

Education 220D/History 258E
History of School Reform in the U.S.:
Origins, Policies, Outcomes, and Explanations
Fall 2012
Monday/Wednesday, 1:15-3:05
3-5 units
Building 200 Room 034

Professor David Labaree
Office: 312 Cubberley
E-mail: dlabaree@stanford.edu
Web: www.stanford.edu/~dlabaree
Office hours: by appointment
Section: Bldg. 200-034, W 2:15-3:05

Teaching Assistants:
Ethan Hutt
Office: 25A Cubberley
Cell phone: (203) 645-5997
E-mail: ehutt@stanford.edu
Office hours: by appointment
Section: Bldg. 200-201, W 2:15-3:05
Ethan Ris
Office: 25A Cubberley
Cell phone: (401) 225-3276
E-mail: eris@stanford.edu
Office hours: by appointment
Section: Bldg. 240-101, W 2:15-3:05

Course Description

In this course, we will explore the history of school reform in the United States. In only 10 weeks we will not be able to pursue a systematic study of this history from beginning to end, so instead we will explore a few of the major issues in this history and examine some pertinent cases of school reform to consider their consequences. School reform is the intended change of schooling toward accomplishment of a valued goal. One problem with reform, therefore, is intent. Education is an extraordinarily complex social institution -- involving a vast array of people, structures, and organizations -- which means that reforming education in ways that make it produce the intended results is quite difficult. Frequently reforms unintentionally generate new problems, which then require a new wave of reform to deal with them. (This is why Elmore and McLaughlin called school reform "steady work.") A second problem with reform is that reasonable people can disagree over the goals of schooling, which means that what is a positive reform for some people may be a negative change for others. The result is that your reaction to the success or failure of a reform effort depends on where you stand on its value, since the failure of a bad reform is a good thing.

Major Issues in the History of School Reform: Framing our look at the history of reform will be the book, *Tinkering Toward Utopia*, which David Tyack and Larry Cuban wrote in response to what they learned in teaching this class for a number of years at Stanford. A key theme of this book and of the course is the paradox of school reform, in which it seems that schools are constantly being bounced around by a stream of reform efforts while at the same time they never seem to change. Tyack and Cuban unravel this paradox by separating the history of reform into two interacting elements: the noisy and often contradictory rounds of reform rhetoric that intrude upon schools at irregular intervals, and the slower and steadier process of evolutionary change in the structure of schooling that takes place largely outside of public view. We will look at both aspects

of reform, with special attention to assessing the outcomes of reform in the realm of the structure and practice of schooling itself. Drawing on the work of scholars such as David Cohen, Richard Elmore, Milbrey McLaughlin, and Larry Cuban, we will consider why it has been so difficult to change the basic grammar of schooling through deliberate reform efforts -- because of such factors as the peculiar nature of teaching as a practice, the loosely coupled character of schools as organizations, the number of actors who need to be aligned for change to happen, and the complex goals and structures that define the educational enterprise. We will then look in detail at the nature and variety of school reform rhetoric, through a close study of a few key reform texts over the years, including pedagogical progressivism, administrative progressivism, desegregation, the standards movement, and school choice.

Consequences of School Reform: In the second part of the class, we will examine a series of cases of school reform in detail. The aim here is to consider the extent to which reform rhetoric has affected the structure and practice of schooling, incorporating both intended and unintended consequences, and also to consider the impact of longer term trends in the evolution of schooling that are less visibly and directly connected to the waves of reform rhetoric. To help keep the analysis more focused and coherent, most of these cases will revolve around a single educational institution, the high school, which is a medium through which we can examine most of the reform efforts and processes that characterize the history of American schools. In light of this, we will consider: my own study of the evolution of the Central High School of Philadelphia, under the influences of common-school and progressive reform, and under pressure from democratic politics and educational markets; the study by Diane Ravitch about the consequences of progressive reform in the early 20th century; the study by Larry Cuban of constancy and change in the pedagogy of American elementary and secondary classrooms during the same period; and Gerald Grant's study of a New York high school responding to the movements for desegregation and mainstreaming in the 1960s and 70s. At the end, we examine two quite different visions of how to foster change in schools. Michael Fullan provides a primer for reformers about how to carry out reform effectively in light of the complex nature of schools as organizations. In contrast, James Scott's develops a framework, drawn from anthropology and political science, for understanding why it has been so hard over the years for governments to impose order on complex social institutions such as education.

