George Mason University  
College of Education and Human Development  
Early Childhood Education Program

EDSE 633.001 and EDUT 782.001  
Policy Perspectives Affecting Diverse Young Learners and Their Families (3:3:0)  
Spring 2010  
Thursdays, 7:20 – 10:00 pm  
Robinson B 205

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Course Description  
EDUT 633: Provides understanding of historical and current trends and issues involving legislation and policy in early childhood education, bilingual education, early childhood special education, and multicultural education. Focuses on historical role of social advocacy, development of advocacy skills, and collaboration and consultation with other professionals and staff. Addresses continuum of services and the context of service delivery. Requires field experience.

EDUT 782: Advanced seminar explores historical and current trends and issues involving legislation and policy in early childhood education, bilingual education, early childhood special education, and multicultural education. Focuses on historical role of social advocacy, development of advocacy skills, and collaboration and consultation with other professionals and staff in early childhood education. Provides understanding of continuum of services and context of service delivery.

Nature of Course Delivery  
The class will have lecture, discussion, group work formats and will require active participation of all students.  
Guest speakers will complement course discussions.

Learner Outcomes  
This course is designed to enable students to

1. Describe the historical role of social advocacy and the role of educators in advocating for young children to ensure equity and access in service delivery;
2. Demonstrate the ability to implement actions through collaboration and consultation with professional peers and staff;
3. Describe the legislation and policy-making process related to culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families;
4. Describe the continuum of services and the fiscal and regulatory context of service delivery at the local, state, and national levels;
5. Describe the administrative aspects and legal mandates for early childhood programs;
6. Identify characteristics of leaders and analyze own leadership skills;
7. Analyze a current policy issue related to the lives of culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families and plan and implement an appropriate awareness/advocacy/leadership response.

Professional Standards

This course complies with the standards established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Council for Exceptional Children. The course content has been designed to address the following standards and competencies.

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

- Standard 10 Collaboration
- Standard 9 Professional and Ethical Practice (also addressed by elements of the class)

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

- Standard 5 Becoming a Professional
- Key Element 5a: Identifying and involving oneself with the early childhood field
- Key Element 5b: Knowing about and upholding ethical standards and other professional guidelines
- Key Element 5c: Engaging in continuous, collaborative learning to inform practice
- Key Element 5d: Integrating knowledgeable, reflective, and critical perspectives on early education
- Key Element 5e: Engaging in informed advocacy for children and the profession

Required Texts


Web-based Resources

Since current policy readings are often found on the websites associated with advocacy and policy organizations, several readings that can be obtained from the web will be identified.
These will be posted on Blackboard and will form the basis of class discussions. In addition, students will be expected to access these sites as they work on their group and independent research projects. Students are also expected to collect and share policy related articles in the weekly class sessions.

Some examples of sites include:

http://www.tcrecord.org (a publication of Teacher’s College, Columbia University)
http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/idea (the United States Department of Education Site)
http://naeyc.org (National Association for the Education of Young Children)
http://www.childrensdefense.org (Children’s Defense Fund)
http://www.edweek.org (Education Week)
http://www.pdkintl.org (on-line versions of Kappan, a publication of Phi Delta Kappa)
http://www.nieer.org (National Institute for Early Education Research)
http://www.zerotothree.org (Zero to Three, National Center for Infants and Families)
http://www.nbcdi.org/ (National Black Child Development Institute)
http://nectac.org/ (National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center)
http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~scpp/crosswalks/toolbox/ (Your source for teaching, training and staff development resources that reflect cultural, linguistic and ability diversity and content)
http://www.peatc.org/ (website of the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center, Virginia’s Parent Training and Information Center)
http://www.doe.virginia.gov/ (website of the Virginia Department of Education)

Additional Resource Readings


Course Requirements

General Requirements
1. The completion of all readings assigned for the course is assumed. Because the class will be structured around discussion and small group activities, it is imperative that students keep up with the readings and participate in class.
2. Class attendance is important. If, due to an emergency, students will not be in class, they must call the instructor and leave a message or contact the instructor via email.
3. The university requires that all pagers and cell phones be turned off before class begins. Laptops and other electronic devices are to be used for educational and learning purposes only and should not be used during class time to check email, surf the web, or communicate with people outside of the class unless part of the class activity.
4. It is expected that assignments will be turned in on time (the beginning of the class in which they are due). However, it is recognized that graduate students occasionally have serious problems that prevent work completion. If such a dilemma arises, students should speak to the instructor in a timely fashion. **NOTE:** Weekly logs, however, will not, in any instance, be accepted after the due date, as they are used to inform class discussion.

