**Leading Schools and Communities**

GMU - EDLE 610-601

Fall 2009

Smart’s Mill Middle School Library

## Course Syllabus

**Instructor:**

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**Course Location and Mailing Address:**

Smart’s Mill Middle School

850 North King Street

Leesburg, VA 20176

571-252-2030

**Meeting Times:**

Monday from 4:30 to 7:10

**Office Hours:**

Before or after class or by appointment

**Course Description:**

**610 Leading Schools and Communities (3:3:0)** *Prerequisites: admission to the program and EDLE 620, 612, 614, 616, 618, and 690. Co-Prerequisite: EDLE 791.* This course examines critical functions of leadership and management, complex decision-making of school executives, and constructive relationships between schools and communities. Studies historical, philosophical, and sociological foundations of American education, and impact of organizational structure on reform and student achievement. Emphasizes leadership skill development.

**Nature of Course Delivery:**

The course will used varied instructional techniques including lecture, class discussion, quest speakers, cooperative learning groups, independent assignments, and some blackboard activities.

**Texts:**

* How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie, 81 edition, Simon and Schuster Publisher, ISBN:0-671-72365-0.
* School Leadership That Works by Robert Marzano, 05 Edition, Association for Curriculum and Development, ISBN: 1-4166-0227-5.

**Student Outcomes**:

At the conclusion of this course, successful students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and ability to collaborate with families and other community members, respond to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilize community resources in order to create and maintain a positive school culture which supports the success of all students.
2. Identify, assess and apply elements of a constructive relationship between a school and its community in order to support implementing the school’s vision.
3. Gain insight into power structures and pressure groups in the school community in order to create coalitions and increase support for school programs and goals.
4. Identify leadership knowledge and skills that promote success of all students through integrity, fairness and ethical behavior.
5. Determine a personal bank of leadership skills to structure and ground your decision making ability as you navigate future school “challenges.”

**Leading Schools and Communities** is intended to provide students with an opportunity to apply what they have learned in past EDLE courses to situations involving ethical dilemmas and to working productively with the school community. Students are expected to bring together all they have learned in the EDLE Program and will have a major opportunity to reflect on the experience of implementing their School Improvement Projects.

*Content*

In order to develop leadership savvy, students will deepen their understanding of how organizations function and how leaders influence school change and improvement. Specifically, students will:

1. Review meanings of leadership and the roles leaders play in school change and improvement.
2. Articulate a vision for effective school leadership and their beliefs about how that leadership interacts with and gains strength from the larger community.
3. Apply skills, knowledge, and dispositions gained through the Education Leadership Program to the analysis of case studies and in role-playing exercises involving leadership behavior and school change.
4. Meeting with community leaders to gain understanding of their views of the school’s success. Using this information to create an action plan to increase community involvement in implementing the school’s vision.

**Relationship of Student Outcomes to Program Goals:**

Candidate outcomes and activities are related to the following GMU/EDLE program goals:

1. Service to communities
2. Improvement of communication skills
3. Reflective practice
4. Understanding of diverse communities
5. Development of skills in bringing about change

**ASSIGNMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS**

All students are required to use Taskstream (<http://www.taskstream.com>), CEHD’s online assessment system, as part of this course. All papers will be submitted through Taskstream. Additionally, all students are required to use their GMU e-mail accounts and check e-mail daily.

**College of Education and Human Development Statement of Expectations:**

All students must abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://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](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc) or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

**Course Requirements and Procedures:**

* Students are expected to attend every class for its entirety and participate in class discussions. However, emergencies sometimes arise. Students who need to be absent from class are expected to notify the instructor in advance. Students who miss more than one class will lose participation points.
* Each student will complete the required class projects, and will finish all readings as scheduled. Late projects may be accepted in extenuating circumstances, but will be subject to a minimum of a one grade penalty. Students may choose to submit written projects prior to the deadline date for feedback from the instructor.
* Access to a computer and email accounts will be required in order to complete class requirements.

**Accommodating Students with Special Needs:**

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](http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc%20or%20call%20703-993-2474) to access the DRC.

**Course Asignments:**

Attendance and Participation (16% of course grade)

Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions, in group activities, and in serving as *ideas and resources* to other students. Students are expected to attend every class for its entirety. Emergencies sometimes arise; if you need to be absent from class, please notify me in advance by telephone or e-mail. If you miss two classes or more, you will lose participation points. If you come to class more than 30 minutes late or leave more than 30 minutes early, you will lose participation points.

Learning Activities and Reflection: An important component of any leader’s learning involves balancing action and reflection. As such, we will engage in a variety of learning activities in class, including exercises, discussions, role-playing, oral presentations, and analyses of cases.

