

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
PhD in Education

EDLE 802.DL2.21200 – Leadership and Decision Making
Spring 2019

Faculty

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Prerequisite

EDLE 801

University Catalog Course Description

Engages students in the study of major leadership and decision theories that inform educational leadership research. Students use theory to help inform their own research interests. Students begin work on analytical literature review.

Course Overview

EDLE 802 is the second in a two-course sequence designed to provide a firm foundation for students' research in education leadership. The general emphasis in the sequence is on students learning how to explore their research interests in the context of the large sweep of educational leadership as a field with a focus on how leaders at multiple levels and various contexts impact the effectiveness and improvement of schools and systems of schools. EDLE 802 provides a specific focus on theory and research surrounding leader decision making in general and in educational environments in particular.

Additionally, the course is designed to connect theory, research and practice by exploring a variety of leadership decision making perspectives:

1. Theory. What are the features and assumptions of the perspective? What content themes are stressed? Does the perspective adequately describe, explain, and predict something of interest in the world of education leaders?
2. Research. What kinds of empirical questions tend to be addressed using this perspective? Are there any particular methodological considerations associated with the perspective (i.e., unit of analysis, typical research methods used)?

3. Practice. What does each perspective help us understand about school leadership, organizations, and decision-making? What are the limitations of the perspective?

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered online (100%) using an asynchronous format via Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on 1/22/19 or earlier.

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.

Technical 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/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers

To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems

- 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.
- 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:
 - 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/

Expectations

- Course Week: Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will start on Monday and finish on Sunday. When the work week will vary from that schedule it will be noted on our tentative class schedule.

- Log-in Frequency: Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week, or as indicated by the weekly schedule.
- 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. Participation counts for 20% of the course grade (see rubric for participation criteria)
- 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 **Tentative 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. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. 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 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.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a solid understanding of formal leadership and decision theory through discourse, presentation, and written paper assignments;
2. Review and summarize research literature and present persuasive written and oral critiques;
3. Engage in conversation to explore topics in their field of interest that represent opportunities for future investigation;

4. Use theory to frame researchable questions and extant literature to inform problems relating to research and professional practice; and
5. Further develop their ability to write doctoral-level papers.

Professional Standards

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

- 1.1 Candidates understand and can collaboratively develop, articulate, implement, and steward a shared vision of learning for a school. 1.2 Candidates understand and can collect and use data to identify school goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and implement plans to achieve school goals.
- 2.2 Candidates understand and can create and evaluate a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular and instructional school program. 2.3 Candidates understand and can develop and supervise the instructional and leadership capacity of school staff.
- 3.4 Candidates understand and can develop school capacity for distributed leadership. 5.4 Candidates understand and can evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of decision making in the school. 6.1 Candidates understand and can advocate for school students, families, and caregivers. 6.2 Candidates understand and can act to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning in a school environment.

Course Materials

- **Required Text**
Hoy, W.K. & Tarter, C. J. (2008). *Administrators solving the problems of practice. Decision-making concepts, cases, and consequences*. Boston: Pearson.
- **Additional Readings** will be available on Blackboard under Assigned Readings or Optional Readings.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time as indicated in the **Tentative Class Schedule**. The assignments and their respective weights are indicated below:

- **Assignments (80%)**
 - **Critique of Research Articles (20%, 10% for each of two critiques)**
 - **Critique of a Decision Made in Your School (30%)**
 - **Decision Making Research Proposal (30%)**

- **Participation (20%)**

- **Grading scale.**

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

Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/polices-procedures/>

Tentative Class Schedule

Note: Please refer to the Weekly Schedule on Blackboard for the most up-to-date version of the course schedule. This tentative schedule will be revised as the course proceeds. Changes in the schedule will be posted on Blackboard.

