

Azusa Pacific University
School of Education and Behavioral Studies
Department of Doctoral Studies in Education
901 East Alostia Avenue, P. O. Box 7000, Azusa, CA 91702

Education 701 Strengths-Based Leadership for Teaching and Learning (3 units)

Azusa Pacific University is an evangelical Christian community of disciples and scholars who seek to advance the work of God in the world through academic excellence in liberal arts and professional programs in higher education that encourage students to develop a Christian perspective of truth and life.

Course Description:

This course is a critical analysis of strengths-based educational theory and practice with an emphasis on how awareness and application of strengths can increase teaching, learning, and leadership effectiveness. Using case studies of excellence in educational practice, students develop and evaluate theoretical principles of strengths-based education and how to move an educational organization towards being a strengths-based institution. Research protocols are implemented and findings analyzed in a study of excellent teachers, learners, and educational leaders.

Student Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of this course, students will have an opportunity to demonstrate the following outcomes:

1. Articulate a set of principles for strengths-based education, strongly grounded in an understanding of theory, research and theological foundations.
2. Synthesize current literature on strengths-based education and engage other learners in a critical examination of that literature.
3. Identify and analyze current approaches to teaching, learning, and leading and evaluate the extent to which these approaches are based on the strengths of teachers, learners, and leaders.
4. Identify and evaluate issues and points of potential conflict and agreement between a Christian worldview and a strengths-based educational philosophy.
5. Identify and analyze how personal strengths have produced past achievements and how a better application of personal strengths can produce greater excellence in the process of teaching, learning, and leading.
6. Design and implement a research protocol for investigating the behaviors, thoughts, and attitudes of excellent teachers, learners, and leaders and analyze the results of this investigation to identify patterns.
7. Collaboratively develop a plan for a strengths-based approach to education within a college environment.
8. Evaluate critically important principles that comprise a theory of strengths-based education.

Required Texts

- Buckingham, M., & Coffman, C. (1999). *First, break all the rules*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Clifton, D. O., & Anderson, E. C. (2002). *StrengthsQuest: Discover and develop your strengths in academics, career, and beyond*. Washington, DC: The Gallup Organization.
- Palmer, P. (1999). *Let your life speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Required Articles:

- Clifton, D. O., & Harter, J. K. (2003). Investing in strengths. In K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, & R. E. Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship* (pp. 111-121). San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Nakamura, J., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2002). The concept of flow. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 89-105). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pajares, F. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs in academic settings. *Review of Educational Research*, 66(4), 543-578.
- Salovey, P., Mayer, J. D., & Caruso, D. (2002). The positive psychology of emotional intelligence. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 159-171). New York: Oxford University Press.

Additional Articles:

(all students will synthesize and post online 2 of the articles for the others to respond to)

- Anderson, E. C. (1991). What would we do if we really loved the students? In G.I. Berry & J. K. Asamen (Eds.), *Black students*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Anderson, E. C., Cave, S., & McDowell, S. (October, 2001). *Why become strengths-based?* Keynote presented at the Eastern University Strengths Conference, St. Davids, PA. Available at <http://www.eastern.edu/academic/strengths/strengths.based.html>
- Averill, J. R. (2002). Emotional creativity: Toward “spiritualizing the passions.” In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 172-188). New York: Oxford University Press.
- [Excerpts from] Beechner, M. (1995). *Developing the gifts and talents of all students in the regular classroom*. CT: Creative Learning Press.
- Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (2003). Three human strengths. In L. G. Aspinwall & U. M. Staudinger (Eds.), *A psychology of human strengths: Fundamental*

- questions and future directions for a positive psychology* (pp. 87-102).
Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- [Excerpts from] Collins, J. (2001). *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap—and others don't*. San Francisco: HarperCollins.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, *56*, 218-226.
- Gibbons, M. (2002). *The self-directed learning handbook: Challenging adolescent students to excel*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Glickman, C. D. (2003). *Holding sacred ground: Essays on leadership, courage, and endurance in our schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
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- Harter, S. (2002). Authenticity. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 382-394). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Langer, E. (2002). Well-being: Mindfulness versus positive evaluation. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 214-230). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Masten, A. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist*, *56*, 227-238.
- McCullough, M., & Snyder, C. (2000). Classical sources of human strength: Revisiting an old home and building a new one. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *19*, 1-10.
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- Pargament, K. I., & Mahoney, A. (2002). Spirituality: Discovering and conserving the sacred. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 646-662). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (Eds.). (2002). *The VIA classification of strengths and virtues*. Available at www.positivepsychology.org.

