

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

**EDLE 690 – 603, EDLE 690 – 605
Using Research to Lead School Improvement
Spring 2024, 3 credit hours
Synchronous/Asynchronous format**

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Phone:
Office Hours: By appointment.
Course Term:
Prerequisite(s): EDLE 620. EDLE 690 must be taken concurrently with EDLE 791/792.

Course Description

690 Using Research to Lead School Improvement (3:3:0)

Develops skills, insights, and understanding of how leaders use research to improve schools, with emphasis on the use of assessment and research data to identify school improvement needs and to design school improvement projects.

General Goals: Students in this course will learn how to gather and analyze student achievement and demographic data available from their school, school district, and the state; search online databases for recent publications relevant to a specific topic and prepare a brief summary of applied research on a topic relevant to the improvement of instruction at their school site. Students will understand how to use education research to develop a position based on more than one's opinion; understand basic statistics (e.g., measures of central tendency & dispersion; basic inferential statistics) and their application in educational research; and be able to evaluate basic research designs, and apply a research design to the study of a problem related to instruction and/or improvement at their school site. Students will prepare and defend a proposal for a Internship Improvement Project (IIP) that becomes the blueprint for the capstone project required in the EDLE program internship.

Program vision: The Education Leadership Program is dedicated to improving the quality of pre-K – 12 education through teaching, research, and service. Candidates and practicing administrators engage in course work devoted to experiential learning, professional growth opportunities, and doctoral research that informs practice. We educate exceptional leaders who act with integrity as they work to improve schools.

Course Delivery

This is a Synchronous 50% and Asynchronous 50% blended 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. Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technology Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see:
https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Ultra/Getting_Started/Browser_Support
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students will need a headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool. [Delete this sentence if not applicable.]
- 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, respectively, are available for free download: [Add or delete options, as desire.]
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - Windows Media Player:
<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

On-line Expectations

- **All students are now required to activate and monitor their GMU e-mail accounts.** If you are uncertain about how to do this, please see me. It is my expectation that you will be fully competent to send and receive e-mail messages with attachments. If your computer at school or home has spam blocking that will prevent you from seeing messages with attachments, you are responsible for addressing this problem immediately.
- It is expected that all students will have access to standard word processing software that can be read by Microsoft Office 2010. Students will also need a Google account to access the Google work suite (e.g., word documents).
- **Netiquette:** The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.
- **Accommodations:** Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services

Required Readings

Course Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. understand and apply planning, assessment, and instructional leadership that

- builds collective professional capacity;
- 2. understand and apply systems and organization theory;
- 3. understand and apply management and leadership skills that achieve effective and efficient organizational operations;
- 4. understand and apply basic leadership theories and knowledge that impact schools.

Student Outcomes

Successful students will emerge from the course with the ability to:

- gather and analyze student achievement and demographic data available from their school, school district, and the state;
- search online databases for recent publications relevant to a specific topic, and prepare a brief summary of applied research on a topic relevant to the improvement of instruction at their school site;
- use education research to develop a position based on more than one's opinion;
- apply the principles of improvement science to design a school improvement plan;
- prepare and defend a proposal for an Internship Improvement Project (IIP) that becomes the blueprint for the capstone project required in the EDLE program internship.

Relationship of Course to Internship (EDLE 791)

Although the internship is a separate course, the Education Leadership program has integrated internship-related activities into course work. During this course, students will prepare and present a proposal for an Internship Improvement Plan that they will implement and evaluate as a part of their internship activities over the remainder of the program.

National Standards

The following National Educational Leadership Preparation standard elements are addressed in this course:

NELP Standard 1: Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to collaboratively lead, design, and implement a school mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.

- Component 1.1
- Component 1.2

NELP Standard 3: Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive school culture.

- Component 3.1
- Component 3.2
- Component 3.3

NELP Standard 6: Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to improve management, communication, technology, school-level governance, and operation systems to develop and improve data-informed and equitable school resource plans and to apply laws, policies, and regulations.

