WKU Ed.D.

Fall 2023

*Improvement Science*
*for*
*Education Leaders*

# Educational Leadership Doctoral Program
## Student Handbook

Educational Leadership
Doctoral Program

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**Please note: Students in the WKU Educational Leadership Doctoral Program should abide by all policies and procedures set forth in this document.**

## Introduction

For more than 100 years, Western Kentucky University, along with the institutions from which it emerged, has been a leader in preparing Kentucky educators and organizational leaders. Alumni from WKU include a former Secretary of Education, Kentucky Department of Education officials, many superintendents, principals, teacher leaders, and leaders in higher education and education-related fields. Building on that long tradition, WKU offers an innovative Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership (Ed.D.) designed to meet the increasing demand to take education in Kentucky to new levels of excellence. This doctoral program is the next essential step for fulfilling WKU's evolving mission to (a) utilize a strong technological infrastructure for educational delivery and (b) enhance economic growth in the Commonwealth through the promotion of advanced educational degrees.

The philosophical foundation and primary purpose of the WKU Educational Leadership doctoral program is the development of ***scholarly practitioners*** (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017) equipped to assume leadership roles at every level of the educational system and to effectively work with educational partners across agencies to improve student achievement outcomes (see next pages for a Conceptual Framework graphic and program objectives). While traditional Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programs train future researchers, WKU'S Ed.D. program engages participants in relevant and reflective action-research with a focus on gaining experience and competencies critical to changing the nature of education and increasing student learning.

The purpose for the doctoral program is to improve professional practice through the development of competencies to obtain and synthesize knowledge, solve problems, and lead organizational improvement. Learners will be provided value-added opportunities to develop breadth in understanding leadership, improvement science, and research methods. The program seeks to produce future leaders who will creatively generate new knowledge, critically conserve valuable and useful ideas, and responsibly transform those understandings through writing, teaching, and application. Graduates of the program will be well positioned to contribute to the improvement of education at all levels and settings in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and beyond.

Students admitted to the WKU Educational Leadership Doctoral Program will have successfully passed a rigorous screening and admissions process. The administration and faculty of the program look very closely at the credentials of each applicant and his or her potential for successfully completing the requirements for the doctoral degree. Once students are admitted, WKU will provide necessary resources to orient, advise, monitor, guide, and support them through the coursework, the exams, and the dissertation process allowing focused and committed students to complete the degree in a timely and appropriate manner.

Since 2010, WKU's Educational Leadership Doctoral Program has focused on meeting the needs of practicing professionals to develop leadership skills in cross-disciplinary settings. The following document provides important information about the current doctoral program in educational and organization leadership at Western Kentucky University.

### Carnegie Project for the Educational Doctorate

The WKU Ed.D. program is affiliated with the Carnegie Project for the Education Doctorate (CPED). CPED, which began in 2007, is a consortium of over 100 colleges and schools of education working together to critically examine and redesign the doctorate in education (Ed.D.) through dialog, experimentation, feedback, and evaluation. The CPED Ed.D. design supports quality, rigorous practitioner preparation while honoring the local context of each member institution. The CPED Framework consists of three components—a new definition of the Ed.D., a set of guiding principles for program development, and a set of design-concepts that serve as program building blocks (Jones et al., 2018).

### Improvement Science

Improvement Science has its roots in mid-20th century efforts to articulate principles and practices of continuous improvement in manufacturing and business settings. Walter Shewhart (1891-1967) first deployed the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) improvement cycle which was later expanded in the vastly influential work of W. Edwards Deming (1900-1993), best known for his association with Total Quality Management and other techniques to promote efficiencies and improvements in various industries (Langley et al., 2009). Improvement science came to the health care industry in the 1990's (Nilsen et al., 2022) and then to the domain of elementary and secondary education (Bryk et al., 2015).

Langley et al. (2009) describe Improvement Science as a method of inquiry whereby practitioners engage in cycles of interventions designed to make measurable improvements in complex organizational problems. The scholar practitioners who engage in Improvement Science don't expect to permanently solve such problems but they hope to make changes in organizational processes and show demonstrable positive change in outcomes that benefit all stakeholders.

Improvement Science projects utilize a mix of robust quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide the most comprehensive understanding of problems of practice and the efficacy of various interventions. Quantitative methods used in Improvement Science include survey research and various statistical analysis techniques. Qualitative methods include interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, observation, and document analysis. As a doctoral student engaging in Improvement Science, you are encouraged to approach your dissertation-in-practice with an open mind just as a good scientist approaches an experiment: eager to see if various changes have the intended effect and to learn from every cycle of improvement no matter the result.

## Conceptual Framework

**PROGRAM OUTCOMES**
**ENHANCED LEADERSHIP CAPACITY TO MEET COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL CHALLENGES**

***Develop creative and innovative leaders*** *to address challenges, lead change, and transform educational institutions, organizations, and communities.*

***Develop scholarly practitioners*** *to use research methods as a tool for the practice of adaptive and transformational leadership.*

**WKU Climbing to Greater Heights Strategic Priority:** ***Nurture intellectual capital in communities served by WKU. Engaging with those communities as a resource partner in finding innovative solutions to social, economic, and other challenges.***

### CPED Guiding Principles

The WKU Doctor of Educational Leadership (Ed.D.) is a part of the Carnegie Program for the Education Doctorate (CPED) consortium. The program will embrace the CPED framework supporting rigorous practitioner preparation in the regional and local context. This framework consists of a set of guiding principles for the program, and a set of design concepts that serve as program building blocks.

The Ed.D. Program framework includes the following guiding principles:

- **Knowledge**: the technical and humanistic elements of leadership theory, preparing leaders who can construct and apply knowledge to make a difference in their organizations and communities.

- **Praxis:** the nexus of action and practice, learning leadership by leading with emphasis on the generation, transformation and use of professional knowledge and practice.

- **Reflection:** grounded in and develops a professional knowledge base that integrates both practical and research knowledge, that links theory and systematic inquiry.

- **Interdisciplinary Studies:** provides opportunities for candidates to develop and demonstrate collaboration and communication skills to work with diverse communities and build partnerships. The curriculum has an emphasis on critical thinking, cross-cultural understanding, ethical capacity, and community engagement.

- **Community Engaged Scholarship:** a cornerstone of the program will be for candidates to study and practice the art of leading change focusing on an adaptive challenge or problem of practice relevant to their community and organization.

## Core Program Components

The core curriculum of the doctoral program consists of four components, (a) a core of courses focused on applied, adaptive leadership theory, ethics, and strategies, (b) a research methodology core, (c) improvement science courses for the application of research skills to a problem of practice, and d) content area core based on electives and areas of multidisciplinary leadership.

The Fall 2023 Cohort will complete the following course sequence. See Appendix B at the end of this document for a schedule of courses to be taken each term of the program.

