This course supports the assessment for Theoretical Reasoning and Problem Solving. The course covers 1 competency and represents 9 competency units.

Introduction

This course is aligned to the SCA1 performance assessment. There are two other courses in this domain that are connected to this course—SSA1 Annotated Bibliography, and SDA1 Presentation. Be sure to review the course of study and performance assessments for both those assessments as you begin working on this course.

Overview

Theoretical reasoning and problem solving involves a review of current educational theory and practice and then a critical thinking process to create a paper that represents a personal vision for the future of education.

Getting Started

Welcome to Theoretical Reasoning and Problem Solving! In this course, you will write a vision paper about a current issue in education. By reviewing a number of articles, websites, and other sources, you will learn skills to identify the focus for your paper and develop a thesis statement. Then, using the annotated bibliography you developed in Educational Theory Synthesis and Evaluation, you will focus on how that research relates to your chosen topic and create an outline for your paper. Finally, you will apply what you learn about presenting a detached, balanced view of the evidence you have gathered from your research.

It’s important to remember that writing a research paper involves following a process and requires time to implement each step. Throughout this course there are a number of writing assignments that will help you practice each step, apply what you are learning, and prepare you to write your final paper.

Welcome Video

Watch the following video for an introduction to this course:

Note: To download this video, right-click the following link and choose "Save as...": [download video].

Competencies

This course provides guidance to help you demonstrate the following competency:

- **Competency 608.4.1: Research Paper**
  The graduate will demonstrate the ability to analyze and synthesize concepts and ideas from a variety of sources into a written vision of the purpose and structure of schools of the future.

Course Instructor Assistance
As you prepare to demonstrate competency in this subject, remember that course instructors stand ready to help you reach your educational goals. As subject matter experts, mentors enjoy and take pride in helping students become reflective learners, problem solvers, and critical thinkers. Course instructors are excited to hear from you and eager to work with you.

Successful students report that working with a course instructor is the key to their success. Course instructors are able to share tips on approaches, tools, and skills that can help you apply the content you're studying. They also provide guidance in assessment preparation strategies and troubleshoot areas of deficiency. Even if things don't work out on your first try, course instructors act as a support system to guide you through the revision process. You should expect to work with course instructors for the duration of your coursework, so you are welcome to contact them as soon as you begin. Course instructors are fully committed to your success!

**Preparing for Success**

The information in this section is provided to detail the resources available for you to use as you complete this course.

**Learning Resources**

The learning resources listed in this section are required to complete the activities in this course.

**MindEdge**

As you work through this course, you will find links to the learning resource in the activities for each content area. As you come upon these activities, you simply need to click on the link provided and you will be taken to the MindEdge Learning Resource Modules.

**Other Learning Resources**

You will use the following learning resource for this course.

**APA Formatting With Purdue OWL**

Successful completion of this course requires an understanding and application of proper APA formatting. Please review the [Purdue OWL APA Formatting and Style Guide](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/7th_edition.html) for formatting guidelines and solutions for a range of citation types. If you find yourself in need of additional information on APA formatting, you are welcome to purchase a copy of the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* at your own expense.

**Pacing Guide**

This pacing guide suggests a weekly structure to pace your completion of learning activities. It is provided as a suggestion and does not represent a mandatory schedule. Follow the pacing guide carefully to complete the course in the suggested timeframe.

**Week 1:**

- Learning Resources
- Current Issues in Education
Week 2:

- Research Education Theory, Trends, and Practices
- Choose a Research Focus

Week 3:

- Research Educational Theory, Trends, and Practices

Week 4:

- Research the topic

Week 5:

- Create an Outline

Week 6:

- Create the Vision Paper

Week 7:

- Complete the Vision Paper

Week 8:

- Edit and submit paper

**Cohorts**

Please join us for our cohort offerings! You can sign up for as many cohort opportunities as you like. A cohort provides students an opportunity to work on application of the concepts and theories they are learning in this course. For each cohort, you will prepare in advance by working through a particular section of the course of study, and then in the live sessions we provide students with an opportunity to process the information, ask questions, share ideas and examples, and work through sample questions or scenarios to get a better understanding of the material.

**BAES Calendar**

[Live Events Calendar](#). This calendar includes all of our live cohort and webinar offerings for SDA1 and other BAES courses. Students can view schedules, and find links to sign-up for each cohort. Webinars do not require any sign-up—just drop in when you are able to attend. Please click on any of the individual offerings to learn more about them. The schedule rotates monthly.

