

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Education Leadership Program**

**EDLE 634, Section DL1
Contemporary Issues in Education Leadership
Fall 2021, 3 credit hours**

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Course Term: August 23 – December 13, 2021

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

University Catalog 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.

II. COURSE DELIVERY METHOD

This course will be delivered 100% fully online using an asynchronous (not “real time”) format via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before “@masonlive.gmu.edu”) and email password. The course site will be available on August 23, 2021.

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.

III. COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts

Frey, William H. (2018). *Diversity explosion: How new racial demographics are remaking America*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

(Note that there is a new 2018 edition)

Duncan, Greg J., and Richard J. Murnane. (2014) *Restoring opportunity: The crisis of inequality and the challenge for American education*. Harvard Education Press.

Other Assigned reading in Blackboard and Optional Sources

Assigned and optional source material will be available on their links listed on Blackboard. Assigned sources will also be listed on the tentative schedule below.

IV. COURSE CONTENT

During the course students will learn about (1) the demographic shifts about school populations that have led to changes in current and projected student bodies; (2) research that examines causes of opportunity and achievement gaps in American education; (3) interventions related to reducing opportunity and achievement gaps by race/ethnicity, SES, dominant language, or disability; and (4) examining critical issues that occur in schools when managing staff and students as a school leader.

Teaching and Learning

Each class will include a variety of activities and exercises. Specific process goals for this class are as follows:

1. Classes will reflect a balance of activities that encourage the exploration of and the use of research in instructional leadership. To promote an atmosphere that allows us to accomplish this, we will:
 - a. agree to disagree respectfully during class discussions;
 - b. give others a charitable read by assuming good intentions;
 - c. strive to be open to new ideas and perspectives; and
 - d. listen actively to one another.

2. Candidate work will reflect what is expected from leaders. Hence, it is expected that candidates will:
 - a. write papers that are well-researched, proofread, submitted in a timely fashion, and conform to APA guidelines;
 - b. participate actively in class discussions in a manner that challenges the best thinking of the class; and
 - c. provide constructive feedback to others both on their ideas and on their written work, striving to learn from each other and to test each other's ideas.

3. We will endeavor to create an online environment that approximate what we know about learning organizations. Consequently, it is important that we create a space that allows participants to try out new ideas and voice opinions without fear or ridicule or embarrassment. The hallmark of a learning organization is a balance between openness and constructive feedback; hence, everyone is expected to:
 - a. demonstrate appropriate **respect for one another**;
 - b. voice concerns and opinions about the class process openly;
 - c. engage in **genuine inquiry**;
 - d. recognize and celebrate each other's ideas and accomplishments;
 - e. show an awareness of each other's needs; and
 - f. **maintain strict confidentiality** regarding any information shared.

V. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students completing the course successfully will be able to:

- ✓ Access and manipulate GIS sites to retrieve and analyze demographic data.
- ✓ Convey and 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 generation gaps; and their impact on education.
- ✓ Analyze and explain research about education gaps related to race/ethnicity, disability, SES, or dominant language.
- ✓ Apply such research to a proposed plan to narrow at least one of these gaps.
- ✓ Consider the myriad number of challenges school leaders typically face when managing staff and students.

VI. RELATIONSHIP TO PROGRAM GOALS

The following National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) and Education Leadership Constituent Council standard elements are addressed in this course:

NELP Standard 3: Equity, Inclusiveness and Cultural Responsiveness

- Component 3.1 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to use data to evaluate, design, cultivate, and advocate for a supportive and inclusive school culture.
- Component 3.2 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable access to educational resources, technologies, and opportunities that support the educational success and well-being of each student.
- Component 3.3 Program completers understand and demonstrate the capacity to evaluate, cultivate, and advocate for equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive instruction and behavior support practices among teachers and staff.

NELP Standard 7: Policy, Governance, and Advocacy

- Component 7.1 Program completers understand and have the capacity to collaboratively develop the school's professional capacity through engagement in recruiting, selecting, and hiring staff.
- Component 7.2 Program completers understand and have the capacity to develop and engage staff in a collaborative professional culture designed to promote school improvement, teacher retention, and the success and well-being of each student and adult in the school.

