

Vanguard University
School for Professional Studies
Degree Program

SPECIAL TOPIC:
“FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION”
EDUC #293
ONLINE

Student Guide

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Description:

This course provides a general, introductory exploration of the basic foundations that shape the United States Public Education System. This course is for educators and non-educators alike. Topics include: A brief history of the U.S. Education System; a general overview of the economics of education; the politics of education (including teacher unions, tenure, testing, and charter schools); the role of the teacher in education; and the competing views on what the purpose of education is.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Objectives for this course are related to the overall Educational Targets and Goals of Vanguard University of Southern California.

Intellectual Engagement

You will learn to think critically about some of the current issues, trends, and ideas in education. You will learn to understand how the utilization of research is related/unrelated to the development of new trends, ideas, legislation, and public opinion.

Spiritual Formation

You will reflect upon your own beliefs and paradigms regarding many of the policies and trends in our education system, and how this fits within a biblical sense. You will have an opportunity, through reflection, writing, and discussion, to grow in your relationship with Christ.

Professional Excellence

You will investigate the responsibilities of being a Christian parent/teacher/supporter in secular schools, recognizing the moral and ethical challenges faced each day. You will grow in your ability to think and act as a learner and teacher.

Aesthetic Expression

You will give aesthetic expression, through writing, speaking, and use of art and media, to your experiences of and ideas about education.

Responsible Stewardship

You will work with diligence to be a good steward of time and resources, understanding the importance of stewardship in the life of a learner and teacher.

Sociocultural Responsiveness

You will demonstrate a capacity to challenge personal prejudices, appreciate cultural diversity, and learn from people in other cultures, and develop a commitment to pursue peace, justice, and reconciliation within a pluralistic society, formulating Christian attitudes regarding creation, ethnicity, gender, age, within a biblical vision of inclusiveness and the equal value of all people.

TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Required readings:

There is no required textbook for this course. All required readings are available for download/viewing online. Please refer to each week's assignments.

Please note, however, that you will be required to purchase/rent three different educational documentaries. These include:

- Waiting for Superman (2010)
- 2 Million Minutes (2008)
- Boys of Baraka (2005)

STUDENT EVALUATION

Students in this course will be evaluated by the College's 4.0 grading system. You should refer to the University's Student Handbook for further details on the grading system.

The following criteria will be used in determining the student's grade:

<u>Assignment/Grading</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Date Due</u>
Written Responses (on readings)	25	Week 1-5
Weekly Online Discussions	25	Weeks 1-5
Educator Interview Report	20	Week 5
Final Paper	30	Week 5
TOTAL POINTS:	100 points (100%)	

STUDENT EVALUATION

Percentages	Points	Grade	Significance	GPA
93-100%	93-100	A	Exceptional	4.00
90-92.9%	90-92	A-		3.67
87-89.9%	87-89	B+		3.33
83-86.9%	83-86	B	Above Average	3.00
80-82.9%	80-82	B-		2.67
77-79.9%	77-79	C+		2.33
73-76.9%	73-76	C	Average	2.00
70-72.9%	70-72	C-		1.67
67-69.9%	67-69	D+		1.33
63-66.9%	63-66	D	Below Average	1.00
60-62.9%	60-62	D-		0.67
00-59.9%	00-59	F	Failure	0.00

OVERVIEW

Foundations of Education is a course in which students will learn to understand and appreciate the basic foundations of our public education system, and how that translates to the current issues and trends facing our schools today. Designed for educators and non-educators alike, this course embraces the idea of informed decision-making in education through the utilization of research and critical analysis. Teacher narratives, popular media, and professional journals will enhance the course.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS AND POLICIES

Weekly Reading Assignments: Read assigned articles as indicated in the course schedule. In order to promote individual participation in class discussions and activities, reading assignments are to be completed **before** you complete the weekly assignments.

Written Responses: Each week will have one or more required written responses that are associated with the week's readings and/or viewings. Form and citation methods should follow standard APA (American Psychological Association) guidelines. Written responses should include a short summary of the reading followed by a personal reflection and response. The body of each paper must include an interaction with the theme identified. No late work will be accepted.

Attendance and Participation: Because this is an online course, your participation in online discussions and group work is critical for you and your classmates. To receive the full participation points, students must log in to the course multiple times throughout each week and engage in the online discussions well before their due dates and times. Early discussion posts allow for an in-depth analysis of the assigned readings. In addition, they allow for many questions to be answered.

