

EDSI 9941

Models of School Improvement and Reform

Semester Hours: 3
 Semester/Year: Fall 2011
 Time/Location: 100% online

Instructor: O. P. Cooper, Ed.D.

Office Location: Room 141, Education Annex

Office Hours: Mondays 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.; Thursdays 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Online Hours: Mondays 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.; Wednesdays 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

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 CourseDen Home Page: <http://westga8.view.usg.edu>
 24/7 CourseDen Help: <http://help8.view.usg.edu>
 CourseDen Help & Troubleshooting: <http://www.westga.edu/~distance/help/>
 UWG Distance Learning
 <http://www.westga.edu/~distance> ,
 Distance Learning Library Services:
 <http://www.westga.edu/~library/depts/offcampus/> ,
 Ingram Library Services:
 <http://www.westga.edu/~library/info/library.shtml>
 University Book Store: <http://www.bookstore.westga.edu/>

Course Description

This course overviews nationally recognized models for school improvement, the forces and factors that influence school improvement and reform, the barriers to change and reform, and how change can be instigated within educational settings. Students build and value a conceptual understanding of the knowledge base in school improvement. Students develop foundational skills in different styles of writing required throughout the doctoral program.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the College of Education at UWG forms the basis on which program, courses, experiences, and outcomes are created. By incorporating the theme *Developing Educators for School Improvement*, the College assumes responsibility for preparing educators who can

positively influence school improvement through altering classrooms, schools, and school systems (transformational systemic change). Ten descriptors (decision makers, leaders, lifelong learners, adaptive, collaborative, culturally sensitive, empathetic, knowledgeable, proactive, and reflective) are integral components of the conceptual framework and provide the basis for developing educators who are prepared to improve schools through strategic change. Core Competencies for the doctoral program also are incorporated as criteria against which candidates are measured.

The mission of the College of Education is to develop educators who are prepared to function effectively in diverse educational settings with competencies that are instrumental to planning, implementing, assessing, and re-evaluating existing or proposed practices. This course's objectives are related directly to the conceptual framework and appropriate descriptors, principles, or propositions, and Learned Society standards are identified for each objective. Class activities and assessments that align with course objectives, course content, and the conceptual framework are identified in a separate section of the course syllabus.

Approaches to Instruction

Prerequisite: There is no prerequisite. This course will be delivered entirely at a distance with no face-to-face (F2F) meetings. Students are expected to use *WebCT CourseDen* (and/or other electronic means assigned by the instructor) for corresponding with each other and the instructor. Work will be submitted using the assignments feature, discussion board, or testing feature of *WebCT CourseDen* (and/or other electronic means assigned by the instructor). Please follow the directions in *WebCT CourseDen*. This class will also employ multiple methods of communication and interaction including a variety of Web 2.0 and distance technologies.

The following are the minimum requirements for completing this class successfully. You must meet these requirements to participate in the class.

- Access to a personal computer (PC or MAC) with speakers and a microphone (headset) to complete the course work.
- High-speed internet service (DSL, Cable, etc.) is **strongly recommended**. If high-speed internet is not available in your area, contact your instructor immediately. Completion of course requirements will be very difficult and cumbersome without high-speed service.
- Software requirements: *Microsoft Office 2007* or higher (available free of charge at UWG), [Adobe Reader](#), and other potentially required downloads listed in *WebCT CourseDen*.

Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes are derived directly from the Core Competencies of the doctoral program and from the conceptual framework descriptors of the College of Education as indicated in parentheses below:

Learners will:

1. describe and value the national trend toward school improvement and reform, focusing on the need for educational change (D8, Knowledgeable; D9, Proactive; D10, Reflective; Core Competency 1Da);

2. know and value the forces and factors with the power and/or influence that affect school improvement and reform (D5, Collaboration; D6, Culturally Sensitive; Core Competencies 1Kb, 1Db);
3. develop a comprehensive frame for studying school improvement and reform, focusing on the key stakeholders which must be addressed in any reform effort (D3, Lifelong Learner; D4, Adaptive; D5, Collaborative; Core Competencies 1Kb, 1Kc, 5Ka);
4. analyze and value various reform efforts according to their successes, failures, intended and unintended outcomes, and connections to subsequent teaching and learning strategies (D4, Adaptive; D9, Proactive; D10, Reflective; Core Competencies 1Dc, 3Dc);
5. draw from the knowledge base in education and school improvement to construct and effectively communicate defensible positions on issues related to school reform (D2, Leaders; D4, Adaptive; D6, Culturally Sensitive; D9, Proactive; Core Competency 5Sa, 5Sb, 2Sd).

