EDLE 634 Section 602 Contemporary Issues in Educational Leadership
3 credits, Summer 2020
Wednesdays 4:45-7:45, May 20, 2020 to July 29, 2020 Online

Faculty:

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Course Description

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.

Course Overview

This course is intended as one of two culminating courses in the Master's in Education Leadership Program. Course content focuses on key contemporary issues in public education, which hold important implications for education leadership, policy, and practice in the 21st century. At the conclusion of the course, students will be expected to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to increase their effectiveness in working with multiple school and community stakeholders in increasingly diverse and complex education contexts.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered using an online format. There will be several synchronous sessions but generally an asynchronous course. A variety of instructional methods will be used in this online course to deepen student's understanding of the course content and create a dynamic, interactive learning community in a seminar format. The instructional methods will include cooperative learning structures, small and large group discussion, group presentations, print and electronic media, guest lecturers, online submissions, and individual research.

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.

Technology 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. Per university policy in compliance with federal law, the professor will only communicate with students via their GMU email accounts, and will be unable to respond to emails sent from other accounts (i.e., Gmail, Yahoo, work email, etc.). Any announcements regarding the course will be sent to your GMU account. I will respond to emails within 48 hours, excluding weekends.
- 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.
- **Video/Screencasting Tools**: You may use Kasturi, Jing, or Camtasia to record any assignments that may utilize videos.
- **Group Work:** You may use **Google Docs or any other platform** to complete any group assignments. Blackboard Discussion Boards will be used for various learning activities throughout the semester.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download: [Add or delete options, as desire.]
  - 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/

Email: All candidates are required to activate and monitor their GMU e-mail accounts. I strongly recommend that you do not forward your Mason e-mail to a different account because attachments are often lost that way. It is best to check e-mail directly from your Mason account daily. Per university policy in compliance with federal law, I will only communicate with candidates via their GMU email accounts and will be unable to respond to emails sent from other accounts (i.e., Gmail, yahoo, work email, etc.). Any announcements regarding the course will be sent to your GMU account. I will respond to emails within 48 hours, excluding weekends.

On-line Expectations

- **Course Week:** Because online courses do not have a "fixed" meeting day, our week will **start** on **Wednesday** and **finish** on **Tuesday.**
- **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.
- **Participation**: Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which include viewing of all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
- **Technical Competence**: Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- **Technical Issues**: Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.

- **Workload**: Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- **Instructor Support:** Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. 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

This course is designed to enable students to:
1. Analyze contemporary issues and major trends in education and their implications for society at large and schools, communities and school districts in particular.
2. Define characteristics and skills of future-focused leaders and learn strategies to address the implications for leadership in education systems and individual schools.
3. Evaluate 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. Synthesize recent research relative to student achievement in diverse school settings, with particular attention to the relationships between student achievement, gender, race, poverty, and ability.
5. Identify various strategies to maximize the effective use of data to improve student achievement and effective ways to communicate results to various community stakeholders and groups.
6. Defend educational decisions using data rather than personal opinion.
7. Describe rights, regulations, philosophies, and methods used in educating diverse groups such as Limited English Proficient and Students with Disabilities.
8. Utilize various data sources to predict future issues/trends in education and to improve student achievement.
9. Work independently and interdependently to successfully accomplish group projects.
10. Listen to multiple perspectives, consider suggestions, seek common ground, and maintain objectivity.

Professional Standards

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 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. 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).

Required Texts

Koonce, G. (2017). *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Educational Issues (20th ed.)*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Twenge, Jean M. (2006). *Generation Me.*

Pink, Daniel H. (2006). *A Whole New Mind.*

Wagner and Dintersmith. (2015). *Most Likely to Succeed.*

Required Resources Due to the nature of this course, the online publications listed below will be used to provide students with the most current issues and best practices and information in the field. Students are required to sign up for the publication prior to the start of the course. The instructor will provide registration and access information. The publications will be used as a regular part of every class.

