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Welcome to the Doctoral Support Center for Writing & Research Excellence (DSC)! As you browse this handbook, I hope you will be excited about the myriad of services available to doctoral students the DSC provides. Services are offered online and face to face to meet the needs of all doctoral students in the College of Education. Primarily, the writing coaches provide wide-ranging support with writing and research tasks culminating in the dissertation. The DSC also offers a host of enrichment activities that include a monthly Brown Bag Lecture Series, writing and data rallies, writing retreats, newsletters, and writing groups. The comprehensive nature of these services provides a safety net for doctoral students who often feel overwhelmed and isolated in their pursuit of a doctoral degree. I encourage you to take advantage of these services early and often throughout your doctoral program. The DSC was created for your success!

Dr. Mellinee Lesley
ABOUT THE DOCTORAL SUPPORT CENTER FOR WRITING & RESEARCH EXCELLENCE
About the Doctoral Support Center for Writing & Research Excellence

The Doctoral Support Center for Writing & Research Excellence (DSC) was created in the fall of 2014 as an innovative solution to address the burgeoning demands of academic writing support for doctoral students in the College of Education at Texas Tech University (TTU-COE). This support is offered online and face-to-face to meet the needs of all doctoral students. The DSC offers comprehensive support with academic writing tasks leading up to the dissertation that include assignments for coursework, proposals for human research protection, dissertation proposals, and dissertations. The DSC also provides motivational support for students through activities such as writing workshops and rallies. Essentially, the DSC provides “wrap-around” support for students from start to finish in their doctoral programs. The primary goal of the DSC is to assist students in the successful attainment of their doctoral degree.

Vision Statement

It is the vision of the DSC to support doctoral students on their quest toward academic excellence and successful completion of quality dissertations. This vision complements the College of Education’s goal of producing the measurably best educators in the United States by providing assistance and services that maximize student success.

Mission

Our mission is to provide exceptional and comprehensive support services that improve doctoral students’ research and writing competencies, thereby enhancing their academic experiences.

Objectives

- Offer the highest quality of support services to TTU-COE doctoral students
- Provide a visible and tangible center dedicated to enhancing TTU-COE doctoral student experiences
- Be recognized by students and faculty as a center for academic excellence
- Serve as the model support center at Texas Tech University with regional and national recognition
- Lead the way in research related to the doctoral support model by presenting at conferences and publishing in appropriate journals
OUR PHILOSOPHY
Our Philosophy

Our philosophy draws from several educational perspectives, including cognitive apprenticeship, social constructivism, and andragogy. We know that scholarship is complex and develops over time, in a recursive and iterative—often refractive—process. Scholarly conversations emerge, unfold, and take shape through dialogic processes. We believe this approach meets students where they are in their scholarly journey. Students may seek our support services at any time in their doctoral work, and we will provide comprehensive support to meet their needs.

Because we are aware that learners construct meaning from experiences and social interactions, our support strives to be task-oriented, justified, and culturally sensitive. We engage with students in various ways to motivate and encourage them in their progress. Some of the ways we engage with students are through one-on-one distance and face-to-face consultations, writing enrichment activities, and workshops. Our support services are best described as organic (relaxed and customized) and holistic (all-inclusive). We invite students to seek our services early in their program and repeatedly in their quest to excel in academic scholarship.

DSC coaches adhere to the following principles:

- Coach students with any writing projects related to academic and professional goals, except those for which assistance is prohibited by their program.
- Offer practical encouragement and constructive criticism.
- Direct doctoral students to additional resources as needed.
- Meet the specific needs the doctoral student has made known, to the best of our ability.

DSC coaches will refrain from:

- Doing the work for a doctoral student or imposing ideas upon a doctoral student.
- Proofreading and editing papers for mechanical and grammatical errors without using track changes or providing a written explanation or having a discussion with the doctoral student.
- Predicting a doctoral student’s grade or the potential outcome of a defense or publication submission, etc.
SERVICES
Services

The primary service offered by the DSC is to read and provide written feedback on eligible student work submitted through the Blackboard interface. In order to expedite turnaround times and serve as many students as possible, DSC coaches will review a maximum of 30 pages per submission. Students are encouraged to revise each draft based on the feedback before resubmitting a request for a subsequent review. While the DSC requests that students identify the range of pages to be reviewed for each submission, the DSC does not limit the number of submissions or draft iterations that students may submit for feedback.

Documents are generally assigned to DSC coaches on a first-in-first-out basis, with turnaround times that fluctuate, depending on the number and type of submissions in the queue. During peak submission times, such as when Graduate School deadlines approach, longer turnaround times may be expected. Students are urged to plan ahead and give the DSC plenty of time to address their concerns. Please note that dissertation drafts are given top priority.

