COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE: EDLE 620: Organization Theory and Leadership Development (3 credits)

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Jane McDonald
Associate Professor
GMU/GSE (MS 4C2)
Education Leadership Program
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Fairfax, VA 22030
jmcdona6@gmu.edu

OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays
2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
7:15 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

TEXTBOOK: Readings will be assigned by the professor

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Studies basic theories and models of leadership and management. Emphasis on shared leadership in professional environments, communication skills, systems theory for complex decision-making, and process of personal and organizational change. Bridges theory to practical applications in educational settings.

CANDIDATE OUTCOMES: Participants will
1. Increase their knowledge and understanding of systems and organizations.
   a. Systems theory
   b. Principles of organizational theory
   c. Model for diagnosing the strengths and needs of organizations
   Demonstration of competency: Candidates successfully complete Project #4.

2. Expand their knowledge and understanding of leadership models, functions of leadership and management, and ethical leadership behaviors.
   Demonstration of competency: Candidates successfully complete Project #4 and the Collective Record of internship experiences.

3. Have a repertoire of strategies for leading and changing organizations.
   a. Models for transitions and change
   b. Leadership responsibilities in school reform
   c. Activities that enhance and inhibit change
   d. Language and change
   Demonstration of competency: Candidates successfully complete Projects #4 and #5 and complete the Collective Record of internship experiences.

4. Develop a heightened awareness of personal leadership strengths and challenges, construct a personal plan for leadership development, and fine-tune beliefs about education and the responsibilities of education leaders.
   Demonstration of competency: Candidates successfully complete Projects #1, #2, and #3.

5. Practice, fine-tune, and communicate problem solving techniques, decision-making skills, and group dynamics.
   Demonstration of competency: Candidates work in groups for various assignments and provide appropriate responses to case studies and scenarios/vignettes that highlight experiences of educational leaders in the context of work.
RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRAM GOALS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION:
The purpose of the course is to strengthen the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of EDLE students as instructional leaders and managers, identify theories on which effective educational practices and change processes are built, and provide opportunities for students to assess their leadership abilities and solidify their philosophy of education and leadership. This is the culminating course in the EDLE masters program.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY: A variety of instructional methods are used to cover the subject matter and create a dynamic, interactive learning environment. These methods include large and small group discussions, case studies, media use, Internet assignments, simulations, lecture, guest practitioners, scenarios, group presentations, email discussions, site interviews, cooperative learning, and reflection.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: You are expected to attend each class because discussions, presentations, and hands-on activities are important parts of the course. The completion of and reflection on assigned readings, constructive participation in discussions and group work, and on-line communication among group members are routine expectations. Access to a computer and email accounts are essential. GMU provides free email accounts. GSE computers are available in labs that are located in Robinson Hall.

If missing a class is unavoidable, you are responsible for notifying the professor (preferably in advance). It is the responsibility of participants to check with class colleagues for notes, and complete any missed assignments, readings, etc. before the start of the next class. Because a quarter of your grade is earned through class participation (which includes discussions/simulations/etc.), absences can affect your grade. All written assignments must be completed on a word processor and turned in on or before the due date. Late assignments affect your grade on the assignment and the final grade, and will not be accepted without making prior arrangements with the professor.

Specific course requirements and due dates are detailed at the end of this course syllabus. **Attendance at the April 24 EDLE Leadership Conference is required.**

EVALUATION AND GRADING: Because EDLE 620 is a graduate level course, high quality work is expected in class and on all assignments. Some assignments are graded by rubrics. In this way, an assessment rubric can inform the completion of the assignments and serve as an instrument to assess your grade for the activity.

Because EDLE 620 is a culminating course in the licensure component of the program, this course is designed to further develop and expand your conceptual abilities rather than only fine-tuning your technical skills. You will be assessed on your ability to analyze situations from the broad perspective of a school administrator, and be expected to view the impact of decisions from a systemic perspective and from the benefit to student learning.

You also will be encouraged to strengthen your communication skills. Specifically, this means to listen actively to others, speak concisely and to the point, remain focused on discussion topics, ask probing questions to gather needed information, make relevant comments that move the conversation forward, use voice tone effectively, be curious about another person’s point of view, and understand issues from various positions which extend beyond a personal perspective only.

