

Course Outline

Communicating Positive Deviance for Social Change

Department of Communication
The University of Texas at El Paso

COMM 4350 CRN 22823

COMM 5350 CRN 24890

MAIS 5360 CRN 22214

3 Credit Hours

Spring 2017



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Singhal is co-author or editor of 13 books, including *three* on the positive deviance approach and several case studies and essays on this topic.

Office Hours: Mondays from 3:30 p.m. to 5:50 p.m. at Starbucks, Lobby of the Chemistry and Computer Science Building on the UTEP campus; or by appointment. I am also happy to skype or have a telephone call with you, especially when I am on the road.

Meetings: Our regular class will meet every Monday evening from 6 to 8:50 p.m. in Old Main 201.

Course Background: Why do some students -- who are first in their family to go to college, who work full time, who hail from low socio-economic strata, who have familial responsibilities -- find a way to complete their degrees in four years, and with a high GPA, while most others in their situation fail to achieve a similar outcome? What are these students *doing*, without access to any additional resources and against all odds, which leads to better outcomes?

How can some very poor households in rural Vietnam, who have access to no special resources, keep their children well nourished, while most others in their situation fail to achieve a similar outcome? What are these households *doing*?

The *Positive Deviance* (PD) Approach is based on the observation that in every community, there are some individuals or groups, whose uncommon behaviors and strategies allow them to have more successful outcomes than their neighbors, even though they face the same constraints and have access to the same resources.

Course Objectives: Participants will (1) understand—experientially, critically, and analytically—the positive deviance approach to social change, (2) gain hands-on experience in framing a positive deviance inquiry, and work toward the collective implementation of a small-scale pilot PD intervention(s) with other vested partners. Further, the course participants will have opportunities to learn from each other and from past experiences in implementation of the PD approach to address a variety of complex social problems. combating childhood malnutrition in Vietnam, reducing school dropout rates in Argentina, and preventing and controlling hospital-acquired infections in US health care settings. Participants will be introduced to the essential steps involved in the PD process by acting their way into a new way of PD thinking.

Learning Outcomes: The present course – through its format of readings, discussions, activities, self-reflection, field-based action, and regular journaling seeks to provide

- (1) an engaged understanding of the positive deviance approach
- (2) an engaged understanding of the BIG role that small (micro) communication acts can make in bringing about social change.
- (3) a reflective space for analyzing and critiquing the underlying discourses, frameworks, methods, and approaches in social, organizational, and behavioral change, and how the positive deviance approach represents an alternative.
- (4) an actionable space for experimentation and experiential learning on the positive deviance approach.

Course Format: A mix of group discussions and presentations, storytelling, liberating structures, creative activities, guest speakers, case-studies, video viewings, and reflective learner notes. While engaging with relevant literature (both scholarly and general interest), the present course will consciously seek to promote a strategic, applied, orientation.

Readings: Class participants will procure and read these three books during the course of the semester. The books are available in the UTEP bookstore.

Book #1:

The Power of Positive Deviance: How Unlikely Innovators Solve the World's Toughest Problems Authors: Richard Pascale, Jerry Sternin, & Monique Sternin
2010 Harvard Business Review Press.

Book #2:

How to be a Positive Leader: Small Actions, Big Impact. Authors: Jane Dutton and Gretchen Spreitzer.
2014 Berrett Kohler Publishers

Book #3:

Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard Authors: Chip Heath & Dan Heath
2010 Crown Business.

As the class unfolds, a set of readings will be provided to you electronically (by email) on relevant topics with the expectation that you will go over them before coming to class.

Grading and Assignments: The grading system for this course is based on four sets of activities:

Impromptu PD Group Assignments in Class	100 points
In-Class 120-second Power Presentations	100 points
Weekly Learner Notes	300 points
PD Inquiry Term Projects	400 points
Presence, Engagement, and Participation in Class	100 points
Total	1,000 points

Final grades will be calculated on the basis of points scored in each evaluation activity. The following general point scale will be used to compute grades: A=900 or more, B=899 to 800; C=799 to 700; D=699 to 600; F=599 or less.

Assessment Metrics: An assessment guide for timely submission of assignments is provided below. When submitting your learner notes, your final PD Inquiry Term Projects, and engaging in in-class work, please know that the following criteria will guide your grade:

A = Exceptional work, demonstrating highest levels of engagement and grasp (does not mean “agreement”) of key course ideas, high quality of thinking, creative expression, and well-organized writing.

B = Good work on criteria listed above.

C = Poor work, etc.

D = Very poor work, etc.

F = No work.

Academic Dishonesty: Several types of behaviors constitute academic dishonesty and are not acceptable. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, which involves submitting the works of others as your own and includes improper source citation, no source citation, using materials prepared by another student, and using fictitious sources.