### Leadership Core (12 credit hours)

- **EDLD 702 Doctoral Program Orientation (3 credit hours):** An introduction to the doctoral program, including habits and skills of effective doctoral students, principles of high-quality academic writing, and basic leadership theories.
- **EDLD 710 Leadership Theory and Ethics (3 credit hours):** Theory and research on leadership, ethics, and managerial effectiveness with a focus on adaptive leadership. Topics may include leadership and management, power and influence, trait theories, current and seminal leadership theories, delegation and shared decision making, as well as morality and ethics for leaders, and current trends in leadership research.
- **EDLD 720 Individual and Group Issues in Leadership (3 credit hours):** Theory and application of adaptive leadership in organizational behavior, including motivation, attitudes, group process, problem solving, decision making,

conflict management, and interpersonal communication.

- **EDLD 730 Leading the Organization 3 credit hours):** Leadership for organizational improvement. Theory and application of systems, communication, culture, change and organizational design, and organizational development.

## Research Core (12 credit hours)

- **EDLD 712 Research Methods & Design for Educational Leaders (3 credit hours):** Quantitative and qualitative research methods and design; survey design and administration; and analysis of research reports.
- **EDLD 722 Measurement and Survey Methods for Educational Leaders (3 credit hours):** Examination of psychometric properties of measurement instruments used in leadership research; data collection and analysis methods used in survey research; issues related to validity, reliability, and fairness; approaches to evaluate the desired properties of research tools; and quantitative data analysis.
- **EDFN 744 Seminar in Advanced Research Methods (3 credit hours, repeated twice for a total of 6 credit hours; second 3-hour course fulfills an elective requirement):** Advanced topics in research, evaluation, statistics, or measurement applied to educational or social and behavioral science problems.

## Improvement Science Core (18-21 credit hours)

- **EDLD 794: Seminar in Educational Leadership: Introduction to Improvement Science (3 credit hours; fulfills an elective requirement):** An introductory seminar in the principles and processes of improvement science, the theoretical foundation and methodology of the WKU Educational Leadership Doctoral program.
- **EDLD 797 Dissertation Seminar (3 Credit Hours):** A seminar designed to assist students in conceptualizing and developing the research for their dissertation. During this course, students in the Fall 2023 cohort will design their first research-based intervention.
- **EDLD 798 Educational Leadership Doctoral Program Internship (3 credit hours, repeated twice for a total of 6 credit hours):** Advisor-approved field experiences within current workplace or at relevant alternative sites geared toward expanding leadership knowledge, enhancing leadership capacity, or exploring future leadership roles through student's assumption of additional roles and responsibilities. Field-based experiences will take the form of **Research Interventions** as part of the dissertation in practice model.
- **EDLD 799 Dissertation Research (6 to 9 credit hours):** Students will carry out their second intervention cycle, analyze results, report conclusions, and prepare their dissertation-in-practice for final defense.

## Professional Specialization Courses (15-18 credit hours)

- **Electives (15-18 credit hours; reduced from 21-24 hours after including EDLD 794 and EDFN 744):** Approved elective courses for Ed.D. program, including possible transfer courses.

## Program Planning, Advising, and Policies

The Ed.D. Director will serve as the initial advisor for all Ed.D. students until the selection of a dissertation chair. The Program Director is available by appointment to meet with students in-person, via zoom, or via telephone.

Students are encouraged to download the Program Planning Worksheet available on the Doctoral Student Program Progress Forms webpage on the Ed.D. website. This form will enable the student to develop a draft program of study. This program of study is based on the required core components of the program in leadership, research, improvement science, and professional electives. Students should coordinate with the Program Director prior to or during their first semester of enrollment to complete this Worksheet.

Students should then track their progress toward completion of degree requirements via Degree Works, an online platform that marks each degree component as it is completed. The Program Director may need to file Curriculum Exception Forms to allocate transfer credits or elective courses into Degree Works.

### Scheduling Classes

Students will not schedule themselves for Ed.D. courses. All course scheduling is done by cohort by the Ed.D. Program Manager/Student Services Coordinator. Other than elective courses, students will be enrolled jointly with the cohort for all core leadership, research, and improvement science courses.

### Continuous Enrollment

Students should maintain continuous enrollment with the Ed.D. program. A break in enrollment will result in having to complete doctoral courses in another cohort. Students who break enrollment for two consecutive semesters (fall or spring terms), may be required to reapply to the Ed.D. program and must follow the requirements of the most current catalog.

### Academic Standing

Doctoral students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in all doctoral coursework. If at any time a student's cumulative doctoral program grade point average falls below 3.0, they will be dismissed from the program and are ineligible to reapply for admission.

### Graduate Student Orientation

The Graduate School offers an optional online orientation, which you might find helpful, especially if this is your first degree at WKU. You can access the orientation here: https://www.wku.edu/online/orientation-grad/index.php. This orientation contains 5 main sections. You can expect to learn everything from how to register for courses (electives only for doctoral students), how to use Blackboard, qualify for and keep your financial aid, and other WKU processes and policies.

### NetID

Your NetID and password are used to login to most major WKU computer systems and services including, but not limited to, myWKU, Blackboard, TopNet, Email, Computer Labs, and WKU Wireless Networks. You should have been issued your NetID at admission, but you can learn more and manage all of your student accounts at the following link: https://www.wku.edu/it/accounts/manage/

### Ed.D. Listserv

All WKU Ed.D. students will be included in doctoral program Listserv and receive regular updates from the director and program manager about important events, opportunities, and deadlines for doctoral students. Students may not unsubscribe from this list while they are active in the program. It is important for all doctoral students to read all email correspondence from the director or program manager. ***All program, professor, and university emails will be sent to your Topper email. It is your responsibility to check this email regularly. Failure to check this email does not relieve you of the responsibilities or deadlines contained within the communications.***

### TopNet

TopNet is the Registrar's database of student records for WKU. Students use TopNet to register for courses (elective courses only in the doctoral program), lookup classes being offered, accept loans, check student records, receive tuition bills and many other administrative functions.

If you have issues logging in, please call the IT Help Desk (270-745-7000). If you are having issues with your NetID, click on the "What is my NetID" link from the TopNet login page to look it up, or reset it and your password.

After logging in, an introductory page will appear with announcements. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on "Continue." Click on the "Student Services" tab to gain access to many administrative student functions. The "Financial Aid" tab will be where you look at what loan amounts have been awarded, scholarships, and more.

Make sure that your personal information is always up to date, including your primary email address, your phone number, and emergency contacts. You can also sign up for emergency text alerts here, for weather alerts and other emergencies involving campus locations.

### Blackboard

Blackboard is the online learning platform through which all online classes are delivered at WKU. If you are new to Blackboard, consider taking an online training session. To complete the Blackboard training, go to the WKU home page: http://wku.edu/; then click on "Students" at the top, and "Blackboard. Log into Blackboard with your NetID and password."

Once in Blackboard, go to the top right menu bar and select "IT Training" then select "IT: Blackboard and ADA Student User Training." This will register you for the online course, which you can complete at your own pace.

### Textbooks

Textbooks for all courses should be purchased and be in your possession by the first day of each academic term. Textbook lists/syllabi will be issued to students well in advance of the start of each term. Textbooks may be purchased via the WKU Bookstore or the vendor of your choice. Make sure you are aware of how the Big Red Backpack program works for textbook fulfillment and how you can opt out if you choose not to use Big Red Backpack. Some of the textbooks you purchase will be used in multiple courses and doctoral students often like to keep their books for their professional library. Therefore, we typically suggest that the Big Red Backpack program is not a good fit for most of our students.