Students will sign up to receive these online newsletters which provide a daily (ASCD), current snapshot of the education community with news from Education Week, The Washington Post and other leading sources written by experts in summary form. Each class will start with a brief report out on a current trend or issue from this resource.

Blackboard Site- Research articles, briefs and reports will be posted to the Blackboard site related to discussion topics for specific class sessions. Students will be required to check the site daily for articles posted and be prepared for class discussions on the topic.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, hard copy).

Assignments and/or Examinations

Below is a list and a brief summary of the required assignments in this course. Please refer to the assignment rubrics at the end of the syllabus for more detailed information on exactly what is expected for each assignment.

1. **Class Discussion and Participation (25 points)**

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, weekly 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 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 prepared and on time, that student is responsible for notifying the professor 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.

2. Group Presentation: Trends for the 21st Century (30 points)

Collaboration is a key skill for 21st century leaders and learners. This assignment allows future leaders to share their knowledge of 21st century trends that are likely to have a significant impact on our students, schools, districts, communities and our future. Based on Marx's work, these trends are grouped into 8 "spheres". Students will be assigned to groups and selected spheres, inclusive of several trends. Using the assigned text (Marx), students will research two "spheres" and demonstrate their collective knowledge on related research, perspectives, issues, and insights to the class. The focus of the one-hour presentation will be on the implications for education and particularly the role of the educational leader in addressing the issues.   Students will synthesize the implications for the educational leader into a one-page executive summary document that will also be distributed to the class. Through this collaborative learning activity, students will connect the learning to current and future practice, with a focus on the role of the educational leader, including challenges and opportunities. Students are encouraged to use other 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, and effective communication to convey the essential knowledge and implications. A rubric is provided as an assessment for this assignment.

3. Issue Brief (20 points)

Students will select a contemporary issue in education that is of great interest to them and holds important implications for the study and practice of education leadership. Once selected, the student will write an issue brief (4 to 5 pages) that: (a) clearly describes the underlying assumptions and arguments informing multiple perspectives on the issue; (b) integrates current research/policy literature and popular media coverage of the issue; (c) analyzes competing perspectives on the prevailing issue and their implications for education leaders, and (d) presents at least three recommendations for policy and/or leadership practice as possible solutions.

4.   Small Group Project/Presentation on Current Issue (25 points)

Students will work in groups of 4 or 5, with defined roles and prepare a 40-minute interactive presentation (which includes a Q & A) with visuals/PPT, on a selected topic, which is to be defined/described and include relevant related research. The group will discuss the topic's implications and potential impact on education. Multiple perspectives from key stakeholders should be presented. See list of possible topics.

Possible Topics for Issue Brief Paper/Small Group Presentations:
Bullying, discipline, technology, personnel shortages/recruitment/retention, professional learning, professional standards, personalized learning, performance-based assessment, common core, response to intervention/multi-tiered systems of support, funding, school turn around, charter schools, graduation rates, gender equity, inclusive practices, employee compensation, teacher leadership, blended learning, parent/community involvement, etc. Contact the instructor if you would like to explore a topic that is not listed.

Assignment Expectations and Possible Points:

All papers must be typed (12 pt. font, 1-inch margins, double-spaced in APA format – 6th edition) and submitted electronically to the instructor. It is expected that student work will be submitted on time (before 11:59 p.m. on the due date). If you miss class the day an assignment is due, it is your responsibility to ensure the assignment is turned in before the deadline to avoid a failing grade. If you anticipate needing an extension (except, of course, in the case of a true emergency), please make arrangements prior the deadline. Designate one person in each group to submit the group presentation ensuring that each group member's name is included on the presentation document.

