

**University of Massachusetts at Boston
College of Education and Human Development
Critical & Creative Thinking Program**

**Creative Thinking, Collaboration and Organizational Change
CCT 618 Syllabus, July 2011**

Instructors:

Abby Yanow, Adjunct Professor & Boston Facilitators Roundtable (abbyyanow@yahoo.com)
(Part 3 of course & Course coordinator)

Gregg Turpin, Adjunct Professor & Boston Public Schools (gregg1411@hotmail.com) (Part 1 of course)

Rena Gray, Adjunct Professor, CCT (Part 1 of course)

Peter Taylor, Professor, CCT (617-287-7636; peter.taylor@umb.edu) (Part 2 of course)

Office hours: For an hour directly after each session, or by arrangement

Class email list:

Emails sent to cct618@yahoogroups.com will go to everyone in the course

Class times: 9am-4.15pm, with breaks,

Diversity Awareness (July 8-9)

Cultivating Collaboration (July 15-16)

Facilitating Participation And Collaboration In Groups (July 22-23)

Paper Due dates

Reflection papers -- Friday following the session, by email to instructor.

- Diversity – **July 15**
- Cultivating Collaboration – **July 22**
- Facilitating Participation – **July 29**

Plan for Practice -- **Sunday August 7, 5pm**, to Abby Yanow via mail.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Through interactive, experiential sessions and structured assignments students learn critical and creative approaches to working in organizations. Skills addressed include: communication and team-building; facilitation of participation and collaboration in groups; promotion of learning from a diversity of perspectives; problem-finding and solving; and reflective practice. Students apply these skills to situations that arise in business, schools, social change groups, and other organizations with a view to taking initiative and generating constructive change.

COURSE OVERVIEW and OBJECTIVES

This course builds on two assumptions about education:

- education takes place in many government, corporate, non-profit, and informal settings;
- many graduates will take leadership roles that are not official administrative ones as they strive to fulfill the needs of their schools, workplaces, and communities, adapt to social changes, and collaborate with others to these ends.

The goal is that student leave the course with experience and skills in using new tools in their schools, organizations, and other workplaces for communication and team-building; facilitation of participation and collaboration in groups; promotion of learning from a diversity of

perspectives; problem-finding and solving; and reflective practice. The course emphasizes learning through experience during class sessions and through reflection and writing between sessions, with a view to stimulating the students to experiment with and employ in their own workplace the tools introduced during the course.

ASSESSMENT & REQUIREMENTS

Each session of this course takes the form of an interactive, experiential workshop, using worksheets designed to be adapted to your specific work situations. You are expected to:

1. **attend all the hours of both days of all workshops and participate actively** in the exercises and hands-on activities in which you practice with various ideas and tools and adapt them to your own work situations (**30 = 3 x 10 points**);

2. *work in process*

a) Complete worksheets from the sessions and any homework exercises;

b) Submit twice-weekly emails, two emails per workshop, to cct618@yahoogroups.com.

These emails help contribute to building a community of learning and support during the course. Your emails should contribute some original thinking that adds to the conversation. These emails should reflect your own thoughts that have been stimulated by the workshops. It is not sufficient to send a reference to someone else's article or to just quote the article – nor are you expected to read any articles for these emails! (**12 = 6 x 2 points**); and

c) Write 500-word Reflection Papers after each workshop. The paper for each workshop is worth 10 points, so (**24 = 3 workshops x 8 points**). Guidelines for Diversity workshop will be handed out by the instructors. For Team Building and Groups Participation: write a Reflection Paper, which addresses:

1. What did you learn? What parts resonated for you?
2. What was new for you? What *Aha!* Moments did you have?
3. How or where were you challenged?
4. What, if anything, changed in your thinking?

Do not describe the class activities in this reflection paper – assume that the instructor knows the activities that you refer to in your paper. Do not include definitions from the dictionary, and **do not quote in any length** from the materials you received in class – this paper should be written from the “I” perspective: What did you experience? What resonated with you?

The preceding items will help you:

3. Develop a **Plan for Practice** (2000-3000 words) demonstrating how and when you plan to put into practice the skills and tools from all 3 sessions of the course - in your work situation or community, and/or how you could adapt and practice using those tools for opportunities in the future. You should include a plan for evaluating the outcome so you learn from experience and practice. At the workshop we will give you Guidelines to assist you in developing your Plan for Practice. (**34 points**);

A = 94+, A- = 88-93, B+ = 82-87, B = 76-81, B- = 70-75, C+ = 64-69, C = 58-63

Please note: You are responsible for following these guidelines for your papers and your email participation. There is no option built into this course for revision to increase grades after the final course deadline.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Sections 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 offer guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. If applicable, students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Ross Center (287-7430). The student must present these recommendations to each professor within a reasonable period, preferably by the end of the Drop/Add period.

Students are advised to retain a copy of this syllabus in personal files for use when applying for certification, licensure, or transfer credit.

This syllabus is subject to change, but workload expectations will not be increased after the semester starts.

SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

The course is divided into three two-day workshops, each led by a different instructor: 1. Diversity Awareness; 2. Cultivating Collaboration; and 3. Facilitating Participation and Collaboration in Groups.

The workshops are designed to be interactive and experiential, using worksheets designed to be adapted to your specific work situations.

Suggested topics for journal entries and additional information about classes, assignments, and other tasks may be provided in handouts and e-mails.

Workshop 1. DIVERSITY AWARENESS

In this first part of the course you experience and learn approaches aimed at enabling groups and organizations to: become more diverse; address tensions arising from lack of awareness of differences and inequalities; and undertake coalition work that dismantle traditional barriers. Dimensions of diversity addressed include race, class, gender, and sexuality.

Workshop 2. CULTIVATING COLLABORATION

The second workshop addresses the question: How do people become skilled and effective in contributing to collaborations? How do we lead others to develop their interest and skills in collaboration? A series of activities introduces tools and perspectives related to a 4Rs framework—respect, risk, revelation, and re-engagement. (Note: This workshop and the next one have been designed to complement each other, with very little duplication of tools and processes introduced in them.)

Workshop 3. FACILITATING PARTICIPATION AND COLLABORATION IN GROUPS

The last part of the course introduces students to a number of different techniques of group participation, such as working in small groups and stakeholder groups, and World Cafe or Open Space. The topics of discussion within each technique will be chosen in an effort to make the learning experience as close as possible to real-life situations, within our workplaces and our communities. We will focus on the art of careful listening and the crafting of effective questions.

You will experience the generativity of the participatory process, in which the wisdom comes from the group. You will be encouraged to consider ways of implementing these techniques into your practice, with your colleagues and in your communities.

BIBLIOGRAPHY (Recommendations only -- Required readings will be distributed in class.)

Books

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- Wondolleck, J. M. and S. L. Yaffee (2000). Making Collaboration Work: Lessons from Innovation in Natural Resource Management. Washington, DC: Island Press.

Articles

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