- Rathunde, K. (1996). Family context and talented adolescents' optimal experience in school-related activities. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 6, 605-628.
- Ryan, R.M., & Deci, E.L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68-78.
- Schulman, M. (2002). The passion to know: A developmental perspective. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 313-326). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14.
- Sherhoff, D., Knauth, S., & Makris, E. (2000). The quality of classroom experiences. In M. Csikszentmihalyi & B. Schneider (Eds.), *Becoming adult* (pp. 141-164). New York: Basic Books.
- Steele, C. (1997). A threat in the air. *American Psychologist*, 52(6), 613-629.
- Sternberg, R., & Spear-Swerling, L. (1998). Personal navigation. In M. Ferrari and R. Sternberg (Eds.), *Self-awareness: Its nature and development*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Weisberg, R. P., Shriver, T. P., Bose, S., & DeFalco, K. (1997). Creating a district-wide social development project. *Educational Leadership*, 54, 37-39.
- Wrzesniewski, A., McCauley, C. R., Rozin, P., & Schwartz, B. (1997). Jobs, careers, and callings: People's relations to their work. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 31, 21-33.

Instructional Methods

Through a combination of case studies, analysis, discussion of readings, and development of course materials, students will work in teams throughout the course. In the online phases of the course, students will interact with online curriculum on *StrengthsQuest*, will post, evaluate, and respond to critiques on assigned readings, and will continue to interact with their team in developing the final project for the course.

Assignments and Grading Procedures

1. All written assignments must use the APA style of citations (see the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th edition*), and must synthesize and/or apply the assigned readings, as well as draw from other sources in the bibliography of this syllabus. Specific grading rubrics for each assignment will be provided in class.

2. Develop and post online a synopsis plus three discussion questions on two readings regarding strengths-based educational theory, research, and practice. (100 points, 10% of final grade)
3. Post responses to the synopsis and discussion questions on twenty readings regarding strengths-based educational research, theory, and practice. (150 points, 15% of final grade)
4. Write a 10 to 15-page paper that provides a self-analysis of one's own strengths and talents as they have been manifested in past achievements in teaching, learning, and leading and articulate the ways in which one's strengths can be more effectively applied to move to higher levels of excellence in teaching, learning, and leading. (200 points, 20% of final grade)
5. Write a 10 to 15-page paper that articulates a set of principles for strengths-based education, strongly grounded in an understanding of theory, research, and theological foundations. (150 points, 15% of final grade)
6. Conduct a case study investigation of an excellent teacher, learner, or educational leader. Develop the interview script, informed consent procedures, conduct the interview, code the data for themes, and synthesize the responses into a final 10-15 page paper that describes the qualities and behaviors most evident in this person. (250 points, 25% of final grade)
7. Working with a team of 2-3 other classmates, contribute to a collaborative project and presentation to the class concerning how to implement a strengths-based educational approach within an existing educational institution. This project should take into account contextual dynamics within the institution and the community in which it is located. (150 points, 15% of final grade)

Evaluation

Students may earn a possible 1000 points in this course, accumulated via the three major assignments outlined above. The final grade will be based on the following point allocations.

940-1000=A	890-900=B+	790-800=C+	650-690=D	0-640=F
910-930=A-	840-880=B	740-780=C		
	810-830=B-	700-730=C-		

Basic proficiency at the graduate level is considered "B" work. Work that is exceptionally crafted in its writing, depth of knowledge and ability to apply that knowledge will receive an A. Work that demonstrates minimal proficiency will earn a C. A C- does not count toward doctoral credit. The final course grade reflects learning consistent with the descriptions below.

- A Superior knowledge regarding details, assumptions, implications, and theories of strengths-based teaching, learning, and leading; superior ability to synthesize theories, apply knowledge to real-life situations, and analyze and critique theory and research in these areas.
- B More than adequate knowledge regarding technical terms, distinctions, and basic concepts, along with a basic ability to use these concepts in new situations
- C Basic knowledge regarding major principles, central terms, and major figures; also possesses a basic awareness of current issues in this field.
- D, F *Graduate credit not given for the grade of D or F*

