

Educational Specialist Thesis/Research Project
PSYC 700/800
Spring 2018

**“Writing is not what the writer does after the thinking is done; writing is thinking.”
-D. Murray**

Recommended Readings

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Cone, J. D., & Foster, S. L. (2006). *Dissertations and theses from start to finish: Psychology and related fields* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Galvan, J. L. (2004). *Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyczak Publishing.

Heppner, P. P., & Heppner, M. J. (2004). *Writing and publishing your thesis, dissertation, and research: A guide for students in the helping professions*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Thomson.

Content and Purpose

The purpose of the Educational Specialist Research Thesis/Research Project is to provide you with an opportunity to undertake an intensive, in-depth work of scholarship in the field of counseling. The final product is an original contribution relating to the counseling profession. Most counseling students complete this project during their third year while they are also interning.

We will determine by the second week of the semester whether you will be completing a thesis or a research project. This determination will be driven by your professional goals and the scope of your area of inquiry.

The Graduate School formally recognizes the Educational Specialist Research Project in the same manner as it does theses and dissertations. The title of your Ed.S. Research Project will appear on your transcript. Copies of your final report will be bound and included in the JMU Carrier Library permanent collection.

The purpose of this course is to help you complete a successful Ed.S. Project. The course will include practical information such as developing your ideas, writing a proposal, selecting a committee, using APA Style, charting a timeline for completing your report, and following the JMU Graduate School Format Guidelines.

Objectives, Knowledge and Skills Outcomes

The objectives of this preparation course are to help you:

- understand the importance of research in advancing the counseling profession;
- be familiar with research methods, such as qualitative, quantitative, single-case designs, action research, and outcome-based research;
- understand statistical methods used in conducting research and program evaluation;
- develop your ideas for a successful Ed.S. Project;
- write your proposal for the project;
- select a chair and members of your committee;
- know and use APA Style appropriately;
- chart a timeline for completing your report;
- understand the applications of needs assessment, program evaluation, and using findings to modify programs;
- adhere to ethical standards for research;
- follow culturally relevant strategies for interpreting research results;
- be familiar with the JMU Graduate College Format Guidelines;
- appreciate the use of research to inform evidence-based practice; and
- improve your technical writing skills.

Format and Methods of Instruction

Each class will include a variety of opportunities for you to become better prepared for planning and carrying out your project. You will be discussing your ideas for a research project, shaping your plan of action, and sharing your work in progress.

Performance Evaluation Criteria and Procedures

Your performance in this course is graded as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Grades will be based on your participation and contributions in class, and on the completion of the writing assignments.

Writing your EdS Project requires self-motivation and commitment. Identifying specific goals and responsibilities from the start can help ensure you continue to make satisfactory progress.

Your responsibilities:
Talk through your proposal and plan with me. Include your peers when possible! Keep a written record of your plan and notes from our discussions.
Be aware of your own time constraints and capabilities, and be open to suggestions for possible revisions that could strengthen your original plan.
Create a realistic timeline and stick with it. If you run into trouble with your timeline, let me know right away. We can usually make adjustments without creating too much unnecessary

stress for yourself.
Promise to keep accurate citations and records for every resource you use.
Promise to create an outline and follow that outline for the structure of your paper. Trust me on this.
If you know you need help in polishing the professionalism of your writing, please make an appointment with the writing lab for assistance. Consider asking a colleague to read your draft and provide feedback. You are responsible for editing your paper and ensure that you follow the conventions of APA and professional writing.
Look at the APA manual and the Graduate School guidelines regarding writing style and format. You're responsible for putting your paper into the appropriate format, which includes using current APA style when referencing sources.
Be respectful of your committee members. Ask them how they prefer to be consulted during this process. Some faculty like to be involved throughout, and others prefer to take a back seat, offering assistance as needed and then helping at the final committee meeting.
Also ask your committee members if they prefer electronic or hard copies of your draft. Unless a faculty member specifically asks to be kept abreast of your work during the semester, plan to provide each member a final (<i>not</i> rough or unfinished) draft of your paper at least one week prior to the final committee meeting.
Allow at least one week after the final committee meeting to make changes to your project prior to submitting it to the Graduate School.
Once you've had your final committee meeting, ask a representative of the Graduate School to review your formatting.
My responsibilities:
I will help you think through your project plan and identify specific steps to take to make satisfactory progress toward completing the project.
I will also be available to meet with you as much as you would like or need to help you continue to make progress and gain mastery in this process.
If you would like, I'm happy to prompt you by phone or email to remind you of your timeline.
I will prepare you for your final meeting and will ask for revisions and rewrites (often many times) prior to that meeting.
You'll notice that your list of responsibilities is much longer than mine. Don't worry, though, keep me informed, tell me how I can best help you, and you'll do just fine.

