

**EDUC 600**  
**Designing Professional Learning Communities**

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**Course Syllabus**

**Credit**

This course is available for one professional development graduate credit.

**Text**

DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & Many, T. (2006). *Learning by doing*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

**Description**

This course accompanies the North Dakota Curriculum Initiative's Spring Meeting at the Kelly Inn on April 26-27, 2007 in Bismarck, North Dakota. The purpose of this course and the meeting will be to answer the questions: (1) What are professional learning communities? and (2) How do they work?

**Objectives**

Participants will

- Become familiar with the four critical questions that guide purposeful learning communities.
- Engage in self-reflection and discussion about their current practice related to this school/district improvement framework.
- Be prepared to initiate conversations in their districts about forming Professional (Purposeful) Learning Communities.
- Be introduced to the aspects of Professional Learning Community work that is being implemented in North Dakota.
- Learn about district models of professional learning communities at the elementary, middle and high school.
- Discuss the issue of time and possible solutions.
- Engage in self-reflection and discussion about how districts can lead a change initiative to establish professional learning communities.

**Course requirements**

- All assigned meeting activities
- Full and active participation during two-day meeting
- Completion of a reflective essay assignment

## Reflective Essay Assignment

The reflective essay will show commitment to the implementation of the participant's new knowledge and comprehension of PLCs by summarizing the knowledge gained and describing how the participant plans to use the information. The essay must include the following:

### Part I

A goal statement (1-2 paragraphs) defining how attending the NDCI Spring Meeting on *Designing Professional Learning Communities* is related to your professional goals. It should include specific outcomes and personal benefits expected from attending the meeting.

### Part II

A reflective essay of **300-500 words** summarizing your conference experience based on your goals (from Part 1). Include a description of how you plan to use the information you gained at the conference in your educational setting. **Note:** Essays not meeting the 300 word minimum will be returned, resulting in an incomplete grade.

It must be word processed and sent by **Friday, May 11, 2007** to

NDSU Distance and Continuing Education  
Attention: Lisa McNamara  
PO Box 5819  
Fargo, ND 58105-5819

## Evaluation plan components

- Activities
- Participation
- Essay

## Task-Specific Rubric

Grade	Description
A	All meeting activities completed as assigned. Full participation and active involvement in the two-day meeting demonstrated by daily table discussions, including posing questions, critically listening, and making quality contributions. The reflective essay is a high quality summary and synthesis of concepts, describes how the participant's new knowledge will be used, and has been organized in a professional fashion.
C	Some of the meeting activities were completed as assigned. Full attendance during the two-day meeting, but not always actively participating and involved. The reflective essay is unorganized and

	includes a few, undeveloped ideas about how what was learned and how the new learning will be implemented.
F	Meeting activities not completed due to lack of attendance. No participation or involvement during the two-day meeting. Requirements for the submitted reflective essay were not followed.

**Students with Disabilities**

Any students with disabilities or other special needs, who need special accommodations in this course, are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor as soon as possible.

**Academic Honesty Statement**

All work in this course must be completed in a manner consistent with *NDSU University Senate Policy , Section 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct* (<http://www.ndsu.nodak.edu/policy/335.htm>)

**Topical Outline and Tentative Schedule**

(see attached)

# Designing Professional Learning Communities

*North Dakota Curriculum Initiative*

*Kelly Inn*

*Bismarck, North Dakota*

*April 26-27, 2007*

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**Thursday – April 26, 2007 – Morning**

**Professional (Purposeful) Learning Communities: What Are They?**

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***Essential Question:***

- What does research say about the effect of professional learning communities in districts?

***Focusing Question:***

- What is a professional (purposeful) learning community?

***Outcomes:*** Participants will

- Become familiar with the four critical questions that guide purposeful learning communities.
  - Engage in self-reflection and discussion about their current practice related to this school/district improvement framework.
  - Be prepared to initiate conversations in their districts about forming Professional (Purposeful) Learning Communities.
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**8:00 – 8:30**

**Welcome and Agenda Overview**

**8:30 – 10:00**

**Presentation:** Overview of Professional (Purposeful) Learning Communities, **Matt Miller, Denton, Missouri (Solution Tree)**

- *Nuts and Bolts for beginning a professional learning community*
- *The role of relationship building*
- *Planning with clear mission, vision, values and goals*

**10:00 – 10:15**

**Break**

**10:15 – 11:00**

**Presentation:** Overview continued

- *The Denton, Missouri PLC Story – What have we learned?*
- *Q & A from audience*

**11:45 – 12:30**

**Lunch**

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**Essential Question:**

- What are the fundamental goals of professional (purposeful) learning communities?

