

Fall 2019 Semester Reflection

The Fall 2019 semester was largely a positive experience for me, as my classes offered content that I was truly interested in, whether that be leadership information or researching for my future dissertation topic. The semester provided the structure I needed in my life; I had just moved towns and started at a new college. Continuing with my degree gave me some consistency among all the newness in my life. I am learning that the courses I enjoy most are the ones that allow me to do research. This semester was no exception. Educational Leadership in the 21st Century (EDLD 9531) was one of the classes I have enjoyed most thus far in the doctoral program. The course entailed learning not only leadership theories and how they can be applied to educational settings, but also explored leadership in the pop culture world. This course took a very practical approach to the topic of leadership as it relates to both the P-12 and higher education settings. I was able to directly apply the readings and topics to my work with my center's student leadership team. I have since started a book club on a leadership text, incorporating many of the theories I learned in this course. However, the class I enjoyed most this semester was Research Seminar I with Dr. McBrayer.

Research Seminar 1 had research and writing days and allowed me to develop my research questions and literature review a lot. The class started with our topics; all the while being encouraged that this may change during the semester. During this semester and the subsequent course work, I was able to make significant gains in what I hope will be my literature review for my dissertation. From there, we did a tour of the library, something I definitely wouldn't have done on my own because of the online nature of the program. This tour helped me to find new ways to search for studies relating to the peer tutoring experience. I even learned how to have references delivered to my work library or my home address! I appreciated Dr. McBrayer's commitment to research, which encouraged me to seek out a possible publication for my study from our Field Based Research course (which I have since had accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal). We concluded the class with an assignment that initially made me very uncomfortable, the 3-minute thesis. In the end, this was great practice for being able to verbalize my topic in 3 minutes. Overall, this semester was exactly what I needed during this time in my career.