

The University of Hong Kong  
Faculty of Education

### **EDUC 100: INTRODUCTION TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

#### Class Time

Monday: 7:00PM – 9:00PM

#### Instructor Information

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*Office Hours:* 10:00AM – 11:00AM, or by appointment

#### Introduction

This course is intended to give the student a broad overview of contemporary higher education both in the U.S. and internationally. To achieve this end, the course will examine major trends, issues, and problems facing colleges and universities from a variety of perspectives, including historical, administrative, public policy, governance, and faculty. The primary objectives of the course are to assist the student in developing an understanding of 1) various components and operations of higher education and 2) the interaction of these components and operations. The foundation provided by this course will serve as a basis for further study, reasoned judgment, and (hopefully) determination of appropriate policy development for the college and university of the early 21st century.

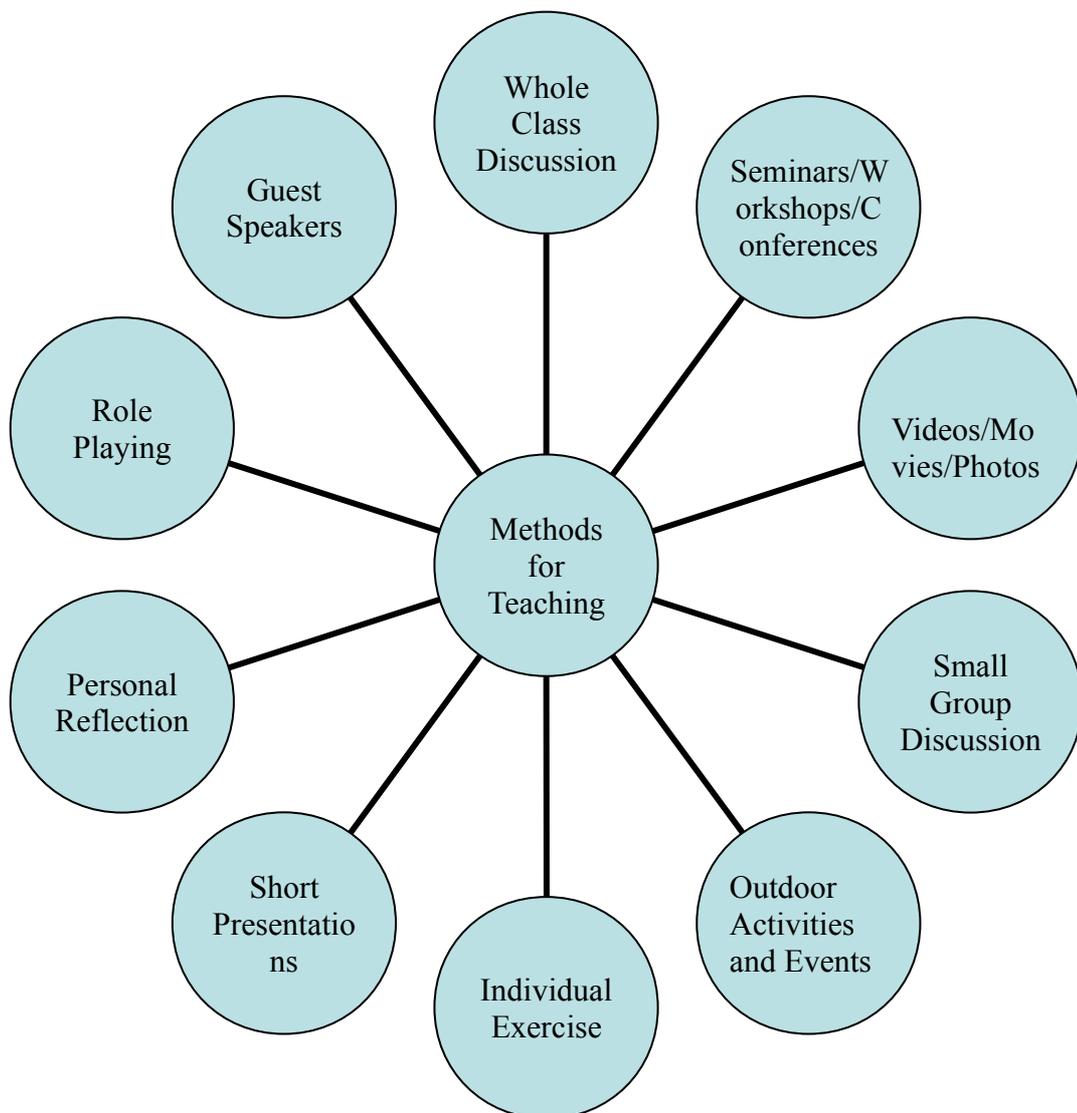
#### Aims of the Course

The specific aims of the course are:

1. to introduce higher education as a field of study and professional area in which to work;
2. to familiarize the student with the literature and terminology of higher education;
3. to provide an overview of the diverse institutional and environmental factors that influence higher education;
4. to develop the critical skills necessary for the analysis and evaluation of important higher education issues; and
5. to enhance the written and verbal communication skills necessary for effective communication and leadership in a higher education setting.

