

Course Syllabus
05.651: Transformative Leadership for Schools
Spring, 2012
Instructor/Course Designer: James Nehring

Wednesdays, 4:00-6:30

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Course Overview

This course is driven by three essential questions:

- What are the fundamental problems of PreK-12 education in the United States?
- What are current scholarly perspectives on transformative change in schools?
- How do we bridge educational research and practice in order to bring transformative change to the problems of PreK-12 education in the United States?

The course is divided into three parts, each of which focuses on one of the essential questions.

The first part of the course will focus on schools as they presently are and will consist of a review of a book-length case study of an urban school district, an historical analysis of 20th century American education, and a contemporary study of American education in the global context. Each student will develop an essay based on the first of the course’s three essential questions: What are the essential problems of PreK-12 education in the United States?

The second part of the course will focus on theories transformative school change and will explore the work of several contemporary scholars. Each student will develop an essay based on the second of the course’s three essential questions: What are current scholarly perspectives on Transformative change in schools?

The third part of the course is intended to both deepen and personalize the foundational work completed in the first two parts of the course by connecting research to school practice. Each student will develop a course project which applies his or her scholarly learning from the course to a significant problem at his or her work site. Though identified as the “third part” of the course, work on the course project will begin early in the semester and culminate near the end of the semester.

Student Outcomes

By the end of this course the student will be able to

- 1) Demonstrate familiarity with seminal & current educational leadership literature;
- 2) Thoughtfully discuss the relationship of policy and practice based on research and theory;
- 3) Assess and evaluate educational research, including the benefits and limitations of various methodologies;
- 4) Access high quality research in general and in connection with specific question(s) and topic(s);
- 5) Thoughtfully discuss ethics in research;
- 6) Distinguish between empirical research, theory, commentary, journalism, practitioner accounts etc.;
- 7) Demonstrate a commitment to social justice, meaning the improvement of education for all children and all families;
- 8) Plan and evaluate curriculum, policy, instructional practice, and administrator/leader effectiveness in light of research and theory;
- 9) Present and dialogue effectively in speech and writing about one's research;
- 10) Think flexibly about educational issues, demonstrating openness to new ideas and the ability to integrate them into one's thinking;
- 11) Articulate a vision of leadership and schooling.

Program Context

This course is nested programmatically within the Leadership in Schooling Ed.D. of the Graduate School of Education. Student learning outcomes for this course are carefully aligned with Leadership in Schooling Student Outcomes and the Graduate School of Education Conceptual Framework. As a core course within the Leadership in Schooling Ed.D., this course is also particularly aligned with the criteria for Phase I (Portfolio and Defense) of the Leadership in Schooling Program. For a detailed description of curricular alignment among the course, the program and the Graduate School of Education, see the Appendix at the end of this document.

Required Course Texts

The required texts for this course are as follows:

Cuban, L (2010). *As good as it gets: What school reform brought to Austin*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
ISBN: 0674035542

Hargreaves, A. and Fink, D. (2006) *Sustainable leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
ISBN: 978-0-7879-6838-0

McLaughlin, M. & Talbert, J. (2006). *Building School-Based Teacher Learning Communities: Professional Strategies to Improve Student Achievement*. New York: Teachers College Press.
ISBN: 0-8077-4679-7

Nehring, J. (2009) *The practice of school reform: lessons from two centuries*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
ISBN: 1438428464

Sizer, T. (2004) *Horace's compromise: the dilemma of the American high school*. New York: Houghton-Mifflin.
ISBN: 0-618-51606-9

Tucker, M. (Ed.) (2011) *Surpassing Shanghai: An agenda for American education build on the world's leading systems*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.
ISBN: 978-1-61250-103-1

Tyack, D. and Cuban, L. (1997) *Tinkering toward utopia: a century of public school reform*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
ISBN: 0674892836

Tentative Course Calendar (Subject to change)

Session 1 (1/25)	Course Introduction
Session 2 (2/1)	Essential Problems of US PreK-12 Education: Cuban
Session 3 (2/8)	Essential Problems of US PreK-12 Education: Cuban
Session 4 (2/15)	Essential Problems of US PreK-12 Education: Tyack and Cuban
Session 5 (2/22)	Essential Problems of US PreK-12 Education: Darling-Hammond Introduction to Transformative Change (Fullan snippet) Introduction to Course Project Essay 1 due
Session 6 (2/29)	Perspectives on Transformative Change: Sizer Course Project Proposal due
Session 7 (3/7)	Perspectives on Transformative Change: Nehring Course Project Plan due

