

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
Education Leadership Program

EDLE 690, Section DL1 (ISL cohort)
Using Research to Lead School Improvement
Fall 2024, 3 credit hours

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Office Hours: Online by appointment

Meeting Times: August 26 – December 9, 2024
Location: Asynchronous

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Prerequisite: EDLE 620

University Catalog Course Description

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.

II. COURSE DELIVERY METHOD

This course will be delivered online 100% using an asynchronous format via Mason's Learning Management System (LMS). You will log in to the course site using your Mason email name (everything before @gmu.edu) and email password.

- The course site will be available on August 26, 2024.
- To access your course in Blackboard Learn: <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu/>

III. REQUIRED TEXTS

Required

Bauer, S.C. & Brazer, S.D. (2012). *Using research to lead school improvement: Turning evidence into action*. Sage.

Hinnant-Crawford, B. (2020). *Improvement science in education: A primer*. Myers Education Press.

Recommended

Bryk, A. S., Gomez, L. M., Grunow, A., & LeMahieu, P. G. (2015). *Learning to improve: How America's schools can get better at getting better*. Cambridge, MA: 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. TEACHING AND LEARNING

Each class week 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 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 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. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students completing the course successfully will be able to:

- ✓ understand and apply planning, assessment, and instructional leadership that builds collective professional capacity;
- ✓ understand and apply systems and organization theory;
- ✓ understand and apply management and leadership skills that achieve effective and efficient organizational operations;
- ✓ understand and apply improvement science principles as part of professional practice;
- ✓ understand and apply research knowledge to a significant instructional problem.

- ✓ 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;
- ✓ understand and be able to evaluate basic research designs;
- ✓ lead instructional and school improvement efforts using improvement science principles to fail quickly, learn fast, and accelerate improvement; and
- ✓ prepare and defend a proposal for the Internship Improvement Project (IIP) that becomes the blueprint for the capstone project required in the EDLE program internship.

VI. 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 improvement project that they will implement and evaluate as a part of their internship activities over the remainder of the program.

VII. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

ICAISA Standards

The following ICAISA standards are addressed in this course:

Mission

- The school has a clear statement of educational mission. The stated mission and philosophy guide the school's admissions, program, planning, and decision-making.

Program

- The educational program stems from the school's beliefs about teaching and learning that are regularly reviewed and are consistent with the mission of the school.
- Requirements and expectations for students, parents, faculty, trustees, and employees clearly reflect the values and mission of the school.
- The school demonstrates that its educational programs, instructional practices, and institutional culture are informed by relevant research regarding how students learn and the knowledge and capacities they will need to lead purposeful and constructive lives.

Culture and Climate

- In keeping with its mission, the school promotes an equitable, just, and inclusive community of adults and students, fosters a culture of learning, and inspires students to respect and value diversity.

Recruitment, Admission, Enrollment, and Retention

- The school has procedures in place to ensure that students are mission appropriate and can be served by the program.

National Education Leadership Preparation Standards

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

NELP Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Improvement. 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.

1.1 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to collaboratively evaluate, develop, and communicate a school mission and vision designed to reflect a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.

1.2 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to lead improvement processes that include data use, design, implementation, and evaluation.

NELP Standard 3: Equity, Inclusiveness, and Cultural Responsiveness. 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.

3.1 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to use data to evaluate, design, cultivate, and advocate for a supportive and inclusive school culture.

3.2 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable access to educational resources, technologies, and opportunities that support the educational success and well-being of each student.

3.3 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive instruction and behavior support practices among teachers and staff.

NELP Standard 6: Operations and Management. 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.

6.1 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, develop, and implement management, communication, technology, school-level governance, and operation systems that support each student's learning needs and promote the mission and vision of the school.

6.2 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, develop, and advocate for a data-informed and equitable resourcing plan that supports school improvement and student development.

NELP Standard 7: Building Professional Capacity. 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.

7.2 Program completers understand and have the capacity to develop and engage staff in a collaborative professional culture designed to promote school improvement, teacher retention, and the success and well-being of each student and adult in the school.

7.4 Program completers understand and have the capacity to evaluate, develop, and implement systems of supervision, support, and evaluation designed to promote school improvement and student success.

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.

VIII. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

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

- High-speed internet access with updated browsers.
 - Blackboard Learn supported browsers:
https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Ultra/Getting_Started/Browser_Support
- Consistent and reliable access to GMU email and the course LMS, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Speakers and a microphone or a microphone-enabled headset for use with synchronous web conferencing tools.
- Note that 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.

IX. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Expectations

Course Week:

Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will start on Monday, and finish on Sunday.

Log in Frequency:

Students must actively check the course LMS site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least two times per week. In addition, students must log in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings, if any.

Participation:

Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing 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 who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.

Technical Issues:

Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.

Workload:

Please be aware that this course is not self-paced. Students are expected to meet specific deadlines and due dates listed in the Class Schedule section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.

Instructor Support:

Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

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 that 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 ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Submitting papers: All papers must be submitted **on time, electronically through Blackboard**. The final written assignment needs to be submitted through the Assessments section of Blackboard using VIA, CEHD's performance-based assessment system.

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 use instructor availability to get help before assignment deadlines.

Grade Appeals: Grade appeals will only be granted when the number of points awarded for the assignment is less than 80 percent of the possible points available. Grade appeals will only be allowed for the first three written assignments. Students must resubmit the assignment within two weeks of receiving their original grade to receive a new grade.

X. USE OF GENERATIVE AI

Use of Generative AI tools should be used following the fundamental principles of Mason's Academic Standards. This includes being honest about the use of these tools for submitted work and including citations when using the work of others, whether individual people or Generative AI tools.

XI. PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS (CEHD Student Guide)

Throughout study in the College of Education and Human Development, students are expected to demonstrate behaviors that reflect the positive dispositions of a professional. See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/current-students/cehd-student-guide>.

XII. CEHD COMMITMENTS

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to fostering collaboration and community, promoting justice and equity, and advancing research-informed practice. Students are expected to adhere to, and contribute to, these commitments, the CEHD Mission, and Core Values of George Mason University. More information can be found here: <https://cehd.gmu.edu/about/culture/>

XIII. GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Policies

- Students must adhere to Mason's Academic Standards (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic-standards/>)
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://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 <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).

- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>.
- Questions or concerns regarding use of your LMS should be directed to:
 - Blackboard Learn: <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>
 - Canvas: <https://its.gmu.edu/service/canvas/>
- For information on student support resources on campus, see:
 - TimelyCare: <https://caps.gmu.edu/timelycare-services/>
 - Writing Center: <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per [University Policy 1202](#). If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as [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 or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.