

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**  
**Education Leadership Program**

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**EDLE 634, Section DL1**  
**Contemporary Issues in Education Leadership**  
**Fall 2018, 3 credit hours**

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**Office Hours:** Online office hours –Thursdays 3-5 p.m. using Blackboard Collaborate  
Online by appointment using Google Hangouts or  
Blackboard Collaborate  
In person by appointment only (Thompson Hall – Room 1307)

**Course Term:** August 27–December 8, 2018

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

**Contemporary Issues in Education Leadership (3:3:0)** Examines current and emerging issues and trends impacting education to include 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.

## II. COURSE DELIVERY METHOD

This course will be delivered 100% fully online using an asynchronous (not “real time”) format via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before “@masonlive.gmu.edu”) and email password. The course site will be available on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

### III. COURSE MATERIALS

#### ***Required Texts***

Frey, William H. (2018). *Diversity explosion: How new racial demographics are remaking America*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

*(Note that there is a new 2018 edition)*

Duncan, Greg J., and Richard J. Murnane. (2014) *Restoring opportunity: The crisis of inequality and the challenge for American education*. Harvard Education Press.

#### ***Other Assigned and Optional Sources***

Assigned and optional source material will be available on their links listed on Blackboard. Assigned sources will also be listed on the tentative schedule below.

### IV. COURSE CONTENT

During the course students will learn about (1) the demographic shifts about school populations that have led to changes in current and projected student bodies; (2) research that examines causes of opportunity and achievement gaps in American education; (3) interventions related to reducing opportunity and achievement gaps by race/ethnicity, SES, dominant language, or disability; and (4) examining critical issues that occur in schools when managing staff and students as a school leader.

#### ***Teaching and Learning***

Each class will include a variety of activities and exercises. Specific process goals for this class are as follows:

1. Classes will reflect a balance of activities that encourage the exploration of and the use of research in instructional leadership. To promote an atmosphere that allows us to accomplish this, we will:
  - a. agree to disagree respectfully during class discussions;
  - b. give others a charitable read by assuming good intentions;
  - c. strive to be open to new ideas and perspectives; and
  - d. listen actively to one another.
  
2. Candidate work will reflect what is expected from leaders. Hence, it is expected that candidates will:
  - a. write papers that are well-researched, proofread, submitted in a timely fashion, and conform to APA guidelines;
  - b. participate actively in class discussions in a manner that challenges the best thinking of the class; and
  - c. provide constructive feedback to others both on their ideas and on their written work, striving to learn from each other and to test each other's ideas.

3. We will endeavor to create an online environment that approximate what we know about learning organizations. Consequently, it is important that we create a space that allows participants to try out new ideas and voice opinions without fear or ridicule or embarrassment. The hallmark of a learning organization is a balance between openness and constructive feedback; hence, everyone is expected to:
  - a. demonstrate appropriate **respect for one another**;
  - b. voice concerns and opinions about the class process openly;
  - c. engage in **genuine inquiry**;
  - d. recognize and celebrate each other's ideas and accomplishments;
  - e. show an awareness of each other's needs; and
  - f. **maintain strict confidentiality** regarding any information shared.

## V. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students completing the course successfully will be able to:

- ✓ Access and manipulate GIS sites to retrieve and analyze demographic data.
- ✓ Convey and understanding of demographic changes that have occurred and are projected to occur in America including forces affecting the changing racial map, population shifts; cultural and generation gaps; and their impact on education.
- ✓ Analyze and explain research about education gaps related to race/ethnicity, disability, SES, or dominant language.
- ✓ Apply such research to a proposed plan to narrow at least one of these gaps.
- ✓ Consider the myriad number of challenges school leaders typically face when managing staff and students.

## VI. RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRAM GOALS

The following Education Leadership Constituent Council (ELLCC) standard elements are addressed in this course:

- 1.1:** Candidates understand and can collaboratively develop, articulate, implement, and steward a shared vision of learning for a school.
- 1.2:** Candidates understand and can collect and use data to identify school goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and create and implement plans to achieve school goals.
- 1.3:** Candidates understand and can promote continual and sustainable school improvement.
- 1.4:** Candidates understand and can evaluate school progress and revise school plans supported by school stakeholders.
- 2.2:** Candidates understand and can create and evaluate a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular and instructional school program.
- 5.1:** Candidates understand and can act with integrity and fairness to ensure that schools are accountable for every student's academic and social success.
- 5.3:** Candidates understand and can safeguard the values of democracy, equity, and diversity.
- 6.3:** Candidates understand and can anticipate and assess emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt school-based leadership strategies.