What This Class Is and Is Not About: This class is intended to encourage you to think hard about the things that make educational reform so complex, contradictory, difficult, and often dysfunctional. Its focus is on analyzing what happens to reform efforts between initial proposals and eventual outcomes. This means that its aim is not to provide you with a how-to manual that will enable you to be a successful reformer. I don't think such a manual exists, and the dream of finding the one right way to fix things has done a lot of damage to schools over the years. Instead, think of this class as an exercise in realism, a set of cautionary tales that I hope will help you locate your own efforts to improve schools within a useful historical framework.

Eligibility

This class is open to doctoral students, master's students, and undergraduates. It fulfills one of the requirements for master's students in the POLS program. All students who enroll in the class must take it for a letter grade. Except in cases of medical emergency, no one will be granted an incomplete grade for this course. You can enroll in the class for 3, 4, or 5 units – whatever works

best for your needs. Requirements are the same for all students, regardless of the number of units they are earning in the class.

Course Requirements

The Importance of Critical Reading: You need to do more than read the required texts in this class; you need to read them critically. See the section at the end of the syllabus, “Guidelines for Critical Reading.”

The Importance of Analytical Writing: The entire grade for this course depends on the quality of each student’s work on the written assignments that are defined below. (While I strongly encourage students to participate in discussions in class, this participation is not graded.) One central purpose of the course is to encourage students to develop their skill at producing effective analytical writing. This skill is essential for anyone who wishes to be successful in meeting the requirements of academic study and who expects to have an impact in the intellectual and professional world of education. This course (like any course) is a good place to work on enhancing your abilities as a writer. See the section at the end of the syllabus, “Guidelines for Analytical Writing.” Also see the section on “Reference Books on Research, Writing, and Making Arguments,” in which I recommend four reference books that can be helpful to students in working on problems of writing, thinking, and carrying out research in education.

Class Structure

The class will meet on Monday and Wednesday from 1:15 to 3:05 p.m. In general, Monday and the first hour on Wednesday will be devoted to lecture and occasional small-group work, whereas the second hour on Wednesday will be devoted to sections. The class will be divided into three sections. One will stay with me in the main classroom and the others will meet with Ethan Hutt and Ethan Ris in nearby classrooms. Each of us will grade all of the papers of the students in our sections, but I review all grades before they go out. In addition, I will grade and comment on one reaction paper during the quarter for every student not in my section, and I will provide comments and grades for all final papers, after the TA’s have provided initial comments for the students in their sections.

Format for Submitting Papers: Please submit all papers by email to your section head. Papers should be Word documents, single-spaced and left justified. Label reaction papers with your last name and the due date, e.g., Labaree 10-06-12. Label final paper or final exam with your last name and either Final Paper or Final Exam.

Critical Reaction Papers (50%): Write four short reaction papers dealing with the assigned readings for a particular week. In each of these papers you should provide a brief critical response to some significant issue encountered in the book or other assigned readings for a particular week. You are not being asked to summarize the argument of individual readings, although your discussion should reveal that you have understood what this argument is. Instead you should react to the reading(s) as a critical observer with a specific frame of reference (derived from the course, from your reading elsewhere, and/or from your own experience). You don’t need to respond to a whole book or the whole array of readings for a particular week, although you do need to focus on something that cuts across two or more articles or chapters. Pick one major issue from the reading that grabs your attention and briefly develop it. (A focused discussion of one issue

works better in a short paper like this than an effort to cover a number of different issues.) Feel free to make connections with other things you know, but be sure that you draw on the reading from that week for a substantial part of your evidence or ideas or examples. It's perfectly ok, even desirable, for you to draw on your own experience with schools, as long as you use this experience as a case in point in an analytical argument that is related to the reading. Also keep in mind that these short papers can be more informal in style and structure than the final paper in the course, which should adhere more closely to academic norms for analytical writing. You will be evaluated on the basis of the thoughtfulness, depth of understanding, and analytical insight that is reflected in your paper. These papers should be approximately three pages in length double-spaced (900 words). They can run longer, if you wish, but this is not necessary or even necessarily desirable. Reaction papers should be turned in no later than 1:15 p.m. on Wednesday of the week that the particular reading(s) are assigned. Late papers will earn a reduced grade (e.g., a B+ will become a B). All papers in this class must be submitted by e-mail. Save your paper as an MS Word document and send it as an e-mail attachment to the instructor of your section, who is the person who will be doing the grading. (During the first week, send it to me.) We will be using Word's "tracking changes" function to record comments in the text. We will send papers back to you as e-mail attachments. If you turn in more than four papers, we will count the four with the highest grades.