Students who go more than one week without logging in to the course and/or participating may receive a failing grade and need to retake the course to obtain a passing grade. If an instructor deems that a student's absence was under extremely unavoidable and unusual circumstances (i.e. hospitalization, death in the family, major auto accident), the professor may file an academic petition on behalf of the student to the Program Chair. If the academic petition is approved, the instructor may give the student a "W" (Withdrawal) grade in place of a failing grade. The student will be required to re-take the course.

Students who do not log in to the course at all during the first week will automatically be dropped and be required to retake the course.

Weekly Quizzes: Quizzes will incorporate article readings, class discussions, activities, and lectures.

Educator Interview Report: Your educator interview report is meant to provide you with an opportunity to discuss the rewards and challenges that educators today are facing within the education system. This report will require you to interview an educator (e.g. teacher, principal, etc.) on the phone, or in person, to ask specific questions related to his/her job. For the purpose of this report, all names of persons and place should be changed to preserve confidentiality and anonymity. In addition to the summarizing and synthesizing of the conversation you have with your selected educator, you will also need to provide a personal reflection regarding your feelings towards the interview, the topics discussed, what you have learned about the education system through this interview and what was learned in class, as well as what you may have learned about yourself. References to assigned articles should be included, and this paper should be two-to-four pages in length.

Final Paper: The final paper is meant to provide you with an opportunity to make a research-based case on a specific issue in education. In addition, this final paper will allow you to discover how research can be used to argue nearly any side of a particular issue. The goal, then, is to give you the opportunity to engage in scholarly research, and to develop critical thinking skills that will allow you to analyze data and information before making a judgment or decision.

Students will group into pairs and select a topic from a pre-selected list of current issues in education. This list includes: teacher unions, charter schools, class size reduction, dual immersion, tenure, local funding, school vouchers, local funding, and more. In each paired grouping, one student will argue for one side of the issue, and the other student will argue on the opposite side. For example, if the topic is class size reduction, one student will argue the benefits of class size reduction (with supporting research), and the other student will argue against class size reduction (with supporting research).

A minimum of five references from peer-reviewed scholarly journals must be utilized for this paper. The final paper should be three-to-five pages in length and follow appropriate APA form.

In addition, you will also be asked to read your partner's paper (which has the position opposite of yours for the same topic). You will then write a 1-page reflection that discusses what you learned about the opposing view, and your thoughts about what you have learned about research.

Late Work: The policy set by SPS is that no late work will be accepted. If, due to extreme circumstances, a professor accepts a late assignment, that assignment will be subject to point deduction to be determined by the professor.

Grading and Late Point Policy: Student grades are determined using the formula contained in this guide. Assignments must be typewritten (computers available on campus) and must be turned in on time. If a student anticipates an absence, arrangements must be made to send the assignment(s) to the professor on the day of class (via e-mail with attachment, sent with another student, etc.). Late assignments will be accepted only with the permission of the instructor and will be subject to late points as determined by the instructor. Under extremely special circumstances the professor may determine that a reduction is not appropriate if the student is involved in a crisis of significant proportions. These instances will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty, either cheating or plagiarism (presenting the words or opinions of others as one's own work), is regarded as a serious violation of both the academic and moral standards of Vanguard University. Dishonesty in any class assignment can result in: loss of credit for the assignment, loss of credit for the entire course, and referral to the Director and/or Provost. It is the prerogative and responsibility of the instructor to determine if academic dishonesty has occurred and the seriousness of the infraction. The Office of the Provost is to be notified of instances of academic dishonesty.

A student commits plagiarism if he/she submits as his/her own work:

1. Part or all of an assignment copied from another person's assignments, notes, or computer file.
2. Part or all of an assignment copied or paraphrased from a book, magazine, pamphlet, or website.
3. A sequence of ideas transferred from another source which the student has digested, integrated, and reorganized, and for which he/she fails to give proper acknowledgement.

A student is an accomplice in plagiarism if he/she

1. Allows his/her paper or other assignments, in outline or finished form, to be copied and submitted as the work of another.
2. Lends his/her computer disk to another student or otherwise allows his/her computer files to be copied for the purposes of plagiarism.
3. Prepares a written assignment for another student and allows it to be submitted as another's work.

Disability Services: For students with documented medical or psychological disabilities, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. The Coordinator of Disability Services is located in the Counseling Center on the second floor of the Scott Academic Center and can be reached at extension 4489 or by email at disabilityservices@vanguard.edu.

For students with a documented learning disability who would like to request appropriate accommodations, please contact the Director of Learning Skills, located upstairs in Scott

Academic Center at extension 2540 or by email at disabilityservices@vanguard.edu

Diversity Statement: The School for Professional Studies intends to foster a Christ-centered community that promotes appreciation and respect for individuals, enhances the potential of all members, and values differences in gender, race, abilities, and generation. As such, we endeavor to communicate with honesty, to speak with encouraging and edifying words, and to create a safe environment in our classes and interactions.