Attendance
Attendance in class is important to students’ learning; therefore, students are expected to make every effort to attend class sessions. Absences, tardiness, and leaving early may negatively affect course grades. The following policy is from the university course catalog:

   Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor’s grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

Written Assignments
All written assignments prepared outside of class will be evaluated for content and presentation as graduate-level writing. The American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition (APA) style will be followed for all written work. All written work unless otherwise noted must be completed on a word processor and should be proofread carefully. (Use spell check!) If students are not confident of their own ability to catch errors, they should have another person proofread their work. When in doubt, they should check the APA manual. Portions of the APA manual appear at the Style Manuals link on the GMU library web guide at [http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/](http://library.gmu.edu/resources/edu/).

Students will
1. Present ideas in a clear, concise, and organized manner. (Avoid wordiness and redundancy.)
2. Develop points coherently, definitively, and thoroughly.
3. Refer to appropriate authorities, studies, and examples to document where appropriate. (Avoid meaningless generalizations, unwarranted assumptions, and unsupported opinions.)
4. Use correct capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

**Grading Criteria**

A = 95 – 100        A- = 90 – 94        B+ = 87 – 89        B = 83 – 86
B- = 80 – 82        C = 70 – 79        F = < 70

A+ is possible if work is of exceptional high quality and includes work above and beyond that required for the course.

**Grading Policy**

All CEHD undergraduate and graduate students are held to the university grading policies as described in the Academic Policies section of the catalog: [http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=104](http://catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=104). Those students enrolled in a CEHD licensure program, however, must earn a B- or better in all licensure coursework. A degree-seeking graduate student will be dismissed after accumulating grades of F in two courses or 9 credits of unsatisfactory grades (C or F) in graduate courses. A 3.0 grade point average is required for completion of the graduate degree.

**Submission of Performance-Based Assessment**

This course has a Program Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) that MUST be uploaded and submitted to Task Stream for evaluation when the assignment is due. Only PBAs posted to TaskStream will be graded. This means that NO final grades will be posted until all materials are on Task Stream.

**CEHD Syllabus Statements of Expectations**

All students must abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See [http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm](http://gse.gmu.edu/facultystaffres/profdisp.htm) for a listing of these dispositions.
- Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See [http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12](http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12) for the full honor code.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See [http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc/) or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

**Note:** To determine whether the campus is closed due to inclement weather, call 703-993-1000 or go to [www.gmu.edu](http://www.gmu.edu).
Assignments

Attendance and Participation (15 points)

Because active participation and engagement are imperative for optimal learning, preparation for and participation in in-class activities will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Students attend class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class period. *If you are unable to attend a class, please inform the instructor, either by phone or by email prior to class.*
- Students complete readings and prepare for class activities prior to class as is evidenced by their ability to discuss and write about the concepts presented and examined in the texts as well as participate fully in related activities.
- Students are actively involved in in-class learning experiences as is evidenced by (1) participating in all activities, (2) engaging in small and large group discussions, (3) completing written work related to the activities, and (4) supporting the participation and learning of classmates.
- Students show evidence of critical reflective thinking through in-class discussions, activities, and written reflections.

Policy Reading Logs (15 points)

- Policy Reading Logs (*five at 3 points each*) are graded according to the following criteria:
  
  a) Reading logs are completed and turned in at the beginning of the appropriate class session. *I will not accept logs after the beginning of class, as these will be used for discussion* (1 pt.).
  b) Reading logs show evidence of having reflected on and integrated the assigned readings and websites. *Note: This means the response log should synthesize all of the readings for a particular session* (1 pt.).
  c) Reading logs show thoughtfulness in formulating questions for class discussion (1 pt.).

  NOTE: These do not have to be word processed.

Leadership Book (30 points)

Students will select a book of their choice that is an autobiography or biography of someone they consider to be a leader. They will come to class prepared to discuss what they have learned about leadership. In addition, they will prepare a two-part paper: 1) a review of the book; and 2) a reflection about implications for leadership and advocacy on behalf of culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families, linked to course concepts and readings.

The Leadership book assignment will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Text is appropriate to the assignment (5pts.).
- Review captures key themes of the book and the leader it describes (10pts.).
- Reflection shows thoughtfulness, depth, and breadth in the discussion of leadership attributes, issues of equity and diversity, links to own leadership. Reflection provides links to Brown and Mazza, as well as other course readings, and to class discussions. Reflection describes how this person’s leadership informs one’s own leadership, how it is
similar to or different from one’s own leadership style, and how it informs one’s leadership goals. Reflection describes what can be learned from this person’s leadership that could inform leadership to ensure equity and access for culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse young children and their families. Reflection includes a discussion of the book club discussion and how it affected one’s view of leadership (10 pts.).

d) Participation in the book club session is active and helps classmates see the contribution of this text to better understanding effective leadership (5 pts.).

