

EDPL 670—Syllabus, Fall 2000

Meeting Times and Place

The class will meet every Tuesday from September 5 to December 12, 2000, except as otherwise noted. The class will meet from 4:15 to 7:00 PM, at the Comer SDP Office, 6111 Ager Road, Hyattsville

Instructor

Willis D. Hawley

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Course Goals

Participants will understand the meaning and importance of learning communities and the different meanings attached to the concept.

Participants will be able to identify the relative importance of the different influences on the development and maintenance of learning communities. Participants will be able to answer questions such as:

- How can one know a learning community when one sees it?
- How can one assess the progress being made in efforts to develop learning communities?
- How does the context of a learning community influence its development and functioning?

Participants will be able to identify significant barriers to the development and maintenance of learning communities and strategies for overcoming such obstacles.

Content to be covered

In pursuit of the goals just identified, the following topics will be covered:

- * How people learn.
- * Creating learning organizations, the role of schools structures in learning communities.
- * Professional collaboration and group dynamics.
- * Professional development.
- * Parental and community involvement.
- * Multicultural realities in the design of learning communities.
- * Using technology to support learning communities.
- * Strategies to facilitate organizational change.

Expectations for Course Participants:

- * Keeping up with reading averaging about 100 pages a week.
- * Active participation in class discussions.
- * 3-4 short (1-2 pages) assignments related to reading.
- * Two case study analyses (3-4 pages)
- * Final paper: design a strategy for creating a learning community in your school or a school with which you are familiar.

Assigned Books

J. Bransford, et al., eds., How People Learn, National Academy Press, 1999
M. Fullan, Change Forces: The Sequel, Falmer Press, 1999
K. Leithwood & K. S. Louis, eds., Organizational Learning in Schools, Swets & Zeitlinger, 1998

A packet of copied articles will be distributed.

Assigned Reading and Assignments

September 5

Introductions, assessment of learners' objectives, discussion of the importance of learning communities.

September 12

Bransford, et al., *How People Learn*, pp. 1-27, 48-50, 51-82, 95-102, 108-113, 126-27.

Assignment. Prepare (1) a 2-3 paragraph definition of a learning community and (2) a schematic diagram showing significant influences on student academic achievement. Send to me no later than Tuesday, September 12 at 9 AM. This assignment will not be graded.

September 19

Bransford, et al., *How People Learn*, peruse chapters 6-10. Read pp.131-54, 179-82, 188-189, 190-205, 233-247

September 26

National Partnership for Excellence and Accountability in Teaching, Revisoning Professional Development. In class packet. 19 pages.

Boston Plan for Excellence, Memo on Professional Development (handout).

M. Linn, et al., "Beyond Fourth Grade Science: Why Do U.S. and Japanese Students Diverge?", excerpts. In class packet, 3 pages.

WCER Highlights, "Professional Development to Improve Schools". In class packet, 3 pages.

www.nPEAT.org

Go to this website, click on National Dialogue. Explore the site, especially looking under "Discussion" and "Examples" for each principle.

Note: You will see that there is a lot of overlap in these readings, especially the principles of effective professional development.

Assignments be prepared to discuss the material assigned and relate that to Chapter 8 in How People Learn.

You will receive a handout in class, a NYT article by Richard Rothstein on “The Math Wars”. Read that and be prepared to suggest how this article relates to the provision of effective professional development.

Given what you have read for week 4 (above assigned reading), identify at least three obstacles or barriers to implementing effective professional development in your school. Fax or e-mail these to me by noon next Tuesday, the 26th. I am looking for a list with one sentence of explanation for each obstacle. Be prepared to identify ways to overcome one or more of the obstacles.

For October 3

B. Hart & T. Risley, “Meaningful Differences....” In packet

B. Rutherford, et al., Parent and Community Involvement in Education, Ch.3.
Class handout.

R. Thorkildsen & M. Stein, “Is Parent Involvement related to Student Achievement...” In packet.

J. Epstein, et al., “Involving Parents in Homework in the Middle Grades”. In packet.

Assignment: Two vignettes are being handed out in class. Chose one of them and write a one page response. Bring it to class and be prepared to discuss your solution.

