George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Educational Leadership

EDLE 624 Section 601 Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership
Spring 2017, 3 Credits
Monday 4:30-7:30 Washington Lee HS-Room B-321
1/9/17-4/17/17

Instructor: Dr. Lisa Piehota
            703-981-0774 (Cell)
Office Hours: In person by appointment and available by phone or email
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Required Texts

Smith, R.G. & Brazer, S.D. (2016). Striving for Equity: *District leadership for narrowing opportunity and achievement gap*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Blankstein, A.M. & Noguera, Pedro. (2015). Excellence through Equity: *Five principles of courageous leadership to guide achievement for every student*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

University Catalog Course Description
This course examines current and emerging issues and trends impacting education. Includes demographic shifts; globalization; technology; data-based decision making; inclusion of diverse learners in American schools; and recent research on student achievement when influenced by race, gender, and poverty.

Course Delivery Method
A variety of instructional methods are used in this course to cover the course content and create a dynamic, interactive learning environment. These methods include large and small group instruction, cooperative learning, media, Internet assignments, lecture, guest practitioners, group presentations, and individual research.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives
Participants will:

1. Be able to explain several of the seismic shifts and major trends and related implications for society at large and schools and school districts in particular.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the history of diverse groups in the United States and review education in the United States in reference to diverse groups, as well as the privileges or inequities that members of these groups have encountered on the basis of race, ethnicity, and social class.

3. Articulate how student diversity can help teachers and administrators develop curriculum that includes global literacy with a significant effect on economic, cultural, and political matters, with particular attention on how culture influences learning.

4. Be able to explain the definitions and characteristics of children with special learning needs, i.e., learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, visual and hearing impairment, ADHD, and giftedness.

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

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

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

8. Apply principles of legal, ethical, social, and equity issues related to technology (such as copyright, fair use, equitable access, free speech) along with effective techniques for evaluating technology effectiveness.

9. Be able to synthesize recent research relative to student achievement in diverse school settings, with particular attention to the relationships between student achievement and gender, race, and poverty.

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

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

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 emergent. 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 unexpected hallmark of education in the 21st century.

Course Performance Evaluation
Since this is a graduate class, high quality work on all assignments and meaningful class participation are expected. Rubrics will be used in the evaluation of required course work.

- **Assignments and/or Examinations**

    1. Students will select a contemporary issue in education that is of high interest to them and holds important implications for the study and practice of education leadership and write an essay [5-7 pages] which [a] shows evidence of reading and thought on the topic; [b] connects to research/thought/examples in practice; and [c] which analyzes the prevailing issue and presents at least 3 recommendations as possible solutions/recommendations. (30 points)
    .
    Possible Topics:

ELL	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
School Choice and Vouchers	Parental Involvement
Teacher Education	Privatization
Teacher Quality	Home Schooling
Pre – Education	Homework
Sex Education	Zero Tolerance
Role of Research in School Reform	
Effective Practices	Comprehensive School Reform

2. Collaboration is a key skill for 21st century learners and leaders. This assignment allows future leaders to collaborate and share information with the class. Students will deliver small group presentations of Blankstein and Noguera's five guiding principles of courageous leadership. On the first night of class, students will be placed in small groups and each group assigned one of the five guiding principles from the text, *Excellence through Equity*. During the presentation, the principle should be fully explained and examples cited and analyzed. Student groups will also develop a one page summary document of the principle that will be distributed to the class. Presentations should not be approximately 30 minutes in duration and should multi-media presentation methods. (20 points)

3. In this culminating research paper, students will research narrowing opportunity and achievement gaps. To make progress on shrinking opportunity and achievement gaps, it is important to understand the factors that cause or propel these 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. Students will identify the gap to be addressed, select 8-10 scholarly sources to be used, synthesize data and research findings, identify policy interventions, and, in conclusion, reflect on the data that supports his/her position.   (40 points)

4. A percentage of the grade is based upon course participation. Students are expected to participate in class by completing readings prior to class discussions and making thoughtful and informed contributions to the discourse. As such, assigned readings should be completed prior to the class meeting for which they are assigned. Students are also encouraged to share relevant materials and resources to stimulate discussion, learning, and improved practice in the field, while concurrently fostering an environment that welcomes diverse and critical perspectives, given the aims of this course. If an unforeseen circumstance arises that keeps an individual from attending class, that student is responsible for notifying the instructor prior to the scheduled class time. Only those students who attend class regularly, arrive on time, and are actively informed and engaged in the coursework will be eligible for maximum participation points.