**NOTE: This assignment may be posted on Task Stream as additional evidence for the PBA for this class.**

**Current Issues Project (40 points)**

With the help of faculty, students develop ideas for a project addressing current trends and issues in educational policy in Early Childhood Special Education, Bilingual Education, Early Childhood Education, and Multicultural Education. For each project, in small groups, students are responsible for facilitating the class’s understanding of the issue and creating an advocacy opportunity. Based on their research on the issue, students are to select one brief reading that the class must read in preparation for the class in which the group presents about the issue. Each in-class presentation will be about 45 minutes. As a group, members are to show shared leadership in helping the class understand the issue and are also to involve class members in an activity that helps them better engage with the action the group is proposing. For the presentation, the group is to prepare a handout for the presentation (agenda, powerpoint, other resources, as appropriate) as well as a policy brief that will be used to support the action.

The second element of the project is an **advocacy action.** This may include attending a public hearing, preparing a letter, and others as appropriate. Walling provides guidance for appropriate actions.

The nature of each current issues project will depend upon the group’s topic and will be discussed in depth in class.

**Elements of the CIP Process**

Students will do the following:
1. Decide Broad Issues
2. Do Research on the Topic
3. Decide Narrow Advocacy Issue and Target Audience

**Elements of Policy Brief**

Students will
1. Make it short, no more than one page front and back.
2. Identify clearly what the issue is and what needs to be “fixed.”
3. Explain who is hurt by current policy/needs to be helped by new policy and implications for things not changing.
4. Provide evidence – what’s the research. Make it clear and simple for the reader who is unfamiliar with early childhood special education.

5. Link to the right person/target audience.

6. Provide a clear, workable solution and an identifiable action.

**Elements of a Background Reading for Class**

Reading provides key information and resources to help class better understand the issue.

Reading is from a reputable source that contains objective and complete information about the topic.

**Deciding on an Action**

Students will

1. Refer to the Walling book and other course readings and discussions.

2. Consider feasibility and doability.

3. Match their action to the issue and the target audience (refer to 5 and 6 in description of policy brief).

The action may include attending a public hearing, preparing a letter to the editor or a local, state or federal decision maker, visiting a policy maker, and others as appropriate. It may also include a social media component. This may include the following:

   a) Joining an education group on Facebook and participating in discussions;
   
   b) Following an education leader on Twitter and Tweeting about your topic;
   
   c) Following an education blog and commenting on entries;
   
   d) Starting your own blog, fan page or Twitter account for your issue;
   
   e) Recruiting family, friends, and colleagues to your issue.
   
   f) Making and posting a brief video on your issue on YouTube.

You will need to provide documentation of your action, including documentation of all on-line activity.

**Assessment**

This assignment is worth 40% of the course grade, and it is the PBA for this class. **Note:** Every student registered for this course is required to submit the identified PBA to TaskStream.

TaskStream information is available at [http://taskstream.com](http://taskstream.com). Failure to submit the assignment to TaskStream will result in reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless this grade is changed, upon completion of the required submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

The assignment will be graded according to the following criteria:

a) The policy brief is short and contains the elements of a policy brief described above, provides an overview of the topic, key findings, and recommended actions, and shows evidence of obtaining appropriate information from relevant professional and community organizations (e.g., DEC, NAEYC, Zero to Three) (refer to list of websites above) (5 pts.).

b) The in-class presentation gave accurate and appropriate information, showed evidence of equal participation and contribution of all group members, showed flair that reflected the group’s thought and effort, and engaged the class (10 pts.).

c) The selected reading provided an adequate background for class members (5 pts.).
d) The action was appropriate for the topic, and group members provided evidence of completing the action (10 pts.).

e) The individual reflection: (10 pts.)

- Describes group planning and implementation process.
- Critically analyzes own role as a group member and discusses own contribution to the process.
- Critically analyzes own role as a group leader, linking to elements identified in readings and in class.
- Critically analyzes the project outcome and its potential impact.
- Provides specific examples/documentation of the planning process, including electronic correspondence among group members and with key policy makers, if appropriate.

**NOTE:** Reflections may be submitted as early as one week after the in-class presentation, or whenever the assignment requirements have been met. All reflections must be submitted and uploaded no later than May 6.