### WKU Institutional Review Board (IRB) Process

All research activities at WKU are governed by institutional policies and compliance committees that are imposed by federal and state laws. Non-compliance can result in penalties for WKU, as well as the individual researcher. It is WKU's mission to foster an environment of compliance and promote the responsible conduct of research. Thus, it is the responsibility of all doctoral students to apply for and receive IRB approval before they begin collecting dissertation data. For more information about the IRB approval process, visit https://www.wku.edu/Dept/Support/SponsPrg/grants/research-compliance/.

An important step in the approval process is the completion of the Collaborative IRB Training Initiative (CITI) Course. CITI is a web-based ethics training course for those conducting research with human or animal subjects. All Principal Investigators, Co-Investigators, and study personnel must complete CITI training with a minimum score of 80%. The WKU Compliance Manager is notified by CITI upon successful completion of the relevant course. Again, visit the WKU IRB website for additional information about completing this course.

### Important Information for WKU Employees

Per university policy, WKU staff members are not permitted to teach or take more than a combined total of six credit hours during any semester. This applies to staff members only (not full-time faculty members or full-time instructors).

The Ed.D. program engages in a competitive admissions process for all applicants, regardless of employment status. All Ed.D. applicants must meet the rigorous academic standards and requirements for admission. Employment within the university does not guarantee admission. Employees admitted to the program may use tuition waivers as described in university policy and comply with all policy requirements to maintain the waiver in good standing.

### Important Links, Forms, and Documents

The Ed.D. program web site https://www.wku.edu/Ed.D./ is a good resource of information about the Ed.D. program. The "Current Students" tab includes all important Forms, Important Dates for graduation, course sequence schedules, and other deadlines. The "Current Students" tab also includes a link to important Resources that doctoral students may need such as Human Subjects/IRB information, writing assistance, dissertation guidelines, links to all WKU dissertations, and program leadership and research standards.

## Academic Integrity Policy

The School of Leadership & Professional Studies, which is home to the Ed.D. program, expects all undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students to demonstrate academic integrity and not participate in academic misconduct as defined by the University (https://www.wku.edu/studentconduct/process-for-academic-dishonesty.php). The SLPS has developed two tiers for academic misconduct. Examples of academic offenses include (but are not limited to) any act of plagiarism, cheating, or falsification or misuse of academic records.

**Tier 1 Violations**

Acts of plagiarism that involve not citing all sources and/or using papers previously written and submitted in other courses are considered a Tier 1 violation. Students committing violations in Tier 1 will meet with the instructor to discuss the incident and work toward a resolution. Students may receive a zero on the submitted work with feedback stating the issue; students are responsible for checking grades and reading feedback. Instructors will follow the policy for Tier 2 violations for additional Tier 1 violations.

**Tier 2 Violations**

Tier 2 violations include but are not limited to using artificial intelligence programs, content generators or websites to complete an assignment in ways not allowed by the instructor, as described by the course syllabus, sharing passwords and login information with individuals not enrolled in the course, failing to cite any sources in submitted work when outside sources were obviously used, cheating on an assignment or test, employing a person, website, or artificial intelligence program to complete an assignment, and/or committing a second Tier 1 violation. Students committing violations in Tier 2 will meet with the instructor to discuss the incident and review evidential materials. If the instructor determines a Tier 2 violation has occurred, the instructor should report the student to the Office of Student Conduct and request that the Office of the Registrar issue a failing grade for the course. If the academic misconduct is severe and flagrant, the student may be dismissed from the program. Students who wish to dispute the allegation, dismissal, or grade should follow the Student Complaint Policy (https://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-complaint.php).

## Doctoral Program Faculty Procedures for Student Academic Misconduct

**Tier 1 Violations (Using work from previous courses; Plagiarism – Failing to Cite all Sources)**

- After collecting evidence, schedule a time to meet privately with the student (in-person or virtually) to discuss the incident. Refer the student to the syllabus statement concerning Academic Integrity. Suggestions resolutions are:
    - Fail the student on the assignment (if warranted).
    - Request the student resubmit the assignment.
    - Provide additional APA assistance to help the student accurately cite sources.
- Remind the student that not complying with the request will result in Tier 2 actions, which are severe.
- Send an email to the student providing a summary of the discussion and decision on action. Blind copy yourself as documentation.

**Tier 2 Violations (Cheating, Password Sharing, Plagiarism, 2nd Tier 1 Violation)**

- After collecting evidence, schedule a time to meet privately with the student (in-person or virtually) to discuss the incident. Inform the student about the Student Complaint Procedure located in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog.
- Send an email to the student providing a summary of the discussion and ramifications. Blind copy yourself as documentation.
- *For Course Removal:* Immediately contact the Office of the Registrar (registrar@wku.edu) to request the student be withdrawn from the course pending a failing grade due to academic misconduct. It is important to note that: (1) the Office of Student Conduct WILL NOT do this for you; and (2) the student can drop the course without any penalty if action is not taken immediately. After the Registrar's Office is notified make sure the student:
    - Is no longer on your course roster.
    - No longer appears in the Blackboard course list.
- *For Program Dismissal:* Discuss the violation with the School Director. The School Director will work with the Office of the Registrar, Office of Academic Affairs, and/or The Graduate School to develop a plan to formally dismiss the student from the program.
- Report the incident to the School Director.
- Report the incident to the Dean of Students AND initiate the Student

Conduct notification process using the directions on this page: https://www.wku.edu/studentconduct/process-for-academic-dishonesty.php. When completing the notification, you must share or upload:
  - Your contact information.
  - The student's WKU ID and email address.
  - The penalty for the student.
  - A copy of the syllabus showing the definition of academic integrity and the consequences as defined by the department.
  - A copy of the evidence including previous work samples or meeting notes (if applicable).
- Save documentation of all correspondence and evidence to use if the student complaint procedure is initiated.

## University Definitions of Academic Misconduct

- ***Academic Misconduct (2022 University Catalogs):*** The University expects students to operate with the highest standards of integrity in all facets of the collegiate experience. Broadly defined, academic misconduct is any unethical self-serving action in the performance of academic work, deliberate or unintentional, that affords a student an unfair, unearned, or undeserved advantage.

  The maintenance of academic integrity is of fundamental importance to the University. Thus, it should be clearly understood that acts of plagiarism or any other form of cheating will not be tolerated and that anyone committing such acts will be held accountable for violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

  Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in a course without possibility of withdrawal. The faculty member may also present the case to the Office of Student Conduct.
  For more information on Academic Misconduct, visit www.wku.edu/studentconduct.
- ***Dishonesty (WKU Student Conduct website):*** Such as cheating, plagiarism, misrepresenting of oneself or an organization, knowingly furnishing false information to the University, or omitting relevant or necessary information to gain a benefit, to injure, or to defraud is prohibited.

- ***Cheating (WKU Student Conduct website):*** No student shall receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in taking an examination or in the preparation of an essay, laboratory report, problem assignment or other project which is submitted for purposes of grade determination.

