EDCI 784: Teaching, Professional Development & School Change

Instructor: Dr. Linda Valli
Office: 2207 Benjamin

Semester: Fall 2007
Time/Place: Mondays 4:15–7:00, 0306 Benjamin

Office Hours: Appointment
Email: LRV@umd.edu

Course Description
The social context that shapes our professional lives is marked by constant pressure for improvement, particularly school improvement and the improvement of teaching. The most recent manifestations are the standards movement and No Child Left Behind legislation. At the same time, professional educators have their own needs and desires for on-going learning and development. These institutional and individual pulls are sometimes reinforcing, but at other times conflicting. In addition, change efforts are also often at odds with powerful—and rational—forces for stability. Since change isn’t necessarily improvement, and doesn’t necessarily serve everyone’s interests, we should consistently ask: To what end? For what purpose? Who benefits and who doesn’t?

To explore these issues, the course will ground students in the scholarly literature on the professional development of classroom teachers and other educators, examining, in particular, the relationships among teaching, student learning, professional development, and school change. It will also help students develop greater capacity to influence, engage in, and evaluate professional development programs and policies. It accomplishes these goals by striving to create a learning community in which students work together to envision ideal professional development opportunities for teachers and other educators. This requires deep analysis of the components of professional development and teacher learning. Students must ask themselves: What do I need to know to construct ideal learning opportunities for teachers? What would an ideal program look like? What would be its components? Why are institutions and individuals resistant to change? What implicit theories do I have about teachers, schools, teaching, learning to teach and professional development?

Students are encouraged to think about professional development across the entire spectrum of teachers: from those who are just beginning their preparation as teachers (preservice education) to those newly licensed (induction programs) to experienced teachers (in-service preparation). Most of the course will, however, focus on classroom teachers’ opportunities to learn in school settings. Readings will be used to deepen knowledge, push thinking in new directions, and lead to other questions and ideas. Some core readings will be assigned to everyone. Students will also be asked to explore diverse readings that address core ideas, and to recommend readings for the class. The instructor will act as a resource, facilitator, provocateur, and evaluator. Students will form Work Groups of 4-5 members around shared interests. If possible, these groups should include doctoral and masters students.
**Required Readings**


Assigned articles

**Recommended Books**


**Tentative Class Schedule** (* = additional required reading for doctoral students)

**Sept 10**  
What are the relationships among teaching, professional development, school improvement?

**Sept 17**  
Why is teaching so hard to change?  
**Required Readings:**  
Kennedy Ch. 1-2


**Sept 24**  
What are the primary tasks of teaching?  
**Required Readings:**  
Kennedy Ch. 3, 4, 5


**Recommended Readings:**  

Oct 1  What are the sources of teaching problems and improvement? How can they inform school reform efforts?
Required Readings:
Kennedy Ch. 6, 7, 8

Recommended Readings:
Darling Hammond, Ch. 1


Oct 8  What theories of learning are professional development and school improvement efforts based on? What do we know about the characteristics of good professional development?
Required Readings:
Hawley Ch. 2, 8


Recommended Readings:


Oct 15  What are the unique problems of the beginning years of teaching? What do we know about good induction programs?
Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:
Darling-Hammond Ch. 7


**Guest Speaker** on PAR: Donna Redmond Jones, Assistant Principal, Benjamin Banneker Middle School

**Oct 22**

What kind of professional development is needed to support a multicultural society?

Required Readings:

Hawley Ch. 11

Series of Ruby Payne Articles/Critiques (see http://ahaprocess.com)


Recommended Readings:
Darling-Hammond, Ch. 4


Oct 29  How does the policy environment foster or impede teacher and student learning?
Video, NY District #2

Required Readings:
Hawley Ch. 12

**Recommended Readings:**

McLaughlin Ch. 7


**Nov 5**

**How do relations among teachers shape their development?**

**Required Readings:**

Hawley Ch. 3, 4


**Recommended Readings:**


**Nov 12**

**Required Readings:**
Hawley Ch. 5, 6


**Recommended Readings:**


(Video: Settings for Change)
Nov 19  What are the conditions of schooling that foster or impede the improvement of teaching and learning? What is the impact of leadership?