All doctoral students in the TTU-COE are encouraged to use the DSC resources early, often, and entirely throughout their doctoral program. To that end, our coaches will assist students in the following areas.

DSC Service Areas:

- Dissertation Services
- Coursework Services
- Professional Activities Services
- Nota Bene
- Rallies, Retreats, and Enrichment Activities
### Dissertation Services

- Developing sound research methods
- Preparing proposal defense presentation materials
- Completing & navigating IRB processes
- Providing resources and/or consultation on statistical analysis
- Articulating ideas & drafting content for dissertation chapters
- Developing writing & editing skills
- Documenting & citing sources in APA style
- Preparing dissertation defense materials
- Formatting drafts to meet Graduate School requirements

### Professional Activities Services

- Understanding specifications for calls for applicants, manuscripts, or proposals (e.g., grants, research proposals, & fellowships, etc.)
- Understanding audience, purpose, & context of materials to meet the intended needs of the reader(s)
- Preparing academic & professional conference materials
- Preparing proposals for grants, research, & manuscripts
- Preparing full manuscripts for scholarly & professional publication
- Understanding editorial reviewer comments & requested revisions actions

### Coursework Services

- Articulating ideas & drafting content for course assignments
- Developing writing & editing skills
- Documenting & citing sources in APA style
- Formatting drafts for APA style
- Preparing course presentation materials
Not all work is eligible for submission to the DSC. Based upon assignment parameters and the professor's expectations and instructions, some assignments may not be eligible. In addition, the DSC does not provide support for the following:

- Completing any aspect of coursework exams or qualifying exams
- Extensively editing drafts

The student retains complete responsibility for complying with the Student Code of Conduct as it pertains to academic integrity. The DSC adheres to the APA guidelines for ethical and legal standards in publishing.

The DSC coaches assume an instructional role with regard to student work submitted for review. All intellectual property rights remain solely with the student.

Students should be in consistent consultation with their faculty advisors.

### Rallies, Retreats, and Enrichment Activities

In addition to the review of drafts through Blackboard and individual student consultations, the DSC coaches also provide doctoral students with a variety of support activities that cultivate rigorous writing and research communities. Each semester, the DSC will present special events to provide additional support to distance and local doctoral students. Some of the additional activities we provide are:

- Rallies and retreats to support scholarly writing and research
- Virtual Brown Bag Speaker Series focusing on topics of interest to doctoral students in the field of education
- Workshops and tutorials to cultivate skills needed for academic and professional success
- Writing groups and research network forums to build community engagement
Hours of Staff Availability

The administrative offices for the College of Education, including the Doctoral Support Center for Writing & Research Excellence, are open and operational from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and are normally closed on Saturdays, Sundays, and annually established university holidays.

Appointments with DSC coaches may be scheduled outside of normal working hours upon request.

Monday – Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Doctoral Support Center for Writing & Research Excellence
Lubbock, TX 79404-1071
Email: dsc.educ@ttu.edu
Fax Phone: 806-742-2179
REQUEST AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

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Request and Submission Process

Doctoral students in the Texas Tech University College of Education (TTU-COE) who want feedback on their work will be asked to submit their drafts to the designated DSC Blackboard site. Students need not contact the DSC in advance, but may submit their work directly to Blackboard.

Students may email the DSC at dsc.educ@ttu.edu for more information and to request support services for other activities, such as developing project timelines and time management skills, setting goals for research and writing activities, creating a personal motivational agenda, and discussing feedback received on previous submissions. The DSC coaches interact with students through a variety of platforms, such as email, phone, Blackboard, and Skype for Business, as well as face-to-face consultation.

Draft Review Process
The following steps outline the typical draft review process.

Submit drafts through Blackboard
The student submits his or her draft to the DSC through Blackboard.
- Log in to Blackboard and select the course designated as the DSC.
- Choose the appropriate assignment type.
- Follow the instructions provided on the page to upload the file.
- Be sure to specify concerns in the Add Comments field.

The DSC will contact the student to confirm the draft was received and to begin the draft review process.

A writing coach will review and comment on the draft and send feedback to the student for improving the draft. Feedback may be provided through the Track Changes and Comments review features in Microsoft Word, the Comments box in Blackboard, email exchanges, or consultations.

