

Syllabus

EADU 4200

Organizational Learning in the Workplace

University of Georgia, Department of Adult Education
Spring, 2004
Wednesdays, 5:00-7:45, Gwinnett University Center

Course Instructor and Contact Information

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By appointment

Course Description:

Concepts of human relations, group dynamics, organizational behavior, and organizational development. Emphasis on how individuals and groups impact organizational systems.

Course Purpose:

The purpose of this course is to examine organizational learning processes in the workplace. We will explore individual, group and organizational learning theories and practices. We will also consider the contextual factors that influence learning in the workplace such as power, positionality, diversity and globalization. We will create a learning community to safely explore the theoretical and practical issues of organizational learning in the workplace.

The word "community" has old roots, going back to the Indo-European base mei, meaning "change" or "exchange." Apparently this joined with another root, kom, meaning "with" to produce and Indo-European word kommein: shared by all. Thus, a learning community is a "change or exchange shared by all." (The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook, Senge et al, 1993, p. 509).

Course Goals. In general, this course strives to help you:

- Explore basic theories of organizational learning and apply them to the educator, learner, learning process and context.
- Explore basic practices of organizational learning as they relate to the educator, learner, learning process and context.
- Develop skills to enhance your effectiveness as a facilitator of organizational learning as they relate to yourself (as an educator), the learner, the learning process and the context.

Course Objectives. Specifically, upon completion of the course you should be able to:

1. Recognize and dialogue about key concepts and scholarship significant to organizational learning in the workplace.
2. Develop strategies for facilitating organizational learning on individual, group and organizational levels.
3. Distinguish between the learning organization and organizational learning.
4. Describe at least 5 models of the learning organization.
5. Explain how social, institutional, and other contextual factors affect organizational learning in the workplace.
6. Examine and practice multiculturally sensitive instructional techniques and methods for diverse adult learners.
7. Engage as both individual and community learners, critical thinkers and reflective practitioners.
8. Hone your skills in F2F (face-to-face) and virtual (WebCT) contexts.

Methodology. The course will be organized and facilitated in the following ways:

1. One goal of this course is to create a learning community where everyone can safely explore the theory and practice of adult learning. We will strive to create and enhance a learning community in both the class and www formats and expect you to support a constructive, and democratic learning community.
2. You are expected to use the skills of inquiry, dialogue, and action learning to accomplish our goals and objectives and when discussing issues whether on WebCT or in F2F (face-to-face) sessions.
3. Each class session will include a balanced exploration of theory and practice through discussion, "stories", simulation, reflection, and experiential exercises.
4. You will receive folders as one vehicle for facilitating communication between us during F2F class sessions. You will receive your folder at the beginning of each class session. It will contain new information and returned assignments. You will

have the folder to work with during class. At the end of each class the folder is returned to Laura with any assignments and/or comments you have.

5. The use of cell phones is not permitted during class. If you bring a cell phone to class, you are expected to turn the ringer off and manage your telephone calls during scheduled breaks.
6. Everyone will have an opportunity to evaluate each class and provide direct feedback. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate your suggestions and resolve concerns. Changes may be negotiated providing they do not compromise the original purpose, goals, and objectives of the course. There will also be a midpoint evaluation to assess our process on a more formal level.
7. You are expected to ask fresh questions and keep our inquiry rigorous and lively.
8. You are expected to be active learners and assume responsibility for learning and discovery, as well as question the intentions of the instructor and colleagues.
9. In the event that you must miss class, it is your responsibility to make arrangements with your colleagues to review the session. Follow-up questions should be directed to Laura.

Persons with Disabilities

I am committed to doing whatever is necessary to make this learning experience as fulfilling as possible for people who may have special needs due to a disability, whether visible or invisible. If there is anything I can do--such as providing materials in alternative formats, assuring physical access to class sessions, or being sensitive to interaction difficulties that may be posed by communication and/or learning disabilities--please take time to discuss your concerns with me early in the semester so we can work together to make the necessary accommodations for you. Please know that anything you discuss with me in this regard will be held in strictest confidence.

