Thematic Project Organization Guide

Every paper, whether summarizing scholarly literature, presenting new empirical research, or describing a curricular approach, should present information in an organized manner. The project should begin with a premise/thesis, explain that premise, and conclude by summarizing the support for that premise.

As we discussed in CAS 300 and in our class, every piece of the paper should have a clear introduction and conclusion. The introduction should begin with a broad premise and then become increasingly specific. In the case of this paper, the introduction should begin with a statement regarding the relation between early childhood education (or the quality/type of ECE), child/family characteristics, and child outcomes. The specific variables that you focus on within these broad topics will be your personal choice.

The body of the paper should present the evidence supporting your statement about these relations. The information will be drawn from the articles that you have selected (four for an individual, six for a group of 2). Everyone should utilize the class article (article 1).

The information in the body of your paper may be organized by the source (so that you review each source individually) or by content (so that all information about a particular issue is reviewed together, regardless of source). The key organizing principles should be to avoid repetition and ensure that ideas follow a logical sequence.

Make sure to include enough detail about the studies that the reader can understand how and why certain conclusions were reached. If different articles reach different conclusions (e.g., because they study different populations, or operationally define variables in different ways), you should explain that.

The conclusion should begin with a brief review of the specific information that you have presented and expand out to encompass and restate your original premise. The conclusion should not include any new information or ideas; it should only restate your previous ideas to emphasize the main points.

Your outline is worth 25 points. If you are working with a partner, you may devise an outline together. In that case, both of you will receive the same grade.

Your outline should be arranged hierarchically. The thesis statement/premise should be written clearly and completely at the beginning of the outline. Each level of the outline should represent a paragraph, with the superordinate point being the overarching topic sentence for the paragraph.