George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Educational Leadership
EDLE 634.001
Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership
Fall, 2013

Tuesdays, starting August 27th at 4:30pm to 7:10pm in Thompson Hall, Room L028

Instructor: Dr. Alan Sturrock
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CLASS BLOG:

TEXTBOOKS
Pink, Daniel, A Whole New Mind [*recommended*]
Noll. James, Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Educational Issues **[** ** required***]

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines current and emerging issues and trends impacting education: inquiring into 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.

CANDIDATE OUTCOMES

Participants will:

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.

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.

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.

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.

Describe the educational rights of individuals with disabilities including the legal foundations, models of service delivery, and the concepts of mainstreaming and inclusion.

Describe ways in which special educators and regular educators can partner with regard to shared goals, collaboration, referrals, and placements.

Be able to articulate effective knowledge management strategies that use technology to enhance administration, teaching, and learning at the school and district levels.

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.

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.

Identify various strategies to maximize the effective use of data to improve student achievement and effective ways to communicate results to various community groups.

Demonstrate the ability to make educational decisions which are supported by data rather than only on personal opinions.

RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRAM GOALS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION

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 21st 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).

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

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. The challenge is to function as a Community of Learners.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Access to a computer, the World Wide Web, and email are essential for this course. Candidates should have access to **Taskstream** 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.

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.

GMU HONOR CODE

Candidates are expected to abide by the George Mason University Honor code. Violations (cheating, attempted cheating, plagiarizing, lying, stealing) will be reported to the Honor Committee. Please refer to the University Catalog or http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/ for the full Honor Code.

George Mason University Policies and Resources for Students

- Academic integrity (honor code, plagiarism) – Students must adhere to guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/].
- Mason Email – Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, division, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/].
- Counseling and Psychological Services – The George Mason University 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/].
- Office of Disability Services – Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor in writing at the beginning of the semester http://ods.gmu.edu/].
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- The Writing Center (Optional Resource) – The George Mason University Writing Center staff 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/].
- University Libraries (Optional Resource) – The George Mason University Libraries provide numerous services, research tools, and help with using the library resources [See http://library.gmu.edu/].

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.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

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.

Assignment #1 – Written Essay – Contemporary topics in education

Students will select an issue that is of high interest to them and write an **essay** [3 to 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.

25% of Final Grade

(Course outcomes numbers 1, 2, and 3 are met by this activity when successfully completed.)

Possible Topics:

ESOL	Teacher Pay
Graduation Rates	Teacher Assignments
Gender Equity	Class Size
Gifted Programs	High School Reform
Disabilities	Grouping and Tracking
Standards	Standardization vs. Variation
Assessment	Retention and Promotion
Low Performance in Urban Areas	Centralization vs. Decentralization
Low Performance in Rural Areas	Charter Schools
AYP as defined by NCLB	School Choice and Vouchers
Teacher Education	Privatization
Teacher Quality	Home Schooling
Pre – Education	Evolution
Sex Education	Zero Tolerance
Religious Expression	Role of Scientific Research in School Reform
Effective Practices	Comprehensive School Reform

Assignment #2 – Consultant presentation

The school board has created a planning group to advise it on issues which may impact the district in the future. Students will work with a partner as Futurist Consultants. They will present information to the School Board Planning Group (the rest of the class) on an assigned topic decided upon by the class. In order to prepare the Planning Group for the presentation each pair will locate and assign readings to be completed by the class prior to the presentation. Remember- the school district is paying big bucks for your consulting services. The presentation should be worth it.

25% of Final Grade

(Course outcomes numbers 4, 5, 6, and 9 are met by this activity when successfully completed.)

Assignment #3 – Group Presentation

Student groups will present information on the major trends affecting education in the immediate future. Topics will be based on Marx's work and will be chosen in class May 2, 2012. Presentations are of the students design and should incorporate the use of technology. A power point is not required! Utilization of outside sources is expected and at least one journal article for each member of the class will be handed out the class meeting before the presentation so everyone has some background knowledge. 20 to 30 minutes will be allocated in class for presentations.

