

EDC 200/522 Orientation to Education in an Urban Setting
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Attendance / Participation / Leadership Reflection

Attendance gets you in the game. When you're in the game you can make investments. What is the game? Generally, we're talking about the game of life of course. In the case of the portfolio containing this reflection, we're talking about Orientation to Education in an Urban Setting. Attending in this class meant: Friday evenings roughly every other week, regular "check-ins" to the class Moodle forum, regular service learning engagements totaling 20 hours, a professional meeting of our choosing and several other smaller "need to be there" events. I always attended and believe that everything was worthwhile.

Once you're "there," it's important to make it worthwhile. Whether we do, or not, is mostly determined by how we *participate*.

Participation exercises the "stuff" you have so that you get stronger. It cements new knowledge so that it becomes habit and reflex. Your "voice" is given the opportunity to emerge. Attendance causes your investments grow. When we participate we necessarily allow our thoughts to bump into those of others. When or if enough of this bumping occurs in a group critical mass occurs and a chain reaction begins. A physicist would call it fusion. Two compounds come together to form a new third and more interesting compound. When people are the "atoms" it can be called creativity. The best groups and teams are "fusing" all the time. If we participate with our minds, voices, physical presence, our writing and our listening we gain more from our involvement than we're required to give.

Leadership doesn't always happen all the time. I mean, someone has to be a follower. Plus, we take turns. It can rotate and move from person to person. This is involved in participation. When leadership first occurs, it begins with us. I believe one of the most basic forms of leadership occurs when a man or woman is willing to consult and talk honestly with the person in the mirror. A form of this discussion can occur when we reflect and write down our reflections. The amount of reflecting we did in Orientation to Education in an Urban Setting laid a great foundation to build on. However, it would have been helpful to first learn how to reflect. For example, personal reflection is most effective when it is a regular and disciplined process. Benjamin Franklin used the practical method of checking his daily performance against what he considered his most important personal virtues, of which he identified thirteen. He had a note card for each virtue and would keep track by marking the cards.

I plan to continue working on the leadership topic. I want to identify how leadership occurs in the classroom. Who does it and to whom? Stay tuned!