OVERVIEW OF COURSE CONTENT
There is a qualitative difference in the way people learn when they are a part of a community that shares common goals and values. During this class, we will come to recognize the characteristics of healthy, sustainable learning communities and appreciate the value added. We will be able to initiate and facilitate their growth in a variety of educational organizations, as we hone in on the opportunities and challenges present in particular settings. In addition, we will see learning communities through the lens of education reform, as an essential element of continuous improvement.

REQUIRED TEXTS

OVERVIEW OF ONLINE DELIVERY SYSTEM
The bulk of the semester's learning and interactions will take place online. Most of the interactions will be asynchronous (not at the same time). This means you can log into the class website ANYTIME, ANYWHERE and participate according to your personal schedule.

Three times during the semester, we will meet ONLINE at a mutually agreed upon time, in a live virtual classroom. This class will last one hour and we will be able to hear each other speak, see each other if you chose to use a camera (not necessary), view a PowerPoint together, and write on a shared whiteboard. This will be a time to learn new concepts, share ideas, and ask questions. I guarantee you will find this format quite useful. There will also be one FACE-TO-FACE orientation meeting in early September.

For the online aspect of the class, all you need to get started is a computer with internet access. You will learn the rest at the orientation meeting in September, and throughout the semester as you participate in the activities.
The main site where all of our class activities will occur can be assessed by going to http://elms.umd.edu and typing in your Maryland ID and password. (If you do not know what that is, please contact the Office of Informational Technology at 301-405-1400.) Once you have typed in your ID and password, look in the right hand column and click on the name of this class.

**FACE-TO-FACE MEETING**
There will be ONE ORIENTATION MEETING at beginning of the semester, at a mutually agreed upon time. During that meeting we will get to know each other, review course expectations, learn how to use the various course components, find out the many sources of help to which you can turn during the semester, and of course enjoy some yummy food and drinks.

**OFFICE HOURS**
Please remember that during the semester you are ALWAYS WELCOME to contact me by phone or email, or meet me in my office with questions, suggestions, or just to chat. We can also meet in a Virtual Study Space online, where we will be able to hear each other and view a shared white board. My schedule is flexible so please call or email to set up a time.

**GRADING**
Your grade will be based on the following formula:

- Reading Inventories 20%
- Live Virtual Classroom 20%
- Case Study 20%
- Blog 10%
- Quick Case Study Analysis 10%
- Digital Story 20%

**HONOR CODE**
The University of Maryland has a student-administered Honor Code with a pledge that reads, “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).” Compliance with the code is administered by the Student Honor Council, which strives to promote a “community of trust” on the College Park campus.
CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

Our course content has been divided into 4 units. This will help you in two ways. You will be better able to absorb and retain the main lessons, and it will help you budget your time. Each unit will be available on our course site for 4 weeks. At the end of the period, you will no longer be able to post assignments for that unit. The next unit will then become available for your participation.

Unit I
Making the Case for Learning Communities: What Do We Mean and Why Does It Matter?
(August 31 – September 20)
Reading due:
Sergiovanni, Preface & Chapters 1 – 5
Two Sample Case Studies
Assignment due:
Personal Introduction (due: 9/13 - with responses to classmates’ postings)
Reading Inventory #1 (due: 9/20)
Blog entry #1 (due: 9/20)
Email me your Case Study Topic for approval (due: 9/20)
Synchronous (at the same time and place) Meeting:
Face-to-Face Orientation on the College Park campus

Unit II
Beyond Collegiality: Building Professional Learning Communities
(September 21 – October 18)
Reading due:
McLaughlin, Chapters 1 – 7
Building a Professional Learning Community in the Teachers’ Lounge
(PowerPoint)
Assignment due:
Reading Inventory #2 (due: 10/4)
Blog entry #2 (due: 10/18)
Post completed Case Study to Discussion Board (due: 10/18)
Synchronous Meeting:
Live Virtual Class #1 (one hour – time TBA)

Unit III
A Community of Learners: Building Community in the Classroom
(October 19 – November 15)
Reading due:
Sergiovanni Chapters 6 – 7
Assignments due:
Midcourse Survey (due: 10/25)
Email me your Digital Story idea for approval (due: 10/25)
Read and respond to 5 of your classmates’ Case Studies (due: 11/1)
Reading Inventory #3 (due: 11/8)
Email me the Outline and Storyboard for your Digital Story (due: 11/8)
Blog entry #3 (due: 11/15)

Synchronous Meeting:
   Live Virtual Class #2 (one hour – time TBA)

Unit IV
Wrap Up: Thinking About How It All Fits Together
(November 16 – December 13)
Reading due:
   Eight Elements of a Learning Community (PowerPoint)
Assignments due:
   Quick Case Study Analysis (due: 11/22)
   Blog entry #4 (due: 12/13)
   Post Digital Story (due: 12/13)
Synchronous Meeting:
   Live Virtual Class #3 (one hour – time TBA)