

**University of Lethbridge
Faculty of Education**



EDUCATION 5500

**Understanding Professional Practice and Professional
Development
Spring 2016**

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to a broad variety of methods in which knowledge and understanding of professional practice and professional development can be enhanced and applied through field studies for professionals in education and education-related contexts in community settings (University of Lethbridge Calendar, p. 342).

The central focus of this course will be a critical examination of various paradigms of leadership as they apply to professional practice and professional learning. As such, the course aims to situate conventional notions of leadership by comparing and contrasting emerging models of communities of practices, collaborative professional learning, and inquiry-based adult learning.

Students' experiences as formal and/or informal instructional leaders and educators will guide (a) reflection on the form, function, and intersection of leadership, learning, and teaching practice, (b) examination of the process of social constructivism as it relates to leading and participating in collaborative inquiry as a professional learning strategy, and (c) exploration of recent literature regarding professional development, communities of practice, and adult learning.

The course will address the essential question *What does it mean to be an effective educational leader of professional practice?*

RATIONALE:

Perhaps to a greater extent than ever, educators are assuming formal or informal leadership roles and responsibilities around designing and implementing curriculum, re-imagining assessment, facilitating the professional learning of colleagues, and demonstrating cyclical and sustained inquiry-based pedagogical growth. Effectiveness in doing so requires an expanded understanding and analysis of the context in which this unique type of leadership occurs.

OBJECTIVES:

For the purposes of this course, students will be encouraged to ground their understanding in theories of their own development and experiences in schools. Accordingly, the course will provide opportunities for interacting with various school improvement perspectives and professional development approaches. In so doing, the central focus will be on enhancing the reciprocal learning relationship between leaders and teachers.

Throughout the course activities and assignments, students will:

1. Identify critical conditions and considerations for leadership of professional practice and professional learning
2. Understand the role and process of reflective practice
3. Become familiar with a variety of theories of adult learning and their implications for professional development
4. Develop increased skill in facilitating professional collaborative inquiry for self and colleagues
5. Create cognitive links between school improvement, instructional leadership, and enhanced teaching
6. Increase knowledge and skills specific to academic writing
7. Access, analyze and integrate information from a variety of sources.

COURSE CONTENT

This course invites students into an investigation of current teaching and leadership practices in Alberta schools.

Course content will include, but not be limited to, the following topics of examination. Based on students' background, professional responsibilities, and interests, shifts in emphasis may be appropriate. The following broad themes will guide readings, discussions, and course assignments.

A. Models and characteristics of leadership

- Defining professional competence in teaching and leading
- Leading professional learning
- Responsibilities and limitations of informal and distributed leadership

B. Theories of adult education

- Rationalist, behaviourist, and constructivist paradigms of professional development
- Andragogy
- Critical reflection and professional reflexivity

C. Learning Communities versus Communities of Practitioners

- Characteristics of learning communities
- Comparative assumptions between learning communities and communities of practice
- Issues of culture and social capital in school improvement

D. Models of Action Inquiry and Professional Growth

- Role and types of reflective practice
- Comparing models of action research and collaborative inquiry

COURSE DELIVERY:

Education 5500 in Spring 2016 is offered through on-line delivery. However, several opportunities will be provided for students to attend skill development seminars during the course of the semester. While these seminars are mandatory, students may participate remotely or face-to-face, as geographic circumstances warrant.

TEXT/RESOURCES:

**Please note: Required and optional readings are outlined in greater detail on pages 8 – 9 of this syllabus.*

Readings from the following required text:

Townsend, D., & Adams, P. (2009). *The essential equation: A handbook for school improvement*. Edmonton, AB: Detselig.

In addition, required readings from the following authors will be posted on the course moodle site and should be referenced to successfully complete assignments.

Adams, P. (2015). The generative dialogue. Excerpt from *Developing school leadership competencies using a collaborative inquiry model*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Education.

Adams, P. & Townsend, D. (2014). From action research to collaborative inquiry: A framework for researchers and practitioners. *Education Canada*, 54(5), pp. 12 – 15.

Alberta Education. (1997). *Ministerial Order #016/97*. Retrieved at <https://education.alberta.ca/media/.../appendix%20d%20-%20tqs.pdf>

Alberta Education. (2008). *Teacher growth, supervision, and evaluation policy*. Retrieved at <https://education.alberta.ca/departement/policy/otherpolicy/teacher/>

Alberta Education. (2009). *The principal quality practice guideline: Promoting successful school leadership in Alberta*. Retrieved at <https://education.alberta.ca/.../principal-quality-practice-guideline-english>

Brown, J. & Moffett, C. (1999). *The hero's journey*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Cranton, P. (1994). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning: A guide for educators of adults*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Elmore, R. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership*. Washington, DC: Shanker Institute.

