05.650/201 Instructional Leadership and School Reform
Graduate School of Education
University of Massachusetts-Lowell
Fall 2012
Mondays, 4:00-6:30 PM

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 11:00-12:30 or by appointment

Course Overview

*History is not kind to idlers.* –The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983)

The 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* generated an abundance of school reform activity in the three decades that followed its release. Efforts to improve U.S. public schools ranged from more rigorous curriculum, longer school days, restructuring, site based management, and teacher empowerment initiatives to increased time for instructional planning and preparation, differentiated roles for teachers, teaming, and alternative assessment. Yet, the quest for large scale improvement proved elusive because reform efforts failed to meaningfully consider the single most important factor in facilitating student learning and achievement—the practice of teaching. This course provides students with the theoretical and empirical bases for understanding effective classroom instruction and the processes by which effective instructional practice can be brought to scale at the school and district levels. The course also calls on students to demonstrate a deep understanding of the current policy landscape and research that explores and illuminates the complexities of improving teaching and learning in U.S. public schools.

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. Through this course, the GSE’s commitment to “Education for Transformation” produces graduates who:
1) Demonstrate instructional leadership by applying their professional knowledge, judgment, and skill in their respective organizations;
2) promote equity of educational opportunity for all learners by improving the quality of instruction in their respective organizations;
3) Collaborate with other educators, parents, and community representatives to place instructional improvement at the forefront of reform efforts and, in doing so, support educational excellence;
4) Use inquiry and research around issues of practice to address educational challenges; and
5) Have the ability to create productive dialogue about instructional practice and student learning in order to transform relationships among people in schools, mobilizing them to accomplish purposes their shared values.
Scope of the Course and Class Format

This course is grounded in three fundamental assumptions about leadership and instructional improvement. First, leaders must be able to use empirical evidence and structured dialogue as tools for improvement. Throughout the semester students will become skilled observers of classroom practice who establish a shared language that facilitates discussion of classroom teaching as a common “text.” Second, because leaders must be able to make hard decisions based on limited information in ambiguous situations, this course is grounded in the case method approach to teaching and learning. Derived from real events, cases immerse students in the conflicts and challenges they will face as leaders in their organizations. Students will be presented with cases about school improvement in which they take on the role of decision maker (or protagonist). As such, they will identify the problem they are faced with, examine the causes, consider courses of action, and make and defend recommendations. Finally, effective leaders have a working knowledge of relevant theory which helps them make sense of their organizations. Students will therefore be asked to apply theory in their interpretations and discussions of cases, observations and analyses of teaching, and research and presentations on school improvement efforts.

Leadership In Schooling Outcomes for Doctoral Students

Students enrolled in the Leadership in Schooling Doctoral Program are expected to demonstrate proficiency with outcomes identified by the program faculty as essential to the field and consistent with the Graduate School of Education Framework. Table 1 below identifies the outcomes addressed in this course.

Table 1: Leadership in Schooling Outcomes Covered in Instructional Leadership and School Reform.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Student Outcome</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Demonstrates familiarity with seminal and current educational leadership literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thoughtfully discusses the relationship of policy and practice based on research and theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Assesses and evaluates educational research, including the benefits and limitations of various methodologies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Accesses high quality research in general and in connection with specific question(s) and topic(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>Writes papers that are comparable to papers that have been published in refereed journals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b</td>
<td>Writes for publication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Distinguishes among empirical research, theory, commentary, journalism, practitioner accounts etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Demonstrates a commitment to social justice, meaning the improvement of education for all children and all families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Plans and evaluates curriculum, policy, instructional practice, and administrator/leader effectiveness in light of research and theory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14a</td>
<td>Presents and dialogues effectively in speech and writing about one’s research ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14b</td>
<td>Presents and dialogues effectively in speech and writing about one’s research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Thinks flexibly about educational issues, demonstrating openness to new ideas and an ability to integrate them into one’s thinking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Assignments and Grades

In order to demonstrate proficiency in the areas outlined above, students will be expected to complete of the following assignments, which will be explained in detail as the class proceeds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Forum</td>
<td>Due 10.1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of Teaching Paper</td>
<td>Due 10.29</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Analysis Paper</td>
<td>Due 11.19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Proposal</td>
<td>Due 12.19</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The success of this course is contingent upon thoughtful, engaged participation of all class members. Students should come to class well-prepared to discuss all readings and take part in class workshop activities. Students are expected to engage in text-based discussion (as “lead off” or follow up participant), team-based case challenges, role plays, and simulations. Each student will be assigned at least one article to critique in class over the course of the semester.

Policy Forum

Students are expected to analyze, present, and discuss a federal, state, or local policy concerning accountability or teacher quality. As in-class “experts,” students describe the policy’s relationship to research, what is known about its effect on practice, and what it means for school leadership. Each student will have roughly 20 minutes to present and lead discussion about the policy they choose.

Analysis of Teaching Paper

Students are expected to analyze one teacher’s instructional practice. This will require an observation of and interview with the teacher. The final product will be an 8-10 page paper. The guidelines for this assignment will be presented and discussed in class.

Case Analysis Paper

Students are expected to analyze a case (provided by the instructor) using empirical and theoretical research discussed in class.