Week	Dates 2019	Lessons	Readings and Activities
1	1/22-1/27	Orientation Lesson 1: Rational Decision Making	Read Preface & Chapter 1, Hoy and Tarter (H&T) text (pgs. xv-xix & 1-9), Buchanan, L. & O'Connell, A. (2006). A brief history of decision making. <i>Harvard Business Review</i> , 84, 32-41 Activities: Watch Welcome Video, complete and submit syllabus quiz, respond on discussion board to questions
2	1/28-2/3	Lesson 2: Optimizing & Satisficing	Read Chapter 2, H&T Simon, H. A. (1991). Bounded rationality and organizational learning. <i>Organization Science</i> , 2, 125-134. Simon, H.A. (1993). Decision-making: Rational, nonrational, and irrational. <i>Educational Administration Quarterly</i> , 29, 392-411. Activity: Apply the satisficing model to the Controversial Speaker Case (37-40)
-----	2/4	Submit Assignment 1: Critique of Research Article (A)	
3	2/4-2/10	Lesson 3: Muddling & Scanning	Activity Read: Chapter 3, H & T Etzioni, A. (1967). Mixed-scanning: A "third" approach to decision-making. <i>Public Administration Review</i> , 27, 385-392. Etzioni, A. (1986). Mixed scanning revisited. <i>Public Administration Review</i> , 46, 8-14.
4	2/11-2/17	Lesson 4: Garbage and Politics	Activity Read: Chapter 4, H & T Cohen, M.D., March, J. G. & Olsen, J. P. (1972). A garbage can model of organizational choice. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> . 17 1-25. doi: 10.2307/2392088.
-----	2/18	Submit Assignment 2: Critique of Research Article (B)	
5	2/18-2/24	Lesson 5: Sensemaking	Activity: Read : Weick, K. E. (1993). The collapse of sensemaking in organizations: The Mann Gulch disaster. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> , 38, 628-652. Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M. & Obstfeld, D. (2005).

			Organizing and the process of sensemaking. <i>Organization Science</i> , 16, 409-421.
6	2/25-3/3	Lesson 6: Intuitive Decision-Making	Read: Johnson, B. L. & Kruse, S. D. (2009). The intuitive decision maker in the information age. <i>In Decision making for educational leaders</i> (pp. 125-140). Albany: State University of New York Press.
7	3/4-3/10	Lesson 7: Dispositions and Effective Decision Making	Read
-----	3/11-3/17	George Mason Spring break	
8	3/18-3/24	Lesson 8: Data Driven Decision Making	Read Park, V., Daly, A. J. & Guerra, A. W. (2012). Strategic framing: How leaders craft the meaning of data use for equity and learning. <i>Educational Policy</i> , 27, 645-675. doi: 10.1177/0895904811429295 Park, V. (2018). Leading data conversation moves: Toward data-informed leadership for equity and learning. <i>Educational Administration Quarterly</i> , 54, 617-647. doi: 10.1177/0013161X18769050
-----	3/25	Submit Assignment 3: Critique of a Decision Made in Your School	
9	3/25-3/31	Lesson 9: Testing and Applying Models	Read: Chapter 5, H&T Activities: Responding to selected cases
10	4/1-4/7/8	Lesson 10: Shared Decision Making 1	Read: H&T, Chapter 6
11	4/8-4/14	Lesson 11: Shared Decision Making 2	Read: H&T, Chapter 7
12	4/15-4/21	Lesson 12: Ethical Decision Making 1	Read <i>one</i> of the following: Cherkowski, S., Walker, K. D. & Kutsyuruba, B. (2015). Principals' moral agency and ethical decision-making: Toward a transformational ethics. <i>International Journal of Education Policy & Leadership</i> , 10(5), 1-17. URL: http://journals.sfu.ca/ijep/index.php/ijep/article/view/149 Frick, W. C., Faircloth, S. C., & Little, K. C. (2012). "Best interests of students": Revisiting the tension between administrative practice and ethical imperatives in special education leadership. <i>Educational Administration Quarterly</i> , 49, 207-242. doi: 10.1177/0013161X12463230 Tenuto, P. L. & Gardiner, M. E. (2018). Interactive dimensions for leadership: An integrative literature