Textbooks, Reading, and Instructional Resources

Required Readings

Cross, C. T. (2004). *Putting the pieces together: Lessons from comprehensive school reform research*. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform. Retrieved from <http://www.centerforcsri.org/PDF/PTPTLessonsfromCSRRResearch.pdf>

David, J. L., & Cuban, L. (2010). *Cutting through the hype: The essential guide to school reform*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Additional course materials and readings are posted in CourseDen.

Knowledge Base (partial)

Barth, R. S. (1990). *Improving schools from within: Teachers, parents, and principals can make the difference*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in schools: A core resource for improvement*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Bulkley, K. E., Henig, J. R., & Levin, H. M. (Eds.) (2010). *Between public and private: Politics, governance, and the new portfolio models for urban school reform*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Elmore, R. (2002). Hard questions about practice. *Educational Leadership*, 59(8), 22-25.

- Elmore, R. (2004). *School reform from the inside out: Policy, practice, and performance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Evans, R. (1996). *The human side of school change: Reform, resistance, and the real-life problems of innovation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fink, D. (2000). *Good schools/real schools: Why school reform doesn't last*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change* (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fullan, M. (2003). *The moral imperative of school leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Fullan, M. (2005). *Leadership and sustainability: System thinkers in action*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Giles, C., & Hargreaves, A. (2006). The sustainability of innovative schools as learning organizations and professional learning communities during standardized reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42(1), 124-156.
- Glickman, C. (1993). *Renewing America's schools: A guide for school-based action*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lambert, L. (1998). *Building leadership capacity in schools*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Little, J. W. (2003). Inside teacher community: Representations of classroom practice. *Teachers College Record*, 105(6), 913-945.
- Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B.A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Miller, B., & Kantrov, I. (Eds.) (1998). *Casebook on school reform*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Newmann, F. M., & Wehlage, G. G. (1995). *Successful school restructuring: A report to the public and educators*. Madison, WI: Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED387925).
- Pappano, L. (2010). *Inside school turnarounds: Urgent hopes, unfolding stories*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Schlechty, P. C. (2005). *Creating great schools: Six critical systems at the heart of educational innovation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schlechty, P. C. (2009). *Leading for learning: How to transform schools into learning organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schlechty, P. C. (2002). *Working on the work: An action plan for teachers, principals and superintendents*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Silins, H. C., Mulford, W. R., & Zarins, S. (2002). Organizational learning and school change. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38(5), 613-642.

Spillane, J. (2006). *Distributed leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Tschannen-Moran, M. (2004). *Trust matters: Leadership for successful schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Weick, K. E. (1976). Educational organizations as loosely coupled systems. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 21(1), 1-19.

Instructional Resources

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Activities and Assessments, Evaluation procedures, and Grading Policy

Link to the Conceptual Framework.

The focus of this course is on building a conceptual understanding of the school improvement knowledge base with emphasis on assessing the utility of various nationally recognized school improvement models and considering cultural and political barriers to change in education. The overall evaluation of this course is designed so that each assignment relates to expanding the capacity of students to analyze the school context to make informed decisions that match reform models and change strategies to context-specific needs of schools and districts.

