

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Course Syllabus – Spring 2010

Course Number and Title: EDLE 420 Organization and Management of Schools

Instructor: Dr. Courtney L. Fletcher cfletche@gmu.edu (301) 213-5329 ©

Textbook: Owens, Robert G. and Valesky, Thomas C. Organizational Behavior in Education: Adaptive Leadership and School Reform. 9th edition, Pearson Education, Inc. ISBN # 0-205-48636-3

Additional readings will be required

Office Hours: By appointment

All students are expected to attend every class session. Personal problems that prevent students from attending class should be reported ahead of time to the instructor via telephone or e-mail.

Meeting Times: January 19, 2010 – May 12, 2010 (Thursday)
West Building, Room 1008

Note: Our 11th Annual Leadership Conference will take place on March 18, 2010 (5p.m. to 8 p.m.). All students are expected to Attend the conference. No class will be held the week of March 15.

Course Description

EDLE 420 Organization and Management of Schools - Studies basic issues in leadership, organization, and governance of schools. Explores theories and models of leadership how leaders conceptualize school organization, with an emphasis on distributed leadership in professional environments, systems thinking, and organizational change.

Overview

Organization and Management of Schools is intended to provide students with an opportunity to explore meanings of leadership in schools; leaders' role in school change and restructuring; and ways school leaders make sense of school organization. Students explore both how organizations function and leadership choices within organizations, and they have an opportunity to reflect on the role and function of leaders within the broad context of American public education.

Student Outcomes

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

1. Articulate their core beliefs about teaching, learning, and leadership, and relate these to their vision of effective school leadership;
2. Understand major perspectives for analyzing organizational behavior and outcomes in schools;
3. Understand the broad governance context of school leadership;
4. Understand state and national standards for school leadership performance and leadership dispositions; and
5. Begin to articulate how they plan to develop their leadership capabilities.

College of Education and Human Development statement of expectations:

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 or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

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, internet assignments, lecture, guest practitioners, group presentations, interviews, collaborative learning, and reflections.

Grading

1. Class participation—10%

Attendance: Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions, in group activities, and in serving as critical friends 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 the instructor 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. If you are absent for a presentation, you will not receive credit for that activity.

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, role-playing, oral presentations, and analyses of cases.

2. Written assignments—60%

The Personal Best and Platform of Beliefs papers you are required to write are intended to help you think about your own leadership and what you value in leadership generally. (The Platform of Beliefs paper is the required performance for the course.) The papers should represent your best thinking and writing and will probably require multiple drafts to achieve a standard of excellence.

3. Final examination—30%

The final examination is intended to pull together all the parts of the course by having you examine a case from multiple theoretical perspectives. You will be asked to describe the most important elements of a case dealing with the leader’s role in school change; analyze the case using theories you have learned in class; and reflect on how using multiple theory bases to analyze a situation helps leaders enhance their effectiveness.

Schedule of course topics

Date	Topic	Reading and Writing Assignments
	Introduction & Overview: Leadership and Organization	
	Exploration: What is leadership? Chapter 1	
	Exploration: What kind of leadership do we need for today’s schools? Chapter 2	
	The leader’s role in school change Chapter 3	
	Ways of seeing organization and leadership - Structural Frame Chapter 4	

	Ways of seeing organization and leadership - Human Resource Frame Chapter 5	
	Distributed leadership & Collaboration Chapter 6	
	Ways of seeing organization and leadership - Political Frame Chapter 7	
	Ways of seeing organization and leadership – Symbolic Frame Chapter 8	
	Platform of beliefs	
	Reframing	
	Ethics in leadership and decision-making Chapter 9	
	Leadership development plans Chapter 10 & 11	[Culminating activity]
	Final examination	

Sample Assignment #1 - Personal Best Case Analysis

For your first assignment, we will borrow an exercise from James Kouzes and Barry Posner's book, *The Leadership Challenge*. As a part of their studies of leaders and followers, they asked leaders to write a **personal best case**, which they then discussed to discover themes about leader behavior.

For this paper, think back over your own leadership experiences and choose one that you consider to be a "personal best" -- a time when you performed at your peak as a leader. Review the experience in your mind, and ask yourself:

- What characterized the situation? Who was involved, where and when did it take place, and who initiated the situation?
- What motivated you to get involved? How did you challenge yourselves and others?
- How did you build enthusiasm and excitement? How did you involve others and foster collaboration? How did you build trust and respect?
- What principles and values guided you and others? How did you set an example?

The above helps you describe your leadership best situation. To complete the paper, examine the leadership model Fullan presents in chapter 1 of his book. Using this model as an analytic tool, **in what ways did you excel as a leader in the situation you described above? What might you have done differently to enhance your performance? What lessons did you learn about leadership from the experience?**

This is a short paper (4-5 pages), which should be typewritten, double-spaced with ample margins. Come prepared to **share** your case!

