

SYLLABUS: AmSt 385r

AMERICAN EDUCATION

Oxford College of Emory University

Fall SEMESTER 2017

INSTRUCTORS: Drs. Joseph Moon & Michele Hempfling

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CLASS MEETINGS

Tuesday, Thursday: 3:30 – 4:45
Candler Hall, Room 27

REQUIRED TEXTS

Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage Inequalities*. New York: Harper Collins, (Chapter 1-3)

Gatto, John Taylor (2005). *Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling*. Canada: New Society Publishers. (Chapter 1, 2, and 4)

Selected readings: Additional journal articles, book chapters, news media and documents will be available on E-reserves through the Oxford Library or indicated on Canvas.

Course Overview:

This course will survey some of the historical, social, cultural, and political factors that influence issues and practices in American Education. Topics to be covered include history of US education, current models of public education, topics in public policy, curriculum, and various innovations intended to enhance the effectiveness of American Education. Students will examine these topics through lecture, oral reports, films, class discussions, a topical paper project, field experiences in local schools, several short writing assignments, and a final examination.

** The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.*

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- Understand the significant historical events that shaped American education;
- Understand contemporary school reform initiatives and be able to provide informed arguments for and against them;
- Relate their field experiences in local public schools to the issues covered in assigned readings and lectures; and course content.
- Understand the role of society, culture, and politics in shaping contemporary American education.

Accommodations

Your teachers are committed to make this learning experience accessible and optimal for people who may have any disability related needs, whether visible or invisible. Please bring your special needs to the attention of one of the instructors at the beginning of the semester to communicate and agree upon special accommodations, (such as providing materials in alternative formats, assuring physical access to class sessions, or being sensitive to interaction difficulties that may be posed by communication and/or learning disabilities).

Course Policies

Attendance: You are encouraged to attend all class meetings. More than three absences will result in the lowering of your final grade by three points, and each successive absence will result in an additional three point deduction. Absences judged to be emergencies will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Make-up work/Incompletes: All assignments are due on the dates listed in the syllabus. Any deviation from posted due dates must be approved in advance by the instructors. You are expected to communicate any issues to us in a timely manner.

Grade Disputes: Unless there are computational errors, no grade will be revised.

Honor Code/Plagiarism: The Oxford Honor Code will be in effect for the entire course. Plagiarism is a violation of the honor code; if at any point you are unsure how to cite correctly another individual's work, please see one of your instructors. A copy of the honor code can be viewed at:

<https://inside.oxford.emory.edu/academics/oxford-honor-council/student-honor-code/>

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Professional Dialogue/Interaction: Since we will be discussing important and sometimes controversial topics, we are committed to creating a class environment that is open for all students' opinions. Debate and disagreement is encouraged yet must be civil and respectful.

Cell phones must remain off during class.

Please be time on time for class. Repeated tardiness may be factored in as deductions from the class participation score.

Grading Details

1. Written Response to ***Savage Inequalities*** (chapters 1-3) and ***Dumbing Us Down*** = **20 points**. Your submission must be typed, double spaced in 12 point font, 1500 – 1800 words. Details on this assignment are on Page 11 of the syllabus.
2. Tutoring Field Experience and Journal Reflections – TPSL: You will tutor children, help teachers, or perform other useful tasks in assigned local public school classrooms. You must spend a minimum of 16 hours (8 visits) at your site over the course of the semester. You will maintain a regular, weekly tutoring time and are expected to receive a satisfactory evaluation from a cooperating teacher at your local school/agency. Students will maintain a journal and link observations to class content. The 5 journal entries are noted on the syllabus. No late journal entries will be accepted. Journal Entries = 20 points, TPSL experience = 10 points, **overall 30 points**
3. Topical Paper (submitted electronically in Canvas). **Outline – 5 points; paper, 25 points**
In order to be exposed to a broader range of topics and issues in American Education, you will select a topic/issue and write a scholarly paper that analyzes the topic/issue, presenting different perspectives and competing related arguments where appropriate, including your concluding opinion or perspective. Detailed writing guidelines will be provided. 2500 – 3000 words.
4. Oral Presentations – **15 points** The topic for your topical paper will form the basis for your Oral Presentation. Students will prepare an 8-10 minute presentation. Students will be evaluated on the overall quality, clarity and completeness of the presentation, as well as the effectiveness of their presentation. Also, students will distribute to the class a one-page outline of their topic.

