

**MDDE 602 Research Methods in Distance Education
Assignment One Evaluation
Spring 2008**

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Directions

Doing research in education requires consideration of many complex factors. The first few weeks of this course cover the components of research activity and the different ways of approaching research. Assignment 1 is an opportunity to compare and evaluate multiple perspectives and data collection opportunities. In a short essay of argument,

- present your case for research in distance education in favor of a particular way of doing research. For example, debate the use of one knowledge paradigm over another. Or you could consider one research method over another or the benefit of basic versus applied research.

To prepare for this writing, review all reading and the conference discussion in Conference #2. Consider your reaction to the way things are done in research. What do you consider would most benefit the field? Why?

- From this experience, identify a position regarding one aspect of the research process. In a short essay of approximately 1200 - 1500 words (4-6 double-spaced pages), present your case. Include references to material used with appropriate style for quotes and citations.

Callouts such as this one are inserted by me to link the content in this assignment to corresponding competencies. Extended commentaries and reflections can be found on the e-portfolio page where this file was downloaded from.

5.8. Critically analyze the issues and discuss the wider implications affecting the use of information.

4.1. Write clearly and in a style appropriate to purpose (e.g. assignments, essays, published documents, and theses).

TOPIC	MARKS	COMMENTS
Part 1 Overview of research assumptions Knowledge & Theory Construction Practical application Types of data generated Validity and reliability	10/10	You come on strong and confident – excellent. Unique and timely discussion for distance education. If you wish to study mixed methodology I recommend John W Creswell's Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, 2 nd ed (2003) and Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research by John W Creswell and Vicki Plano Clark (2007). Excellent books and easy reads. Both are available from Sage. You cover reliability and validity strategies and procedures very well. Study further into the rigor of authenticity and dependability involving triangulation, internal audits, and other means of ensuring accuracy of reporting the voices of study participants in qualitative data. Neuman touches on this. It is essential for the researcher to know these like second nature.
Presentation and Mechanics	5/5	You're a very good writer, Serhat. Your discourse flows smoothly and is easy to read. The illustrations are a good addition.
TOTAL	15/15	Nicely done, Serhat! Wouldn't it be interesting if someone were to study student motivations and actually get into their heads to learn what the triggers are. Is there a particular instructor involved? A particular class? A particular instructor in a certain class with a particular teaching style? One could easily get tangled up in the possibilities. Fun!

Comment [A1]: Received by email on Jun 05, 2008

To write it, it took three months; to conceive it - three minutes;
to collect the data in it - all my life. *F. Scott Fitzgerald*

Grading Clarification

<http://cde.athabascau.ca/mdde/064Spring/602/grading.htm>

The marking system generally used in MDDE courses is as shown below. As those of you who are teachers or trainers know, marking is not an exact science. The overall impact of a piece of writing is more than a simple sum of its parts. As in most areas of life (other than geometry), the whole is equal to the sum of the parts, plus the pattern of organization. If you doubt this, look at an all-star athletic team or the disassembled parts of an automobile. Everything is there, but the result just doesn't work if it isn't assembled correctly.

A+ (95-100)	Outstanding. Meets all requirements of the assignment fully. Could be published (i.e., put forward and studied as an excellent example of the assignment.)
A (90-94)	Excellent. Meets the major requirements of the assignment fully. Would benefit from small changes, especially in structure or mechanics.
A- (85-89)	Very good. Meets most of the major requirements well. Would benefit from some changes in structure, or some minor content changes.
B+ (80-84)	Good. Meets most of the major requirements fairly well. Would benefit from changes in content, or relatively significant structural changes.
B (75-79)	Good. Meets most of the major requirements adequately, but would definitely benefit from some changes in content or structure.
B- (70-74)	Fair. Exceeds the minimum requirements but lacks significant content or has considerable structural problems.
C+ (66-69)	Minimally acceptable. Serious, definite deficiencies or missing elements. Should probably be rewritten, with guidance from the instructor (you should seek this, if it is not offered).

Please note: The above are general criteria for the marking of individual assignments. The requirements for final course marks are provided below:

In core courses, the lowest acceptable grade is B-. Students who receive a grade lower than B-, or receive more than one grade of B- or lower, may be required to withdraw from the program.

In elective courses, the lowest acceptable grade is C+. Students who receive a grade lower than C+, or receive more than one grade of C+ or lower, may be required to withdraw from the program.

The marking criteria generally shared by MDE instructors are content, organization, and mechanics. Emphasis on each of these is as described below:

- **Content** (70%) - refers to the treatment of the topic conceptually and analytically. This is the substance, the what of the paper: what you had to say about the topic, what you presented in defense of your position, and what your analysis revealed about thought processes and grasp of the material you grappled with.
- **Organization** (20%) - is the way your essay is arrayed and presented, including both the overall organization and the arrangement of the sub-parts. We look for a relevant title and subheadings; introductory material, where needed; summaries, where appropriate; connective and transitional links; and what used to be called 'rhetoric': the skillful arrangement of the pieces for maximum persuasive impact on the reader. One can think of this as the confidence an effective writer manages to convey that the work is moving in a promising direction, from sound and identifiable origins, and will arrive at its destination in good order and in a timely manner.
- **Mechanics** (10%). In our day of spell checkers, this consists mostly the basics of correct sentence structure and punctuation, effective and sensitive word choice and usage, and paragraph organization. (A word of advice: if you still have trouble in these areas, work on them! It is not too late to master these basics, and mastery of basic communication and writing skills is a must for graduate students. Some of us ex-English teachers will be happy to help, privately and confidentially. Ask.)