

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
CEHD PH.D. IN EDUCATION PROGRAM
EDLE 815—CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS IN EDUCATION LEADERSHIP (3 CREDITS)
Fall 2005

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Schedule Information

Meeting Times: Classes will meet on Wednesdays from 4:30 – 7:10 p.m. with the exception of October 12.

Location: Science and Technology I, room 122

Course Description

This course introduces students to multiple theoretical perspectives on education leadership and helps students identify and articulate different conceptual frameworks used in various publications. Designing a conceptual framework that informs research questions of students' own choosing is the major course focus.

Student Outcomes

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

1. apply at least three theoretical perspectives to issues in education leadership;
2. describe, verbally and graphically, conceptual frameworks used in a variety of publications;
3. develop conceptual frameworks that inform their own original research questions; and
4. formally defend their conceptual frameworks—describing strengths, acknowledging weaknesses, and engaging in question-and-answer.

Relationship to Program Goals

EDLE 815 is a course in the Education Leadership specialization in the Ph.D. in Education program. It is aligned with the following CEHD Priorities: diversity; reflective, research-based practice; research and scholarship; and advanced studies. This course also directly addresses the two major Ph.D. in Education Program goals: 1) Improve knowledge and skills useful in current or planned educational and counseling roles; and 2) Improve the ability to analyze current social, economic, political, and ethical issues and concerns in their relationship to various educational and community situations and activities. A major goal of the Ph.D. in Education Program is to teach students how to conduct research. Developing a conceptual framework is a key component of engaging in and writing about research.

Course Materials

Required Texts

Cuban, L. (1988). *The managerial imperative and the practice of leadership in schools*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Phelan, P., Davidson, A.L., & Yu, H.C. (1998). *Adolescents' worlds: Negotiating family, peers, and school*. New York: Teachers' College Press.

Articles on electronic reserve:

To retrieve the articles below, go to <http://oscr.gmu.edu/cgi-bin/ers/OSCRgen.cgi>, enter the course number, my name as the instructor and the password people (no caps). You download an article, it is probably best to have Adobe Reader running first.

Argyris, C. (1999). *Organizational learning*. Malden, MA: Blackwell. (Two chapters: A leadership dilemma: Skilled incompetence; and Why individuals and organizations have difficulty in double-loop learning)

Coleman, J.S. (1990). *Foundations of social theory*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press. (Chapter 5: Social capital)

Eisenhart, M. (2001). Changing conceptions of culture and ethnographic methodology: Recent thematic shifts and their implications for research on teaching. In V. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of research on teaching, fourth edition* (pp. 209 – 225). Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association.

Sandefur, R.L. & Laumann, E.O. (2000). A paradigm for social capital. In E.L. Lesser (Ed.) *Knowledge and social capital*, pp. 69 - 87.

Scribner, J.P., Hager, D.R., & Warne, T.R. (2002). The paradox of professional community: Tales from two high schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38, pp. 45 – 76.

Silins, H.C., Mulford, W.R., & Zarins, S. (2002) Organizational learning and school change. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38, pp. 613 – 642.

Recommended Text

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th edition).
Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Outside-of-Class Resources

All students are expected to have access to a personal computer and the ability to use basic word processing, e-mail and Web browser programs.

Nature of Course Delivery

Students are expected to be active participants in the class and to help create a unique classroom experience for everyone involved. Brief lectures or presentations help to organize the course, but students are expected to flesh out the basic structure through their participation in classroom activities, discussions, debates, presentations, and electronic discussions via Blackboard. Students will enhance course content through informally sharing their research in a specific topic area.

Course Requirements, Assignments, and Evaluation Criteria

All students are required to complete all assigned readings prior to the date they appear in the “Schedule” section below. The following writing assignments are required:

- Research Question and Rationale—15 points
- Idea Paper About Useful Concepts—10 points
- Conceptual Framework—35 points

Specific assignment instructions and assessment rubrics may be found at the end of this syllabus.

Letter grades will be assigned according to the weights and grading scale listed below. Students should always bear in mind that grading is primarily the instructor’s judgment about performance. The intent is to indicate student success in completing assignments and tasks, not the level of effort put into it.

Class Participation	30 percent
Research Question and Rationale	15 percent
Idea Paper About Useful Concepts	10 percent
Conceptual Framework	35 percent

Conceptual Framework Defense 10 percent

Class participation has the following components:

- Preparation for class, including completing reading assignments on time and thinking about topics to be handled or discussed.
- Making oral contributions to discussions—offering original ideas as well as responding to what others have said.
- Making thoughtful contributions to Blackboard discussions including timely submission of “learning logs”.

