EDST Reading Reflection Entries

Each chapter will require you to respond to a question as a Group, and a short scenario/case study related to the chapter as an Individual.

**Group Questions:**

* The Padlet for each chapter will have your group's questions right at the beginning. Research items and help will be located there as well!
* Each day we are working on the Philosophy portion of the course, you will work with your small group for about 20 minutes of class time to address the given question for the day.
* With your group, prepare visual aides, such as a PowerPoint/Slides presentation, to share with the class to help you answer your question.
* Plan to present for approximately 10 minutes.
* Each group member should get a chance to contribute during the presentation portion of the class time!
* Remember that you don't just have to talk at us - you can ask the rest of the class questions, engage us in an activity, or anything else you think is appropriate.

**Individual Assignments:**

* Each chapter will have a short case study for you to think about and respond to related to that chapter.
* Responses should be at least 1 page in length (Word, double-spaced is okay). See the rubric in the Assignments here in BlackBoard to help guide your response.
* This individual response is intended to give you a chance to consider the chapter in another way, and reflect on what you have learned in this chapter. In other words, your group mates don't need to help you with this part! Everyone will submit their own response.
* During our Reading section of the course, please note some of the following tips.
* When reading:
* Google Slides is great for working together on a shared presentation document. It is recommended that you try it while in your 20 minute group time. But, don't feel like you have to use only Slides - there are many options. Be creative, and have fun. Our classroom permits us to share your screen with the rest of the class easily, so don't worry about transferring from one specific to device to another. But, please bring your device if you have one to every class session!
* It might be helpful to work on your Chapter Response while you're reading - or right after you're done with - your chapter, so that it's all fresh in your mind.
* Remember, Chapter Responses should be completed by the END of each week (Sunday at midnight).
* Don't hesitate to do your own cross-referencing to help you understand things that might still be fuzzy after reading. YouTube, Wikipedia, and Google are great resources and many videos are included in our weekly modules. However, for some chapters with more controversial philosophical ideas, know that you will find some stuff out there that has a lot of bias one way or another.
* When you're running a discussion:
* Don't be shy! Jump in and be heard.
* Be creative and have fun while presenting your topic - engage us in a game or other activity to keep things interesting.
* When you're not presenting:
* Again, don't be shy! Ask questions, and answer those of others where you can.
* Take notes - the information you get will help you understand the topics better, and in turn help you do better on the quiz later on.

Chapter Padlets:

* Chapter 1: <http://www.padlet.com/atrekles/chapter1>
* Chapter 2: <http://www.padlet.com/atrekles/chapter2>
* Chapter 3: <http://www.padlet.com/atrekles/chapter3>
* Chapter 4: <http://www.padlet.com/atrekles/chapter4>
* Chapter 5: <http://www.padlet.com/atrekles/chapter5>
* Chapter 6: <http://www.padlet.com/atrekles/chapter6>
* Chapter 7: <http://www.padlet.com/atrekles/chapter7>
* Chapter 8: <http://www.padlet.com/atrekles/chapter8>

Following are general criteria for the evaluation of Individual Reading Responses

* There are 8 reading reflections and each is 10 points. The reading reflections are intended to help you make sense of the many educational philosophies and ideas we will learn about this semester.
* Your answers should be based upon your research from the book and outside class sources. You are required to identify your sources (at least ONE) in APA citation style.
* Do provide personal insights gleaned from the readings and/or from personal experience as well. They should connect the ideas in the readings to their experience in some way.

**Chapter 1 Individual Response Prompt:**

Someone stops you on the street and asks you what you're studying this semester. You mention you're in a philosophy class, and your friend (relative, whoever it is) asks you what that has to do with anything. "Philosophy - what's that? Aren't you studying to be a teacher? Why aren't you studying something useful?"

What have you read that helps you answer this question? What do you say to this person?

**Chapter 2 Individual Response Prompt:**

To wrap our heads around the basics of philosophical theory, let's go with a classic, one you might have heard of before: If a tree falls in the forest, does it make a sound?

Let's take that a step further: How would you KNOW one way or the other? What sources of knowledge do you have to draw upon? What does Chapter 2 say about whether we can trust those sources - or CAN we truly trust them? Is it possible that two people in the same forest observing this tree would see and hear two different things?

Now take this thought one more step further: Suppose you're a teacher giving a lesson on trees. You're asked a question you don't know the answer to, but another student, Billy, claims to know and answers the question. He also tells the class that trees are the most beautiful things in nature. How do you respond? How do you even know that what Billy answered is accurate on any of his information?

**Chapter 3 Individual Response Prompt:**

Many philosophers, including Plato, Aristotle, and St. Thomas Aquinas, have thoughts about what living a "good life" means. Suppose a student comes up to you in your classroom and asks you this very question - how to live a good life. You think maybe there are some things are you not supposed to tell a student when he asks a question like this in a classroom. How do you even begin to respond?

You might want to consult a source like <http://www.openculture.com/2015/12/plato-aristotle-nietzsche-kants-ideas-on-the-good-life.html> for some further insight beyond Chapter 3.

