

Common Course Outline
EDTR 212
Contemporary Challenges in Public Education: The American Perspective
3 Credits

Community College of Baltimore County

Description

EDTR 212 – Contemporary Challenges in Public Education: The American Perspective requires students to synthesize the historical context of the American education system with the ever-fluctuating trends and issues affecting today’s society in order to develop a unique and independent perspective. Students are presented with the materials and skills required to analyze the educational history that drives current issues and developments in reform measures, as well as the advantages and flaws inherent in previous attempts to improve our education system. Through an intensive investigation of primary and secondary sources, field-based observations, interviews with current educational leaders, and Socratic seminars, students will develop a critical comprehension of the problematic matter of ensuring American students have effective public, private, and post-secondary educational systems.

3 Credits

Prerequisites: ENGL 101 and EDTR 101 or permission of program coordinator

Overall Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. characterize and differentiate the educational philosophies behind American and international education systems;
2. develop and conduct interviews to gauge attitudes toward current educational initiatives and reforms;
3. observe and evaluate the proceedings of educational governance at local and state levels;
4. construct an appraisal of the attitudes and perceptions of current educational policymakers and/or innovators;
5. analyze the effects of increased and decreased federal funding on urban and rural educational systems;
6. debate the issues involving school choice vouchers, charter schools, magnet schools, and home schooling programs;
7. distinguish and analyze the potential for effectiveness in federal reform initiatives from the challenges to current educational systems;
8. examine the benefits and repercussions of expanded use of technology in classrooms;
9. analyze the causes and effects of remedial education on college readiness;
10. identify the issues surrounding teacher performance and accountability and analyze their effects on teacher effectiveness and quality instruction;

11. evaluate the need to train culturally responsive teachers in an increasingly multicultural society;
12. assess and evaluate learner-centered versus teacher-centered approaches to education;
13. analyze the efficacy of setting tuition caps and tuition levels in higher education; and
14. demonstrate the ability to critically analyze, discuss, and debate educational issues in formal and informal settings.

Major Topics

- I. Educational Philosophies
 - A. The United States
 - B. International Models
- II. School Organizational Reform
 - A. Current Educational Policymakers and Innovators
 - B. Role of Federal Funding
 - C. School Choice Programs
 - D. Federal Education Reforms and Initiatives
 - E. Impoverished Rural and Urban School Communities
- III. Curricular Reform
 - A. Technology in the Classroom
 - B. Remedial Education
 - C. Federal Curriculum Initiatives (e.g., Race to the Top, Common Core Curriculum)
- IV. Instructional Reform
 - A. Teacher Performance and Evaluation
 - B. Multicultural Education
 - C. Learner Centered Education
- V. Educational Philosophies Revisited

Course Requirements

Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include the following:

Grading/exams

- Participation in seminar discussions and debates
- A weekly written reflection based upon in-class discussions and individual analyses of the assigned readings and/or videos
- One detailed analysis of a disciplinary interview depicting the highlights and main points of the conference as related to the course
- One observational paper relating the proceedings of a local school board meeting
- Two analysis papers on the effects of reform initiatives on local school systems
- At least one book analysis based upon one or more issues regarding current educational reform as discussed in and related to course topics, e.g., Sahlberg's *Finnish Lessons* or Tough's *How Children Succeed*
- An exhibition of a multi-modal investigation into a self-selected educational issue as presented throughout the course. The student's ability to effectively utilize the analytical

and critical thinking skills, as developed and demonstrated throughout the course, must be demonstrated clearly in the project

Written Assignments: Students are required to use appropriate academic resources.

Other Course Information

Method of Instruction: As a seminar course, students will meet in a small group setting to analyze and discuss educational issues which students will investigate through assigned readings of primary and secondary sources. In using a Socratic dialogue, students will question, discuss, and debate issues in an informal context. Students will also have the opportunity to actively engage current leaders in educational reform through a series of interviews and discussions and to participate in visitations to Maryland public, charter, and magnet schools.

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