Assignments are due when requested and are only accepted later at the discretion of the instructor. (10 points)

- **Grading**
    - A+   100 points
    - A   95 - 99
    - A -   90 - 94
    - B+   87 - 89
    - B   83 - 86
    - B -   80 - 82
    - C   75 - 79
    - F   0 - 74

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

Tentative Class Schedule
EDLE624 Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership
Course Calendar-Spring 2017

Date	Topic	Assignment/Work Due
1/9	Class Introduction, Syllabus review, Group Assignments, Leadership	Read Syllabus
1/16	No Class-MLK Day	
1/23	Equitable Instruction	Smith & Brazer, Chap. 1-3 Vilson (2016)
1/30	Gap Groups/Standards, Assessment, Data	Smith & Brazer, Chap. 4-5 Minkel (2015)
2/6	English Language Learners	Smith & Brazer, Chap. 6
2/13	Demographics/Redistricting	Smith & Brazer, Chap. 7-8 Karns (2010) **Essay Due**
2/20	No Class- President's Day	
2/27	Specialized Instruction	**Blankstein & Noguera Leadership Principle #1 Presentation** Gregory et al (2010)
3/6	Poverty	**Blankstein & Noguera Leadership Principle #2 Presentation** Ladson-Billings (2006)
3/13	Technology	**Blankstein & Noguera Leadership Principle #3 Presentation**
3/20	School Reform	**Blankstein & Noguera Leadership Principle #4 Presentation** Harris (2011)
3/27	School Safety and Security	
4/3	Student Established Issue	**Blankstein & Noguera Leadership Principle #5 Presentation**
4/10	No Class-Spring Break	
4/17	Course Wrap-up	**Research Paper Due**

Schedule of readings is subject to change as needed and additional reading will be assigned.

Gregory, A., Skiba, R.J., Noguera, P.A. (2010). The Achievement Gap and the Discipline Gap: Two Sides of the Same Coin? *Educational Researcher.* 39(1). 59-68.

Harris, D.M. (2011). Curriculum differentiation and comprehensive school reform: Challenges in providing educational opportunity. *Educational Policy*. 25(5). 844-884.

Karns, M. (2010). Teaching our way to success. *Leadership*. 39(5). 8-11.

Ladson-Billing, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in US schools. *Educational Researcher*. 35(7). 3-12.

Minkel, J. (2015, January 27). Too much of a good thing: Making data work for schools. *Education Week*. 34(18).

Vilson, J.L. (2016, January). The Need for More Teachers of Color. *American Educator*. 81(5). 17-26.

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

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

GMU Policies and Resources for Students
Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/).

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/).

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see http://ods.gmu.edu/).

- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/.

- The Writing Center provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing (see http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/).

- The Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs)

to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance (see http://caps.gmu.edu/).

- The Student Support & Advocacy Center staff helps students develop and maintain healthy lifestyles through confidential one-on-one support as well as through interactive programs and resources. Some of the topics they address are healthy relationships, stress management, nutrition, sexual assault, drug and alcohol use, and sexual health (see http://ssac.gmu.edu/). Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone at 703-993-3686. Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to http://ssac.gmu.edu/make-a-referral/.