As an administrator in training, you are expected to bring energy and commitment to your job; be able to handle multi-tasks; show flexibility in behavior and thinking; work collaboratively as well as independently; be creative and thorough as a problem solver; accept ambiguity as part of a leader’s job; take risks; be resilient; have a well developed sense of humor; balance work, play, and reflection; adhere to deadlines; appreciate various aspects of diversity; be creatively on the cutting edge of change; and show a sincere respect for and appreciation of the innate abilities of children and youth. You also are expected to bring these aspects to your participation and learning in EDLE 620.
The grading scales and assigned percentages shown below are assessment guidelines only. Your final grade for the semester will reflect my judgment of your classroom performance as you attempt to demonstrate the leadership behaviors as outlined in the above paragraphs. In other words, I want you to demonstrate, in observable behavior and judgement, your readiness for the awesome responsibility and joy that comes with a leadership position in schools.

**GRADING SCALE**

Participation in class and contribution to group learning, demonstration of group process skills, class quizzes, and quality of homework………………………………………………………………………25 points

Leader Interviews (Project #1)…………………………………………………………..15 points

Two-year Professional Development Plan (Project #2)…………………………………10 points

Personal Philosophy of Education (Project #3)………………………………………15 points

Development of a Future Learning Environment (Project #4)………………………15 points

Group Project: Course Concepts, Theorists and Theories…………………………..15 points

---You may add 5% to any of the above activities--………………………………………5 points

TOTAL 100 points

**Summary of Projects and Due Dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project #</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Interview of 3 leaders</td>
<td>Session #5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Professional Development Plan</td>
<td>Session #8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Personal Philosophy of Education</td>
<td>Session #6 (draft)Session #9 (final draft)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Future Learning Environment</td>
<td>Session #14</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Major Concepts, Theorists, Theories</td>
<td>Session #12</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>First 90 Days on the Job</td>
<td>Session #14 (in class work)</td>
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**Dates When Philosophy of Education Drafts Are Due To Professor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates When Philosophy of Education Drafts Are Due To Professor</th>
<th>Dates When Philosophy of Education Drafts Are Returned By Professor With Feedback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 25 (1st draft)</td>
<td>March 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 24 (final draft)</td>
<td>April 7</td>
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***At the beginning of the 3rd class session, please give me a copy of your proposed study/work calendar for the semester.*****
There are 14 class sessions, plus attendance at the annual EDLE Leadership Conference:
(15th session, May 5, will be used as a make-up session, if needed)

Topics of the course content are listed separately below. However, knowledge of organizations, leadership, and change is overlapping and intertwined throughout most sessions.

Course Content

What is theory?

Organization Theory

How can theories of organization help educational leaders?

Properties of organizations

The bright and shadow sides of organizations

Coping with ambiguity and complexity of organizations
  Mental models
  Problems and dilemmas

Models of organizations

How does structure influence what happens in the work place?

Diagnosing organizations

Leadership models

Vision-making and culture-building

Change

Authority, power, influence

Group leadership

Operational and strategic leadership challenges
The following projects are designed to answer questions relevant to your continual development as an educational leader. A list of the projects, with due dates, is displayed on page 3. Project #6 will be completed during the final class session.

1. **Question #1:**
   What are the similarities and differences in the ways that school leaders, business owners/CEOs, and entrepreneurs think about their jobs and the process of change?

   **Project #1:**
   Interview 3 leaders in different professions: a school leader, a business owner or CEO, and an entrepreneur.

   **Project Directions:**
   Use predetermined questions about job motivation and the change process to conduct interviews with a school leader, a business owner or CEO of an organization, and an entrepreneur (someone who owns or started a business, regardless of size or profit). You have the option to conduct the interviews by yourself or to pair up with one or more classmates. Then, write a brief 1-paragraph summary of each interview. Next, write a 3-paragraph summary to compare and contrast the 3 interviews and highlight your learning(s) about leadership and about yourself during this activity. **Project #1 is due on February 18.** During that class session, you and your classmates will participate in small and large groups to (a) discuss your personal interview findings, (b) discover the patterns of similarities and differences among the total responses, (c) synthesize the total responses, and (d) reflect on the learning, if any, for educational leaders.

2. **Question #2:**
   Now that you are coming to the end of the license portion of your Mason Leadership Program, what are your plans for continuing your leadership development?

   **Project #2:**
   Create a Professional Development Plan to assess your leadership strengths and further develop and expand your leadership knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practical experiences.

