

# Teacher Leadership in Professional Learning Communities

GRADES K–12

GRADUATE CREDIT: 3 SEMESTER HOURS

Educators discover how to extend the scope of their influence, from working with peers to engaging school and community stakeholders. They also learn the processes, benefits, and challenges of building and working in professional learning communities, and they identify issues and address problems that affect student learning and achievement.

*This course is designed for K–12 classroom teachers, lead teachers, and content-area teachers.*

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## COURSE TOPICS

- Introduction to learning communities
- Collaborative culture
- Professional learning communities: a model for implementation
- Professional learning communities for student learning and intervention
- Professional learning communities: results-driven orientation
- Overcoming potential obstacles
- The broader context: technology and learning communities

## COURSE OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, educators will:

- Describe the effect of learning communities on the role of teachers.
- Explain the relationship between learning communities and teacher leadership opportunities.
- Analyze their school using stages of learning-community development.
- Discuss the purpose and role of communication in a learning community.
- Examine how incorporating learning communities changes school culture.
- Compare and contrast their school's collaboration with collaboration in a learning community.
- Construct an opinion on the need for collaboration that occurs in a learning community.
- Analyze their school's developmental stage related to mission, vision, values, goals, and communication.
- Discuss the use of individualized assessment and common assessment and how to balance the use of these forms of assessment.
- Determine the use of inquiry stance to enhance assessment.
- Analyze their school's developmental stage related to clarity, assessment, and systematic intervention.
- Evaluate forms and use of data.
- Analyze their school's developmental stage related to goal setting and data use to inform decision making.
- Analyze their beliefs on the role of the teacher leader in the change process.
- Summarize their understandings of the goals, purposes, and characteristics of a learning community.
- Synthesize their objective analysis of their school using the Professional Learning Community Continuum and propose suggestions for addressing identified weaknesses.
- Explain the effect learning communities have on school culture and the implications for the teacher leader in creating social change.
- Evaluate the role of online learning communities in facilitating collaboration and professional development.
- Reflect on their learning in this course and consider how mentoring, coaching, and collaboration can expand their sphere of teacher leadership influence in their school community.

## TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

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### METHODS OF ASSESSMENT

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This course provides numerous opportunities to apply research-based concepts and theory to practical teaching situations. Assessment is conducted in the following ways:

- **Activities** are short assessments that help educators explore concepts and make connections between the content and their teaching practice. Some activities are ungraded but serve to prepare educators for other graded assignments. Any ungraded activities are clearly marked as such.
- **Study Team Discussions (print & DVD) or Dialogue Summaries (online)** allow educators to share ideas about the course content with other teachers, then ask them to analyze and summarize the discussion, and then describe how their understanding of the topic has been enhanced or expanded.
- **Applications** assist educators in applying the theories, concepts, and strategies to their teaching practice.
- **Quizzes** provide educators with instant feedback (online only) on their understanding of the course material. There are three quizzes, each reviewing several sections of content.
- The **Final Reflection** requires educators to synthesize the content and reflect on their key learnings throughout the course.

### COURSE MATERIALS AND FORMAT

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Course texts, websites, and journal articles help facilitate learning and transfer theory into practice. Video programs feature interviews with nationally recognized education experts. Classroom scenes provide a view into the classrooms of master teachers who demonstrate the strategies taught in the course. This course is offered in two distance-learning formats: print & DVD and online. Educators select one format when they enroll.

#### PRINT & DVD FORMAT

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Educators in the print & DVD version of the course receive printed materials to facilitate their learning. This version of the course requires educators to form a study team. The educator must have at least one study partner or peer coach, preferably another educator, to complete activities, engage in discussion, and seek feedback. It is not necessary that the study partner be enrolled in the course. Educators enrolled in the print & DVD version should have Internet access in order to connect with the many websites that are offered as learning resources. Assignments are submitted via email. The print & DVD course includes:

→ The print study guide:

- *Teacher Leadership in Professional Learning Communities*

→ The DVD:

- Laureate Education, Inc. (Executive Producer). (2008). *Teacher leadership in professional learning communities*. Baltimore: Executive Producer.

→ The course textbook(s):

- DuFour, R.; DuFour, R.; Eaker, R.; and Many, T. (2006). *Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities at work* (2nd ed.). Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.
- McLaughlin, M., and Talbert, E. (2006). *Building school-based teacher learning communities: Professional strategies to improve student achievement*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

→ The other required readings

#### ONLINE FORMAT

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Educators in the online version of the course access the course content via an online classroom. Educators are required to participate in virtual discussions with fellow educators via a discussion board. The course textbook is shipped to educators, but the video programs and other resources are available within the online classroom. Assignments are submitted through the online classroom. The online course includes:

→ Access to the online classroom for:

- *Teacher Leadership in Professional Learning Communities*

→ Access to the video programs in the online classroom as well as a backup DVD:

- Laureate Education, Inc. (Executive Producer). (2008). *Teacher leadership in professional learning communities*. Baltimore: Executive Producer.