- Component 7.3 Program completers understand and have the capacity to personally engage in, as well as collaboratively engage school staff in, professional learning designed to promote reflection, cultural responsiveness, distributed leadership, digital literacy, school improvement, and student success.

VII. TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

This course will be delivered on GMU's Blackboard platform, so students are required to have access to Blackboard. A Blackboard site is available to all students enrolled in the course at <http://mymason.gmu.edu>. You need to log on using your GMU username and password. To participate in this course, students will need the following resources:

- 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
- Consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard (at least daily access on weekdays), as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- 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 are available for free download by clicking on the link next to each plug-in:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - Windows Media Player: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
 - Apple QuickTime Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/
- You will use **Google Docs** to complete select assignments and to participate in various learning activities throughout the semester.
- **Video/Screencasting Tools:** You will use Kaltura, Jing, Camtasia, or Screencast-O-Matic to record videos throughout the semester.
- **A headset microphone** for use with Blackboard Collaborate we conferencing tool, Zoom, or with Google Hangouts to engage with the instructor. These can also be useful when recording videos for the course.

Email: Per university policy and 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.).

- **All candidates are required to activate and monitor their GMU e-mail accounts.**
- Any announcements concerning the course will be sent to your GMU email address.
- I will respond to emails within one business day of email receipt (i.e., excluding weekends).

- **Video Conferencing:** Students are encouraged to communicate with each other and the instructor using Blackboard Collaborate for both group collaboration sessions and the instructor's virtual office hours. We may also use Google Hangouts as a video communication platform when needed.

Microsoft Office: It is my expectation that all students have access to Microsoft Office. We will be using Word and Excel for this course. If you do not have access to this software, you are required to obtain it within the first two weeks of the course. It is best, but not required, to have the most recent version of the software.

Google Account: We will be using Google Drive to organize some of our collaborative work this semester. All students are required to have an active Gmail account in order to participate in these activities. This Gmail account should be distinct from your school district email address, even if you have access to google through your school district account (email should end in @gmail.com).

VIII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

General Expectations

Consistent with the expectations of a Master's level course in the Education Leadership program, grading is based heavily on student performance in 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 class activities
- The quality of analysis, synthesis, and application
- The ability to write in a clear, concise, and organized fashion

Additionally, a significant portion of the class grade will be based on participation and the contribution you make to class discussion.

Specific Performances and Weights

The overall weights of the various performances are as follows:

Class participations - 125 points

Candidates are expected to participate actively in class discussions, 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.

Orientation (5 points)

- Padlet Introduction activity
- Syllabus quiz

Unit 1: Diversity Explosion (50 points)

- Group discussions, in-class activities, quizzes and peer review

Unit 2: The Opportunity and Achievement Gap (50 points)

- Group discussions, in-class activities, quizzes and peer review

Unit 3: Critical Issues in Education (20 points)

- Group discussions, in-class activities, quizzes and peer review

Written Assignments - 375 points

You will have **three major assignments** during the course. The first paper involves reporting a demographic analysis. The second is a proposal on a specific achievement gap, including the nature of this gap and what research suggests might help close it, followed by a set of proposed actions to narrow it in your setting. The third is a descriptive analysis of a contemporary issue from your school/campus. A description of each assignment and a rubric for grading each assignment are included at the end of this syllabus.

Submitting papers: All papers must be submitted **on time, electronically via Blackboard.**

Late work: Students' work is expected to be on time, meaning no later than midnight of the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted except in an emergency situation that have been discussed and approved by the instructor in advance of the due date. Please take advantage of instructor availability to get assistance prior to assignment deadlines.

Grade Appeals: Grade appeals will only be granted when the number of points awarded for the assignment is less than 75 percent of the possible points available. Grade appeals will only be allowed for the first two written assignments. Students must resubmit the assignment within two weeks of receiving their original grade in order to receive a new grade. If the resubmission represents a substantial improvement over the original assignment, students will be eligible to receive up to half of the points they didn't earn on their first attempt.

Grading Scale:

- A+ = 500 points
- A = 475 - 499 points
- A- = 450 - 474 points
- B+ = 435 - 449 points
- B = 415 - 434 points
- B- = 400 - 414 points
- C = 375 - 399 points
- F = Below 375 points

IX. ONLINE EXPECTATIONS

Course Week: Because online courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will generally **start on Monday and finish on Sunday**, with exceptions communicated to students via email.

