Dissertation Topics for Learners in P-12 Leadership and Licensure Programs of Study

(LEA, C&I, SPED)

Dissertation Topics

Dissertation Topics in LEA, C&I, and SPED must be related to the field of P-12 Education Leadership, public, charter or private, focused on school administration, curriculum and instruction and/or special education leadership.

1. Leadership and Administration (LEA) - This program is designed to prepare candidates to meet the growing leadership challenges of the 21st century P–12 school. Curricular experiences allow candidates to explore ideas, confront educational issues, consider alternatives, create change, make decisions, and apply knowledge and skills in practical situations. Therefore, LEA Learners should seek dissertation topics within the PK-12 educational arena to include public, private or charter schools, with a leadership emphasis focused on aspects of learning and leading continuous school improvement efforts.

2. Curriculum and Instruction Leadership - Curriculum and Instruction programs are designed for teachers and administrators interested in leadership careers as building or district-level administrators, or as teacher-leaders guiding curriculum and instructional improvement initiatives within the P-12 school environment. Therefore, learners should select dissertation topics with a leadership emphasis focused on current theory and
research in curriculum design, instructional models, and assessment strategies focused on increasing student achievement.

3. Special Education Leadership (SPED) - The Special Education Leadership program is designed to prepare teachers and administrators for leadership positions to meet the growing and challenging demands of the 21st century P–12 school within the Special Education environment. Curricular experiences allow learners to explore ideas, confront educational issues, consider alternatives, create change, make decisions, and apply knowledge and skills in practical situations. As a result, learners should find dissertation topics focused on learning and leading in the P-12 Special Education school environment to facilitate continuous school improvement.

**Meeting Scientific Merit Standards**

Dissertation Topics for the P-12 Leadership and Licensure Programs should advance the scientific knowledge base in the field by meeting one or more of these four criteria:

A. The study should address something that is not known or has not been studied before.

B. The study should be new or different from other studies in some way.

C. The study should extend prior research on the topic in some way.

**Validation Questions to Ask When Selecting a Dissertation Topic**

When contemplating topics for dissertations in LEA, C&I or SPED Specializations learners should consider the following questions:

1. Will the results of the research be useful to the Specialization?
2. Is the study about variables that are of interest to P-12 School Leadership?

3. Will the study add to the P-12 School Leadership body of knowledge?

4. Does it have a connection to P-12 School Leadership knowledge base?

**Potential Dissertation Topics**

Please Note: Most of the topics below are very wide and may be not suitable as a specific research topic but they can be used as overarching areas from which a research topic might be derived.

- 21st Century Skills
- School Finance
- School Law Issues
- Supervision and Evaluation Issues
- Data Driven Decision Making
- Differentiated Instruction
- School Culture/Climate
- Gifted and Talented Education
- Reading Literacy
- Mathematics Literacy
- Assessment and Grading
- Effective Teaching and Leading
- School Safety
- Brain-Based Learning
- Reading Strategies Across the Content Areas
- Writing Strategies Across the Content Areas
• English Language Learners
• Curriculum Content Standards
• Building Academic Vocabulary
• Inclusion and Special Education
• Student Mentoring
• Character Education
• Integrated Curriculum
• Understanding By Design
• Classroom Management
• Multicultural Education
• What Works in Schools
• Common Core
• Multiple Intelligences
• Whole Child
• Democratic Education
• Response to Intervention (RTI)
• Supervision and Instructional Leadership
• School Improvement (Input/Output)
• Professional Development/Practice/Effect on Learning/ Achievement
• Measuring Teacher Effectiveness
• Performance-Based Evaluation
• Leadership Style and School Improvement
• First-Year Principals in Urban School Districts:
**Additional Sources of Potential Dissertation Topics**

Additional Dissertation Topics within the P-12 Leadership and Licensure Specializations might be found on one of the following national educational associations web sites.

1. Capella Dissertations – Capella Library


2. Featured Research Topics According to the ASCD

   [http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic.aspx](http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic.aspx)

3. Top Ten Issues in Education for 2012 According to the Georgia DOE


4. School Leadership Research Topics According to the Wallace Foundations

   [http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/Pages/default.aspx)

5. Primary Topics in Educational Research According to Ed Weekly

   [http://www.edweek.org/topics/research/index.html](http://www.edweek.org/topics/research/index.html)

6. Educational Topics of Interest According to the NASSP

   [http://www.nassp.org/Knowledge-Center/Topics-of-Interest](http://www.nassp.org/Knowledge-Center/Topics-of-Interest)

7. Hot Topics in Education According to the NASEP

   [http://www.naesp.org/quick-links](http://www.naesp.org/quick-links)

8. Recent Research By Educational Students by UNC-G
P-12 LLP Faculty Who Conduct Reviews

- Dr. Melissa McIntyre, Specialization Faculty Chair
  (Melissa.mcintyre@capella.edu)
- Dr. Jackson “Skot” Beazley, Faculty Lead for Comps and Dissertations
  (Jackson.Beazley@Capella.edu)
- Dr. Doug Dewitt, Core Faculty
  (Douglas.Dewitt@Capella.edu)
- Dr. Ted Ray, Faculty Lead for LEA
  (Ted.Ray@Capella.edu)
- Dr. Carol Pasanen, Faculty Lead for SPED
  (Carol.Pasanen@Capella.edu)
- Dr. Phil Corkill, Core Faculty
  (Phil.Corkill@Capella.edu)

References and Additional Resources

These publications may be useful to learners seeking additional guidance:


