University of Massachusetts Lowell
Graduate School of Education

Course: Dynamics of Curricular Change Online           Number: 04635/061
Term: Fall 2011
Instructor: James H. Nehring, Ed.D.
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Course Overview
The Graduate School of Education is committed, through its mission, to providing its students an “Education for Transformation” with a focus on excellence, equity, collaboration and inquiry. This mission lies at the heart of the design for this course and should also serve as a driving focus of student work.

Dynamics of Curricular Change considers major perspectives on curriculum and explores issues and strategies involved in the process of changing the curricular visions and practices of schools. The course is divided into three strands, each driven by an essential question about curriculum, as follows:

Strand I: What is curriculum?
In this unit, we will explore four major schools of curricular thought and situate our own beliefs about curriculum among them. Students will develop two short essays identifying the strengths and limitations of several curricular perspectives. As well, students will develop a personal curriculum manifesto.

Strand II: How Do I initiate Curricular Change?
In this unit we will look at contemporary scholarship and practice in the field of curricular change. Specifically, we will ask: How do I, as a school leader, initiate curricular change? This strand will culminate in a site-based practicum focusing on curricular change.

Strand III: How do I assess contemporary approaches to curriculum?
In this unit, we will examine several contemporary approaches to curriculum organization. Students will develop a critical review of a selected, contemporary approach to curriculum organization. Classmates will share their critical reviews so that all students may collect the complete set and leave the course with a binder of useful information.
**Intended Learning Outcomes**

The following learning outcomes are drawn from the Educational Leadership Program Standards of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, March 2009. To view the complete Standards document, go to [www.npbea.org](http://www.npbea.org).

Students completing this course will advance their knowledge and skill with the following outcomes:

1. collaboratively develop and implement a shared vision and mission (ELCC Standard 1.1)
2. create and implement plans to achieve goals (ELCC Standard 1.3)
3. nurture and sustain a culture of collaboration, trust, learning, and high expectation (ELCC Standard 2.1)
4. create a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular program (ELCC Standard 2.2)
5. develop the capacity for distributed leadership (ELCC Standard 3.4)
6. model principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior (ELCC Standard 5.2)
7. consider and evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of decision making (ELCC Standard 5.4)
8. act to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning (ELCC Standard 6.2)
9. assess, analyze, and anticipate emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt leadership strategies (ELCC Standard 6.3)

**Required Texts**

ISBN: 0684841886

ISBN: 0684838281

ISBN: 0787956112

ISBN: 0826412769

ISBN: 0226820319

Xanedu Coursepack:
CoursePack, 04.635/031: Dynamics of Curricular Change Online, (CPID 266168):
Course Policies

In general, assessment of projects (see next section below) will fall into one of the following categories

A= Excellent work demonstrating independent and high quality performance (4.0)
B= Work of graduate standard, but omissions exist or careful analysis is not in evidence. (3.0)
C= work of very poor quality, indicating little understanding of the depth of analysis required. (2.0)
I= work that is substantially incomplete or not submitted (0.0)
+ = work just above a letter grade (2.3, 3.3, 4.0)
- = work just below a letter grade (1.7, 2.7, 3.7)

Submission of work: Work is due on the day and time indicated for each assignment. Written work should adhere to APA style. If you anticipate having trouble meeting a due date, please contact me in advance so that we may negotiate an appropriate alternative arrangement.

Revision: Students may revise assessed work once. In general, revisions are due within two weeks of the date the work was returned. Opportunity to revise may be curtailed as we approach the end of the course due to time constraints. Specifically, students will not be able to revise the collaboration log and the final reflection.

Academic Honesty: This course adheres to the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty.

Major Projects

Essay 1: The Rational/Social Scientific Perspective and the Traditionalist Perspective
Identify a course of study you have recently taught or participated in. Develop a summary description of the course and provide a critique of it from the two chosen perspectives. (@1250 words)

Essay 2: The Liberal/Progressive Perspective and the Critical/ Transformational Perspective
Same as essay 1 except that the focus is on the liberal/progressive view and the critical/transformational view. (@1250 words)

Essay 3: Curriculum Manifesto
Identify two fundamental disagreements among two or more of the perspectives, then critically discuss each disagreement. (@1250 words)

Curriculum Review
Each student will be responsible for preparing and presenting a critical review of a contemporary curriculum program. A suggested list of curriculum programs will be provided.

**Site-based Practicum:**
Each student will be responsible for designing and carrying out a curriculum-related project at his or her worksite.

