level geared to audience (1 point)
- Language and manner is appropriate and professional (1 point)

**Substance of Presentation**

**Introduction/Overview** (2 points)

- Purpose and rationale are clearly stated
- Overview of topic is encompassing yet succinct
- Overview of presentation is encompassing yet succinct

**Findings/Discussion**

- Relevant research from 3 studies is presented and critiqued (2 points)
- Limitations are noted (2 points)

**Implications for Future Research**

- Directions for researchers are examined (2 points)
- Implications for practice are indicated (2 points)