The student will revise the draft, incorporating feedback as he or she sees fit. The student may then submit a revised draft or a different draft for review, thus beginning the process again.
Feedback
Feedback received reflects the recommendations and/or observations of the DSC writing coaches. Our suggestions should not be considered prescriptive, final, exhaustive, and/or comprehensive. In addition, the student’s dissertation advisor has the final authoritative word. Ultimately, the student makes the final writing decisions in consultation with his or her chair and committee.

If requested, and based on coach and student availability, students may schedule a pre-draft and/or post-draft review appointment.

Appointments may be conducted face-to-face, over the phone, or via a web conference.
Accessibility

Texas Tech University provides that all educational and other programs and activities are available to persons with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate. Students, employees, applicants and other individuals with disabilities served by Texas Tech are not segregated, separated or treated differently. For more information, please refer to TTU Operating Policy 10.08, Americans with Disabilities Act.

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to access services provided by the DSC should contact us to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services in order to receive accommodations.

Please note that DSC coaches are not allowed to provide accommodations to any student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: Who can go to the DSC for help?
Any doctoral student within the College of Education who is currently enrolled in a course or 7000/8000 level research hours may seek writing and research assistance from the DSC.

Q: When should I go to the DSC?
Students are encouraged to go to the DSC early and often throughout their doctoral program.

Q: Do I need a referral from my advisor in order to submit a manuscript on Blackboard?
No – Students do not need to be referred by an advisor to obtain research or writing assistance from the DSC. However, some assignment types may require the consent of your instructor.

Q: How often can I submit a course assignment?
There are no restrictions on the number of times you may submit a course assignment with a request for feedback. However, please understand that dissertations in the Blackboard queue will receive top priority.

Q: How long does it take to get feedback back from the DSC?
The turn-around time will depend on many factors, such as the length of your draft, the research and writing stage of your draft, and the scope of the review you request. Longer drafts take longer than shorter drafts. Rough drafts take longer than revised and more polished drafts.

Q: If I submit a draft for a course project or professional project and then someone else submits a dissertation proposal or draft after me, will my draft still get reviewed and feedback provided?
Yes – However, because our first priority is to help students writing their dissertation materials, we may have to bump up drafts in the queue to meet deadlines related to dissertation projects. In most cases, this may mean a minimal delay in returning feedback on course projects and professional projects.

Q: Can I submit my qualifying exam to the DSC for writing assistance?
No – The DSC does not assist students with any aspect of coursework exams or qualifying exams.
Q: If I have a documented disability and need special accommodations, do I need to submit a letter of accommodations to the DSC?
Yes – If the accommodations require us to perform in ways other than our normal business functions, students must submit a letter of accommodations from the TTU Student Disability Services.

Q: Can I submit a draft that is co-authored for feedback?
We can provide feedback on drafts that are co-authored by other TTU-COE students. The DSC coaches do not provide feedback on drafts that are co-authored with TTU faculty or others outside of the COE.

Q: How many documents may I submit at one time?
Students are encouraged to submit one draft at a time. They are further advised to apply the DSC coach’s recommendations to their entire document before submitting a revised version or a new draft for review.

Q: Will DSC staff edit and correct my work?
The DSC coaches will proofread and edit papers for mechanical and grammatical errors by providing a written explanation, track changes, and/or a discussion with the doctoral student. Applying the suggested revisions is always at the discretion of the student.

Q: Can I hire a dissertation coach or editor from the DSC to do full content editing or statistical analyses?
No – DSC coaches cannot provide work for hire to currently enrolled TTU-COE doctoral students.
OUR WRITING COACHES
Our Dissertation Specialists and Writing Coaches

Three Dissertation Specialists and Writing Coaches are available to support doctoral students of the College of Education.

Sonya Sherrod, Ph.D.
Dissertation Specialist and Writing Coach
sonya.e.sherrod@ttu.edu
- Dissertation writing & APA
- Educational theory
- Qualitative research
- Instrument development

Irene Arellano, Ph.D.
Dissertation Specialist and Writing Coach
irene.arellano@ttu.edu
- Dissertation Writing & APA
- Qualitative Research
- Engaged Scholarship/Research
- Experiential Education
- Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Jasmine D. Parker, Ph.D.
Dissertation Specialist and Writing Coach
jasmine.parker@ttu.edu
- APA
- Chicago Manual of Style
- Qualitative Research
- Discourse Analysis
- Narrative Inquiry
- History of Education
- Educational Law, Policy, and Politics
Texas Tech University • College of Education

Doctoral Support Center for Writing & Research Excellence

Email: dsc.educ@ttu.edu
Submit Drafts through Blackboard (http://www.depts.ttu.edu/lms/)
Web Site: https://www.depts.ttu.edu/education/graduate/doctoral-support-center/
Fax Phone: 806-742-2179