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5. Short Papers- Two short papers will be assigned to further develop comprehension of selected reading.. Your submission must be typed, double spaced in 12 point font, 1000 – 1500 words.
20 points (10 points each)
6. Special Projects – There will be special projects for small point values. **10 points (max).**
7. Comprehensive Final Examination = **30 points**
8. Class attendance, active participation, and contribution to discussion = **15 points**

Total possible point value = 170 points

Note: Student work submitted as part of this course may be reviewed by Oxford College and Emory College faculty and staff for the purposes of improving instruction and enhancing Emory education

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	Possible Points	Earned Points
1. Active participation and contribution to class discussion	15	
2. Special Projects 5 must be completed by 10/5/17	10	
3. <i>Written Response to Savage Inequalities and Dumbing Us Down</i> Typed, double-spaced, in 12 font, 1500 - 1800 words.	20	
4. TPSL Field Experiences and Journal Reflections Journal Reflections (5 total journal entries. 4 journals worth 3 points each and a final reflection worth 8 points to be evaluated on clarity, reflective quality of content, incorporation of relevant course topics as appropriate); 500 and 1000 word minimum, respectively. Tutoring Experience (regular site attendance and positive supervisor evaluation)	20 (journals) 10 (TPSL)	
5. Topical Paper Outline (5 pts) Final paper (25 pts). 2500 – 3000 words	30	
6. Oral Presentation of Topical Paper Students will prepare an 8 - 10 minute presentation that allows the audience to understand the key elements and controversies of the topical paper. Also, students will distribute a one-page topic overview of their presentation to classmates.	15	
7. Short Paper due September 5	10	
8. Short Paper due November 9	10	
9. Final Exam TBA	30	
TOTAL POINTS	170	

Grade	Standard	% Range
A	4.0	160+
A-	3.7	153-159
B+	3.3	148-152
B	3.0	141-147
B-	2.7	136-140

Grade	Standard	% Range
C+	2.3	131-135
C	2.0	124-130
C-	1.7	119-123
D	1.0	112-118
F	0	0-111

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CLASS	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	ASSIGNMENT DUE
1	8/24/17	Introductions, Expectations, & Syllabus	Read syllabus	
2	8/29/17	Why Study American Education? TPSL Introduction	Read: The Sociology of American Education by Joel Spring (Canvas)	
3	8/31/17	History of Primary and Secondary Education in the U.S.: Part One	Read: History and Goals of Public Schooling (Canvas) The Common School by Urban and Wagoner(Canvas)	
4	9/5/17	History Continued: Part Two	Read Social Reform by Urban and Wagoner(Canvas) Read Pedagogical Progressives by Urban and Wagoner(Canvas) Read Modern School System by Urban and Wagoner(Canvas)	Short Paper Due
5	9/7/17	Jonathan Kozol	Read: Chapters 1-3 from Kozol, <u>Savage Inequalities</u>	
6	9/12/17	Gatto's Dumbing US Down: Class discussion/debate	Read Chapters 1, 2, 4, Gatto, <u>Dumbing Us Down</u> ; prepare for in class debate	Divide up Gatto and Kozol for paper
7	9/14/17	Social Class Divide & Educational Access	Read Tearing Down the Gates by Peter Sacks (Canvas)	

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8	9/19/17	Race, Culture, and Language	Read Student Diversity by Joel Spring (Canvas) Read The Education of Children Whose Nightmares Come Both Day and Night (Canvas)	TPSL begins
9	9/21/17	Legal Issues	TBA	
10	9/26/17	Home School movement Vouchers	Read School Choice by Joel Spring (Canvas) Read Home Schooling by Joel Spring (Canvas) Read Taking Sides by JW Noll; Issue 11 (Canvas) Policy Analysis: Homeschooling by Lyman (Canvas)	Select and submit Topic for paper paragraph description
11	9/28/17	<i>A Nation at Risk</i>	Read “A Nation at Risk” The Imperative for Educational Reform 1983, in James Fraser, A Documentary History (Canvas)	
12	10/3/17	NCLB/ESSA	Read NCLB Act of 2001, Executive Summary (Canvas) Read NCLB : Measure and Punish (Canvas) Read ESSA summary and ESSA-DeVos letter (Canvas)	Librarians visit Journal Entry #1 Due
13	10/5/17	High Stakes Testing and Accountability	Read Standards based Reform by Nelson (Canvas) Review the press release on the GA’s College & Career Ready Performance Index (Class Websites document)	Kozol/Gatto paper due Deadline for first five special project points

