Urban Education in Theory, Policy, and Practice
Educational Studies 480
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"Moment by moment, as teachers move among their students they are touching lives. Teachers are poets and prophets. If they are wise, then they and their students will learn to care for each other, bestow value, and grow together. If teachers are foolish, no one will flourish.”

James Garrison

Course Purpose:

Today there is significant concern that public education has reached a critical juncture. Perhaps more than any other social institution, public schools mirror a troubling array of social problems. Yet also more than any other social institution, public education provides vital opportunities to express social justice, compassion, imagination, and integrity. Urban public schools remain as one of the few social settings through which diverse citizens can interact in sustained and meaningful ways to achieve common goals. This course is centered in the belief that through the informed and persistent efforts of reflective, creative and compassionate teachers, public education can be shaped to better prepare all young people to pursue life with intelligence, dignity, affiliation, and an ever-evolving sense of purpose and possibility.

To this end, we will draw from an extensive theory and research base—educational psychology, curriculum and pedagogy, educational philosophy, and policy studies grounded in the social sciences—to support interdisciplinary explorations of the peril and promise of urban public education. An intensive school-based internship (6-8 hours/week) is integrated with weekly seminar sessions (2-3 hours/week) to study advanced topics in teacher preparation and policy analysis relevant to learning and life in public school settings serving students who represent diverse cultural, linguistic, and economic backgrounds, a broad range of academic interests and aptitudes, and varied forms of exceptionality.

Course Process:

Throughout the semester we will use a social approach to inquiry—an approach based on well-grounded assumptions that deep learning is relational, exploratory, and responsible.

Social inquiry is relational. Learning is not only cumulative, but also connective. It is deepened by through relationships that integrate cognitive, emotional, intuitive, aesthetic, ethical, and kinesthetic ways of knowing. It is extended by creating connections that cross boundaries. It is best accomplished through interpersonal relationships that are engaging and egalitarian. In such relationships the roles and responsibilities of ‘teacher’ and ‘learner’ are continually exchanged.
**Social inquiry is exploratory.** Deep learning occurs in response to the discovery of new, often surprising conceptual patterns that provide a sense of possibility and direction, even in the face of complexity and uncertainty. Educational interactions are conversational. Knowledge is advanced through open, non-judgmental questioning and response. The goal is to sustain, complicate, and extend shared consideration rather than to move as quickly as possible toward closure. Curiosity, risk-taking, and experimentation are always in play.

**Social inquiry is responsible.** To learn for one’s own sake, to derive personal meaning and develop skill in self-expression, is necessary but not sufficient. Our knowledge is challenged and enriched as we strive to understand, and then to respond with respect and creativity to the needs and contributions of others. We are transformed as we work to connect our learning with broader civic aspirations and principled social action.

Two attributes of social inquiry are important to note here. First, because effective learning requires active participation and cooperative exchange, reliable seminar attendance is essential. Second, because deep learning is both radically social and highly personal, self- and social reflection and self- and peer evaluation play fundamental roles in this teaching/learning process.

"Knowledge emerges only through invention, and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other."

*Paulo Freire*

**Course Requirements:**

Course requirements are developed in response to the challenges and opportunities of teaching and learning in contemporary diverse urban public school classrooms. Requirements are also shaped by state and national public education regulations and policy initiatives including the Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers (see Syllabus Addendum) and federal ‘No Child Left Behind’ legislation.

1. **Teaching Internships:** The purpose of the teaching internship is to explore, reflect upon, and contribute to life in diverse urban classrooms. An intensive school-based experience (6-8 hours/week) is integrated with weekly seminar sessions to study advanced topics in teacher preparation and policy analysis relevant to learning and life in public school settings. Successful completion of an **instructional design and implementation project** is required.

2. **Shared Readings:** Together we will read and consider *Teaching as Principled Practice: Managing Complexity for Social Justice* by Linda Kroll, et al.; *Action Research: A Guide for the Teacher Researcher* by Geoffrey Mills; and *Urban Teaching: the Essentials* by Lois Weiner. These texts will be supplemented by relevant print, on-line, and other media resources.
3. **Reflective Journal & Conferencing**: Reflection, formative evaluation, and informed revision are essential elements of principled and effective practice. We will use ‘Moodle’—an on-line course-organizing tool—to support continuing conversations in preparation for, and in response to, course experiences and projects. Through on-line (reflective journal) and student led (peer teaching) class conversations, we will explore issues of personal interest, as well as acknowledge and constructively respond to issues that resonate most strongly with others.

4. **Action Research**: Given the current emphasis on standardization and high stakes testing, the ability to meaningfully assess and respond to the needs and aspirations of diverse learners assumes critical importance. As noted by G. Mills, “Action research helps teachers…embrace action, progress, and reform rather than stability and mediocrity,…fosters a democratic approach to decision-making, (and assists them in addressing)…the gap between the real world of their daily teaching practices and their vision of an ideal one”. To these ends, we will support each other in the design, implementation, and dissemination of a substantive piece of action research to be conducted at the internship sites.

5. **Electronic Portfolios**: We will use the portfolio platform available to all Minnesota educators to document and disseminate evidence of continuing academic, professional, and personal development as creative, caring, and effective teachers.

   http://www.efoliominnesota.com/

**Evaluation:**

Students are expected to demonstrate a high quality of performance across all course activities and assignments. Self, peer, cooperating teacher, and faculty evaluation are incorporated.