**Class Participation:**
Students are expected to participate in course activities. Student participation is assessed on a weekly basis. Participation assessment is holistic. Comments are not provided.

**Assessment of Major Projects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum Review</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site-based Practicum</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tentative Course Calendar and Weekly Activities**

Following is a tentative course calendar showing each learning module of the course together with the texts for that learning module and assignments due. A learning module is all the course content for one week. Much more detail about topics, readings, and assignments than what appears below will be provided within each learning module. Typically, each learning module begins on Monday. Assignments are typically due throughout the week. A Chat session is held approximately every other week at 7:30 - 8:30 PM Eastern Time and focuses on topics and assignments in progress.

In addition, students will be paired each week as “buddies” to provide feedback on each other’s work. The “buddy of the week” will be a different classmate each week.

Based on the above, a typical week will proceed as follows:
- **Monday:** Learning module made available
- **Monday:** (roughly every other week) Chat Session at 7:30 PM Eastern Time
- **Tu.-Fri:** Feedback to buddy-of-the-week on previous week’s posting
- **Monday:** Assignment due; next learning module made available

A note about chat sessions: Students are encouraged to attend all chat sessions. In the event that you are unable to attend, you will be expected to read the content of the chat session and make two thoughtful email posts to the entire class in response to it by the end of the next day. The email posts should be made through the course email system.

**Tentative Course Calendar**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Module</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Major Assessed Work Due</th>
<th>Reading Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Course Introduction. The Rational/Social Scientific Perspective and the Traditionalist Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tyler and Adler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>The Rational/Social Scientific Perspective and the Traditionalist Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wiggins and Hirsch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Applying the First Two Perspectives to the Real World</td>
<td>Essay 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>The Liberal/Progressive Perspective and the Critical/Transformational Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dewey and Freire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>The Liberal/Progressive Perspective and the Critical/Transformational Perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sizer and hooks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Applying the Second Two Perspectives to the Real World</td>
<td>Essay 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Developing Your Own Curriculum Manifesto</td>
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<td>Ferrero</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Initiating Change Evans</td>
<td>Essay 3</td>
<td>Evans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Initiating Change Evans</td>
<td>Project Proposal</td>
<td>Evans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Initiating Change</td>
<td>Project Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Reform Approaches</td>
<td>Reform Review</td>
<td>Various websites</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Major Projects in Detail

Essay 1: The Rational/Social Scientific Perspective and the Traditionalist Perspective

Identify a course of study you have recently taught. If you are not currently teaching and have access to materials for a course you taught some time ago, then you may use that course. If you are not currently teaching and do not have access to materials from a course you previously taught, then identify a course in which you have recently been a student. (Please do not select this course as I do not have sufficient critical distance to appropriately assess your work.)

1. Summarize the course based on the course syllabus or other course materials. Try to be true to the style and approach of the course in developing your summary. Provide sufficient information to be clear to a person not acquainted with the course. (@250 words)

2. Provide a critique of the course from the rational/social scientific perspective in which you respond to the following questions (@500 words):
   a. In what significant ways does the course adhere to or depart from the main ideas of the rational/social scientific perspective?
   b. If you were to revise the course to more closely adhere to the rational social/scientific perspective, how would the course change?
   c. What do you see as the strengths and limitations of the rational/social scientific perspective?  
      Note: Integrate at least one appropriate citation of a text we have studied in your response to each question.

3. Provide a critique of the course from the traditionalist perspective in which you respond to the same questions as above. (@500 words) Note: You should use the same course used in the previous essay as the basis of your comparison.

Rubric
Essay 2: The Liberal/Progressive Perspective and the Critical/Transformational Perspective

Same instructions and rubric as essay 1 except that the focus is on the liberal/progressive perspective and the critical/transformational perspective. (@1250 words) Note: You should use the same course as used in the previous essay as the basis of your critique.

Essay 3: Curriculum Manifesto

While many educators see value in aspects of all four curriculum perspectives and regularly adopt elements of each in their practice, there are, nonetheless, some fundamental disagreements among the four perspectives. In an essay of @1250 words, identify two fundamental disagreements among two or more of the perspectives, then discuss each disagreement with reference to the following questions:
What are the beliefs or values or assumptions that create this disagreement?
How does the disagreement manifest itself in curriculum? Provide an example. (If applicable, use the course of study that you referenced in essays 1 and 2.)
What is your opinion with regard to this disagreement and what reasons support your opinion?
Cite texts we have read as appropriate.

Rubric

Criteria: You identify two fundamental disagreements among two or more of the four curriculum perspectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>A</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You identify two fundamental disagreements among two or more of the four curriculum perspectives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You accurately identify beliefs, values, and assumptions that underly the disagreements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You thoughtfully explain how the disagreements manifest themselves in curriculum, providing an example.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You provide an opinion about the disagreement and</td>
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</table>
Site-based Practicum

For this project, you will identify an element of the curriculum in your work setting that you believe would benefit from significant change (change that reaches beneath the surface of events and behavior to include beliefs, values, attitudes, and/or assumptions). You will then design and carry out a project, the goal of which is to achieve some significant change. As an exercise in leadership, the project must include at least one other adult whose practice, along with your own, is the focus of the change. Therefore, you will identify one or more persons in your setting with whom to collaborate. Your project may be small in scope (e.g., adoption of a teaching strategy by you and one other person that significantly changes your approach to teaching) or wide in scope (e.g., the design of a new school that you will found). The project does NOT need to be completed by the end of the course, but it needs to be fully planned and begun, meaning that a project plan (see below) has been completed, and concrete, substantial, collaborative activity has occurred. You are urged to conceive a project that you are authentically committed to so that you will continue the work after you complete this course.

Project Proposal

Prepare a one page proposal for your Site-based project. In your proposal, address the following questions:

1. In brief, what is your project?
2. If your project were completely successful, how would student learning be altered?
3. If your project were completely successful, how would teacher practice be altered?
4. What do you propose to do to bring about the changes identified in 2 and 3 above?

As you prepare your proposal, keep in mind the basic criteria for the project, namely, that the project needs to be: A) Significant (i.e. involving change that goes beneath the surface.) B) Collaborative (i.e. substantial work with at least one other adult.) C) In progress before the end of the semester (i.e. you need to show that concrete steps have been taken toward its eventual completion.) D) Authentic (i.e. you are genuinely committed to the work outside the confines of this course.)

Project Plan

Complete a written plan that addresses the following prompts in several pages.

1. Describe your project.
2. Explain how student learning will be altered if this plan is completely successful.
3. Explain how teacher practice will be altered if this plan is completely successful.
4. Describe what you seek to change.
5. Explain why you believe it is important to bring about change in the area you have chosen, grounding your explanation explicitly in your beliefs about curriculum and the curricular perspectives we have studied.
6. Explain how you intend to initiate your change project, providing a rationale that is grounded in reading and discussion of curricular change.
7. Identify at least one adult from your work setting who has consented to serve as a collaborator for this project. Describe what your collaborator will do. Please include the person’s name and title.

**Collaboration Log**

Collaboration is an essential part of this project. Therefore, you will be expected to engage with one or more other persons in substantial ways. While the frequency and nature of collaboration will vary from project to project, you will be expected to document three collaborative sessions of at least a half hour in length each. A collaborative session means simply you and one or more other adults actively engaged with each other in the work of this project. For each session you should indicate: 1) the date, time, and location; 2) the persons involved and their titles/roles; 3) the purpose of the session; 4) the ways in which the session has moved the project forward. Under most circumstances a log entry should be no more than a paragraph in length.

**Final Reflection**

After completing your project plan and collaboration log, you are to give your written materials to your buddy of the week for a dialogue that will be described in a Learning Module for the course. After completing the dialogue, you should write a two page reflection in which you A) summarize what was discussed; B) identify what you would do the same and differently (and why) in the planning or initiation of your project if you could start over; C) identify next steps for your project and a rationale for your next steps.

**Summary of steps involved with Site-based project**

2. Develop Project Plan, identify collaborator(s). Submit.
3. Proceed with project, conduct at least three collaborative sessions, complete Collaboration Log. Submit.
4. Share written materials with buddy of week, conduct dialogue.
5. Compose final reflection.
6. Submit Collaboration Log and Final Reflection

Note: Because of the unusual nature of this project, strict adherence to APA guidelines is not required.

**Rubric for Site-Based Project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Proposal</th>
<th>C</th>
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<th>A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You describe your project, providing an understandable introduction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You appropriately identify student learning and teacher practice that will change.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
You explain what you will do to bring about the above changes.

Project Plan
You concisely describe your project.
You explain how student learning will be altered if your project is successful.
You explain how teacher practice will be altered if your project is successful.
Your provide a persuasive rationale grounded in course study and personal belief.
You explain how you will initiate your project referring to our study of curric. change.
You identify collaborator(s) with contact information.
Your project is appropriate in scope and complexity.
Your writing is clear and thoughtful throughout.

Collaboration Log
You document three collaborative sessions of at least 30 minutes each.
You provide evidence that each session is substantive.
You provide evidence that each session moves your project forward.