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14	10/12/17	Teach for America discussion Guest speaker: Rhiannon Hubert	Review Teach for America website (Class Websites document) Read Is Teach for America Working (Class Websites document)	
15	10/17/17	The United States and International Comparisons	Read International Testing (Canvas)	
16	10/19/17	Charter Schools	Read Can Charter Schools Revitalize by JW Noll; Issue 12 (Canvas) Read Charter Schools by Joel Spring (Canvas)	Journal Entry #2 due
17	10/24/17	Charter Schools, case study Guest: Lindsey James Luczynski	Read: Darn Good Charter School (Canvas) Review Drew Charter School link (Class Websites document)	Topical paper outline due
18	10/26/17	Debate as An Inner City Strategy Guest: James Roland	Read Rethinking Debate Across the Curriculum (Canvas)	
19	10/31/17	The Common Core What it is and why it is a hot topic of debate in American Education.	Common Core video Development process (Canvas) Read Everything you need to know about Common Core (Canvas) Read Educational Researcher (Canvas)	
20	11/2/17	Gates and role of Private foundations Guest: Teresa Rivero	Read Was the 5 Billion Worth It? (Canvas)	Journal #3 Due

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21	11/7/17	Education Department	Review US Dept of Education (ED) homepage (Class Websites document)	
22	11/9/17	Financing Education Guest: Dr. Teresa Romano	Research local school boards (more info in class) Review School Funding (Class Websites document)	Short Paper Due
23	11/14/17	TBA	TBA	TBA
24	11/16/17	4 presentations		All special projects due Journal Entry #4 due
25	11/21/17	4 presentations		Topical Paper due
26	11/28/17	4 presentations		
27	11/30/17	3 presentations TPSL discussion		TPSL Ends
28	12/5/17	Course Review Evaluations		Final Journal #5 Due
29	12/12	Final Examination: TBD	MUST submit final exam before 10pm	

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How to write the Kozol/Gatto paper

- Double-spaced, with one inch margins, 12 point font.
- 1500 – 1800 words.
- This is a scholarly paper. You should use precise, academic language and avoid slang, contractions, and colloquialisms.

This paper should be more than a "book report" where each chapter is only summarized. What central problem does the book address? What inspired this particular book? What are the key points raised by the author? (again, do not submit a chapter-by-chapter retelling). What themes recur throughout the book? You may add your own points of view and commentary/criticism preferably at your paper's conclusion but the bulk of the paper should be focused on a critical explication on the assigned work.

For this paper, you are *not required* to include outside sources. If you choose to do so, they must be cited properly (using a consistent citation style such as APA or Chicago style).

Due: October 5 at class time

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How to write TPSL Journal Reflections

Journaling is a process that allows you to think critically about your tutoring experience. Journal reflections require you to examine **what is happening, why it is happening, what you can do about it, and how it affects you/others**. Journal reflections, while they do contain your personal thoughts and observations, are not diaries. You are not merely recording the day's events.

For this class, journal reflections should be *a minimum of 500 words, on double-spaced pages*. The majority of your journals should stem from incidents or topics you encounter in the classroom, but if you cannot develop an original idea, please see the list of suggestions below.

Journal entries to be submitted on Canvas. ***No late journals will be accepted.***

Your reflections will inevitably contain personal thoughts and will only be read by the instructors. Unless the information contained is deemed to be dangerous to you or others, it will not be shared with anyone else. You may share your thoughts with your peers, but it is best to do this verbally to prevent accidental or intentional plagiarism.

Journal reflections are one of the most important parts of making meaning of your tutoring experience. Your writing is a way to link classroom events to what we are reading and what is happening in the broader field of education. Most importantly, it is a way to think about how the experience is affecting *you*.