			review and model to promote ethical leadership praxis in a global society. <i>International Journal of Leadership in Education</i> , 21, 593-607. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2017.1321783
13	4/22-4/28	Lesson 13: Ethical Decision Making 2	Read Beard, K.S. (2017). Promises kept or opportunities lost: A wicked problem in educational leadership. <i>Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership</i> , 20, 86-103. Hightower, B. B. & Franklin, J. (2012). When ethics and policy collide. <i>Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership</i> , 15, 103-111. doi: 10.1177/1555458911413888
14	4/29-5/5	Lesson 14: Making Tough Decisions	Johnson, B. L. & Kruse, S. D. (2009). Making tough decisions: Issues and considerations. <i>In Decision making for educational leaders</i> (pp. 187-202). Albany: State University of New York Press.
-----	5/6	Submit Assignment 4: Decision Making Research Proposal	

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 <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 <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 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/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

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

Assignments 1 & 2: Critique of Research Articles

20 Points (10 points each)

Due: February 4 and February 18

Rationale

As scholars using published research to bolster your arguments, it is important that you become a discerning reader. The purpose of these two papers is to give you opportunities to select, analyze and criticize published work in terms of the contribution it makes to both the knowledge base and methodology.

Directions

To complete this writing assignment, follow the steps below:

1. Select a research article from a peer-reviewed professional journal that addresses one of the topics covered in this course and relates to one of the issues you believe is an important topic of research. Carefully read the article with an eye toward understanding the contribution the work makes to the knowledge base and the methodological soundness of the work.
2. Write a critique of the article addressing a discussion of the structure of the article; the value of the research question(s) addressed; the appropriateness of the methodology used to address the question(s); and the reasonableness of the claims made regarding the conclusions. Be certain to begin your critique with an introduction that draws the reader into your paper and ends with a clear thesis for your paper. The thesis must establish your burden of proof for the paper.
3. Conclude your paper with a re-statement of your thesis and a brief discussion of the implications of your critique in terms of theory, policy and/or practice.

Your critique should be approximately 7 double-spaces, typewritten pages.

Assessment Rubric for Critique of Research Articles A & B
20 Points (10 points each)

Dimension	Criteria by Level			
	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Falls Below Expectations
Introduction and thesis (15%) Introduction orients the reader to the purpose of the paper and introduces the article reviewed.	Introduction describes the paper critiqued, the purpose of the critique itself, and foreshadows significant findings through the thesis.	Introduction provides an adequate description of the paper critiqued and purpose of the critique itself.	Introduction is vague and does not adequately orient the reader to the paper	Introduction is either missing or insufficient
Topic & review of literature (20%) Review addresses the appropriateness of research questions posed and the adequacy of the review of literature provided in the paper	Extensive discussion of research questions, and importance of the topic for theory and practice. Considerable discussion of the merits of the literature review and organization of the review.	Adequate treatment of research questions, importance of topic for theory and practice, and adequacy of the literature review.	Superficial treatment of topic, research questions, and importance. Superficial discussion of the merits of the literature review.	One or more of the elements of this criterion are missing and/or confusing.
Research design (20%) Review summarizes and deals with the quality and technical appropriateness of the method used to conduct the study	Extensive analysis of the methods used, including consideration of research design; subjects; procedures, instruments; & limitations Appropriateness of design for addressing research questions is discussed	Adequate analysis of the methods used in the study (subjects, procedures, instruments, limitations, etc.) and their appropriateness for research questions	Superficial or incomplete critique of the methods used in the study and their appropriateness for research questions.	Analysis of methods used is missing or incomplete.
Data & findings (20%) Critique discusses the quality of the presentation of findings.	Extensive critique of the research findings in terms of presentation and appropriateness; some discussion of alternative ways of presenting data and/or any gaps or inaccuracies in presentations of findings	Adequate discussion of the research findings in terms of presentation, appropriateness, and/or accuracy.	Superficial discussion of the research findings in terms of presentation, appropriateness, and/or accuracy	Discussion of findings is missing or incomplete.
Conclusions (15%) Paper closes with a restatement of the thesis, a brief summary of the critique, and implications of the critique.	Conclusion follows logically from the body of the paper and is persuasive. It summarizes main points made in the critique, including whether the conclusions are reasonable; whether the research questions were answered; and the implications of the study for theory, policy and/or practice	Adequate conclusion, including brief summary and implications for theory, policy and/or practice. Conclusion is not necessarily persuasive.	Conclusion merely summarizes paper content and does not provide implications.	Critique ends without a discernable conclusion.
Mechanics and APA (10%) Your written work should always represent you as accurate and precise.	Nearly error-free, reflecting clear understanding of APA format and thorough proofreading.	Occasional grammatical errors, questionable word choice, and minor APA errors.	Frequent errors in grammar, punctuation and/or spelling, and frequent and/or APA conventions.	Errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation and APA conventions, rendering the paper difficult to read.

