ESSAY DIRECTIONS

Answer two exam questions of the four provided. Devote about equal time and space to each of the two essays. Do not repeat in your second essay content an analysis already provided in the first essay. Take care to address each component of the exam question. Draw appropriately from the scholarly literature. Make sure to provide references to original sources (e.g., book, chapter, or journal article) for statements that refer to ideas, words, or research findings of another person. Use appropriate headings and subheadings throughout the paper. Write clear, grammatically correct sentences and logical paragraphs.

Formatting

Clearly label the question number for each essay.

Each essay should be between 2,000 and 2,500 words. Do not exceed 2,500 words per essay.

For each essay provide a bibliography of works cited. Essay word count does NOT include the bibliography.

Use a standard 12-point font, double-spacing, and numbered pages.

Run a spell check on each essay prior to submission.
Question 1

Research and theory in different social science and applied disciplines offer various ways of conceptualizing leadership. There are as well numerous models for practitioners to apply to the challenges of leading educational institutions. Yet there is no consensus on the definition of leadership and, even though leadership is often a central component of many proposed and enacted educational reforms, the strategies for leadership they advocate can be inconsistent and contradictory. Compare and contrast two specific approaches (that you identify clearly) that analyze the subject of educational leadership both theoretically and empirically. Evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.
Question 2

“Culture” and “climate” are two terms used interchangeably by some scholars and practitioners to describe informal human relationships in organizations and other social groups (e.g., cities and nations). Others argue that these two terms refer to distinctly different concepts and conflating them is problematic in analysis aimed at understanding educational organizations or systems. Write an essay that explores the theoretical or disciplinary distinctions, or lack of them, between culture and climate as applied in the educational literature. Highlight a distinction by developing an operational definition of each concept, suggesting a methodological approach or tool from research or evaluation that could be used to measure each. Illustrate their application using a specific educational organization or system of your choosing at any level or in any part of the world.
Question 3

In educational policy and administration, from pre-K to graduate education, many interventions, practices and recommendations purport to be backed by “evidence of effectiveness.” Indeed, many administrative and policy innovations are justified in terms of being “evidenced-based.” In addition, many skeptics of evidence-based policy-making have questioned, among other things, the quality of evidence used in making policy decisions, and the extent to which research can or should guide educational policy or administrative choices that address extremely complex problems and include important normative and ethical considerations.

Write an essay in which you analyze this evidenced-based education policy and administration movement as it applies to a particular level of the educational system (pre-K to graduate education) in a particular institutional or geographic setting. Substantiating your arguments with specific references to research and/or theoretical literature, offer and justify criteria or important factors to consider in determining the strength, quality and appropriate role of evidence in the policy-making or administrative decision-making process, illustrate your discussion in reference to specific policies, programs or administrative initiatives that you clearly identify.
Question 4

Policy makers, school and university administrators, and other actors are increasingly focusing on how educational systems and schools, colleges and universities can promote successful transitions from secondary schools to postsecondary institutions. Initiatives in these areas include those that are specific to an educational level (for example, the rigor, relevance and engagement of the secondary school curriculum, or remedial programs and financial aid policies in higher education) and a number that cut across levels (for example, dual enrollment or dual credit and other forms of high school and college/university collaborations). There are also specific programs for college-readiness or to facilitate transitions in specific schools, schools systems, post-secondary institutions or tertiary systems. Write an essay about a specific policy, administrative innovation, or institutional program intended to promote successful transitions from secondary to postsecondary education. You may choose a policy or program at any level of the educational system, or that cuts across educational levels. The policies may be institutional or at national, subnational or supranational levels, anywhere in the world. In your essay, describe the policy or program and discuss and evaluate the theory and/or research that supports it. Discuss the implications of your assessment for good policymaking or administrative practice to promote successful transitions.