I have two aims in asking you to write these reaction papers. First, they will encourage you to keep up with the reading and to come to class with some already-formulated thoughts about the issues for that week. You should come to every class with a set of questions and comments and thoughts about the issues that you developed while doing the week's readings, and you should be prepared to draw on these insights selectively in a constructive effort to help shape discussion in class. The critical reaction papers help facilitate this kind of preparation and thereby help promote an informed and broad-based discussion of the issues in class each week. (As I mentioned earlier, participation in such discussions is encouraged but not graded.) Second, these short papers will provide you, at the end of the term, with a set of elaborated notes on course issues and readings that should serve as a useful resource when you write your final paper, when you encounter related issues in your future work, or when you want to revisit some of the readings at a later point. You may want to use these papers to write a running commentary on the issues in the course, with your individual papers building on each other from week to week. You may want to try out ideas in these papers that you will later develop in the final paper for the course. Also, you may want to use these papers as a way to hold an ongoing conversation with us about readings, schools, and history. Whatever you do in each of these papers, however, you should make sure that in some substantial way you are making a response to a significant aspect of the reading.

Final Paper (50%): You have two options for doing a final paper for this course: 1) write a take-home final exam essay in response to questions that I provide; or 2) write a paper on any topic related to this course (as long as your section instructor gives advance approval for this topic). I explain these options below. Whichever option you pick, you should review carefully the "Guidelines for Analytical Writing" near the end of this syllabus. All take-home final exams and final papers must be submitted to your section instructor by e-mail no later than 1:00 p.m. on Monday, December 10. Late papers will receive a reduced grade (e.g., a B+ will turn into a B).

1) **Take-Home Final Exam:** On Wednesday, November 16, I will distribute a list of 3 or 4 final exam questions by email. These questions will ask you to analyze broad issues in the history of school reform by drawing on required readings in this course. Pick one of these questions and write a persuasive analytical essay in response. Be sure to follow the "Guidelines for Analytical Writing," which are found in a section at the end of this syllabus.

These essays should be a minimum of 12 pages double-spaced (3,600 words). They are due no later than Monday, December 10 at 5:00 p.m. Please send them to your section instructor as an e-mail attachment. Late papers will receive a reduced grade.

2) **Final Paper:** If you choose option 2, write a paper on an issue loosely related to this course. (See below for details about the content of this paper.) These papers should be a minimum of 15 pages double-spaced (4,500 words). Basically, any topic that you and your section instructor agree on will be acceptable for this assignment. A one-page proposal for this paper is due on October 17. If you turn in a draft by Monday, November 19, you will be permitted to revise the paper (after receiving our comments) and submit it for re-evaluation. The final version of the paper is due no later than Monday, December 10 at 5:00 p.m. Please send your proposal and paper by the appropriate deadline to your section instructor as an e-mail attachment. Late papers will receive a reduced grade.

You don't need to think of this paper as a "history" paper. My aim in this course is not to turn you into historians of education. After all, most of you in the course are not here to become inducted into that cult. Instead, you're here to acquire a general historical framework to use in thinking about education reform issues in your own area of interest, whatever that might be. Through the short reaction papers, we will get a good sense of your ability to wrestle with the historical content of this course. Therefore, when you come to the final paper, you are free to pursue your own interests, using the course as a springboard for pursuing these interests and not as a prison for confining them to the realm of history. You should be thinking about how you can use the paper to advance your own intellectual and professional agenda. What are you interested in exploring in your program? What issues brought you here in the first place? What kinds of issues will you be exploring in your honor's thesis, master's thesis, qualifying paper, or doctoral dissertation? How can you configure this paper as an opportunity to examine some part of this larger agenda, in a way that will move you along intellectually and professionally? We're open to anything that is productive for you and that is loosely related to this course. If you get the permission of both instructors, you can combine this paper with one you are writing in another course and produce a single larger paper that meets both course requirements.

Consider some of the following options for framing a final paper in this course:

1. Write a paper on any issue related to the history of school reform. The only constraint is that we need to approve your topic. We can negotiate the details of purpose, focus, sources, audience, and so on. Feel free to use this paper as a way to develop your thinking about any course-relevant issue that interests you, to follow up on earlier work you have done in other classes, to carry out a pilot empirical study, to reflect on teaching or research work you have done, or to try out ideas (or analyze data) that you might want to explore later in a dissertation.