Session 8 (3/21)	Perspectives on Transformative Change: Hargreaves & Fink
Session 9 (3/28)	Perspectives on Transformative Change: McLaughlin & Talbert
Session 10 (4/4)	Perspectives on Transformative Change: Elmore
Session 11 (4/11)	Perspectives on Transformative Change: Tucker et al
Session 12 (4/18)	ONLINE CLASS. Bridging Research and Practice Essay 2 due
Session 13 (4/25)	Bridging Research and Practice Collaboration Log due (for course project)
Session 14 (5/2)	Course Synthesis Final Reflection due (for Course Project)
Session 15 (5/9)	TBD. Optional as needed.

Course Policies

In general, assessment of projects (see next section below) will fall into one of the following categories

A= Excellent work demonstrating independent and high quality performance (4.0)

B= Work of graduate standard, but omissions exist or careful analysis is not in evidence. (3.0)

C= work of very poor quality, indicating little understanding of the depth of analysis required. (2.0)

I= (incomplete) work that is completed only partially or not at all (0.0)

+ = work just above a letter grade (2.3, 3.3)

- = work just below a letter grade (1.7, 2.7, 3.7)

Submission of work: Work is due at the beginning of class for the day indicated.

Written work should adhere to APA style. If you anticipate having trouble meeting a due date, please contact me in advance so that we may negotiate an appropriate alternative arrangement. *All work should be submitted electronically before class and a hard copy should be brought to class as well, unless otherwise directed.*

Revision: Students may revise each of the two essays and the project plan once if they choose. A revision is due within two weeks of the date the work was returned. A revision should indicate changes using the Track Changes feature of Word or some similar method such as italics, color, or underlining. Other assignments besides those mentioned above may not be revised.

Academic Honesty: This course adheres to the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty available at: <http://www.uml.edu/catalog/graduate/discipline/default.htm>

Attendance: Students are expected to attend all classes and to be punctual. Active participation in class activities by each of us enhances the quality of the course experience for all of us. If you know you are going to miss a class, please let me know in advance. Repeated absence may be reflected in the class preparation grade.

Major Course Assessments

Major course assessments include 2 essays, one course project, and class preparation. The relative value of each assessment in determining a student's course grade is as follows:

Essay #1	30%
Essay #2	30%
Course Project	20%
Class Preparation	20%

All work should be submitted electronically prior to class on the identified due date. Also, a hard copy of all work should be brought to class on the identified due date.

Essay #1:

Much contemporary research and scholarship focuses on problems of American PreK-12 education. Grounding your response in current literature, discuss one significant, contemporary problem of American PreK-12 education. First, state the problem concisely, framing it as a question. Then, review literature associated with it and discuss the ways in which various studies respond to the problem. Discuss patterns that emerge from the findings, pointing out ways in which the studies complement and/or conflict with one another. In your review of literature you should include relevant scholars/studies on the reading list for this course (that we have discussed as a class) as well as eight to ten prominent studies that you have identified on your own. You should assess the quality of studies, distinguishing among empirical research, journalism, syntheses of research, practitioner accounts, etc., weighing the strengths and limitations of each, and emphasizing original, empirical research. Your tone should suggest inquiry not advocacy. Be sure to appropriately cite all sources consulted. (Length requirement: 3000 to 4000 words).

Rubric for Essay 1

	C	B	A
You state your problem concisely, framing it thoughtfully as a question in the area of preK-12 education			
Your lit review includes the appropriate number/selection of studies			
The chosen studies are appropriate to your topic and are prominent and credible in the field, emphasizing original, empirical research			
Your discussion identifies patterns, conflicts, and complementarity among studies			
You assess the quality of studies, distinguishing among genres, and assessing strengths and limitations.			
Your tone suggests inquiry, not advocacy			
You follow APA guidelines throughout			
Your writing is clear and focused			
Your work is free of grammatical, typographical, and spelling errors			
Your work meets length guidelines			

Essay #2:

Much scholarship of the past thirty years focuses on transformative change in American PK-12 education (i.e., change that reaches beneath the surface of technical problems to address matters of belief and values). Grounding your response in contemporary research and scholarship (reaching back as far as about thirty years), identify several major scholarly perspectives on transformative change in schools. Discuss patterns that emerge from the various perspectives, pointing out ways in which the perspectives complement and/or conflict with one another. In your review of the literature you should include relevant scholars/studies on the reading list for this course (that we have discussed as a class) as well as eight to ten prominent studies that you have identified on your own. You should assess the quality of studies, distinguishing among empirical research, journalism, syntheses of research, practitioner accounts, etc., weighing the strengths and limitations of each, and assessing the empirical foundation of each. Your tone should suggest inquiry, not advocacy. Be sure to appropriately cite all sources consulted. (Length requirement: 3000-4000 words).

Rubric for Essay 2

You clearly articulate several major scholarly perspectives on transformative change.	C	B	A
Your lit review includes the appropriate number/selection of scholarly perspectives			
The perspectives are prominent and credible in the field, founded on original, empirical research			
Your discussion identifies patterns, conflicts, and complementarity among perspectives			
You assess the quality of studies, distinguishing among genres, weighing strengths and limitations, and assessing the empirical foundation of each			
Your tone suggests inquiry, not advocacy			
You follow APA guidelines throughout			
Your writing is clear and focused			
Your work is free of grammatical, typographical, and spelling errors			
Your work meets length guidelines			

Course Project:

This project is designed to help you apply scholarly learning to a real school setting in an effort to bridge research and practice. For this project, you will identify an element of your work setting that you believe would benefit from transformative change (change that reaches beneath the surface of technical problems to address matters of belief and values). In order to demonstrate leadership, the project must include at least one other adult besides you as the focus of the change. You will, therefore, identify one or more persons in your setting with whom to collaborate. Your project may be small in scope (e.g., adoption of a teaching or leadership strategy by you and one other person that is transformative in nature) or wide in scope (e.g. the design of a new school that you will found). The project does NOT need to be completed by the end of the course, but it needs to be fully planned and begun, meaning that a project plan (see below) has been completed and concrete, substantial, collaborative activity has occurred. You are urged to conceive a project that you are authentically committed to so that you will continue the work after you complete this course. You are also required to identify a critical friend to provide input on your project. The critical friend is a colleague knowledgeable with your work setting with whom you feel comfortable openly discussing your work. Your critical friend may be one of your collaborators if you wish or someone slightly more distant from the work, such as a classmate in this course.

Proposal: Prepare a 250 word (very brief) proposal for your Course Project. In your proposal, address the following questions:

1. What, in summary, is your project?
2. What is your role in the workplace where you will seek change?
3. If this project were completely successful, how would student learning be altered?

4. If this project were completely successful, how would teacher and/or school leader practice be altered?
5. What do you propose to do to bring about the changes identified in 1 and 2 above?

As you prepare your proposal, keep in mind the basic criteria for the project, namely, that the project needs to be: A) Transformative (i.e. involving change that goes beneath the surface.) B) Collaborative (i.e. substantial work with at least one other adult.) C) In progress before the end of the semester (i.e. you need to show that concrete steps have been taken toward its eventual completion.) D) Authentic (i.e. you are genuinely committed to the work outside the confines of this course.)

Project Plan: Complete a written plan approximately 2000 words in length that addresses the following prompts.

1. Describe your project briefly and identify your role in the workplace where you will seek change.
2. Explain how student learning will be altered if this plan is completely successful.
3. Explain how teacher practice will be altered if this plan is completely successful.
4. Explain why you believe it is important to bring about change in the area you have chosen, including appropriate references to scholarly work.
5. Surface ethical considerations and explain the ethical foundation of your choices.
6. Explain your initiative within the context of a vision of excellence and equity for all students.
7. Explain how you intend to advance your change project, providing a rationale that includes appropriate references to scholarly work.
8. Identify a person who has consented to serve as your critical friend for this project. Please include the person's name, title, and either an email address or phone number.

Collaboration Log: Collaboration is an essential part of this project. Therefore, you will be expected to engage with one or more other persons in substantial ways. While the frequency and nature of collaboration will vary from project to project, you will be expected to document three collaborative sessions of at least a half hour in length. A collaborative session means simply you and one or more other adults actively engaged with each other in the work of this project. For each session you should indicate: 1) the date, time, and location; 2) the persons involved and their titles/roles; 3) the purpose of the session; 4) the ways in which the session has moved the project forward. Under most circumstances a log entry should be no more than a paragraph in length.

