

CUR 526 - Educational Research for Practitioner Reflection

Course Reflection

This course was perfect as the foundation of what was to come for the rest of the ITDE program. The Ed Research for Practitioners course has taught me many things when it comes to the area of research. I had some basic research skills from my undergraduate courses that included going to the library and looking books up and writing papers in MLA format. In this course however, we were taught how to do research without even having to step into a library. We were given an overview of how to utilize the library's online database and how to find articles and journals for our research. This enabled us to go to the library portal and find all the information we needed from various resources. I was also shown how to distinguish between professional journals and other resource.

I learned how descriptors made my searches more specific and focused, therefore allowing me to increase my research skills. The first two assignments taught me how to come up with a research topic and how to critically review journals. This showed me how to look at different situations that were present and come up with something to research and asses. Luckily, being comfortable with the internet enabled me to successfully gather all the information I needed to complete the annotated bibliography. This was the first time I had to make an annotated bibliography and it stretched me to be able to analyze and collect all the needed journals, articles and data for my research.

The literature review process taught me how to analyze and summarize the educational research I had done. Being able to tie in different topics and similar themes became more apparent as I wrote the literature review. This is a skill that will help me with future research and will allow me to readily evaluate themes in any subject. Another thing that I learned was how to

write in APA format. Being that I had only written in MLA, this was something new and challenging. Fortunately, we were given examples and taught how to format all our assignments.

Assembling a needs assessment instrument design and report was very rewarding. I attained the knowledge of how to create, implement, and collect data for a needs assessment. We were shown the importance of when to use percentages and numbers when collecting data. I was also able to interpret the data collected to come up with the problem at hand. This research class has taught me how to it doesn't matter if the data agrees or disagrees with your problem statement, the research just needs to be sound and needs to represent the facts at hand.

I was able to identify methods for analyzing data such as writing a discrepancy statement, goals, objectives and activities. Designing an evaluation plan and being able to come up with solutions to the problem, taught me how to these steps are critical in implementing any strategy with a sound reasoning to back up your plan. One of the greatest skills I learned this semester was how to break the research into parts and then be able to put it all together easily to create a concept paper. Overall, this course prepared me to critically review and design research step-by-step. Prior to attending this course I had some basic skills in research and now I can say I have the tools and skills it takes to do some thorough research in any area.

Assignment 1: Draft Purpose Section of Concept Paper Reflection

This assignment made me think about what I wanted to write about for my concept paper. It forced me to be a forward thinker and really focus on what my resources were and what target audience I wanted or needed to reach. Being able to meet the librarian and learn about the resources available to us was invaluable. This assignment has taught me how to setup the background and data information of a concept paper. I also learned the importance of including

several detailed information such as the problem statement, a clear description of the target group, the setting, the needs to be addressed, and specific dates.

Assignment 2: Needs Assessment Instrument

The Needs Assessment Instrument assignment was important not only for the concept paper, but an assessment tool and lesson that can be used in the workplace. Working in training and development I had some previous knowledge on assessments, but got an in-depth lesson on enhancing them to clearly identify needs. This assignment showed me the importance of not only customizing each assessment specifically to address your needs, but the value of taking the time to write clear directions for participants. The process of creating a needs assessment showed me how to gather anonymous information to confirm the existence of a problem and identify them through data driven results.

Assignment 3: Annotated Bibliography

The annotated bibliography was a challenging assignment that required a lot of time, but in the end it was truly a great way to learn how to summarize each document I had gathered for the concept paper. This assignment was repetitive, but through that process, I became competent in quickly gathering resources and writing APA formatted citations. This assignment specifically required the research to be conducted online and it needed to include detailed information. Becoming proficient in using NSU's electronic library was and is very useful in doing research. The resources on APA style formatting was useful not only in this class, but for every class that followed.

Assignment 4: Literature Review

With all the resources summarized, I was better prepared to synthesize the literature I had gathered. This assignment taught me how to organize my research and how to write detailed

information that would flow from one sentence to the next on my concept paper. This assignment showed me how to narrow down my research and tailor it to clearly link my resources to the specific topic I was writing about. With a numerous amount of resources to review, I was able to gain a great deal of understanding and was able to support my rationale with relevant and detailed evidence.

Assignment 5: Needs Assessment Report

The needs assessment report portion of the concept paper taught me the process of using the customized tool to gather data and how to write well-written descriptions of the targeted audience. It also showed me how to describe and explain the results of the data gathered with supporting or opposing information depending on the proposed project. This process allowed me to validate my research with current data of anonymous participants from various backgrounds. I also learned that the more participants in a study, the better and more accurate the results are. The use of tables and charts showed me how bringing in the visual element can enhance a report by making it clearer to understand the data results.

Assignment 6: Draft Methods Section of Concept Paper

Drafting the methods section of the concept paper taught me how to write discrepancy statements that include my goal, objectives, and supporting activities that assisted in validating my research. This assignment was important in that it taught me how to create an action timeline that addressed each objective, demonstrated the preparation required, and included guided steps for the learning activities. I also learned the importance of writing a good problem statement that would allow me to expand a research on it. The level of detail and planning required for this assignment was important to show how much thought and work goes into thinking through and carefully planning the methods section of a research paper.

Assignment 7: Draft of Evaluation Plan for Concept Paper

My evaluation plan included objectives, descriptions and methods for evaluating my methods and data collected. The descriptions were important in explaining the process that would be used in measuring progress and implementation of my assessment. I found this assignment to be insightful in that it really made me think through of all the steps needed in successfully conducting my research. The importance of analyzing and planning the use of data to ensure it met all the objectives was a great way to validate all the work done thus far. I learned that an evaluation plan should always be included when conducting research to ensure that there isn't anything missing and that the instruments and methods used are appropriate.

Assignment 8: The Concept Paper

After working on each part of the concept paper one step at a time, assembling the final paper was not as challenging as I thought it would be. I learned that if all the previous assignments were well-written and done correctly, all I needed to do was assemble the four major sections, include an appendices section, and include the references used. With all the information at hand, it allowed me to easily review and write an abstract for the paper. This assignment proved that even though research has a lot of components and takes a lot of work, it can be a seamless process to assemble all your work.

Assignment 9: Presentation of Concept Paper

Being in communications, I enjoyed creating a presentation of the concept paper. I think it is important to be able to visually demonstrate your work. This assignment helped me realize that I am able to create clear and concise presentations that are visually appealing. I was able to actually collaborate with some classmates and share some best practices in using PowerPoint and using stock photography. This assignment gave me the chance to showcase my work and share

an overview of the work I had done for the concept paper. It also opened up an opportunity to get feedback from my peers on the overall presentation.