

McDaniel College
(in partnership with MCEA- MCPS)
Graduate Certificate

Equity and Excellence in
Education

Course Descriptions

Course #1: Foundations of Social Justice Teaching

McDaniel Graduate Studies Program: **Equity and Excellence Certificate**

Course Level and Credits: **Graduate Course, Three Credits**

Description

This course challenges candidates to reflect on their individual beliefs in relationship to social justice teaching. Candidates will gain a comprehensive understanding of the historical struggles for equity and excellence in education. Using Freire's (1970) philosophy of social justice teaching as a context, candidates will analyze their own relationship to issues related to gender, race, class, sexual orientation and disability and examine how these categories intersect to reproduce inequality. The concepts of social justice, race, ethnicity, culture, privilege, institutional racism, poverty and wealth will be explored. In addition, the course will explore the effect of public school students' self-perceptions about how they are institutionally disenfranchised. This course will utilize approaches of multiple perspective-taking and self-actualization combined with educational theory to help candidates develop new approaches to their teaching and interactions that facilitate a positive reframing of student self-perception.

Rationale and Objectives

Candidates need to establish learning communities that are conscious of race and culture to ensure implementation of culturally relevant instruction. Awareness, knowledge, and understanding of systemic inequity; of one's own racial and cultural identity; and of the racial and cultural identity of students are cornerstones for teaching that more effectively meet the need of all students, especially at-risk students from non-majority cultures. Through the exposure to theory, direct reflection, and ongoing dialogue, candidates can use their knowledge about the socio-historical context that perpetuates inequities in schools and classrooms to make informed decisions, to confront stereotypical thinking, and to facilitate perspective-changing.

By the end of the course, candidates will:

1. develop a working knowledge about major trends and issues related to equity and excellence in teaching for social justice.
2. be able to apply principles of social justice teaching to their own classrooms and schools.
3. critically examine their own social belief systems.
4. learn to facilitate open dialogue with students and colleagues about equity and excellence in education.

Course #2: **Race and Ethnicity in American Education**

McDaniel Graduate Studies Program: **Equity and Excellence Certificate**

Course Level and Credits: **Graduate Course, Three Credits**

Description

Candidates will scrutinize the historical myths and misconceptions of race and ethnicity in the United States to reveal the underlying social, economic, and political conditions that disproportionately affect people of color and work to the advantage of white people. Candidates will discuss how racial/ethnic consciousness and experience shape one's conception of self and how it affects educators' perceptions, teaching practices, as well as student identity and achievement. Candidates will begin to explore the construct of race including notions of racial privilege. Candidates will identify strategies that work to disrupt patterns of racism in educational institutions.

Course Rationale and Objectives

The educational achievement gap between white and non-white students is wide, persistent and well documented, even when income level is taken into account. Research shows that race, ethnicity, and culture affect student-teacher and student-peer interactions, learning styles, teacher expectations, and student experiences and achievement in school. Because racial belief systems follow people into the classroom, it is important for candidates to learn to examine and de-construct their ideas about race, ethnicity and racism in order to ensure a culturally responsive environment. Critical race theory provides a framework for candidates to analyze race, power, the reproduction of inequality, and the possibilities for equity.

This course makes candidates aware of how race and ethnicity function in society, how racial/ethnic inequality is reproduced in schools, and how it influences educational success. It then helps them to develop tools to address these issues. Candidates can then become more effective teachers by reducing inequality in their classrooms and schools and creating an environment of educational equity and inclusion that is beneficial to *all* students.

By the end of the course candidates will be able to:

1. identify and explain race, ethnicity, racial privilege, and how it is structured in the U.S.
2. explain the social and educational history of various racial and ethnic groups in the U.S.
3. explain how those histories and institutionalized power and privilege shape American public education
4. differentiate between individual and institutionalized/systemic racism and discrimination
5. analyze how racial/ethnic consciousness and experience shape one's conception of self and instructional practices
6. explain how and why our educational institutions may perpetuate social inequality
7. articulate the meaning of educational equity and anti-racism, and identify ways of bringing it to our schools and classrooms.

Course #3: **Culturally Reflective Instruction**

McDaniel Graduate Studies Program: **Equity and Excellence Certificate**
Course Level and Credits: **Graduate Course, Three Credits**

Description

Students will examine curriculum and pedagogy to determine/reveal how curricular and pedagogical choices can reproduce inequalities or promote success for all students. Students will develop a portfolio to demonstrate key learning in their journey towards cultural competence.