## VII. TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

This course will be delivered on GMU's Blackboard platform, so students are required to have access to Blackboard. A Blackboard site is available to all students enrolled in the course at <http://mymason.gmu.edu>. You need to log on using your GMU username and password. To participate in this course, students will need the following resources:

- High-speed internet access with a standard up-to-date browser including Google Chrome (preferred), Mozilla Firefox, or Internet Explorer. Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard.
- Consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard (at least daily access on weekdays), as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs are available for free download by clicking on the link next to each plug-in:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
  - Windows Media Player: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
  - Apple QuickTime Player: [www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)
- You will use **Google Docs** to complete select assignments and to participate in various learning activities throughout the semester.
- **Video/Screencasting Tools:** You will use Kaltura, Jing, Camtasia, or Screencast-O-Matic to record videos throughout the semester.
- **A headset microphone** for use with Blackboard Collaborate we conferencing tool or with Google Hangouts to engage with the instructor. These can also be useful when recording videos for the course.

Email: Per university policy and in compliance with federal law, I will only communicate with candidates via their GMU email accounts and will be unable to respond to emails sent from other accounts (i.e., Gmail, yahoo, work email, etc.).

- **All candidates are required to activate and monitor their GMU e-mail accounts.**
- Any announcements concerning the course will be sent to your GMU email address.
- I will respond to emails within one business day of email receipt (i.e., excluding weekends).

Video Conferencing: Students are encouraged to communicate with each other and the instructor using Blackboard Collaborate for both group collaboration sessions and the instructor's virtual office hours. We may also use Google Hangouts as a video communication platform when needed.

## VIII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

### *General Expectations*

Consistent with the expectations of a Master's level course in the Education Leadership program, grading is based heavily on student performance in written assignments. The assignments constructed for this course reflect a mix of skills associated with the application of research to education leadership contexts. Overall, written work will be assessed using the following broad criteria:

- Application of concepts embedded in assigned readings and other materials and reinforced in class activities
- The quality of analysis, synthesis, and application
- The ability to write in a clear, concise, and organized fashion

Additionally, a significant portion of the class grade will be based on participation and the contribution you make to class discussion.

### *Specific Performances and Weights*

The overall weights of the various performances are as follows:

#### **Class participations - 125 points**

Candidates are expected to participate actively in class discussions, small group activities, and in serving as critical friends to other colleagues. The participation rubric is available on the course site. Participation points will be assessed as part of each unit and the activities are as follows.

#### *Orientation (5 points)*

- Syllabus quiz
- Google map activity

#### *Unit 1: Diversity Explosion (40 points)*

- Group discussions, in-class activities, quizzes and peer review

#### *Unit 2: The Opportunity and Achievement Gap (40 points)*

- Group discussions, in-class activities, quizzes and peer review

#### *Unit 3: Critical Issues in Education (40 points)*

- Group discussions, in-class activities, quizzes and peer review

#### **Written Assignments - 375 points**

You will write **three papers** during the course. The first paper involves reporting a demographic analysis. The second is a literature review of the nature of an achievement gap and what research suggests might help close it, followed by a set of proposed actions to narrow it in

your setting. The third is a descriptive analysis of a contemporary issue from your schoolhouse. A description of each assignment and a rubric for grading each assignment are included at the end of this syllabus.

Submitting papers: All papers must be submitted **on time, electronically via Blackboard.**

Late work: Students' work is expected to be on time, meaning no later than midnight of the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted except in an emergency situation that have been discussed and approved by the instructor in advance of the due date. Please take advantage of instructor office hours and availability to get assistance prior to assignment deadlines.

Grade Appeals: Grade appeals will only be granted when the number of points awarded for the assignment is less than 75 percent of the possible points available. Grade appeals will only be allowed for the first two written assignments. Students must resubmit the assignment within two weeks of receiving their original grade in order to receive a new grade. If the resubmission represents a substantial improvement over the original assignment, students will receive a new grade with the 75 percent of the points available for the assignment.

Grading Scale:

A+ = 500 points  
 A = 475 - 499 points  
 A- = 450 - 474 points  
 B+ = 435 - 449 points  
 B = 415 - 434 points  
 B- = 400 - 414 points  
 C = 375 - 399 points  
 F = Below 375 points

## IX. ONLINE EXPECTATIONS

Course Week: Because online courses do not have a "fixed" meeting day, our week will generally **start** on Tuesday and **finish** on Monday, with exceptions communicated to students via email.

