



**Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations
EDCI 413
Teacher Leadership in Jamaica**

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Catalogue Description: Students explore the changing roles that teachers have played in Jamaican schools, focusing on current formal and informal opportunities for leadership.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK STATEMENT

The professional education program at Western Carolina University fulfills its mission by creating and nourishing a community of learners guided by knowledge, values, and experiences. The guiding principles of this community include the belief that the best educational decisions are made after adequate reflection and with careful consideration of the interests, experiences, and welfare of the persons affected by the decisions; appreciation of and respect for diversity; and the fostering of the responsible use of technology.

OVERVIEW

This course promotes the development of teacher leadership within professional learning communities. In this class, we will consider the needs of 21st century learners within the context of professional learning communities and teacher leadership. Students will be encouraged to reflect on the following questions: What kind of leader do I want to be?, What experiences do I want to facilitate in my school? and What philosophical beliefs guide my actions and “shape” my thinking about the things I value about education and leadership? And finally, What professional contributions do I want to make in my own career?

Teacher leadership, in its current form, is an outcome of the movement to improve student achievement; however, ultimately, teacher leadership has the potential to profoundly impact the ways that we think and talk about teacher’s work. Globally, teachers began to assume more visible leadership roles with the advent of standards-based school reform in the 1980s. As the quality of the teacher workforce began to be more scrutinized and held to more stringent standards, teacher leadership began to be viewed by many as one area in which teachers themselves could be empowered to address school reform in ways that contribute not only to student achievement, but to the quality of the educational experience of students, teachers, and other participants in the teaching/learning process.

This course will examine teacher leadership as it currently exists in the Jamaican educational system. It will be discussed as a potentially powerful mechanism for the improvement of teaching and learning in Jamaican schools. Strategies will be discussed that place teacher leaders [form teachers, lead teachers, master teachers, senior teachers] in the forefront of efforts to improve instruction, develop professionalism in themselves, and nurture it in their colleagues. As a phenomenon that has grown in importance over the last two decades, teacher leadership is a “sleeping giant” that will increasingly impact the ways in which all teachers try to make sense of new and expanding work roles. We will examine these new roles and consider how teacher leaders contribute to teachers’

understanding of them. We will look at teaching from an historical point of view and ask how cultural factors have influenced teachers' work. We will also look at teaching within the larger organizational framework of schooling where teachers serve as political actors who potentially wield or relinquish power within the organization.

Like the act of teaching, teacher leadership must respond to the context in which it occurs. Despite the attention placed on mandates from the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), and the often highly prescriptive nature of the MOEC responses to educational policies, the work done by teachers varies greatly from region to region, school to school, and from classroom to classroom. Therefore, in this course, we will continually refer to our own experiences as educators to consider issues of practice and question how conceptions of leadership may influence the quality of teaching and learning in Jamaican schools.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The professional education unit at Western Carolina University defines diversity broadly to include *exceptionalities, race, ethnicity, culture, religious background, gender, linguistic differences, socioeconomic level, and any of the other ways our society defines human and group differences, including age, geography, sexual orientation and national origin.*

The composition of our student population deeply influences the educational experiences that they receive at WCU. Students are both recipients and providers of the teaching/learning that takes place in this course, and therefore, I have a vital interest in the experience that WE create in this classroom. Learning in an environment populated with different perspectives helps students to confront ideas and viewpoints that vary from their own, and thus, to think more vigorously and imaginatively about the issues. The educational benefits of student diversity include the discovery that there is a broad range of viewpoints and experiences within any given community—as well as learning that certain imagined differences often turn out to be not so different from one's own perspective. The quality of our interaction depends upon each of us respecting and valuing our differences and being open to the “aha!” moments that we can create as a group. In this course, students will explore the role of the educational leader in creating an organizational culture and climate that is responsive to the needs of diverse individuals.

TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS

Required:

- *Teacher Leadership: The “new” Foundations of Teacher Education-A Reader* by E.B. Hiltz (Ed.) (2011). New York: Peter Lang Publishing. ISBN#978-1-4331-1291-1
- *Leadership Capacity Building for Lasting School Improvement* by L. Lambert (2003). ASCD. ISBN#0871207788
- *Awakening the Sleeping Giant* (2009). Katzenmeyer and Moller, Corwin, ISBN# 978-1412960403

A collection of case studies will be printed and provided to each student.