Written / or Group / or Project Assignments (3 assignments x 28%=84% of course grade)

You will be asked to do a variety of “written / or group/ or project” assignment work that involves developing your leadership capabilities, wrestling with ethical issues, and applying organizational theory to situations in schools. Assignments are due as indicated on the schedule course schedule. **Unless you choose a presentation** **all papers or projects must be submitted via Taskstream.** You will receive feedback on this work via e-mail and TaskStream. Assignment descriptions and rubrics appear at the end of this syllabus.

Grading Scale

A = 95 – 100 percent B- = 75 – 79 percent

A- = 90 – 94 percent C = 70 – 74 percent

B+ = 85 –89 percent F = 69 percent and below

B = 80 – 84 percent

**Assignment #1 – The 21 Responsibilities of School Leadership (28%)**

Rationale - It is easy (and popular) to talk about what a school leader should have done or should not have done in any particular decision. So many situations arise during the day that quick decisions sometimes have to be made that end up with long term consequences (for staff, students, or the community). This assignment requires you to apply the “21 Responsibilities” to one of the schools in LCPS. You will use them to compare the priorities of responses from the principal of that school, three teachers from that school, and one parent from that school. The main question will be, “Which of the 21 Responsibilities” are the most important to student achievement?

Taking the interview as raw data and analyzing it through the frame of your school’s vision and/or mission statements requires you to determine if your school’s theories in use are well aligned with its espoused theories—an important initial step toward school improvement. Weaving community perceptions into the school improvement process is critical to building community support for change and advancement. Presenting your analysis and action plans in writing and orally is a crucial part of the process of leading for school improvement.

Process

1. Consult with your principal and/or internship Site Supervisor to identify 3 staff members and 1 parent community member in that school’s community who are both knowledgeable about the school and open to being interviewed.
2. Work with your class study group (3 or less) to develop a series of questions to be used in your interviews and to develop a script for potential interview participants that will help them to understand the purpose and nature as well as the anonymity of their responses.
3. Conduct your interviews (not more than 30 minutes each). Take detailed notes or record interviews, possibly transcribing them and build a matrix with the questions and significant responses.
4. Identify common responses and/or themes from the interviews. Look also for contradictory or inconsistent perceptions.

Product

Write a paper, present to the class, or video yourselves and your findings and how they relate to the “21 Responsibilities” selected and those not selected for your project.

The main question will be, “Which six of the ‘21 Responsibilities’ are the most important improving student achievement?” The body of your product must demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the 21 Responsibilities through the use of the qualitative data you collected in your interviews and your analysis of those interviews. A vital portion of the body is your **action plan** for addressing significant (findings) community perceptions. Be sure to conclude with a brief discussion of the implications of what you learned from the interview experience and your action plan.

**Assignment #2 – Managing Second Order Change (28%)**

Rationale – The most popular leader is not necessarily the best. Some of the greatest world leaders have had approval ratings of 60% or less. If significant changes need to be made, how are they done successfully and how are they done with the least damage to those involved?

Process

1. Using the 21 Responsibilities as a guide and structure, you will examine a major change initiative in one of our schools (that represents second order change), and lay out the issue, study its effects, talk to teachers, kids (if needed), parents, and school leadership to determine how they managed it and where they could have done better. Review any similar situations from other school or research. Analyze the cases and reflect on personal/professional learning experiences and apply understandings you have gained through your study and coursework.

Product – Present your finding on Managing Second Order Change. As above (with your class study group (3 or less), either write, present, of use some other form to communicate your findings (approved by me first). Make sure it includes an analysis of the cases and reflect on personal learning experience and a conclusion that explains the implications of your application.

**Assignment #3: Public Relations and “Parents and Community” Project (28%)**

Rationale – Why are some schools more highly thought of in the community? Does it relate to their demographics? Is it because of sports teams? Does it relate to the leadership? Does it relate to the community “wealth?” Is it because of communication? Is it because there is little staff or personnel change?

Process

Before you begin this assignment, gather and think about the following information:

1. Pick at least three schools to study and compare.
2. Look at them from Dale Carnegie’s point of views in How to Win Friends and Influence People.
3. What special or different or pro-active things do they do to make this magic or non-magic happen?
4. How does the “word” (+/- perception) get out that they are good or bad?
5. What can they do about it?
6. It might help to examine recent school issues, such as the “Obama Speech,” “Swine Flu,” or other community issues and how they were handled.

Product - Work with your class study group (3 or less) to develop a small series of questions to be used in your interviews and to develop a script for potential interview participants that will help them to understand the purpose and nature as well as the anonymity of their responses.

Your product will be your plan to build and improve school climate. It should include:

* A brief synopsis of your plan, including your driving question, relevant demographic information, and the key features of your action plan.
* A presentation of results to date, with data, if available.
* A discussion of the frame you used (either explicitly or implicitly) to put together your plan.
* A discussion of how you might think about your plan from a teacher’s perspective or your next job in an administrative role.
* A discussion of two to three important lessons you have learned through the process of investigating this.