- ***Plagiarism (WKU Student Conduct website):*** To represent written work taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious act. The academic work of a student must be his/her own. One must give any author credit for source material borrowed from him/her. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage without reference to the source after having changed a few words is also plagiarism.

- ***WKU Password Security (WKU ITS Policy 5.5033)***: Accounts and credentials are issued to University employees, students, and authorized affiliates for use accessing and utilizing information technology systems, services, applications, and information. Authorized University constituents (users) may retain and utilize such accounts as long as they remain in a status or relationship with the University that warrants access to relevant resources. Users are required to manage their accounts securely, maintain appropriate passwords, and protect their account credentials at all times. Any inappropriate use of technology accounts may result in immediate revocation of a user's account privileges and disabling of the account. Sharing any WKU provided or affiliated account credentials is expressly prohibited.

  Any violation of this policy may lead to suspension of access to information technology resources, with the possibility of revocation of privileges, or other action as provided by disciplinary provisions applicable to faculty, staff, or students. Confirmed or suspected violations of local, state or federal laws will be turned over to the University General Counsel and/or the appropriate law enforcement agency.

## Dissertation-in-Practice Process

Please see Appendix B, The Dissertation-in-Practice Guide, for a complete description of all components of the dissertation-in-practice and program expectations and guidelines related to the process.

## Program Completion and Graduation Information

**Step 1: Apply for Graduation**

After Graduate School receives and approves your GS Admission to Candidacy (upon completion of your first intervention plan), you will receive an e-mail directing you to complete the Application for Graduation. The current Application for Graduation form is available on Topnet*. When completing the Application to the Office of the Registrar, please be prepared to pay the $200 doctoral graduation fee. *To be eligible to graduate (and participate in the upcoming commencement, if applicable), you must complete the Application for Graduation prior to the semester of degree completion.*

*Application for Graduation must be completed online in TOPNET: sign into TOPNET → click on the Students Services tab → click on Students Records → click on Application for *Graduation → click on Apply for Graduation → Complete all THREE tabs at the top (application, confirm, and payment).*

**Step 2: Schedule and Successfully Defend Your Dissertation**

Professional editing must be completed ***before*** scheduling of defense. ***Even if defense occurs via Zoom, you still must schedule your date and time through our office in order to move forward in the process.*** The Ed.D. Program

Director or the SLPS Department Chair will be the presider of all student dissertations and their schedules must be consulted prior to finalizing defense date. An additional outsider reader will be assigned by the Ed.D. Program Director for all defenses. All parties must receive a copy of your professionally edited dissertation at least ***three weeks*** prior to your defense date. After a successful defense, your dissertation chair will need to access the Comprehensive/Capstone form on Topnet.

**Step 3: Submit Signature Page to Ed.D. Program Manager**

Assuming your dissertation signature page meets all Graduate School formatting requirements, please send only the one-page document in PDF format to the Ed.D. Program Manager. After a successful defense, the Ed.D. Program Manager will get the required digital signatures on the form and submit to the Graduate School Office on your behalf.

**Step 4: Submit Defended Dissertation on Blackboard**

At your dissertation defense, your committee will likely instruct you to make various changes to your dissertation before it is considered final. After the dissertation chair has approved these changes, your document must be reviewed by the Ed.D. Program Director. Submit defended dissertation with any required changes into organizational Blackboard site- *Ed.D. Dissertation Review Site*. Submit your dissertation through SafeAssign and upload Word document of dissertation to Ed.D. Program Director for review. If the dissertation is relatively error free, the director will inform you of any last edits to be made and let you know when it is permissible to submit your final edit to the Graduate School Office. If the edits are major, the director may require you to resubmit the dissertation for another final review.

**Step 5: Submit Your Finalized Dissertation to the Graduate School**

Submit final dissertation to graduate school (submit PDF to graduate.school@wku.edu and complete online Copyright Permission form online). Your Signature Page with your committee's digital signatures will have already been submitted to the Graduate School Office by the Ed.D. Program Manager.

**Step 6: Await Final Approval from the Graduate School Regarding Graduation**

Upon receiving your finalized dissertation, the Graduate School will review your progress on Degree Works and other submitted forms to verify that you have successfully completed all aspects of your program.

Important Final Note: Although we do not anticipate that students who comply with all the steps described above will be delayed in graduating, it is still within the Associate Provost of Research and Graduate Education's discretion to delay your graduation date. However, with rare exceptions, you should still be able to participate in commencement. A successful defense is always required prior to participating in Commencement.

## Commencement Participation Information

### Ordering Academic Regalia

1. Please note that special regalia have been designed for WKU doctoral students. Thus, students must rent or buy their regalia through the WKU Store to ensure that they have the proper regalia to participate in commencement.
2. The graduation fee that doctoral students pay when they apply for graduation includes the purchase of the doctoral hood and rental of the other pieces of the WKU doctoral regalia (gown and tam). Students should attend Grad Fair (typically, late March or late October) to place their rental order.
3. Doctoral students who would like to purchase the additional pieces of the WKU academic regalia (gown and tam) should contact the WKU Store about current

pricing. To ensure that purchased regalia arrive on time, students should visit the WKU Store to be measured by deadlines provided by the WKU Store.

4. Contact the WKU Store for additional information by calling (270) 745-2466.

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# Appendix A: WKU Dissertation-in-Practice Guidelines

**Introduction and Overview**

The Improvement Science dissertation-in-practice at WKU is influenced by our relationship with the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) program. Unlike traditional PhD, the CPED-influenced Ed.D. at WKU is designed to develop “scholarly practitioners” who use the adaptive leadership framework (Heifetz et al., 2009) and improvement science (Langley et al., 2009) to examine and solve problems in their schools/districts or organizations in real time. Candidates in the Ed.D. Program at WKU will identify a problem of practice in their context and study the literature to understand the root cause(s) and find interventions to positively impact the problem. The resulting dissertation-in-practice is scholarly work product that reflects high quality methods of inquiry and offers practical implications so that other similarly-situation practitioners can learn lessons that might impact the problem of practice in their own contexts (Perry et al., 2020).

**Adaptive Leadership Framework**

The Ed.D. Improvement Science Dissertation-In-Practice process is founded on the principles of Adaptive Leadership (Heifetz et al., 2009). Students identify a problem of practice (adaptive challenge) and engage in the improvement science approach for learning about the problem through a root cause analysis. The analysis allows the student to define the problem and identify possible solutions. Through a comprehensive review of the literature, students develop and implement interventions to improve and/or solve the problem. In some cases, the intervention may identify additional challenges not originally considered. Adaptive leadership is a practical approach to solving problems of practice, guiding leaders in identifying and focusing on the important aspects of organizational challenges and eliminating barriers to success.

**Improvement Science Approach**

Improvement Science has its roots in mid-20th century efforts to articulate principles and practices of continuous improvement in manufacturing and business settings. Walter Shewhart (1891-1967) first deployed the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) improvement cycle which was later expanded in the vastly influential work of W. Edwards Deming (1900-1993), best known for his association with Total Quality Management and other techniques to promote efficiencies and improvements in various industries (Langley et al., 2009). Improvement science came to the health care industry in the 1990’s (Nilsen et al., 2022) and then to the domain of elementary and secondary education (Bryk et al., 2015).