Gabriel, J. (2005). *How to thrive as a teacher leader*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Palmer, P. (1998). *The courage to teach*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Students are also expected to familiarize themselves with the writing of authors seminal to topics such as reflection, adult learning, communities of practice, and collaborative inquiry. Selected resources written by these authors are provided on the class moodle site. These authors include:

Knowles, M. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy*. New York, N.Y.: Cambridge. Retrieved at www.amazon.com/Malcolm-S-Knowles/e/B001IGHJAE

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schön, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner*. New York, N.Y.: Basic Book.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School.

Lastly, the course moodle site contains a section for each assignment entitled *Additional Resources*. The readings in this section are **optional**, and each is accompanied by an audio that offers questions for consideration that will highlight key concepts that may be integrated into assignments.

Elmore, R. (2008). Accountable leadership. *The Educational Forum*, 69(2), pp. 134 – 142.

Knight, J. (2011). *Unmistakable impact*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Male, T. & Palaiologou, I. (2011). Learning-centred leadership of pedagogical leadership? *International Journal of Leadership in Education: Theory and Practice*, 15(1), pp. 107 – 118.

Opfer, D. & Pedder, D. (2011). Conceptualizing teacher professional learning. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(3), pp. 376 – 407.

Shön, D. (1987). *Educating the reflective practitioner*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Tian, M., Risku, M., & Collin, K. (2015). *A meta-analysis of distributed leadership from 2002 – 2013: Theory development, empirical evidence and future research focus*. Retrieved at <http://ema.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/04/09/1741143214558576.full.pdf+html>

Timperley, H. (2011). Knowledge and the leadership of learning. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 10(2), pp. 145 – 170.

York-Barr, J. (2006). *Reflective practice to improve schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & EVALUATION:

The following course requirements are meant to engage students in personalized, relevant, and purposeful exploration and growth. Accordingly, negotiation of weighting and form of assignments is possible. **Please refer to Appendix A for further information or, alternately, contact the instructor to make differentiated arrangements.**

1. LEADERSHIP METAPHOR: 20% (10% for artifact + 10% for interpretation and analysis)

Purpose. Metaphor has the power to kindle imagination and apply a conceptual lens to reflection that enriches understanding and insight. This purpose of this assignment is to probe into areas such as leadership style, teaching philosophy, the teacher-leader nexus, and transformation.

This assignment always elicits some wonderful offerings of deep and extended symbolism: a rose garden, a loaf of bread, a luge track, a series of babushkas, a country road, a quilt, and a variation of Animal Farm, to name but a few. Honor your own narrative when completing this assignment! Art-work is permitted. Creativity is rewarded.

Accompanying Required Readings. The class moodle site contains readings by Brown & Moffett (1999) and Townsend & Adams (2009) that accompanies this assignment. In addition, students should familiarize themselves with Ministerial Order #016/97, the

Alberta Education Growth, Supervision, and Evaluation Policy, and the Competencies for School Leaders in Alberta. Concepts from all readings should be evident in the analysis portion of this assignment.

The moodle site also contains a required video viewing.

Requirements. Create an artifact that symbolizes your formal or informal leadership journey to this point in your career (10 marks). Provide a written interpretation and analysis (10 marks) of your metaphor, making reference to concepts offered in the accompanying required readings. The analysis should be no less than 1500 words in length.

All metaphors will be shared at the first face-to-face seminar and written analyses will be submitted electronically.

Suggested due date: January 16, 2016

2. CRITIQUE: LEADERSHIP IN LEARNING EPISODE: 30% (10% for vignette description or video + 20% for critique and analysis)

Purpose. As formal or informal leaders of learning among practitioners, it is important to identify and critique practices about facilitating professional learning. The purpose of this assignment is to examine and reflect upon existing practices, with an eye toward engaging in and implementing more informed practices in students' leadership of professional learning.

Accompanying Required Readings. The class moodle site contains readings by Townsend & Adams (2009), Elmore (2000), Gabriel (2005) and Parker Palmer (1998). Each author explores various aspects of the conditions and characteristics of effective professional learning.

The moodle site also contains a required video viewing.

Requirements. Thoroughly describe or video one (1) professional development episode in which you have assumed a leadership role. Provide a written post-episode reflection.

- a. Describe the vignette, clarifying or embellishing the scenario to highlight particular aspects being critiqued. This anecdote should be no less than 800 words. If providing a video, submit the video in electronic form.
- b. Analyze the episode by identifying no fewer than five (5) characteristics that are supported or not supported by current research concerning effective leadership in professional learning. A T-chart format may be used as one method to synthesize some aspects of your analysis.
- c. Summarize the critique by making recommendations concerning the practice (continue as described, continue with modifications, discontinue because practice is not supported by research).