Log in Frequency: Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communication from the instructor, **at a minimum this should be three times per week.**

Participation: Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes 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 are expected to seek assistance from the instructor or GMU IT if they are struggling with the technical components of the course.

Technical Issues: Students should expect to experience some technical difficulties at some point in the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.

Workload: Expect to log in to this course **at least three times a week** to read announcements, participate in discussions, and work on course material. Remember, this course **is not self-paced**. There are **specific deadlines** and **due dates** listed in the **CLASS SCHEDULE** section of the syllabus and the weekly to do lists on Blackboard to which you are expected to adhere. It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities, and assignments due. **Plan to spend about 10 hours a week to complete all course activities.**

Advising: If you would like to schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content, or other course-related issues, we can meet via telephone or web conference. We can meet during the online office hours using Zoom. Send an email to schedule a one-to-one session if you are unable to meet during office hours, and including your preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

Netiquette: Our goal is to **collaborate**. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be misconstrued. A following is a list of suggestions for interacting with others online:

- Re-read your responses carefully before you post.
- Be positive in your approach to others and be diplomatic with your words.
- Remember, you are not competing with each other. You are sharing information and learning from one another as well as the instructor.
- Use descriptive subject lines. Give readers a clue about what’s inside.

- Do not use all caps.
- Avoid slang, abbreviations, and acronyms.
- Avoid sarcasm, joking, or other communication styles reliant on visual cues.
- Avoid multiple exclamation points.
- Assume good intentions. Err on the god side of all contributors.
- If you are referring to something that was said or read on the online forum, “cite” the original source to give credit to who originally shared the idea.

X. 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 <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 tk2ohelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursesupport.gmu.edu/>.
- **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 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/>.

Plagiarism:

- **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. Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions for this include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writers' own insights or findings from their own field research, and what has been termed common knowledge. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious; what is common knowledge for one audience may not be so for another. In such situations, it is helpful, to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being "reader friendly." In other words, writers provide a citation for any piece of information that they think their readers might want to investigate further. Not only is this attitude considerate of readers, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will never be guilty of plagiarism. (Statement of English Department at George Mason University)
- **Plagiarism and the Honor Code:** George Mason University operates under an honor system, which is published in the University Catalog and deals specifically with cheating, attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing. Please familiarize yourself with the honor code, especially the statement on plagiarism (<http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html>). If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor or utilize the GMU writing center.
- **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.
- If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor utilize the GMU Writing Center.

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. That means, 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/>

Diversity, Religious Holiday: Please refer to George Mason University's calendar of religious holidays and observations (<http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/>). It is the student's responsibility to speak to the instructor in advance should their religious observances impact their participation in class activities and assignments.

Student Privacy Policy: George Mason University strives to fully comply with FERPA by protecting the privacy of student records and judiciously evaluating requests for release of information from those records. Please see George Mason University's student privacy policy <https://registrar.gmu.edu/students/privacy/>.

Professional Dispositions: Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>.

Core Values Commitment: 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/>.

Other Concerns: If you have concerns or issues relating to the content or conduct of the class, please talk with me directly. Although the specifics of these conversations are entirely confidential, they may provide me with useful suggestions that may be shared indirectly with the class to improve the learning experience for all students. As a matter of policy, I do not respond to anonymous e-mails.

Tentative Class Schedule
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To accommodate the learning needs of the class, the topics and reading schedule may be amended during the semester. Any changes will be communicated via email or Blackboard.