In addition, you are responsible for using APA style in all submitted papers prepared for this and other graduate classes. Information about purchasing *Concise Rules of APA Style* is found at: <http://www.wcu.edu/11743.asp> or you may utilize online resources.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To develop and demonstrate knowledge, philosophies, dispositions, and performances essential for instructional leadership in 21st Century schools
- To develop and demonstrate knowledge and competency in development of group and school organizational culture.
- To develop and demonstrate knowledge and skills for leading organizational improvement and effecting change in educational organizations.
- To develop and demonstrate interpersonal communications skills essential for effective leadership and collaborative problem-solving
- To experience the synergy of a think tank and collaborative problem-solving
- To develop and demonstrate performance competencies exemplifying leadership in 21st Century learning communities.

COURSE TOPICS/OUTLINE

Essential Questions:

1. How can changes be initiated to offer best practices of teaching and learning for 21st Century students?
2. How is school culture changed?
3. What are the optimal characteristics for Organizational Culture and Climate in 21st Century Schools?
4. How is an organizational culture for teacher leadership sustained?
5. What is the role of the principal in learning organizations?
6. What are the characteristics present in organizations where teacher leadership is utilized?
7. How does teacher leadership affect organizational culture and change? And vice versa?
8. How is teacher leadership defined and how does teacher leadership influence change in school organizations?
9. What actions are essential to teacher leadership and influencing action?
10. What is leadership capacity in organizations and how can it be built?

POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Western Carolina University, a community of scholarship, is also a community of honor. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students work together to achieve the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense at WCU because it threatens the quality of scholarship and defrauds those who depend on knowledge and integrity. Academic dishonesty includes the following:

- A. Cheating. Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
- B. Fabrication. Intentional falsification or invention of information or citation in an academic exercise.
- C. Plagiarism. Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of someone else as one's own in an academic exercise.
- D. Facilitation of Academic Dishonesty. Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help someone else to commit an act of academic dishonesty, such as knowingly allowing another to copy information during an examination or other academic exercise.

For specific information on procedures for cases involving allegations of academic dishonesty, see relevant sections in the WCU Student Handbook that is available online. Guidelines to avoiding plagiarism are listed at the following location: <http://www.wcu.edu/11733.asp>

ANY STUDENT IN THIS CLASS WHO IS FOUND GUILTY OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY WILL RECEIVE A GRADE OF "0" ON THE ASSIGNMENT IN QUESTION, AND THE FINAL GRADE FOR THAT STUDENT WILL BE NO HIGHER THAN A "C." DEPENDING ON THE SEVERITY OF THE OFFENSE, A STUDENT MAY FAIL THE CLASS DUE TO ACADEMIC DISHONESTY.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

1. Attendance, Participation, Preparation, and Attitude (APPA): (10 classes x 10 pts for each class/100 pts).

In order for us to develop as a community of learners who will learn from each other and enjoy our time together, and in order for the time to speed by, it is important that everyone:

- ✓ attend each class, arriving on time and willing to move the furniture when necessary
- ✓ be an active and informed participant in class discussions
- ✓ read and think about the assigned materials prior to class
- ✓ prepare and hand in assignments on the date due
- ✓ find my questions provocative, and my humor devastatingly witty
- ✓ understand that what you know when you come to class each week may change
- ✓ Arrive with a mind open to the ideas of others.
- ✓ Please be aware that if you arrive late...you will only receive partial credit (or points) for the day. For example, if you arrive 30 minutes late, 3 pts will be subtracted; 1 hour late, 5 pts will be subtracted. Any student who comes in 1 1/2 hours or more late will receive no credit for attendance on that day. Attendance and participation credit cannot be made up. And yes, I realize that prior commitments and/or emergencies are important; however, these issues will be dealt with on an individual basis.

2. **Reflective Journals:** Students will be asked to do the assigned readings in the Teacher Leadership text (Hilty) and prepare a 1 -2 page journal entry for each section of the book. Guidelines for each entry will be provided. (25 pts per journal entry x 5 entries/125 pts.)
3. **Final Exam:** Each student is expected to read both books and take a final exam over the main ideas from the texts. (100 pts).
4. **Case Study Response:** (6 cases x 5 pts each/30 pts total)
5. **Each student will be assigned to a small group where they will be asked to examine in-depth a *Teacher Leadership Issue in Jamaica*.** Students will present their findings in a group presentation the final day of class. The final presentation will clearly identify the contributions of each group member (100 pts).

Students may earn a total of 455 pts and grades will be based on the following percentages of the total possible points:

90 – 100% = A

80 – 89% = B

70 – 79% = C

Below 70 % is a Failing Grade

“+”s and “-“s will be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Please know that I am aware that you are very busy in your personal and professional lives. I know how hard this can be. I have tremendous respect for what you are doing and I will do my best to meet your needs; however, in return, I need for you to give this class your undivided attention for the 10 days that we are meeting. Thank you.