Attendance Policy

Because you are adults, the course design is based on the assumption that each of you is a resource person as well as a learner and that each of us has a responsibility to contribute to the group's learning as well as our own. Practically, this means that if you miss a class then all class members have lost your unique contribution. However, I do recognize that all of you have complex lives and other responsibilities intrude on your attendance from time to time. Based on these realities, here is the attendance policy:

- You are expected to attend each class prepared by completing the assigned readings and written assignments. This will make for the most effective class for everybody.
- It is expected that you will:
 - Prepare for all class sessions
 - Attend all class sessions
 - Arrive on time for class (at start and following breaks)
 - Actively participate in all class activities, conversations and assignments
 - Reflect on your experience and learning
 - Participate regularly and substantively on the class website

- Raise questions and observations about material
- Share your learning with colleagues
- Learn and have fun with the course
- Challenge each other constructively (we all learn from this)
- Listen to each other
- Modify these expectations as appropriate
- If you must miss a session, please let Laura know in advance so that she can adjust the instructional plan for the session. If a paper is due on the day you miss, you are still responsible for turning in the paper on the due date.
- If you must miss more than two classes or anticipate late arrivals, please do not register for this class. Your absences will be too disruptive, especially for the effective functioning in-class exercises. Your alternatives are:
 1. not to take the course and find a substitute that is acceptable to your advisor
 2. take it next time it is offered.
- Chronic absences and tardiness will negatively impact your final grade.
- The class schedule is as follows:

Week	Date	Format
1	January 14	F2F
2	January 21	F2F
3	January 28	F2F
4	February 4	WebCT
5	February 11	F2F
6	February 18	WebCT
7	February 25	WebCT
8	March 3	F2F
9	March 10	Spring Break
10	March 17	F2F
11	March 24	WebCT
12	March 31	F2F
13	April 7	WebCT
14	April 14	WebCT
15	April 21	F2F
16	April 28	F2F

General Writing Guidelines for Assignments

- Double-space type all academically written material (i.e. research papers, literature reviews, etc.).
- Use business writing style as needed (when writing is stylized to appeal to stakeholders in the organization you are working with). Business writing is generally single-spaced with an appropriate use of headers, bullets and blank space that enhances the communication of your message. Even when using "business style," it is still expected that you will follow APA (American Psychological Association) Manual rules. There is some guidance on the website, but it is also advisable to purchase the APA 5th Edition style manual.
- Follow the APA Manual, 5th Edition for style and citation guidelines.
- Use inclusive language (that means avoiding the exclusive use of masculine pronouns when referring to men and women) in your writing.
- You may submit paper or electronic versions of your work. **I will not accept electronic versions unless they are posted to WebCT** (either via the dropbox or WebCT email). In other words, do not mail them to my regular UGA email account.
- Do not use slipcover or protector pages on written work. It makes providing written feedback difficult.
- Ensure that the quality of your written work reflects the quality of your paper's content. Correct grammar and spelling errors, as well as awkward or unclear sentences and paragraphs before the final paper is submitted.
- Quality written assignments generally meet the following criteria:
 - Includes the title and name of the author at the beginning of the paper.
 - Clearly identifies the question being addressed or the purpose of the paper.
 - Provides an overview of the structure and organization in the introductory section of the paper.
 - Defines key terms, concepts and slogans.
 - Gives examples when they enhance the understanding of the concept being discussed.
 - Applies theory from the assigned readings or elsewhere.
 - Demonstrates the ability to self-reflect and discover core values and beliefs.
 - Considers implications and/or consequences.
 - Provides a strong summary and conclusion.