| Week/Date | Lesson | Reading | Activities & Assignments |
|--|---|--|--|
| Week 1 August 23-29 | Orientation Introduction to Unit 1: Diversity Explosion Lesson 1: America's Racial Map | 1) Syllabus 2) Frey, Chapters 1 & 3 | 1) Introduction video 2) American Community Survey GIS exercise |
| Week 2 August 30- September 5 | Lesson 2: The Cultural Generation Gap | 1) Frey, Chapter 2 2) <i>Assignment #1 description</i> | 1) Continue small group discussion board exercise from week 1 2) Show what you know (SWYK) about videos and readings 2) Discussion board on the cultural generation gap |
| Week 3 September 6-12 | Lesson 3: Population Shifts | 1) Frey, assigned chapter (possible Chapters 4-7) 2) Additional article matching assigned chapter | 1) Discussion board summary on assigned chapter and article. Responses and discussion on other summaries. 2) Discussion board post on data for assignment #1 |
| Week 4 September 13-19 | Lesson 4: How and Where We Live | 1) Frey, assigned chapter (possible Chapters 8-11) 2) Frey, Chapter 12 | 1) Summary (text or video) on your assigned chapter. Responses and discussion on other summaries. 2) Discussion on Frey Chapter 12. |

| Week/Date | Lesson | Reading | Activities & Assignments |
|--|---|--|--|
| Week 5 September 20-26 | Lesson 5: Where and With Whom Our Children Go To School | 1) Excerpt from <i>Five Miles Away a World Apart</i> by James Ryan | 1) Discussion on reading 2) Blackboard activity |
| Week 6 September 27-October 3 | Lesson 6: Analysis of Changing Demographics | <i>See project #1 requirements</i> | Assignment #1 Due 10/3 |
| Week 7 October 4-10 | Introduction to Unit 2: Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Lesson 6: The Nature of Gaps, Part 1 | 1) <i>Assignment #2 description</i> 2) Readings in Blackboard | Blackboard Activities |
| Week 8 October 11-17 | Lesson 7: The Nature of Gaps, Part 2 | 1) Duncan & Murnane, Chapters 1-4 | 1) Intro to new small group discussion board 2) Small group discussion board posts on The Nature of Gaps lessons 3) Padlet on opportunity gaps |
| Week 9 October 18-24 | Lesson 8: Narrowing Gaps, Part 1 | 1) Duncan & Murnane, assigned chapter (possible Chapters 5-8) 2) Additional article matching assigned chapter | 1) Summary (text or video) on your assigned chapter. Responses and discussion on other summaries. 2) Citations for Assignment #2 due by 10/24 |

| Week/Date | Lesson | Reading | Activities & Assignments |
|--|---|---|--|
| Week 10 October 25-31 | Lesson 9: Narrowing Gaps, Part 2 | 1) Duncan & Murnane, Chapter 9 2) Additional readings in Blackboard | 1) Class-wide discussion board reflection post. 2) Small group activity compiling causes and solutions to opportunity and achievement gaps. |
| Week 11 November 1-7 | Lesson 10: Achievement and Opportunity Gaps Proposal | <i>See project #2 requirements</i> | Assignment #2 Due on or before 11/7 |
| Weeks 12-13 November 8-21 | Unit 3: Critical Issues in Education Leadership Lesson 1: Trends in Education | Current and Emerging Trends Facing Special Education Book Title: <i>Special Education Leadership</i> -- Pages: 228 -243 | Blackboard Activity Activity on selected topic |
| November 22-28 Thanksgiving Break | | | |
| Weeks 14 November 29-December 1 | Lesson 2: Trends in Education | Blackboard assignments | Blackboard Activity Activity on selected topic |
| Week 15 December 6-13 | Lesson 3: Wrapping up the semester | Blackboard assignments | Assignment #3 Due no later than 12/13 |

**Assignment #1: Analysis of Changing Demographics
(125 points)**

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.

Tasks

Select the data from credible sources that you will use.

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.

Assignment #1 description continued on next page...

Analysis of Changing Demographics Assessment Rubric

| 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% |
| <i>Introduction (15)</i> 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. |
| <i>Description of the data (30)</i> 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. |
| <i>Presentation of data (20)</i> 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. |
| <i>Analysis (30)</i> 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. |
| <i>Conclusion (15)</i> 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. |
| <i>Mechanics and APA (15)</i> 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) and APA errors. | The paper is difficult to understand because of issues related to clarity and correctness of writing. |

Assignment #2: Achievement and Opportunity Gaps Proposal (125 points)

Rationale

Part of being an effective school leader is effectively advocating for your students/teachers. This includes high competence in presenting information that convinces others to devote resources and attention to issues important to your school. In this assignment, you will be preparing a proposal that communicates a problem in your school that deserves more attention, including an achievement and opportunity gap perspective on the problem, with suggestions based on class readings, research, and/or trustworthy sources for how to narrow this gap. You can structure this proposal in a variety of formats including,

- a document (e.g., Word, docs).
- a presentation (e.g., powerpoint, sheets). Note that you will not be presenting this presentation, it will exist as a document alone.
- an alternate format of your choosing (e.g., padlet).