Assignment 3: Critique of a Decision Made in Your School
30 points
Due: March 25, 2019

1. Select a decision that was made in your school in the last few years that exerted a considerable impact on the operations and/or functions of the school.
2. Write an introduction that provides the reader a synopsis of the decision, the thesis that guides how you will critique, and a foreshadowing of your significant findings and how you will support them.
3. Describe the decision by reference to the:
 - a. theoretical decision-making lens through which you believe the decision was made and the theoretical lens (perhaps the same) through which you will analyze the decision, and why you selected it;
 - b. issue or problem it addressed;
 - c. process by which it was made;
 - d. who or what interests were involved in the decision;
 - e. the nature of the decision; and
 - f. the results or impact of the decision.
4. Critique the decision in accordance with the theoretical lens you have adopted and indicate what, if anything, should have been done differently and why.
5. Write a conclusion that restates the thesis, summarizes the decision and describes and supports your judgment regarding how the decision should have been made.

**Assessment Rubric for Assignment 3: Critique of a Decision Made in Your School
30 Points**

Dimension	Criteria by Level			
	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Falls Below Expectations
Introduction and thesis (15%)	Introduction describes the decision you will analyze, indicates the apparent theory in use in making the decision, foreshadows significant findings through the thesis, and foreshadows how the thesis will be supported.	Introduction provides an adequate description of the decision, but does not provide a clear thesis and/or foreshadow how the thesis will be supported.	Introduction is vague and does not adequately orient the reader to the paper	Introduction is either missing or unclear.
Description of the Decision (15%)	The description includes a coherent rationale for the theoretical decision-making lens through which the decision was made, the issue or problem it addressed, the process by which it was made, who or what interests were involved in the decision, the nature of the decision and its results.	The description provides a sense of the decision, its undergirding theory and the process by which it was made, but lacked coherence on one or more of those elements.	The description ignores one or more of the required elements.	The description is incoherent.
Critique of the Decision (40%)	The critique uses appropriately the selected theoretical lens to indicate what, if anything, should have been done differently, and why.	The critique describes reasons to support or criticize the decision, but the theoretical lens or the reasoning are unclear.	The critique is based on a theory that does not apply, the theory is applied inappropriately, or major elements are ignored.	The critique is absent or incoherent.
Conclusion (20%)	The conclusion provides a clear and concise summary of the thesis, the decision description and supports the critique.	The conclusion, although including the required components, is unclear on one or more of the components.	The conclusion ignores important components.	The conclusion is missing or incoherent.
Mechanics and APA (10%)	Nearly error-free, reflecting clear understanding of APA format and thorough proofreading.	Occasional grammatical errors, questionable word choice, and minor APA errors.	Frequent errors in grammar, punctuation and/or spelling, and frequent and/or APA conventions.	Errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation and APA conventions, rendering the paper difficult to read.