Log in Frequency: Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communication from the instructor, **at a minimum this should be three times per week.**

Participation: Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing of all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.

Technical Competence: Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students are expected to seek assistance from the instructor or GMU IT if they are struggling with the technical components of the course.

**Technical Issues:** Students should expect to experience some technical difficulties at some point in the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.

**Workload:** Expect to log in to this course **at least three times a week** to read announcements, participate in discussions, and work on course material. Remember, this course **is not self-paced**. There are **specific deadlines** and **due dates** listed in the **CLASS SCHEDULE** section of the syllabus and the weekly to do lists on Blackboard to which you are expected to adhere. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities, and assignments due. **Plan to spend about ten hours a week to complete all course activities**.

**Advising:** If you would like to schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content, or other course-related issues, and you are unable to come to the Mason campus, we can meet via telephone or web conference. We can meet during the online office hours using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. Send an email to schedule a one-to-one session if you are unable to meet during office hours, and including your preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

**Netiquette:** Our goal is to **collaborative**, not combative. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be misconstrued. A following is a list of suggestions for interacting with others online:

- Re-read your responses carefully before you post.
- Be positive in your approach to others and be diplomatic with your words.
- Remember, you are not competing with each other. You are sharing information and learning from one another as well as the instructor.
- Use descriptive subject lines. Give readers a clue about what's inside.
- Do not use all caps.
- Avoid slang, abbreviations, and acronyms.
- Avoid sarcasm, joking, or other communication styles reliant on visual cues.
- Avoid multiple exclamation points.
- Assume good intentions. Err on the good side of all contributors.
- If you are referring to something that was said or read on the online forum, "cite" the original source to give credit to who originally shared the idea.

### **Professional Dispositions**

- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.
- See: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

### **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://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- 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 the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS). Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ds.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 [tk2ohelp@gmu.edu](mailto:tk2ohelp@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>.

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

### ***Plagiarism:***

- **Plagiarism Statement:** Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; **a simple listing of books and articles is not sufficient.** Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting. Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions for this include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writers' own insights or findings from their own field research, and what has been termed common knowledge. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious; what is common knowledge for one audience may not be so for another. In such situations, it is helpful, to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being "reader friendly." In other words, writers provide a citation for any piece of information that they think their

readers might want to investigate further. Not only is this attitude considerate of readers, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will never be guilty of plagiarism. (Statement of English Department at George Mason University)

- **Plagiarism and the Honor Code:** George Mason University operates under an honor system, which is published in the University Catalog and deals specifically with cheating, attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Please familiarize yourself with the honor code, especially the statement on plagiarism (<http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html>). If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor or utilize the GMU writing center.
- **Plagiarism and the Internet:** Copyright rules also apply to users of the Internet who cite from Internet sources. Information and graphics accessed electronically must also be cited, giving credit to the sources. This material includes but is not limited to e-mail (don't cite or forward someone else's e-mail without permission), newsgroup material, information from Web sites, including graphics.
- If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor utilize the GMU Writing Center.

**Academic Integrity & Inclusivity:** This course embodies the perspective that we all have differing perspectives and ideas and we each deserve the opportunity to share our thoughts. Therefore, we will conduct our discussions with respect for those differences. That means, we each have the freedom to express our ideas, but we should also do so keeping in mind that our colleagues deserve to hear differing thoughts in a respectful manner, i.e. we may disagree without being disagreeable. <http://integrity.gmu.edu/>

**Diversity, Religious Holiday:** Please refer to George Mason University's calendar of religious holidays and observations (<http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/>). It is the student's responsibility to speak to the instructor in advance should their religious observances impact their participation in class activities and assignments.

**Student Privacy Policy:** George Mason University strives to fully comply with FERPA by protecting the privacy of student records and judiciously evaluating requests for release of information from those records. Please see George Mason University's student privacy policy <https://registrar.gmu.edu/students/privacy/>

**Professional Dispositions:** Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

**Core Values Commitment:** 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.

**Other Concerns:** If you have concerns or issues relating to the content or conduct of the class, please talk with me directly. Although the specifics of these conversations are entirely

confidential, they may provide me with useful suggestions that may be shared indirectly with the class to improve the learning experience for all students. As a matter of policy, I do not respond to anonymous e-mails.