Students who do not participate in a Blackboard activity and/or are absent for the Conceptual Framework Defense, will not receive credit for those activities.

Absence From Class

Students are expected to attend every class for its entirety. Emergencies sometimes arise, however. Students who need to be absent from class must notify the instructor in advance by telephone or e-mail. Students who miss more than one class, will lose participation points. Students who come to class more than 30 minutes late or leave more than 30 minutes early will lose participation points.

Grading Scale

A	=	95 – 100 percent
A-	=	90 – 94 percent
B+	=	85 – 89 percent
B	=	80 – 84 percent
C	=	75 – 79 percent
F	=	74 percent or below

Late Work

Students are expected to submit all assignments by the due dates listed in the schedule below. Sometimes students fall behind for various personal and/or professional reasons. I will accept a maximum of one late assignment from each student during the semester. **Work may not be submitted later than 48 hours after the published due date.**

CEHD/GSE Expectations for All Students

The College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) and the Graduate School of Education (GSE) expect that all students abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See <http://cehd.gmu.edu> for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

Schedule

Note: All writing assignments are to be submitted via e-mail not later than midnight on the due date.

Session	Topics	Reading Assignment	Writing Assignment
Aug. 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the course • Developing a working definition of “conceptual framework” • Discussion of Research Question and Rationale paper 		
Sep. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphic representations of conceptual frameworks—your own professional history • Images and roles of teaching, principaling, and superintending • Our default conceptual frameworks 	Cuban, Preface – ch. 5	Learning log via Blackboard
Sep. 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research topic, purpose, and significance • Sharing research questions and rationales • Does the Cuban conceptual framework work? • How would a historical perspective inform your research question? 	Cuban, ch. 6 - end	

Session	Topics	Reading Assignment	Writing Assignment
Sep. 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is leadership from a historical perspective? • How has your research question evolved since the end of EDLE 803? • Introduction to Idea Paper About Useful Concepts 		Research Question and Rationale paper
Sep. 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the conceptual framework and research methodology of <i>Adolescents' Worlds</i> • The <i>Adolescents' Worlds</i> case studies: Implications for leadership. When do leaders follow and vice versa? • Verbal and graphic representations of the Phelan et al. conceptual framework 	Phelan et al., chapter 1 and assigned case studies	
Oct. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemporary research challenges in anthropology • How would an anthropological perspective inform your research question? 	Eisenhart article	Learning log via Blackboard
Oct. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No class meeting • Work on independent reading and writing for conceptual framework 		
Oct. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is organizational learning? • Graphic representation of organizational learning • When conceptual frameworks collide • Discussion of Idea Paper About Useful Concepts 	Argyris, chapters 1 and 5 Silins et al. article	
Oct. 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the sociology of education • Coleman's social theory • Three kinds of capital: cultural, social, and human 	Coleman chapter Sandefur and Laumann article	

Session	Topics	Reading Assignment	Writing Assignment
Nov. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common themes in history, anthropology, and sociology to this point • How might the historian and sociologist differ from the anthropologist interpreting the school lives of Ryan, Trinh, Patricia, and the others from <i>Adolescents' Worlds?</i> 	Steeley conceptual framework (optional)	Idea Paper About Useful Concepts
Nov. 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing ideas about useful concepts • Articulating conceptual frameworks using history, anthropology, and sociology • Discussion of Conceptual Framework paper 	Scribner et al. article	
Nov. 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picking and choosing: Which concepts inform your research question and why? • Developing a relationship between conceptual framework and research methodology 	Brazer and Keller conceptual framework (optional)	Learning log via Blackboard
Nov. 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research informing practice: What would you say to an educational leader? • How research goals may drive conceptual frameworks • Miscellaneous pieces 		Conceptual Framework paper
Dec. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where did you land? Sharing and defending conceptual frameworks 	Classmates' conceptual frameworks	

Writing Assignments and Assessment Rubrics

RESEARCH QUESTION AND RATIONALE

15 points

This writing assignment has the following goals:

1. To give students the opportunity either to practice developing a research question or to refine a previously developed research question.
2. To provide a foundation for the conceptual framework paper that is the most important product in this course.
3. To give students and the instructor the opportunity to experience one another's writing and feedback.