Assignments

Books and Readings

Required Reading

1. Fenwick, Tara (2001). Sociocultural perspectives on learning through work. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no. 92. San Francisco: Jossey- Bass
2. Rowden, Robert. (1996). *Workplace learning: Debating five critical questions of theory and practice*. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, No. 72. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
3. Senge, P. M., Ross, R., Smith, B., Roberts, C. & Kleiner, A. (1994). *The fifth discipline fieldbook: Strategies and tools for building a learning organization*. New York: Doubleday Currency.
4. Readings available via Online Reserve (some optional). Password "learning."

Recommended Readings

- Burgoyne, J., Pedler, M. and Boydell, T. (eds.) (1994) *Towards the Learning Company: Concepts and Practices*. London: McGraw-Hill.
- Fritz, R. (1989). *The path of least resistance: Learning to become the creative force in your own life*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Marquardt, Michael J.(1996) *Building the Learning Organization*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Senge, Peter M. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. Doubleday/Currency, New York. 1990.
- Watkins, Karen E. and Marsick, Victoria J. (1994) *Sculpting the Learning Organization: Lessons in the Art of Systemic Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Wheatley, M. (1992) . *Leadership and the new science: Learning about organization from an orderly universe*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Assignments Summary

This course will involve a variety of individual and group projects, papers, mini-lectures, small and large group discussions, and individual readings. Overall course requirements are as follows:

1. Active participation in class discussions and activities (F2F and online)
2. Completion of the assigned readings by the due date
3. Completion of the learning activities related to the course objectives

Assignments Summary			
Assignment	Due Date	Possible Points	Actual Points
1. Organizational Learning Strategy (online or F2F)	As Assigned	10	
2. Organization Learning versus Learning Organization Paper	3-03-04	15	
3. Personal Learning Reflection	3-24-04	20	
4. Organization Learning Project (Individual)	4-14-04	25	
5. Organization Learning Assessment (Group)	4-21-04	30	
Total		100	

Description of Course Assignments

1. Organization Learning Strategy [due as assigned; 10 points]

The purpose of this exercise is to give you the opportunity to research and facilitate an exercise to help individuals, teams or organizations reflect on organizational learning issues. Individuals will be responsible for researching, documenting, and modeling the organization learning strategy of your choice. The modeling will be done either in a F2F class or on WebCT, depending on the week you are scheduled. The strategy should be short, **taking approximately 15 minutes**. Dates for interventions will be assigned at the beginning of the semester. Refer to the template for presentation guidelines (below).

Your presentation and written information should include:

1. Overview of purpose and objectives
2. Facilitation guidelines

3. Use considerations
4. Modeling of the intervention (participative!!)
5. Citation(s)

You will be evaluated on:

1. Successfully executing the strategy, and
2. Providing an electronic copy of the facilitation information.

All strategies will be posted on WebCT for your reference as an instructional toolbox.

2. Organization Learning versus Learning Organization Paper [due 3-03-04; 15 points]

The purpose of this assignment is for you to compare and contrast the concepts of "organization learning" and "the learning organization." Your paper should incorporate reviews of relevant research citing no fewer than 5 scholarly sources. A scholarly source is a peer-reviewed research journal such as *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *Adult Education Quarterly*, *Human Resource Development Review*, *The International Journal of Lifelong Education*, etc. To a limited extent, you may also use academic text books as sources. The paper should include the following:

1. Introduction
2. Literature search strategy
3. Comparison and contrast of OL and LO
4. Implications for practice and research
5. Conclusion
6. Bibliography following APA 5th Edition Citation rules

The paper will be graded according to the writing guidelines set forth in the Methods and Policies Section of the Syllabus. In addition the paper should include:

- at least 5 sources with correct citations
- an organized and cogent presentation of ideas
- linkages between the theory and practice
- APA compliance

3. Personal Learning Reflection [due 3-24-04; 20 points]

The purpose of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to reflect on your own personal learning processes and how they impact organization learning. The paper might include:

- An organization learning philosophy statement
- Analysis of personal structures that impact learning
- A surfacing of mental models
- An example of a ladder of inference you have climbed
- An example of a left-hand column

You will be evaluated according to the writing guidelines put forth in the policies/methods section of the syllabus, as well as the depth of your reflection and analysis.