**Contact a Mentor**

Use our booking page to find time to meet with a course instructor. Course instructors work
varied schedules, and there are appointments available 7 days a week.

Schedule an appointment with a course instructor

**Theoretical Reasoning and Problem Solving: Current Issues in Education**

This section includes a review of some current issues in education and a process to assist you in identifying a research focus for your vision papers. In order to develop a vision of education for the future, it is important to understand educational trends, practices, and theories of the past.

**Current Issues in Education**

In this section, you will review a number of articles, websites, and other sources that address current issues in education; relevant legislation for K–12 education, and research that has been done on current and future trends; diversity in education; and different points of view. You will begin to identify an area of focus for your vision paper and start to outline areas you plan to research further.

**Review Gallop Poll Survey Results**

Access the latest version of the following, and compare your own opinions to the national results:

- [PDK/Gallup Poll](https://www.pdkintl.org)

**Discuss** your reaction in the Course Chatter and title it "Gallup Poll." Look at and respond to the posts of others.

**Review "Every Student Succeeds Act" Documentation**

**Review** the following website:

- [Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ese/essa/index.html)

**Access the Current Status of Our Educational System**

Write a brief (approximately one page), informal essay that states both the successes and current issues that face U.S. schools, as you understand them.

For this activity, it is not necessary for you to do further research or cite additional resources, although you may cite other available resources as appropriate.

**Brainstorm Vision Paper Topic Ideas**

Brainstorm a list of potential topic ideas. Add notes or write a few sentences to further define each topic idea.

**Focus on Your Topic**
Write a brief (approximately three pages), informal essay that states your current ideas about the purpose and structure of schools of the future. Brainstorm your initial thoughts, and write a brief essay as a vision for schools of the future that include at least five of the following aspects:

- teachers and standards
- high stakes assessment/standards
- curriculum/instruction
- methodology
- technology
- bilingual/ESL
- special education
- public policy
- diversity and inclusion

**Theoretical Reasoning and Problem Solving-Choosing a Research Focus**

How do you develop a thesis statement? You will create a thesis statement for your vision paper and begin exploring and reviewing relevant information from other sources.

**Choosing a Research Focus**

What will you focus on as you consider narrowing your topic to describe your vision of education for the future? What are the pressing issues facing US educators today? In this section, you will choose a focus for your vision paper.

**Creating a Thesis/Problem Statement**

Read this article on [Formulating Problem Statements](#)

Watch this video on creating a problem statement

- Problem statement/open-ended nature of the problem

Use your preliminary research, and revise or rewrite your informal essay that identifies both the successes and the current issues facing U.S. schools, as you understand them.

**Research Paper Outline form**

As you begin to develop your topic and problem statement for this paper, and flesh out your ideas, use this form to help organize and structure your paper:

- [Educational Studies Reasoning and Problem-Solving Help Sheet](#)

**Discuss Your Research Focus**

What is your primary focus for education? What do you think is most important? Share your vision for the future of education in the Course Chatter, and title it "Vision for the Future of Education." Comment on the views expressed by other students.

**Explore Your Research Focus**
Review your notes regarding the sources you have identified at this point in your work. Respond to the following questions (from half a page to one page response each):

- Do you think it is possible to know for sure whether your vision is possible?
- How is it possible that there are differences of opinion about the future of education?
- If you compare your vision of the future with another, how do you decide which vision is feasible?

**Theoretical Reasoning and Problem Solving - Reviewing and Interpreting the Evidence**

How is the evidence that supports your topic interpreted? You will review and begin to interpret the evidence you have found related to your research focus and look at biases and assumptions related to that topic.

**Researching the Topic**

How is the information, which was obtained through research, analyzed and compiled for presentation? In this section, you will begin to review, analyze, and synthesize the information gathered through the annotated bibliography work and specifically focus on how that research relates to your chosen topic for your vision paper.

**Review of Research**

**Review** the sources you identified for the annotated bibliography and your notes or papers for the books you read in the Educational Theory and Analysis: Educational Thought Seminar Course.

**Write** down any issues, concerns, or conflicts that impact your vision for the future of education.

**Identify two different Perspectives**

For each aspect section in your paper you will need to identify at least two different perspectives or approaches to addressing the problem you have identified, in the future.

