

Unit 1: Course Introduction

EDUC 525 - Challenges in Urban Education: Learning

Spring 2019

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Agenda

Overview of the course

Introductions

Ground rules

What is learning?

Beliefs about learning and motivation

Identifying problems of practice

Rossier Mission

The mission of the USC Rossier School of Education is to prepare leaders to achieve educational equity through practice, research and policy. We work to improve learning opportunities and outcomes in urban settings and to address disparities that affect historically marginalized groups. We teach our students to value and respect the cultural context of the communities in which they work and to interrogate the systems of power that shape policies and practices. Through innovative thinking and research, we strive to solve the most intractable educational problems.

Overview of the Course

Introductions

Ground Rules

Group Discussion

1. What types of challenges in learning and motivation do you see in your personal and professional life?
2. What do you hope to learn about your own learning and motivation this semester?
3. What strategies have you found helpful to your learning and motivation personally and professionally?

Poll

Navigate to:

<https://b.socrative.com/login/student/>

Room: COURTNEYMALLOY

What is learning?

This Week's Readings

Independently, jot down 2-3 main takeaways from the readings this week.

In small groups, share your ideas and discuss potential implications for practice.

What educational practices can you identify that may lack research evidence to support their continued use?

Problems of Practice

Research Paper vs. Gap Analysis

Research Paper

- Focuses on a general topic related to an educational issue of interest to the field
- Starts by introducing the general topic
- Addresses the question: “What does the research say about XXX?”
- Audience = wider education field (practitioners, and maybe researchers)
- Relies on evidenced-based research to support analysis

Gap Analysis Paper

- Focuses on analyzing causes of unmet goals (knowledge, motivation, organizational)
- Starts by introducing a specific setting and its mission/goals
- Addresses the question: “What is causing the gap in this setting?”
- Audience = the setting: the local context where the problem is occurring
- Relies on evidenced-based research to support analysis of causes and solutions

Types of Problems

Educational

(Research Papers)

- Broad, large-scale problems that affect education at a macro level (e.g. retention rates of historically marginalized students in STEM fields)
- Problem can be present in multiple settings and can be manifest itself differently depending on the organization/context
- Focus of your EDUC 605 Framing paper

Field-Based/Organizational

(Gap Analysis)

- Specific, context-based problems that affect a specific organization or field (e.g., retention rates in your professional field or organization)
- Often related to broader educational problems, but the focus of the problem is on the specific, local setting
- Focus of your EDUC 525 Gap Analysis Paper

Gap Analysis Problem Paragraph

I am currently working at [school/organization/agency] as a...

The performance problem I am focusing on is...

I know this is a problem because...[insert organizational data]

This problem affects the school's, organization's, or agency's mission or goals to...

This problem is related to the larger problem of practice in [context] of....

I currently work at Bright Star Middle School as an assistant principal. The performance problem I am focusing on is algebra scores for our Latinx students. I know this is a problem because our test scores show that 15% of our Latinx students met or exceeded state standards. This problem affect the ability of our school and district to meet our annual accountability goals. This problem is related to a larger problem across the U.S. of math performance and STEM preparation of K-12 students.

I am an academic advisor in the engineering department at Urban University. The performance problem I am focusing on is graduation rates of our first generation college students who are engineering majors. I know this is a problem because school and university data show that 40% of first generation college students in engineering majors actually graduate with a degree. This rate is 20% lower than the overall university graduation rate for first generation students and 40% lower than the all-university rate. This problem affects the university's goals of 1) bringing about equitable outcomes for first-generation students; and 2) increasing overall retention rates of the student body. This problem is related to the larger problem in the U.S. of first-generation student retention rates and the number of STEM graduates in higher education.

Inappropriate Problems for Gap Analysis

Lack of:

- Professional development for staff

- Motivation to attend college

- Financial support for interventions

- Qualified teachers/staff

- Parental value for school initiatives

Gap Analysis Problem Discussion

1. Share one or two learning-related performance problems you are encountering or have encountered in your organization or field.
2. Discuss how you know this is a problem and why it might be beneficial to focus on this problem for your final paper.

Looking Ahead

Next Week

- Unit 2
- Bring ideas for your gap analysis paper

1/21: 1st quiz is due by midnight

1/22: Problem focus paragraph due before class