This proposal also will push you to base the plan of action on findings from credible sources, including peer-reviewed research articles. Often educators tend to react quickly and base plans of actions on intuition or prior experience. This proposal will be an exercise in basing future actions more purposefully, based on what others have found to be effective.

Tasks

(1) Identify the gap you wish to address. You may select from among gaps associated with differences in performance based on race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, dominant language or disability.

(2) Select the sources on which you will rely. These sources may include class readings, peer-reviewed research articles, or trustworthy sources including reports from university research centers, non-partisan think tanks, and professional organizations like ASCD. **Include 5 or more credible sources.**

(3) Create a document/presentation that you could theoretically send an important stakeholder group. **Consider this a proposal that could be sent to school division-level leaders, parents, community groups, or a funding organization.** Format the proposal in a way that would be appropriate for this type of audience. Regardless of the format, include the following elements:

- 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 literature review with summaries of the credible sources that support potential intervention(s) for narrowing the gap. Organize the summaries based of your thesis. The

goal is to review the sources together – synthesize them – instead of reviewing them one by one;

- a description of the rationale for and the implementation of one or more interventions to narrow the gap (i.e., why this intervention would narrow the gap and how);
- a proposed plan of action for how you would implement the intervention, 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 conclusion that restates your thesis and summarizes how the research/sources supports the thesis.

Assignment #2 description continued on next page...

Achievement and Opportunity Gaps Proposal Rubric

| 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% |
| <i>Introduction (20)</i> The introduction orients the reader to the purpose of the paper and presents the proposal's thesis. | The introduction is compelling and attention grabbing. 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 proposal will be organized to support the thesis. | The introduction orients the reader to the proposal, 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 proposal, 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. |
| <i>Literature Review (30)</i> The literature cited supports the thesis, or theory of action, regarding both causes and possible amelioration of the gap. | The literature review is clearly organized in accordance with the thesis and provides persuasive evidence to support the thesis or theory of action. | The literature review is either unclear or unsupported by the evidence. | The literature review is unclear <i>and</i> unsupported by the evidence. | The literature review is unintelligible. |
| <i>Quality of Sources (10)</i> 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, but can also include other trustworthy sources. | 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 less credible sources. | The synthesis is based on inadequate sources. |
| <i>Quantity of Sources (5)</i> The paper includes at least the minimum number of sources required. | The synthesis relies on at least 5 or more sources. | The synthesis relies on fewer than 5 sources but 3-4 sources. | The synthesis relies on fewer than 3 sources but 1-2 sources. | The synthesis relies on no sources. |
| <i>Intervention(s) (30)</i> The rationale and plan of action of the proposed intervention is persuasive and based on the sources. | The rationale and plan of action of the proposed intervention(s) are compelling and clearly based on the cited sources. | The rationale or plan of action is not compelling and not linked to the cited sources. | One of the two elements (rationale, plan of action) appear unrelated to the cited sources. | All of the elements are unrelated to the cited sources or one or more elements is missing. |
| <i>Conclusion (20)</i> The conclusion restates the thesis and summarizes the literature review and proposed intervention(s). | The conclusion includes a clear restated thesis and a clear summary of the literature review and proposed intervention(s). | The conclusion includes an unclear restated thesis or an unclear summary of the synthesis literature review and proposed intervention(s). | The conclusion includes neither a clearly restated thesis nor an unclear summary of the synthesis literature review and proposed intervention(s). | The conclusion is absent or unintelligible. |
| <i>Proposal Style (5)</i> The proposal is visually appealing and accessible for the intended audience. | The proposal is clearly structured, will appeal visually to the intended audience, and is accessible. | The proposal is clearly structured but is difficult to access, visually unappealing (e.g., too busy, messy). | The proposal is not clearly structured and is difficult to access, visually unappealing (e.g., too busy, messy). | The proposal is of an inappropriate or unintelligible style. |
| <i>Mechanics and APA Citations (5)</i> Your written work should always represent you as accurate and precise. | The proposal is nearly error-free. APA citations for cited sources reflect a clear understanding of APA format. | The proposal contains either writing errors (e.g., spelling, grammar, questionable word choices) or APA errors. | The proposal contains writing errors (e.g., spelling, grammar, questionable word choices) and APA errors. | The proposal is difficult to understand because of issues related to writing. |

