

Chronology of Courses and Program Synthesis

It began July 6 th. 2007 when as a member of Cohort 8 I was first introduced to Dr. Korynne Taylor who welcomed and presented us with the outline for our initial course **"Educational Planning"**. The course *"applied different frameworks and theories to examine the change process, to analyze organizational problems, and to develop constructive strategies for change"*. Using the text *"Sustainable Leadership"* by **Hargreaves and Fink** as our resource, working in teams I was able to present my first power point presentation in hopes of demonstrating concepts of improved pedagogy. We were also introduced to the Advocacy Design Center Model (ADC) and Instruction, Organization, Governance, and Accountability (I.O.G.A.) model of **Dr. Frank Smith**. It was the first time I had had the opportunity to digest the contents of the Advocacy Design study guide which incorporated the use of 29 questions that enabled my cohort members and myself to use this *"tool in seeing the school as a whole"*. With that conceptual framework as a foundation, I now viewed all academic programs with an objective eye.

In my Cohorts first experience meeting Dr. Smith for the course **"Politics of Education"**, he had the pleasure of initiating my Cohort members and me to the book *"Policy Paradox"* by **Deborah Stone**. In reading and analyzing the text we were able to distinguish between the "market" and "polis" models. Stone talks about "Goals" as the "central tenet of modern political analysis"; "Problems" in "measuring the difference of two states of affairs", and "Solutions" as "ongoing strategies for structuring relationships and coordinating behavior to achieve collective purposes". In addition to using Stone' model we were exposed to other theorists who address similar concepts. For example: **Popkowitz** and his concept of the "technical illusory", **Schein** and the concepts of "artifacts beliefs and assumptions" and **Comer** with his "social, emotional and academic outcomes".

In the fall of 2007 continuing with Dr. Smith and the foundation of Deborah Stone from our previous course, our next course **"Administrative Leadership in Schools"**, we were able to tackle **Clarence Stone's** paper on "civic capacity" and the shared understanding of an issue, sustained uncommon effort and momentum, and engagement of all stakeholders. In an assignment of a fictional area titled "Elmtown" we were able to take what we learned and apply it to solving the problems raised in this class assignment. The framework of **Vincent L. Ferrandino** provided some members of our cohort the concept to redesign the old school systems from the

agricultural model to the new technological model. Here, the emphasis was on focusing on the whole child, and moving beyond the school to generate more civic capacity for education. In addition **Richard Florida's** creativity index added to our framework for school leadership. The model advocates reaching out to a more diverse community and helping people to participate. The emphasis is on "tolerance, talent and technology".

The fall of the same year also was our first contact as students with Dr. Jonathan Hughes. The course entitled "**School Based Data Analysis**" had troubled me as a novice in data analysis especially when coupled with abstract digital graphic designs. However, as our Cohort had various levels of familiarity with performing the sequences to apply the data, Dr. Hughes gladly went over how to accomplish our objectives and gave each member of my cohort the undivided attention they needed until all questions were answered. I was now able to understand how to use data to frame a problem- a skill that I would need to consider a future dissertation design. Using the **School District Almanac** provided by Dr. Hughes I was able to illustrate a quality presentation on looking at comparatives in two long Island school districts from information provided by the data.

The spring of 2008 found my cohort continuing our studies with Dr. Dunlop and our class "**Multi-Cultural Social Urban Organization**". This course examined the many theories, strategies, and techniques designed to develop effective multicultural organization policies in educational administration. My cohort and I were enlightened by three very important texts: "Black Feminist Thought" by **Patricia Collins**, "A Framework for Understanding Poverty" by **Ruby Payne** and "Making Choices for Multicultural Education" by **Sleeter and Grant**. We then took what we had learned and applied it in designing and implementing instructional strategies that promote democracy and equity for all students as well as developing policy and strategic planning to achieve educational equity across groups. With the foundation of the classes that we had previously taken my cohort members and I felt relatively secure in designing a viable strategic plan.

