

**Reflective Narrative Outline to Summarize Learning**  
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### Key Learnings from the Course

*Trust is necessary in a relationship where learning is expected to occur.*

I knew that there were many issues in my school regarding climate and culture toward learning, but I was never quite able to put my finger on what exactly was the problem until this course. Our school staff is missing the key component of trust in our leaders; therefore, many are unwilling to try new ideas or take risks professionally. Just as in the classroom, because there is a lack of trust, there is a lack of learning. In the article, “Trust is the On Ramp,” Pat Roy explains that “relational trust involves more than creating high morale; it is developed through ongoing interaction each day as people work together on improving student learning.” (Roy, 2007, pg. 1). Because this trust is lacking and there are feelings of non-support, it is challenging to collaborate and push forward with new ideas. In order to create an environment of learning and change, trust is necessary. Roy (2007) states it perfectly when he explains that “Trust and respect is the on-ramp to building collaboration and collegiality.”

*Teachers must develop a sense of professional capital in their careers*

Before this course, I had never heard of the term professional capital. The article “Reviving Teaching with Professional Capital” by Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves was very powerful for me. Professional capital “involves a long-term investment to develop human capital.” (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012, pg. 1) The authors explain that there are three components to professional capital: human, social, and decisional. All three of these components must be present for teachers to be fully invested in their own professional capital. I think that the notion of “reviving teaching” through professional capital makes sense

and could be a useful way to move from a stagnant staff to a more richly developed one that is willing to learn and take risks. Fullan and Hargreaves agree when they state, “when the vast majority of teachers possess the power of professional capital, they become smart and talented, committed and collegial, thoughtful and wise.” (Fullan and Hargreaves, 2012, pg. 2).

*Exemplar leaders are the “lead learner”*

This is my first course that deals with leading adult teachers. I had not put much thought into the principal modeling for their staff in the same way that a teacher should be a good model for their students. When the principal expresses the notion “I’m the No. 1 leader around here...but...everyone can be No. 1” (Easton, 2008, pg. 10), it displays two different values. First, it shows that the principal wants to better themselves and is a lifelong learner. Second, it creates a positive environment of learning where the expectation is that all staff should continue their own learning journey in their own way. A high standard and expectation must be set by the principal that learning is valued, supported, and encouraged.

*Standards for professional learning are necessary to ensure learning is occurring*

I did not know that standards for professional learning existed before this course! As stated on the Learning Forward website, these standards “outline the characteristics of professional learning that lead to effective teaching practices, supportive leadership, and improved student results.” Completing the Edupaths course was eye-opening and provided a nice overview as to what the standards are and why they are necessary. I like that each standard begins with “Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results

for all students...” This really displays the value toward lifelong learning as well as keeping our WHY right up front, that is, increasing learning and results for our students!

*Protocols and learning designs are powerful tools that provide a structure for deep discussions and real change within a learning environment*

Protocols and learning designs are excellent examples of real-life resources that we can take and use after this course! I love that they provide a structured way to dig into the deeper issues in education and create safe conversation starters to guide these discussions. I think that any meeting of educators (PLC, staff, team meetings) can benefit from using these protocols. I also think that schools that are struggling with true collaboration or lack of interest in learning would benefit from using these. For example, I could foresee my own PLC beginning with one or two protocols at the beginning of the year to team-build and re-focus our group! There is a plethora of protocols to explore, and I really appreciate that we created a GoogleDoc as a class to share out some that we explored. That will be a valuable resource to take back to school in the fall!

### **Shifts in Thinking, Beliefs, and/or Value**

I used to believe that professional development was intended for educators to learn new practices and put them into place in their classrooms. Often times, based on experience, I thought that professional development meant sitting in a conference room listening to a presenter and taking notes. Many times, I did not find relevance to my professional developments and did not think that they were necessary for my practice. Now, I know that valuable professional LEARNING is to be had and that there are educators and educational

leaders who are working to make this meaningful learning occur. I know that professional learning involves the principal modeling as the lead learner and helps enable the educators in their buildings to create and attend powerful learning sessions that have true purpose and value in their classrooms.

I used to believe that PLC's were not meaningful and a waste of time where no true collaboration occurs. Based on my own experiences, there is a lot of off-task talking and a lack of direction, focus, and purpose. I now know that PLC's are an amazing opportunity to truly collaborate with peers. PLC's need an agenda and need purposeful planning in order to make the time meaningful for each member. Creating a learning session in Assignment 4 provided an excellent example of the amount of intentional thinking and planning that is necessary to create a powerful experience. Each member also needs to come in to their PLC with the same goal of making themselves stronger as a teacher so that their students can learn more efficiently.

I used to believe that collaboration was a process where educators share what they are doing in their classrooms and give tips on how to help others. I now know that true collaboration is where each individual member of a team is fully engaged and participating in helping to make each other better. True collaboration can be aided through the use of protocols and learning designs. The result of true collaboration is improved teaching and as a result improvement in student learning.

### **Application of One of Glickman's Tasks**

The most relevant of Glickman's tasks for me would be Group Development. I think that an effective leader really needs to understand the complex inner-workings of the various

groups that are formed within a building and district. For example, understanding the different stages of group development is crucial. If a group is in the “storming” phase, it may appear as if they do not know how/do not want to work together. However, a strong leader would know that this is a phase and would be able to help them work through this challenging phase of development. A strong leader would also work day in and day out to set a positive model of trust in the building. By creating a trusting environment, the leader is able to set up groups to build trust within their smaller communities as well. I’m not sure exactly how I would use this in the fall. I’m thinking perhaps to share it with my principal and have PLC’s see explicitly the differing stages for themselves. Or, I could bring it to my PLC so that we could evaluate ourselves and see where we are and how we can move to the next stage.

### New Questions

- How can I help to put some of these amazing protocols and learning designs in my building if I am not yet a leader? Present them to my PLC or team leader? Speak with my principal?
- How can I apply and use the chapter *Confronting Individuals who Undermine Learning* in my building? This chapter really seems to describe a lot of my colleagues.
- How can I evaluate my own professional learning and/or help my colleagues evaluate their own?
- What can I do to help re-build the lost trust in our building?

### Summary

EAD 824 has been an amazing learning experience. I have gained an incredible wealth of new knowledge and resources to take back to school with me in the fall. I have learned that an exemplar leader is the “lead learner” who models and learns with their staff. This exemplar leader also works daily to create a positive and trusting environment where all staff feel supported and willing to take professional risks. I learned that there are stages to group development and that true collaboration can occur with intentional planning and use of protocols and specific learning designs. I have learned that as educators we have a duty to continue to work to hone our craft and make ourselves better each and every day in order for our students to achieve their highest potential. I have learned to use the *WHY* to create and drive a purpose for professional learning and teaching.

References

Easton, L. B. (2015). *Powerful designs for professional learning*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

Roy, P. (2007). Trust is the One Ramp. *The Learning Principal*. National Staff Development Council.

Hargreaves, A. & Fullan, M. (2012). Reviving Teaching with Professional Capital. *Education Week*.