**Tentative Class Schedule**  
**EDLE 634.DL1 (Viano) Fall 2018**

To accommodate the learning needs of the class, the topics and reading schedule may be amended during the semester. Any changes will be communicated via email or Blackboard.

Week/Date	Lesson	Reading	Activities & Assignments
Week 1 August 27 – September 4	Orientation  Introduction to Unit 1: Diversity Explosion  Lesson 1: America’s Racial Map	1) Syllabus  2) Frey, Chapters 1 & 3  3) Assignment #1 description	1) Syllabus Quiz  2) Google Map exercise  3) Introduction video with icebreaker activity, respond to your groups’ videos  4) American Community Survey GIS exercise
Week 2  September 5 – 10	Lesson 2: The Cultural Generation Gap	1) Frey, Chapter 2	1) Discussion board
Week 3  September 11 – 17	Lesson 3: Population Shifts	1) Frey, assigned chapter (possible Chapters 4-7)  2) Additional article matching assigned chapter	1) Video <sup>1</sup> on assigned chapter and article. Responses and discussion on other videos.
Week 4  September 18 – 24	Lesson 4: How and Where We Live	1) Frey, assigned chapter (possible Chapters 8-11) with additional article matching assigned chapter  2) Frey, Chapter 12	1) Video <sup>1</sup> on assigned chapter and article. Responses and discussion on other videos.  2) Discussion on Frey Chapter 12.

<sup>1</sup> You will have the option of a variety of creative ways to communicate the assigned materials including videos, a narrated PowerPoint, and other media-based presentation formats.

Week 5 September 25 – October 1	Lesson 5: Where and With Whom Our Children Go to School	1) Orfield report 2) Excerpt from <i>Five Miles Away a World Apart</i> by James Ryan	1) Participate in peer review 2) Activity TBA
October 4	<b>Assignment #1 Due</b>		
Week 6 October 2 – 8	Introduction to Unit 2: Opportunity and Achievement Gaps  Lesson 6: The Nature of Gaps, Part 1	1) Assignment #2 description 2) Other readings TBA	1) Show what you know activity on videos and readings
Week 7 October 9 – 15	Lesson 7: The Nature of Gaps, Part 2	1) Duncan & Murnane, Chapters 1-4	1) Citations for Assignment #2 due 2) Activity TBA
Week 8 October 16 – 22	Lesson 8: Narrowing Gaps, Part 1	1) Duncan & Murnane, assigned chapter (possible Chapters 5-8) 2) Other readings TBA	1) Video <sup>1</sup> on assigned chapter and article. Responses and discussion on other videos. 2) Activity TBA
Week 9 October 23 – 29	Lesson 9: Narrowing Gaps, Part 2	1) Duncan & Murnane, Chapter 9 2) Other readings TBA	1) Participate in peer review 2) Activity TBA
November 1	<b>Assignment #2 Due</b>		
Week 10-11 October 30 – November 12	Introduction to Unit 3: Critical Issues in Education Leadership  Lesson 10: Managing Staff	-----	1) Activity on selected topic

Weeks 12-13 November 13 – December 3	Lesson 11: Student Behavior and Academic Challenges	-----	1) Activity on selected topic
November 21-25	<b><i>Thanksgiving Break</i></b>	<i>Note: No deadlines during Thanksgiving Break</i>	
December 8	<b><i>Assignment #3 Due</i></b>		

## **Writing Assignment #1: Analysis of Changing Demographics (125 points)**

### **Rationale**

It is important that school leaders understand the demographic changes that are occurring and are projected to occur in the nation, their state, their school district and their school. This assignment requires that you demonstrate your grasp of the demographics of your school or school district, compare them to the state, project demographic changes on the basis of trends in your school district or school, and describe what needs to be done instructionally to meet the needs implied by the current and future demographics. The conclusions of this paper will help inform the work on the final assignment.

### **Tasks**

Select the data from credible sources that you will use.

Write a paper of 8-10 pages that includes these elements:

- an introduction that treats your thesis and foreshadows what you will do to support it, including the data that you will provide,
- a description of the changing demographics of your school district or school, including
  - a rationale for presenting the data you selected (i.e., why they were important)
  - comparisons with previous years, and with similarly situated schools, the state and/or the nation,
- a description of your projections of the future demographics of your school district or school, including a figure(s) or table(s) displaying past, current and future data.
- an analysis of the data and their implications for education in your school district or school and;
- a conclusion that summarizes your thesis and your support for it.

