#7 Readings

The readings below have been chosen to help you in preparing for your Assignment 1 in this unit, the second part of a two-part assignment, with the first part having been completed in the last unit. Note that the readings are not necessarily listed in the order in which they appear in your texts, nor are they meant to be read in chapter order. All of them will serve as continuing references in your later courses, so plan to keep your books and use them for the remainder of your program.

*The Jossey-Bass Reader on Educational Leadership*

* Chapter 18, "Three Capabilities for Student-Centered Leadership," pages 297–316.

In this reading, Robinson explores how principals interact with teachers in making the ordinary decisions of day-to-day life in a culture of learning. Knowledge, trust, and conversation are the tools that both principals and teachers have to work with. How can they use them well? One study reported by the author compares the way in which expert principals and typical principals approach problem solving. Expert principals were (a) more open to alternative formulations of the problem, (b) more likely to see problems as interconnected with wider goals and values, and (c) more active in facilitating staff discussions. As you consider how to integrate Unit 6 into your Unit 7 paper, the broader approaches described in this reading will offer some useful guidance.

* Chapter 19, "The Leader's Role in Developing Teacher Expertise," pages 317–333.

Of all the human resources that contribute to the quality and effectiveness of a culture of learning, none is more important or closer to the action itself than the teacher. This reading gives a comprehensive analysis of the resources and processes that go into developing the teacher's expertise. Fink and Markholt make a strong case for the critical contribution that leaders make to supporting the expertise of teachers by (a) maintaining clear and accepted standards for their professional practice, (b) providing public scrutiny and feedback regarding their teaching behaviors, and (c) offering teachers the resource of high-level expert coaching. As you address your assignments and discussions, you can make good use of this reading to understand and apply principles of leadership to the human resource of teacher quality.

*The Craft of Research*

* Chapter 11, "Warrants," pages 152–170.

One of the requirements in action research is that you use an intervention to bring about an improvement. Your data analysis has to show not only how and to what extent the improvement occurred but also that it was the intervention that caused it. This logical difficulty plagues many dissertations. For your second discussion in this unit, you will examine the process of causal inference in assuring that the improvement you seek in your action study can logically and reliably be connected to the intervention that you implement.

To help you prepare for that logical analysis, review Chapter 11 in [*The Craft of Research*](http://site.ebrary.com.library.capella.edu/lib/capella/docDetail.action?docID=10288700), which you read in your previous course (EDD8306). Warrants can be a difficult topic to grasp, but you will be repaid for your study effort with far clearer and more defensible conclusions in your dissertation (capstone project).

*Schools That Learn*

* Part III, Chapter 2, "Designing a Learning Classroom," pages 164–168.

The decision maker closest to the action in a culture of learning is the teacher. How the teacher organizes the situation and makes the day-to-day activities serve the purpose of learning determines the quality of the culture. This reading expresses one teacher's view of the broader context decisions that enhance the leverage of what is done to yield more effective results. Cambron-McCabe's eight-step process is a useful practical technique for decision makers, but it can also be viewed as critical thinking questions that you might use in preparing your integrated paper.

Web Resources

The Web resources in this section will supplement and focus your readings on the subject of culture and its relation to educational decision making. They will also assist you in completing your assignments and discussions.

Note: Remember that if you make use of Wikipedia or any other encyclopedia (a good way to find overviews and references), do not cite them or quote them in any way for any of your course assignments.

* Site 1: [*Decision-Making Techniques: How to Make Better Decisions*](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_TED.htm). This toolkit from Mind Tools brings together a large amount of research-based information about organizational decision making. Use its descriptions of a range of issues and activities to increase your own understanding and skill in bringing issues to a resolution. Pay particular attention to the articles on decision making and problem solving as you consider practical applications of leadership in your Assignment 1 integrated paper, which deals with building and maintaining a strong culture of learning.