<i>Levels:</i>	4 exceeds expectations	3 meets expectations	2 approaching expectations	1 falls below expectations	Score
<i>Criteria:</i>					
Thesis & introduction (10%)	The paper starts with a clear and concise statement of purpose and an introduction that provides a clear roadmap for the reader, foreshadowing what the paper is intended to cover.	Paper starts with a brief introduction that alludes to the purpose of the paper and provides a general foreshadowing of what is to be included.	The introduction provides the barest hint of the purpose of the paper and the information to be shared.	There is no clear introduction or purpose.	
Description of personal best case (20%)	The case is described thoroughly, including an accounting of the "personal best" situation and why it was selected as a "personal best."	The case is described thoroughly, but detail is lacking on why the case represents a "personal best"	Description of the case is incomplete or poorly constructed	Description of the case is largely missing or wholly inadequate.	
Case analysis (25%)	Fullan's model is summarized and then used to thoroughly assess how the case exemplifies effective leadership.	Fullan's model is used adequately to assess how the case exemplifies effective leadership.	Analysis is weak or incomplete, or superficially considers the Fullan model.	Analysis is unrelated to the case, is largely missing or wholly inadequate.	
Implications for leadership development (25%)	Lessons are derived from the case relating the candidate's experiences and need to develop specific leadership dispositions or proficiencies	General lessons are presented relating to the candidate's experiences and leadership development	Lessons relating to the candidate's experiences and future leadership development are superficial	Lessons learned and implications of the case are largely missing or wholly inadequate.	
Organization of paper (10%)	Paper is powerfully organized and fully developed	Paper includes logical progression of ideas aided by clear transitions	Paper includes brief skeleton (introduction, body, conclusion) but lacks transitions	Paper lacks logical progression of ideas	
Mechanics (10%)	Nearly error-free which reflects clear understanding and thorough proofreading	Occasional grammatical errors and questionable word choice	Errors in grammar and punctuation, but spelling has been proofread	Frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation	

Sample Assignment 2 - Platform of Beliefs (Required Performance)

The Maine School Leadership Network developed the Platform of Beliefs exercise as a tool they use with school leaders as a way of helping them identify the core beliefs that form the foundation of their decision-making and professional practice.

Each person approaches a reflective exercise like this somewhat uniquely, based on past experiences, knowledge, and hopes for the future. To do your platform:

1. Identify 3 or so core beliefs that are important to you when you think about *teaching, learning, and leadership*.
2. For each of these, explain why it is a critically important belief, and how it relates to the other beliefs.
3. Then for each belief, expand on them by including a few principles that describe what the belief means and how it appears in school practices – what are people actually doing when this belief is manifested in behaviors.

Your Platform of Beliefs is a document you will be developing over your career. At this stage, consider the document a work in progress. Use the exercise to reflect on the kind of leader you want to be, and to begin to develop the capacity to speak with others about this vision.

Come prepared to make a **short presentation** of your vision and beliefs.

Assume you are interviewing for a leadership position in a school. You have been asked to provide a formal introduction at the search committee meeting by talking a little about your beliefs as a school leader. Consider what kind of first impression you want to make -- What is important to you? How will you lead? What messages do you want the committee to take away about your leadership?

(Note – the committee DEMANDS that your presentation take no more than 3 minutes, and you will suffer CONSEQUENCES if it runs longer.)

<i>Levels:</i>	4 exceeds expectations	3 meets expectations	2 approaching expectations	1 falls below expectations	Score
<i>Criteria:</i>					
Attention to Audience (20%)	Engaged audience and held their attention throughout with creative articulation, enthusiasm, and clearly focused presentation	Engaged audience and held their attention most of the time by remaining on topic and presenting facts with enthusiasm	Little attempt to engage audience	Did not attempt to engage audience	
Clarity (20%)	Development of thesis is clear through use of specific and appropriate examples; transitions are clear and create a succinct and even flow	Sequence of information is well-organized for the most part, but more clarity with transitions is needed	Content is loosely connected, transitions lack clarity	No apparent logical order of presentation, unclear focus	
Presentation Length (20%)	Presented within the allotted time	Remained close to the allotted time (i.e., within 30 seconds)	Exceeding or falling short of allotted time by a significant margin (30-60 seconds)	Greatly exceeding or falling short of allotted time (more than 60 seconds)	
Content (20%)	Exceptional use of material that clearly relates to a focused thesis; creative use of supporting ideas	Information relates to a clear thesis; many relevant points, but they are somewhat unstructured	Thesis is clear, but supporting information is disconnected	Thesis is unclear and information appears randomly chosen	
Speaking Skills (20%)	Exceptional confidence with material displayed through poise, clear articulation, eye contact, and enthusiasm	Clear articulation of ideas, but apparently lacks confidence with material	Little eye contact; fast speaking rate, little expression, mumbling	Monotone; speaker seemed uninterested in material	

Class Participation Rubric

<i>Levels:</i>	4	3	2	1	
<i>Criteria:</i>	exceeds expectations	meets expectations	approaching expectations	falls below expectations	Score
Attendance	Exemplary attendance, no tardies	Near perfect attendance, few tardies	Occasional (2-3) absences or tardies	Frequent (>3) absences or tardies	
Quality of Questions, Interaction	Most queries are specific and on point. Deeply involved in class dialogue. Challenges ideas, seeks meaning.	Often has specific queries, stays involved in class dialogue, though sometimes tentative or off-base.	Asks questions about deadlines, procedures, directions or for help with little specificity. Little discussion of ideas.	Rarely asks questions of any quality.	
Effort	Willingly participates when asked. Plays a leadership role in groups. Engages and brings out the best in others.	Willingly participates when asked. Takes on group tasks. Engages others.	Reluctantly participates when asked. Seeks easiest duties in groups. Tolerates others.	Actively avoids involvement when possible. Complains about others. Has large set of excuses.	
Engagement	Enthusiastically initiates discussion. Personalizes and takes ownership of activities. Always knows where class or group is.	Sometimes initiates discussion and always works well with direction. Generally knows what's going on.	Seeks direction, but does not initiate discussion. May know where class or group is.	Waits for direction. Knows little of what is going on. Cannot describe where class or group is.	