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### Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 22</td>
<td>Overview of syllabus and assignments</td>
<td>Read Cryer and Clifford, chapters 1 and 11</td>
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<td>Defining policy and advocacy</td>
<td>Read Kozol, chapters 1-4</td>
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<td>Early guidance on the individual and group projects</td>
<td>Read and review at least one newspaper article or online resource related to current policy issues. Bring article to class.</td>
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<td>The role of education in democracy – policy implications</td>
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<td>Why study policy?</td>
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<td>Video: Darius Goes West</td>
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<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>The current policy context, challenges and opportunities.</td>
<td>Read Cryer and Clifford, chapters 2 and 4</td>
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<td>The policy process.</td>
<td>Read Kozol, chapters 5-8</td>
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<td>An emerging picture of current issues.</td>
<td>Read and review at least one newspaper article or online resource related to current policy issues. Bring article to class.</td>
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<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>Defining and regulating high quality programs</td>
<td>Read Cryer and Clifford, chapters 2 and 4</td>
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<td>Read Kozol, chapters 5-8</td>
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<td>Read and review at least one newspaper article or online resource related to current policy issues. Bring article to class.</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading Assignments</td>
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<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>Poverty, Disability, Diversity and Educational Equity</td>
<td>Read Kozol, chapters 9-12 and Epilogue</td>
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<td>Over-representation and disproportionality</td>
<td>Read and review at least one newspaper article or online resource related to current policy issues. Bring article to class.</td>
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<td>Historical factors affecting education</td>
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<td>The respective roles of legislation and litigation</td>
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<td>First policy reading log due</td>
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<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>Access and funding issues</td>
<td>Read Cryer and Clifford, chapters 3 and 8</td>
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<td>Further discussion of Current Issues Projects – how do we influence policy?</td>
<td>Read Walling</td>
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<td>Read and review at least one newspaper article or online resource related to current policy issues. Bring article to class.</td>
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<td>Sign up for Current Issues Projects</td>
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<td>Second policy reading log due</td>
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<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>Policy issues affecting program content</td>
<td>Read Cryer and Clifford, chapter 6</td>
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<td>Work as CIP Groups</td>
<td>Read and review at least one newspaper article or online resource related to current policy issues. Bring article to class.</td>
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<td>Third policy reading log due</td>
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<td>Mar 4</td>
<td>Policy regarding high quality personnel</td>
<td>Read Cryer and Clifford, chapter 5</td>
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<td>Work as CIP Groups</td>
<td>Read and review at least one newspaper article or online resource related to current policy issues. Bring article to class.</td>
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<td>Fourth policy reading log due</td>
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<td>Mar 11</td>
<td>Spring Break: No Class</td>
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<td>Mar 18</td>
<td>The power of data in the current policy climate</td>
<td>Readings from CIP Groups 1 and 2</td>
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<td>Influencing policy at the local level – from community organizing to board membership Meet in CIP groups</td>
<td>Read Cryer and Clifford, chapters 9 and 10</td>
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<td>Fifth policy reading log due</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>Mar 25</td>
<td>Family and peer advocacy</td>
<td>CIP Groups 1 and 2 presentations</td>
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<td>Meet in CIP Groups</td>
<td>Submit leadership book ideas</td>
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<td>Readings from CIP Groups 3 and 4</td>
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<td>Cryer and Clifford, chapter 7</td>
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<td>CIP Groups 3 and 4 presentations</td>
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<td>Leadership book selection completed</td>
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<td>Apr 1</td>
<td>Dual language learners and immigrants</td>
<td>Begin reading leadership book</td>
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<td>Read Brown and Mazza, chapter 1</td>
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<td>Readings from CIP Groups 5 and 6</td>
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<td>CIP Groups 5 and 6 presentations</td>
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<td>Apr 8</td>
<td>Wrap-around services, health and welfare programs and young children</td>
<td>Read Brown and Mazza, chapter 2</td>
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<td>Readings from CIP Groups 7 and 8</td>
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<td>Continue leadership book</td>
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<td>CIP Groups 7 and 8 presentations</td>
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<td>Apr 15</td>
<td>Young children with disabilities, inclusive services</td>
<td>Read Brown and Mazza, chapter 3</td>
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<td>Readings from CIP Groups 9 and 10</td>
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<td>Continue leadership book</td>
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<td>CIP Groups 9 and 10 presentations</td>
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<td>Apr 22</td>
<td>Exploring attributes of effective leadership in diverse communities</td>
<td>Finish Brown and Mazza</td>
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<td>Continue leadership book</td>
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<td>Apr 29</td>
<td>Leadership book club</td>
<td>Finish leadership book</td>
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<td>Post leadership book book review on Blackboard</td>
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<td>May 6</td>
<td>Final – Leadership Reflection Due - Upload PBA</td>
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Weekly Reading Log

Name: ___________________________________________ Date _______________

References:

What is important about this/these reading(s) that contributes to an understanding of policy concerning diverse young learners and their families? Provide a synthesis of key points

How does the reading relate to/influence your own role/practice?

What questions come up for you that you would like to see discussed related to this reading or readings?