As always, if you have specific needs that are addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and require course materials in alternative formats, please notify me immediately. I will make any reasonable effort to accommodate to your special needs. Of course, I expect you to abide by the JMU Honor Code, which is in the Catalog. Check with me if you have any questions regarding this matter.

Types of Educational Specialist Research Projects

The Counseling Program allows flexibility in the format of the final report. In addition to the traditional format, you may also present a:

- case study,
- technical report,
- protocol for an intervention,
- training manual, needs assessment,
- resource directory,
- program description, or
- article manuscript.

In other words, you do not have to follow a thesis format of having chapters that include an introduction, extensive literature review, analysis, and conclusions. Instead, the form of your project can vary according to what product you develop. For example, if you design a protocol for a particular kind of psychoeducational group, you can write instructions and guidelines that provide the practical, hands-on information that someone would need to implement the group. It would not be necessary to provide a detailed and comprehensive review of the literature on psychoeducational groups.

With this greater flexibility, we are encouraging you to create a project that would do more than simply fulfill a degree requirement and sit on a library shelf. We invite you to consider developing a product that would contribute a useful tool, intriguing concept, promising program, or helpful information to the counseling profession. Your product will ultimately offer helpful concepts and recommendations regarding prevention and treatment relevant to practitioners in the field. You can then share this product with other counselors by giving a presentation at a conference or writing an article for publication.

Proposal

As part of your comprehensive examination, which you typically take the semester after you have completed your practicum, you submit a proposal for your Ed.S. Research Project. In 3-5 pages, you should describe the topic area, provide a concise overview of the literature you will review, and state the specific purpose of your proposed research project. We expect that you provide an organized, clear and well-written description of what you plan to accomplish. Your proposal must show promise of making a positive and original addition to the counseling literature that is based on your own ideas and work.

You can examine our guidelines in greater detail in the previous chapter, but the essential principles you should follow are to propose a meaningful and doable project. Take care in crafting a readable document that follows APA style. You should propose a clear timeline

identifying your target dates for achieving the major tasks, such as literature review, data collection, first draft, final committee meeting, and submission of the finished report.

Committee

In addition to a brief proposal, your comprehensive examination materials must also include a completed approval form naming your Ed.S. chair and two committee members. The form is available at <http://www.jmu.edu/cgop/current/thesisdissertation.shtml>. The purpose of this portion of the comprehensive examination is to provide a landmark point for launching your research and to ensure adequate time for successfully completing the project.

You may choose any member of the Counseling faculty to be the chair of your Ed.S. Research Project committee. Consider the faculty members' areas of interest and pick someone who has expertise on your topic. Some faculty members have organized interest groups that are working on ongoing projects. You may want to join the group and eventually take on a specific undertaking that can become your Ed.S. Project.

You should meet regularly with your committee chair to discuss the progress you are making on your project. It is **your** responsibility to keep your committee chair informed of the scope, plan and progress of your project.

The two committee members must be members of the JMU graduate faculty, and at least one of them must be a member of the Department of Graduate Psychology. You may elect to have an additional reader if this person has expertise relevant to your research project. This third reader is not required to be on the graduate faculty.

Typically, you will have two meetings with the entire committee – one at the beginning of the semester and another at least a week before the final report is due to the Graduate College. The purpose of the first meeting is to consider your research proposal for approval. The purpose of the second is to consider your final report for approval.

Final Report

The format for the final report should follow the guidelines presented in the *JMU TGS Thesis and Dissertation Manual*, which is available online at <http://www.jmu.edu/grad/08-09Manual.pdf> and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.)*. Follow the guidelines **carefully** and check with TGS before the deadline for a tentative approval of your report format.

You must submit three unbound copies of your final report to TGS by the deadline. The copies should be in a protective box. You should include three original approval pages with original signatures, signed in black ink, of the project advisor, committee members, and department head. The library will then bind two copies and include your research project in the permanent library collection. You should also provide a bound copy of your final report to the chair and each member of your committee.

Journal

I invite you to keep a journal of your intellectual journey in your Educational Specialist Research Project. The journal is a place where you can make your thinking visible and where you can work out connections in your own words. It may serve as a reservoir of ideas, the place where you face and answer your own questions. The journal is an on-going written conversation with yourself. You can use your journal to react to, reflect on, and tie together all your learning experiences: the readings you encounter, the information you collect, and the observations you make.

You can get much more out of keeping a journal if you do more than merely summarize your experience. For example, consider what is particularly interesting, meaningful, unusual, or even puzzling about the research you are doing. I suggest that you date your entries and write regularly, at least two or three times a week.

I encourage you to use your journal to explore your thoughts, sort through your feelings, recollect memories, and develop ideas. You can use a variety of strategies--questioning, synthesizing, speculating, and brainstorming.