- Component 6.1

Component 6.2

NELP Standard 7: Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to build the school's professional capacity, engage staff in the development of a collaborative professional culture, and improve systems of staff supervision, evaluation, support, and professional learning.

Component 7.2

Component 7.4

Virginia Competencies

This course addresses the following Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Competencies:

- a. Knowledge understanding, and application of planning, assessment, and instructional leadership that builds collective professional capacity, including:
 - (2) Collaborative leadership in gathering and analyzing data to identify needs to develop and implement a school improvement plan that results in increased student learning; (7) Identification, analysis, and resolution of problems using effective problem-solving techniques; and
 - (8) Communication of a clear vision of excellence, linked to mission and core beliefs that promotes continuous improvement consistent with the goals of the school division.
- b. Knowledge, understanding and application of systems and organizations, including:
 - (1) Systems theory and the change process of systems, organizations and individuals, using appropriate and effective adult learning models;
 - (2) Aligning organizational practice, division mission, and core beliefs for developing and implementing strategic plans;
 - (3) Information sources and processing, including data collection and data analysis strategies;
 - (4) Using data as a part of ongoing program evaluation to inform and lead change;
 - (5) Developing a change management strategy for improved student outcomes; and
 - (6) Developing empowerment strategies to create personalized learning environments for diverse schools.
- c. Knowledge understanding and application of management and leadership skills that achieve effective and efficient organizational operations, including:
 - (8) Application of data-driven decision making to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.
- f. Knowledge understanding and application of basic leadership theories and influences that impact schools including:
 - (1) Concepts of leadership including systems theory, change theory, learning organizations and current leadership theory.

Teaching and Learning Expectations

Each class will include a variety of activities and exercises. Out-of-class work will rely on readings and on the use of resource task sheets created to complement the primary text. Specific process goals for the class are as follows:

1. Classes will reflect a balance of activities that encourage the exploration of 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. strive to be open to new ideas and perspectives; and
 - c. 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 on-line environment that approximates 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 of 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 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.

Grading and Evaluation Criteria

Students can earn a total of 100 points in this course. Written graded assignments account for 80 points of the overall grade, while online course participation accounts for 20 points.

General Expectations

Consistent with expectations of a master's level course in the Education Leadership Program, grading is based heavily on student performance on 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:

1. Application of concepts reflected in class discussion and readings
2. Original thinking and persuasiveness
3. The ability to write in a clear, concise, and organized fashion.

Additionally, due to the nature of this online course, a significant portion of the class grade will be based on participation and the contribution you make to class discussions.

The Class participation

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.

Written assignments ---

VIA Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirements

Every student registered for any EDLE course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, The Internship Improvement Plan to VIA through Blackboard (regardless of whether the student is taking the course as an elective, a onetime course or as part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in VIA through Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to VIA (through Blackboard) will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required VIA submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

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

Grading scale:

Assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. on the dates listed on the syllabus. Late assignments will not be accepted except in emergency situations 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.

Professional Dispositions

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

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education & 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 <https://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 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://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 tk20help@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://courseessupport.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>
 - Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as the Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

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

Other reminders:

GMU Add/Drop Policy: The last day to drop this class without any penalty is provided on the GMU academic calendar page <http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendar/>. It is the student’s responsibility to check to verify that they are properly enrolled, as no credit will be awarded to students who are not.

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 (Statement of English Department at George Mason University).

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. Even if you give credit, you must get permission from the original source to put any graphic that you did not create on your web page. Shareware graphics are not free. Freeware clipart is available for you to freely use. If the material does not say “free,” assume it is not. Putting someone else’s Internet material on your web page is stealing intellectual property. Making links to a site is, at this time, okay, but getting permission is strongly advised, since many Web sites have their own requirements for linking to their material.

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.

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, meaning 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/ferpa>

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.