### Methods for Teaching and Learning

This course will utilize a variety of teaching methods and strategies to ensure that all undergraduate students acquire the necessary knowledge surrounding the field of higher education. This class will meet once each week for two hours. In each class session a particular learning topic will be addressed as outlined in the course schedule on page 5. The instructor will teach all sessions in the first half of each lesson utilizing constructivist (idealism) approach. Later, the instructor will lead small group discussions, whole class discussion, and/or individual exercises during the second half of each lesson. The lectures may consist of:



<u>Outcomes of the Course:</u>	<u>Methods of Teaching and Learning</u>	<u>Assessment:</u>
Upon successful completion of the course, each participant will have:		
1) begun to understand the larger scope of the current issues facing contemporary higher education,	■ Introductory lecture; small group discussion; whole group discussion; essay	■ Weekly Readings
2) knowledge of a number of theories surrounding postsecondary education,	■ Introductory lecture; small group activity; student-led presentations; use of powerpoint	■ Group Presentation; One Take Home Mid-Term Examination
3) basic familiarity with a broad range of components and operations to the higher education sector,	■ Introductory lecture; small group activity; guest speakers; whole class discussion	■ 2000 Final Essay (on any choice of topics) *Exemption: Students can be exempted from the Final Essay by participating in a Three Day
4) further developed skills to conduct quantitative and qualitative educational research.	■ Introductory lecture; small group discussion; use of movies and videos	Conference scheduled on TBA.

### Required Effort

Content time: 40 hours

Approximate preparation time needed: 80 hours

### Course Requirements and Assessments

In order to complete the course successfully, a participant must:

- attend all class sessions
- participate in session activities to an acceptable standards
- show an acceptable level of competence in the knowledge of higher education
- prepare and submit the following works:
  - 1) Weekly Reading Summary
  - 2) Group Presentation of Each Topic
  - 3) One Take Home Mid-Term Examination
  - 4) 2000 Final Essay (on any choice of topics)

## INTRODUCTION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

## Class Schedule for Semester 1, 2011-2012:

<u>Class Session</u>	<u>Class Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	01/09/2011	Issues in Contemporary Higher Education
2	08/09/2011	History of American Higher Education
3	15/09/2011	Comparative and International Higher Education
4	21/09/2011	Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
5	28/09/2011	Organizational Change and Management in Higher Education
6:	03/10/2011	Higher Education Law and Public Policy
7	10/10/2011	Anthropology and Sociology of Higher Education
8	17/10/2011	Academic Affairs and Student Development in Higher Education
9	24/10/2011	The Academic Profession and the Future of Higher Education
10:	31/10/2011	Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Educational Research
--	05/11/2011	* 2011 Annual Conference: Association for the Study of Higher Education held at Pennsylvania

\* denotes optional

#### Required Textbooks

Altbach, Philip & Gumport, Patricia (2011). *American Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Social, Political and Economic Challenges*. The John Hopkins University Press: New York, NY.

Hacker, Andrew & Dreifus, Claudia (2010). *Higher Education? How colleges are wasting our money and failing our kids – and what we can do about it*. Times Books: New York, NY.

#### Teaching Assistant(TA) Contact Details

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## **Lesson Plan #1**

### **Topic:**

Issues in Contemporary Higher Education

### **Learning Objectives:**

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

- a) Understand, distinguish and interpret major philosophical and sociological theories surrounding higher education.
- b) Define, explain, and outline their views on today's higher education system.
- c) Analyze, identify and recognize the current major issues facing community colleges and universities in the United States as well as abroad.
- d) Discuss and argue contemporary issues during whole group discussion and debate points of perspective in a collegial and professional environment.

### **Purpose and Structure of Lesson:**

In this new century, more jobs than ever requires a four-year college degree. More education means more choices and career opportunities. It is estimated that, by 2014, 90 percent of the fastest-growing careers will require some higher education (US Department of Labor, 2011). Every bit of education you get after high school increases the chances you'll earn. The purpose of this lesson is intended to bring attention to the various student issues which are currently of concern to American higher education, with a particular focus on research universities. From the lesson, students will be able to: (1) understand the current issues facing higher education and why particular issues are important; (2) effectively follow and interpret issues of higher education in the popular media and professional journals; and (3) discuss contemporary issues and to consider main points of perspective resulting from student in-class opinion. Students will also learn where and how to acquire such information and how to use it in their professional practice.