2. Write a review essay on some issue related to the history of school reform, using two or three books -- from the course reading list or elsewhere -- as the basis for the review. In what ways are these books helpful in developing a useful understanding of this issue? What can you learn about this issue by comparing and contrasting the approaches taken by these authors? What are the implications of the authors' analyses for the issue you have selected? Examine a number of examples of review essays before proceeding. Note that a

review essay is not just a long book review. Instead, this is a genre which combines a review of several books with an essay about some of the key issues raised by the books but developed further by the essayist. The books provide a platform from which you can launch your own interpretation, synthesis, analysis, political program, and/or theoretical ruminations. However you are still held by the usual rhetorical norms: you need to persuade the reader of your credibility through careful argumentation, effective use of sources and evidence, and artful political-moral-emotional appeals. In such an essay you need to draw on appropriate sources outside the books that are the starting point of the review.

3. Write a proposal for a research study related to school reform. You are not expected to carry out this study during this quarter but only to frame the issues, define a workable and worthy research question, and spell out the process of data gathering you will go through in order to answer it. This proposal could be for a pilot study for a study leading to a thesis or dissertation. Advanced doctoral students can use this paper as an early version of their dissertation proposal for a topic related to reform.

4. Write a paper exploring an issue in school reform empirically using data you will collect (or have already collected) or using primary historical sources.

Readings

Books: The following books are required reading for the course; all are available through the Stanford Book Store. All are in paper editions. One copy of each is on reserve at Cubberley Library:

Tyack, David & Cuban, Larry. (1995). *Tinkering toward utopia: Reflections on a century of public school reform*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Labaree, David F. (1988). *The making of an American high school: The credentials market and the Central High School of Philadelphia, 1838-1920*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Grant, Gerald. (1988). *The world we created at Hamilton High*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Scott, James. (1999). *Seeing like a state*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Assigned Articles and Other Readings: A collection of additional readings for the class are available on the web. They can be found on the Stanford Blackboard system at <http://bb8.stanford.edu/>.

Course Outline

Below are the topics we will cover, week by week, with the readings for each week.

* = Readings available on Blackboard.

** = Books available for purchase at the Stanford Bookstore.

Week 1**Introduction to course****M 9/24 and W 9/26**

- *Cohen, David K. (1988), Teaching practice: Plus que ça change, in Phillip W. Jackson (ed.), *Contributing to Educational change* (pp. 27-84). Berkeley: McCutchan.
- *Elmore, Richard F., & McLaughlin, Milbrey W. (1988). *Steady work*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand.
- *Labaree, David F. (2008). Limits on the impact of educational reform: The case of progressivism and U.S. schools, 1900-1950. In Claudia Crotti & Fritz Osterwalder (Eds.), *Das Jahrhundert der Schulreformen: Internationale und nationale Perspektiven, 1900-1950* (pp. 105-133). Bern: Haupt.
- *Labaree, David F. (2003). The peculiar problems of preparing and becoming educational researchers. *Educational Researcher*, 32:4 (May), 13-22.

Week 2**The History of Educational Reform: An Overview****M 10/1 and W 10/3**

- **Tyack, David & Cuban, Larry. (1995). *Tinkering toward utopia: Reflections on a century of public school reform*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- *Metz, Mary H. (1990). Real school: A universal drama amid disparate experience. In Douglas E. Mitchell & Margaret E. Goertz (Eds.), *Education Politics for the New Century* (pp. 75-91). New York: Falmer.

Week 3**The Rhetoric of Educational Reform: Cases in Point****M 10/8 and W 10/10**

- *Labaree, David F. (2010). From citizens to consumers. In *Someone has to fail: The zero-sum game of American schooling* (chapter 1, pp. 10-41). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Common School Movement

- *Mann, Horace. (1842). Fifth Annual Report to the State Board of Education of Massachusetts. Selections.

- *Mann, Horace. (1848). Twelfth Annual Report to the State Board of Education of Massachusetts. Selections.

Committee of 10

- *Committee of 10. (1893). *Report to the National Council of Education*. Selections.