To complete this writing assignment, follow the steps below:

1. Articulate a specific research question, or set (no more than three) of questions, you would like to pursue for your dissertation research.
2. Identify a relevant set of literature that helps you to articulate your question and provide a persuasive rationale for studying it.
3. Write a paper not to exceed ten pages that explains the following:
 - The general topic area into which your question falls and your purpose in pursuing this research topic
 - Why the topic is compelling—i.e., the significance of your topic
 - The specific question (or questions) you intend to answer

Your paper should be written persuasively. As with any paper, it requires a thesis that is supported, proven, or demonstrated through its course. The thesis in this case should be a statement about the importance of investigating your research topic. You will use the literature you have found to support what you wish to say about the research topic. Your paper will end with a re-statement of your thesis and discussion about potentially helpful concepts to focus your search for answers to your question(s) (i.e., pieces of a potential conceptual framework).

Citations must be consistent with APA style and a full list of references must be included at the end of the paper.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND RATIONALE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

	PROFICIENT	EMERGING	INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE
<p><u>Thesis (4 points)</u> The thesis essentially establishes the burden of proof for the paper. It provides structure for the paper by telling the reader what the author intends to prove.</p>	<p>The thesis is clear, analytical, and focused on the importance of studying the research question(s). It requires demonstration through coherent arguments. The thesis appears as the last sentence of the first or second paragraph.</p>	<p>The thesis is apparent, though not entirely clear. It may be more descriptive than analytical.</p>	<p>The paper lacks a clear thesis.</p>
<p><u>Research Question (4 points)</u> The research question(s) should be clear and answerable.</p>	<p>The research question is easily understood and may be answered through accepted data collection and analytical techniques. The research question does an excellent job addressing the general topic area.</p>	<p>The research question is difficult to understand and/or may not be answerable. It is not entirely clear how the research question addresses the general topic.</p>	<p>The research question is poorly conceived and impractical.</p>
<p><u>Question Support (5 points)</u> It is important to explain to the reader the background for asking the stated research question, and to make a persuasive argument about its significance.</p>	<p>The author weaves together an explanation of the purpose for studying the topic, persuasive arguments regarding the significance of the topic, and logical concepts that will help the author to search for answers to the stated research question(s).</p>	<p>Significance is not persuasively demonstrated, though it is somewhat apparent. The relationships among purpose, significance, question(s) and concepts are not entirely clear.</p>	<p>The question is not well supported.</p>
<p><u>Grammar, Mechanics, and APA style (2 points)</u></p>	<p>The paper contains few errors and is consistent with APA style.</p>	<p>The paper has several errors.</p>	<p>The paper has numerous errors.</p>

IDEA PAPER ABOUT USEFUL CONCEPTS

10 points

This writing assignment has the following goals:

1. To give students the opportunity to organize their thoughts regarding related concepts that both inform their chosen research questions and suggest helpful pathways for research methodology.
2. To help students make a first attempt at articulating a conceptual framework that could be used in their dissertation proposals.

This paper requires students to identify a theoretical foundation that provides the basis for studying their research questions. To complete this paper, students should follow the steps below:

- Identify, from the relevant literature and your own professional experiences, the most useful concepts for studying your research question. Be sure that you have adequate citations for each of the concepts, or that you are clear about the concepts you have developed on your own.
- Clarify how each concept you intend to use informs your research question(s) and where you have conceptual blanks—aspects of your question that lack an adequate theoretical foundation.
- Write a paper not to exceed six pages that begins with a thesis that describes which concepts are useful and why and the ways in which the concepts are related to one another. Be sure to include in your conclusion section which areas require more conceptual development on your part (if any). Your paper must include a first attempt at a graphical representation of your conceptual framework.

Citations must be consistent with APA style and a full list of references must be included at the end of the paper.

IDEA PAPER ABOUT USEFUL CONCEPTS ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

	PROFICIENT	EMERGING	INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE
<p><u>Thesis (2 points)</u> The thesis essentially establishes the burden of proof for the paper. It provides structure for the paper by telling the reader what the author intends to prove.</p>	<p>The thesis is clear and covers in general the major conceptual areas and their relationships the author intends to discuss.</p>	<p>The thesis is apparent, though not entirely clear and/or not analytical.</p>	<p>The paper lacks a clear thesis.</p>
<p><u>Concept Descriptions (3 points)</u> The body of the paper discusses each of the relevant concepts in detail and demonstrates relationships among them.</p>	<p>All body paragraphs are linked directly to the thesis. Each paragraph follows logically from the one before. The body develops and weaves together the concepts that will ultimately form the author's conceptual framework (next paper).</p>	<p>The body of the paper contains worthwhile information, but not all of it is linked to the thesis. The relationships among concepts may not be clear.</p>	<p>The body of the paper is not directly related to the thesis. Concepts discussed are unclear.</p>
<p><u>Graphic Representation (2 points)</u> A graphic representation helps the author to present complex and abstract ideas so that the reader can comprehend them more easily.</p>	<p>The graphic representation is tightly linked to the verbal description of relevant concepts and their relationships. Graphics are clear and easily understood and/or clearly explained in the text.</p>	<p>The graphic representation is related to the body of the paper but contains ambiguity, conceptual gaps, or inaccuracies.</p>	<p>The graphic representation is either missing or unhelpful.</p>