### **Details of the Lesson:**

<i>Content</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Time</i>
Introduction to Lesson	Teacher's Presentation – Introduce students to the overall lesson for today and provide learning objectives	4 minutes
Overview of Higher Education	Teacher and Student Interaction – Teacher will ask student to describe views on today's higher education	10 minutes
Introduction to New	Lecture – Teacher will	60 minutes

Material	lecture on the current issues facing American higher education	
Small Group Discussion	Teacher and Student Interaction – Teacher will divide class into groups of four and give each groups a case study to investigate. Students will then discuss what the best way to solve their case study is.	15 minutes
Small Group Presentation	Student Presentation – Student will present their case studies and provide possible solutions of their issue/problem	15 minutes
Whole Group Discussion	Teacher and Student Interaction – Teacher will open up the floor and start a whole group discussion	10 minutes
Independent Exercise	Reflection – Teacher will provide a reflection question for the students. The teacher will ask students to write their thoughts on a piece of paper	5 minutes
Conclusion	Teacher’s Presentation – Teacher will conclude the lesson with final comments and reading assignments	2 minutes

*Total: ~ 120 minutes*

**Conclusion:**

By the end of the class, students will be able to: a) demonstrate a key understanding of the major issues affecting higher education; b) interpret current information on the issues in higher education both nationally and internationally; and c) understand and outline the general arguments discussed in field of higher education.

## **Lesson Plan #2**

### **Topic:**

Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in Educational Research

### **Learning Objectives:**

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

- a) Identify, distinguish, and master the content related to the paradigms and methods used by educational researchers.
- b) Define, explain, and understand how to critique research articles and reports.
- c) Analyze, identify and develop specific research skills that facilitate the actual use of research methods in the context of his/her education as a researcher.
- d) Develop an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of various research designs.

### **Purpose and Structure of Lesson:**

Often students enroll in an introductory course will have some background knowledge in research. While they might have the ability to evaluate research and use it in their professional work, many have had little, if any, experience actually conducting research. The purpose to this final week of lesson is to introduce you to the use of specific educational research methods. Projects might include developing an appropriate research problem, conducting a review of the literature, sampling subjects or participants, collecting data using appropriate instrumentation and interactive techniques, analyzing and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data, and writing a research report. The structure of the lesson will be divided into three specific goals: 1) understanding the paradigms from which current educational research efforts emulate; 2) development of a research topic of interest to the student; and 3) designing a quantitative and qualitative study to investigate some aspect of a topic as mentioned on the course schedule.

### **Details of the Lesson:**

<i>Content</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Time</i>
Introduction to Lesson	Teacher's Presentation – Introduce students to the overall lesson for today and to outline learning objectives	3 minutes
Overview	Teacher and Student Interaction – Teacher will ask students to discuss with other students their prior experience conducting	15 minutes

	research on-campus. Teacher will then hold a group discussion about this topic.	
Introduction to New Material	Lecture – Teacher will lecture on the general framework of educational research and methodologies	60 minutes
Small Group Discussion	Teacher and Student Interaction – Teacher will divide the class and give each group a current journal article on higher education. Students will then discuss the structure, content, and format of article.	15 minutes
Small Group Presentation	Student Presentation – Student will present their research article to class.	15 minutes
Independent Exercise	Reflection – Teacher will provide a reflection question for the students on education research. The teacher will ask students to write what research topic they wish to investigate.	5 minutes
Conclusion	Teacher’s Presentation – Teacher will summarize lesson with final comments	2 minutes

*Total: ~ 120 minutes*

**Conclusion:**

By the end of the class, students will be able to: a) understand the historical and philosophical debates surrounding education research; b) understand of the advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods design; c) locate higher education literature and related online databases for the history, evolution and analysis of data; d) collect, analyze, and report any data using mixed methods design.

### **Incorporating Problem-Based Learning(PBL) into Higher Education Context**

Problem-based learning can be taught in almost any topics and subjects at a higher education institution. In general, problem-based learning allows students the opportunity to engage with other classmates to solve complex problems that help develop their content knowledge and problem-solving skills. As a Higher Education expert, I believe that incorporating problem-based learning is necessary to university curriculum.