Critical Friend Reflection: At the outset of your project, you should identify a classmate who is willing to serve as your Critical Friend. After completing your project plan and collaboration log, you are to give your written materials to your critical friend to read, then arrange a virtual, phone, or face-to-face meeting (outside of class) to last at least a half hour during which you discuss the work. After this session, you should write a 500 word reflection on your project in which you A) describe what worked well and what

you would do differently; B) discuss new questions and/or insights that you have into your work; C) relate your new insights and questions to scholarship we have studied in this course; D) discuss next steps in your project.

Summary of steps involved with Course Project

1. Complete Project Proposal. Submit.
2. Develop Project Plan, identify Critical Friend. Submit.
3. Proceed with project, conduct at least three collaborative sessions, complete Collaboration Log. Submit collaboration log.
4. Give Project Plan and Collaboration Log to Critical Friend to read.
5. Meet with Critical Friend, discuss Project, complete Critical Friend Reflection.
6. Submit Collaboration Log and Critical Friend Reflection

Rubric for Course Project

	C	B	A
Preliminary Proposal			
You briefly describe your project and explain your role.			
You identify student learning and teacher practice that will change			
You thoughtfully explain what you will do to bring about the above changes			
Project Plan			
You concisely describe your project, focusing on what it will change			
You describe your role in the workplace where you seek change.			
Your project is appropriate in scope and complexity			
You provide a thoughtful rationale with scholarly references			
You explain how your project will be advanced, including scholarly ref.			
Your writing is clear and thoughtful throughout			
You surface ethical considerations and explain the ethical foundation of your choices.			
You explain your initiative within a vision of excellence and equity for all students.			
Collaboration Log			
You document three collaborative sessions of at least 30 minutes each			
You provide evidence that each session is substantive			
You provide evidence that each session moves your project forward			
Critical Friend Reflection			
You discuss what worked and what could be done differently			
You thoughtfully identify new questions and insights into your work			
You relate your new questions and insights to scholarship studied in this course.			
You identify appropriate next steps			
Overall			
Your writing is clear and focused			
Your work is free of grammatical, typographical, and spelling errors, and it follows APA guidelines			
Your work meets length guidelines			

Class Preparation:

Your preparation for class will be assessed weekly, based on your weekly assignments and submission of major projects. The assessment will be holistic. Unlike major projects, there will not be formal written feedback on your preparation assessment. Also unlike other assessed work in this course, preparation may NOT be revised. For the first week of the course, your preparation will be assessed, but the assessment will not count. This is done to give you a sense of the expectations with no risk. Also, at the end of the course, your lowest weekly preparation assessment will be dropped from the grade book. The assessment of preparation is not about “the correct answer.” Rather it is about evidence of thoughtful and thorough work prepared in a timely fashion.

Note: Due to the informal nature of the class preparation, strict APA format is not required.

Important note: *Class preparation assessment will be based on electronic submission of all weekly assignments and ready availability of hard copy in class. Assignments should be submitted as a single wordfile attached to an email addressed to james.nehring@uml.edu. To be on time, the time/date stamp needs to be before the respective class meeting, unless otherwise directed.*

Rubric for Preparation

	A (4.0)	B (3.0)	C 2.0)	I (0.0)
Quantity	The length of your materials is appropriate to the assignment.	The length of your materials is somewhat too long or too short.	The length of your materials is much too long or much too short.	You do not prepare all materials.
Quality	The quality of your materials is exemplary for graduate level work	The quality of your materials is adequate for graduate level work	The quality of your materials is not up to a graduate level standard	You do not prepare all materials.
Timeliness	Your preparation is on time.	Your preparation is mostly on time.	Your preparation is sometimes on time.	You do not prepare all your materials.

Appendix

In order to clarify the programmatic context for this course, several key documents are presented below, namely, the Graduate School of Education Conceptual Framework, the Leadership in Schooling Ed.D. Student Outcomes Rubric as aligned with the GSE Framework, and the Leadership in Schooling, Ed.D. Student Outcome Rubric showing program phases during which each criterion is met.