Langley et al. (2009) describe Improvement Science as a method of inquiry whereby practitioners engage in cycles of interventions designed to make measurable improvements in complex organizational problems. The scholar practitioners who engage in Improvement Science don’t expect to completely and permanently solve such problems, but they hope to make changes in organizational processes show demonstrable positive change in outcomes that benefit all stakeholders.

Improvement Science projects utilize a mix of robust quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide the most comprehensive understanding of problems of practice and the efficacy of various interventions. Quantitative methods used in Improvement Science include survey research and various statistical analysis techniques. Qualitative methods include interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, observation, and document analysis. As a doctoral student engaging in Improvement Science, you are encouraged to approach your dissertation-in-practice with an open mind just as a good scientist approaches an experiment: eager to see if various changes have the intended effect and to learn from every cycle of improvement no matter the result.

## The Role of Chair and Committee

Each doctoral student will be supported by a committee made up of a chair who is a full-time program faculty member at WKU, a methodologist (if the chair does not also serve as methodologist), and at least one additional committee member.

### *The chair*

Each doctoral student will be assigned a dissertation-in-practice committee chair, usually in their second term of coursework. The chair, in collaboration with course instructors, will serve as the student's guide and advisor throughout the entire dissertation-in-practice process. Students will have input, but the chair will be assigned by the program director based on the availability of program faculty members and their professional and research interests. The responsibilities of the chair are as follows:

- Assist the student in further refining the problem of practice (articulated in Chapter 1 of the dissertation-in-practice) and review and provide feedback on the various components of the dissertation-in-practice (see the section, Course Sequence and Dissertation-in-Practice Components, below):
    - Root cause analysis (Chapter 2)
    - Intervention plan (proposed method for Chapter 3)
    - Intervention Cycle 1 (Chapter 3)
    - Intervention Cycle 2 (Chapter 4)
    - Conclusions and Recommendations (Chapter 5)
- Serve as faculty sponsor on the student's Institutional Review Board (IRB) application.
- In consultation with the methodologist and committee members, review and approve the initial IRB application and any subsequent IRB amendments prior to the application or amendments being submitted for IRB review by the student. During the planning of each intervention, the chair and student should use the IRB's Continuing Review form to determine if an amendment to the existing IRB application will suffice or changes to the original research plan are extensive enough to require a new IRB application.
- Consult closely with the assigned methodologist to ensure that the research methods of each inquiry cycle and the data analysis techniques utilized are rigorous and appropriate to the study.
- Provide feedback to the student in a timely manner at each of the major checkpoints described above. Note: Students should give their chair a minimum of two weeks to review and respond to all written work submitted for the chair's consideration.
- Monitor to ensure that the student is making sufficient progress toward successful completion of each of the dissertation-in-practice components. If the student falls behind, the chair should consult with the committee and with the program director if necessary.
- Determine that all research plans or completed chapters are well-written and of high quality prior to being sent to the rest of the committee for their review.

- Communicate and collaborate with instructors of record of the various research classes and other courses in which students are completing components of the dissertation-in-practice.
- Collaborate with the program director and program manager to ensure the appropriate research plan approval forms (Root Cause Analysis Plan Approval, Intervention Plan 1 Approval, and Intervention Plan 2 Approval) are signed by all committee members for each of the dissertation-in-practice components. If the chair or committee members deem it appropriate to meet to discuss the research plans, the chair will coordinate and facilitate that meeting with the student.
- Monitor the student's work for the highest standards of research ethics and academic integrity (See the School of Leadership and Professional Studies Academic Integrity policy).
- Communicate with committee members to ensure that the completed dissertation includes all required components and is of high quality.
- Work with the student to schedule and prepare for the dissertation-in-practice defense meeting. The chair should not allow the student to schedule the defense unless the chair is confident the student is ready for a successful defense.

By agreeing to serve as chair, a faculty member agrees to fulfill all the responsibilities described above.

*The methodologist*

Each dissertation-in-practice committee will include a methodologist assigned by the program director in consultation with the student and committee chair. The methodologist will typically be a full-time WKU faculty member with expertise in research methods and strong familiarity with the principles and processes of Improvement Science. The responsibilities of the methodologist are as follows:

- Review all research plans and completed chapters of the dissertation-in-practice and provide feedback to the chair and student specifically on the proposed and enacted research methods and data analysis techniques.
- Communicate with the student and chair and respond to all requests for input in a timely manner. Note: Methodologists should be allowed a minimum of two weeks to review and respond to any submitted written work.
- Monitor the student's work for the highest standards of research ethics and academic integrity (See the School of Leadership and Professional Studies Academic Integrity policy).
- Attend or participate in all committee meetings unless extenuating circumstances prevent them from doing so. All committee members must be present to conduct the dissertation defense, described below.

By agreeing to serve as methodologist, a faculty member agrees to fulfill all the responsibilities described above.

*Committee members*

The dissertation-in-practice committee must include one more person for a total of three members. Committee members should be chosen based on their professional expertise or interest in the research topic. If the student wishes to include a non-WKU faculty member as their third committee member, that person should submit a WKU Ed.D. Faculty Appointment Application to the program director. The responsibility of committee members are as follows:

- Review and sign all research plan approval forms for the various components of the dissertation-in-practice.

- Communicate with the student and chair and respond to all requests for input in a timely manner. Note: Committee members should be allowed a minimum of two weeks to review and respond to any submitted written work.
- Monitor the student's work for the highest standards of research ethics and academic integrity (See the School of Leadership and Professional Studies Academic Integrity policy).
- Attend or participate in all committee meetings unless extenuating circumstances prevent them from doing so. All committee members must be present for the dissertation defense, described below.

By agreeing to serve on a dissertation-in-practice committee, a committee member agrees to fulfill all the responsibilities described above.

**Student Responsibilities**

Just as the chair and committee members have specific responsibilities during the dissertation-in-practice process, so does the student. Among the student's responsibilities are the following:

- Study and work hard in all classes so as to master all of the knowledge and skills needed to successfully complete all elements of the dissertation-in-practice.
- Complete all course assignments and components of the dissertation-in-practice by the due dates established each term.
- Proactively communicate with your chair about all components of the dissertation-in-practice. The completion of all components is the student's responsibility. Do not wait for your chair to contact you. The student should take the initiative for all communication with the chair based on the Course Sequence and Dissertation-in Practice (see below).
- Respond to feedback from your chair and other committee members in a timely manner.
- Follow all guidance from your chair and committee members. If you perceive that feedback from committee members is conflicting, work through your chair to resolve these matters.
- Practice the highest standards of research ethics and academic integrity (See the School of Leadership and Professional Studies Academic Integrity policy). Consult with and seek the chair's approval of all necessary IRB applications or amendments.

By virtue of being a student in the WKU educational leadership doctoral program, you agree to fulfill all the above responsibilities.

**Dissertation Defense**

The defense activity occurs after the conclusion of the entire dissertation-in-practice. The defense is an exercise that should allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and expertise gained the dissertation-in-practice process. It provides a time and place for any clarification on the "pieces" of the work and should be an opportunity for committee members to inquire and probe concerning the document.