Assignment 4: Decision Making Research Proposal
30 Points
Due: May 6, 2019

Rationale

The purpose of this assignment is to provide an opportunity to practice the development of a research proposal, using the readings completed and adding to them.

Process

Complete the following steps to develop the decision-making proposal.

1. Select a decision-making problem related to one of your areas of research interest.
2. Describe your interest in the problem and how decision making relates to the problem.
3. Provide a summary of the research related to the issue.
4. Develop one or more research questions that you wish to investigate
5. Describe how you would conduct the investigation.
6. Describe limitations and threats to validity inhering in the intended investigation and how to address them.
7. Write a conclusion that restates the thesis and summarizes the research questions and method.

Assessment Rubric for Assignment 4: Decision Making Research Proposal
30 points

Dimension	Criteria by Level			
	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Falls Below Expectations
Introduction (10%)	The introduction indicates clearly the decision-making problem to be investigated, the reason it was selected, the thesis related to how it might best be investigated, and foreshadows how the thesis will be supported.	The introduction presents unclearly one or more of the elements of the introduction.	The introduction omits one or more important elements	The introduction is unclear or missing.
Research Summary (20%)	The research summary synthesizes and cites at least 3 or more sources regarding the nature of the problem, its possible solutions, and what should be further investigated.	The research summary includes appropriate references to 3 or more sources but treats them serially.	The research summary includes fewer than 3 sources.	The research summary is unclear or absent.
Research Questions (20%)	The research questions are clear and clearly related to investigating decision-making (related to the problem).	The research questions are clear but their relationship to decision-making or to the problem is unclear.	At least one of the research questions is unrelated to the problem.	The research questions are unclear or missing.
Method of Investigation (20%)	The method of investigation is described clearly and holds promise of answering the research questions.	The method of investigation is described clearly but may not answer one or more of the questions.	The method of investigation, although promising, requires considerable revision.	The method of investigation is unclear or absent.
Limitations and Threats (10%)	The limitations and threats are succinctly presented and explained; and ways to address them are described.	The limitations and threats are presented succinctly, but the explanations, or the measures to address them may require revision,	The limitations and threats and the measures to address them are not presented succinctly.	The limitations and threats are either unclear or not presented.
Conclusion (10%)	The conclusion clearly restates the thesis and summarizes the research questions and method.	The conclusion omits one of the required components.	The conclusion omits more than one of the required components.	The conclusion is unclear or absent.
Mechanics and APA (10%)	Nearly error-free, reflecting clear understanding of APA format and thorough proofreading.	Occasional grammatical errors, questionable word choice, and minor APA errors.	Frequent errors in grammar, punctuation and/or spelling, and frequent and/or APA conventions.	Errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation and APA conventions, rendering the paper difficult to read.

Assessment Rubric for Participation
20 points

Dimension	Criteria by Level			
	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Falls Below Expectations
Active engagement in activities (30%)	Active engagement in all course activities	Active engagement in almost all course activities	Active engagement in a majority of activities	Active engagement in less than a majority of activities
Quality of participation (30%)	Most queries are specific and on point. Deeply involved in class dialogue. Challenges ideas and seeks meaning. Treats others with respect.	Often has specific queries, stays involved in class dialogue, though sometimes tentative or off-base. Treats others with respect.	Asks questions about deadlines, procedures, directions or for help with little specificity. Infrequently discusses ideas.	Rarely asks questions of substance and/or treats others with disrespect.
Effort (20%)	Volunteers as appropriate and often leads in group activities. Engages and brings out the best in others.	Willingly participates in group activities.	Reluctantly participates when asked. Seeks easiest duties in groups.	Actively avoids involvement when possible.
Preparation (20%)	Demonstrates preparation regularly by referring to previous learning, text and other sources to contribute to group 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 periodic preparation and readiness for class.	Rarely demonstrates readiness for class.