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<tr>
<th>Teaching Internships</th>
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<tr>
<td>Instructional Design &amp; Implementation</td>
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<td>Supervising Teacher’s Evaluation</td>
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<td>Reflective Journal</td>
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<td>Peer Teaching</td>
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<td>Action Research</td>
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**Course Overview:**

*Challenges and Opportunities of Teaching and Learning in Urban Public Schools*

**Week One**  9/6-13

- Introductions
- Teaching Internships
  - Instructional Design & Implementation
- *Urban Teaching (Chapters 1-3); 19 Urban Questions (Chapter 1)*
Reflective Action/Active Reflection
Week Two  9/18-20
  Reflective Journal/Conferencing
    - Peer Teaching
  Action Research
  *Teaching as Principled Practice (Chapter 3); Reflective Teaching (Chapter 5)*
  *Action Research (Chapters 1-2)*

Teaching as Principled Practice
Week Three  9/25-27
  Electronic Portfolios
  *Teaching as Principled Practice (Chapters 1-2)*

Urban Students
Week Four  10/2-4
  Urban Teaching (Chapter 6); City Schools & the American Dream (Chapter 3)*
  *Action Research and Instructional Design Abstracts Due (10/4)*

Action Research - Design & Data Collection
Week Five  10/9-11
  *Action Research (Chapters 3-5)*

Student Learning
Week Six  10/16-18
  Midterm Evaluations to Cooperating Teachers
  *Teaching as Principled Practice (Chapters 4-5); Light in Their Eyes (Chapter 1)*
  *Action Research Proposals Due (10/18)*

Action Research – Proposal Review
Week Seven  10/23-25
  Action Research Proposal Conferences
  *Scheduling of Intern Visits Complete*
  
  Fall Break 10/26-29

Student Learning
Week Eight  10/30-11/1
  Urban Teaching (Chapter 7); Evaluation & Assessment in an Urban Context*
Complex Collaborations – Peers & Professional Organizations
Week Nine 11/6-8
Teaching as Principled Practice (Chapter 6); Urban Teaching (Chapters 4-5)

Action Research – Analysis, Communication, and Response
Week Ten 11/13-15
Action Research (Chapters 6-8)

Communication Theory and Practices
Week Eleven 11/20-22
Workshop session: schedule and guest instructor to be announced

Thanksgiving Break 11/23-26

Complex Collaborations – Administration & Policy
Week Twelve 11/27-29
Final Evaluations to Cooperating Teachers
Teaching as Principled Practice (Chapters 7-8); Urban Teaching (Chapter 8)
Instructional Design & Implementation Reflections Due

Action Research - Presentations
Week Thirteen 12/4-6
Reflective Journals Due (12/6)

Course Completion
Week Fourteen 12/11-13
Action Research Reports Due 12/13
Electronic Portfolios Due 12/13

“The social individual…is an open-ended possibility. What we do in our classroom, the view we offer the world, the choices we make, add detail and direction to possibility— for children, ourselves and society. An in our choosing, in that ‘process of discovering’, we find that in teaching, the personal, the political, the moral, and the aesthetic are interwoven—and understanding that makes it both harder and easier to teach.”

Harriet Cuffaro
EDUC 480: Urban Education in Theory, Policy and Practice

Syllabus Addendum
Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice for Teachers

Standards to be Addressed Primarily through the Teaching Internship
(Including Instructional Design and Implementation Project)

4D. enhance learning through the use of a wide variety of materials and human and technological resources;

4L. use educational technology to broaden student knowledge about technology, to deliver instruction to students at different levels and paces, and to stimulate advanced levels of learning;

5G. understand how participation supports commitment:

5L. design and manage learning communities in which students assume responsibility for themselves and one another, participate in decision making, work both collaboratively and independently, and engage in purposeful learning activities;

5P. develop expectations for student interactions, academic discussions, and individual and group responsibility that create a positive classroom climate of openness, mutual respect, support, inquiry, and learning;

6F. use effective listening techniques;

6G. foster sensitive communication by and among all students in the class;

6H. use effective communication strategies in conveying ideas and information and in asking questions;

6K. use a variety of media communication tools, including audiovisual aids and computers, including educational technology, to enrich learning opportunities;

10G. collaborate with other professionals to improve the overall learning environment for students.

Standards to be Addressed Primarily through Action Research

5Q. analyze the classroom environment and make decisions and adjustments to enhance social relationships, student motivation and engagement, and productive work;

9H. use classroom observations, information about students, and research as sources for evaluating the outcomes of teaching and learning and as a basis for reflecting on and revising practice;

9I. use professional literature, colleagues, and other resources to support development as both a student and a teacher;

9J. collaboratively use professional colleagues within the school and other professional arenas as supports for reflection, problem-solving, and new ideas, actively sharing experiences, and seeking and giving feedback.
Standards to be Addressed Primarily through Seminar Participation

6A. understand communication theory, language development, and the role of language in learning;

6B. understand how cultural and gender differences can affect communication in the classroom;

6C. understand the importance of nonverbal as well as verbal communication;

6D. know effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques;

6E. understand the power of language for fostering self-expression identity development, and learning;

9B. understand methods of inquiry, self-assessment, and problem-solving strategies for use in professional self-assessment;

9C. understand the influences of the teacher’s behavior on student growth and learning;

9D. know areas of research on teaching & resources available for professional development;

9E. understand the role of reflection and self-assessment on continual learning;

9F. understand the value of critical thinking and self-directed learning;

9G. understand professional responsibility and the need to engage in and support appropriate professional practices for self and colleagues;

9K. understand standards of professional conduct in the Code of Ethics for Minnesota Teacher in part 8700.7500; and

9L. understand the responsibility for obtaining and maintaining licensure, the role of the teacher as a public employee, and the purpose and contributions of educational organizations.