The defense includes the dissertation-in practice committee plus one external reader and one presider. The external reader provides a fresh point of view and perspective and participates in all aspects of the defense except for voting. They should make recommendations for revision and change, participate in the questioning of the candidate, and engage in the deliberations at the conclusion of the defense. The committee will vote to accept, accept conditionally, reject conditionally, or reject the dissertation-in-practice.

Students and the chair must adhere to all timelines imposed by the WKU Graduate School and allow for appropriate deliberation, discussion, and feedback in the process. In general, the dissertation defense should occur at least 30 days before the end of the semester in which the degree is to be awarded. All oral defenses are open for attendance (e.g., faculty and interested graduate students), but only members of the dissertation committee may question the student and vote on the acceptance of the dissertation. The chair of the dissertation committee is responsible for arranging for the meeting room or setting up the Zoom link, informing other Committee members, and submitting the form. The Ed.D. Office will post the announcements of all dissertation defenses.

Prior to the scheduling of the defense, students must have their dissertation professionally edited. The Ed.D. Office can provide students with a list of editors that can assist them with the final edits of their project. Students are responsible for any costs incurred with professional editing of their dissertation.

The “Dissertation Final Defense Schedule,” must be submitted by the Dissertation Chair to the Ed.D. Office at the same time final copies of the dissertation are distributed to the Committee members, Director and Department Head (at least three weeks prior to the defense date). The signature of the Dissertation Chair confirms that all committee members endorse the content, research, conclusions, and defense of the student’s work as reflective of quality work and as meeting Educational Leadership Doctoral Program standards.

Once the defense is complete and final edits are done, the Graduate School must have the completed dissertation along with the signed title page approximately four weeks before the end of the semester for graduation. Exact deadlines will be sent out each semester.

**Dissertations and Credit Hour Registration**

Registration for credit hours associated with the completion of component of the dissertation-in-practice is subject to the approval of dissertation chairs based on the progress students are making toward the completion of each component. Thus, if students are not achieving certain levels of progress, registration of dissertation-associated credit hours may be delayed. Chairs may use the following guidelines to help guide their recommendations on student credit hours.

| Credit Hours | Progress |
|---|---|
| 3 | EDLD 797 Intervention #1 Planning |
| 3 | EDLD 798 Implement Intervention #1 |
| 3 | EDLD 798 Intervention #2 Planning |
| 3 | EDLD 799 Implement Intervention #2 |
| 1 | EDLD 799 Write Chapter 5 (results and implications) |
| 1 | EDLD 799 Committee review and editing of complete dissertation-in-practice |
| 1 | EDLD 799 Defend dissertation |

**Dissertation Model**

The dissertation-in-practice follows a 5-chapter format but differs significantly from a traditional dissertation in that Chapters 2 through 4 describe the three inquiry cycles (root cause analysis, first intervention cycle, and second intervention cycle) and their results. In consultation with the program director, committees may approve a different format than the one that follows, but this document outlines the standard format for WKU dissertations-in practice.

**Writing Style**: As an academic discipline, scholars in education utilize writing guidelines established by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition (2020). All elements of the dissertation-in-practice should conform to APA style, format, and citation practices.

Dissertations-in-Practice should be written in first person voice. In other words, academic writers should not refer to themselves in the third person ("the researcher") but rather should use the pronoun "I" when discussing how they carried out their study. This would not apply to the abstract of the dissertation-in-practice, however, which should be written in third person. See more from the APA website on first person usage. However, doctoral students should always use the highest quality writing and be aware that overuse of the pronoun "I" can make their writing sound excessively and unnecessarily subjective. The first-person voice should mostly be used to help clarify who carried out the study and help maintain active, rather than passive, voice.

Doctoral students should expect their writing will go through multiple rounds of revision as they receive feedback from their chair and committee members and make edits accordingly.

The WKU Educational Leadership doctoral program expects the highest level of academic integrity for all students and faculty members. Accordingly, students should be aware of and follow all guidelines of the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures established by the School of Leadership and Professional Studies (2023), which appears in all course syllabi.

**Literature Review**: There is no separate literature review chapter in the dissertation-in-practice. Rather, a thorough treatment of relevant literature is embEd.D.ed through the entire document:

- In Chapter 1 (Introduction), research and practitioner-oriented literature helps establish the ubiquity, relevance, and importance of the chosen problem of practice and the significance of the proposed study. Literature on leadership theory relevant to the topic should also be referenced.
- In Chapter 2 (Root Cause Analysis), an extensive literature review helps the reader understand how the problem of practice has been previously studied, and especially how researchers have conceptualized and empirically investigated the root causes of the problem. The literature review should clearly inform the design of the root cause analysis.
- In Chapter 3 (Invention One), the literature review section describes how researchers and practitioners have studied various intervention strategies meant to meaningfully impact the problem of practice. In this chapter, there should be a clear linkage between the proposed intervention and the findings of previous research on the topic.
- In Chapter 4 (Intervention Two), the literature review is typically shorter but again provides justification, based in the literature, for the revisions proposed in the second intervention cycle.
- In Chapter 5 (Conclusions and Recommendations), findings and recommendations should be framed within the larger body of literature on this topic, making it clear how the results confirm or diverge from previous research or theoretical perspectives. Chapter 5 should also make clear the leadership implications of the study, grounded within the larger body of leadership theory and research.

The literature featured in the dissertation-in-practice should present an exhaustive overview of theories and empirical studies related to the topic from the last 5-10 years. Older literature may (and should) be included when it features seminal or foundation studies and theoretical perspectives upon which later research was based. By grounding the study in the best available literature, the dissertation-in-practice serves as the key indicator that Ed.D. graduates have become *scholar*-practitioners, capable of addressing real-world problems by leading practical organizational strategies rooted in the best available scholarship.

A description of the five dissertation-in-practice chapters and their typical components follows.

**Chapter One**: **Introduction** -- NOTE: Chapter 1 is typically written in stages, but not until the student has identified a problem of practice and examined relevant literature. Chapter one is the "30,000-foot overview" of your work. It is a blueprint of your study designed to provide a reader with a basic understanding of your problem of practice, literature to support why this problem is endemic to your kind of organization, and how you approached developing a cycle of interventions to impact the problem. Chapter 1 is not intended to be verbose or detailed; rather, it should be long enough and detailed enough to provide a clear understanding of your study. Note: If Chapter 1 is less than 10 pages (excluding the definitions/glossary of terms, it is likely not fully developed; likewise, if it is longer than 20 pages (excluding definitions/glossary of terms) it is likely infringing on the remaining chapters.

The elements listed below are generally included in Chapter 1 of the dissertation-in-practice.

I. Introduction to the problem (generally) in the field. What evidence exists that this is an endemic problem for practitioners in your field? What scholarly and practitioner sources have discussed this problem previously?