Special Needs: Please let me know if you have any special needs with respect to your involvement in the present class. If you have or suspect a disability and need accommodations, please contact Disabled Student Services Office (DSSO) at 747-5148 or at dss@utep.edu or come by Room 106 Union East Building.

CLASS ONE (1/23)

Introduction to the course and participants

CLASS TWO (1/30)

What is PD?

***Vietnam Case Study: Understanding the PD Process Step-by-Step**

Readings: *The Power of Positive Deviance* (First Half of Book) and

- Arvind Singhal, Jerry Sternin, & Lucia Dura (2009). [Combating Malnutrition in the Land of a Thousand Rice Fields: Positive Deviance Grows Roots in Vietnam](#). *Positive Deviance Wisdom Series, Number 1*, pp. 1-8. Boston, Tufts University: Positive Deviance Initiative.
- Video: TEDx on Positive Deviance (The Flipped approach) <https://youtu.be/n-NAvN-PLW0>

CLASS THREE (2/6)

Expanding our Understanding of the PD Approach

***Impromptu In-Class Group Assignment #1 on PD**

Readings: *The Power of Positive Deviance* (Second Half of Book)

Videos: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ad9suSYL6RU> (Monique Sternin on PD)

Jerry Sternin on Positive Deviance <http://vimeo.com/61509784> (9'30")

CLASS FOUR (2/13): Guest Speaker

PD Case Studies at UTEP

PD and Vulnerable Populations

***In-Class work on PD Pitches for next class**

Lucia Dura and Arvind Singhal (2009). [A Positive Deviance Approach to Reduce Girls' Trafficking in Indonesia: Asset-Based Communicative Acts that Make a Difference](#). *Journal of Creative Communication*, 4(1): 1-17.

Readings: Arvind Singhal and Lucia Dura (2009). [Sunflowers Reaching for the Sun: Positive Deviance for Child Protection in Uganda](#). *Positive Deviance Wisdom Series*, Number 4, pp. 1-8. Boston, Tufts University: Positive Deviance Initiative.

Videos: [Let Go of the Tiger's Head, But Hold on to the Tail \(PD and Sex Trafficking in Indonesia\)](#). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DsvKaege0Cc>

[The Music Catches Me and We Rise Again \(PD and Reintegration of Returned Abductees in Uganda\)](#). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfu1Z4PuGFg>

CLASS FIVE (2/20)

***3-5 minute Preliminary Project Pitches on PD Inquiry Topics -- Class Participants**

Readings: Arvind Singhal (2013). [Positive Deviance: Uncovering Innovations that are Invisible in Plain Sight](#). *Kappan*, 95(3): 28-33.

Arvind Singhal and Karen Greiner (2011). [Using the Positive Deviance approach to reduce MRSA at the Veterans Administration Healthcare System in Pittsburgh](#). In A. Suchman, D. Sluyter & P. Williamson (Eds.), *Leading Change in Healthcare: Transforming Organizations Using Complexity, Positive Psychology, and Relationship Centered-Care* (pp. 177-209). New York: Radcliffe Publishing.

Video: [Video: Curt Lindberg on Complexity and Positive Deviance \(MRSA\)](#)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k00MsZcYzZ0&feature=related>

CLASS SIX (2/27)

PD Inquiry Project – Defining and Determining and Discovery Phases

Muhammad Shafique, Monique Sternin, & Arvind Singhal (2010). [Will Rahima's Firstborn Survive Overwhelming Odds? Positive Deviance for Maternal and Newborn Care in Pakistan](#). *Positive Deviance Wisdom Series*, Number 5, pp. 1-10. Boston, Tufts University: Positive Deviance Initiative.

Lucia Dura and Arvind Singhal (2009). [Will Ramon Finish Sixth Grade? Positive Deviance for Student Retention in Rural Argentina](#). *Positive Deviance Wisdom Series*, Number 2, pp. 1-8. Boston, Tufts University: Positive Deviance Initiative.

Videos: [CBC Report on Germ Warfare](#)
http://www.cbc.ca/video/#/Shows/The_National/Health/1274854987/ID=2213462958

[Positive Deviance in a Brazil Hospital 4' \(Albert Einstein Hospitals\)](#)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-X5j1MIY77Y>

CLASS SEVEN (3/6)

How Small Leadership Actions Can Make a BIG impact

Readings: *How to be a Positive Leader* (Book) read first half. And, complete book over Spring break.

3/13 SPRING BREAK: No Class Today

During Spring Break Finish *How to be a Positive Leader* Book.