Pedagogical Progressivism

- *Dewey, John. (1902/1990). The child and the curriculum. In Philip W. Jackson (ed.), *The school and society and the child and the curriculum* (pp. 181-209). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Administrative Progressivism

- *Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. (1918). *Cardinal principles of secondary education*. Washington, DC: National Education Association.

Desegregation

*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

*Cohen, Adam. (2004). The supreme struggle. *New York Times*, January 18.

Standards Movement 1.0

*National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

School Choice

*Walberg, Herbert J. & Best, Joseph L. (2003). Failure of the public school monopoly. In *Education and capitalism: How overcoming our fear of markets and economics can improve America's schools* (pp. 3-32). Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.

Standards Movement 2.0

**No Child Left Behind Act*. (2002). Public Law 107-110. Title I.

School Choice 2.0

*Fuller, Howard. (2002). Education matters to me: Full court press. *Education Next* 2:3 (p. 88). See website of Black Alliance for Educational Options at <http://www.baeo.org/>.

Week 4

The High School: Early Evolution in Response to Common Schools, Progressivism, and the Market

M 10/15 and W 10/17

**Labaree, David F. (1988). *The making of an American high school: The credentials market and the Central High School of Philadelphia, 1838-1939*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

*Cohen, David. K., & Neufeld, Barbara. (1981). The failure of high schools and the progress of education. *Daedalus*, 110 (Summer), 69-89.

*Labaree, David F. (2012). Balancing access and advantage in the history of American schooling. Keynote address delivered at annual meeting of the Swiss Society for Research on Education, Bern.

Proposal for final paper due on Wednesday 10/17

Week 5

High School Curriculum: Effects of Progressive Reform

M 10/22 and W 10/24

*Ravitch, Diane. (2000). *Left back: A century of failed school reforms*. New York: Simon and Schuster. Introduction, chapters 1-3, 5, 11, and conclusion. Read summary pp. 282-3; footnote 6 pp. 527-8.

*Powell, Arthur, Farrar, Eleanor, & Cohen, David. (1985). Origins. In *The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace* (pp. 233-308). Boston: Little Brown.

Week 6**Pedagogy: Constancy and Change in the Face of Progressive Reform****M 10/29 and W 10/31**

*Cuban, Larry. (1983). How did teachers teach, 1890-1980. *Theory Into Practice*, 22:1, 159-165.

*Cuban, Larry. (1988). Constancy and change in schools (1880s to the present). In Phillip W. Jackson (Ed.), *Contributing to educational change: Perspective on research and practice* (pp. 85-105). Berkeley: McCutchan.

*Cuban, Larry. (2007). Hugging the middle: Teaching in an era of testing and accountability, 1980-2005. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 15:1, 1-27.

Check out Larry Cuban's blog on school reform and classroom practice, always a good read: <http://larrycuban.wordpress.com/>.

Week 7**The High School After Desegregation and Mainstreaming****M 11/5 and W 11/7**

**Grant, Gerald. (1988). *The world we created at Hamilton High*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Week 8**Understanding the Difficulties of Educational Change****M 11/12****W 11/14 – no class**

*Fullan, Michael G. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change* (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press. Chapters 1-3, 5-6, and 16.

*Wolf, Shelby A., Borko, Hilda, Elliott, Rebekah L., & McIver, Monette C. (2000). "That dog won't hunt!:" Exemplary school change efforts within the Kentucky reform. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37:2, 349-393.

W 11/14 -- Take-home final exam questions distributed by email

M 11/21 and W 11/23 – no classes – Thanksgiving break

Draft of final paper due on Monday 11/19, if you want a chance to revise and resubmit

Week 9**Problems in Making Systematic Reform of Education****M 11/26 and W 11/28**

**Scott, James. (1999). *Seeing like a state*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Pay close attention to Introduction, chapters 1-2 and 9-10. Skim through the rest looking for examples.

Week 10**Conclusions****M 12/3 and W 12/5**

- *Cohen, David K. (1990). A revolution in one classroom: The case of Mrs. Oublier," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 12:3, pp. 311-329.
- *March, James G. (1975). Education and the pursuit of optimism. *Texas Tech Journal of Education*, 2:1, 5-17.
- *Labaree, David F. (1997). Public good, private goods: The American struggle over educational goals. *American Educational Research Journal*, 34:1 (Spring), 39-81.
- *Labaree, David F. (2010). What schools can't do. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogische Historiographie*, 16:1, 12-18.

Monday, December 12: Take-home final exams and final papers due at 3:00 p.m.

