EDUC616

Applying Theory to a Current Educational Problem

This assignment version is for Professor Baker's section

In the theoretical paper, you will discuss a contemporary problem in education or learning (big or small), and how a core thinker in Education (studied in this course) would suggest that it be solved. Your paper must clearly demonstrate why you believe that this thinker would recommend this solution – ideally through quotation to the author's work or discussions of their thinking by other writers. You should also present evidence on how effective this solution is likely to be. You should support your argument with empirical evidence or theoretical argument, drawing empirical evidence from published scientific papers, books, websites, systems, and news articles. While it is acceptable to draw from your own personal experience or that of others transmitted by personal communication, the majority of evidence presented must be from publicly available sources.

Part One: Prospectus

Due Date: October 18, 1159pm USA Eastern time

In this prospectus, you will propose a topic, which the instructor will review and give you feedback on the suitability of your topic.

Your prospectus should clearly state what problem you hope to solve, ideally in one sentence, along the lines of
"Educational opportunity remains unequal between urban and rural areas."
or
"Educational assessment only captures shallow skill, not deep preparation for future learning."

Your prospectus should then state what thinker you intend to discuss, and what solution and/or key considerations you believe that he or she would propose.

You have the option of including a brief outline of your planned article, but this is not required.

Please submit this prospectus through your Piazza discussion group.

Part Two: Paper

Due Date: November 15, 11:59pm USA Eastern time

Your theoretical paper must be at least four pages long, 12 point, double-spaced Times New Roman. It can be longer than this, with no upper limit (but be reasonable, don't submit a book). If it is longer than this, any reasonable font choice, size, and spacing is acceptable.

Please post your final paper in your discussion group.

Grading:

The Prospectus counts for 5% of your class grade.

The Paper counts for 20% of your class grade.

The Prospectus will be graded in terms of completeness and representing an honest effort to submit a reasonable-quality prospectus. In other words, you'll get graded down if your topic is obviously outside the scope of the class ("My favorite food is pizza") or if you say your evidence is TBD, your grandmother's (unpublished) experiences as a teacher, or from a science fiction novel you. Note that these are just examples, you can get graded down for coming up with a bad/out-of-scope prospectus in other ways too.

The Paper will be graded upon how strong a case you make for your argument, including the quality of your evidence and argumentation. You will also receive credit for the degree of insight your paper represents. I don't necessarily need to agree with your argument, but I need to be persuaded that it fairly represents what your thinker might believe. There is a trade-off in choice of problem: the ideal problem will be tractable, but not trivial. Similarly, your insights from your thinker should be believable (don't tell me "Lave says to use more drill-and-practice of addition facts") while not being trivially obvious ("Vygotsky thinks that social communication matters").