**Focusing Questions:**

- What are we doing now to answer the questions, “What should students know and be able to do?”, “How will we know that they are learning?” and “What do we do when students have not learned?”
  - What would our district need to “Get Started”?
  - How do PLC’s support the development of common assessments?
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<b>12:30 - 2:00</b>	<b>Presentation:</b> Framing the work around the 4 critical questions of a Professional Learning Community
<b>2:00 - 2:15</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>2:15 – 3:15</b>	<b>Presentation:</b> Pyramid of Interventions for struggling students – “What do we do when students have not learned?”
<b>3:15 - 3:45</b>	<b>Discussion:</b> Where are we now and what would our district need to “Get Started?”
<b>3:45 - 4:00</b>	<b>Reflections for the Day</b>

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**Friday – April 27, 2007 – Morning**

**Professional (Purposeful) Learning Communities: How Do They Work?**

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***Essential Question:***

- Is there a best way to establish professional (purposeful) learning communities?

***Focus Questions:***

- How do effective professional learning communities work?
- How can districts establish a sustainable culture that provides intentional time for explicit teaching focused on student learning?

***Outcomes:*** Participants will

- Be introduced to the aspects of Professional Learning Community work that is being implemented in North Dakota.
  - Learn about district models of professional learning communities at the elementary, middle and high school.
  - Discuss the issue of time and possible solutions.
  - Engage in self-reflection and discussion about how districts can lead a change initiative to establish professional learning communities.
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<b>8:00 – 8:30</b>	Important Moments from Day 1 – Linda Paluck
<b>8:30 – 9:15</b>	<b>Case Study:</b> Bismarck Public School District model to build infrastructure that supports PD, collegial learning and interventions, <b>John Salwei, Tanna Kincaid</b>
<b>9:15 – 10:00</b>	<b>Case Study:</b> Fargo Public School District Model of “Getting Started”, <b>Nancy Murphy and Bob Grosz</b>
<b>10:00 – 10:15</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>10:15 – 11:00</b>	<b>Case Study:</b> Grand Forks Model of K-12 Professional Learning Communities, <b>Laurie Robinson, Roanne Malm, (Viking Elementary), Dr. Mary Koopman (Schroeder M.S.), and Dr. Jeff Schatz (Central H.S.)</b>
<b>11:00 – 11:45</b>	<b>Discussion Groups:</b> Grade Level Break-Out (Table Leaders from districts)
<b>11:45 - 12:30</b>	<b>Lunch</b>

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**Friday – April 27, 2007 – Afternoon**

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***Essential Question:***

- How can districts provide the time to make this work?

***Focusing Questions:***

- What have other districts done to make this work?
  - What type of change would occur in my district and how can I as an administrator/leader help manage the change?
  - Where should our district begin based upon what we already do?
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<b>12:30 - 1:15</b>	<b>Panel Presentation:</b> Time, Perspective and Priorities <b>Panel Moderator:</b> Justin Wageman <b>Panelists:</b> Lois Myran (Dickinson), John Salwei (Bismarck), Tanna Kincaid (Bismarck), Mike Heilman (Century H.S.), Tricia Lang (Department of Public Instruction), Cindy Mau and Harlan Johnson (Minot)
<b>1:15 – 2:00</b>	<b>Discussion:</b> Time Models That Work (Table leaders guide discussion)
<b>2:00 – 2:15</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>2:15 – 3:15</b>	<b>Presentation:</b> Managing the Change: 1 <sup>st</sup> or Second Order Change <b>Ceri Dean, NCCC Director</b>
<b>3:15 – 3:45</b>	<b>District Team Action Plans:</b> Possible Next Steps (Collaborative Team Discussions)
<b>3:45 – 4:00</b>	<b>Session Evaluation and Wrap-up</b>