   **Project Directions:**
   Use selected information which you gleaned from the Personal Power Profile; the Life Styles Inventory; personal and professional readings; internship feedback; conversations with colleagues, supervisors, and instructors; observations of leaders; class discussions; and personal reflections to create a 2-year Professional Development Plan. The Plan needs to include the following sections: (a) an assessment of your strengths, (b) the areas you want to develop or fine-tune, (c) a statement as to why you believe further development in these areas is important for you as a leader, and (d) the learning activities in which you will participate to further develop your leadership knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practical experiences. Include a 2-year time line for accomplishing these proposed tasks. **Project #2 is due on March 17.** Keep a copy of the Plan for yourself and during class, be prepared to interactively discuss one of your areas of strength and one area which you identified for continued growth.
3. **Question #3:**
As you arrive at the end of your education leadership program at the George Mason University, what do you now believe about education and education leadership? (As an educator/leader, what are the beliefs that drive your actions?)

**Project #3:**
Construct a personal Philosophy of Education (written) from the perspective of an educational leader, including how your beliefs apply to practice.

**Project Directions:**
When writing your philosophy, include the 7 elements listed here as subtitles (You may include additional elements, if you think they are needed):

- The purpose of education
- The role of education in today’s society
- The responsibilities of leadership in schools
- The leader’s responsibilities for student learning
- The ethical responsibilities of school leaders
- The major skills, knowledge and dispositions needed by successful educational leaders
- How you intend to demonstrate leadership skills, knowledge, and dispositions in your work as an educational leader

Project #3 is an on-going assignment, throughout the length of this course, to fine-tune your beliefs about education and what you believe about the roles and responsibilities of leaders. As you continue to draft and rework your philosophy, you will receive on-going feedback from your class colleagues about the focus and clarity of your ideas; correctness of your spelling, grammar, and sentence structure; neatness of your final paper; and conciseness of your written expression. You will be divided into study groups for the purpose of providing the feedback, and the first 5 to 10 minutes of some class sessions will be devoted to this interaction. Be sure to arrive on time to class so that you can participate in this activity with your group. The final copy of your philosophy of education paper is expected to be 2 to 4 pages in length, typed, and presented in 10 or 12 point font. **Project #3 is due in class on March 24.**

4. **Question #4:**
What will future learning environment for students look like if it matches your philosophy?

**Project #4:**
Create and describe an ideal future learning environment for our youth which matches the philosophy you expressed in Project #3.

**Project Directions:**
Project your thinking 16 years into the future (2020). Imagine a fresh, new learning environment for students which also matches your personal education/leadership philosophy, as expressed in Project #3. (Go ahead, break the conventional boundaries!) Use a brochure, Power Point presentation, CD, diagram, 3-dimensional constructed model, Web site, PR packet, or other visual display to describe your new learning environment and how it differs from the schools of today. **Project #4 is due on April 28.**
5. **Question #5:**
What are the major concepts and theories used in EDLE 620 to study education leadership?

**Project #5:**
Compile a list of the major concepts and theorists that are covered in this course, EDLE 620: Organization Theory and Leadership Development.

**Project Directions:**
Project #5 is a group project. The class will be divided into work groups. Each group will meet to brainstorm, discuss, and compile a list of what it considers the major concepts covered in EDLE 620 during the semester. Be sure to (a) include some of the theorists who are associated with each concept, (b) write a synopsis of each person’s theory, and (c) give a short overview of how each theory can be used in the practical, everyday work of school leaders. A sample format is suggested here, but your group can create its own way to present this material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Concepts</th>
<th>Related Theorists</th>
<th>Synopsis of Theories</th>
<th>Suggestions for Theory Use in the Practical Work of School Leaders</th>
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Your group is expected to find a mutually convenient time to meet and prepare a 20-minute presentation and follow-up discussion. **Project #5 is due on April 14.** (20 minutes is the total amount of time your group is allotted.)

6. **Question #6:**
What does an administrator in a new leadership position do during the first 3 months on the job to diagnose the organization, learn the culture, and set the stage for change?

**Project #6:**
Identify successful leadership strategies to use during the first 90 days of an administrative position and create a timeline for their implementation to share with your classmates.

**Project Directions:**
Reflect on your entire EDLE course work (including EDLE 620), your internship activities, course readings, conversations with guest presenters, class discussions, leader interviews, and successful personal experiences. First, (a) identify what you, as an educational leader, will do during your first 90 days on a new leadership job and (b) give your reasons for selecting to participate in these experiences. Second, construct a timeline for implementing the 90-day activities. Bring a draft of your ideas to class during the final EDLE 620 session and be prepared to discuss your thoughts with your class colleagues. **Project #6 will be completed on April 28.**