25% of Final Grade

(Course outcomes numbers 7, 8, 10 and 11 are met by this activity when successfully completed.)

Assignment #4 – Class participation

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

25% of Final Grade

(Course outcomes numbers 1, 6, 9, and 10 are met by this activity when successfully completed.)

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

Proposed Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading and assignments
1. August 27	Introduction	
2. September 3	Quo Vadis, US Curriculum	Noll, Issue #2 and #22
3. September 10	Can We Educate ALL the People?	Noll, Issue #11 Case Study #1 [Instructor Handout]
4. September 17	Should We Have Universal Pre-School?	Noll, Issue #12 Current Issues #1 [tbd]
5. September 24	Workshop Class: Contemporary Issues Brainstorm: Groups formed	**Assignment #1 drafts due [Peer Review]**
6. October 1	NCLB: 'A Flawed Utility'?	Noll, Issue #8 Case Study #2 [Instructor Handout] **Assignment #1 due**
7. October 8	Failing Schools—What Can Be Done?	Noll, Issue #9 Current Issues #2 [tbd]
8. No class Monday classes meet on Tuesday and Tuesday classes are cancelled.		
9. October 22	Is the Inclusive Classroom Model 'workable'?	Noll, Issue # 14 Case Study #3 [Instructor Handout]
10. October 29	Zero Tolerance—Whose Rights?	Noll, Issue # 18 Current Issues #3 [tbd]
11. November 5	Quo Vadis, Public Schools?	Noll, Issue #5
12. November 12	School Board Presentations	**Assignment #2 due [in class]**
13. November 19	Designing A School of the Future	In-class work session
14. November 26	Workshop Class	
15. December 3	Group Presentations	**Assignment #3 due [in class]**

Assignment #1 Written Essay Rubric

25 points

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations 4	Meets Expectations 3	Approaching Expectations 2	Falls Below Expectations 1
Introduction (Statement of purpose) (24%)	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.
Interview Summary (including PIM) (24%)	Major points are strong and supported by examples	Major points are given	Major points lack clarity	Major points are missing
Directions for Schools (24%)	Concepts are insightful and inspiring	Concepts are good	Concepts do not go beyond the obvious	Concepts are missing or underdeveloped
Reflection (16%)	Reflection is in-depth	Reflection is good	Reflection is evident, but lacks depth	Reflection is missing
Mechanics (16%)	No errors	A few minor errors	Several distracting errors	Many major mechanical errors

Assignment #2 - Consultant Presentation Rubric

25 points

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations 4	Meets Expectations 3	Approaching Expectations 2	Falls Below Expectations 1
Presentation Content (20%)	Provides new insights into issues and makes suggestions for future plans.	Provides complete and accurate understanding of issues	Provides incomplete understanding of issues	Provides misconceptions of issues
Data analysis (20%)	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
Handouts, Visuals and Reading Assignments (20%)	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
Presentation Delivery (20%)	Presentation was clearly done by professional consultants. The School Board spent its money wisely.	The presentation was adequate but the delivery could be a bit more polished..	The presentation appeared to have been done by a group of students	The delivery of the presentation came across as poorly planned and not rehearsed.
Audience Involvement (20%)	The presentation involved the audience throughout and they gave a standing ovation.	The audience was involved in the presentation.	Some attempts were made to involve the audience in the presentation.	No attempts were made to involve the audience in the presentation.

Assignment Small Group Project Assignment Rubric

25 points

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations 4	Meets Expectations 3	Approaching Expectations 2	Falls Below Expectations 1
Presentation Content (48%)	Provides new insights into issues	Provides complete and accurate understanding of issues	Provides incomplete understanding of issues	Provides misconceptions of issues
Presentation Delivery (32%)	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
Handout (20%)	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