***Assignment #1 description continued on next page...***

### Analysis of Changing Demographics Assessment Rubric

Criteria (Points)	Levels of Achievement			
	Exceeds expectations 90 to 100%	Meets expectations 80 to 89%	Approaching expectations 70 to 79%	Falls below expectations 0 to 69%
<i>Introduction (15)</i> The introduction orients the reader to the purpose of the paper and presents the paper's thesis	The introduction draws the reader into the paper effectively. The thesis is clear and the author foreshadows the data and how it will be used to support the thesis.	The introduction orients the reader to the paper, but the thesis is unclear, or the author has not foreshadowed how the thesis will be supported.	The introduction orients the reader to the paper, but the thesis is unclear, <i>and</i> the author has not foreshadowed how the thesis will be supported.	The introduction is missing or unintelligible.
<i>Description of the data (30)</i> The data set the stage for the analysis	The author makes clear why the data were selected, why the sources are credible and what the reader should note in the table(s) and/or figure(s). The data include past demographics, current demographics and projected demographics.	The author leaves unclear why the data were selected, why the sources are credible, or omits past, current or projected demographics.	The author leaves unclear why the data were selected <i>and</i> why the sources are credible.	The description of data is missing.
<i>Presentation of data (20)</i> The written description of data is illustrated in a table(s) and/or figure(s)	The table(s) and/or figure(s) follow logically from the text and enhance the reader's understanding of what the author presented in writing.	The table(s) and/or figure(s) follow logically from the text but fail to enhance the reader's understanding of what the author presented in writing.	The table(s) and/or figure(s) do not follow logically from the text.	The table(s) and/or figure(s) are absent.
<i>Analysis (30)</i> The analysis of the data indicates their implications for a school district or a school.	The author states clearly and logically the implications for the school district or school of the data analyzed.	The author states but leaves somewhat unclear the implications of the data for the school district or school.	The analysis is present but fails to account for the implications for the school district or school.	The analysis is absent.
<i>Conclusion (15)</i> The conclusion finishes the paper by summarizing the thesis, support for the thesis and what the author has learned.	The conclusion follows logically from the analysis, includes a re-worded statement of the thesis and summarizes clearly how the analysis of the data supports the thesis.	The conclusion follows logically from the analysis, but does not include either a re-worded statement of the thesis or a clear summary of how the analysis of the data supports the thesis.	The conclusion follows logically from the analysis, but \includes neither a re-worded statement of the thesis nor a clear summary of how the analysis of the data supports the thesis.	The conclusion is illogical or absent.
<i>Mechanics and APA (15)</i> Your written work should always represent you as accurate and precise.	The paper is nearly error-free, and reflects clear understanding of APA format.	The paper contains either writing errors (e.g., spelling, grammar, questionable word choices) or APA errors.	The paper contains writing errors (e.g., spelling, grammar, questionable word choices) and APA errors.	The paper is difficult to understand because of issues related to clarity and correctness of writing.

## **Writing Assignment #2: Review of Research on Narrowing Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (150 points)**

### **Rationale**

If they expect to produce positive results, school leaders need to be knowledgeable about the demographics of their student bodies, and the research surrounding the nature of and possible amelioration of opportunity and achievement gaps. To make progress on shrinking opportunity and achievement gaps, it is important to understand the factors that cause or propel those gaps. In the absence of such understanding it is difficult, if not impossible, to launch interventions to diminish the influence of the factors associated with creating and/or widening the gaps. To complete this paper you will conduct a literature review of research that will enable you to:

- describe the nature of the gap, including what appears to cause or propel it;
- describe the interventions that appear to hold promise in narrowing the gap; and
- provide a rationale for one or more interventions that you would apply to the gap in your setting.

### **Tasks**

(1) Identify the gap you wish to address. You may select from among gaps associated with differences in performance based on race/ethnicity, social-economic status, dominant language or disability.

