School Finance
EDLE 8312-N

Semester Hours: 3

Semester/Year: Fall 2013

Time/Location: Asynchronous plus Collaborate live online sessions selected
Tuesday’s 5:30 PM-7:15 PM

Live online sessions: 8/27, 9/3, 9/17, 9/24, 10/1, 10/15, 10/22, 10/29, 11/12, and 12/3

Instructor: Andy Nixon, Ed.D.

Office Location: Coliseum 2041
University of West Georgia
Carrollton, GA 30118

Office Hours: M-TH 8:00 AM-10:30 AM; others available

Telephone: 678-839-6172

Email: anixon@westga.edu

Fax: 678-839-6195

Online Support:
Course Den Home Page
https://westga.view.usg.edu/

Course Den Help & Troubleshooting
http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/help

UWG Distance Learning
http://distance.westga.edu/

UWG On-Line Connection
http://www.westga.edu/~online/

Distance Learning Library Services
http://westga.edu/~library/depts/offcampus/

Ingram Library Services
http://westga.edu/~library/info/library.shtml
COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is designed to provide the student with the basic principles of school finance, accounting procedures, and school business management.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
The conceptual framework of the College of Education at UWG forms the basis on which programs, courses, experiences, and outcomes are created. With the goal of Developing Exemplary Practitioners, our programs incorporate ten descriptors, clustered into three interrelated and overlapping themes, that demonstrate our commitment to (a) Professional Excellence [knowledgeable, reflective, inquisitive]; (b) Field-Based Inquiry [decisive, adaptive, proactive, leading]; and (c) the Betterment of Society [collaborative, culturally sensitive, empathetic]. These themes and descriptors are integral components of the conceptual framework and provide the basis for developing exemplary practitioners who are prepared to improve schools and communities. National (ELCC) and Georgia PSC Leadership Standards also are incorporated as criteria against which candidates are measured.

The mission of the College of Education is to provide excellence in the initial and advanced preparation of professionals for a variety of settings, to foster an innovative learning community, and to empower a faculty committed to teaching and the dissemination of knowledge. This course’s objectives, activities, and assignments are related directly to the conceptual framework, national standards, and the Georgia PSC as identified below.

APPROACHES TO INSTRUCTION
This course includes a combination of synchronous and asynchronous online learning strategies. In all instances, theory and practice will be blended to create the most authentic learning experiences possible. I will employ case studies, projects, small group discussions, discussion boards, and large group discussions. Some students are anxious about the quantitative and technical aspects of school finance, however I make every effort to emphasize the underlying concepts; and the live online collaborate sessions help to alleviate some student’s apprehensions.

This course will be delivered approximately 100% online. This requires the online equivalent of 2250 minutes of instruction (seat-time) and an additional 4500 minutes of supporting activities.

As such, you will be required to complete the following online activities during this course:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Instructional Equivalent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion posts</td>
<td>750 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio/video instruction</td>
<td>750 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online assignments</td>
<td>750 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Additionally, it is anticipated that students will need to work independently for twice the number
minutes listed above to complete the online activities.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students will:

1) Gain an understanding of the historical development of various state methods for funding public education (Alexander & Salmon, 1995; Baker, Green, & Richards, 2008; Brimley & Garfield, 2005; Burrup, Brimley, & Garfield, 2011; National Research Council, 1999); Professional Excellence; ELCC 3; GA PSC 3

2) Develop an understanding of equity, adequacy, liberty, and equality in school finance, especially as these concepts relate to funding public education to meet the needs of a multi-cultural school population (Baker, Green, & Richards, 2008; Brimley & Garfield, 2005; Burrup, Brimley, & Garfield, 2011); Professional Excellence, Betterment of Society; ELCC 1, 3, 5, 6; GA PSC 1, 3, 5, 6

3) Develop an appropriate presentation for an external audience based on analysis of multiple sources of data. (Bagin, Gallagher, & Moore, 2008; Ramsey, 2002) (Leader Key DA-2) Professional Excellence; ELCC 4, 6; GA PSC 4, 6

