George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Educational Leadership
EDLE 634
Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership
Summer 2010
Monday and Wednesday 4:30 – 7:30

Instructor: Dr. John Banbury
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John.Banbury@fcps.edu

Textbooks
Pink, Daniel, *A Whole New Mind*
Wagner, Tony, *The Global Achievement Gap*
Kozol, Jonathan, *The Shame of the Nation*
Marx, Gary, *Sixteen Trends*

Course Description

This course examines current and emerging issues and trends impacting education. Inquiring into demographic shifts; globalization; technology, data-based decision-making; inclusion of diverse learners in American schools; and recent research on student achievement when influenced by race, gender, and poverty.

CANDIDATE OUTCOMES

Participants will:

1. Be able to explain several of the seismic shifts and major trends and their implications for society at large and schools and school districts in particular.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the history of diverse groups in the United States and review education in the United States in reference to diverse groups as well as the privileges or inequities that members of these groups have encountered on the basis of race, ethnicity, and social class.
3. Articulate how student diversity can help teachers and administrators develop curriculum that includes global literacy with a significant effect on economic, cultural, and political matters, with particular attention on how culture influences learning.
4. Be able to explain the definitions and characteristics of children with special learning needs, i.e., learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, visual and hearing impairment, ADHD, and giftedness.
5. Describe the educational rights of individuals with disabilities including the legal foundations, models of service delivery, and the concepts of mainstreaming and inclusion.

6. Describe ways in which special educators and regular educators can partner with regard to shared goals, collaboration, referrals, and placements.

7. Be able to articulate effective knowledge management strategies that use technology to enhance administration, teaching, and learning at the school and district levels.

8. Apply principles of legal, ethical, social, and equity issues related to technology (such as copyright, fair use, equitable access, free speech) along with effective techniques for evaluating technology effectiveness.

9. Be able to synthesize recent research relative to student achievement in diverse school settings, with particular attention to the relationships between student achievement and gender, race, and poverty.

10. Identify various strategies to maximize the effective use of data to improve student achievement and effective ways to communicate results to various community groups.

11. Demonstrate the ability to make educational decisions which are supported by data rather than only on personal opinions.

RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRAM GOALS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION

This course is intended as one of two culminating courses in the Masters in Education Leadership Program. Course content focuses on key contemporary issues in public education, both current and emerging. At the conclusion of the course, participants are expected to demonstrate knowledge and skills that increase their effectiveness when working in diverse school settings; an expected hallmark of education in the 21st century.

In relationship to professional organization competencies, participants in this course will demonstrate proficiency in appropriate VA DOE competencies and ISLLC standards. VA DOE: 1-d, 1-e, 2-c, 2-d, 3-g, 4-a, 5-c, 6-e, 6-f. ISLLC: 1-K1, 1-K4, 1-K5, 2-K7, 2-K10, 2-P5, 2-P6, 2-P9, 2-P16, 2-P18, 3-K8, 3-P3, 3-P16, 3-P17, 4-K1, 4-K2, 4-P11, 5-K3, 5-P12, 6-K6, 6-K8, 6-P2, 6-P4, 6-P5. With regard to NCATE Curriculum Guidelines, candidates in this course will demonstrate an understanding of, and capabilities in, all four areas of education leadership; strategic leadership (1.3, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4); instructional leadership (3.3, 3.4); and organizational leadership (7.2, 7.4, and 9.3).

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

A variety of instructional methods are used in this course to cover the course content and create a dynamic, interactive learning environment. These methods include large-
and small-group instruction, cooperative learning, media, Internet assignments, lecture, guest practitioners, group presentations and individual research.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Access to a computer, the World Wide Web, and email are essential for this course. Candidates will be given access to Blackboard.com for communication and resource purposes. Candidates are expected to competently use standard computer office tools such as word processing, spreadsheet, database, and presentation software.

Candidates are expected to attend each class for its entirety. Candidates who must be absent from class are expected to notify the instructor in advance by telephone or email. Candidates who miss more than one class, or who arrive late or leave early, will lose participation points.