Final Research Proposal

Students are expected to craft a research proposal that explores a question related to leadership’s role in building school capacity. A structure for the proposal will be provided; the final product will be a 10-15 page paper. Students will present their proposals in roundtables on the last day of class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Scale</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>99-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Work of the highest professional standard Demonstrating independent and exemplary performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-98</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Excellent work demonstrating independent and high quality performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Very good work, indicating consistent and careful thought and attention to the task, but requiring some areas of improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Good work, carefully executed for the most part, yet requiring several areas of improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-87</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Work of graduate standard, but omissions exist or careful analysis is not evident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Graduate Standard:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-83</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Effort is evident, but work indicates lack of understanding of the demands of the task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Required Texts, Cases, and Notes


HBR Case: Timilty Middle School [http://hbr.org/](http://hbr.org/) $6.95

HBS Case: Case: The Turn-Around at Highland Elementary School $12.00 [http://hbsp.harvard.edu/product/cases](http://hbsp.harvard.edu/product/cases)

HBS Case: South River Elementary School [http://hbsp.harvard.edu/product/cases](http://hbsp.harvard.edu/product/cases) $6.95


HBS Note: PELP Note on Strategy [http://hbsp.harvard.edu/](http://hbsp.harvard.edu/) $3.95

HBS Note: PELP Note on Coherence [http://hbsp.harvard.edu/](http://hbsp.harvard.edu/) $3.95

HBS Case: Central Falls High School [http://hbsp.harvard.edu/](http://hbsp.harvard.edu/)$3.95

Schedule of Topics and Readings


**Session 1 (9/10): Introductions and Course Overview**

Introductions

Course Overview/Blackboard

  - Syllabus Q&A
  - How to Analyze a Case [CW]

Case-based Discussion

**Session 2 (9/17): The Policy Landscape**

Why has accountability talk dominated the policy discourse for the past decade? What are the results of recent accountability policies, namely No Child Left Behind?

Readings to prepare:


Rhodes, Jesse. (2012). “Accountability in Education as a Civil Rights Cause.” Policy brief written for *Scholars Strategy Network.* (pp. 1) [CW]

Case: In-class video
Assignment #1: Policy Forum [HO]

**Session 3 (9/24): The Policy Landscape**

Why is teacher quality central to the policy discourse? What characteristics matter when it comes to teacher effectiveness? Why is teacher evaluation so fundamental to accountability policy, yet so difficult to implement? What is the relationship between teacher quality and organizational capacity?

Readings to prepare:


Case: In-class video
Final Assignment: Research Proposal [HO]

**Session 4 (10/1): Policy Forum**

**Session 5 (10/10*Wednesday meeting): The Relationship Between Teaching and Learning**

If instructional practice matters, how does it matter? What is the core technology of teaching? What do we know about the transactions and interactions that occur within the classroom—why are some more effective than others? How do we talk about the instructional practice we observe? Why is it so hard for many teachers to change their practice?

Readings to prepare:


Case: Mrs. Oublier [CW] In-Class Video: Every Child a Reader/Writer
Assignment #2: Observation and Analysis of Teaching [HO]

Session 6 (10/15): The Relationship Between Teaching and Learning
If instructional practice matters, how does it matter? What is the core technology of teaching? What do we know about the transactions and interactions that occur within the classroom—why are some more effective than others? How do we talk about the instructional practice we observe? Why is it so hard for many teachers to change their practice? Can we learn from other countries?

Readings to prepare:

Case: (In-class video) International comparisons

Session 7 (10/22): The Relationship Between School-Level Leadership and Teaching and Learning
How, if at all, can school leaders create conditions for improved teaching and learning? To what degree, if any, should principals be involved in instructional improvement efforts?

Readings to prepare:
Case: The Turn-Around at Highland Elementary School [RC]

Session 8 (10/29): The Relationship Between School-Level Leadership and Teaching and Learning
How, if at all, can school leaders create conditions for improved teaching and learning? How do relationships and expectations influence teachers’ work and students’ achievement?

Readings to prepare:


Case: South River [RC] In-class Video: Do you believe in me?

**Teaching Analysis Paper Due**

Session 9 (11/5): The Relationship Between School-Level Leadership and Teaching and Learning
How, if at all, can school leaders create conditions for improved teaching and learning?

Readings to prepare:


Case: Worcester East Middle School [CW]

Case Analysis Paper Assigned [HO]

Session 10 (11/12): The Relationship Between School-Level Leadership and Teaching and Learning
How, if at all, can school leaders create conditions for improved teaching and learning? What role does teacher collaboration play in capacity building?

Readings:


In Class Case: Souhegan HS

Session 11 (11/19): The Relationship Between District-Level Leadership and Teaching and Learning
What role should district level leadership in school improvement efforts? Can district leaders influence the quality of instructional practice across schools?

Readings to prepare:
M. Bruce King, Kate Bouchard, (2011),"The capacity to build organizational capacity in schools", *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 49 Iss: 6 pp. 653 – 669 [CW]
Case: NYC Community District 2 [CW]

Case Analysis Paper Due

Session 12 (11/26): The Relationship Between District-Level Leadership and Teaching and Learning
How can district leaders create coherence across schools? Why should they? What does strategy have to do with it?

Readings to prepare:
Case: Bristol City Schools [RC]

Session 13 (12/3): The Relationship Between District-Level Leadership and Teaching and Learning
Can unions forge the path to large scale improvement? What gets bargained and what doesn’t (and does it matter)?

Readings:
Case: Central High School [RC]
Session 14 (12/10): Course Evaluation and Research Paper Roundtables