Class Discussion and Participation	25 points
Education Issue Brief	20 points
21st Century Trends: Group Presentations	30 points
Small Group Project/Current Issue Presentation	25 points
TOTAL POSSIBLE	**100 points**

Grading

The grading scale for the final course grade is as follows:

A+	=	100 points
A	=	95-99 points
A-	=	90-94 points
B+	=	87-89 points
B	=	83-86 points
B-	=	80-82 points
C	=	75-79 points
F	=	below 75 points

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/

Proposed Class Schedule: The schedule is tentative and subject to change by the instructor.

DATE	TOPICS	READINGS/ ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week 1 (5/20)	Course Introduction & Overview Discussion of Syllabus, Assignments, Expectations, Group Work/Assignments Introduction: Trends for the 21st Century Blackboard site overview	Introduction to Koonce. Twenge: Chapters 1-3, 8, and one of your choice.
Week 2 (5/27))	Online Research individual Topics Taking Sides Preparation Should Public Schools Be Redefined?	Continue with Twenge. Discussion Board #1 Kounce: pp. 36-53

Week 3 (6/3)	Taking Sides Presentations Groups 1 and 2	Continue with Twenge
Week 4 (6/10)	Taking Sides Presentations Groups 3 and 4	Continue with Twenge
Week 5 (6/17)	Socratic Seminar Twenge Issue: Should Teacher Preparation & Licensing Be Regulated by The Government?	Pink: Chapters 1-3 and two of your choice. Discussion Board #2 Kounce: pp. 157-167
Week 6 (6/24)	Taking Sides Presentations Groups 5 and 6	Continue with Pink.
Week 7 (7/1)	Individual Group Research	Prepare for issue brief and small group presentations. Continue with Pink
Week 8 (7/8)	Issue: Should There Be No-Zero Grading Policies in Schools? Socratic Seminar: Pink	Issue Brief Due. Kounce: pp. 184-200 (BB Discussion Board). Wagner and Dintersmith chapters 1-4 And 1 of your choice.
Week 9 (7/15)	Issue: Is There Support for Arming Teachers in School?	Wagner and Dintersmith Prepare for small group presentations Kounce: pp. 129-140
Week 10 (7/22)	Socratic Seminar: Wagner and Dintersmith (BB Discussion Board) Small Group Presentations Group 1 and 2	Prepare for Small Group Presentations-Groups 3 and 4
Week 11 (7/29)	Small Group Presentations Groups 3 and 4	Course Wrap-Up

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:

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website (See http://gse.gmu.edu/).

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see http:/catalog.gmu/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 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.

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 services on campus, see http://ctfe.gmu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus.

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

As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

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

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC(S):

Assessment Rubric for Group Presentation: Trends for the 21st Century

Students will be assigned to groups and selected spheres, inclusive of several trends. Using the assigned text (Marx), students will research two "spheres" and demonstrate their collective knowledge on related research, perspectives, issues, and insights to the class. The focus of the 45 minute presentation will be on the implications for education and particularly the role of the educational leader in addressing the issues. Students will synthesize the implications for the educational leader into a one-page executive summary document that will also be distributed to the class. Through this collaborative learning activity, students will connect the learning to current and future practice, with a focus on the role of the educational leader, including challenges and opportunities.

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Meets Expectations (3)	Approaches Expectations (2)	Falls Below Expectations (1)
Knowledge of Sphere & Related Trends **Research-based Information (20%)**	Critical research included regarding all trends	Basic and current research included for all trends	Missing one or more important research studies on trends	No research cited
Group member Participation & Evidence of Collaboration **(20%)**	All members have a unique role, assume shared responsibility & demonstrate extensive preparation	All members demonstrate participation & collaboration	Some members demonstrate participation	One member delivers presentation