Guidelines for Critical Reading

As a critical reader of a particular text (a book, article, speech, proposal), you need to use the following questions as a framework to guide you as you read:

1. What's the point? This is the analysis issue: what is the author's angle?
2. Who says? This is the validity issue: On what (data, literature) are the claims based?
3. What's new? This is the value-added issue: What does the author contribute that we don't already know?
4. Who cares? This is the significance issue, the most important issue of all, the one that subsumes all the others: Is this work worth doing? Is the text worth reading? Does it contribute something important?

If this is the way critical readers are going to approach a text, then as an analytical writer you need to guide readers toward the desired answers to each of these questions.

Guidelines for Analytical Writing

In writing papers for this (or any) course, keep in mind the following points. They apply in particular to the final paper or take-home exam for this class. Many of the same concerns apply to critical reaction papers as well, but these short papers can be more informal than the final paper.

1. Pick an important issue: Make sure that your analysis meets the "so what" test. Why should anyone care about this topic, anyway? Pick an issue or issues that matters and that you really care about.
2. Keep focused: Don't lose track of the point you are trying to make and make sure the reader knows where you are heading and why.
3. Aim for clarity: Don't assume that the reader knows what you're talking about; it's your job to make your points clearly. In part this means keeping focused and avoiding distracting clutter. But in part it means that you need to make more than elliptical references to concepts and sources or to professional experience. When referring to readings (from the course or elsewhere), explain who said what and why this point is pertinent to the issue at hand. When drawing on your own experiences or observations, set the context so the reader can understand what you mean. Proceed

as though you were writing for an educated person who is neither a member of this class nor a professional colleague, someone who has not read the material you are referring to.

4. Provide analysis: A good paper is more than a catalogue of facts, concepts, experiences, or references; it is more than a description of the content of a set of readings; it is more than an expression of your educational values or an announcement of your prescription for what ails education. A good paper is a logical and coherent analysis of the issues raised within your chosen area of focus. This means that your paper should aim to explain rather than describe. If you give examples, be sure to tell the reader what they mean in the context of your analysis. Make sure the reader understands the connection between the various points in your paper.

5. Provide depth, insight, and connections: The best papers are ones that go beyond making obvious points, superficial comparisons, and simplistic assertions. They dig below the surface of the issue at hand, demonstrating a deeper level of understanding and an ability to make interesting connections.

6. Support your analysis with evidence: You need to do more than simply state your ideas, however informed and useful these may be. You also need to provide evidence that reassures the reader that you know what you are talking about, thus providing a foundation for your argument. Evidence comes in part from the academic literature, whether encountered in this course or elsewhere. Evidence can also come from your own experience. Remember that you are trying to accomplish two things with the use of evidence. First, you are saying that it is not just you making this assertion but that authoritative sources and solid evidence back you up. Second, you are supplying a degree of specificity and detail, which helps to flesh out an otherwise skeletal argument.

7. Draw on course materials (this applies primarily to reaction papers, not the final paper). Your paper should give evidence that you are taking this course. You do not need to agree with any of the readings or presentations, but your paper should show you have considered the course materials thoughtfully.

8. Recognize complexity and acknowledge multiple viewpoints. The issues in the history of American education are not simple, and your paper should not propose simple solutions to complex problems. It should not reduce issues to either/or, black/white, good/bad. Your paper should give evidence that you understand and appreciate more than one perspective on an issue. This does not mean you should be wishy-washy. Instead, you should aim to make a clear point by showing that you have considered alternate views.

9. Challenge assumptions. The paper should show that you have learned something by doing this paper. There should be evidence that you have been open to changing your mind.

10. Do not overuse quotation: In a short paper, long quotations (more than a sentence or two in length) are generally not appropriate. Even in longer papers, quotations should be used sparingly unless they constitute a primary form of data for your analysis. In general, your paper is more effective if written primarily in your own words, using ideas from the literature but framing them in your own way in order to serve your own analytical purposes. However, selective use of quotations can be very useful as a way of capturing the author's tone or conveying a particularly aptly phrased point.