October 10

M. Driscoll, ed. Vol. 73, Peabody Journal of Education, pp. 6-68.

Met. Life, The American Teacher 2000, Class handout. Be prepared to discuss what the implications of this study are for the development of learning communities.

Assignment: Look at Figure 1 on p. 25. Locate your school’s present circumstance in the matrix. Then identify where you want it to be. What will it take to move the school from where it is to where you want it? Turn this one page exercise in at class.

October 17

J. Comer, et al., Rallying the Whole Village, pp. 27-41. Class handout.

P.C. McCullum, “Six Points of Effective Partnerships”. Class handout.

R. Rodriguez & A. Villarreal, "Development Through Engagement: Valuing the 'At Promise' Community". Class handout.

M. McLaughlin, Community Counts: Executive Summary. In packet.

C.T. Adger, "School/ Community partnerships to Support Language Minority Student Success". Class handout.

October 24

Senge, "The Learning Organization Made Simple" (in reading packet)

Louis and Leithwood, pp. 17-46, 219-237

Murphy and Beck, School-based Management as School Reform, excerpts (in reading packet)

October 31

Hawley, "In the Beginning: The Philosophy and Structure of the High School in the Community (HSC) (in readings packet)

Janis, "Groupthink:...." (Article handed out in class).

Assignment: Using the description of the High School in the Community (see reading for this week), imagine that you have been called in as a consultant to assist the teachers in the school. They are concerned about problems they should anticipate in implementing their ambitious design for school restructuring. Prepare a memo to them describing issues with which they might have to deal. Devote no more than two paragraphs to each issue, but explain why the issues you identify are problematic.

Bring the memo with you to class along with 5x8 cards listing the problems you think are possible. Make the print bold and keep the description to three words.

Be ready with any questions you might have about the technology portfolio you have to produce. Professor Stan Bennett will be with us to suggest advice and tell you a bit about what principals might be expected to do in facilitating the use of educational technology.

November 7

Hawley, "On the Possibilities of Nonbureaucratic Organizations" article to be distributed in class on October 31.

Louis and Leithwood, pp. 67-88, 203-218

November 14

Louis and Leithwood, pp. 261-285, 177-179

Assignment: Revise your memo on High School in the Community and annotate the changes you make. That is, explain any changes that you make. Discuss the reasons for your changes, if any, after each issue or problems you identified.

November 21

Louis and Leithwood, pp. 237-260

Newmann and Wehlage, Successful School Restructuring, (in readings packet)

Galston, "Does the Internet Strengthen Community" (in readings packet)

Hawley, "Creating Technology Facilitated Learning Communities..." (in readings packet)

Assignment: Come to class with the identification of at least one barrier to implementing a learning community in your school that you want to discuss with the class written on a 5x8 card.

November 28

Fullan, Change Forces: The Sequel.

December 5

McDermott, "Barriers to Large Scale Success of Models for Urban School Reform" (in readings packet).

Bodilly and Berends, "Necessary District Support for Comprehensive School Reform" (in readings packet).

December 12

Last class. Summing Up

Final Paper is due no later than December 15 and will be gratefully accepted at this class session. The assignment is to develop a strategy for creating a learning community with your school as the foundation of that community. This should look like a presentation you might make to others who you want to pursue this goal. Among the things you should do are:

Be clear about the goals—why is a learning community worth the effort; what will it do that could not otherwise be done?

Given your school situation, what would be the indicators that a learning community was in existence and functioning to improve student learning? That is, what activities and structures would be in place if your school were a learning community? Be specific. A diagram might help.

How well does your school meet these tests of existence?

What will it be necessary to do to move from where you are to where you need to be to meet the standards implied by the indicators? What challenges do you face and how can these be addressed?

When you are writing your memo, cite the readings for the course (and other things you know about, if you wish). Cites can be names of authors only—the idea is to show that you see the link between the reading and your analysis. There is no need for references.