Oral Presentation

Once you have completed the written report, you will arrange to offer an oral presentation on your project. If you are an intern, you may offer a presentation based on your Educational Specialist Research Project at the Spring Symposium. You may decide to submit a proposal based on your project to a professional conference, such as Virginia Counselors Association's annual meeting. If you are completing an applied research project, you may present it to those who will be using your findings.

Registration

You need to submit a written proposal for an Educational Specialist Research Project **before** you register for PSYC 800. If you do not complete the Educational Specialist Research Project in time, you must register for PSYC 799 Educational Specialist Research Project Continuance. Keep in mind that continuance hours do **not** count towards graduation requirements.

Hints

I have compiled a few suggestions from other students who have successfully completed their Ed.S. Research Projects.

- **Make a timeline.** Develop a timeline for completing portions of your project. A timeline can help you stay on track with this long-term project.
- **Be punctual.** Keep track of important dates and deadlines. Be sure to have materials to committee members so that they will have adequate time to read them before meeting.
- **Organize your material.** Organize your references on hard copies or on a database program. This strategy will be an enormous help when you later assemble your reference section.

Nothing is more annoying than tracking down a missing reference when a deadline is hanging over you.

- **Take responsibility.** Remember that the chair's job is to guide you through this project with feedback and suggestions. You have the responsibility to arrange committee meetings, give drafts to committee members, and deliver the final manuscripts to the Graduate Office.

- **Use your committee resources.** Your chair should be satisfied before you give the formal proposal to other committee members. However, in some cases, it may make good sense to work closely with a member who has a specific expertise.

- **Proofread your work.** It is fine to use spell check and grammar programs, but do not rely on them to catch every error. Be sure to proofread your drafts carefully before giving them to your chair.

- **Back up your work.** Unless you want to experience the ultimate graduate student nightmare, make it a habit of regularly backing up your work. Accidents do happen, so keep backup CDs and additional hard copies of your drafts in a safe, fireproof place.

<u>Class</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
First	Introductions & Goals	
Second	Refining Your Idea	Review of Proposal
Third	Making or Reviewing a Timeline	Timeline Draft
Fourth	Formats	Title Page, Signature Page, Reference Page
Fifth	Putting It All Together	Proposal or Beginning of Report
Sixth – Tenth	Drafting and Revising	
Eleventh	Committee Meeting Preparation	
Twelfth	Committee Meeting	
Thirteenth	Revising	
Fourteenth	Final Review	
Fifteenth	Submission of Final Project	

Please Note:

The above schedule and procedures for this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. Weekly topics and reading assignments will follow in the general order listed above, although some topics may be explored for several weeks.

Counseling Programs Academic Policies for Syllabi

Over the years, we have deeply appreciated the tremendous sense of commitment that our counseling students have demonstrated in their work with us. As members of the James Madison University faculty, we are required to provide information in our syllabi regarding attendance, academic honesty, adding/dropping courses, inclement weather, religious accommodations, and disability accommodations. Therefore, we have adopted the following general academic policies to apply to all our Counseling Programs courses. Of course, in addition to these guidelines, individual faculty members may use their syllabi to inform you of more specific policies and expectations for particular courses.

Attendance

We are looking forward to you being active, contributing members of our learning community by attending every class, being fully involved in all activities, and contributing your ideas, reflections, feedback, and observations. The fundamental goal of all our courses is to prepare you to become a counseling professional, a role in which your sense of presence is essential. When you are granted the sacred trust of entering into someone else's pain, you must honor that invitation with your full and absolute attention. Your class times are your opportunities to hone that skill of being fully present. If you are unable to attend class due to an emergency, we expect you to contact us as soon as possible. If you need to miss class, you are responsible for obtaining any material distributed during the class.

Class Participation Rubric

Excellent	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Consistently engages, actively listens, and builds on the contributions of other members of the class. Arrives promptly and fully prepared at every class session. Can always be counted on to offer honest reflections, insightful observations, and supportive comments that contribute significantly to a stimulating learning environment. Brings a sense of presence that stimulates productive group dynamics without dominating the process.	Attends every class, arrives promptly, and is well prepared, having completed all assignments. Interacts respectfully and empathically with other members of the class. Regularly contributes thoughtful reflections, relevant comments, and constructive observations to class discussions. Brings a sense of presence that contributes to productive group dynamics.	Is absent or, when present, rarely interacts with other members of the class. Comes to class unprepared. Demonstrates a notable lack of interest in contributing to a positive learning environment. Brings a presence that sabotages productive group dynamics. Engages in non-verbal relational aggressive behaviors, such as eye rolling and dismissive gestures, that communicate disrespect or contempt for peers and the instructor.

