V. RESEARCH PAPER: CONNECTING THEORY TO PRACTICE. Students are expected to submit a well-written, polished research paper that connects the implemented research study with the theoretical foundation. This section of the portfolio explains and discusses the research study, its implementation, and findings in the context of the theory selected as the foundation for the study. **NO first person is used in the paper.** The paper will usually be about 20+ pages in length and should include the following:

A. **Introduction.** The paper begins with a brief description of the problem. It goes on to include the actual research question(s) posed for the study and introduces the connection between your research study and key aspects of the theory/research that serves as the theoretical framework for the study. This information will come directly from the Theoretical Foundation, part II of the Research Study Portfolio. **The Introduction MUST include at least one citation / reference to a primary text.**

B. **Theoretical Foundation.** This is an extremely important portion of your paper. It should also be the most substantive (and perhaps longest) section of the paper as it offers a synthesis of the reading you did when constructing an understanding of the theory and research used to build your study. If the Theoretical Foundation, Section II of the Research Study Portfolio, has been carefully done, students can basically insert that section of the portfolio into the paper – being sure to adjust tenses and transitions. **This portion of the paper MUST include numerous citations to references listed in the Annotated Bibliography** – as indicated in the directions to the Theoretical Foundation. Make sure that all citations refer to texts included in the Annotated Bibliography. In addition, make sure that you have included relevant and substantive material quoted or paraphrased from primary texts and relevant research studies.

C. **Setting and Participants.** This portion of the paper offers a description of the setting (context) in which you did your research and provides a profile of the children with whom the researcher worked. Describe carefully the location and conditions of the study. Then describe the participants – their ages, genders, grade levels, and any other relevant data. Be sure to avoid using any confidential information in this section that would connect the specific location or specific children to the study. It would be appropriate to include pictures in this section of the paper; however, special consent is required for pictures of children’s faces or pictures of recognizable locations.

D. **Study Method / Procedure.** This portion of the paper offers the specific procedure used to implement the study and collect data. In other words, what did you do? Include in this section any relevant connections between the procedure / method and the theoretical foundation. (Information for this section can come directly from the IRB (and consent letters), the Data and Treatment of Data, Section IV of the Research Study Portfolio, and from the Theoretical Foundation, Section II of the Research Study Portfolio. In writing this section of the paper, be sure to tell the “story” of the encounter with the children. Mention any problems or unusual circumstances that occurred.

E. **Research Findings.** This portion of the paper explains the results of the study based on the data collected during the study and then analyzed. In other words, this section of the paper answers each of the research questions of the study using the results of the data analysis. It includes the graphical representation(s) for each research question that were created for the Data and Data Treatment section of the Research Study Portfolio. In this
section of the paper, it is essential to include and refer to graphic representations of the results.

F. **Implications / Questions.** This section of the paper is as important as the Theoretical Foundation section. Here, the student is expected to discuss the results of the study and what those results mean relevant to the Theoretical Foundation of the study. This part of your paper must be well thought out. It must include implications of your research for education (or psychology or medicine or parenting) and also reflect the researcher’s growth in understanding key aspects of the Theoretical Foundation as well as growth in understanding the growth and development and education of children. This section should also include NEW THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS which have emerged from the study – both those relevant to the theoretical foundation and others that may be connected to other known theories and/or research (from class). In writing this portion of the paper, the student MUST connect implications, insights, and questions with the Theoretical Foundation, citing primary texts, secondary sources, and research. In addition, the student MUST ALSO connect insights gained from the research study with particular aspects of the study (observation data, results, setting, etc.) to demonstrate a clear synthesis of all elements relevant to the research study. The best studies will show evidence of additional reading stimulated by new questions that arose from the results of the study. This section of the paper may include a table/graph or other representation of data in order to make a point. It is important to offer a constant interplay among the theory, the data, and researcher insights. This section of the paper MUST include citations / references to both primary and secondary sources.

G. **Evaluation:** This is an important element of the paper. In this section, the researcher(s) needs to discuss problems encountered during the research study and ways to improve the study. The evaluation should be at least one and no more than two word-processed pages. The research study evaluation MUST address the following: 1) did the research study answer all of the research study questions? 2) did the study results substantiate the hypothesis – or not, 3) what were the strengths and weaknesses of the research study, and 4) what changes would improve the study if it were to be done again. In discussing each point, the student is expected to provide explicit evidence to substantiate responses, citing information from the Theoretical Foundation or information / data gained during the study.

H. **Works Cited:** DO NOT CONFUSE WORKS CITED WITH THE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY, which is a separate element of the Research Study Portfolio. The Works Cited is simply a section of the paper that comes at the very end of the paper. In this section, the student MUST offer a bibliographic list – without annotations -- for all of the authoritative sources cited in the paper. Students should be mindful that the format selected for citing references within the paper must be consistent with the format for providing bibliographic information at the end of the paper.