CLASS EIGHT (3/20)

Positive Deviance and other Social Change Approaches
***120-Second Individual Power Presentations on PD Journey**

Readings:

Arvind Singhal (2011). [Turning Diffusion of Innovations Paradigm on Its Head. A chapter in Arun Vishwanath and George Barnett \(Eds.\).](#) The diffusion of innovations: A Communication Science Perspective (pp. 192-205). New York: Peter Lang Publishers.

CLASS NINE 3/27

In-Class Progress Reports on PD Inquiry Projects

CLASS TEN (4/3)

Designing a PD Intervention: Acting One's Way

Class ELEVEN (4/10)

In-Class Progress Reports on PD Inquiry Projects
Subtleties and Nuances of Implementing PD

CLASS TWELVE (4/17)

In-Class Progress Reports on PD Inquiry Projects
When Not to Implement PD

CLASS THIRTEEN (4/24)

In-Class Progress Reports on PD Inquiry Projects

CLASS FOURTEEN (5/1)

***Learner Notes Due electronically at asinghal@utep.edu (with summary sheet)**

FINALS WEEK (5/8)

***Presentation of PD Inquiry Projects**
***PD Inquiry Term Project Reports Due**

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**Impromptu In-Class Group Assignment on Positive Deviance
(100 points)**

On February 6, 2017, you will be split into groups and implement an in-class impromptu positive deviance inquiry. Before this group assignment, we will take you step-by-step through all the key steps of the PD approach. In essence, you do not need to do any special preparation, just be caught up on your readings.

Class attendance is mandatory for you to get this group grade. And, peer-grading will be employed!

**120-Second Power Presentation
(100 points)**

On March 20, 2017 right after Spring Break, come prepared with a 120-second power (short for **powerful**) presentation on what your PD journey has been like. What buckets have been filled and what fires have been lit? Let your presentation be BIG and POWERFUL (whatever those words may mean to YOU)! Class attendance is mandatory, and peer grading will be employed. Please, no Powerpoint or anything which requires any set-up time.

**Weekly Learner Notes
(300 points)**

This course includes a substantial grade assessment component based on what you believe you are learning from engaging in our readings, class discussions, reflections, and actions. This is an on-going, week-by-week, self- motivated (and monitored) activity. We will often begin our class sessions by inviting you to share your learner notes with other class participants in a small or big group.

How will you operationalize these learner-centered reflection activities?

Each of you will maintain a notebook that you can title “Learner Notes”. After each class session when you return home, write a 500-word essay (about two-double spaced pages), synthesizing your key learning from that day’s class discussions, activities, and/or readings. Try to focus on the most important/revealing concepts, ideas, approaches, and/or vignettes about the positive deviance approach to social change.

You will bring your *updated and typed* Learner Notes to the *next* class session in a binder. Each Learner Note should be (a) **numbered** (1,2, 3, etc.), (b) **dated** (the date of the class session on which it is based), and (c) should list the **word count**. This means your first learner note – which you will bring to class on January 30, 2017 – should be dated January 23, 2017.

Each person can give themselves a break from the Learner Notes once or twice during the semester; which means we will look for 11 entries total in grading the final submission. Each day’s learning notes are thus worth 27 points.

You will submit your collated Learner Notes for final review and grading in electronic MS-Word/or PDF form (sent to me at asinghal@utep.edu) by 6 p.m., May 1, 2017. All learner notes should be in one electronic file.

SUMMARY SHEET: The first page of this Learner Notes doc should be a summary sheet with your name, the total number of learner notes you have, and the dates that you were not present in class. You will need to keep a running tab of your absences (excused/non-excused). The file name and subject line should be in the following manner: Full Name_PD Learner Notes_Spring 2017. Doc/pdf

PD Inquiry Term Projects
(400 points)

This group project (to be carried out in groups of up to three people) involves a step-by-step implementation and documentation of a Positive Deviance Project on an intractable, complex social problem in the city of El Paso.

Regular weekly progress reports will be made by the group members in class to invite inputs from others, and on May 8, 2017 (Final Exam Week) each group would submit a 12-15 page document summarizing the process through which the intractable problem was framed/defined, how a determination was made of who represent the positive deviants, and what PD behaviors were discovered that are replicable by all.

Each group will present the main findings on May 8, using 8 timed minutes. The presentation should be creative, powerful, awe-inspiring. Again, we encourage you to go beyond PowerPoint and think of it as a Power-presentation.

The report should pay attention to the various decision points, key recommendations for “acting one’s way” into the PD behaviors.

A PD report-writing guide will be provided to you at least three weeks before the project report is due.