Academic Honesty

It should come as no surprise that we expect you to be committed to academic honesty, which is absolutely essential for the success of any learning community, but especially one with the mission of training ethical counselors. If you are unfamiliar with the specifics of the JMU Honor Code, you can read it at <http://www.jmu.edu/honor/code.shtml#TheHonorCode>.

Adding/Dropping Classes

As mature and conscientious students, you know that you are responsible for registering for classes and for verifying your class schedules on e-campus. Obviously, you must register for classes or drop classes before the scheduled add/drop deadline. For more details, you can refer to the Registrar's Web site at <http://www.jmu.edu/registrar/>.

Inclement Weather

By the way, inclement weather may lead to the cancellation of a class. If you are unsure of the weather conditions on campus, you can call the JMU Weather Line at 540.433.5300. You also can listen to the JMU radio station at 1610AM for cancellation announcements. The area radio and television stations regularly inform the public when classes are cancelled. For details about JMU's cancellation policy, go to <http://www.jmu.edu/JMUpolicy/1309.shtml>. And stay safe! Don't take unnecessary risks to make it to class. We want you alive!

Religious Accommodations

Cultural diversity enriches our learning community and is an essential component of our counselor education programs. Therefore, we are committed to providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations for your religious observations. Please let us know at the start of a course if you expect any absences so that we can explore mutually acceptable alternatives for completing any missed activities. If you have any additional questions, we encourage you to contact the Office of Equal Opportunity at 540.568.6991 or online at <http://www.jmu.edu/oeo/>.

Disability Accommodations

We believe that cultural diversity also includes differences based on physical abilities. Therefore, we are also committed to providing any accommodations you may need for a disability. Please contact us at the beginning of the semester so we can make any necessary arrangements. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disability Services. The office is located in Wilson Hall, Room 107. You may call 540.568.6705 or contact the office at <http://www.jmu.edu/ods/> for more information.

Confidentiality and Title IX

Title IX addresses not only gender discrimination, but also sexual harassment and sexual violence, because they create a hostile educational environment. We are committed to creating a safe haven and an open atmosphere in this learning community. The personal information you share in your written assignments, class discussions, experiential activities, and counseling practice sessions enriches the learning experience for everyone. We want to let you know that, as educators, we are mandated by Title IX to report any suspected sexual harassment or sexual assaults of students. This mandate does not require identifying you and we are dedicated to addressing these concerns with sensitivity and consideration for your privacy and wellbeing. If you do want to report any event, the Title IX Coordinator is Amy Sirocky-Meck, Madison Hall 4035, sirockam@jmu.edu, 540-568-5219. You may also file a report with Title IX online at <https://www.jmu.edu/access-and-enrollment/titleIX/index.shtml>.

Furthermore, we also will take necessary action to respond to any disclosures of dangerousness to self or others. For more information on resources and reporting options, refer to the Title IX website: <https://www.jmu.edu/access-and-enrollment/titleIX/index.shtml>

CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING ED.S. PROJECT EVALUATION

Student _____ Faculty/Supervisor _____ Date _____

1. PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING ORIENTATION AND ETHICAL PRACTICE: Professional and Ethical practice	Below Standard	Approachi ng Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

2. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY: Cultural competence and self-awareness	Below Standard	Approachi ng Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

3. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: Developmentally appropriate approaches	Below Standard	Approachi ng Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

4. CAREER DEVELOPMENT: Appropriate career counseling	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

5. COUNSELING AND HELPING RELATIONSHIPS: Evidence-based counseling	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

6. ASSESSMENT AND TESTING: Relevant assessment procedures	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

7. RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION: Research evaluation	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

Key clinical mental health counseling competencies	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
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Observations, Comments and Suggestions:

OVERALL EdS PROJECT EVALUATION	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
Recommendation – Based on project and presentation of project	FAIL		PASS	

Summative Feedback:

Faculty Signature

Faculty Signature

Faculty Signature

Appendix

KPI Rubric	Below Standard	Approaching Standard	At Standard	Exceeds Standard
<p>8. Research and Program Evaluation: Critically evaluates research related to core areas of counseling practice. Uses data-informed decision-making practices for program evaluation and management.</p>	<p>Does not meet expectations for level of training and experience in locating community resources and critically evaluating research related to client problems. Does not use this information to inform decision-making.</p>	<p>Does not consistently meet expectations for level of training and experience in locating community resources and critically evaluating research related to client problems. Inconsistently uses this information to inform decision-making.</p>	<p>Meets expectations for level of training and experience in locating community resources and critically evaluating research related to client problems. Able to use this information to inform decision-making.</p>	<p>Surpasses expectations for level of training and experience in locating community resources and critically evaluating research related to client problems. Able to use this information effectively and thoughtfully to inform decision-making.</p>