Required Readings:
Hawley Ch. 7, 9, 10

Recommended Readings: (*doc students select at least one of these articles)


Nov 26  What do we know about professional development and school improvement in urban and high-stakes settings?

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Dec 3  TBA
Dec 10 Final Paper Presentations
Assignments & Grading [APA format required on all papers]
All of the assignments are designed to contribute toward your final papers and deep understanding of what it means to engage in meaningful professional development and school/educational improvement efforts. All assignments will be submitted through our web-based course site: Assignments, Discussion Board, or Work Groups. General expectations for graduate study are that students spend two-three hours preparing for every one hour of class. On average, doctoral students should spend nine hours (masters students 6-7 hours) outside of class each week, engaged in the following:

Class Readings, Notes, Participation & Leadership: Be prepared to share insights with the class each week that are shaped by the readings. Write extensive notes in preparation for class, responding to the core questions that will be discussed. Your notes should capture how the readings added to your knowledge or changed your thinking. (You might start out with what you “knew” from prior experience). No matter how much you agree with the author’s perspective, force yourself to consider alternative perspectives, criticisms, or weaknesses. These notes should serve as a basis for your written assignments. Everyone is encouraged to read, recommend, and discuss relevant sources beyond the assigned readings. As a professional community, we should all monitor discussions to make sure everyone has an opportunity—and feels encouraged—to participate.

In groups of three, doctoral students will be asked to co-lead one class discussion between October 8 – November 19. I will give time at the end of our first class for you to decide on groups and topics. I will also ask each doctoral student to summarize key points from one day’s discussion on our Discussion Board. This should be done within 48 hours following class. I will distribute a sign up list for specific days. Try to include questions for further reflection and exploration. All students are required to respond to at least one of these summaries and encouraged to respond to more. If, for some reason, you were unable to contribute to class verbally on any given day, you will need to post to the Discussion Board to receive full participation credit.

Short Papers: Doctoral students will submit two 2-3 page papers that (a) state the topic(s) they are focusing on; (b) summarize how their reading and reflecting expanded, changed or confirmed their thinking about those topics, (c) offer a well-reasoned critique of the readings, and (d) provides a reference list that includes at least three articles beyond the required reading. These papers should be closely linked to the focus of your final paper and give you some direction. Masters students are required to submit one of these papers. These papers will be submitted to the Assignments page.

Website Assignment for Masters students: Explore some professional development websites that deal with your core interest in the course and that might contribute toward your final paper. (A few key websites are linked to our course site. Additional possibilities are listed below; you might know of or find others). Compose a 2-3 page paper that you will post to the Discussion Board that does the following: gives the URLs and names of the websites; explains the general purpose of one or two websites; assesses strengths and weaknesses (you can do this comparatively); and makes recommendations for improvement. This assignment can be done alone or in groups of 2-3. Masters students need to give feedback at least once (e.g., What did you find helpful about the site and/or the analysis? What other information would you have liked?).
Final Paper & Presentation: For your final paper you should try to synthesize what you’ve learned about professional development to create an ideal program. This paper can be written alone or in groups of two or three. Again, co-authoring is encouraged, but not required. I will try to provide a few minutes of class time for Work Groups to share their ideas and sources, but most of this should be done online. Masters papers should be about 20 pages with at least 15 references; doctoral papers about 25-30 pages with at least 20 references. Group papers should be somewhat longer (30-40), with more references (25-30).