I am a firm believer in “student-centered” learning. I believe that learning should be active, integrated, constructive, and “ill-structured.” When I teach this *Introduction to Higher Education* course, I seek to share my knowledge and expertise in the field of Higher Education as a facilitator rather than a disseminator. In each of my lesson, I desire to effectively lecture my students about the specific content of this topic to stimulate interest of this subject. I would then apply problem-based learning perspective into my lesson plan that would allow students to think critically and analytically surrounding the major issues facing higher education institutions today.

Some approach that I have incorporated into my lesson plan is small group discussion, whole group discussion, as well as student-led presentation. For example, in the first and second lesson, I had given students the opportunity to work in their small groups to discuss about a problem found in the journal article surrounding an issue facing higher education institutions. The case study presents a case scenario and follows up with various open-ended questions students need to ask within their groups. Each group will then present their case study to the class and provide solutions to the problem. By incorporating the case study into my lesson, I allow students to critically think and evaluate thoroughly the various issues raised in the literature. From these group work activities, I believe that students would be more inclined to tackle the bigger issues currently facing the field of Higher Education.

Consequently, I believe that problem-based learning is the most practical teaching strategies any instructors can utilize into their classrooms because they promote active learning as well as students’ confidence. I strongly feel that problem-based learning should be incorporated into all university curriculums. Students should be given the opportunity to discuss a problem, work on the problem, and present their solution to the problem. As a result, designing a course with problem-based learning is the best strategy to assess students learning progress and to make any adjustments to curriculum structure.

In using this perspective, I believe that all students in my course will become self-directed learners in the future that would allow them to utilize what they already know about Higher Education to solve larger complex issues facing many institutions today. From my *Introduction to Higher Education* course, I believe that incorporating problem-based learning is the best method in organizing and teaching a lesson to ensure that all learning objectives and aims are met at the end of the course.

### **Personal Position to the Nature of Knowledge, Research, Teaching and Learning**

In the world of metaphysics today, there are currently five basic philosophical perspectives surrounding education: idealism, realism, pragmatism, experimentalism and existentialism. Although there are five major philosophical perspectives in the field of education, two of the most popular theories used in classroom are idealism and realism.

Idealism is based on the view that all students should be taught wisdom through the study of literature, history, philosophy, and religion. The primary aim is to teach moral lessons by giving examples of people from history, so that all students can serve the society in a better way. The teaching methods used in idealism are lectures, discussions and dialogs that stimulate the mind to think both critically and analytically. Hence, idealism in education allows student to study the mind through intuition and introspection. It is based on the view that reality is a world within a person's mind, and that schools exist to sharpen the mind and intellectual processes.

Contrary from idealism, realism is based on the view that all students should discover the world and the universe by studying science and mathematics. Realism emphasizes on providing factual information to the students and teaching them the laws of the nature. Moreover, students are heavily taught factual information rather than fictional information. It is a perspective that is based on the view that reality is what we observe. Schools exist to reveal the order of our world and our universe.

As a teacher who lives life with passion and teaches it with hope, I am a strong believer in the constructivist (idealism) approach rather than a traditional (realism) teaching approach. I believe that all instructors who are employed at a university should find various teaching strategies that will foster student's moral excellence and prepare them for the real working world of our society. Although the traditional approach allows students to fully grasp and understand more of the reality in the physical world and what we see around us, I believe that taking a more constructivist approach is more valued to teach students moralistically right ideas that will ultimately prepare students to serve our society in a better way.

Generally, I believe that learning should be socially constructed into four divisions: knowledge, research, teaching and learning. The nature of knowledge allows students to utilize various means of instruction, such as lectures, discussions and dialogs that would help them think critically within the classroom. Student personal knowledge from current study of literature, history, philosophy, and religion is vital to their intellectual growth and their personal development.

Like to the nature of knowledge, the nature of research is important to help students shape and re-shape their individual beliefs and values. I believe that the nature of research can help young students further develop their own ideas, morals and values as

they become future leaders and change agents of our society. The nature of teaching and the nature of learning are two additional components for students to learn new information and ideas of our society. I believe that it is important for all teachers to set up a classroom environment that allows students to learn and apply criteria of moral evaluation within the context of their subjects.

Hence, by utilizing a constructivist approach, learners would feel more inclined to use new information acquired in the classroom to connect old previous information learned from the past experience. I believe that utilizing a constructivist approach can encourage more students to think critically and analytically about the facts learned from the class as well as how these facts relate to their own personal and professional lives. Thus, I believe that teaching a constructivist (idealism) approach into the classroom environment is important for students to experience reflective thinking; encourage personal moral choices; provide skills in logical thinking; and encourage learners to accept the values of human civilization. I would encourage more Professors and faculty members to instill a constructivist approach into their curriculum when disseminating the nature of knowledge, research, teaching and learning to all post-secondary students.