4) Work collaboratively to implement fiscal policies that equitably and adequately distribute all available resources to support the success of all students. (Brimley & Garfield, 2005)(Leader Key MO-1) Professional Excellence; Betterment of Society; ELCC 3, 4; GA PSC 3, 4

5) Develop a budget which aligns resources with data-based instructional priorities. (Ray, Candoli & Hack, 2005; Sorenson & Goldsmith, 2006) (Leader Key MO-5) Professional Excellence; Betterment of Society; ELCC 3; GA PSC 3

6) Monitor the implementation of the school improvement or strategic plan and its impact on student achievement using an accountability system. (Sorenson & Goldsmith, 2006) (Leader Key PM& PI-4) Professional Excellence; ELCC 1, 3; GA PSC 1, 3

7) Identify and map core school/system processes and plan for their improvement. (Ramsey, 2001; Ray, Candoli & Hack, 2005) (Leader Key PM& PI-8) Professional Excellence; Field Based Inquiry; ELCC 3; GA PSC 3

8) Use improvement results to make recommendations for continuation and or modification of plans and processes. (Sorenson & Goldsmith, 2006)(Leader Key PM& PM-11) Professional Excellence; Field Based Inquiry; ELCC 1, 3; GA PSC 1, 3

9) Develop and lead communication strategies to support the system and school goals and student achievement. (Bagin, Gallagher, & Moore, 2008) (Leader Key RD-1) Professional Excellence; 1, 3; GA PSC 1, 3
10) Mobilize community resources to strengthen schools, families, and student learning. 
(Blomley & Garfield, 2005; Bagin, Gallagher, & Moore, 2008). (Leader Key RD-4) Field Based Inquiry; Professional Excellence; Betterment of Society; ELCC 3, 4; GA PSC 3, 4

TEXTS, READINGS, INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES, AND REFERENCES

Required Text: None

Required Instructional Resource: Tk20 Subscription
These are available at the University Bookstore or at http://westga.tk20.com/campustoolshighered/start.do. If you have purchased a subscription previously, DO NOT re-subscribe. For more information about this resource, see http://www.westga.edu/coe/index_550.php. For assistance, email tk20@westga.edu.

References


ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION PROCEDURES, AND GRADING

Course Overview

The course is organized into five content learning modules. The first module serves as the course organizer, proving resources and other necessary course information. Each content module (#’s 2-5) equate to about a month of time. Students will be able to work at their own convenience, with the exception of the recommended live online sessions and the required due dates of projects and activities.

You will need access to a computer with sound (and high speed internet). You will need to be able to listen and watch audio presentations. You will also need to be able to speak while participating in online Collaborate classes; therefore you will need a working microphone. A video camera is strongly recommended, but is not required. Please spend time up-front, well before any online sessions, to check to ensure that your technology is working. Seek technical help right away as needed. We will be using Collaborate as the software platform to the live sessions. You will find the access to Collaborate on the Course Den class site.

While the online sessions are listed as recommended, I appreciate knowing in advance if you will be unable to attend. I take great care to make the live sessions meaningful and a good use of time. I am concerned when students miss important learning activities.

Assignments

Detailed assignment sheets, literature, and expectations are located on the Course Den site. Students should check the Course Den each day for updates and emails. Assignments are due on Sunday night at midnight.

1) Resource audit

The resource audit is designed to provide a field-based inquiry experience to students. Students will complete the assignment as detailed in the assignment sheet posted in Course Den. This is a major project of the course and is designed to help students display proficiency in several of the Georgia Leader Keys. (400 of 1000 points; Course Objectives 1-8)
2) QBE simulation

The QBE simulation is designed to provide students a working knowledge of the primary Georgia school funding program. Students must achieve 100% mastery on this simulation. Students will complete the assignment as posted on Course Den. **(200 of 1000 points; Course Objectives 2, 3, 8, 9)**

3) School-based staffing allocations

The staffing allocation assignment is designed to simulate the process of allocating the earned positions from QBE and local ad valorem taxes to the various school units. Students will complete the assignment as posted on the Course Den assignment tab. **(50 of 1000 points; Course Objectives 2, 3)**