Watch this video on creating different perspectives:

- [Different Perspectives or Approaches](#)

Read this story to help understand how to identify perspectives:

- [The Blind Men and the Elephant](#)

**Reviewing the Evidence**

**Review** this [document from the Victoria Transport Policy Institute](#) website on evaluating research.

**List** five or six key ideas of your vision. What references/authors support each of the key ideas? What evidence exists of opposing views?
**Summarize** the reasons and evidence of one or more authors used to support your vision in each category. Summarize the reasons and evidence of one or more authors who hold an opposing view to your vision.

**Bias and Assumptions**

Read this article on Bias and Assumptions

**Complete** MindEdge Module 4: Identifying Assumptions, Biases and Common Fallacies

The following are some questions you may want to ask yourself as you examine your own assumptions and biases:

- How do you know what you know?
- What and who has influenced your thinking about teaching and learning?
- Who should be educated?
- Where does education happen?
- What is the goal of education?

Post your thoughts about these questions in the Course Chatter, and title it "Bias and Assumptions." Respond to at least one posting of another student.

**Response to Review of Bias and Assumptions**

Write at least one page that explains assumptions and/or biases that are embedded in your current vision for the future of education.

Identify at least two of your own initial biases and/or assumptions, and explain how your initial biases and/or assumptions affected what you wrote.

**Interpreting Research Data**

Complete MindEdge Module 5: Examining the Evidence

Identify three or four important pieces of research data that support your vision but could be interpreted in different ways. Write one page discussing how that evidence can be interpreted in at least two different ways or be used to support at least two different points of view.

Share your views with others in the Course Chatter, and title it "Interpreting Research Data." Comment on at least two other student postings.

**Connections Between the Aspects**

Watch this video on Connections Between the Aspects

Identify ways in which the different discussions in each aspect section connect to or have an influence on other aspects included in your paper. Use the outline form you started at the beginning of the course to flesh out your ideas.

**Theoretical Reasoning and Problem Solving-Creating an**
Outline

What is the purpose of an outline, and how is one developed to help organize your paper? You will create an outline for your vision paper.

Creating an Outline

How does your review of the research material synthesize into an outline of your paper? In this section, you will review, analyze, and synthesize the information gathered through the annotated bibliography work and use it to create an outline that specifically focuses on how that research relates to the chosen topic for the vision paper.

Create an Outline

Create an outline that includes main ideas for the purpose and structure of schools of the future, your primary ideas for your vision, and main conflicts or problems to address. Use the outline form you started at the beginning of the course as a guide.

SCA1 Performance Assessment

Review the instructions for SCA1: Task 1

Expand the Outline

Review the TaskStream instructions for clarification on aspects to include in the paper. Include these in your outline, and begin to plan out each section. Use the following websites in this activity for additional information on educational resources.

- U.S. Department of Education Site Map
- National Educational Technology Standards
- National Association of Bilingual Education

For each aspect of the outline, list some of the points you intend to cover, and list references that you will be citing in this area to support your vision. Provide supporting points and arguments as well as a representation of opposing views.

Theoretical Reasoning and Problem Solving: Writing the Vision Paper, Part 1

How do you create your paper's first draft? You will synthesize the information you have researched and reviewed and start writing your vision paper.

Creating the Vision Paper

What are the elements of creating a first draft of your paper? In this section, you will begin to write a first draft of your vision paper.

Write the Vision Paper

You are ready to start writing your vision paper. This paper will be posted in TaskStream as the SCA1 assessment (Task 1). As you work with your outline, begin to develop each section. Consider the instructions below as you write your paper.
Cite all references appropriately in the body of the paper according to APA style.
Include the references as cited in the text of your paper.
Write the paper using APA style.

Consider all of your work on the paper up to this point. Build on those ideas, and write a research/vision paper, at least 20 double-spaced pages in 12-point font, that effectively communicates your current thinking about the future of education in the United States.

Review this Graphic Organizer of the Research Paper, to get a visual image of how the various elements come together in the final paper.

Introduction

Effectively communicate your current thinking about the future of education in the United States. Construct a thesis/problem statement that gives your paper focus and direction and identifies the open-ended problem to be addressed in the body of the work.

Balanced View of Evidence

Present a detached, balanced view of the evidence for the future of education from literature you have read. Present evidence from at least five of the factors below.

