

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION and HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
Education Leadership Program**

**EDLE 690, Section 603, Using Research to Lead School Improvement  
3 credits, Summer 2023  
Stafford Professional Development Center, Rm 14  
Thursdays 4:45 – 7:45, September 7 – November 30**

**Faculty Name:** Seth B Hunter, PhD  
**Office Hours:** By appointment  
**Office Location:** Thompson Hall, Suite 1306  
**Office Phone:** 703-993-4485  
**Email Address:** [shunte@gmu.edu](mailto:shunte@gmu.edu)

**Prerequisite(s)/Corequisites:** EDLE 620

**University Catalogue Course Description**

Using Research to Lead School Improvement (3:3:0) develops skills, insights, and understanding of how leaders use research to improve schools, with emphasis on the use of assessment and research data to identify school improvement needs and to design school improvement projects.

**Course Delivery Method**

This course will be delivered online synchronously and asynchronously and in-person. See class dates (below) for details. Students are expected to attend in-person and online synchronous class meetings. Instruction will be delivered via Blackboard Learning Management system housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @gmU.edu) and email password. The course site will be available before 9/1/2023.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles.

**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](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](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/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)

### **Learner Outcomes or Objectives**

Students completing the course successfully will be able to:

- understand and apply planning, assessment, and instructional leadership that builds collective professional capacity;
- understand and apply systems and organization theory;
- understand and apply management and leadership skills that achieve effective and efficient organizational operations;
- understand and apply basic leadership theories and knowledge that impact schools;
- understand and apply research knowledge to a significant instructional problem.

### *Student Outcomes*

Successful students will emerge from the course with the ability to:

- gather and analyze student achievement and demographic data available from their school, school district, and the state;
- search online databases for recent publications relevant to a specific topic, and prepare a brief summary of applied research on a topic relevant to the improvement of instruction at their school site;
- use education research to develop a position based on more than one's opinion;
- apply the principles of improvement science to design an internship improvement plan;
- prepare and defend a proposal for an Internship Improvement Project (IIP) that becomes the blueprint for the capstone project required in the EDLE program internship.

### **Relationship of Course to Internship**

Although the internship is a separate course, the Education Leadership program has integrated internship-related activities into course work. **During this course, students will prepare and present a proposal for the Internship Improvement Project (IIP) that they will implement and evaluate as a part of their internship activities over the remainder of the program.**

## **Professional Standards**

### ***National Standards***

The following National Educational Leadership Preparation standard elements are addressed in this course:

NELP Standard 1: Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to collaboratively lead, design, and implement a school mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.

Component 1.1

Component 1.2

NELP Standard 3: Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive school culture.

Component 3.1

Component 3.2

Component 3.3

NELP Standard 6: Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to improve management, communication, technology, school-level governance, and operation systems to develop and improve data-informed and equitable school resource plans and to apply laws, policies, and regulations.

Component 6.1

Component 6.2

NELP Standard 7: Candidates who successfully complete a building-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to build the school's professional capacity, engage staff in the development of a collaborative professional culture, and improve systems of staff supervision, evaluation, support, and professional learning.

Component 7.2

Component 7.4

## **Virginia Competencies**

This course addresses the following Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Competencies:

- a. Knowledge understanding, and application of planning, assessment, and instructional leadership that builds collective professional capacity, including:
  - (2) Collaborative leadership in gathering and analyzing data to identify needs to develop and implement a school improvement plan that results in increased student learning; (7) Identification, analysis, and resolution of problems using effective problem-solving techniques; and
  - (8) Communication of a clear vision of excellence, linked to mission and core beliefs that promotes continuous improvement consistent with the goals of the school division.
  
- b. Knowledge, understanding and application of systems and organizations, including:
  - (1) Systems theory and the change process of systems, organizations and individuals, using appropriate and effective adult learning models;
  - (2) Aligning organizational practice, division mission, and core beliefs for developing and implementing strategic plans;
  - (3) Information sources and processing, including data collection and data analysis strategies;
  - (4) Using data as a part of ongoing program evaluation to inform and lead change;
  - (5) Developing a change management strategy for improved student outcomes; and
  - (6) Developing empowerment strategies to create personalized learning environments for diverse schools.
  
- c. Knowledge understanding and application of management and leadership skills that achieve effective and efficient organizational operations, including:
  - (8) Application of data-driven decision making to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.
  
- f. Knowledge understanding and application of basic leadership theories and influences that impact schools including:
  - (1) Concepts of leadership including systems theory, change theory, learning organizations and current leadership theory.

## **Required Texts**

Hinnant-Crawford, B.N. (2020). *Improvement Science in Education: A Primer*. Myers Education Press.

**All students are now required to activate and monitor their GMU e-mail accounts.** If you are uncertain about how to do this, please see me. It is my expectation that you will be fully competent to send and receive e-mail messages with attachments. If your computer at school or home has spam blocking that will prevent you from seeing messages with attachments, you are responsible for addressing this problem immediately.

It is expected that all students will have access to standard word processing software that can be read by Microsoft Office 2010.

Students will also need a Google account to access the Google work suite (e.g., word documents).

## **Course Performance 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:

1. Application of concepts embedded in assigned readings and other materials and reinforced in class activities
2. The quality of analysis, synthesis, and application
3. 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 discussions and small-group projects.

### **Specific Performances and Weights**

The overall weights of the various performances are as follows:

#### **Class- and school-based assignments and quizzes. Class participation - 10 points**

Candidates are expected to form and work with a school-based leadership team to design their IIP. Candidates are expected to participate actively in class discussions, small group activities, and in serving as critical friends to other colleagues.

#### **Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Cycle Worksheet Completion – 10 points**

Candidates will apply PDSA cycles within a classroom or school in preparation for internship PDSAs.

#### **Written Assignments - 80 points**

Several different types of performance-based assignments will be completed during the semester. Each assignment relates to the application of educational research in your school setting. A description of each assignment and a rubric for grading each assignment are included at the end of this syllabus.

### **VIA Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement**

Every student registered for an EDLE course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit these assessments to VIA through Blackboard. EDLE 690's required performance is the **Internship Improvement Project**. Evaluation of the performance-based assessments by the course instructor will also be completed in VIA through Blackboard. Failure to submit the assessment to Blackboard will result in the course instructor reporting the grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the Blackboard submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

#### **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

### **Course Policies**

ALL ASSIGNMENTS must be submitted electronically through Blackboard unless stated otherwise.

**LATE WORK:** Late assignments will be accepted on a case-by-case basis. Please take advantage of instructor office hours and availability to get assistance prior to assignment deadlines.

**REWRITES:** Rewrites of graded work will not be possible in EDLE 690.

**COMMUNICATING WITH INSTRUCTOR:** Feel free to discuss any/all concerns about the class with me. It is unlikely I will respond to email over the weekend. I typically check email twice daily.

### **Core Values Commitment**

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

## **GMU Policies and Resources for Students**

### *Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <http://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 the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS). Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ds.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.
- 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 1412](#). You may seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or email [cde@gmu.edu](mailto:cde@gmu.edu). 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 703-993-3686 or [Counseling and Psychology Services](#) (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. The 24-hour Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence Crisis Line for Mason is 703-380-1434.

### *Campus Resources*

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to [viahelp@gmu.edu](mailto:viahelp@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>.

## *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 or utilize the GMU Writing Center.

### **Professional Dispositions**

Students are always expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions. See <http://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

### **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](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).