(2) Select the research sources on which you will rely. These sources may include theoretical pieces, reviews of research, original research (quantitative and/or qualitative), and reports of practice. Reviews of research and original research studies found in peer-reviewed journals should predominate. **Include at least 8 or more credible sources.**

(3) Write a 10-15 page paper that includes:

- an introduction that identifies, explains, and justifies the gap based you have selected, in part, on your analysis of demographics contained in Assignment 1, and states your thesis regarding the causes of the gap and what might be done to narrow it, and foreshadows how you will support your thesis;
- a synthesis of the research reviewed that is organized on the basis of your thesis, not a serial review of studies (Remember the research brief from EDLE 690?)
- a description of the rationale for and the implementation of one or more interventions to narrow the gap;
- a description of how you would implement the intervention, including
  - Who will receive the intervention
  - Who will conduct the intervention

- How the intervention will be conducted (e.g., what will those conducting the intervention do and how often, and what will the students do and how often?)
- A description how you would evaluate the intervention, including
  - an assessment of the implementation of the intervention, and
  - an assessment of the intervention's effects (consider the outcomes studied in the research you reviewed; and
- a conclusion that restates your thesis and summarizes how the research supports the thesis

***Assignment #2 description continued on next page...***

### Review of Research on Narrowing Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Rubric

Criteria (Points)	Levels of Achievement			
	Exceeds expectations 90 to 100%	Meets expectations 80 to 89%	Approaching expectations 70 to 79%	Falls below expectations 0 to 69%
<i>Introduction (15)</i> The introduction orients the reader to the purpose of the paper and presents the paper's thesis.	The introduction draws the reader into the paper effectively. The gap of interest is identified and justified on the basis of the findings of the first paper. The thesis, or theory of action, is clear and the author foreshadows how the review will be organized to support the thesis.	The introduction orients the reader to the paper, and identifies a justified gap, but the thesis is unclear, <i>or</i> the author does not foreshadow how the thesis will be supported.	The introduction orients the reader to the paper, but the thesis is unclear, <i>and</i> the author does not foreshadow how the thesis will be supported.	The introduction is missing or unintelligible.
<i>Research synthesis (30)</i> The synthesis supports the thesis, or theory of action, regarding both causes and possible amelioration of the gap.	The synthesis is clearly organized in accordance with the thesis and provides persuasive evidence to support the thesis or theory of action.	The synthesis is either unclear or unsupported by the evidence.	The synthesis is unclear <i>and</i> unsupported by the evidence.	The synthesis section is a serial review or is unintelligible.
<i>Assessment of Sources (15)</i> The synthesis includes descriptions of the research reviewed and its quality.	The descriptions of the research refer to the problems or questions addressed, the methods used, the findings and conclusions and an assessment of credibility.	The descriptions of the research lack one or two of the required elements.	The descriptions of the research lack more than two of the required elements.	The descriptions of the research do not refer to the required elements.
<i>Quality of Sources (20)</i> To support the thesis the sources should be of high quality.	The synthesis is based on a review of credible studies, largely from peer reviewed journals.	The synthesis is based on a review of a mixture of credible and less credible sources.	The synthesis is based largely on a review of reports of practice and/or prescriptive pieces	The synthesis is based on inadequate sources.
<i>Quantity of Sources (15)</i> The paper includes at least the minimum number of sources required.	The synthesis relies on at least 8 or more sources.	The synthesis relies on fewer than 8 sources but 6-7 sources	The synthesis relies on fewer than 6 sources but 4-5 sources	The synthesis relies on 3 or fewer sources.
<i>Intervention(s) (30)</i> The rationale, implementation and evaluation of the proposed intervention is persuasive and based on the research.	The rationale, implementation and evaluation of the proposed intervention are compelling and clearly based on the research synthesis.	The rationale, the implementation or the evaluation is not compelling and not linked to the research synthesis.	Two of the three elements (rationale, implementation and evaluation) appear unrelated to the research synthesis.	All three elements are unrelated to the research synthesis or one or more elements is missing.
<i>Conclusion (15)</i> The conclusion restates the thesis and summarizes the synthesis.	The conclusion includes a clear restated thesis and a clear summary of the synthesis.	The conclusion includes an unclear restated thesis or an unclear summary of the synthesis.	The conclusion includes neither a clear restated thesis nor a clear summary of the synthesis.	The conclusion is absent or unintelligible.
<i>Mechanics and APA (10)</i> Your written work should always represent you as accurate and precise.	The paper is nearly error-free, and reflects clear understanding of APA format.	The paper contains either writing errors (e.g., spelling, grammar, questionable word choices) or APA errors.	The paper contains writing errors (e.g., spelling, grammar, questionable word choices) and APA errors.	The paper is difficult to understand because of issues related to clarity and correctness of writing.