Assignments are to be completed by the due date outlined. Assignments submitted late will have points deducted. Assignments submitted more than one week late may not receive full credit. All written assignments are to be completed using standard word processing or presentation tools and may be submitted in advance electronically.

**GMU HONOR CODE**

Candidates are expected to abide by the George Mason University Honor code. Violations (cheating, attempted cheating, plagiarizing, lying, stealing) will be reported to the Honor Committee. Please refer to the University Catalog or [www.gmu.edu](http://www.gmu.edu) for the full Honor Code.

**STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the series, programs, or activities of all state and local governments. Under ADA, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, working, walking, speaking, hearing, breathing and/or taking care of oneself. If a student has a disability and needs course adaptations or accommodations because of that disability, it must be established with the faculty, in writing, at the beginning of the semester so arrangements can be made. Please call the Disability Resource Center for required documentation (703-993-2474).

**EVALUATION AND GRADING**
Since this is a graduate-level class, high quality work on all assignments and meaningful class participation is expected. Rubrics will be used in the evaluation of required course work.

Assignment #1

Students will select an issue that is of high interest to them and write an essay [3 to 5 pages] which [a] shows evidence of reading and thought on the topic; [b] connects to research/thought/examples in practice; and [c] which analyses the prevailing issue[s] and presents at least 3 recommendations as possible solutions. Due June 14, 2010.

25% of Final Grade

(Course outcomes numbers 1, 2, and 3 are met by this activity when successfully completed.)

Possible Topics:

ESOL  Teacher Pay
Graduation Rates  Teacher Assignments
Gender Equity  Class Size
Gifted Programs  High School Reform
Disabilities  Grouping and Tracking
Standards  Standardization vs. Variation
Assessment  Retention and Promotion
Low Performance in Urban Areas  Centralization vs. Decentralization
Low Performance in Rural Areas  Charter Schools
AYP as defined by NCLB  School Choice and Vouchers
Teacher Education  Privatization
Teacher Quality  Home Schooling
Pre – Education  Evolution
Sex Education  Zero Tolerance
Religious Expression  Role of Scientific Research in School
Reform  
Effective Practices  Comprehensive School Reform

Assignment #2
The school board has created a planning group to advise it on issues which may impact the district in the future. Students will work with a partner as Futurist Consultants. They will present information to the School Board Planning Group (the rest of the class) on an assigned topic decided upon by the class. In order to prepare the Planning Group for the presentation each pair will locate and assign readings to be completed by the class prior to the presentation. Remember- the school district is paying big bucks for your consulting services. The presentation should be worth it. Due Date to be decided.

25% of Final Grade

(Course outcomes numbers 4, 5, 6, and 9 are met by this activity when successfully completed.)

Assignment #3

Students will present in small groups of the major trends effecting education in the immediate future. Topics will be based on Marx’s work and will be chosen in class May 10, 2010. Presentations are of the students design and should incorporate the use of technology. A power point is not required! Utilization of outside sources is expected and at least one journal article for each member of the class will be handed out the class meeting before the presentation so everyone has some background knowledge. 20 to 30 minutes will be allocated in class for presentations.

25% of Final Grade

(Course outcomes numbers 7, 8, 10 and 11 are met by this activity when successfully completed.)

Assignment #4

Class participation and attendance, including participation in Socratic Seminars and other presentations.

25% of Final Grade

(Course outcomes numbers 1, 6, 9, and 10 are met by this activity when successfully completed.)

The grading scale is:

A+ = 100 percent
A  =  95 - 99 percent
A - =  90 - 94 percent
B+ =  87 - 89 percent
B = 83 - 86 percent
B- = 80 - 82 percent
C = 75 - 79 percent
F = 0 - 74 percent

GSE Syllabus Statements of Expectations

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See http://mail.gmu.edu and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

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 www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.
Proposed Course Schedule