- d. The completed critique should be no less than 6 typed, double-spaced pages in length (excluding reference list).

Grading Criteria.

- Quality of critique
 - Research cited directly relates to practice
 - Analysis and evaluation are supported by research evidence
- Defensibility of recommendations

Suggested due date: February 28, 2016

INQUIRY-BASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PLAN (20%)

Purpose. The purpose of this assignment is to engage students in a process of thinking that will serve as preparation to lead future collaborative inquiry professional learning experiences at the school and/or division level.

Accompanying Required Readings. Townsend & Adams (2009) have written several pieces that focus on the process of collaborative inquiry as professional learning. Cranton (1994) extends these theories in the context of adult learners.

Requirements. Students will be provided a hardcopy Professional Learning Plan. For completion of this assignment.

Grading Criteria.

- Clearly articulated and specific guiding question.
- Thorough description of the strategies involved in answering the research question.
- Reference to the data and evidence that will be used to answer the guiding question.

Suggested due date: March 19, 2016

LITERATURE SYNOPSIS (30%)

Purpose. This assignment will take the form of an academic piece of writing that examines concepts identified in the *Course Content* and authors identified in the *Text/Resources*. Students are encouraged to build familiarity with seminal literature through which they can compare, contrast, and critique the contentions of important authors in the area of leadership, professional learning, and instructional practice.

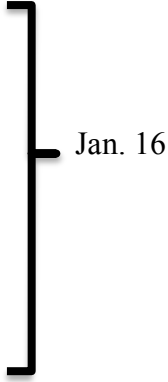
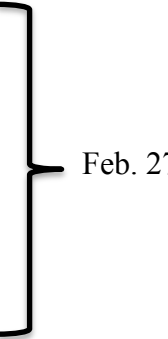
Accompanying Required Readings. The class moodle site contains a reading by Malcolm Knowles that should be taken into consideration in this assignment.



Requirements. Using articles, book chapters, or research studies, identify major concepts posited by the author(s). *Contrast and compare* authors with similar or divergent messages by elaborating upon similarities and differences. Papers are expected to be 10 – 12 double-spaced pages in length (excluding reference list).

Grading Criteria.

- Scholarly approach to writing
 - Succinct, well-defined description of research and/or theory
 - Clear inter-relatedness between authors/concepts
- General quality of writing (organization, structure, grammar)
- Format and adherence to APA style (6)

Suggested due date: No later than April 9, 2016

ASSIGNMENT	REQUIRED READINGS on moodle site	ADDITIONAL (optional) RESOURCES on moodle site	DUE DATE
#1 – Metaphor (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Brown & Moffett <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 1 and 2 ➤ Townsend & Adams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2 ➤ Policy Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TQS • GSE • PQPG Required Viewing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carol Koran 8204 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mezirow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 15 • Audio questions ➤ Wenger <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You tube lecture 	
#2 – Learning Leadership (30%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Townsend & Adams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 4 and 5 ➤ Elmore <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article ➤ Gabriel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 ➤ Palmer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4 and 6 Required Viewing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adams 8121 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Timperley <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article • Audio questions ➤ Mezirow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 • Audio questions ➤ Tian et al <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article • Audio 	

#3 – Learning Plan (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Townsend & Adams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3 ➤ Adams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt ➤ Adams & Townsend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article ➤ Cranton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Timperley <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article • Audio ➤ Knight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 2 • Audio ➤ York-Barr <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 and 2 • Audio 	 March 19
#4 – Literature Synopsis (30%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Knowles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any chapter of book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Elmore <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article • Audio ➤ Male & Palaiologou <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article • Audio ➤ Opfer & Pedder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article • Audio ➤ Schön <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 11 • Audio 	 April 9

GRADING SCHEDULE FOR GRADUATE CLASSES

Numeric Value	Letter Grade	Grade Point
97 – 100	A+	4.00
93 – 96	A	4.00
90 – 92	A-	3.70
87 – 89	B+	3.30
83 – 86	B	3.00
80 – 82	B-	2.70
Note: Any course with a grade of less than B- cannot be considered for credit in a Graduate Studies & Research in Education graduate program.		
77 – 79	C+	2.30
73 – 76	C	2.00
70 – 72	C-	1.70
67 – 69	D+	1.30
63 – 66	D	1.00
<63	F	0.00

APPENDIX A: Negotiation of Assignments

NAME: _____

Assignment Name	Due Date From→To	Weighting From→To	Professor's Endorsement ✓