4. Organizational Learning Project (Individual) [Due 4-06-04; 20 Points]

The purpose of this assignment is for you to apply organization learning principles to a real-life organization. You should work with an organization (your place of work, worship, or community or social organization) to implement a short project related to promoting organization learning. It is up to you to design, facilitate and evaluate the project and write a paper describing the project. Your final paper should include:

1. Introduction
 1. Organization context
 2. Your relationship/role
 3. Problem or issue the learning project is intended to address
2. Detailed description of your intervention
 1. Describe intervention
 2. Identify source(s)
 3. Explain the development and facilitation of the intervention
3. Evaluation of the intervention
 1. Your personal assessment
 2. Feedback from participants (as appropriate)
 3. Assessment against literature
4. Recommendations for practice
5. Conclusion

5. Organization Learning Assessment (Group Presentation) [paper due 4-21-04, presentation due 4-28-04; 30 points (15 each)]

One way to bring some of the literature on organization learning "alive" is to find out what organizations are doing in this area. This assignment is designed to provide the opportunity to learn more about organization learning interventions and the practitioners working in this area. This assignment has two parts, the first is a group paper, the second is a group presentation. The paper will detail your findings, and the presentation will share your findings with the other participants of this class.

Guidelines:

1. You will form a group.
2. Your group should identify an organization that is actively pursuing organization learning or the learning organization. The group does not necessarily have to be local, however, this would be to an advantage.
3. You should do research on the organization and include this in your paper, particularly information you learn about its organizational learning processes.
4. You should interview members of the organization to learn their perspectives on the OL process.
5. You should synthesize your findings from the research and interviews and document them in a paper.
6. The paper (**due April 21, 2004**) should compare your findings with the literature and research on organization learning in the workplace. Did the information confirm or contradict what you know about organization learning? Was anything surprising? What are some possible implications for OL? Your paper should include:
 - o Introduction
 - o Description of the organization
 - o Description of data collection process
 - o Description of findings
 - o Analysis of findings according to OL and LO literature
7. Prepare a presentation with your group to be shared on **April 28, 2004**. The presentation should package your findings for the class.

You will be evaluated based on how well you follow the guidelines for the assignment and writing (presented under course methods and policies).

Guidelines* for the Presentation

(*The operative word here is "guidelines." Please use this as a general guide, but feel free to infuse your creativity!!!!)

1. Share the themes that emerged during your interviews
2. Offer some conclusions:
 - o Similarities
 - o Differences
 - o Instructional strategies
 - o Challenges
 - o Other observations
3. Make linkages with adult learning and instruction theory and other literature we've covered this semester.
4. Showcase your strategies for making learning active. In other words, make this participative.

A Quick Format for Presenting

1. Introduction
 - o Overview
 - o Ice breaker
2. Middle
 - o Core content
 - o Exercises
3. Conclusion
 - o Wrap-up
 - o Evaluation

Timing

- Strict adherence to the **30-minute time limit** will be required.
- You will receive alerts at **15 minutes, 5 minutes and 0 minutes.**
- You should allow time for questions in the 30 minutes.

Evaluation Criteria (points each):

1. Themes and integration with course content (5)
2. Presentation (2.5)
3. Organization (2.5)
4. Active Facilitation (5)

Grading Criteria and Standards

Criteria on which your papers are graded:

- Did you address the question(s)?
- Did you incorporate the readings in answering the question(s)?
- Did you formulate your response in an organized, logical fashion, including APA?
- Did you incorporate the "4 R's"?:
 1. Rigorous
 2. Robust
 3. Relevant
 4. Referenced

Grading Standards	
Grade	Points
A	91 to 100
B	81 to 90
C	71-80
D	Problems
F	Big Problems
I	My policy is not to give a grade of "I" (incomplete), except in the rare case of a medical emergency. You should turn in whatever you have written by and your grade will be based on that document.