Additional Resources on Positive Deviance

www.positivedeviance.org

THIRTEEN PD Films

<http://utminers.utep.edu/asinghal/BiographyInfo/New%20Updates/Positive%20Deviance%20Video%20Resources%20%20Media%20Changemakers'%20SJI%20UTEP-Singhal-9-2-2016.pdf>

Positive Deviance Case Studies and Articles

<http://utminers.utep.edu/asinghal/PD%20Wisdom%20Series.htm>



Dr. Arvind Singhal (asinghal@utep.edu) is the *Samuel Shirley and Edna Holt Marston Endowed Professor of Communication* and Director of the Social Justice Initiative at The University of Texas at El Paso. He is also appointed, since 2010, as the *William J. Clinton Distinguished Fellow* at the Clinton School of Public Service, Little Rock, Arkansas, and since 2015, *Distinguished Professor 2*, Faculty of Business Administration, Hedmark University of Applied Sciences, Norway.

Singhal teaches and conducts research on the diffusion of innovations, the positive deviance approach, organizing for social change, the entertainment-education strategy, and liberating interactional structures. His outreach spans public health, education, human rights, poverty alleviation, sustainable development, civic participation, democracy and governance, and corporate citizenship.

Singhal is co-author or editor of 14 books – *Positive Deviance: A New Paradigm of Social, Organizational, and Behavioral Change* (in press, Sage, 2017); *Inspiring Change and Saving Lives: The Positive Deviance Way* (2014); *Health Communication in the 21st Century* (2014); *Inviting Everyone: Healing Healthcare through Positive Deviance* (2010); *Protecting Children from Exploitation and Trafficking: Using the Positive Deviance Approach* (2009); *Popular with a Purpose* (2008); *Communication of Innovations* (2006); *Organizing for Social Change* (2006); *Entertainment-Education Worldwide: History, Research, and Practice* (2004); *Combating AIDS: Communication Strategies in Action* (2003); *The Children of Africa Confront AIDS: From Vulnerability to Possibility* (2003); *India's Communication Revolution: From Bullock Carts to Cyber Marts* (2001); *Entertainment-Education: A Communication Strategy for Social Change* (1999); and *India's Information Revolution* (1989). Three of Singhal's books won awards for distinguished applied scholarship. In addition, he has authored some 180 peer-reviewed essays in outlets such as the *Journal of Communication*, *Communication Theory*, *Communication Monographs*, *Health Communication*, *Management Communication Quarterly*; *Communication Quarterly*, and *Journal of Health Communication*.

Singhal won Top Paper Awards from the International and National Communication Associations (ICA & NCA) a dozen times, and Ohio University's Baker Research Award twice. He was selected Distinguished *Carroll Arnold Lecturer* at NCA in 2015 and recognized with the *Elizabeth Andersch 2014 Award* for outstanding contributions to the communication discipline by the Scripps College of Communication, Ohio University. The Social Science Research Council & the International Communication Association recognized him with the *Communication Research as Collaborative Practice Award* in 2009 and the *Communication Researcher as an Agent of Change Award* in 2008. The NW Communication Association honored him with the 2007 *Human Rights Award for Steadfast Commitment to Social Justice, Social Change, and Freedom*, and in 2005, USC's Norman Lear Center recognized him with the first *Everett M. Rogers Award for Outstanding Contributions to Entertainment-Education*.

Singhal's recent academic honors and appointments include *Presidential Scholar*, Mudra Institute of Communication Arts, India (2015 onwards); *President-Appointed Visiting Professor*, Kumamoto (National) University, Japan (2011 to 2014); *Fulbright Hays Scholar*, Slovakia (2012); *Schomburg Distinguished Scholar*, Ramapo College, NJ (2011), *Commerzbank Foundation Professor*, Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany (2009); *Berkitt Williams Distinguished Lecturer*, Ouachita Baptist University, Arkansas (2009); and *Raushni Memorial Deshpande Distinguished Lecturer*, Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi, India (2006).

Singhal's research has been supported by the National Institutes of Health, The National Science Foundation, The Dutch Health Research Council, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the State of Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services. He has served as an advisor to the World Bank, UN-FAO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNAIDS, UNFPA, U.S. Department of State; U.S. A.I.D., Family Health International, PATH, Save the Children, the BBC World Service Trust, International Rice Research Institute, Voice for Humanity, and private corporations such as Procter & Gamble (U.S.A and Thailand), Telenor AS (Norway), SpareBank (Norway), and others.

He has taught previously at Ohio University, University of Southern California, University of California - Los Angeles, and held visiting professorships at the USC Annenberg School; the Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University; Royal Roads University, Canada; Kumamoto (National) University, Japan; Chemnitz University of Technology in Germany; Institut Teknologi (Malaysia), Bangkok University (Thailand); and visited and lectured in some 90 countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America, Australia, Europe, and North America.