

**George Mason University**  
**College of Education and Human Development**  
**Educational Leadership**

EDLE 634 Section 601  
Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership  
3 Credits, Summer 2018  
Monday and Wednesday, 4:45pm - 7:45pm  
Woodson HS, Room E124

**Instructor:** Dr. Francisco Durán  
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**Office Hours:** By appointment  
**Course Term:** April 23, 2018 to June 6, 2018

**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.

**General Goals:** Students in this course will learn how to access and manipulate GIS sites to retrieve and analyze demographic data, convey an 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 generational gaps, and their impact on education. Students will analyze and explain research about education gaps related to race/ethnicity, disability, SES or dominant language and apply such research to narrowing these gaps.

**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.

## **Course Learning Outcomes**

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Apply to their school settings an understanding of the demographic shifts in America over the past 45 years and the projections for the next 35 years in the geographic locations of populations, the racial composition of populations by location, and the distribution of the populations by age.
2. Demonstrate their understanding of what we know about how to reduce opportunity and achievement gaps related to race/ethnicity, disability, SES and dominant language.
3. Apply their knowledge of opportunity and achievement gap closing interventions to their school setting in at least one of the areas of race/ethnicity, disability, SES or dominant language.

## **Course Alignment to National Standards**

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

- ELCC 1.1:** Candidates understand and can collaboratively develop, articulate, implement, and steward a shared vision of learning for a school.
- ELCC 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.
- ELCC 1.3:** Candidates understand and can promote continual and sustainable school improvement.
- ELCC 1.4:** Candidates understand and can evaluate school progress and revise school plans supported by school stakeholders.
- ELCC 2.2:** Candidates understand and can create and evaluate a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular and instructional school program.
- ELCC 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.
- ELCC 5.3:** Candidates understand and can safeguard the values of democracy, equity, and diversity.
- ELCC 6.3:** Candidates understand and can anticipate and assess emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt school-based leadership strategies.

## **Required Texts:**

1. Koonce, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Educational Issues, 18th Edition*
2. Carter & Welner, *Closing the Opportunity Gap*
3. Frey, *Diversity explosion: How new racial demographics are America (2015)*  
*Brookings Institute Press*

## **Course Requirements, Grading, and Evaluation Criteria**

### ***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:

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

### ***Class participation – 30% of Final Grade***

Candidates are expected to participate actively in class discussions, Socratic Seminars, 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:

### ***Written assignments – 70% of Final Grade***

You will write **two 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 the research suggests might help close it, followed by a set of proposed actions to narrow it in your setting, this also includes a presentation. A description of each assignment and a rubric for grading each assignment are included at the end of this syllabus.

***The two papers are related to one another.*** The first paper requires that you analyze the changing demographics of your school or school district. The second paper represents a synthesis and analysis of the research related to the nature of an achievement gap you select and what the research suggests regarding interventions to narrow the gap, followed by what you would propose to implement to narrow the gap in your setting.

**Both papers must be submitted on time, electronically via Blackboard.**

Late work: Students' work is expected on time, meaning no later than by midnight of the due date. 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.

## **Grading:**

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

## **Professional Dispositions**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-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 <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 George Mason University 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) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.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 Tk20 should be directed to [tk20help@gmu.edu](mailto:tk20help@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>

***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.

***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/>

***Other Concerns:*** If you have concerns or issues relating to the content or conduct of the class, please talk with me directly. As a matter of policy, I do not respond to anonymous e-mails.

