

Iowa Principal Leadership Academy

Syllabus Standard I: The Instructional Leader: Creating the Vision for Successful Schools and Staff Seminar 4: Systems Thinking

Problem-Based Learning Theme 1: How do you develop a shared vision that clearly drives the school improvement process over time and continually promotes the success of all students?

Purpose: The purpose of this seminar on systems thinking is to prepare each principal candidate with the theory needed to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be successful in developing the program content and problem-based learning theme in ISSL Standard I. This seminar will focus on the highlighted knowledge, dispositions, and performances of ISSL Standard I.

ISSL Standard 1: *A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.*

Knowledge: The administrator has the knowledge and understanding of:

- o Learning Goals in a pluralists society
- o The principles of developing and implementing strategic plans
- o Systems Theory
- o Information sources, data collection, and data-analysis strategies
- o Effective communications
- o Effective consensus-building and negotiation skills

Dispositions: The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- o The educability of all
- o A school vision of high standards of learning
- o Continuous school improvement
- o The inclusion of all members of the school community
- o Ensuring that students have the knowledge, skills and values needed to become successful adults
- o A willingness to continuously examine one's own assumptions, beliefs, and practices
- o Doing the work required for high levels of personal and organizational performance

Performances: The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- o The visions and mission of the school are effectively communicated to staff, parents, students, and community members
- o The vision and mission are communicated through the use of symbols, ceremonies, stories and similar activities
- o The core beliefs of the school vision are modeled for all stakeholders
- o The vision is developed with and among stakeholders
- o The contributions of school community members to the realization of the vision are recognized and celebrated
- o Progress toward the vision and mission is communicated to all stakeholders
- o The school community is involved in school improvement efforts
- o The vision and goals for student learning shapes the educational programs, plans, and actions
- o An implementation plan is developed in which objectives and strategies to achieve the vision and goals for student learning are clearly articulated
- o Assessment data related to student learning are used to develop the school vision and goals
- o Relevant demographic data pertaining to students and their families are used in developing the school mission and goals
- o Barriers to achieving the vision are identified, clarified, and addressed
- o Needed resources are sought and obtained to support the implementation of the school mission and goals

- o Existing resources are used in support of the school vision and goals
- o The vision, mission, and implementation plans are regularly monitored, evaluated, and revised

This seminar will also include theory that supports the understanding of Distributive Leadership Principle 1 and Design Principles 1 and 2.

Distributive Leadership Principle 1: The purpose of leadership is the improvement of instructional practice and performance, regardless of role.

Design Principle 1: Maintain a tight instructional focus over time.

Design Principle 2: Routinize accountability for practice and performance in face-to-face relationships.

Tool Box Activities This Seminar Will Address:

- Journal barriers found among staff, students, or parents in developing or implementing a common purpose, vision, and mission in the building. Reflect on what would need to occur to overcome the barriers based on research and best practice.
- Using Peter Holly's model, develop a vision, mission, and belief statements with one class of students. Journal Results.
- Reflect on and journal: How can communities be involved in carrying out the school's vision and mission at a level that is not superficial?
- Reflect on and journal: How are parents involved in our school...is it skin deep or knee deep?
- Reflect on and journal: How does a principal look *modeling* a vision for student learning?

BEFORE WEEKEND

- o Review the course syllabus
- o Read "Team Learning" from Senge's Fifth Discipline
- o Read Michael Fullan's Article, "Beyond Instructional Leadership"

Resources and Materials:

- ☒ Course Syllabus
- ☒ Elmore: *Building a New Structure for School Leadership* (2000)
- ☒ Fullan: *Leading the Culture of Change* (2002)
- ☒ Holly :*The Learning School is the Developing School: Guiding School Leadership Team s Through Action Research and Reflective Practice* (1992).
- ☒ Institute for Educational Leadership *More Strategies for Educating Everybody's Children* (ASCD 2001).
- ☒ *Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalsip* (2000).
- ☒ Holly and Southworth: *The Developing School*. (1989)
- ☒ Jackson, Barbara and Kelley: *Exceptional and Innovative Programs in Educational Leadership*. National Commission for the Advancement of Educational Leadership Preparation. (2002).
- ☒ Senge: *The Dance of Change*(1999)
- ☒ Senge: *Schools That Learn* (2000)
- ☒ Spillane, J.P., R. Halverson, et al.: *Distributive Leadership: Toward a Theory of School Leadership Practice*. Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal.(1999).
- ☒ *What Do We Want From Iowa School Leaders in the 21st Century*, Iowa School Leadership Initiative, Report of Area School Leadership Community Conversations (2000).

Module 4: Systems Thinking Seminar Goals and Objectives

This is a problem-centered course:

A problem is a troubled perplexed, trying situation...not an assigned task...It is indispensable to distinguish between genuine and mock problems. Does a question naturally suggest itself with some situation? Or is it an aloof thing, only for the purposes of conveying information? Would it arouse observation and engage experimentation outside of school? Or is it the teacher's or textbook's, made a problem for the pupil only because he cannot get the required mark unless he deals with it? (John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 1916)

Systems Thinking Overall Goal: The principal goal of systems thinking is to provide the principal candidate with the theory needed to support the development of the knowledge, performances, and dispositions of ISSL Standard I.

Specific Seminar Goals:

- o To review the basic tenets of the theory of system thinking
- o To compare the theory found in the research with the candidates' district Comprehensive School Improvement Plans and building Action Plans
- o To examine the candidate's own assumptions, beliefs and practices with the theory of systems thinking and to develop a strategic class plan for continually reflecting on these throughout the work Problem-based Learning Theme I.
- o To understand the connection between systems theory and thinking as connected to conducting action research
- o To understand the systems thinking is a discipline for seeing the structures that underlie complex situations and for discerning high from low leverage change.
- o To refine personal action research skill

Specific Seminar Continuing Objectives:

- o To continue to dialogue with and receive support from the instructor as an expert mentor throughout Problem-based Learning Theme I in completing the action research, action plan, tool box activities, and reflective journaling.
- o To develop specific course tool box journaling and action requirements through consultation with other Cohort Group members and the instructor as an expert mentor.
- o To prepare a vision, mission, and belief statement within candidate's building with students and other colleagues and share with other candidates and with seminar instructor and other mentors.
- o Continue to critique the reference materials and to share knowledge and understandings with cohort group, instructor, and other mentors.

Note: Candidates will be encouraged to take **The Visionary Leader Behavior Questionnaire (LBQ)**, Revised Edition. (Copyright Marshall Sashkin, Ph.D. This questionnaire will be provided for the candidates. The candidate will take the questionnaire and ask three colleagues to fill it in and return to the instructor who will score it and provide the candidate with the results of the survey. The intent of this survey is to provide the candidate with useful information about his or her own leadership actions.

Student Assignments and Expectations: Listed in Syllabus 1: Problem-Based Learning Theme I.

Evaluation: School Leadership and Vision Rubric

Level 5 on the rubric is assigned for work of the highest academic quality.

Level 4 on the rubric is assigned for professional quality work at the required quality level

Level 3 on the rubric is assigned for adequate work, but not distinguished as sound quality at the proficient level. Those with a Level 3 Rubric will have the opportunity to revise and complete quality work.

All work for the Iowa Principal Leadership Academy must be completed at Rubric Levels 4 or 5 to be considered proficient. All work must be completed at the proficient level.