Course Policies and Guidelines

1. **Incompletes.** According to the Graduate Education Faculty Handbook: “An incomplete is given only under special circumstances and is not to be used simply because students are not able to complete work in the allotted time. ‘Incompletes’ are initiated by the student well in advance of the end of the semester with the use of the Official Incomplete Form signed by both the student and instructor.” The Incomplete will then be approved by the Department Chair and Dean, and the student will have 12 weeks after the last class session to complete the work. It is entirely the student’s responsibility to complete the work in such a way as to remove the Incomplete. *Please note the department policy that students who take Incompletes for any reason other than medical emergency or death in the family cannot earn a grade higher than a B in the course.*
2. **Class Attendance.** Because of our limited time together, it is important that you are prepared for class, arrive on time, stay the entire class session, and actively participate in class. Please notify the professor in advance whenever possible if you cannot avoid being late or missing a class.
3. **Deadlines.** All assignments must be received by the published due date in order to receive full credit. Assignments may be submitted via e-mail, fax, or regular mail. Any assignment received after the due date will receive a one-letter grade reduction, unless the instructor has approved an extension in advance. *No assignments will be accepted more than one week past the due date, unless an extension has been approved by the instructor in advance.*
4. **Advance Assistance.** Student wishing feedback (comments, but no grade) from the professor prior to the due date are invited to notify the professor of their desire and to schedule with the professor a timely means of accomplishing this. We strongly encourage you to get feedback on your work throughout the process.
5. **Extra-Credit Work.** There is no extra-credit work in this course.
6. **Cell phones and Emergencies.** Please turn off your cell phone before coming to class. There will be two breaks during each class session during which you may check your messages.

7. **Returning Course Work to Students.** Assignments should be submitted electronically and will be returned electronically.
8. **Academic Integrity.** Graduate students are expected to do their own independent work, and to refrain from cheating, copying or plagiarizing the work of others. When drawing from various resources for research purposes students must provide citations, footnotes and bibliographic information. Students may not use an editor for any work turned in under their own name. Students who engage in academic dishonesty (as defined below) will automatically receive an "F" in the course. The following statement appears in the Graduate Catalog:

"The maintenance of academic integrity and quality education is the responsibility of each student at Azusa Pacific University. Cheating or plagiarism in connection with an academic program is an offense for which a student will be expelled, suspended, or disciplined. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense which diminishes the quality of scholarship and defrauds those who depend upon the integrity of the educational system. Academic dishonesty includes:

 1. Cheating – Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
 - a. Students completing any examination should assume that external assistance is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the instructor.
 - b. Students may not allow others to conduct research or prepare work for them without advance authorization from the instructor.
 - c. Substantial portions of the same academic work may not be submitted for credit in more than one course without authorization.
 2. Fabrication – Intentional falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
 3. Facilitating academic dishonesty – Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty.
 4. Plagiarism – Intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, or work of another as one's own in any academic exercise."
9. Appeals, grievance procedures, withdrawal, grade permanence, and retention of records policies are published in the Graduate Catalog and apply to this course.

Available Support Services

1. Students with disabilities.

Students in this course who have a disability that might prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should meet with an advisor in the Learning Enrichment Center as soon as possible to initiate disability verification and discuss accommodations that may be necessary to ensure full participation in the successful completion of course requirements.

2. Library, Computer Center, Media Center

Azusa Pacific University maintains excellent library and on-line, full-text databases available to all registered students. It is highly recommended that you visit the Darling and Marshburn Libraries, become familiar with on-line databases, and apply for internet access throughout your graduate program. For more information regarding library, computing and media services contact the Darling Library at (626)815-5087.

Fundamental Principles of Doctoral Study

Your decision to pursue a doctorate and to enroll in this course represents a major commitment of your time, energy, and resources. It also should indicate your commitment to move from the position of “student” to that of “scholar.” For this course, this means the following:

1. *Diligent preparation for class.* You may assume that the professor will operate on a collaborative learning model; that is, all persons in the room are expected to be knowledgeable about the topic for the day and to have something to contribute.
2. *Active participation in class discussions.* Because of this collaborative learning model, your contribution to the class is vital. Your focused and attentive participation, openness to others’ ideas, and positive attitude toward the learning experience are expected throughout the course.
3. *Intellectual engagement.* At the doctoral level, student-scholars view assignments as learning opportunities. Going above and beyond what is expected in the assignment helps you mature as a scholar. Bringing your own ideas or ideas from sources beyond those listed in the syllabus will make an important contribution to the class learning experience.
4. *Self-regulation.* At this level of study, student-scholars are expected to regulate their own behavior and to not need to be reminded of deadlines. Ask for feedback, take the initiative to get what you need from the class, and be courageous in the questions you ask. Hold one another accountable for the quality of the learning experience. Take risks and take responsibility for your own learning.
5. *Coherent, professional writing.* By this point in your career, you are expected to write in a way that is clear, concise, coherent, and professional. Every written assignment should be at least a second draft that has been reviewed by another person for clarity. If you have difficulty with your writing, take the initiative to pursue assistance in this area.
6. *Collegiality.* At its heart, doctoral study is an opportunity for you to become a colleague with your instructor and your classmates. Respect for one another’s ideas, a willingness to engage the hard questions, and an openness to new ways of thinking about issues are some of the hallmarks of collegiality. An appropriate balance of challenge and support for one another is expected in this course.

(many thanks to Dennis Sheridan for allowing us to adapt these principles)

Tentative Course Schedule

Note: Course schedule, topics, evaluation and assignments may be changed at the instructor's discretion. Any changes in assignments will be provided to you in writing during class.

July Sessions:

Session 1 – Introduction to Strengths-Based Education: The concept, philosophy, theory, and research on Strengths-Based teaching and learning and how this educational approach relates to a Christian worldview.

Session 2 – Measurement and Self-Analysis of Strengths: Identification of inventories designed to identify strengths and talents, as well as the theoretical frameworks on which they are based. How to interpret these strengths inventories within the context of teaching, learning, and leading.

Session 3 – The Strengths-Based Paradigm of Teaching and Learning: Theories and research comparing strengths-based approaches to deficit remediation approaches and how these approaches are reflected in current educational practices.

Session 4 – Strengths-Based Leadership: Application of strengths-based research and philosophy to leadership issues.

Session 5 - Case Study Research Protocols in Strengths-Based Investigations: Processes of inquiry and the case study methodology of investigating the “best of the best” teachers, learners, and educational leaders.

January Sessions:

Session 6 – Analyzing Research Findings from Case Study Investigations: Identifying patterns of strengths and the application of strengths among the best of the best, highest achieving teachers, learners, and educational leaders.

Sessions 7 and 8 – Strengths-Based Leadership: How to implement a strengths-based educational approach within an existing educational institution, taking into account contextual dynamics within the institution and the community in which it is located. (Team Reports due)

Session 9 – The Larger Context of Strengths Philosophy: How this paradigm fits within positive psychology, social work, and organizational development theory.

Session 10 – Next Steps: Applications of what has been learned from the case study research investigations.

Bibliography

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- Anderson, E. C. , Cave, S., & McDowell, S. (October, 2001). *Why become strengths-based?* Keynote presented at the Eastern University Strengths Conference, St. Davids, PA. Available at <http://www.eastern.edu/academic/strengths/strengths.based.html>
- Aspinwall, L. G., & Staudinger, U. M. (Eds.) (2003). *A psychology of human strengths: Fundamental questions and future directions for a positive psychology*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Averill, J. R. (2002). Emotional creativity: Toward “spiritualizing the passions.” In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 172-188). New York: Oxford University Press.
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- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman.
- Beechner, M. (1995). *Developing the gifts and talents of all students in the regular classroom*. CT: Creative Learning Press.
- Bloom, B.S. (1985). *Developing talent in young people*. NY: Ballantine Books.
- Buckingham, M., & Clifton, D. O. (2001). *Now, discover your strengths*. New York: Free Press.
- Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (2002). Optimism. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 231-243). New York: Oxford University Press.
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- Clifton, D. O., & Anderson, E. C. (2002). *StrengthsQuest: Discover and develop your strengths in academics, career, and beyond*. Washington, DC: The Gallup Organization.

- Clifton, D. O., & Nelson, P. (1992). *Soar with your strengths*. New York: Bantam, Doubleday, Dell.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). *Finding flow*. New York: Basic Books.
- Cushman, P., & Gilford, P. (2000). From emptiness to multiplicity: The self at the year 2000. *The Psychohistory Review*, 15-31.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, 56, 218-226.
- Freedman, J., Spar, P., & Washer, H. (1995). *Actualized talent: A lifelong process*. New York: Cassell.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2002). Positive emotions. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp.120-134).. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gibbons, M. (2002). *The self-directed learning handbook: Challenging adolescent students to excel*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
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- Glickman, C. D. (2003). *Holding sacred ground: Essays on leadership, courage, and endurance in our schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
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