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

## Class Schedule

Date	Lessons	Readings & Activities
4/23	Introduction to the Course, Orientation and Syllabus Overview	Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Course Overview and Expectations</li> <li>▪ Socratic Seminar Format</li> <li>▪ Educational Issues Debate Format</li> </ul>
4/25	<b>America’s Racial Map and the Cultural Generation Gap</b> <b>(This Class will be conducted online, all activities should be completed by 4/29- we will not meet on Campus)</b>	<b>Reading: Frey, Chapters 1-3</b> <b>Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Post answers to Blog on BlackBoard</li> <li>▪ Watch 2 Videos (Blackboard)</li> <li>▪ Participate in Discussion on Class Blog</li> </ul>
4/30	Educational Issues Policy Debate	Koonce Issues: 1.1- Should schooling be based on social experiences? 1.3- Should behaviorism shape educational practices?
5/2	Population Shifts	Reading: Frey, Chapters 4-7 Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summarize one Frey chapter</li> <li>▪ Participate in Socratic Seminar</li> </ul>
5/7	Educational Issues Policy Debate	Koonce Issues 1.5- Should Public Schooling be Redefined? 2.5- Can Failing Schools be Turned Around?
5/9	How and Where We Live	Reading: Frey, Chapters 8-12 Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Summarize one Frey chapter</li> <li>▪ Participate in Socratic Seminar</li> </ul>
5/14	<b>The Nature of Gaps</b> <b>(This Class will be conducted online, all activities should be completed by 5/16- we will not meet on Campus)</b>	<b>Reading: Berliner article</b> <b>Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Post on Class Blog your conclusions and causes</li> </ul> <b>Assignment #1 DUE</b>
5/16	Educational Issues Policy Debate	Koonce Issues 3.2- Has the time arrived for Universal Preschool? 3.9- Is the “21 <sup>st</sup> Century Skills” movement viable?
5/21	<b>Narrowing Gaps</b> <b>(This Class will be conducted online, all activities should be completed by 5/23- we will not meet on Campus)</b>	<b>Readings: Smith and Brazer and Yeager &amp; Walton articles</b> <b>Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Post on blog conclusions-role of schools</li> </ul>
5/23	Educational Issues Policy Debate	Koonce Issues 3.1- Is there Support for Arming Teachers in Schools? 2.2- Do Public Schools have grounds to punish students for their off-campus online speech?
5/28	<b>Memorial Day Holiday- No Class</b>	
5/30	<b>Work with group to complete Assignment 2 and Prepare for Presentation- Meet Off Campus</b>	
6/4	Group Presentations of Assignment 2: Narrowing Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (2 Groups) <b>Assignment # 2 DUE</b>	
6/6	Group Presentations of Assignment 2: Narrowing Opportunity and Achievement Gaps (2 Groups)	

## **Assignment 1: Analysis of Changing Demographics (125 points)- DUE 5/14**

### **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 and 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.

## Assessment Rubric for Assignment 1: Analysis of Changing Demographics

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 %
<b>Introduction (10)</b> 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.
<b>Description of the data (25)</b> 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.
<b>Presentation of data (15)</b> 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.
<b>Analysis (30)</b> 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.
<b>Conclusion (10)</b> 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.
<b>Mechanics and APA (10)</b> 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) <i>and</i> APA errors.	The paper is difficult to understand because of issues related to clarity and correctness of writing.



## **Assignment 2: Review of Research on Narrowing Opportunity and Achievement Gaps- Group Paper and Presentation (125 points)- DUE 6/4**

### **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. To complete this paper you need to read, *Closing the Opportunity Gap*, (Carter/Welner) and 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 interventions that you would apply to the gaps.

### **Tasks**

- (1) Using the text, identify the gap you wish to address. You may select one of the four gaps associated with differences in performance based on **race/ethnicity, social-economic status, English Learners or students with disabilities**.
- (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. **In addition to the text, include at least 3 or more additional credible sources.**
- (3) Write an 8-10 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 a description of the rationale for and the implementation of one or more interventions to narrow the gap;- **Part of Presentation**
  - a description of how you would implement the intervention- **Part of Presentation**, 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- **Part of Presentation**, 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;
  - a conclusion that restates your thesis and summarizes how the research supports the thesis- **Part of Presentation**

## Assessment Rubric for Writing Assignment 2: Review of Research on Narrowing Opportunity and Achievement Gaps

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 %
<b>Introduction (10)</b> 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.
<b>Research synthesis (20)</b> 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.
<b>Assessment of Sources (5)</b> 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.
<b>Quality of Sources (10)</b> 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.
<b>Quantity of Sources (5)</b> 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.
<b>Intervention(s) (30)</b> The rationale, implementation and evaluation of the proposed intervention is persuasive and based on the research. <b>PART OF PRESENTATION</b>	The rationale, implementation and evaluation of the proposed intervention are compelling and clearly based on the research synthesis.	The rationale, the implementation <i>or</i> 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.
<b>Conclusion (10)</b> The conclusion restates the thesis and summarizes the synthesis. <b>PART OF PRESENTATION</b>	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.
<b>Mechanics and APA (10)</b> 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) <i>and</i> APA errors.	The paper is difficult to understand because of issues related to clarity and correctness of writing.

## Class Participation Rubric

### (Attendance, Educational Issues Policy Debates & Socratic Seminars)

Criteria (Points)	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Falls Below Expectations
<b>Attendance (25)</b>	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
<b>Quality of interaction --- questions, comments, suggestions (20)</b>	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
<b>Effort (25)</b>	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.
<b>Demonstration of preparation for class (30)</b>	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