

University of Lethbridge
Faculty of Education

EDUCATION 5610: Graduate Seminar
LEADERSHIP and PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE
in
CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT
Fall 2015

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The central focus of this course is critical examination of various paradigms of leadership as they apply to professional practice and professional learning. It 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.

Participants' experiences as curriculum and assessment leaders and/or practitioners will guide (a) reflection on the form, function, and intersection of leadership, learning, and practice, (b) examination of the process of social constructivism as it relates to leading collaborative inquiry in curriculum/assessment 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 leader in professional practice around curriculum and assessment?*"

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

Students will demonstrate:

1. An understanding of the role and process of reflective practice
2. Familiarity with a variety of theories of professional development and adult learning
3. Creative thinking in identifying an individual leadership style
4. Skill in facilitating professional collaborative inquiry for self and colleagues
5. Awareness of challenges and limitations of leadership in curriculum and assessment
6. Knowledge and skills specific to academic writing
7. An ability to access, analyze and integrate information from a variety of sources.

COURSE CONTENT

This course invites participants into an investigation of current teaching and leadership practices in Alberta schools, with a focus on enduring issues in initiative implementation in areas such as curriculum and assessment.

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
 - Leadership styles and approaches
 - 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 identity and social capital in school improvement initiatives
- D. Models of Action Inquiry and Professional Growth
 - Role and types of reflective practice and reflexivity
 - Comparing models of action research and collaborative inquiry

TEXT/RESOURCES

Required readings from the following authors will be posted on the course moodle site and should be used to guide successful completion of assignments.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Additionally, students will be encouraged to engage with the leadership ideas offered by:

Elmore, R. (2008). Accountable leadership. *The Educational Forum*, 60(2). DOI: 10.1080/00131720508984677.

Leithwood, K., Patten, S., & Jantzi, D. (2010). Testing a conception of how school leadership influences students learning. *Educational Administrative Quarterly*, 46(5).

Male, T., & Palaiologou, J. (2011). Learning-centred leadership or pedagogical leadership? An alternative approach to leadership in education contexts. *International Journal of Leadership in Education: Theory and Practice*, 15(1), DOI:10.1080/13603124.2011.617839.

Timperley, H. (2011). Knowledge and the leadership of learning. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 10(2), DOI: 10.1080/15700763.2011.557519.

Finally, students will be expected to familiarize themselves with the writing of authors seminal to topics such as reflection, adult learning, communities of practice, and collaborative inquiry. They may include:

Brookfield, S. (1986). *Understanding and facilitating adult learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Knowles, M. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy*. New York: Cambridge.

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: Harvard Business School.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & EVALUATION

The following course requirements are meant to engage students in differentiated, 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 personalized arrangements.**

LEADERSHIP METAPHOR (20%)

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

Requirements. Create a metaphor that describes your formal or informal leadership experiences to this point in your career.

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.

The class moodle site contains a reading by Brown & Moffett (1999) that accompanies this assignment; the reading and the metaphor is one of the requirements that can be prepared in advance. All metaphors will be shared.

Suggested due date: Friday, September 11/2015

Shared posting for classmates no later than Monday, September 21/2015

CRITIQUE: LEADERSHIP IN LEARNING EPISODE (30%)

Purpose. As potential leaders among practitioners, it is important to identify and critique practices in horizontal and vertical leadership. 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 leadership of professional learning.

Requirements. Identify, thoroughly describe, and critique one (1) professional development episode in which you have assumed a leadership role.

- a. Describe the vignette, clarifying or embellishing the scenario to highlight particular aspects being critiqued. This anecdote should be no less than 800 words.

- b. Analyze the episode by identifying no fewer five (5) characteristics that are supported or not supported by current research concerning effective leadership in professional learning. Make specific references to published, refereed research. A t-chart format may be used as one method to synthesize 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 5 typed, double-spaced pages in length (excluding reference list).

Grading Criteria.

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

NOTE: An alternate assignment is possible involving students' videotaping and analyzing themselves in an adult learning leadership role. This may be negotiated with the instructor and indicated on the form in Appendix A.

The class moodle site contains readings by Palmer (1998) and Townsend & Adams (2009) that provide background for this assignment.

Suggested due date: Monday, October 5/2015

INQUIRY-BASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PLAN (20%)

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

Requirements. Students will be provided a Professional Learning Guide template that will facilitate involvement in collaborative inquiry.

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.

The class moodle site contains readings by York-Barr et. al. (2006) and Adams & Townsend (2014) that offer concepts for consideration for this assignment. Professional Learning Guides will be distributed as one possible template to complete this assignment.

Suggested due date: Friday, October 30/2015

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.

Requirements. Using articles, book chapters, or research studies, identify major concepts forwarded 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)

The class moodle site contains a reading by Cranton (1994) that accompanies this assignment.

Suggested due date: Monday, December 7/2015

No later than Friday, December 11/2015

COURSE GRADES

Based on negotiated weightings for each course requirement, final grades will be assigned as follows:

All components within Graduate Studies & Research in Education programs that use a percentage procedure will use the following table for determining the final grade.

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 ✓