

EDEC/EDEL/EDMS 6000/9000

Fall 2008

**Learning Communities for Teachers, Parents, and Students
Focused on Inquiry and Diversity**

Tuesdays 5-7:45

Room 412 Aderhold

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Office hours by appointment

Overview

Masters, specialist and doctoral students are invited to participate in a study of theoretical and case-based understandings emerging from Lave's and Wenger's (1991) text on *situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation*, Wenger's (1998) text on *communities of practice*, and Gutierrez's (2003; 2005; 2006) writings on *repertoires of cultural practices* and *third spaces*. The goal of our work together will be to investigate and imagine the resources that teachers, parents, and students in diverse contexts might draw on to negotiate meanings, identities, memberships and practices in learning communities designed to bridge boundaries and facilitate dialogue among different players/learners in school and community contexts.

Lave's and Wenger's *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* and Wenger's *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity* and readings from Gutierrez (see below) will serve as the foundation for development of a theoretical and conceptual framework that we will then use to examine case studies focused specifically on teacher, parent and student learning communities of practice. We will also use the frameworks to consider ways that interconnections among teachers, parents and students might be fostered and to problematize and engage with issues of equity, power, and social justice evident in *boundary practices* in learning communities of practice.

We will use Watkins' text on classrooms as learning communities as a vehicle for exploring the application of the theoretical and conceptual framework in a classroom context and to critically examine possibilities and constraints for developing inclusive and dynamic learning communities in our own classroom contexts.

Students will choose to focus on one of the three groups of participants (teachers, parents, or students) in an inquiry into current case-based understandings of learning communities and directions for future research. In addition, each student will develop either (a) a proposal for research with learning communities or (b) a proposal for development of a learning community with a particular constituency and context or (c) a project negotiated with the instructor.

The conceptual framework for educator preparation programs in the College of Education states that the college "aspires to prepare exemplary, reflective professionals to serve a diverse global community" (see <http://ncate.coe.uga.edu/framework>). The early childhood, middle school and social studies programs shares that aspiration and seek to prepare exemplary and reflective teacher educators by committing itself to the ethics and standards for early childhood education, middle school education and social studies education of the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (see 505.3-17 at <http://TTT.gapsc.com/TeacherEducation/Rules/Rules.asp>).

Course Texts

Gutiérrez, K. (2006) *Culture matters: Rethinking educational equity*. New York: Carnegie Foundation.
(available on the Web)

Gutiérrez, K. (April, 2005). Intersubjectivity and grammar in the Third Space. Scribner Award Talk.
Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montréal, Québec.
(available on the Web)

Gutiérrez, K., & Rogoff, B. (2003). Actual ways of learning: Individual traits or repertoires of practice?
Educational Researcher, 32(5), pp. 19-25.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. New York, NY:
Cambridge University Press.

Watkins, C. (2005). *Classrooms as learning communities: What's in it for schools?* Rutledge.

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York, NY:
Cambridge University Press.

Supplemental/optional Texts

Delgado-Gaitan, C. (2001). *The power of community: Mobilizing for family and schooling*. Lanham,
Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

McLaughlin, M., & Talbert, J.E. (2006). *Building school-based teacher learning communities:
Professional strategies to improve student achievement*. Teachers College Press.

Weissglass, J. (1998). *Ripples of hope: Building relationships for educational change*. Santa Barbara,
CA: National Coalition for Equity in Education (ncee.education.ucsb.edu).

Web-CT and Galileo on-line resources outlined in course schedule.

Course Requirements

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|---|-------------|
| 1. Participation in and facilitation of our class learning community | 15% |
| 2. Weekly in-class quick writes-personal learning community of practice case. | 15% |
| 3. Midterm in-class essay-theoretical and conceptual framework. | 25% |
| 4. Research or learning community of practice proposal. (book study in class) | 35% |
| 5. Final reflection/evaluation of our class learning community. | 10% |
| Total | 100% |

1. Participation (15%)

This class will be taught through dialogue and a variety of interactive processes including dyads, support groups and Theater of the Oppressed dramatic activities, with much of the time devoted to reaction, reflection, application, and discussion of readings as we learn from each other. We all share responsibility to make the class session relevant and meaningful. We will work together to create our

own class learning community of practice, applying the concepts and practices we are learning about together. In order for that to happen, you will need to attend class sessions, prepare the readings and contribute equally to the work of small group activities. We will be regularly doing reflective quick writes in class and will post resources and materials to share on WebCT. We will also be developing correspondence with colleagues, teachers and students in schools, and authors we are reading as part of our work together.