Course Rationale

Culturally reflective instruction encompasses curriculum, pedagogy, and an environment that recognizes, affirms and values the perspectives of all students. Research shows that educators who understand the impact of race and culture plan instruction that meets the needs of individual students in an equitable classroom environment. Behaviors, practices, and strategies for creating and sustaining equitable learning environments that reflect high expectations, positive relationships and cultural competence lead to increased student achievement.

This course will help candidates redefine how they approach curriculum and pedagogy in order to ensure access and opportunity to rigorous instruction for all students. Candidates will be engaged in research based best-practices to build their skill set and will be provided with a variety of opportunities to reflect on/about curriculum and instruction practices that will transform their pedagogy.

Course Objectives:

Candidates will be able to...

1. Articulate what it means to be a culturally reflective practitioner.
2. Describe the three components of culturally reflective instruction (curriculum, pedagogy, and environment) and how they are used to plan for student success.
3. Develop practices to ensure access and opportunity for all students.
4. Identify factors that contribute to a culturally reflective learning environment
5. Act with intention to transform their practice to be more culturally reflective
6. Analyze curriculum to determine whether it is meaningful and relevant and includes diverse perspectives
7. Know ways to modify and adapt curriculum and content to meet the needs of all students
8. Develop a portfolio to demonstrate their use of key learning in their journey towards cultural competence.
9. Cultivate a greater self-awareness of how racial and cultural identity impact teaching and learning.

Course #4: Leadership for Equity and Excellence

McDaniel Graduate Studies Program: **Equity and Excellence Certificate**
Course Level and Credits: **Graduate Course, Three Credits**

Description

In this course, candidates will develop their understanding of leadership and agency for change and learn to think critically about how policies and practices, no matter how well intentioned, translate into inequitable learning experiences for students in public school settings. They will assess and develop their capacity to serve as change agents for equity and excellence.

Course Rationale

School based educational leaders must understand the policy, institutional, and organizational factors contributing to inequitable education if they are to become change agents for excellence and equity. Agency derives, in part, from intentional critique of structural racism as it manifests in schools. Educators who choose to lead must be able to envision what equitable education is, communicate that vision, build relationships with stakeholders who share the vision, and advocate for the change they hope to enact. This course compels candidates to examine their capacity to lead in school environments that are not yet prioritizing equitable practices. Through doing so, this course is intended to develop leaders skilled in catalyzing socially just schools.

Objectives

1. Candidates will examine how the racialization of leadership is perpetuated.
2. Candidates will explore leadership models that contribute to racial justice.
3. Candidates will reflect on their role in enacting policies at the district/school level.
4. Candidates will reflect on the leadership skills and attributes needed to enact policies at the district/school level.
5. Candidates will examine school policies to determine the extent to which the outcomes are equitable, and if not how to make them equitable.
6. Students will explore equitable solutions to self-selected policy issues.

Course #5 (Capstone/Integration Course)
Research and Action for Equity and Excellence

McDaniel Graduate Studies Program: **Equity and Excellence Certificate**
Course Level and Credits: **Graduate Course, Three Credits**

Description

This course seeks to integrate concepts learned in prerequisite courses and provide candidates with tools to forward their practice as culturally competent practitioners of social justice teaching. Candidates will learn how to use educational research methods to develop their own plans to promote educational equity and excellence.

Course Rationale and Objectives

Candidates examined ideas that contribute to equity and excellence in education in the four courses preceding this one. As the capstone for the program, this course seeks to integrate concepts learned in prerequisite courses and provide candidates with tools to forward their practice as culturally competent practitioners of social justice teaching. An understanding of educational research, its methods and uses, is key for candidates to develop their own plans for promoting educational equity and excellence. Educational research, therefore, will provide the framework that will prepare candidates to promote social change and take leadership roles in their own educational settings.

In this course, candidates will:

1. Raise, extend, and integrate concepts explored in previous courses.
2. Investigate how educational research is used to understand complex social issues and make social change.
3. Learn about research methods they can use to investigate equity issues in educational settings.
4. Develop an action research plan to investigate areas of concern in their own educational setting.
5. Determine how to carry out their action research plan and determine the key stakeholders who will support their effort.
6. Work with peers to critique and improve their action research plan.
7. Participate in activities that will prepare them to analyze their findings, make meaning of those findings, and use them to determine agendas for action.
8. Gain exposure to organizing and advocacy resources and opportunities on a local, state, and national scale, which will enable them to actualize their change agenda.
9. Develop as leaders who are able to move forward a social change agenda for equity and excellence in education.