

“The world is full of suffering,  
it is also [almost] full of overcoming it.”  
–Helen Keller

THE COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND/CUNY  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

EDD 630 SECTION 9575  
Educational Research Seminar: Overcoming Adversity  
Fall 2012

Tuesdays, 6:30 – 8:10 pm  
Room 3S-115

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CONFERENCE HOURS:	TUESDAYS, 5:30 – 6:30 pm And by appointment		
COURSE WEBSITE:	<a href="http://wesamuels.net/edd630.html">http://wesamuels.net/edd630.html</a>		

Consistent with our mission to promote quality teaching and learning in P-12 school settings, our Department of Education prepares educators who possess **intellectual autonomy** and **professional responsibility**. To this end we emphasize the following: **the gaining of content knowledge and pedagogy; the engagement of all students; and the demonstration of professional dispositions.**

### COURSE MATERIALS

All course materials will be made available before being covered in class online at the course website, <http://wesamuels.net/edd630.html>. They will also be sent to your preferred email address at the same time.

Although we will occasionally use non-primary sources, most of the course materials will be primary sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters.

## Course Organization

Our first semester of the EDD 630–631 sequence will focus on:

1. Exploring the factors and developmental mechanisms related to overcoming adversity and nurturing resilience among children and adolescents. You will design an educational intervention that uses this understanding to support students' academic and/or personal growth.
2. Discussing some of the ways that emotions affect learning and academic performance. This will be done through two, general topics: the effects of emotions on memory encoding and retrieval and the roles of stress and motivation on performance.
3. Understanding scientific inquiry, its proper uses and methods, and its utility for gaining knowledge. You will use this understanding to design an appropriate and feasible evaluation of the intervention you design.

During the second semester, you will also conduct, analyze, and present the evaluation of your intervention. Therefore, the intervention you design must be one you can indeed implement—either alone or in collaboration with a small group of course-, community-, or school-based colleagues. Likewise, the evaluation must be both possible and apposite.

Although I will not be able to avoid teacher-centered lectures fairly often, I will incorporate student participation as much as I can. Of course, one cannot participate in a conversation on a topic without information on the topic. Therefore, I will typically assign readings about two weeks before it is covered in class and will expect everyone to have read them enough to discuss them. Given the prominence of topics discussions in this section, a large portion of your final grade (40%) will be composed of class engagement.

Throughout the semester, please feel free to come to me outside of class (in person, through email, etc.) with questions, comments, etc., especially as you develop your idea and then the proposal itself. Nonetheless, as the semester progresses, I will expect you to first go to your fellow students more and more for assistance and feedback. As I'm sure you know, one of the best ways to learn is to teach.

In addition to any meetings outside of class that you initiate, I will meet with you during the course's conference hours to address issues specific to the development of your intervention and its evaluation. If you cannot meet during the conference hours listed above, please let me know so we can schedule other times to meet.

### Electronic Communication

I will post course information online and communicate with you through email. You may use the computers on campus (e.g., in 3S-206) to access relevant websites and email. However, if you do not have ready access to the Internet outside of school and using the college facilities is problematic, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work around this. Please let me know of any problems promptly since I will expect you to read or respond to communications sent to your declared e-mail address or made available to you online.

### Special Accommodations

Please let me know as soon as possible of any special accommodations you may require. I will happily do all I possibly can to meet any and all needs you have.

### Course Objectives

Even if not necessarily the final courses you take, the EDD 630/631 sequence likely represents the most advanced course in education you will complete. It provides the opportunity to synthesize your various areas of educational knowledge into an understanding and perspective that is uniquely your own. Therefore, the primary objective of the sequence is the ability to demonstrate the creation of a sophisticated and state-of-the-art position relevant to this section's topic, overcoming adversity.