11. Cite your sources: You need to identify for the reader where particular ideas or examples come from. This can be done through in-text citation: Give the author's last name, publication year, and (in the case of quotations) page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence or paragraph where the idea is presented -- e.g., (Ravitch, 2000, p. 22); provide the full citations in a list of references at the end of the paper. You can also identify sources with footnotes or endnotes: Give the full citation for the first reference to a text and a short citation for subsequent citations to the same text. (For critical reaction papers, you only need to give the short cite for items from the course reading; other sources require full citations.) Note that citing a source is not sufficient to fulfill the requirement to provide evidence for your argument. As spelled out in #6 above, you need to transmit to the reader some of the substance of what appears in the source cited, so the reader can understand the connection with the point you are making and can have some meat to chew on. The best analytical writing provides a real feel for the material and not just a list of assertions and citations. Depth, insight, and connections count for more than a superficial collection of glancing references. In other words, don't just mention an array of sources without drawing substantive points and examples from these sources; and don't draw on ideas from such sources without identifying the ones you used.

12. Take care in the quality of your prose: A paper that is written in a clear and effective style makes a more convincing argument than one written in a murky manner, even when both writers start with the same basic understanding of the issues. However, writing that is confusing usually signals confusion in a person's thinking. After all, one key purpose of writing is to put down your ideas in a way that permits you and others to reflect on them critically, to see if they stand up to analysis. So you should take the time to reflect on your own ideas on paper and revise them as needed. You may want to take advantage of the opportunity in this course to submit a draft of the final paper, revise it in light of comments, and then resubmit the revised version. This, after all, is the way writers normally proceed. Outside of the artificial world of the classroom, writers never turn in their first draft as their final statement on a subject.

Reference Books on Research, Writing, and Making Arguments

I recommend the following books to all students. They can be a big help in thinking about research, writing, and making arguments.

Wayne C. Booth et al. (2008). *The Craft of Research* (3rd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Howard S. Becker. (1998). *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Joseph M. Williams. (2009). *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace* (3rd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Anthony Weston. (2009). *A Rulebook for Arguments* (4th ed.). Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.

The *Booth* book provides a smart and systematic account of how to carry out research from beginning to end. He starts with the problem of how to conceptualize a study and formulate a question, then moves on to a discussion of how to deal with all the succeeding steps in the research

process: dealing with data, using scholarly sources, constructing valid claims based on data, formulating persuasive arguments, representing data, organizing research reports, revising and refocusing arguments, and so on. This is a wonderfully rich resource for anyone who wants to do research and write about it. He manages to be both quite explicit (the difference between a research problem and a research question; how to use quotations in academic writing) while always emphasizing the intellectual work that research entails.

The *Becker* book focuses on "tricks of the trade" in doing research. What he means by this is not the technical tricks but the intellectual tricks that allow researchers to make sense of their data – by asking productive questions, adopting fruitful angles for analysis, employing logical strategies, and avoiding common mental traps. In separate chapters he focuses on imagery (metaphors, images of how things work as a starting place for research efforts), sampling (data as a mechanism for persuasion, validity, representativeness), concepts (uses of theory, approaches to conceptualizing what you see), and logic (considering the full range of possibilities, looking for what's missing). He provides some wonderful examples of "how to think about research while you're doing it" (in the words of the subtitle), drawing heavily on his own research experience. Tricks include such things as treating the exception as the rule, looking for the case that would upset your theory, and exploring the assumptions behind the observation that "nothing is happening."

The book by *Williams* is the best book there is on the issue of how to write in a clear, concise, effective, and graceful manner. It's better than the old standby in this category – Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* – because it goes beyond simply stating a principle and providing an example. As Williams puts it on the opening page, "I want to do more than just urge writers to 'Omit Needless Words' or 'Be clear.' Telling me to 'Be clear' is like telling me to 'Hit the ball squarely.' I know that. What I don't know is how to do it. To explain how to write clearly, I have to go beyond platitudes." This is exactly what he does. He provides a wonderfully illuminating course on the basic principles of good writing, along with a rich array of examples both before and after the application of these principles. This is great stuff that can help any of us clean up our prose.

The *Weston* book is the clearest and most usable manual available to help scholars make effective arguments. The author is a philosopher who has an uncanny ability to provide the lay reader with a concise and understandable outline of the basic rules for constructing arguments that work. In it he walks the reader through the minefield of fallacies that so frequently destroy the most earnest attempts to make claims and support them. His rules are easy to follow and his examples are quite helpful in showing what good and bad arguments look like in practice. The first part of the book focuses on the problem of creating effective short arguments; the second part extends this to the process of writing arguments that extend over a full-length paper or book. This short book is a must read for all of us who are in the business of trying to write in a manner that is both logical and persuasive.