As mentioned, it is important to move beyond a re-telling of your day. Honesty and a willingness to challenge your ideas are extremely useful for successful journal writing. The following is an excerpt from a reflective journal guide for service-learning, and the ideas are appropriate to writing about your tutoring:

Several ways in which you can move beyond a mere chronology of events:

Detailed description as if to an outsider. Often you will use your journal to record detailed descriptions of some aspect of your internship environment, whether physical, behavioral, or organizational. When you write them, you will not have a clear idea of what you will make of these details, but you will sense that they might be important later. These descriptions should sound as if you were describing them to someone who was never there.

Tentative explanations. Speculate as to why something that you have observed firsthand is as it is. You might derive your explanation from a lecture you have heard, a book you have read, or your own reservoir of "common sense." Having posited an interpretation, you will want to continue with your detailed observations on the topic to see if you want to stick with your hypothesis or alter it. Journals allow you to change your mind.

Personal judgments. Use your journal to make judgments about something in your environment. There may be people's actions that you find unpleasant, ways of doing things that are not as you would do them, work environments in which you would not want to remain. These judgments will help you learn about yourself, your values, and your limits. Journals allow you to "speak your mind."

There are some general questions you will want to consider at the heart of every journal reflection. Please do not just answer these questions, but try to weave them into the journal in a way that best supports your observations.

- What are some critical questions I can raise about issues, people, and myself, based on what I observed?
- What did I see, experience, and feel? Are these things similar to what others saw, experienced, and felt as a result of the same situation?
- What excites me? Troubles me? Impresses me? Disturbs me? Inspires me? Surprises me? Challenges me?

- What am I learning about myself through this experience?
- Did any of my actions have an impact? What more or different things could have been done to alter the outcome of a situation?

Suggested Items for Classroom Observations:

- **Physical Space:** Comment on the organization, structure, cleanliness, and set-up of the physical space. What do the walls, bulletin boards, desks, bookshelves, student work, windows, etc. tell you about the teacher, students, and school?
- **Classroom Climate:** Are students engaged in class? How do you know? Does the class have a generally "positive" or "negative" feel? Does everyone want to be there? How does the teacher treat the students, and vice versa? How do the students interact with each other? How is the classroom climate similar or different than what you expected?
- **Curriculum:** What are the students learning? Are they grasping the concepts and participating in class? How do you know? Is the curriculum chosen by the teacher, department, school, or state? Do the teacher and students enjoy the subject matter? Is the subject matter considerate of diversity and multiculturalism?
- **Instructional Strategies:** What type of instruction does the teacher favor? Does the type of instruction vary based on lesson, day, or topic? How do you think students learn best? Are there noticeable differences between how individual students respond to different methods? If you are planning to teach some day, what new strategies are you learning? Are there any you would adopt or reject in your own teaching?
- **Management/ Discipline:** Are there any student disturbances during class time? How does the teacher handle behavior problems or interruptions? Are the students receptive? Are there rules posted in the classroom? Are they followed by students and referred to by the teacher? Is the administration involved in classroom management? Does the school feel safe?
- **Relationship with Students:** How are you interacting with students? Do you wish you were doing more or less? Do they know why you are in the classroom? Does your presence excite or bother them? How do they respond when you help them? What are you learning about yourself as a student and a teacher as a result of working with them?
- **Relationship with Teacher:** How do you relate to your cooperating teacher? What is the best piece of advice he/she has given you? What are you learning to do, and what are you learning *not* to do?
- **Change Over Time:** What has changed since you've been observing? Participation? Attendance? Relationships? Academic achievement? Why do you think these things changed: time of day, time of year, new teaching methods, new school policies, etc?

Grading of Journals:

Exemplary journal entries may earn 3 points. To receive the 3 points your written reflection must vividly and clearly describe the observed events or conditions, and must make a thoughtful connection to one or more of the course readings or lectures, or topics we've discussed in class. Your reflection must evidence critical thought about relevant issues and concerns, and, where appropriate, should take into consideration multiple points of view. For example, a journal receiving 2 points will contain good observations, be reasonably well written but, in the instructor's judgment, fails to some degree to make connections to course content, evidence critical thought, or convey useful insights based on this experience. In all cases, your writing must be clear, well organized, and

grammatically correct. Minimum length 500 words. The last journal will be worth 8 point and should be an overall reflection of your experience with a minimum length of 1000 words (Total points for all journals = 20)

Topical Paper

The topical paper is designed to allow you to explore a particular aspect of public education in the United States. Students may choose from a list of topics provided by the instructors (see list of topics later in this syllabus), or may suggest another topic related to Education in America that interests them. A one-paragraph description of the topic and the areas to be covered must be submitted for approval on or prior to September 26.