Assignment #3: Issue Brief (125 points)

Rationale

This issue brief will give you the opportunity to explore an issue important to you and relate that issue to educational leadership. You will select a contemporary issue in education that is of great interest to you and holds important implications for the study and practice of education leadership. Once selected, you will write an issue brief that: (a) clearly describes the issue, underlying assumptions and arguments, key players, and/or 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.

Tasks

1. Select a recent, difficult issue that your school leadership confronted.
2. Describe how that issue was handled at your school including a timeline of events and the outcomes that resulted from the actions of school leadership.
3. Identify related research and, optionally, popular media coverage of this issue that illustrate multiple and diverse perspectives.
4. Describe how you would confront this issue as a school leader making reasoned arguments based on what occurred in the past and reflecting on related literature.

Your brief should be 3 to 5 pages long (excluding the title and reference pages) and include:

- an introduction that includes an overview of the issue and your position on the issue
- an outline of the evolution of the issue in your school
- a research-based plan of action that would have led to a different outcome.

Assignment #3 description continued on next page...

Issue Brief Rubric

| 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% |
| <i>Introduction (20)</i> The introduction orients the reader to the issue at hand and states the author's position on the issue. | The introduction is well drawn, introducing the reader to (a) the chosen issue, (b) the reasons for its choice, and (c) and explains the author's position on the issue. The introduction includes a clear roadmap for the paper. | The introduction is well drawn, but unclear on either (a) the chosen issue, (b) the reasons for its choice, or (c) the author's position on the issue. The introduction might not include a clear roadmap for the paper. | The introduction is unclear on (a) the chosen issue, (b) the reasons for its choice, or (c) the author's position on the issue. The introduction might not include a clear roadmap for the paper. | The introduction briefly mentions the chosen issue, and a reason for its inclusion. No roadmap for the paper is included. |
| <i>Outline of Events (15)</i> What precipitated the issue, and key school factors that influenced the issue | The paper clearly outlines both the evolution of events and factors and stakeholders that influenced the issue. The outcome of what happened is clearly specified. | The paper clearly outlines both the evolution of events and factors and stakeholders that influenced the issue. Outcome might be unclear. | The evolution of events and outcomes are unclear. | The issue is briefly described in narrative format with no mention of an unfolding timeline of events. |
| <i>Synthesis of Related Research/Media Coverage (35)</i> Description of related research that could help inform a response to the issue including optional inclusion of media coverage. | A thoughtful, research-based analysis of the issue using high-quality, credible sources. Includes media coverage if it is relevant to this issue. | Analysis does not consistently relate to research or is missing relevant media coverage. | Analysis is not research based but includes relevant media coverage. | Analysis uninformed by research and media coverage. |
| <i>The Action Plans (30)</i> Grounded in thoughtful research on the issue. | A recommendation grounded in thoughtful research on the issue. | A recommendation partially grounded in thoughtful research on the issue. | A recommendation with little connection to research on the issue. | No recommendation is evident. |
| <i>Conclusion (15)</i> Summarizes the issue and suggested action plans. | Clear summary of the issue brief with concise statement of proposed action plans. | Clear summary of the issue brief with unclear statement of proposed action plans. | Unclear summary and/or includes new information not in the brief prior to the conclusion. | No conclusion is evident. |
| <i>Mechanics and APA (10)</i> Your written work should always represent you as accurate and precise. | The paper is error free and is clearly and professionally presented. References reflect APA formatting. | The paper has no spelling errors and no more than two mechanical errors. References reflect APA formatting. | The paper has some spelling, grammar and/or mechanical errors. References inconsistently reflect APA formatting. | The project contains many significant errors. |