Engaging Presentation; Emphasizes Role of Educational Leader **(20%)**	Engages participants & provides specific examples of the leader's role, challenges & opportunities	Engages Participants & discusses the leader's role	Minimal engagement & reference to leader's role	No engagement or mention of leader's role
Presentation Content **Connecting Content to Practice** **(20%)**	Provides new insights into issues & excellent connections to leadership practices	Provides complete and accurate understanding of issues & connection to leadership practices	Provides incomplete understanding of issues & leadership practices	Provides misconceptions or issues; no connection to leadership practices
One Page Executive Summary: Implications for Educational Leaders **(10%)**	Paper clearly/fully synthesizes implications for educational leaders in practical terms	Paper clearly described implications for leaders	Paper describes only partial implications	Information lacking or not relevant to leadership
Response to Questions **(10%)**	All questions responded to clearly and accurately	All questions responded to adequately	Some questions not responded to or some responded to inaccurately	No response or inaccurate answers

Assessment Rubric for Issue Brief

Students will select a contemporary issue in education that is of great interest to them and holds important implications for the study and practice of education leadership. Once selected, the student will write an issue brief (3 to 4 pages) that: (a) clearly describes the issue, underlying assumptions and arguments, key players, and divergent points of view; (b) integrates current research/policy literature and popular media coverage of the issue; (c) discusses the prevailing issue and its implications for education leadership.

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Meets Expectations (3)	Approaches Expectations (2)	Falls Below Expectations (1)

Overview of Issue (25%)	The brief begins with an accurate overview of the issue that is clear and concise. The author calls attention to key players, divergent points of view and the issue's significance to education leadership.	The brief begins with an overview of an issue, but may wander. The author does at least two of the following: calls attention to key players, divergent points of view and the issue's significance to education leadership.	The brief offers an overview of the essay but misstates critical details. The author does at least one of the following: calls attention to key players, divergent points of view and the issue's significance to education leadership.	The brief does not offer an accurate overview of the issue. The author neglects to call attention to key players, divergent points of view and the issue's significance to education leadership.
Related Research (40%)	The author effectively integrates publicly accessible research/policy literature and popular media coverage of the issue to further illustrate multiple and diverse perspectives on the issue.	The author integrates some publicly accessible research/policy literature and popular media coverage of the issue to present multiple and diverse perspectives on the issue.	The author does not present a sufficient discussion of the relevant research and popular media coverage or multiple perspectives on the issue.	The author does not include any research or popular media coverage of the issue.
Implications for Education Leadership (25%)	The author offers a clear and specific statement and examination of how he/she would lead around this issue as a school leader.	The author offers a statement of how he/she would lead around the issue, but offers few specific details.	The author offers a vague statement of how he/she would lead around the issue with few specific details.	The author does not offer a statement or examination of how he/she would lead around the issue as a school leader.
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.

Assessment Rubric for Small Group Current Issue Presentation

Students will work in groups of four, with defined roles. Each group will prepare a 40-minute interactive presentation with visuals/PPT, on an educational issue, which is to be defined/described. Relevant related research should be included. The topic's implications and potential impact on

education should be discussed. Multiple perspectives from key stakeholders should be presented. Ten of the 40 minutes of the presentation should be devoted to Q & A.

Criteria	Exceeds Expectations (4)	Meets Expectations (3)	Approaches Expectations (2)	Falls Below Expectations (1)
Research-Based Information **(20%)**	Critical research included	Basic and current research included	Missing one or more important research studies	No research cited
Necessary/Integral Information on Assigned Topic **(25%)**	Topic clearly described and implication for future changes or uses outlined	Topic clearly described and necessary information provided	Topic not clearly described and only partial information provided	Information lacking or not on topic
Presentation Content **(25%)**	Provides Multiple perceptions & new insights into issues	Provides complete and accurate understanding of issues	Provides incomplete understanding of issues	Provides misconceptions or issues
Group Member Participation & Evidence of Collaboration **(20%)**	All members have a unique role, assume shared responsibility & demonstrate extensive preparation	All members demonstrate participation & collaboration	Some members demonstrate participation	One member delivers presentation
Response to Questions **(10%)**	All questions responded to clearly and accurately	All questions responded to	Some questions not responded to or some responded to inaccurately	No response or inaccurate answers