Guidelines for Topical Paper:

- 2500 – 3000 words, double-spaced, with one inch margins.
- Use APA or MLA style when including quotations. For both styles, remember that punctuation is placed outside quotation marks and parentheses.
- APA Example: According to Karp, No Child Left Behind is a "short-term solution to a much more systemic issue of school organization and bureaucracy" (p. 15).
- Include at *least five* quotations/citations from resource material. Do not use block quotes
- This is an academic paper. You should use precise, academic language and avoid slang, contractions, and colloquialisms.
- State your topic and the approach you are taking with your paper in your first paragraph.

Your paper should include at least 3 credible academic sources.

Outline of topical paper due: October 24. Finished paper due: November 21 at class time.

Grading: Topical Paper is graded using a 30-point scale.

27 – 30 Truly outstanding, insightful, thorough, skillfully written

23 - 26 Strong paper, well written, all guidelines met

19 – 22 Good paper, some typos, some weaknesses evident in content.

15 – 18 Fair paper, most guidelines met, content is lacking in parts, writing errors

0 – 14 Poor paper, flaws evident in content, low quality of writing, guidelines not met

Suggested Research Topics for Topical Paper

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- Describe the history and development of education of persons with disabilities in America from 1950 to the present, including key political milestones, issues and strategies for improving access and quality.
- Community schooling is a movement and philosophy of education that approaches education holistically. What is the status of community schooling today, what are the best examples, and what evidence is there for success/failure?
- Select a person, persons, (Booker T. Washington, WEB Dubois) or event (Civil Rights Movement, NAACP, integration) related to African American education or exemplars in the United States. Determine historical context of person/event; contributions to American education, feature critics/criticism.
- Examine the issue of literacy, including the topics of functional literacy, cultural literacy, and the implications of literacy for America.
- How did John Dewey's philosophy influence the Progressive Education movement and education today? Who were Dewey's critics, then and now?
- Trace the history of Native American education in the United States, and conclude with current challenges of Native American education.
- Compare and contrast the visions of common schools from both Thomas Jefferson and Horace Mann. How might of education in the United States been different if Jefferson's model had been adopted?
- What are the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)? What problems did it address? Inherent controversies?
- School violence is a growing problem in American education. What are its causes? What are hopeful solutions?
- Examine the proposal to shift public schools in the US to a year round model. Are there relevant international models? Pros and cons of extending school year.
- Presently in the US, primary and secondary education is compulsory vary state by state. Should US education be required? What is the most effective compulsory education age (16? 17? 18)? Include research and supporting statistics.
- Classroom discipline is a major issue and subject of debate among American educators? Is there a case to be made for the return to corporal punishment? What are effective strategies for managing classroom and schoolyard discipline?
- What rights do parents have in the US to getting their differently-abled or disabled child needed special services (autistic, blind, reading disability, cerebral palsy, etc)?
- Trace the controversy regarding teaching evolution in public classrooms in the US. What is the state of this argument at present?
- What is the function of teacher's unions in the US? What are the advantages and disadvantages to unionization for schoolteachers?
- What is the state of values education, character education, and citizenship education in American public education?
- How are recent immigrants and refugees to the US treated in public primary and secondary education? What are special challenges facing this population? Include evidence of successful models.