**Proposed Class Schedule:**

**Note: This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Topic/Learning Experiences** | **Readings and Assignments Due Today:** | |
| **School Leadership That Works** | **How to Win Friends…** |
| Sept 14 | Introductions, Review of Syllabus, Course Overview, and Factors of School Leadership  Presentation on “Opening a New School” | Page 12  Page 110  Page 111 |  |
| Sept 21 | The 21 Responsibilities of School Leadership  Possible - Community Tour | Chapter 4 |  |
| Sept 28 | The 21 Responsibilities of School Leadership and 2 Types of Change | Chapter 5 |  |
| Oct 5 | 2 Types of Change / Managing versus Leading Change | Chapter 5 | - |
| **Oct 12** | **Holiday – NO CLASS** | - | Part I |
| Oct 19 | Public Relations / Dealing with People / NASCAR and Mozart  Teacher Organizations  Administrative Teams | Chapter 7 | Part II |
| **Oct 26** | **Blackboard Class** or project time | - | - |
| Nov 2 | Working with PTA’s and PTO’s | Chapter 7 | - |
| Nov 9 | Dealing with Change |  | Part III |
| Nov 16 | **Blackboard Class** or project time | Chapter 7 | - |
| **Nov 23** | Community Reputation  What you need to know about your School division, Cultural Competence, Communication  **First Assignment Due** | - | - |
| Nov 30 | Perceptions; Public Speaking, Interviews, Professionalism  **Second Assignment Due** |  | Part IV |
| Dec 7 | Administrative Decathlon – ten things you need to be able to do to run a building  **Third Assignments Due** |  |  |
| Dec 14 | Any final presentations and wrap up | - | - |

**Written Review(s) (Principal Interview, Reflection, or Project):**

**Name:**

**Score:**

**25-28 points**

* Review is written with an interesting summary to bring the reader into the topic.
* Review has a clearly stated analysis, and opinion toward the topic.
* Opinion is supported by multiple, distinct, and logical reasons.
* Utilizes effective words throughout the article to make transitions between ideas.
* Utilizes all correct grammar and spelling.
* Identifying information complete, on topic, and meets class expectations.
* Meets required length (1-2pages)

**22-24 points**

* Review is written with a sufficient summary of the topic.
* Opinion is supported by logical reasons.
* Utilizes transitions between ideas.
* Utilizes mostly correct grammar and spelling.
* Identifying information complete.

**18-21 point**s

* Review contains a summary of the article.
* Review has an opinion but is somewhat confusing.
* Opinion is supported by debatable reasons.
* Limited transitions between ideas.
* Contains multiple grammar and spelling errors.
* Identifying information incomplete.

**0 points**

* Review is not presented for consideration.

**All Presentations (Admin Interview, Interview, or Project,):**

**Name:**

**Score:**

**25-28 points**

* Makes eye contact throughout report.
* Natural hand gestures are demonstrated.
* Exhibits considerable enthusiasm for the topic.
* Voice is fluent, articulate, and utilizes a variety of effective voice levels.
* Presentation falls within given timeframe.
* Facilitates interaction with audience.
* Opinions supported by multiple, distinct, and logical reasons.
* Abstract is distributed to class and reflects presentation.

**22-24 points**

* Makes eye contact at key times during the report.
* Some natural hand gestures are demonstrated.
* Demonstrates some enthusiasm for topic.
* Utilizes effective voice levels.
* Presentation falls within given timeframe.
* Facilitates some interaction with audience.
* Opinions supported by logical reasons.
* Abstract is distributed to class.

**18-21 point**s

* Eye contact focused on one part of the class, does not scan audience.
* Hand gestures may be distracting.
* Demonstrates limited enthusiasm for topic.
* Voice effectiveness is limited – some articulation and fluency errors.
* Presentation extends past maximum time or falls short.
* Facilitates little or no interaction with audience.
* Opinion supported by debatable reasons.
* Abstract distributed to class, but limited in detail and scope.

**0 points**

* Fails to present.

**Class Participation and Attendance Rubric:**

15-16 points

* Consistently demonstrates a genuine desire to learn and share ideas
* Actively enters into dialogue, initiates discussions, asks significant questions, acts as a leader, provides exceptional insight
* Listens respectfully to others
* Completes preparatory assignments
* Does not miss a class or arrives late / leaves early
* Promptly transitions from break to work sessions
* Cell phones, pagers, and beepers turned off

12-14 points

* Demonstrates a genuine desire to learn and share ideas
* Enters into dialogue, initiates discussions, asks significant questions, acts as a leader, provides insight
* Listens when others talk, tolerant of others opinions
* Completes preparatory assignments
* No more than one: missed class, arrives late, leaves early
* Transitions from break to work sessions

8-11 points

* Infrequently participates in class discussion
* Listens when others talk but has private conversations
* Assignments incomplete
* Misses more than one class, arrives late, or leaves early