Multilingual, crosscultural, multinational, interdisciplinary nature of our work

We will include educators from a variety of backgrounds and national origins in our course learning community. Students will draw on resources in their native languages as well as English and assignments and projects can be developed bilingually. We will be drawing on a wide range of disciplinary traditions from anthropology to sociology to philosophy to physical education and the arts, including drama. We will also draw on students' interest and experience with different content areas including social studies, English for Speakers of Other Languages, mathematics, physical education, and language arts.

Writing and Evaluation Criteria

Writings for the course will be assessed both on what you write (your essential ideas) and how well you write (how articulately and effectively your ideas are conveyed). Doctoral students should include research reviews and theoretical rationales that reflect readings beyond basic course requirements in each of the following assignments: Midterm in-class writing; research or learning community proposal. APA style should be used for all references to readings, research and texts.

2. In-class quick writes-personal learning community of practice case description (15%; last revision will take place December 9th in class)

We will be working on writing these cases in and out of class throughout the semester. Plan to add and elaborate as we explore new concepts and elements related to communities of practice in our readings. You will be reading and responding to each other's developing case descriptions in order to learn from each other.

3. Midterm in-class writing (25%; October 14th)

Students will have an opportunity to synthesize and integrate their learning to this point regarding personal perspectives on legitimate peripheral participation and learning communities and theoretical and conceptual frameworks integrating these ideas. Students will bring notes and resources to draw on and will work in computer labs or on laptops.

4. Proposal or Project (35%; Proposal sketch due 9/19; Final proposal/project due 12/9 or 12/11)

This assignment will be part of your work throughout the semester. An outline of your proposal or project will be due September 19th. The final proposal/project will be due to be posted to webct and to be presented in class on December 9th or 11th. Peers will post responses in webct on either December 9th or 11th.

Students can choose from one of the following options:

- a. **A proposal for research with learning communities of practice.**
- b. **A proposal for development of a learning community of practice with a particular constituency and context.**
- c. **An observation/notetaking/analysis project with a learning community of practice.**
- d. **Other project of your choice, to be discussed with and approved by instructor.**

5. Reflection/evaluation of class learning community (10%; due 12/11)

Course Schedule

T 8/19 **Exploring Concepts of Communities of Practice**

Course introduction, group Work, co-course planning, project planning
In-class jigsaw: Apprenticeship cases from Lave and Wenger 67-84

T 8/26 Pages 11-58 Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

T 9/2 Pages 61-123 Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

T 9/9 Pages 1-50 Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL SKETCH DUE

T 9/16 Pages 50-85 Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

T 9/23 Pages 86-142 Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

T 9/30 Pages 143-187 Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

T 10/7 Pages 188-240 Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

T 10/14 Pages 263-278 Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

T 10/28 **In Class-MIDTERM/Essay writing**

T 11/4 Pages 1-65 Watkins, C. (2005). *Classrooms as learning communities: What's in it for schools?* Rutledge.

Book Study Groups /Guest Speakers

T 11/11 Pages 66-135 Watkins, C. (2005). *Classrooms as learning communities: What's in it for schools?* Rutledge.

Book Study Groups/ /Guest Speakers

T 11/18 Pages 136-198 Watkins, C. (2005). *Classrooms as learning communities: What's in it for schools?* Rutledge.

Book Study Groups/Guest Speakers

T 12/2 **Constructing Learning Communities of Practice-Final Reflections**

T 12/9 **Consultations**

Final Proposal/Project Poster Presentation in Class with Feedback

OR

Outside of Class Final Project Presentation

FINAL PROPOSAL DUE TO BE POSTED IN WEBCT/POST RESPONSES TO PEERS

T 12/11 **Consultations**

Final Proposal/Project Poster Presentation in Class with Feedback

OR

Outside of Class Final Proposal Presentation

FINAL PROPOSAL DUE TO BE POSTED IN WEBCT/POST RESPONSES TO PEERS

In this course the University's academic honesty policy is in effect. It is the responsibility of each student to become familiar with this policy and to follow it.

The preceding course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

These items of information (among others) were suggested for inclusion in the syllabus by The University Council, and communicated by Dean William F. Prokasy, Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, UGA, in a memorandum dated July 16, 1991, Attachment L.