LOGISTICS CHART

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
The History of Education	The Economics of Education	The Politics of Education	The Teachers of Education	The Purpose of Education

WEEK ONE: THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION

A. AMERICAN EDUCATION HISTORY: A TIMELINE

<http://www.cloudnet.com/~edrbsass/educationhistorytimeline.html>

This Internet link provides an ongoing, updated, and detailed timeline of events that have occurred within the history of the American Education System. Read through the timeline and complete the following tasks:

- Select five events in this timeline that you believe are the most important in the history of American education. These are events that have the greatest impact on American society. Write a paragraph on each event that briefly describes it and explains why it is important.
- Identify three events that have an impact on education from a Christian/spiritual perspective. Write a paragraph on each event that briefly describes it and explains its impact on religion/spirituality.

B. A NATION AT RISK

<http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html>

A Nation at Risk is often considered to be one of the most impacting reports on our education system. This report was published in 1983, and is often described as a Cold War Document because of its language usage in describing our education system as an act of war on ourselves (due to its mediocrity). It contributed largely to the idea of our education system failing America's youth.

- In one page or less, give a brief summary of what this report was about. Please note important facts and pieces of information used to illustrate the dire state of the American Public Education System.
- In one page or less, give your opinion on the state of education today compared to 1983. Has much changed? If so, what? If not, why not?

C. NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/no-child-left-behind/>

No Child Left Behind was an important piece of legislation in that it allowed for the federal government to have unprecedented powers in the public education system.

- In one page or less, give a brief summary of what this law is about. Please note important facts and pieces of information related to accountability, proficiency, and adequate yearly progress.
- Conduct an online search about the benefits of no child left behind, and find an article of interest. Write a two-paragraph reflection (and include a citation).
- Conduct an online search about the failures of no child left behind, and find an article of interest. Write a two-paragraph reflection (and include a citation).

D. ONLINE DISCUSSION

- For this week's discussion, you are to post information about each of the three topics (timeline of education, a nation at risk, and no child left behind). You should include some specific facts, as well as your personal opinion. You should have 1-2 paragraphs for each of the three topics.
- You will also be required to post responses to at least two other students' posts. Your responses should be a reflection on what you read from their original posts, and they should be respectful and professional.

E. EDUCATOR INTERVIEW REPORT

- By the end of the week, please submit a list of 10 questions you plan on asking an educator.
- In addition, during this week, please decide on whom you plan to interview.

F. FINAL REPORT

For this week, you will notice a forum already setup online. In this forum, you will see a list of topics related to education. Your job is to select a topic that is of most interest to you, and then submit a post indicating that you will write your paper "for" or "against" the topic. Please note that there can only be two people who select a topic, and that one person must be for it, and the other against it. This is first-come, first-served.

G. VIDEOS

As you know, you are required to purchase/rent three different educational documentaries. This week, under the video check forum, please post a response indicating that you have already purchased or rented these videos for viewing.

WEEK TWO: THE ECONOMICS OF EDUCATION

A. UNDERSTANDING DISTRICT BUDGETS

http://www.edsource.org/pub_budgetguide1-04.html

This article provides a general overview of how schools and districts receive and distribute federal, state, and local money. It is meant to show the complexities of the economics of education. Read the article and complete the following task:

- Write a one-page summary of the school budgets. Describe what you learned from the article, as well as what you are still confused about.

B. HOW CALIFORNIA'S SCHOOLS GET THEIR MONEY

http://www.cbp.org/pdfs/2009/090202_SFF_HowSchoolsGetTheirMoney.pdf

Write a one-page summary on this article. Describe what you learned from the article, as well as what you are still confused about.

C. ECONOMICS DIAGRAM

Utilizing the two articles, as well as your own online searches, create a visual diagram that best describes where money in education goes.

D. ONLINE DISCUSSION

- For this week's discussion, you are to write 1-2 paragraphs about the economics of education. You should include some specific facts from the readings, as well as your personal opinion.
- You will also be required to post responses to at least two other students' posts. Your responses should be a reflection on what you read from their original posts, and they should be respectful and professional.

E. EDUCATOR INTERVIEW REPORT

By the end of this week, you should have scheduled a time to conduct an interview with an educator. Please post on your progress.

F. FINAL REPORT

During this week, you should begin your search of peer-reviewed journal articles to defend your position on your selected topic. Please watch the posted video that shows an example of how to search for peer-reviewed articles.