Your paper should include many of the aspects of professional development we discuss in class as they relate to your particular research interests and professional responsibilities. There are many ways to organize a paper like this, but one suggested outline is:

- What is the basic problem you’re trying to address?
- Why is this a significant area for teacher learning & ed improvement?
- What does the scholarly literature contribute to your knowledge? (Where does it fall short?)
- What might be the elements of an ideal program and why?
- Why is this model not widespread? What are some obstacles (individual and institutional) and how might they be overcome?

Students are encouraged to submit questions, ideas, outlines, and drafts for feedback throughout the semester. Use Work Groups, File Exchange so that others in your group can give you feedback as well. As a timeframe, you might consider Oct. 9 main idea; Oct. 25 overall outline/organization; Nov. 15 sources and questions/concerns. By Oct. 9, I will need to know if you are writing your paper alone or in a group. Nov 28 is the last date I will accept drafts for written feedback. (Send an email from that File Exchange to all Group Members, including me, so we know when to provide feedback). Group members are required to provide feedback, at least once, to two members of the group, but are encouraged to give feedback more frequently.

Oral presentations will be scheduled for the last day of class. Please have some type of visual or handout for the class and/or interactive activity.

I am open to alternatives to this final assignment; if you believe a different type of assignment is better suited to your own professional development, please discuss your ideas with me early in the semester.
Grades:
Because the class is a learning community and depends on the ongoing work of small groups, it is essential that you participate in each session. If you are prevented from doing so, please let me and your group members know (preferably in advance) so arrangements can be made for you to make up part of the work for that day's class. You should be prepared to share your insights, questions, and projects each time we meet. Please inform me if you have a documented disability that would require any course accommodations. Grades will be based on the following assignments & point system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>(2 per class + posted summary)</td>
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<tr>
<td>First short paper (doc)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Oct 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short paper (masters)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Oct 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second short paper (doc)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Nov 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Website paper/feedback (masters)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Nov 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dec 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final papers</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Dec 17</td>
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Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>100+</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-95</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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*A+ will be given if a student has 100 points, has made substantive contributions in each class based on readings, and has demonstrated extraordinary insight and grasp of the literature in writing work and presentations. Full credit for class participation will be given only for weekly, on-time attendance and contributions based on readings. Students can receive partial credit for make-up work on unavoidable absences.
Selected On-Line Resources (let me know if any are defunct)
Alliance for Curriculum Reform: http://www.acr.uc.edu/
American Federation of Teachers: http://www.aft.org/index.html
Annenberg: http://www.learner.org/
Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement: http://www.ciera.org/
Center for Multicultural Education: http://depts.washington.edu/centerme/home.htm
Council of Chief State School Officers: http://www.ccsso.org/
Council of Great City Schools: http://www.cgcs.org/
CREDE: http://www.crede.ucsc.edu/tools/directory2-1/main.html
Disney Learning Partnership: http://disney.go.com/DisneyLearning/
Education Trust: http://www.edtrust.org/
http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/
http://4teachers.org/
International Reading Association: http://wwwIRA.org/
Lab at Brown University: http://www.lab.brown.edu/public/index.shtml
Learning Bridges: www.learningbridges.com
Learning First Alliance: http://www.learningfirst.org/
Learning through Technology: http://www.ncrel.org/tandl/homepg.htm
Maryland State Department of Education: http://www.msde.state.md.us/
MCPS: http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/dsd/
Microsoft Educator Network: http://microsoft.com/education/?ID=InnovativeTeachers
North Central Regional Technology in Education Consortium: http://www.ncrtec.org/
National Council of Social Studies: http://www.ncss.org/
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics: http://www.nctm.org/
National Education Association: http://www.nea.org/
National Research & Development Centers: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/At-Risk/center1.html
National Science Teachers Association: http://www.nsta.org/
National Staff Development Council: http://www.nsdc.org/
PGCPS: http://www.pgcps.org/teachers.html
Public Education Network: http://www.publiceducation.org/
Smithsonian Institute: http://www.si.edu/teachers/
Teaching Diverse Learners: http://www.alliance.brown.edu/tdl/
WestEd: http://www.wested.org/