To this end, our section's objectives and their respective outcomes are:

Objective	Outcome
Build a working knowledge of the background and current, major concepts within the field of overcoming adversity to succeed academically	Demonstrate strong grasp of field in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- well-organized and detailed introduction section in intervention and evaluation manuscripts, and</li> <li>- course-based discussions, e.g., in class and during conference hours.</li> </ul>
Understand the scientific inquiry process that constitutes education's vanguard and hone the skills needed to build knowledge based on primary inquiry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design a cogent, feasible, and ethical evaluation of your intervention, and</li> <li>- demonstrate scientific thinking during course-based discussions.</li> </ul>
Acquire a strong grasp of a specific area within that broad field of overcoming adversity to succeed academically.	Base the intervention you design on rationale and objectives that are well-supported by a deep review of the area's literature.
Relate the knowledge you gain in this course to other areas of your professional expertise.	Design an educational intervention that not only supports the resilience of students, but also is grounded in sound pedagogy and students' social and/or cognitive development.

In general, I regard students in EDD 630/631 as nascent colleagues. You are, literally, becoming masters of your profession, and I respect your accomplishments. I can lead and teach you, but I believe it is more honest and true to life to treat you as fellow professionals who have a lot to offer both your fellow class members and me.

## **Assessment**

### **Attendance and Participation**

Regular class attendance and participation is expected. As per college policy, a student who is absent for more than four hours, (this includes accumulated time missed due to lateness), will be assigned a grade of WU, unless I explicitly excuse the absences.

Your active contribution to the course comprise part of your final course grade. Of course, one can contribute to (and detract from) a class in many ways. Therefore, I construe positive class participation broadly: The more your classmates benefit from your active engagement in the course, the more I will consider you to be performing sufficiently in this regard.

### **Course Work**

The writing you will do leading up to your final project for the semester will be reviewed by your peers and by me. Your fellow students will provide most of the formative assessments of your work. I will assess the initial writings you complete to establish the general type and scale of feedback I would like you to give your peers. I will then review both your subsequent writing and the reviews you are given on it. From the writing you do leading up to your final project and from the feedback you give your fellow students I will compute your course writing grade.

Your final project, however, will only be graded by me. I would prefer you to submit this final project electronically (e.g., through email), but you can instead submit a paper copy. The final project and the rubric I will use to assess it are given below.

Any work you submit should conform to American Psychological Association guidelines, using either the fifth or sixth edition. Both the library and I have copies of these manuals.

### **Honor Policy**

It should go without saying that you are expected to conduct yourself in an honorable and honest way in all aspects of this course. Of course, any known deviations from this will result in a failing grade for this section and forfeiture of access to this section in the future.

### **Online Ethics Training**

CSI understandably requires that anyone affiliated with the college who collects “extra” data (e.g., the sorts of data you will collect for your research project) must complete an online training course in research ethics. You must complete this online training before October 3rd. To do this, follow the steps listed online at [http://wesamuels.net/edd630\\_syllabus.html#ird\\_training](http://wesamuels.net/edd630_syllabus.html#ird_training).

### **IRB Proposal**

An additional requirement of any investigation conducted in affiliation with higher education is to complete a proposal that is then vetted by the Institutional review Board (IRB), which ensures that the investigation does not present undue harm to the participants. Fortunately, for the evaluations we will conduct here, the proposal is relatively simple.

## Overall Grading Weights

Material	Course Grade Weight
Class Participation and Course Engagement	30%
Course-Based Writing and Peer Review	30%
Final Project	40%

## Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Event
Aug 28	Introduction and Syllabus	
Sept 4	Foundations of Science	
Sept 11	Anatomy of an Article and Literature Searches	
Oct 2	Design and Evaluation Considerations	Initial <b>Intervention</b> Considerations Due and Discussed
Oct 9	Experimental Design and Statistical Inference	Initial <b>Evaluation</b> Considerations Due and Discussed
Oct 16	Poverty and Impoverishment	Ethics Training Due
Oct 23	Risks to Development	
Oct 30	Emotions and Memories	
Nov 6	Emotions, Stress, Learning, and Motivation	Initial Literature Review Due
Nov 13	Intervention Development Workshop	Reflections on Intervention and Evaluation Idea Due and Peer Reviewed
Nov 20	Personality and Adversity, Part 1	Peer Review and Reflection Due
Nov 27	Personality and Adversity, Part 2	Revised Intervention & Evaluation Due
Dec 4	Environmental & Social Influences	Further Development of Intervention and Evaluation Due and Discussed
Dec 11	Intervention and Evaluation Workshop	IRB Proposal Due
Dec 18	No Class	Final Proposal Due