As spring arrived we were able to reconvene with Dr. Hughes in the course "**Creation of Digital Portfolio**" and begin what would be the beginning of our construct of our digital portfolio. Many of my cohort members and I had little or no experience in such an endeavor but with the guidance of Dr. Hughes we all had working websites at the conclusion of the course. Dr. Hughes explained the order of

significance in presentation and the all important Scholar page where our dissertation proposals will be presented. Dr. Hughes emphasized the two most important things to do in a successful dissertation are "framing the problem" and "finding the model". Although I was not ready to respond to these issues, I now had the knowledge to ponder the all important questions concerning my eventual dissertation proposal.

Beginning in the summer of 2008 my cohort and I met with Dr. Smith again where in our "**Advanced Research Design**" class we were introduced to the **Popkowitz** model of the *technical Illusory* and *constructivist* model and how it will affect our choice of using a qualitative or quantitative approach to our proposed dissertation idea. Here, Dr. Smith guided each of my cohort members into exploring possibilities for our eventual topics and to help direct us into researchable issues. The use of coding systems enabled me to comprehend the need to look for the patterns themes and discrepancies in pursuing a qualitative research design. At the conclusion of this course my cohort members and I had begun the foundations that would eventually evolve in our chapters I, II and III of our research topic. I felt my ideas begin to crystallize and for the first time understood how all the previous work and readings gave us the skills need to attempt the next hurdle.

The second summer course of 2008 we returned with Dr. Dunlop in "**Qualitative Research in Curriculum**" to apply the qualitative research concepts we had learned up to this point in developing a focus group, conduct interview questions, and look for the patterns, themes and discrepancies accomplished in a group project. In a subsequent field work assignment we then carried out our own individual interviews utilizing our research topic of interest beginning with our own focus group and then later interview the same participants in depth to find evidence of patterns themes and discrepancies. At the conclusion of this course I was able to gain confidence in understanding how qualitative research is conducted and how such research can not only serve as an adjunct to qualitative research but be as valuable in "telling a story" when pure numbers, without substance can sometimes mislead.

In the fall of 2008 with a restful summer behind us Dr. Hughes introduced to the principles of using outstanding technology tools for the analysis and presentation of behavior in the course "**Educational Research and Data Analysis I**". Included in the course were recourses such as Data Points (Suffolk County Edition 2007), Data

Analysis SPSS 10 and MapInfo. Dr Hughes taught us how to identify trends in the data, prioritize instructional needs and identify questions that the data raises. Using the information learned we were able to visit several websites to collect information for decision making and in turn develop a matrix that describes the sites and data available from these sites. Dr. Hughes stressed the importance in clarifying the problem, asking the right questions and using the data in telling a story. At the conclusion of this course our confidence levels began to rise with the knowledge we acquired.

Following Dr. Hughes course we had our first meeting with Dr. Bernice, a recent graduate of the program we were attending in the class **"Educational and Data Analysis II"**. As a skilled statistician Dr. Bernice welcomed to the field of statistics. This course extended the study of statistical inquiry begun by Dr. Hughes. Here, my cohort members and I needed to now address more advanced univariate statistical methods, principles of measurement, power analysis and effect size. In performing specific class exercises we were able to locate four peer related journal articles that may possible be used for a dissertation topic. In careful analysis we were then asked to describe in each article what is being measured, the methods used in measuring, the statistics used and why, and the story the statistics tell. The assignments allowed members of the cohort to gain important necessary experience in applying statistical measures and applications to be used in future research.

Beginning in the spring of 2009 began our first contact with Dr. McGuire in the course **"Educational Governance and Policy"**. Using **Jim Collins** book *"Good to Great"*, Dr. McGuire had us discuss our reflections regarding the author's viewpoints and how leadership involves balancing continuity and change. Many of my cohort members not holding administrative positions as well as those with previous experience in this position were enlightened in viewing "great" leadership as an ongoing process that consistently evolves but never ends. As part of the course requirements all cohort members had the opportunity to attend an actual school board meeting and speaking for myself it was an eye-opening experience. The combination of the school board, parent's teacher's students and community members had me reflect back on issues raised by **Deborah Stone, Clarence Stone** and the I.OG.A method of **Dr. Frank Smith**. I was able to see how the work and readings of past classes gave me a unique perspective and insight not known before.