II. Identification of the problem of practice in context. Describe your professional context and how this problem figures as a prominent, vexing, long-term challenge to organizational success. Seek to understand and express answers to the following questions: 1) "Who is involved in the problem?" and 2) "Who is impacted by the problem?" (Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). It is important to understand that your problem of practice is much more specific than the "topic" of your study. In this section of Chapter 1 you are articulating a problem in a context. The formula for a problem of practice should be, "I/we are concerned about ______ [problem] happening in _______ [my organization/school/district/university/hospital/etc.." For example, "My problem is that there is poor kindergarten readiness among low-SES students at Preschool X," or "My problem is that too many students fail to enroll for a second year at University X," or "My problem is that many diabetes patients served by health educators in Hospital X fail to follow recommended lifestyle changes."

III. Purpose of the study – This section describes how you sought to impact the problem of practice with your intervention cycles.

IV. Articulation of research question(s) – the research question should directly address the problem of practice through the application of Improvement Science. The general format for an Improvement Science research question is, "How can we improve _______ [problem] in _____ [context] through Improvement Science?" For example, "How can we use improvement science to improve kindergarten readiness among preschoolers at Preschool X during the 2023-2024 school year?" Or, "How can we use improvement science during the 2023-2024 academic year to improve second-year retention at University X?" Or, "How can we use improvement science with health educators to promote positive health changes in diabetes patients at Hospital X?"

V. Overview of the Improvement Science (IS) design, citing appropriate literature.

VI. Equity elements of the Problem of Practice – This section is optional, but WKU doctoral students are encouraged to consider their problems of practice through the lens of *equity* – that is, how do these problems affect student or other stakeholder groups have who been historically marginalized or under-served? How would impacting the problem of practice have positive equity implications?
VII. Overview of the research methods used – quant, qual, mixed, etc. (A dissertation-in-practice typically uses a mixed methods design).
VIII. Articulation of the conceptual framework
    a. Adaptive Leadership
    b. Improvement Science
    c. Note: By design most dissertations-in-practice will be based on the principles of adaptive leadership. However, other theoretical frameworks may also be utilized to help frame the research question, interventions, or analysis of results. Examples might include Bandura's Social Cognitive theory, Bolman and Deal's Four Frames, Dweck's Mindset framework, Drago-Severson's Adult Learning Theory, etc. Use of additional theoretical frameworks is optional. Additional note: Since the interventions are short and of a limited duration transformational leadership is not typically an appropriate theoretical framework for an Improvement Science project.
IX. Significance of Study – In your first drafts of this chapter, this section will describe why you believe this study will be important based on what we already know about this problem of practice from research literature. After the study is completed, this section will also briefly describe how the findings are important for practitioners and scholars interested in this topic.
X. Limitations and/or Delimitations
XI. Definitions/Glossary of Terms

**Chapter Two**: **The Root Cause Analysis** – NOTE: The purpose of this chapter is to help the reader better understand the problem of practice and to describe the process of inquiry you used to determine the root causes of the problem in your organizational context. This chapter is essential to the rest of your study since the interventions you develop will depend on the findings of your root cause analysis. Rule of Thumb: The length of a well-developed root cause analysis is driven by the literature review, research questions and the research methods selected for the study. Therefore, there is no average number of pages for this section as the literature from topic-to-topic varies.

The elements listed below are generally included in Chapter 2 of the dissertation-in-practice.

I. Introduction – State problem of practice and purpose of the chapter
II. Problem of Practice and Root Cause Analysis Literature Review – The focus of the literature review in this chapter is to help the reader better understand the problem of practice and how researchers have studied it in the field, with a special focus on the underlying causes of the problem.
    a. Explanation of the literature review process, i.e., terms searched, process for reviewing and selecting literature included, etc.
    b. Discussion of research and practitioner literature on the problem of practice, organized around root causes.
    c. Summary of literature on the problem of practice and root causes

III. Methods section
   a. Research question(s) for the study
   b. Research design
      i. Goal/purpose of the root cause analysis
      ii. Setting and Context
         1. Tools utilized to better understand the root causes of the problem in your context, based on the literature review.
            a. Fishbone Diagram
            b. Five Why's
            c. Other tools (Consider- equity audits related to your problem of practice)
         2. Consider – How is our organization (policies, procedures, practices, priorities, personnel) contributing to the problem of practice (intentionally or unintentionally)?
      iii. Participants (Note: Consider – Who is involved in this problem and who is impacted by the problem? See Hinnant-Crawford, 2020).
      iv. Pre-existing data sources (Consider – what data show *variation* in the problem: process variation and outcome variation? See Hinnant-Crawford, 2020). Note: IRB approval is required for the use of pre-existing data.
      v. Instruments
      vi. Procedures – Identify the data sources/measures/instruments: How developed? What do they address? Types of questions?
         1. Data management/analysis
            a. Tests: Reliability and/or validity OR explanation for validated instruments, if appropriate
   c. Limitations of methods
IV. Results
   a. Quantitative
      i. How measured
      ii. Summary
      iii. Description
      iv. Graphs
   b. Qualitative
      i. How measured
      ii. How coded
      iii. Themes identified
      iv. Description with evidence
      v. Triangulation
      vi. Trustworthiness
V. Synthesis of results
VI. Limitations of Overall Root Cause Analysis
VII. Conclusions and Recommendations for Interventions

**Chapter Three: First Intervention**. NOTE: The purpose of this chapter is to explain the first intervention: how the root cause analysis led to the intervention selected, how the intervention was carried out, its impact on the problem of practice, and implications for the next intervention cycle.

The elements listed below are generally included in Chapter 3 of the dissertation-in-practice.

I. Introduction – Purpose of the Chapter: How did the root cause analysis described in Chapter 2 lead to the selected intervention? In simple terms – you are stating what problem you want to address and why.
II. Setting/Context – this is brief recap of the setting context described in Chapter 2. No need for this to be elaborate unless the setting of the intervention differs from the setting of the root cause analysis.
III. Intervention Design
    a. Goals
    b. Literature Review: The focus of this literature review is on how researchers have studied various interventions that might reasonably impact the problem of practice.
        i. Interventions described in the literature
        ii. Interventions considered for this study
        iii. Why intervention was selected over others
    c. Theory of Action
        i. Driver diagram(s)
        ii. Logic model(s)
        iii. Graphic showing parallel between intervention and research design
    d. PDSA (Plan/Do/Study/Act) Procedures
    e. Description of metrics
IV. Research Design
    a. Research question(s)
    b. Goals/purpose
    c. Methods – data sources, measures, instruments
    d. Ethical considerations
    e. Procedures
        i. Instruments
        ii. Measures
        iii. Data management and analysis
        iv. Validity and reliability
    f. Limitations
V. Results
    a. Quantitative
        i. How measured
        ii. Summary
        iii. Description
        iv. Graphs
    b. Qualitative
        i. What collected
        ii. How coded

iii. Themes identified
iv. Description with evidence
v. Triangulation
vi. Trustworthiness

VI. Synthesis of Results
VII. Limitations of the Intervention
VIII. Challenges and Recommendations for Next Intervention Cycle

**Chapter Four: Second Intervention.** NOTE: The purpose of this chapter is to explain how the results of Intervention 1 led to the changes, selection, development, and implementation of Intervention 2. Some sections of this chapter will be redundant with Chapter 3, which is perfectly acceptable so long as the changes made and rationale are clearly articulated. Please note that, based on the changes you make for the second intervention cycle, you may need to review the literature again and add to that section based on what you determine are the most appropriate changes for intervention 2. Do not skip that step – all your work must be rooted in the literature.

