II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: Students are expected to develop a theoretical foundation for their research study – based on substantive and authoritative information. The Theoretical Foundation portion of the Research Study is designed to provide substantial evidence that the student has selected, collected, recorded, and synthesized critical and authoritative information relevant to the key theorist(s), theory and research upon which the Research Study is framed. The Theoretical Foundation consists of six critical components. Brief descriptions of the requirements are provided with links for additional information relevant to each component.

A. **Introduction.** The Theoretical Foundation begins with an introduction. The introduction must state the purpose of the research study or of the problem driving the research study and include a relevant connection to the work of the key theorist(s) in the field child growth and development whose theory/research will serve as the framework for the study and for investigating and interpreting the data collected during the research study.

1. The introduction is ordinarily a single paragraph that clearly establishes the purpose of the study and the key research questions that drive the investigation.
2. It establishes a theorist and his / her theory along with the most specific concepts that will be investigated.
3. **The Introduction MUST include at least one citation / reference to a primary text.**

B. **Overview of Key Theorist and Theory.** This portion of the Theoretical Foundation must offer an overview of the key theorist(s) whose theory/research supports the research study and critical insight into his/her scientific work.

1. This section of the Theoretical Foundation is NOT intended to serve as a vehicle for simply developing a biographical sketch of the theorist although some biographical information is appropriate. (For example, birth and death dates of the theorist, names of significant people who worked with or influenced the theorist, countries of origin and education that may have impacted the theorist’s work all help to situate a theorist in a context; however, this type of information should not be the focus or all that is included.

2. This section of the Theoretical Foundation should be one or two paragraphs in length and include an overview of the work of the key theorist(s). Here, the researcher(s) is expected to identify the broad category (e.g., cognitive development, moral development, etc.) into which the theorist’s work falls and a broad description of all of the contributions of the theorist(s) to the field.

3. **The Overview MUST include citation(s) / reference(s) to primary text(s).**

C. **Comprehensive summary of Theory.** This section of the Theoretical Foundation should be the most substantial (and lengthy) section [2-3 pages]. It must include a comprehensive summary of the theoretical work of the key theorist relevant to the research study. **N.B.** The information included in this section must be directly used to support the development of the Data Collection Instrument and Data Analysis Rubric / Interpretation Tool / Technique used in the research study.

1. The comprehensive summary must integrate and develop the specific area of the theorist’s work that supports the research study.
2. In offering detailed explanation of the theoretical work, the researcher(s) is expected to include and develop critical terms and concepts (from the Glossary...
of Critical Terms) and to include and develop significantly more detail than what is available in the Crain text – mainly from primary texts.

3. This portion of the Theoretical Foundation must include multiple citations / references – again, mainly from primary texts.

D. Research Study Summaries. This section of the Theoretical Foundation must offer coherent summaries of at least two research studies derived from the theoretical concepts of the key theorist – and relevant to your own research study.

1. The researcher(s) is expected to include the following information in each summary of a research study: (1) research question and the purpose of the study; (2) hypothesis tested; (3) participants involve – number, age, and gender; (3) brief description of the study procedure; (4) results/conclusions of the study; and (5) implications of the study. Each summary should be written as a single – but substantial – paragraph.

2. The researcher(s) MUST include citations and references to actual studies.

E. Connection between Theory and Study. This section of the Theoretical Foundation must offer a coherent, well-reasoned argument that connects the theoretical foundation to the student’s research study. In this section, students are expected to specifically state and justify a hypothesis for each research question, using concepts and explanation specifically derived from the theoretical foundation.

1. The researcher(s) is expected to synthesize information from the parts B through E of the Theoretical Foundation to identify key points around which to develop an argument in support of the study hypotheses so as to connect the research study to the theoretical foundation.

2. The researcher(s) MUST include citations and references to both primary and secondary sources in the justification.

F. Glossary of Critical Terms. Each research study must include a glossary of critical terms primarily from the key theory/theorist with a clear, personally worded definition and an example. The glossary should include terms and concepts beyond those included in the Crain text, showing evidence of careful, substantive reading and research. This glossary must be submitted with the Research Study Portfolio as an appendix.