By the completion of this course, the student will have demonstrated achievement in the areas of

<i>decision making</i> (Assignments 2, & 4);	<i>collaboration</i> (Assignments 2 & 3);
<i>leadership</i> (Assignments 2 & 4);	<i>cultural sensitivity</i> (Assignment 2);
<i>being adaptive</i> (Assignments 2 & 4);	<i>empathy</i> (Assignments 2 & 4);
<i>knowledge</i> (Assignments 1, 2, 3 & 4);	<i>being proactive</i> (Assignments 2, 3, & 4);
<i>reflection</i> (Assignments 1, 2, 3 & 4).	

Course Assignments and Assessments

Assignments and activities are designed to lead students to explore and know the research and conceptual knowledge base in school improvement and reform; further, assignments build students' skills in reflection, analysis, and decision-making. Course assignments are listed below. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be provided.

Assignment 1: History of School Reform. Students will document their knowledge and understanding of comprehensive school reform in the United States. Students may choose their own method of documentation (e.g., written paper, video presentation, or any other format that is appropriate for a professional educator). The assignment must answer the following questions: (a) What is comprehensive school reform (CSR)? (b) What is the historical context for CSR? (c) How has CSR been researched? (d) Where do we stand today in terms of CSR?

This assignment is linked to course outcome 1.

-150 points-

Assignment 2: Forces and Factors that Impact School Improvement and Reform. Students will expand their knowledge and understanding of forces and factors that impact school improvement and reform by interviewing persons actively engaged in school improvement initiatives. Questions for consideration include, but are not limited to, the specific problems the school improvement initiative is designed to address; the nature and extent of involvement of various stakeholders in the school improvement planning and implementation processes; specific strategies being implemented; key measures used to assess program success; major challenges, and how these are being addressed; and overall impressions of the school improvement initiative. Each student will conduct a minimum of two interviews: one with a school or district administrator in charge of leading the school improvement efforts, and one with a teacher. Interviews may be either audio-only or audio-video recordings. A written summary (3-5 pages) of the findings from the interview will be submitted along with the interview files. This assignment is linked to course outcomes 2 & 3.

-200 points-

Assignment 3: Matrix of Models of School Reform. Working in small groups, students will research and report on three CSR models (per group). Groups will be assigned by the instructor. Each group will contribute work toward the class matrix, which will describe each CSR in terms of (a) its history, (b) its framework or components, (c) results from research, and (d) related websites and links to articles/research. Each group member is expected to contribute equally to the group, and each member will describe in writing what he/she contributed to the group effort. This assignment is linked to course outcomes 2, 3, & 4.

-200 points-

Assignment 4: School Improvement/School Reform Platform. To be successful school leaders (leaders of improvement or leaders of reform), students must be able to clearly articulate a platform on which they can stand as advocates of school improvement and reform. Each student will write a five-page educational platform that answers the following questions: (a) What are your educational core values? (b) What should be the aims of education? (c) How do you define school reform? (d) What should be the goals of school reform? (e) In school reform efforts, what are the roles and responsibilities of (1) the federal government, (2) the state, (3) the district, (4) school leadership, (5) teachers, (6) students, (7) students' parents, (8) other stakeholders? This assignment is linked to course outcomes 2, 3, & 5.

-200 points-

Participation: Participation in online assignments, chats, and discussions, some of which will be synchronous, is required. Points will be earned based on both attendance and the level and depth of your participation. **-250 points-**

Evaluation Procedures:

Assignment 1	150 points
Assignment 2	200 points
Assignment 3	200 points
Assignment 4	200 points
Participation	250 points

Total	1000 points

Grading Policy:

A = 900-1000 points

B = 800-899 points

C = 700-799 points

F = 699 points or fewer

Class Policies

1. Submitting Assignments

Students are expected to submit assignments on time. All components must be completed to receive a grade. Valid reasons for submitting work late must be cleared by the professor **in advance**. It is the student's responsibility to contact the professor when extenuating circumstances take place. Points will be deducted for each day an assignment is late. Late online assignments such as discussion board postings will also result in grade reduction. All assignments are due by midnight on the date due. Any assignments posted after midnight are considered late.