4) Audit presentation/news article

Speaking and communicating to an audience about resources is particularly difficult, due to the technical nature of the data and the public’s general lack of detailed knowledge regarding the processes. Students will follow the resource audit assignment as posted on the Course Den assignment tab. **(65 of 1000 points; Course Objectives 1, 7, 8)**

5) Case studies and discussions/issues in finance

Resource allocation brings many opportunities to discuss the merits of various strategies and their impact on student learning. Check the Course Den discussion tab for two or three online discussions. A discussion rubric is posted at the site. **(285 of 1000 points; Course Objectives 1-8)**

GRADING POLICY:

A = 1000-900 points  B=899-800 points C=799-700 points F=below 700 points

CLASS, DEPARTMENT, AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Please carefully review the information at Common Language for Course Syllabi. It contains important information related to your rights and responsibilities in this class. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, university, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester. In addition to the above information the following policies apply to this course:

**Academic Honesty**: All work completed in this course must be original work developed this semester. Students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism occurs when a student uses or purchases ghostwritten papers. It also occurs when a student utilizes ideas or information obtained from another person without giving credit to that person. If plagiarism or another act of academic dishonesty occurs, it will be dealt with in accordance with the academic
misconduct policy as stated in the latest *Connection and Student Handbook* and the *Graduate Catalog*.

**Attendance:** Students are strongly recommended to attend the Collaborate sessions. Students who miss class will need to watch the archived session and contact the instructor. Make-up assignments will be provided as needed.

**Disability:** All students are provided with equal access to classes and materials, regardless of special needs, temporary or permanent disability, special needs related to pregnancy, etc. If you have any special learning needs, particularly (but not limited to) needs defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and require specific accommodations, please do not hesitate to make those known, either yourself or through the Coordinator of Disability Services. Students with documented special needs may expect accommodation in relation to classroom accessibility, modification of testing, special test administration, etc. For more information, please contact Disability Services at the University of West Georgia: [http://www.westga.edu/studentDev/index_8884.php](http://www.westga.edu/studentDev/index_8884.php). Any student with a disability documented through Student Services is encouraged to contact the instructor right away so that appropriate accommodations may be arranged. In addition, certain accommodations (which will be discussed in class) are available to all students, within constraints of time and space.

The Office of Disability Services will help you understand your rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide you further assistance with requesting and arranging accommodations.

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please notify your instructor using the course email system by the end of the second full week of class and attach a PDF copy of your SAR (Available from the Office of Disability Services).

**Late Work:** Assignments submitted after the due date will be penalized twenty-five percent (25%). Failure to submit an assignment or presentation will result in a zero grade for the assignment.

**Professional Conduct:** Each student is expected to act in a professional manner. This is an essential quality for all individuals who will be working in schools. Professionalism includes, but is not limited, to the following behaviors:

- Participating in interactions and class activities in a positive manner
- Collaborating and working equitably with classmates
- Turning in assignments on time
- Arriving and leaving online classes at the prescribed times
- Treating classmates, colleagues, and the instructor with respect in and out of the class
- Producing original work. Plagiarism, academic fraud, or turning in work previously turned in for another course, including courses outside UWG, are serious offenses.
The learning community will review this list and adjust as needed.

**Student Email Policy:** University of West Georgia students are provided a MyUWG email account, which is the official means of communication between the University and student. It is the student’s responsibility to check this email account for important University related information.

**CLASS OUTLINE**

This course relies heavily upon the Course Den tool. Students should plan to check their Course Den email each day. Check the Course Den modules for specific activities, assignments, materials, scoring rubrics, etc.

**Collaborate online sessions**

**Live sessions:** 8/27, 9/3, 9/17, 9/24, 10/1, 10/15, 10/22, 10/29, 11/12, 12/3

**August Topics**

History of school finance, state aid formulas, metavalues, Coleman Study, overview of Georgia school funding

**September Topics**

Metavalues, ad valorem taxes, revenue, rate calculations, QBE simulation

**October Topics**

QBE, foundation funding, equalization, grant funding, Title One, SPLOST

**November Topics**

Financial policies, accounting, budget implementation, fiscal management