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

Essay – 30 points
Assessment Rubric

CRITERIA	4	3	2	1	
	Exceeds Expectations	**Meets Expectations**	**Approaching Expectations**	**Falls Below Expectations**	**SCORE**
Overview of Issue; statement of position (40 %)	The paper begins with an insightful overview of the issue that is clear and concise. The author clearly highlights their position on the issue. The author offers readers a roadmap of the paper	The paper begins with a relevant overview of the issue but fails to do so succinctly and with specific details. The author does not clearly describe their position or offer a sense of what will come next.	The core issue is unclear. Author position is vague or unclear. There is no apparent roadmap.	The author does not offer an adequate overview of the issue. There is no position stated.	
Recommendations /Solutions (30%)	The author offers at least 3 clear and specific recommendations for how to address the issue.	The author offers at least 3 recommendations but offers few specific details.	The author offers less than 3 and/or vague details on the recommendations.	The author does not offer recommendation or solutions.	
Reflection (20 %)	The author reflects on how his/her position has evolved or adapted since the coursework began in thoughtful and meaningful ways.	The author offers general comments regarding how his/her position has evolved or adapted over time.	The author makes vague comments about the ways in which his/her position on the topic has evolved over time.	The author does not include a reflection.	
Mechanics (10%)	The paper is nearly error free which reflects clear understanding and thorough proofreading.	There are occasional grammatical errors and questionable word choice.	Errors in grammar and punctuation are present, but spelling has been proofread.	There are frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	
Total					

Research Paper – 40 points
Assessment Rubric

CRITERIA	4	3	2	1	
	Exceeds Expectations	**Meets Expectations**	**Approaching Expectations**	**Falls Below Expectations**	**SCORE**
Introduction and Overview of gap; (40 %)	The introduction draws the reader into the paper effectively. The gap of interest is identified and paper begins with an accurate overview of the gap issues that is clear and concise.	The paper begins with a general overview of the gap of interest but fails to do so succinctly and with specific details.	The core gap issue is unclear.	The author does not offer an accurate and succinct overview of the gap of interest.	
Policy Intervention (30 %)	The author offers a logical and well-conceived policy intervention that specifically attends to the core issue and takes into consideration the research. The authors plan is specific and outlines what action ought to be taken.	The author offers a general policy intervention with some details. The intervention seems to attend to the core issue, but the author generally outlines what action ought to be taken.	The author offers a vague policy intervention. It is not clear how the intervention takes into consideration research. The author's plan only vaguely mentions what action ought to be taken.	The author does not offer a clear policy intervention.	
Reflection (20 %)	The author reflects on how his/her position has evolved or adapted since the coursework began in thoughtful and meaningful ways.	The author offers general comments regarding how his/her position has evolved over time.	The author makes vague comments about the ways in which his/her position on the topic has evolved over time.	The author does not include a reflection.	
Mechanics (10%)	The paper is nearly error free which reflects clear understanding and thorough proofreading.	There are occasional grammatical errors and questionable word choice.	Errors in grammar and punctuation are present, but spelling has been proofread.	There are frequent errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	
Total					

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Presentation Rubric

20 points

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CRITERIA	**4**	3	2	1	
	Exceeds Expectations (Clear, convincing, substantial evidence)	**Meets Expectations (clear evidence)**	**Approaching Expectations (limited evidence)**	**Falls Below Expectations**	**SCORE**
Presentation Content (50%)	An accurate and in depth overview of selected leadership principle was provided with examples cited.	Provides an accurate understanding of selected leadership principle.	Provides incomplete overview of selected leadership principle.	Provides misconception of selected leadership principle.	
Summary Document (20%)	Summary document provides an accurate, comprehensive overview of selected leadership principle and is clear and concise.	Summary document is an accurate overview of selected leadership principle.	Summary document is not comprehensive or clear.	Summary document is not provided.	
Presentation Delivery (30%)	The presentation demonstrates attention to high quality standards visually, technologically and creatively. Each member of the group actively participates and contributes to the presentation.	The presentation highlights essential points of selected leadership principle. Each member of the group actively participates and contributes to the presentation.	The presentation highlights content of selected leadership principle but does not include technology and has limited participation by members of the group.	The presentation did not highlight content of leadership principle and had limited participation by members of the group.	
Total					

Class Participation Rubric (10 points)

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