2. Professionalism

Students are expected to conduct themselves professionally. This is an essential quality for all professionals who will be working in the schools. All students are expected to display a positive attitude. Professionalism includes but is not limited to the following:

- Participating in interactions and class activities in a positive manner.
- Collaborating and working equitably with students in the class.
- Actively participating in class each week.
- Turning in assignments on time.
- Arriving at and leaving scheduled *Adobe Connect* and/or other virtual classes punctually.
- Treating class members, professor, and colleagues with respect in and out of the classroom.
- Eliminating interruptions in class.

Students who display a lack of professionalism will be contacted by the instructor immediately after class when violations take place and informed of the consequences. If there is a second violation the student will meet with a departmental committee and may be dismissed from the program for at least one year.

Academic Honesty

All work completed in this course must be original work developed this semester. Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism occurs when a student uses or purchases ghostwritten papers. It also occurs when a student utilizes ideas or information obtained from another person without giving credit to that person. If plagiarism or another act of academic dishonesty occurs, it will be dealt with in accordance with the academic misconduct policy as stated in the latest *Connection and Student Handbook* and the *Graduate Catalog*.

Disciplinary procedures described in the latest University of West Georgia Connection and Student Handbook will be followed when violations take place. Infractions may include cheating, plagiarism, disruptive behavior, and disorderly conduct.

Disability Statement

All students are provided with equal access to classes and materials, regardless of special needs, temporary or permanent disability, special needs related to pregnancy, etc. If you have any special learning needs, particularly (but not limited to) needs defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and require specific accommodations, please do not hesitate to make those known, either yourself or through the Coordinator of Disability Services. Students with documented special needs may expect accommodation in relation to classroom accessibility, modification of testing, special test administration, etc. For more information, please contact Disability Services at the University of West Georgia: http://www.westga.edu/studentDev/index_8884.php. Any student with a disability documented through Student Services is encouraged to contact the instructor right away so that appropriate accommodations may be arranged. In addition, certain accommodations (which will be discussed in class) are available to all students, within constraints of time and space.

Communication Statement

Student Email Policy: University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG email account, which is the official means of communication between the University and student. It is the student's responsibility to check this email account for important University related information.

Extra Credit Statement

Extra credit activities (other than what is listed above) may be offered in this course. If so, details will be made available in *WebCT CourseDen*.

Dual Submission Statement

Coursework that has been completed or will be completed in another course that duplicates or dovetails with an assignment in this course may not be submitted unless prior approval is granted by

the instructor. If you foresee this possibility, contact the instructor as soon as possible to request approval for dual submission.

Class Outline

This class is delivered using *WebCT CourseDen* at <http://webct.westga.edu/>.

Tentative Class Schedule

NOTE: IF THERE IS ANY CONFLICT BETWEEN WHAT IS PRESENTED HERE AND WHAT IS SEEN IN *WebCT COURSEDEN*, *WebCT COURSEDEN* TAKES PRECEDENCE.

Class	Activities	Assignment/Readings Due
Getting started & Module 1 8/22 – 9/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions, review of syllabus & assignments • Setting the stage for understanding school reform • Review major CSR models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting started activities, including Introductions (video & roster info) and • Adobe Connect “meet-the-instructor” • Module 1 readings • Discussions
Module 2 9/5 – 9/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forces and Factors that Impact School Reform • School Turnaround • Review major CSR models • Online session 1 (Groups, TBD, 9/6 – 9/12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 2 readings • Assignment 1: History of school reform. • Discussions
Module 3 9/19 – 10/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forces and Factors that Impact School Reform, Part 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 3 readings • Discussions • Formative assessment
Module 4 10/10 – 10/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs Assessment & Using Data to Inform School Reform Efforts • Online session 2 (Groups, TBD, 10/10 – 10/12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module 4 readings • Assignment 3: Matrix of models • Discussions
Module 5 10/31 – 11/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forces and Factors that Impact School Reform, Part 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 2: Forces & factors • Discussions
Module 6 11/14 – 11/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot Topics in Reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 4: School reform platform paper
Module 7 11/28- 12/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform Presentations • Course Wrap-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Evaluations • Platform presentations (TBD)