

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**Educational Leadership**

EDLE 634-Section 603– Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership  
3 Credits, Spring 2017  
Tuesdays, 4:30-7:30- TC Williams HS, Room A225  
1/10/17 – 4/18/17

**Faculty**

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**Prerequisites/Corequisites**

Admission to program, EDLE 620, 791 and 690

**University Catalog Course Description**

Examines current and emerging issues and trends impacting education. Includes 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.

**Course Delivery Method**

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.

**Learner Outcomes or Objectives**

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

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.

## **Professional Standards**

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 21<sup>st</sup> 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).

## **Required Texts**

Koonce, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Educational Issues*  
Carter & Welner, *Closing the Opportunity Gap*  
Kamenetz, *The Test*  
Noguera & Blankstein, *Excellence through Equity*

## Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor in Tk20.

- **Assignments and/or Examinations**

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.

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.

### TK20 Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement

#### Assignment #1

Students will select two (2) issues that are of high interest to them and write an essay for each issue of 3-5 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. Each paper will be worth 20% of the Final Grade.

#### **40% of Final Grade**

(Course outcomes numbers 1, 2, and 3 when successfully completed.)

#### Possible Topics:

ESOL

Graduation Rates

Gender Equity

Gifted Programs

Disabilities

Standards

Assessment

Low Performance in Urban Areas

Low Performance in Rural Areas

AYP as defined by NCLB

Teacher Education

Teacher Quality

Pre – Education

Sex Education

Religious Expression

Effective Practices

Teacher Pay

Teacher Assignments

Class Size

High School Reform

Grouping and Tracking

Standardization vs. Variation

Retention and Promotion

Centralization vs. Decentralization

Charter Schools

School Choice and Vouchers

Privatization

Home Schooling

Evolution

Zero Tolerance

Role of Scientific Research in School Reform

Comprehensive School Reform

## **Assignment #2**

Students will present (in pairs) of the major trends effecting education in the immediate future. Topics will be based on our Excellence Through Equity book, and will be chosen in class. Presentations are of the students design and should incorporate the use of technology. Each member of the class should read the chapter (s) to be discussed prior to the class meeting of that presentation so everyone has some background knowledge. 45- 50 minutes will be allocated in class for presentations, questions, and discussion.

**35% Of Final Grade**

(Course outcomes numbers 7, 8, 10 and 11 when successfully completed.)

## **Assignment #3**

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

**25% of Final Grade**

(Course outcomes numbers 1, 6, 9, and 10 when successfully completed.)

- **Other 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.

- **Grading**

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

## **Professional Dispositions**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

## **Class Schedule**

### **January 10**

Introduction

Partner Presentation Topics and Assignments

Socratic Seminar Format

Achievement Gaps Arise from Opportunity Gaps

Lack of Achievement or Loss of Opportunity

### **January 17**

Koonce Issues 1.5, 2.1 and 2.6

Read: Chapters 3-5, Closing the Opportunity Gap, pp.25-74

### **January 24**

Socratic Seminar: Overcoming the Obstacles We Create for Children,  
(Chapters 3-5, Closing the Opportunity Gap, pp.25-74)

### **January 31**

Koonce Issues 2.3, 2.5, and 3.3

Read: Chapters 6-9, Closing the Opportunity Gap, pp.77-140

### **February 7**

Socratic Seminar: Overcoming the Obstacles We Create for Schools,  
(Chapters 6-9, Closing the Opportunity Gap, pp.77-140)

### **February 14**

**Work on Partner Presentations (NO CLASS)**

### **February 21**

Koonce Issues 2.2, 3.6, and 3.1

Read: Chapters 10-13, Closing the Opportunity Gap, pp.143-192

### **February 28**

Socratic Seminar: Overcoming the Obstacles We Create for Equality,  
(Chapters 10-13, Closing the Opportunity Gap, pp.143-192)

### **March 7**

Koonce Issues 3.9, 3.11, and 3.8

Read: Chapters 14-16, Closing the Opportunity Gap, pp.195-227

### **March 14**

Socratic Seminar: Solutions for Closing the Opportunity Gap,  
(Chapters 14-16, Closing the Opportunity Gap, pp.195-227)

**March 21**

Excellence Through Equity Partner Presentations (1,2)

**March 28**

Excellence Through Equity Partner Presentations (3,4)

**April 4**

Excellence Through Equity Partner Presentations (5,6)

Read: **Complete, The Test, entire book**

**April 11**

**SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)**

**April 18**

Socratic Seminar: Why our schools are obsessed with standardized testing, but you don't have to be.

