

Doctoral Program in Counseling

DOCTORAL RESEARCH GROUPS:

A BRIEF OVERVIEW

**Department of Counselor Education
Florida Atlantic University
Boca Raton, Florida**

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DOCTORAL RESEARCH GROUPS

An important component in the design of the proposed Ph.D. in Counseling is the inclusion of designated Research Groups. The department has identified specific areas of research concentration based on faculty expertise, interest and community needs. These Research Groups involve faculty with specific interest and expertise and doctoral students in a mentoring relationship.

All doctoral students will be expected to meet and work with one of these established Research Groups and eventually develop dissertation research as an extension of the existing focus in the chosen group. Admission to the doctoral program, in part, is determined by a prospective student's prior experience or interest in the focus of one the Research Groups.

These Research Groups serve several important functions for students, the department and faculty, the university, and the state of Florida.

1. Students will be better served by increasing collaboration in research design, evaluation of proposals among students, and through working with a team of faculty and doctoral students on research over the course of their doctoral program.
2. The department will be able to establish itself as a leading research center in several distinct areas thus increasing the program's visibility and strengthening its ability to obtain significant external funding in these areas.
3. The University will benefit because of the increased presence as a research university that produces research in specific areas.
4. The community and the State of Florida will benefit because of our focus on action research and program development/evaluation designed to improve the quality of programs and service to children, families, school and adults.

THE RESEARCH GROUP EXPERIENCE

As noted earlier, all Ph.D. students in this program undertake their dissertation research in one of the department's Research Groups. Students become involved with a Research Groups of their choice early in their doctoral studies. Such early involvement serves to foster mentoring and immerse students in the department's culture of leadership and empirical investigation. Students gain valuable experience as a team member in a Research Group and learn to plan and design research, develop testable hypotheses, choice and design assessment and intervention methods, as well as to collect, analyze and publish study results. Both quantitative and

qualitative methodologies are involved in investigating issues and concerns that are of vital importance to the children, adolescents, couple and families as well as their communities.

CURRENT RESEARCH GROUPS

As of Fall, 2004 faculty in the Department of Counselor Education at Florida Atlantic University are actively involve in one of two Research Groups. Both Research Groups are described in terms of their basic focus, rationale, current and planned studies, and involved faculty. A third Research Group—on optimal human functioning-- is in the planning stage and will likely be operative in Fall, 2006.

CHILD, ADOLESCENT, COUPLE AND FAMILY INTERVENTIONS

Focus: The focus of this research group is to improve physical, social and psychological well-being among children, adolescents, couples and families through empirical investigation of the construct of resilience and the assessment of resilience interventions in clinical and non-clinical settings.

Rationale:

1. Based on faculty interests and previous research.
2. Intervention outcomes are too often are missing in research.
3. Addresses the needs of adolescents and families in South Florida

Studies:

1. Impact of family education intervention on child/adolescent resiliency.**
2. The buffering effect of family on acculturative stress and resiliency.*
3. The impact of increasing family resilience on school achievement and social adjustment.**
4. The Impact of family resilience on disease progression (and coping style) in HIV (chronic diseases) in young adults.**

Faculty: Drs. William Nicoll (Coordinator), Len Sperry, Alex Miranda, Larry Kontosh, Michael Frain, and Paul Peluso

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

Focus: The focus of this research group is to improve the practice of school counseling through developing research-based programs for children and adolescents with an emphasis on enhancing academic and social competence. Of particular interest is the investigation of comprehensive programs that address the academic, social and emotional needs of students and that stress prevention and early intervention.

Rationale: Of all the helping professions, counseling is the one that values the application of the developmental model, i.e., strengths, prevention, and wellness; however, very little outcome research exist on the impact of school counselor led interventions and programs on child and adolescent academic and social performance. Faculty involved in this research group have expertise and interest in the developmental model and in expanding the current research base related to the link between academic, social, and emotional learning.

Studies: The following sample studies under five categories help frame the focus of this research group

1. Development and testing of new programs related to the research group focus

Sample study: The effects of the Student Success Skills Parenting Program on student performance.**

2. The effects of various implementation models related to research group focus

Sample study: The effects of a multi-year approach to implementing the Student Success Skills model on student performance.*

3. The effects of various staff development training models used to implement programs associated with the research group focus.

Sample study: The effects of teacher versus counselor delivery of Ready to Learn on student performance.**

4. The effects of implementing research-based programs on school counselor role and function.

Sample study: The effects on school counselor role and function of implementing and evaluating the impact of the Student Success Skills program on student performance.*

5. The effects of school counselor implemented programs on diverse populations.

Sample study: The effects of the Student Success Skills program on Latino and African American student performance.**

Faculty: Drs. Greg Brigman (Coordinator) and Linda Webb.

* current studies

**planned studies