

EDUC 615: Educational Change  
Spring, 2004

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**Course Description:** This two hour course is focused on the problems, issues, and possibility of bringing change to education. This is the culminating course in the ASTL program and in it, we will explore the influences on the education system from many levels, including, the national, state, local, community, school, and classroom levels. This course asks the students to investigate the implications of these influences for school improvement. Students enrolled in this course will have opportunities to reflect on their own experiences and the possibility of becoming agents of educational change.

**Course Outcomes:**

In this course the students will:

1. Analyze the factors, perspectives and entities that influence educational change.
2. Examine their respective stance toward their roles as change agents.
3. Write reflectively about personal experiences of change.
4. Inquire into the perspectives of others on a current topic/innovation in education.
5. Examine their own use of an educational innovation (i.e. investigate the research/theory that motivated it, how it became translated into guidelines at various policy levels, how it was used, and influences on what happened at various levels).
6. Participate in small and large discussions related to general presentation topics.

**Relationship of EDUC 615 to ASTL and NBPTS Propositions**

This course is part of the ASTL core, and is aligned with the following GSE priorities: Advanced Studies, Reflective and Research-based practice, and Research and Scholarship. The course is also aligned with the NBPTS five core propositions, which provide the guiding principles for what teachers should know and be able to do. Specifically, this course is aligned with Proposition 4: *Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience*, and Proposition 5: *Teachers are members of learning communities*.

**Required texts:**

Barth, R. (2001). *Learning by heart*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Meier, D. (2001). *In schools we trust*. New York: Beacon Press.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk*. Washington, DC: Author. (available online, see below).

Posted on [www.blackboard.gmu.edu](http://www.blackboard.gmu.edu): Abridged version of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (2002), 5<sup>th</sup> edition.

Access to journals, periodicals, and education newspapers are critical to each class. A collection of varied articles (a minimum of 10) is to be completed by the April 12 class.

### **Course Requirements**

1. Read all assignments.
2. Attendance is mandatory. If you must miss a class I'd like to know in advance.
3. Participate in classroom activities that reflect critical reading of the assignments.
4. Conduct a research project in an area of interest to you.
5. Present your research project in a poster format to the class.

**Note:** Obtaining and using an email account, preferably a GMU account if you do not already have one, is also required.

### **Assignments**

#### 1. Innovation Project (45% of grade)

- Students will examine their own use of an educational innovation, including:
  - Examining its history, the theory/research on which it is based;
  - Describing how it moved from problem identification to needs assessment, to program implementation guidelines at various policy levels, how it was implemented, and its impact on various levels.

Students will present this project to the class. The presentation may take a variety of formats (Outcomes 1, 2, 5, and 6).

#### 2. Individual reflective journal entries (20% of grade)

- Students will engage in reflective journal writing. Email is to be used as the vehicle for reflective journal writings, which will include reactions to readings and class discussions. Journal entries should be based in objective fact and personal experience, and be thoughtful and reflective on one's own stance toward educational practice and educational change (Outcomes 2, 3, 4, and 6).

***Please use the following questions to guide your reflections:***

- What issue(s) did I identify from the readings or from classroom discussion?
- What was my initial reaction to this reading or discussion point?
- Why do I have this reaction? ***In*** what is it based?
- How do I specifically agree or disagree with the point?
- What does my reaction tell me about why I do what I do as a practitioner?

3. Participation (15% of grade) (Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6)
4. Annotated Bibliography (a minimum of 10 articles) (20% of grade) **Due date: May 4.**
  - Locate articles/websites on an innovation in education. These articles will serve as the foundation for your project. These summaries will be shared with the other students in the class and an annotated bibliography will be submitted to me on May 4.
  - Use APA format: Author, Publication date, Title, Journal name or book publisher name and an annotation of the salient points made by the author(s) that are relevant to the educational innovation you are studying.

*Note:* many education journals and periodicals are now available online, including *Educational Leadership*, *Kappan*, *Harvard Education Review*, *Teachers College Record*, *Educational Forum*, *American School Board Journal*, and *Education Week*.

**Honor Code**

All evaluations and homework will be taken under the GMU Honor Code. Students are expected to abide by the honor code set forth in the current edition of the Student Handbook. All exams, assignments and papers are honor work. That means that students must not give nor receive any unauthorized assistance. While members of a team may collaborate on written paper assignments, they may not give or receive assistance from other teams. Plagiarism is also a violation of the honor code. The University’s Honor Code guidelines for academic honesty are at: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>.

**Learning Disabilities**

Students with any type of documented disability that may interfere with their learning in this class may negotiate a reasonable accommodation with me.

**Tentative Schedule**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>
3/16	Introductions, Overview of the course, Values and Educational Change Free writing exercise 1: If someone were to ask you what the expression “educational change” meant to you, how would you respond? Read: National perspectives on education reform <a href="http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/">http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/</a> <a href="http://edreform.com/pubs/then&amp;now.htm">http://edreform.com/pubs/then&amp;now.htm</a> <a href="http://www.edexcellence.net/library/failing_schools/failingschools.html">http://www.edexcellence.net/library/failing_schools/failingschools.html</a> <a href="http://www.nclb.gov/">http://www.nclb.gov/</a> <a href="http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/nclb/">http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/nclb/</a>

- 3/23                    How did it get like this? and What is it like now?  
 Free writing exercise 2: If someone were to ask you what leadership in education was, how would you respond?  
 Read Meier, pp. 1-94  
 View NBC video on A Nation at Risk  
 Journal entry #1 due
- 3/30                    The substance of change  
 Read Meier, pp. 95 -192  
 View video on Change  
 Journal entry #2 due
- 4/6                     The hard work of change  
 Project topic due  
 In class: Webquest on “changed schools”  
 Journal entry #3 due
- 4/13                    The contexts of change  
 Building a school around a school of thought  
 Read: Barth, pp. xi - 64  
 Journal entry #4 due
- 4/20                    The contexts of change II: Determining Results  
 Read Barth, pp. 65 – 118; 143 – 214  
 Read “Who is Leading Education Reform?”  
 Video PDK on change perspectives
- 4/27                    Teacher leadership as a solution to educational change  
 The role of continuing professional development in implementation  
 Diffusion of innovations  
 Journal entry #5 (Program Reflection Point 4)
- 5/4                     Project presentations
- 5/11                    Portfolio presentations