WEEK THREE: THE POLITICS OF EDUCATION

A. VIDEO: WAITING FOR SUPERMAN

This film travels with five families on their journey to enroll their children in public schools where students are challenged and supported in programs that prepare them for college. Several examples of schools characterized by a culture of low expectations and low achievement are also highlighted in the film. Throughout the film, the following topics are discussed:

- Common Core Standards
- Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
- Public Magnet Schools
- Public Charter Schools
- School Choice
- Tenure
- Tracking
- Education Policy
- Public School Funding
- Charter Schools

After watching the film, please write a 1-page reflection on what you learned in the film, what changed in your perceptions of the education system, and any other important thoughts. This reflection should be personal and insightful.

B. GRADING “WAITING FOR SUPERMAN”

<http://www.thenation.com/article/154986/grading-waiting-superman?page=full>

This article was one of many written in protest to the “Waiting for Superman” documentary. Many opponents of the movie argued against its bias, being quick to point out examples of successful public schools and the failures of countless charter schools. Read the article in its entirety and continue on.

C. BENEFITS OF TEACHER UNIONS

http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news_events/ed/2008/winter/features/unions.html

This article discusses a research study interviewing several union leaders to discuss their current efforts, and how teacher unions are much different now than when they were first created. Read this article in its entirety and continue on.

D. WHY TEACHER UNIONS ARE NEEDED

http://www.educationworld.com/a_issues/chat/chat205.shtml

This is another article discussing the need for teacher unions, and how they might be grossly misrepresented in the media. Read this article in its entirety and continue on.

E. TEACHER'S UNIONS EXPOSED

<http://teachersunionexposed.com/>

This website has an obvious slant against teacher unions. Browse through the website and look for any evidence that backs up their claims. Topics to focus on include:

- Merit Pay
- Protecting Bad Teachers
- Blocking Education Reform
- Political Power

F. THE NEUTRALIZATION OF BENEFITS IN STANDARDIZED TESTING

<http://eserver.org/courses/fall96/76-100g/jones/>

This article provides a pro/cons approach to the idea of standardized testing. Read this article in its entirety and continue on.

G. ONLINE DISCUSSION

This week, you have seen many arguments for and against a variety of issues. You have been exposed to a number of highly political issues in education. You are probably frustrated and overwhelmed. That's okay!

- For this week's online discussion, post 3-4 paragraphs that discuss your reaction to the many politics in education. Make sure to include some of the pros and cons you learned about charter schools, standardized testing, and teacher unions. Also, please provide your own personal opinions and reflections on how politics in education might be affecting our children in the classroom.
- You will also be required to post responses to at least two other students' posts. Your responses should be a reflection on what you read from their original posts, and they should be respectful and professional.

H. EDUCATOR INTERVIEW REPORT

You should interview your educator this week.

I. FINAL REPORT

You should begin writing your final paper. Also, by the end of the week, please post all of the peer-review journal articles you plan on using to defend your position.

WEEK FOUR: THE TEACHERS OF EDUCATION

A. VIDEO: 2 MILLION MINUTES

This educational documentary provides a deeper look at how the three superpowers of the 21st Century (The United States, China, and India) are preparing their students for the future. The movie follows one boy and one girl from each of these countries, and the result is a global snapshot of education from the viewpoint of kids preparing for their future.

After watching the film, write a 1-2 page paper that answers these questions:

- What are the different views of education between students in all three countries?
- Is one view better than the other?
- Should we be balanced, or more aggressive in education?
- Why do you think American children are so different in how they view education?
- What did you learn from this film?
- What are your thoughts about the film?

B. TEACHING PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/TPA-files/CandidateHandbook-AppendixA-TPEs.pdf>

This appendix represents the seven teaching performance expectations that are placed on California teachers. Please read this appendix in its entirety, and then write a two-paragraph paper that describes your feelings on these expectations, whether you feel they are warranted or realistic, and how you might imagine this looking like in the classroom.

C. CALIFORNIA FRAMEWORKS

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/allfwks.asp>

This website shows a list of all of the frameworks for each subject in California. Within the frameworks exist the content standards and expectations for each subject, and at each grade level. For this assignment, choose a framework from the subject of your choice. Skim through the framework. You do *not* need to read the entire framework. Afterwards, write two paragraphs regarding what you learned.

D. WHAT TEACHERS SHOULD KNOW AND BE ABLE TO DO

http://www.nbpts.org/UserFiles/File/what_teachers.pdf

This article, published by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, gives insight into the movement to nationalize teaching and content standards. Read through the article and give a two-paragraph response regarding your feelings towards a nationalization of standards.