- teachers and standards
- high stakes assessments
- curriculum/instruction
- methodology
- technology
- bilingual/ELL
- special education
- public policy
- diversity and inclusion

You laid the groundwork for this in your earlier work.

Understanding the Aspects

Below are links to resources that may help to clarify the context of the aspect sections that are part of the SCA1 paper:

- Teachers and Standards
- High Stakes Assessments
- Curriculum/Instruction
- Methodology
- Technology
- Bilingual/ELL
- LEP Partnerships
- Special Education
- Public Policy
- Diversity and Inclusion
Different Points of View

Present at least two different perspectives on at least five of the influencing factors outlined in the "Balanced View of Evidence" activity in this section.

Theoretical Reasoning and Problem Solving: Writing the Vision Paper, Part 2

You will continue developing and completing the first draft of your vision paper.

Creating the Vision Paper

In this section, you will complete the first draft of your vision paper.

Begin Writing the Vision Paper

How do you organize your paper to respond to the problem presented in your introduction? Organize your paper so that it responds to the complexities of the open-ended problem. Explore the complexities of the open-ended problem identified in the introduction. Provide clear and ordered discussion of the problem and its implications for the future of education. Discuss connections between at least five of the following factors:

- teachers and standards
- high stakes assessments
- curriculum/instruction
- methodology
- technology
- bilingual/ELL education
- special education
- public policy
- diversity and inclusion

Explain how those factors will have an influence on education in the future.

Interpret the Evidence or Solutions

Interpret the evidence or solutions qualitatively by discussing the assumptions, quality of the evidence, and alternative objectives. Use a wide range of carefully evaluated, relevant information. Use evidence to reason logically within your given perspective on the open-ended problem. Remember that there is usually not only one correct answer to open-ended problems.

Identify your Proposed Solution

Watch this video on identifying your Proposed Solution to the problem

Now that you have reviewed the evidence and differing perspectives on the problem and the aspects connected to it, formulate your personal perspective on what the best solution might be.

Address Potential Criticisms

Watch this video on how to identify Potential Criticisms of your proposed solution. The video
explains what this section of the paper should include based on the task directions and rubric guidelines.

Review this website on identifying potential criticisms of your proposed solution to see examples of how to create a discussion of potential criticisms for your paper.

Address the potential criticisms of your vision. Logically lead your readers to your conclusion while recognizing that there may be multiple answers to the open-ended problem. Remember to proofread your essay before submitting it for review. Include a separate reference list at the end of the paper, also cited in APA style. This list of references is not counted as part of the 20–30 pages of the paper.

Theoretical Reasoning and Problem Solving: Reviewing the Vision Paper

How do you review and revise your first draft? In this section you will review and edit your vision paper and complete the final draft.

Completing the Vision Paper

What is the process of reviewing the first draft? What should be the considerations of that review? In this section, you will edit and complete a final draft of the vision paper.

Review the First Draft

Read what you have written for the first draft, and begin to edit your writing. Try to create clear transitions between sections. Use section headings if appropriate.

How has your thinking changed as a result of researching and writing your first draft? Has your vision changed? Post your responses in the Course Chatter, and title it "Evolving Vision." Comment on the posting of at least one other student.

Polish the Draft Paper

Now that the body of your paper is in draft form, begin to write or rewrite the introduction and conclusion to reflect any changes in your thoughts. Remember that your ideas should be introduced in general in the beginning of your paper and summarized in the conclusion. Ensure that the introduction and conclusion are consistent with the ideas presented in the body.

Be sure that no more than 30% of your paper is made up of direct quotes. The majority of this work should be your own ideas or your understanding (paraphrased) of other ideas. All quotes and paraphrased material must be appropriately cited in the text of the paper and included in the reference list.

Final Editing and Posting of the Vision Paper: SCA1 Task

Read your paper from start to finish, and make additional changes and edits as needed. Look for clear transitions from section to section.

Read the TaskStream instructions for the research paper to ensure that you have included
everything that is required for this assessment. Check to make sure you have at least five of the required aspects in your paper and that you have sufficient outside sources for supporting and dissenting opinions.

Follow the task directions to post your final work for the following task:

- SCA1: Task

**Final Steps**

Congratulations on completing the activities in this course! This course has prepared you to complete the assessments associated with this course.