- Over-crowding of school is a challenge in many public school systems. What are effects of over-crowding on the effectiveness of the educational process? What are causes? Solutions?
- Is teacher pay positively related to effective teaching? Describe both sides of this debate, take a position, and support it with evidence.
- What are KIPP schools, how did they originate, and are they succeeding? Include criticism and evidence to support your claims.
- US educators are deeply concerned about the “achievement gap” - disparity in academic performance between groups of students. Research the achievement gaps most evident in US public education today. Provide causes and solutions.
- Michelle Rhee and Randi Weingarten have conflicting views of ways to improve American education. Trace the story of these two leaders in US education, the nature of their disagreement, and select (and defend) the point of view you determine is more persuasive.
- Diane Ravitch, a leader in the accountability movement, has changed her position in recent years and has emerged as a major critic. What influenced Ravitch to shift her position? Who are Ravitch’s critics today?
- Research the issue of online privacy as it relates to American education. Should schools have the right to track the content of students’ social media? Is the use of social media a legitimate concern for school administrators?
- Some public schools are experimenting with “flipping the curriculum” – with no lectures in class and most of the subjects presented in an online format. Class time is used for discussion and project work. Is this effective? Make an argument and support it with relevant research.
- There have been teacher cheating scandals across the US in response to the demands and results of competency testing. What are the sources of the problem, the impact on schools, and how are school administrators responding?
- Many educators hold that pre-school education and enrichment programs are fundamental to school reform and student success. What is the evidence to support or refute this claim?
- Using your intended academic major (philosophy, political science, music, etc), select a topic that connects that field of study to American education. The selected topic should be prior approved by your instructors.
- What legal rights do students have as it relates to freedom of expression, suspension and expulsion, search and seizure, privacy, and nondiscrimination?
- What brought about the decline of progressive education? In terms of emphasis, what changes took place in American Education after the progressive era?
- Trace the recent controversies about teaching ethnic studies in U.S. public schools. What are the possible benefits and consequences of teaching ethnic studies in public schools? Should ethnic studies be taught in schools? Provide evidence to support your claims.
- Trace the recent controversies surrounding social studies/history textbooks in Texas. What are the core issues of the controversy and what ongoing debates in American education does it reflect?
- What are the pros and cons of traditional teacher education routes versus non-traditional routes such as Teach for America? Provide evidence to support your claims.
- What are the differences between high poverty and low poverty schools in urban and/or rural areas? In what ways do the school experiences of students (high poverty or low poverty) in these settings differ? Provide evidence to support your claims.
- How does religion impact the development of sex and sexuality education policies?

- Some U.S. educators are deeply concerned about parental involvement. Why is parental involvement important? What are some of the impediments to parental involvement? How can parents be better supported in being involved in their children's education?
- Some argue that poor health and nutrition are contributing factors to low student achievement. What are some of the issues regarding poor health and nutrition for student and how have schools responded to these issues?
- What are some of the issues related to integrating technology in public school classrooms? Do you think increasing students' access to various technologies will enhance learning? Provide evidence to support your claims.
- ***You may identify your own research topic with instructors' prior approval.***

Special Project Ideas

You may earn up to ten points by taking part in special American Education projects that are of particular interest to you. Note that you can't wait until the end of the semester and earn all 10 points.

10/5 Deadline to submit projects for first 5 points.

11/16 deadline for all remaining projects submitted for points.

What are ways to earn these points? Here are a few ideas, but we are open for your own suggestions. Come to Dean Moon in advance to discuss your ideas and possible point values.

Some projects our students have done in the past:

1. Find a current news article or podcast on a topic that relates to K-12 public education in the US. Write a brief review. Points will vary from 1-3 depending on the nature of the article and quality of writing.
2. Write a letter to one of your K-12 teachers telling her/him what you learned from her/him and why you appreciate her/his influence on your early education. 1 point.
3. Do a poster project featuring a particular issue in American Education. 1-3 points.
4. Check out "Waiting for Superman" (or other documentaries) from our library, view it, and write a short critical review. 1-2 points
5. Organize a "Waiting for Superman" (or other documentary) viewing event for other students (from our the class and beyond). Show the film, lead a post-viewing discussion. 3-5 points.
6. Create a video project that relates to American Education. 2-4 points.
7. Interview a public school teacher or administrator. 2-3 points.
8. Interview someone (teacher or student) who was a participant of some relevant topic or event (desegregation of schools, a homeschool parent, someone who works in the federal Education Department, charter school founder, etc). 2-4 points.
9. Organize a personal (or small group) field trip to a particular public school in Atlanta. 2-4 points.
10. Be creative! Organize and promote your own project!