E. ONLINE DISCUSSION

- For this week's discussion, provide 2-4 paragraphs about the challenges that current and future teachers face in the classroom. Be sure to include references from the film and from each of this week's readings.
- You will also be required to post responses to at least two other students' posts. Your responses should be a reflection on what you read from their original posts, and they should be respectful and professional.

F. EDUCATOR INTERVIEW REPORT

Your Educator Interview Report is due this week.

G. FINAL REPORT

You should be well into the writing of your final report. Please note that your final report is due next week.

WEEK FIVE: THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

A. VIDEO: BOYS OF BARAKA

This 2005 documentary film follows 20 at-risk boys from the most violent ghettos of Baltimore as they attend the seventh and eighth grades at a boarding school 10,000 miles away in rural Kenya. This emotionally explosive journey, shot over three years, zeroes in on a group of brave kids who are willing to cross the ocean to chase an opportunity at succeeding in school.

After watching the film, write a 1-2 page reflection that answers the following questions:

- What was your reaction to the film?
- Has anything changed about your thoughts of children living in poverty?
- What is the school's role in helping underserved children?
- What is the teacher's role?
- What barriers exist that might prevent them from success?
- What can we do to help (even if you aren't a teacher)?

B. QUOTES ON THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

<http://www.quotegarden.com/education.html>

This website lists quite a few memorable and interesting quotes from various people in history regarding the purpose of education. Read through the quotes and pick one that stands out to you. Write a 1-2 paragraphs about this particular quote, and why it resonates with you. Then, write an additional 2-3 paragraphs that explain what you feel the purpose of education is. Be sure to include how this class has changed what you thought you knew and understood about the field of education.

C. PROFESSOR'S VIDEO

After you have watched Boys of Baraka and completed the assignment on the quotes of education, please watch the video created by the professor of this course that sums up the learning and ideas presented to you over the last several weeks.

D. ONLINE DISCUSSION

- For this week's discussion, write 3-4 paragraphs that reflect back on what you have learned. How have your views in education changed? How have your views towards children in poverty changed? What will you do to make a difference?
- You will also be required to post responses to at least two other students' posts. Your responses should be a reflection on what you read from their original posts, and they should be respectful and professional.

E. FINAL REPORT

Your final report is due this week.

F. REFLECTION ON YOUR PARTNER'S FINAL PAPER

By the end of the week, you will have submitted your final paper. It is your responsibility to submit your final paper online for the professor to grade; however, you must also email your final paper to your partner (who took the opposing view of the topic you selected). After you have received your partner's final paper, you will read through it and then write a 1-page reflection that discusses how it contrasted your own paper. In addition, please discuss what you learned about research in general.

This reflection paper must be emailed to the professor within a week after the last day of class.

Rubric for Final Paper & Educator Interview Report
EDUC 293 – Foundations of Education

4 “A”	Exemplary	Generally speaking, your paper is <i>exemplary</i> . You demonstrate that you have invested considerable time in the paper. Your effort reveals profound reflection. Your paper shows evidence that you connected with the content, and that you spent a considerable amount of time to show evidence of your work. Your paper is clear and well-executed in both format and content. Your reflection clearly states how this project enriched your personal growth, including what you learned about teaching, and about yourself, in the process. Your reflection insightfully relates your project to readings and themes in the assigned readings.
3 “B”	Strong	Generally speaking, your paper is <i>strong</i> . You demonstrate that you have invested sufficient time in the paper. Your effort reveals insightful reflection. Your paper shows some evidence that you connected with the content, and that you spent a sufficient amount of time to show evidence of your work. Your paper is clear and well-executed in both format and content. Your reflection clearly states how this project enriched your personal growth, including what you learned about teaching, and about yourself, in the process. Your reflection relates your project to readings and themes in the assigned readings.
2 “C”	Developing	Generally speaking, your paper is <i>developing</i> . You demonstrate that you have invested some, but perhaps not sufficient, time in the paper. Your effort reveals some reflection. Your project shows some evidence that you connected with the content, and that you spent a minimal amount of time to show evidence of your work. Your paper is clear and well-executed in both format and content. Your reflection states how this project enriched your personal growth, including what you learned about teaching, and about yourself, in the process. Your reflection relates your paper to readings and themes in the assigned readings. With an additional effort, this project could be made strong or even exemplary.
1 “D-F”	Under-developed	Generally speaking, your paper is <i>under-developed</i> . The time and effort invested in the paper is clearly insufficient and lacks one or more of the essential elements stated in the project assignment and outlined in the rubric items above.