The elements listed below are generally included in Chapter 4 of the dissertation.

I. Introduction – Explain how the findings or limitations of Intervention 1 lead to Intervention 2.
II. Setting/Context – Omit if not changes from Intervention 1
III. Intervention Design
    a. Goals
    b. Literature Review: This section could be brief or extensive depending on the scope of changes made from the first intervention cycle.
        i. Interventions described in the literature relevant to Intervention 2
        ii. Interventions considered for Intervention 2
        iii. Why intervention was selected over others, based on the literature.
    c. Theory of Action – updated for second intervention cycle
        i. Driver diagram(s)
        ii. Logic model(s)
        iii. Graphic showing parallel between intervention and research design
    d. PDSA Procedures – Revised for second intervention cycle
    e. Description of metrics
IV. Research Design
    a. Research question(s)
    b. Goals/purpose (Consider – How will I know if the change I'm proposing is an improvement?)
    c. Methods – data sources, measures, instruments
    d. Ethical considerations
    e. Procedures
        i. Instruments
        ii. Measures
        iii. Data management and analysis
        iv. Validity and reliability
    f. Limitations

V. Results
    a. Quantitative
        i. How and
        ii. Summary
        iii. Description
        iv. Graphics (as needed)
    b. Qualitative
        i. What collected
        ii. How coded
        iii. Themes identified
        iv. Description with evidence
        v. Triangulation
        vi. Trustworthiness

VI. Challenges and Conclusions

**Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations** – NOTE: This is the conclusions section where the candidate discusses the findings from the study based on the analysis of the data. It is not a restatement of the results of the intervention cycles; rather, it goes deeper to understand the impact and implications of the study. As the researcher, you are making meaning of the work for the reader through your lens. You cannot draw conclusions not supported by the findings, but you may make some limited speculations.

The elements listed below are generally included in Chapter 5 of the dissertation.

I. Improvement Science – how did this study impact/change the problem of practice in the context?

II. Discussion of Intervention 1 Results

III. Discussion of Intervention 2 Results

IV. Discussion of how the theory of action functioned to contribute to the results; discussion of the theoretical and/or conceptual framework(s) including specifically adaptive leadership

V. Implications and next steps for further interventions related to this problem of practice in the same context

VI. Equity Implications: As in Chapter One above, WKU doctoral students are encouraged to consider the equity implications of their study – that is, how do these the findings affect student or other stakeholder groups have who been historically marginalized or under-served?

VII. Limitations

VIII. Recommendations
    a. Recommendations for practitioners based on the study's results
    b. Leadership implications of the study, connected to leadership theory and research
    c. Recommendations and implications for researchers interested in exploring this topic further

IX. Final Conclusions

## Appendix B: Course Sequence by Semester for Fall 2023 Cohort

The dissertation-in-practice is meant to be completed as the doctoral student moves with their cohort through a sequence of courses designed to enhance their leadership skills and self-awareness, develop research knowledge and inquiry skills, and carry out Improvement Science research. The general plan for when various components of the dissertation-in-practice are completed relative to the sequence of courses in the program is as follows. Colors indicate courses completed for various components of the program: green for the leadership core, yellow for Improvement Science courses, blue for the research sequence, and gray for professional specialization electives.

| Term | Semester | Courses | Selected Topics | Dissertation Components |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Fall 2023<br>6 hrs | EDLD 702: Doctoral Program Orientation | Program Overview<br><br>Habits and Dispositions of Successful Doc Students<br><br>Academic Writing Skills<br><br>Intro to APA<br><br>Intro to leadership theories | Identify Problem of Practice |
| | | EDLD 794: Seminar in Improvement Science | Intro to Improvement Science and problems of practice<br><br>“The Scholar Practitioner”<br><br>Intro to reading research/conducting searches | |
| 2 | Spring 2024<br>6 hrs | EDLD 710: Leadership Theory & Ethics | Intro to adaptive leadership<br><br>Classical approaches to leadership<br><br>Leadership ethics | Clarify Problem of Practice<br><br>Draft partial Intro (Ch 1) |
| | | EDLD 712: Research Methods and | Intro stats<br><br>Calculating simple stats | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Design for Educational Leaders | Research/stats terminology<br><br>Intro to qual perspectives<br><br>Refinement of problems of practice | |
| 3 | Summer 2024<br>6 hrs | EDFN 744: Seminar in Advanced Research Methods | Intermediate stats<br><br>Qual methods<br><br>Conducting and writing lit review | Chair assigned<br><br>Lit Review (Ch 2)<br><br>Revisions to Ch 1 |
| | | EDLD 720: Individual & Group Issues in Leadership OR EDFN 726: Change Theory & Practice | Adaptive leadership and organizational change; linkages to improvement science | |
| 4 | Fall 2024<br>6 hrs | EDLD 722: Measurement & Survey Methods for Educational Leaders | Survey design<br><br>Qual methods design<br><br>Designing root cause analysis | Rest of committee assigned<br><br>Design Root Cause Analysis (1st part of Ch 2)<br><br>Submit IRB |
| | | EDLD 730: Leading the Organization | Systems-level leadership; linkages to improvement science | |
| 5 | Spring 2025<br>6 hrs | EDFN 744: Seminar in Advanced Research Methods (Part II) | Survey data analysis and reporting<br><br>Qual data analysis and reporting<br><br>Fundamentals of Intervention design | Deploy Root Cause Analysis (Ch 2)<br><br>Revisions to Ch 1 |
| | | EDLD 798: Doctoral Program Internship | Implementing RCA, analyzing data, writing up results | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Summer 2025<br>6 hrs | EDLD 797: Dissertation Seminar | Design intervention #1 based on results of root cause analysis | Intervention Planning (first part of Ch 3)<br><br>Update IRB if needed<br><br>Admission to candidacy |
| | | Elective | | |
| 7 | Fall 2025<br>6 hrs | EDLD 798: Doctoral Program Internship | Implement Intervention #1, analyze data, writing up results | Intervention #1 (Ch 3)<br><br>Revisions to Ch 1 |
| | | Elective | | |
| 8 | Spring 2026 | EDLD 799: Dissertation Research (1-3 hrs) | Implement Intervention #2, analyzing data, writing up results | Approval of Ch 3<br><br>Intervention #2 (Ch 4) |
| | | Elective | | |
| 9 | Summer 2026 | EDLD 799: Dissertation Research (1-3 hrs) | Writing up conclusions, implications, connections to lit, recommendations for future researchers | Approval of Ch 4<br>Draft Conclusions (Ch 5) |
| | | Elective | | |
| 10 | Fall 2026 | EDLD 799: Dissertation Research (1-3 hrs) | Preparing manuscript for defense | Approval of Ch 5<br><br>Defend dissertation |
| | | Elective | | |

## Appendix C: Ed.D. Program Faculty

**Ed.D. Program Office: Gary Ransdell Hall, Third Floor. Rm 3087, 270-745-3061**

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