**(The Test, entire book)**

Assignment # 1- Both Essays Due

Course Wrap-up

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

**Core Values Commitment**

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

**GMU Policies and Resources for Students***Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

### *Campus Resources*

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/>.
- The Writing Center provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing (see <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>).
- The Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance (see <http://caps.gmu.edu/>).
- The Student Support & Advocacy Center staff helps students develop and maintain healthy lifestyles through confidential one-on-one support as well as through interactive programs and resources. Some of the topics they address are healthy relationships, stress management, nutrition, sexual assault, drug and alcohol use, and sexual health (see <http://ssac.gmu.edu/>). Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone at 703-993-3686. Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to <http://ssac.gmu.edu/make-a-referral/>.

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/>.**

**Written Essay – 20 points**  
**Assessment Rubric**

CRITERIA	4	3	2	1
	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b> (Clear, convincing, substantial evidence)	<b>Meets Expectations</b> (clear evidence)	<b>Approaching Expectations</b> (limited evidence)	<b>Falls Below Expectations</b>
<b>Introduction</b> (Statement of purpose) (25 %)	Contains a sharp focus and a clearly identifiable statement of purpose.	Contains a focus	Contains an unengaging or poorly focused statement of purpose.	Does not present a thesis or purpose statement that is clearly identifiable or developed.
<b>Interview Summary</b> (including PIM) (25 %)	Major points are strong and supported by examples	Major points are given	Major points lack clarity	Major points are missing
<b>Directions for Schools</b> (25 %)	Concepts are insightful and inspiring	Concepts are good	Concepts do not go beyond the obvious	Concepts are missing or underdeveloped
<b>Reflection</b> (15 %)				missing
<b>Mechanics</b> (10%)	No errors	A few minor errors	Several distracting errors	Many major mechanical errors

**Partner Project Assignment– 35 points  
Assessment Rubric**

CRITERIA	4	3	2	1
	Exceeds Expectations (Clear, convincing, substantial evidence)	Meets Expectations (clear evidence)	Approaching Expectations (limited evidence)	Falls Below Expectations
<b>Presentation Content</b> (50%)	Provides new insights into issues	Provides complete and accurate understanding of issues	Provides incomplete understanding of issues	Provides misconceptions of issues
<b>Presentation Delivery</b> (35%)	Analysis of data is persuasively presented, and application is made to a "big picture" context	Analysis of significance is presented clearly and succinctly.	Basic facts are present	Information is incomplete
<b>Handout</b> (15%)	Provides support to presentation that contains rich, vivid and powerful detail	Clearly communicates main idea of presentation with suitable support and detail	Information is not clear	Information results in an isolated and random format

## Class Participation Rubric-25points

	<b>4 Exceeds Expectations</b>	<b>3 Meets Expectations</b>	<b>2 Approaches Expectations</b>	<b>1 Falls Below Expectations</b>
<b>Attendance (25%)</b>	Exemplary attendance (no absences, tardies or early dismissals)	Maximum of one absence or two tardies and/or early dismissals	Occasional absences (more than one)...and/or frequent tardies and early dismissals	Frequent absences and/or tardies
<b>Quality of interaction --- questions, comments, suggestions (20%)</b>	Most queries are specific and on target. Deeply involved in whole class and group discussions.	Often has specific queries, stays involved in class discussion.	Asks questions about deadlines, procedures, directions. Little discussion about class topics and/or ideas.	Rarely interacts with the instructor or class mates in an appropriate manner
<b>Effort (25%)</b>	Volunteers as appropriate and often leads in group settings. Engages and brings out the best in others.	Willingly participates with instructor and classmates. Engages others.	Reluctantly participates when asked (rarely volunteers) Seeks easiest duties within groups.	Actively avoids involvement. Complains about others and uses excuses to explain deficiencies.
<b>Demonstration of preparation for class (30%)</b>	Demonstrates preparation regularly by referring to previous learning, text and other sources to contribute to class discussion and is prepared for each and every class.	Demonstrates preparation regularly by referring to previous learning, text and other sources to contribute to class discussion.	Demonstrates preparation and readiness periodically.	Is unable to demonstrate readiness for class