May 10
Introduction

Read: Marx, Introduction
Socratic Seminar Articles
Kozol – entire book by May 19

May 12
Sixteen Trends

May 17
Marx Chapters 1-4

May 19
Socratic Seminar: The Shame of the Nation
Marx Chapters 5-6

Read: Pink, entire book for next week

May 24
Marx Chapters 7-8
Socratic Seminar: A Whole New Mind

Read: Wagner

May 26
Marx Chapters 9-12

May 31
No Class

June 2
Socratic Seminar: *The Global Achievement Gap*
13-16

June 7
School Board Presentations

June 9
School Board Presentations

June 14
Essays Due
Course Wrap-up
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations</th>
<th>Meets Expectations</th>
<th>Approaching Expectations</th>
<th>Falls Below Expectations</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation Content</strong> (5 pts)</td>
<td>Provides new insights into issues and makes suggestions for future plans.</td>
<td>Provides complete and accurate understanding of issues</td>
<td>Provides incomplete understanding of issues</td>
<td>Provides misconceptions of issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data analysis</strong> (5 pts)</td>
<td>Analysis of data is persuasively presented, and application is made to a &quot;big picture&quot; context</td>
<td>Analysis of significance is presented clearly and succinctly.</td>
<td>Basic facts are present</td>
<td>Information is incomplete</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Handouts, Visuals and Reading Assignments</strong> (5 pts)</td>
<td>Provides support to presentation that contains rich, vivid and powerful detail</td>
<td>Clearly communicates main idea of presentation with suitable support and detail</td>
<td>Information is not clear</td>
<td>Information results in an isolated and random format</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation Delivery</strong> (5 pts)</td>
<td>Presentation was clearly done by professional consultants. The School Board spent its money wisely.</td>
<td>The presentation was adequate but the delivery could be a bit more polished.</td>
<td>The presentation appeared to have been done by a group of students.</td>
<td>The delivery of the presentation came across as poorly planned and not rehearsed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Audience Involvement</strong> (5 pts)</td>
<td>The presentation involved the audience throughout and they gave a standing ovation.</td>
<td>The audience was involved in the presentation.</td>
<td>Some attempts were made to involve the audience in the presentation.</td>
<td>No attempts were made to involve the audience in the presentation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Written Essay – 25 points

**Assessment Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (Clear, convincing, substantial evidence)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (clear evidence)</th>
<th>Approaching Expectations (limited evidence)</th>
<th>Falls Below Expectations</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong> (Statement of purpose) (6 pts)</td>
<td>Contains a sharp focus and a clearly identifiable statement of purpose.</td>
<td>Contains a focus</td>
<td>Contains an unengaging or poorly focused statement of purpose.</td>
<td>Does not present a thesis or purpose statement that is clearly identifiable or developed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview Summary</strong> (including PIM) (6 pts)</td>
<td>Major points are strong and supported by examples</td>
<td>Major points are given</td>
<td>Major points lack clarity</td>
<td>Major points are missing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Directions for Schools</strong> (6 pts)</td>
<td>Concepts are insightful and inspiring</td>
<td>Concepts are good</td>
<td>Concepts do not go beyond the obvious</td>
<td>Concepts are missing or undeveloped</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflection</strong> (4 pts)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>missing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong> (3 pts)</td>
<td>No errors</td>
<td>A few minor errors</td>
<td>Several distracting errors</td>
<td>Many major mechanical errors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Small Group Project Assignment– 25 points
Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (Clear, convincing, substantial evidence)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (clear evidence)</th>
<th>Approaching Expectations (limited evidence)</th>
<th>Falls Below Expectations</th>
<th>SCORE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Content (12 pts)</td>
<td>Provides new insights into issues</td>
<td>Provides complete and accurate understanding of issues</td>
<td>Provides incomplete understanding of issues</td>
<td>Provides misconceptions of issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Delivery (8 pts)</td>
<td>Analysis of data is persuasively presented, and application is made to a &quot;big picture&quot; context</td>
<td>Analysis of significance is presented clearly and succinctly.</td>
<td>Basic facts are present</td>
<td>Information is incomplete</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handout (5 pts)</td>
<td>Provides support to presentation that contains rich, vivid and powerful detail</td>
<td>Clearly communicates main idea of presentation with suitable support and detail</td>
<td>Information is not clear</td>
<td>Information results in an isolated and random format</td>
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