Graduate School of Education Conceptual Framework

The mission of the University of Massachusetts Lowell is to enhance the intellectual, personal and cultural development of its students through excellent, affordable educational programs. The University seeks to meet the needs of the Commonwealth today and into the future and supports the development of sustainable technologies and communities through its teaching, research, scholarship and engagement. The Graduate School of Education (GSE) contributes to this mission by developing professionals who help transform the region and beyond through leadership roles in education. The GSE's commitment to "Education for Transformation" produces graduates who:

- 1) demonstrate excellent knowledge, judgment, and skills in their professional fields;
- 2) promote equity of educational opportunity for all learners;
- 3) collaborate with other educators, parents, and community representatives to support educational excellence;
- 4) use inquiry and research to address educational challenges; and
- 5) possess the collaborative capability to transform relationships among people in schools, mobilizing them to accomplish purposes they value.

Leadership In Schooling, Ed.D. Student Outcomes Rubric , as Aligned with GSE Framework

#	Student Outcome	GSE Framework Alignment 1-4			
1	Demonstrate familiarity with seminal and current educational leadership literature	1			
2	Demonstrate familiarity with seminal and current literature on equity in education	1	2		
3	Thoughtfully discuss the relationship of policy and practice based on research and theory			3	4
4	Assess and evaluate educational research, including the benefits and limitations of various methodologies	1			4
5	Access high quality research in general and in connection with specific question(s) and topic(s)	1			4
6	Write for publication	1			4
7	Form a conceptual/theoretical framework for a question or topic	1			4
8	Thoughtfully discuss what it means to make a contribution to the field and do so	1		3	
9	Design, conduct, and document an empirical research project	1			4
10	Thoughtfully discuss and apply ethics in research	1	2		4
11	Distinguish between empirical research, theory, commentary, journalism, practitioner accounts etc.				4
12	Demonstrate a commitment to social justice, meaning the improvement of education for all children and all families		2		
13	Plan and evaluate curriculum, policy, instructional practice, administrator/leader effectiveness in light of research.	1			
14	Communicate and dialogue effectively in speech and writing about one's research			3	4
15	Think flexibly about educational issues, demonstrating openness to new ideas and the ability to integrate these ideas into one's thinking	1	2	3	4
16	Articulate a vision of leadership and schooling	1	2	3	4

**Leadership in Schooling, Ed.D. Student Outcomes Rubric
(Showing program phase(s)* during which each criterion is addressed)**

CRITERIA FOR EXCELLENCE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Criteria	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
1 Demonstrates familiarity with seminal and current educational leadership literature.	1	2	3
2 Demonstrates familiarity with seminal and current literature on equity in education.	1	2	3
3 Thoughtfully discusses the relationship of policy and practice.	1	2	3
4 Assesses and evaluates educational research, including the benefits and limitations of various methodologies.	1	2	3
5 Accesses high quality research in general and in connection with a specific question or topic.	1	2	3
6 a. Writes papers that are comparable to papers that have been published in refereed journals.	1	2	3
b. Writes for publication.			3
7 Forms a conceptual/theoretical framework for a question or topic.		2	
8 a. Thoughtfully discusses what it means to make a contribution to the field.	1	2	
b. Makes a contribution to the field.		2	3
9 a. Designs and documents an empirical research project.		2	
b. Conducts an empirical research project and reports findings.			3
10 a. Thoughtfully discusses ethics in research.	1	2	
b. Thoughtfully applies ethics in research.		2	3
11 Distinguishes among empirical research, theory, commentary, journalism, practitioner accounts etc.	1	2	3
12 Demonstrates a commitment to social justice, meaning the improvement of education for all children and all families.	1	2	3
13 Plans and evaluates curriculum, policy, instructional practice, and administrator/leader effectiveness.	1	2	
14 a. Communicates and dialogues effectively in speech and writing about one's research ideas.	1	2	3
b. Communicates and dialogues effectively in speech and writing about one's research.		2	3
15 Thinks flexibly about issues, demonstrates openness to new ideas and integrates them into one's thinking.	1	2	3
16 Articulates a vision of leadership and schooling.	1	2	3

*For information on the three phases of the Leadership in Schooling Ed.D. Program, go to: http://www.uml.edu/Education/Current_Students/Updated%20Doctoral%20Handbook.pdf