Final Reflection
You summarize the assigned dialogue with your buddy of the week.
You discuss what you would do the same and differently if you were to do your project again.
You identify next steps for your project and provide a persuasive rationale.

Overall
Your writing is clear and focused.
Your work is free of grammatical, typographical, spelling, and stylistic errors.
Your work reflects engagement with related class activities and discussion.
Your work meets the guidelines for length.

Curriculum Review
This project is designed to provide you with 1) an opportunity to become knowledgable about a contemporary curriculum program that interests you; 2) an opportunity to share your findings with the class and 3) a number of handy summaries and critiques of curriculum programs prepared by your classmates.

For this project you will select a Curriculum Program from the course list (or a different one for which you receive approval in advance). You will conduct research into the approach you have chosen and prepare a critical review for presentation and written summary.

Steps:
1. Take some time to browse the websites of different programs in order to choose one that especially interests you. Then, choose one.
2. Read a selection of materials, including (but not limited to) the website for your chosen program.
3. Read one independent research article about your chosen program. (It’s okay if it is listed on the website of the program you are investigating as long as it represents work conducted by scholars independent of the organization they are writing about.)
4. Prepare a 1-2 page written summary of the program organized by the following headings in the order below:
   a. philosophy/guiding principles;
b. history and current status;
c. schools in our region that employ the program;
d. approach to curriculum development, instruction, evaluation, and staff
development as relevant;
e. Implementation strategy

*Note: It is okay to quote heavily from the website or other sources in completing your summary. Please make sure, however, that you cite any and all sources that you quote or paraphrase. Also, please be sure to format your summary according to the headings above.*

5. Prepare a one page summary of the research article about the program. Include an appropriate citation for the article.

6. Prepare a 1 page written critique identifying strengths and limitations based on your personal beliefs and knowledge of curriculum. Include a bibliography as necessary.

*Note: Please keep your written work close to the suggested lengths. (Too short means not enough substance; too long means less value as a brief digest for classmates.)*

Rubric for Curriculum Review Project

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Section I: Summary of Curriculum Program</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>You summarize the philosophy and guiding principles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You summarize the history and current status.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You identify schools in our region that employ it.</td>
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<td>You summarize the approach to curric. and instruction.</td>
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<td>You summarize the approach to eval. and staff devel.</td>
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<td>You summarize the implementation strategy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your summary is an appropriate length.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Section II: Summary of Research Article</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>You accurately summarize a research article</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your summary is an appropriate length</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Section III: Critique of Curriculum Program</strong></td>
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<td>You identify strengths and limitations.</td>
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<td>You refer to your personal beliefs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your critique is an appropriate length.</td>
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<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Your writing is clear and focused.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your text is free of grammatical, spelling, typographical, and stylistic errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your analysis falls within the guidelines for length.</td>
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<td>Your work is submitted on time.</td>
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**Participation**

Your participation in class will be assessed weekly, based on your buddy feedback, assignment postings, chat participation, timeliness, and any other elements of
participation expected for the week. The assessment will be holistic, spanning all of your contributions during the week. Unlike major projects, there will not be regular feedback on your participation assessment. Also unlike other assessed work in this course, participation may NOT be revised.

For the first week of the course, your participation will be assessed, but the assessment will not count. This is done to give you a sense of the participation expectations with no risk. Also, at the end of the course, your lowest weekly participation assessment will be dropped from the gradebook.

Also, chat sessions are assessed as part of participation for a given week. In the event that you are unable to attend a chat session, you are expected to make two discussion postings the following day in response to the content of the chat session, which you may read online. Please post your response as an email to the whole class using the course email system. To access the chat session after it is over, follow instructions to enter the chat room, click on the gray down-arrow and select “chat log”.

Rubric for participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>4.0</th>
<th>3.7</th>
<th>3.3</th>
<th>3.0</th>
<th>2.7</th>
<th>2.3</th>
<th>2.0</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>The length or frequency of your participation is exemplary for graduate level work</td>
<td>The length or frequency of your participation is adequate for graduate level work</td>
<td>The length or frequency of your participation is not up to a graduate level standard.</td>
<td>You do not participate</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>The quality of your participation is exemplary for graduate level work</td>
<td>The quality of your participation is adequate for graduate level work</td>
<td>The quality of your participation is not up to a graduate level standard</td>
<td>You do not participate</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Your postings &amp; participation are consistently on time.</td>
<td>Your postings &amp; participation are mostly on time.</td>
<td>Your postings &amp; participation are sometimes on time.</td>
<td>You do not participate.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>