In a perfect segue to the preceding class, my cohort and I was able to continue with Dr. McGuire with the course **“Economics and Financing of Education”**. We learned how school finance is calculated and how many factors are involved in distributing school budgets both from the Federal, State and local school board levels. Dr. McGuire presented and discussed the differences between allocation and the use of the education dollar. For a second time we were able to attend a school board meeting, one where actual school budgets were presented and voted upon. As future leaders in education I was able to gain valuable first hand experience in the dynamics and procedures utilized in presenting a school budget to the community and school personnel. The course also included a recent graduate of our program, (Cynthia Curtis-Seniuk) presenting her informative research on developing a district wide department budget.

Towards the latter part of spring 2009 we returned to be greeted by Dr. Dunlop as we embarked on the course **“Advanced Study in Organizational Theory”**. Two main texts would guide us in this important class. They were “Classics of Organizational Theory” by **Shafritz, Ott & Jang**. and **Edgar Schein’s** “Organizational theory”. Dr. Dunlop clearly outlined our assignment which was to *“respond to the issues, review and further research in terms of their district, using theory from the assigned texts, articles and all of the doctoral courses to support problem solving”*. Working individually as well as in teams our cohort was able to analyze and present for peer review, various theories of organization and compare and contrast these methods and its relevance to today’s educational systems. We completed our class with an extensive team presentation discussing the Fundamental issues, in-depth review and Probing Further the questions revealed using specific and properly cited theory.

In early summer 2009 we returned to join Dr. Smith for **“Research and Development in Innovative Instruction”**. The course began with a review of the Constructivist model in determining the frame of reference we use in order to evaluate teachers’ work and the kind of work a student is using that can be judged from this model. My cohort members and I had the opportunity to review a unique educational program entitled “High Tech High” In order to share ideas and thoughts on the H.T.H. program members of my cohort and me were assigned into groups to begin the process of using a new program “Moodle” a course management system. Here, we started out by performing the role of students with Dr. Smith as instructor resulting in first hand experience utilizing this new innovative technology. Later roles were reversed and the roles of teachers were performed by

cohort members in presenting material for peer review. What began as a daunting task for my cohort members transformed into a new sense of confidence and skill that we were able to take with us from that day forward.

Upon reconvening in the fall of 2009 in our **"Independent Study"** course with Dr. Hughes as our mentor we continued working on our portfolios and to work both within our cohort as well as individually to develop the clearest and finest presentation we could. Each member of our cohort was able to compare and contrast ideas and share expertise both in technology as well as literary content and working together as each of us used our critical eyes to assist and help all. Dr. Hughes also arranged for recently graduate students to present their portfolios to our cohort and give us the opportunity to ask appropriate and important questions as we were nearing that occasion of our own finished products.

The second of our fall courses had us meeting back with Dr. Smith for **"Independent Seminar in Administration and Supervision"**. Again Dr. Smith had our cohort continue their progression in on our portfolios with special emphasis on our Scholar page where our Dissertation proposal will be presented. Using our previous acquired knowledge of "Moodle", the course management system, we communicated with each member of our cohort as we posted and sent replies of each member's dissertation proposals. In addition we provided positive feedback and offered advice and assistance in helping each cohort member transform their ideas into a viable research oriented concrete concept. Dr. Smith also reviewed and offered suggestions to each member to support and guide them into an appropriate direction that their eventual dissertation proposals will finally take. I was able to complete this course with a reserved confidence that I was on the appropriate path towards a finished product of my portfolio as well as my dissertation proposal that I could be proud of having accomplished.

