

COURSE SYLLABUS

EDUC 5750.W1 Special Institute: Building Learning Organizations

Fall 2004

"Those who dare to teach must never cease to learn." - Socrates

Instructor: Dr. Frances Powell

Phone (904) 645-8355 after 5 p.m. Central Standard Time

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Description: Learning communities bring the collective power of the full staff to bear on improving student achievement. In this course participants will review successful models of collaborative culture, and identify the traits and skills educators will need in order to work together in an environment of trust and professional inquiry. They will explore the complexities of the change process, including dealing with resistance and conflict, and mobilizing support for improvement. They will take a systems approach to organizational learning and uncover the illusions which cause leaders to self-destruct.

Objectives: This course will enable participants to: (a) develop a familiarity with important thinkers who are currently influencing educational leadership and organizational structure. (b) explore research in organizational psychology, organizational culture, group process, systems analysis, and the process of change; (c) read and synthesize written materials on these topics; and (d) conduct an in-depth investigation into critical aspects of building a successful learning organization and present their findings in oral and written form.

Procedures for achieving the objectives: The above objectives will be met through online class activities and assignments, other readings, library research, field studies and reports, a PowerPoint presentation of key concepts of learning organizations, and one in-depth term project.

Readings: Peter Senge, *Schools That Learn*. Doubleday/Currency, New York, 2000. Additional readings will be assigned from Richard DuFour, Margaret Wheatley, and others found in library materials, periodicals (newspapers, professional journals, monographs, etc.) and online resources.

Attendance / participation policy: Class participants are responsible for completing all online class discussion, activities and assignments by posted due dates.

Grading Procedures: Class participants will be evaluated on (a) satisfactory completion of term project; (b) analysis, synthesis and discussion of articles by leading researchers and thinkers; (c) class presentations (PowerPoint) on selected books; and (d) participation in class discussions (including reactions to readings, current topics, peer presentations), group activities and other online assignments.

Topical Overview, Activities, and Readings: (subject to change)

1. Introduction to and overview of the course; What is a "Learning Organization?"
(*Readings: Senge: Part I Orientation.*)

2. The Five Disciplines overview with emphasis on the “ladder of inference” and systems thinking. (*Readings: Senge: Part II A Primer to the Five Disciplines.*)
3. Research and resources. (*Assigned reading*)
4. A professional approach to professional development. Discussion of *Part X Current Reality* and *Part XI Development* (pages 325 to 410 in the text.)
5. The role of communications in building learning organizations. (*Assigned reading*)
6. Building Trust. ERIC search results due. (*Instructors materials and assigned reading*)
7. The Learning Cycle. (*Assigned Reading*)
8. The anatomy of change and dealing with resistance. (*Readings from Senge and Instructor’s materials*)
9. School culture. (*Readings from DuFour*)
10. Models for analyzing systems. (*Readings from Senge and others*)
11. Leadership without control. (*Instructor’s materials and assigned readings from Senge.*)
12. Shared vision in the classroom, school and community. (*Readings from Senge and others*)
13. Dignity, respect and sustainability. (*Assigned readings and Instructor’s materials*)
14. Transforming the classroom; Term project due. (*Readings from Senge and DuFour*)
15. Community connections and review of term projects. (*Readings from Senge and DuFour*)
16. Course summary and evaluation; discussion of term projects.

The five disciplines of a learning organization: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning.

Updated: 8/20/03 Subject to change