	PROFICIENT	EMERGING	INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE
<u>Conclusion (2 points)</u> It is important to conclude your paper in a manner that is persuasive to the reader and that leads to broader thinking on the topic.	The conclusion begins with a re-statement of your thesis and draws together the main ideas of the paper. It follows logically from the body of the paper. The conclusion broadens out to include discussion of conceptual work yet to be done and a preview of a complete conceptual framework.	The conclusion follows logically from the body of the paper, but may leave out some important ideas or may have irrelevant portions.	The conclusion is either missing or does not appear to be related to the body of the paper.
<u>Grammar, Mechanics, and APA style (1 point)</u>	The paper contains few errors and is consistent with APA style.	The paper has several errors.	The paper has numerous errors.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

35 points

This writing assignment has the following goals:

1. To help students decide which concepts have greatest potential to address their research questions.
2. To help students develop a conceptual framework that can be used in their dissertation proposals (very likely with some modification in EDUC 998).
3. To help students identify promising methodological approaches to their research questions.

This paper requires students to write a conceptual framework very similar to what will appear in their dissertation proposals and dissertations. Students are expected to:

- Write an introduction that articulates the research question(s) to be explored and leads into the conceptual framework.
- Write a thesis that takes a position regarding the most powerful family of concepts (e.g., policy implementation) that provides a theoretical foundation for studying their research questions.
- Argue persuasively (using appropriate literature citations) for the validity of the specific concepts used and their appropriate relationships for studying the specific research question—i.e., construct a verbal conceptual framework.
- Provide a graphic representation of the conceptual framework that gives the reader a clearer understanding. (This must be integrated with the text of the paper.)
- Conclude with a restatement of the thesis and a brief explanation of the research methodology(ies) most compellingly suggested by the conceptual framework.

The paper should be no longer than 20 pages and must conform to APA format.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

	PROFICIENT	EMERGING	INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE
<p><u>Introduction and Thesis (3 points)</u> The introduction orients the reader to the author's research question and presents the thesis.</p>	<p>The introduction provides a smooth transition from research question to conceptual framework. The thesis is clear and analytical in nature. The thesis makes obvious to the reader which concepts (at least generally) the author will use and why.</p>	<p>The introduction may be somewhat confusing. The thesis is apparent, though not entirely clear. The thesis may not be sufficiently analytical.</p>	<p>The paper lacks a clear thesis.</p>
<p><u>Body Paragraphs (12 points)</u> The body of the paper demonstrates the validity of the thesis. The paragraphs emphasize how the author has put together vital concepts and why.</p>	<p>All body paragraphs are linked directly to the thesis. Each paragraph follows logically from the one before. The body progressively clarifies the author's conceptual framework and uses relevant literature persuasively. Relationships among key concepts are clearly explained.</p>	<p>The body of the paper contains worthwhile information, but not all of it is linked to the thesis. The progression of paragraphs may be confusing or illogical. The conceptual framework and its rationale are not entirely clear.</p>	<p>The body of the paper is not analytical and/or does not elaborate on the thesis.</p>
<p><u>Graphic Representation (9 points)</u> A graphic representation helps the author to present complex and abstract ideas so that the reader can comprehend them more easily.</p>	<p>The graphic representation is tightly linked to the verbal description of relevant concepts and their relationships. Graphics are clear and easily understood and/or clearly explained in the text. Ideally, the graphics enhance the verbal analysis.</p>	<p>The graphic representation is related to the body of the paper but contains ambiguity, conceptual gaps, or inaccuracies.</p>	<p>The graphic representation is either missing or unhelpful.</p>

	PROFICIENT	EMERGING	INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE
<u>Conclusion (9 points)</u> The conclusion of a conceptual framework must reiterate the main points and draw the reader into thinking about methodology.	The conclusion appears obvious based on the body of the paper. The methodological approaches suggested follow in a compelling manner from the arguments in favor of the theoretical approach to the research question(s).	The conclusion appears somewhat disconnected from the body and/or is not entirely persuasive with regard to methodology.	The conclusion does not follow logically from the body and/or the implications for methodology are unclear.
<u>Grammar and Mechanics (2 points)</u>	The paper contains few errors.	The paper has several errors.	The paper has numerous errors.