## **Writing Assignment #3: A Contemporary Issue (100 points)**

### **Background & Rationale**

These days, School Leadership is fraught with issues—national, state and local. Mostly local. And, as you can infer from a close examination of the Case Study, *Using Data for School Change: The Discipline Equity Audit*, issues are grounded in the vagaries of school demographics and diversity profiles and quite often connect to secondary issues: in this case disproportionality of school suspension rates, teacher turnover, superintendent turnover, and media coverage. Additionally, many issues germinate first outside of the immediate school environment but find ways to insinuate themselves quickly into the schoolhouse where they fast become a school-based issue.

### **Tasks**

- Read [and think about] the Case Study, *Using Data for School Change: The Discipline Equity Audit*, in terms of the elements listed in the Context, Case Narrative, and Executive Summary sections.
- Select a recent [difficult] issue that your school leadership confronted, that resulted in a moderately successful outcome.
- Create a one-page timeline of [i] the origins and context [demographic and diversity profiles] of the issue [ii] how it evolved and who was involved [iii] action steps that were taken by school leadership to resolve it
- Describe how the contexts in the timeline influenced the evolution of the issue
- Analyze the leadership reaction, action plan and attempts at resolution in terms of your knowledge of leadership theory and practice

Your paper should be 4 to 6 pages long (excluding the title and reference pages) and include:

- an introduction that includes a thesis statement
- a profile of the school and community [demographics & diversity]
- an outline of the evolution of the issue from beginnings to ‘resolution’
- an analysis of leadership responses/actions in terms of leadership theory and practice
- two research-based [different] plans of action that would have led to a different outcome.

***Assignment #3 description continued on next page...***

### A Contemporary Issue Assessment Rubric

Criteria (Points)	Levels of Achievement			
	Exceeds expectations 90 to 100%	Meets expectations 80 to 89%	Approaching expectations 70 to 79%	Falls below expectations 0 to 69%
<i>Introduction (10)</i> The introduction orients the reader to the issue at hand and presents the basic outline of the paper.	The introduction is well drawn, introducing the reader to (a) the chosen issue, (b) the reasons for its choice, and (c) and explains how it connects to the author's schoolhouse.	The introduction is reasonably well drawn, introducing the reader to (a) the chosen issue, (b) one or two reasons for its choice, and (c) a short explanation as to how it connects to the author's schoolhouse.	The introduction is briefly drawn and introduces the reader to (a) the chosen issue, (b) a reason for its inclusion, and (c) a brief explanation of its connections to the author's schoolhouse.	The introduction briefly mentions the chosen issue, and a reason for its inclusion.
<i>Description of Context (20)</i> Important demographics, consideration of diversity, and connections to the issue.	The paper clearly defines demographic and diversity data as they affect the issue described.	The paper somewhat defines demographic and diversity data as they affect the issue described.	The paper defines either demographic data or diversity data –but not both as it affects the issue.	The paper provides the briefest of contexts to help the reader understand the issue.
<i>Outline of Events (20)</i> What precipitated the issue, and key school factors that influenced the issue, in timeline format	In concise timeline format, the paper clearly outlines both the evolution of events and factors and stakeholders that influenced the issue.	In concise timeline format, the paper outlines the evolution of either events or factors and stakeholders that influenced the issue.	A general timeline is offered in loose chronological form, describing the evolution of the issue.	The issue is briefly described in narrative format with no mention of an unfolding timeline of events.
<i>Author's Analysis (25)</i> Includes two research-based scenarios that would have led to a different outcome.	A thoughtful, research-based analysis of the issue examines the leadership response and foreshadows 2 prudent (alternate) scenarios leading to a different outcome.	A research-based analysis of the issue examines the leadership response and foreshadows 1 alternate scenario leading to a different outcome.	A research review of the issue and leadership response leads to a general description of a different outcome.	Analysis uninformed by research-based strategies in reaching for a different outcome.
<i>The Action Plans (25)</i> Grounded in thoughtful <b>research</b> on the issue.	The twin recommendations are grounded in thoughtful research (3) on the issue.	The twin recommendations are grounded in thoughtful research (2) on the issue.	The twin recommendations are grounded in research (1) on the issue.	No research informs the recommendations for a different outcome.
<i>Mechanics and APA (10)</i> Your written work should always represent you as accurate and precise.	The paper is error free and is clearly and professionally presented.	The paper has no spelling errors and no more than two mechanical errors.	The paper has some spelling, grammar and/or mechanical errors.	The project contains many significant errors.