→ The course textbook(s):

- DuFour, R.; DuFour, R.; Eaker, R.; and Many, T. (2006). *Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities at work* (2nd ed.) Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.
- McLaughlin, M., and Talbert, E. (2006). *Building school-based teacher learning communities: Professional strategies to improve student achievement*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

→ Access to the other required readings

### SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS FOR ONLINE COURSE FORMAT:

- Operating system for PC: Windows® XP, Windows Vista®, or Windows® 7
- Operating system for Mac®: OS X or higher
- Processor: 1 GHz, 32/64 bit or higher
- Memory: Minimum 512 MB of RAM; 1 GB recommended
- Browser: Microsoft Internet Explorer® 6.0 or higher; Firefox® 3.6 (also for Mac®: Apple® Safari® 4 or higher)
- Internet connection: Broadband (DSL, cable modem, or similar) required
- Software: Microsoft Word®, Adobe® Flash® Player 7 or higher (free), Adobe® Acrobat® Reader® version 8 or higher (free)
- Monitor resolution: 1280 x 800 pixels or higher

**Note:** If you are using a Macintosh®, please be sure to download Mozilla® Firefox® 3.6. It's free, and the download should take only a few minutes at [www.mozilla.org](http://www.mozilla.org).

#### Trademark Information

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- Mozilla and Firefox are registered trademarks of the Mozilla Foundation.
- Adobe, Flash, and Acrobat Reader are registered trademarks of Adobe Systems Incorporated in the United States and/or other countries.

## EDUCATION EXPERTS

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### Linda Darling-Hammond, Ed.D.

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond is the Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education at Stanford University, where she serves as principal investigator for the School Redesign Network and is a director of the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute. She was the founding executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, which produced the widely cited 1996 blueprint for education reform, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*. Dr. Darling-Hammond's work focuses on educational policy, teaching and teacher education, school restructuring, and educational equity. Among her more than 200 publications are *The Right To Learn*, which received the 1998 Outstanding Book Award from the American Educational Research Association, and (as co-editor) *Teaching as the Learning Profession: A Handbook of Policy and Practice*, which was awarded the National Staff Development Council's Outstanding Book Award in 2000.

### Richard DuFour, Ed.D.

Dr. Richard DuFour was a public school educator for 34 years. He was principal of Adlai E. Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Ill., from 1983 to 1991 and superintendent of the district from 1991 to 2002. During his tenure, Stevenson became "the most recognized and celebrated high school in the United States," according to the U.S. Department of Education. Stevenson has been repeatedly cited in the popular press as one of America's best schools and referenced in professional literature as an exemplar of best practices in education. Dr. DuFour has consulted with school districts, state departments, and professional organizations throughout North America on strategies for improving schools. He is the author/co-author of six books, including *Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn*.

### Linda Lambert, Ed.D.

Dr. Linda Lambert is professor emeritus at California State University, Hayward, and president of Lambert Leadership Development. She has served as a teacher, principal, district director, and coordinator of leadership academies. Dr. Lambert is the author of *The Constructivist Leader, Who Will Save Our Schools?*, and *Building Leadership Capacity in Schools*. Her major research areas involve constructivist leadership, leadership capacity, teacher leadership, school and system improvement, and women in leadership.



### ABOUT CANTER

Canter, a subsidiary of Laureate Education, Inc., is committed to serving the educational community with high-quality, graduate-level courses that blend research-based theory with practical strategies. Canter began with one groundbreaking guide on managing behavior in the classroom and, more than 35 years later, has helped more than 300,000 educators address the most critical issues in education while advancing their careers.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about Canter graduate-level courses, visit [www.Canter.net](http://www.Canter.net) or call 1-800-669-9011.

### ABOUT OUR PARTNERSHIP

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Canter offers its courses in partnership with Walden University, allowing you to benefit from Canter's quality curriculum in a self-paced format, while earning graduate credit from a leading accredited university.\* The course curriculum is developed and designed by Canter in collaboration with national education experts, while graduate credit is granted through Walden University, which assesses student work. Credit may be applicable for certification renewal and/or salary advancement.<sup>†</sup> Course credit may be transferable with prior approval from the university providing your advanced degree or planned program.

### Walden University

The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership at Walden University is a **National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)**–accredited college dedicated to enhancing educator effectiveness. As a recognized standard of excellence in professional education for the preparation of teachers, administrators, and other pre-K–12 school professionals, NCATE accreditation ensures the college has met rigorous national standards set by the profession and members of the public.

The college, named for the former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, was identified by *U.S. News & World Report* as having the largest online graduate program in education by enrollment (May 2010). Walden students were awarded the fourth most TEACH Grants to students nationwide in 2010–2011, according to the U.S. Department of Education. The choice of more than 53,000 students and alumni, including more than 80 state teachers of the year, the college is also a proud partner of the National Education Association (NEA) Academy and a year-round sponsor of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Walden University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and a member of the North Central Association, [www.ncahlc.org](http://www.ncahlc.org). Canter and Walden University are both subsidiaries of Laureate Education, Inc.

\*Prospective Washington state students are advised to contact the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at 1-360-725-6275 or [prof.educ@k12.wa.us](mailto:prof.educ@k12.wa.us) to determine whether Walden's programs in the field of education are approved for teacher certification or endorsements in Washington state. Additionally, teachers are advised to contact their individual school district as to whether this program may qualify for salary advancement.

<sup>†</sup>It is each student's responsibility to check with his or her state/district and evaluate and understand any requirements related to the use of individual courses for any purpose.