Expected Outcomes: Competency in research related activities

Provide program experiences which will improve the students’ use of research for making decisions in K-12 school systems.

Assessment methods

Method: Required Research project

Each student is required to complete a research project in at least one educational leadership course. For example, this can be accomplished in EDLD 8400 Ethics for Leaders, EDLD 8220 Personal and Professional Development or EDLD 8200 Assessment and Evaluation of the Learning Organization. In our Ph.D. courses, students are expected to develop competent research practices. Depending on the particular course, students are expected to select an area of study, develop hypothesis or related research questions, gather the data, analyze and report the findings and suggest implications for future research. As students move through our course sequence, they build these research competencies. The Ph.D. students culminating project is the dissertation. [Some of these examples can be seen in student portfolios in the program coordinator’s office. Other examples may take the form of a dissertation and can be accessed electronically from the Auburn library.]

Findings:

The students demonstrated knowledge of gathering data and making decisions concerning their research project. 100% of our students have at least one such project in their portfolio. Over 60% of our incoming 2008-2009 Ph.D. cohort have graduated signifying completion of their dissertation project. 60% of this same cohort have presented at international, national, regional or state conferences. Students have demonstrated exemplary competence in research.

How did you use findings for improvement?

1) We have developed a stronger plan to support students with their research and writing, to complete research projects and to prepare them for presenting their research findings. 78% of the 2009-1010 cohort and 82% of the 2010-2011 cohorts have presented at international, national regional and state conferences. We hope to give our Ph.D. students an in depth appreciation of research skills expected of a competent Ph.D. student. 2) We have improved the design of our educational leadership program to strengthen and support this student outcome. We have developed special writing courses, have utilized the Writing Center at Auburn University and have incorporated research experiences in almost all of our courses. 3) We have used our findings to help the program redefine the role of the Leadership Institute. We now use the Institute to showcase work from various cohorts i.e. masters, specialist and Ph.D. students.

Additional comments:

None

Expected Outcomes: Competency as a reflective practitioner

Provide program experiences which will build the reflective personal and professional practices of our
graduates.

Assessment methods

**Method**: Reflective Practice-depth and quality

In most educational leadership classes students are expected to engage in types of reflective practice. These practices may be small i.e. a check-in, a one paragraph reflection on an assignment. Again, reflective practices may be somewhat larger i.e. “reflexive journaling” in qualitative research.

**Findings**:

some students appear to take reflective practice more seriously than others. Some enjoy the practice while others do not. Because we know the importance of producing graduates from our program who excel at reflective practices, we are seeking new outcomes of this practice.

**How did you use findings for improvement?**

1) We have decided to have Ph.D. students keep a reflective journal throughout their program and have tied this activity to their general comprehensive exam. We will use the student reflective journal as part of their written and oral examination. 2) The journals will be used as part of the examination process but will also be used to help inform our program decisions.

**Additional comments**:

None