**Chapter 4 Individual Response Prompt:**

Your friend comes up to you one day and says that she is enrolling her six year-old daughter into a Montessori school. She indicates that she is "fed up" with the public education system and wants her daughter to have the "best" education possible. Now, your friend knows that you are going to school to become a teacher, and are being exposed to all kinds of public school concepts, as well as actual public schools and - yikes! - teachers. Some of those schools might even be places you feel are sources of a good or even the "best" education.

So what is your reaction to all of this? Do you agree with your friend's interest in addressing the existentialist needs of her child? What do you tell your friend who is now looking at you expectantly?

**Chapter 5 Individual Response Prompt:**

You are teaching on a typical day, and you have just gone down to the teacher's lounge for your 30-minute lunch break. Some of the other teachers are there, of course, as this is the primary gathering place for the teachers at lunch.

"I think we should just do away with the Test all together," one of your colleagues is saying.

"Well, what would we do instead?" another teacher asks, playing Devil's Advocate.

"We should let students choose their own learning path," the first teacher says. "They need us to guide them, but there are so many ways to arrive at knowledge."

"This is true," says the second teacher, "but don't you think there should be some sort of foundation of knowledge that we all accept? Shouldn't we be able to test that with a standardized test?"

The first teacher shakes her head vehemently. "No! If you're doing your job then they will all get that foundation of knowledge, but they'll come to it in their own way. They can show what they know through portfolios and group presentations and multimedia, but it will be different for every child."

The second teacher sighs. As you've just come in to the conversation, everyone is looking at you expectantly, waiting for you to respond. What do you say? What are your feelings on the first teacher's clear Postmodern view of teaching and learning? Do you take a side in the debate, or present your own counter-argument?

**Chapter 6 Individual Response Prompt:**

You're back at the teacher's lounge the next week after the standardized test debate, and your two colleagues are at it again. This time, the conversation is a little different.

"So, I have a parent who came in to see me this morning," says the first teacher. We'll call her Mrs. Smith, and she teaches fifth grade. "He started going on about how I was a Socialist and a Commie and he wanted his kid out of my class. I was so upset!"

"Wow," says the second teacher, Mr. Jackson. "Why would he say something like that?"

Mrs. Smith shakes her head. "Apparently this parent did not like my lesson on social justice. I am a critical pedagogist. I follow the work of Paulo Friere. I tried to explain that the assignment was perfectly harmless - I just asked the students to group together and research a social problem in our country, and how they might solve it. This parent's student was in the group that chose poverty, and they did some research on Universal Basic Income. Apparently the parent got wind of it and didn't like the Socialist sources his student was reviewing. I have no idea why."

Again, Mr. Jackson is pretty perplexed. This isn't the kind of assignment he would give, but he teaches sixth grade. "What did you do?"

"I told the parent that it was group's choice to go with the topic and the way they addressed it, but I in no way told them what to say or that their ideas were good or bad. I also didn't give them resources - they found their own. He seemed satisfied with that, I guess, but he still said he didn't need his kid being told what to think about social justice at school and that he was going to the principal."

"Oh boy. Are you going to change your assignment?"

Mrs. Smith looks confused. "Heavens no! Why would I? Social justice is an important topic in today's world, and our kids need to understand it."

If you were Mrs. Smith, would you change the assignment in any way? Knowing what you know about progressive modern theories of education, including Critical Pedagogy and Reconstructionism, would you have handled the situation with the parent differently?

**Chapter 7 Individual Response Prompt:**

Mrs. Smith and Mr. Jackson are at it again the next week (they're a good source of lunchtime entertainment at your school). This time, the debate is a little more heated.

"Honestly, Jackson, you just don't get it," says Mrs. Smith.

"Are you kidding? There is no difference between the words assessment and evaluation." Mr. Jackson looks annoyed.

"There is a HUGE difference! What did they teach you in your teacher ed program?"

"They taught me how to figure out what kids know and are able to understand. We created rubrics and tests. We did observations and used checklists. We interviewed teachers and kids. We did all of the normal things that one does in a teacher ed program. Why, what did they do in your program?"

"Well, they sure taught us about assessment, and evaluation and assessment mean very specific things. And what you're doing with your project cannot be called an evaluation. It's an assessment."

Mr. Jackson is dumbfounded. He gets out his phone and looks up the words in the dictionary and the thesaurus. They appear to be more or less the same to him. But Mrs. Smith is incredulous and continues to debate her point.

Now that you know something about analytic philosophy, what might you do or say to help calm the situation and get to the root of why there may or may not be a difference between two words that appear - on the surface - to mean the same thing?

**Chapter 8 Individual Response Prompt:**

You've decided it's time for a new job (you've about had it with the weekly explosions in the teacher's lounge). So, there you are, at your interview, facing your potential new principal, Dr. Carmona. She asks you some basic questions, tries to get you  comfortable since you're so nervous, and then she asks a doozy:

"So, what is your personal philosophy of education? Describe how you run your classroom for me, please. What would you teach at my school? How would you treat our children and families, and work with your fellow teachers?"

Well, now that's no small question. Looking back on everything you have read this semester so far and referring to applicable philosophies and theories where needed, what do you say to her next?