



ED_AD 509

Leading School Improvement

3 Credits

NELP Standards

1.1, 1.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 5.2, 6.1, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2

Since Time Immemorial Standards/Components

Integration of the Since Time Immemorial curriculum and relevant scope and sequence as a feature of ongoing school improvement work and planning efforts. Incorporation of Recognition into ongoing courses and ensure that teacher, principal, and program administrator candidates engage and familiarize themselves with the content. *(See related field components for further elaboration on the incorporation of STI into ED_AD 509).*

Social/Emotional Learning Standards/Components

Interpersonal Support and Development for Staff

- Establishment of Positive Social Relationships: Course places emphasis on highly effective change as a function of interpersonal support. Throughout the course, we routinely address how school leaders support high impact and sustainable change within schools as a relational as well as leadership concern.
- Self-Authoring: Course requires ongoing reflection related to the leadership values, expectations, and practices they carry into the change/improvement process.
- Goal-setting: As leaders, candidates must model skills in goal-setting, establishing reasonable aims, and celebrating successes. These skills are featured within the context of decision-making and determinations over measurable aims within the context of change and improvement.
- Advocacy: As a future school leader, candidates must be comfortable serving as a voice and advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves. This course places emphasis on the critical link between advocacy and meaningful and sustainable change.

CCDEI+ Standards/Components

- Understanding Self and Others: When educators understand themselves deeply as cultural beings, they can better serve others across a range of human differences.
- Learning Partnerships: Educators create conditions that support partnerships and shared responsibility for learning.
- Leading for Educational Equity: Educators create opportunities and remove barriers to ensure each and every student experiences the full benefit of public education.

Common Course Readings

Berwick, D. M. (2003). Improvement, trust, and the healthcare workforce. *Quality Safe Health Care*, 12. (Suppl. 1): i2 –i6.

- Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (Eds.). (2000). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school* (Expanded ed.). National Academy Press. (Chapters 6 & 8).
- Bryk, A. S., Gomez, L. M., Grunow, A. & LeMahieu, P. G. (2015). *Learning to Improve: How America's Schools Can Get Better at Getting Better*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Bryk, A. S., Gomez, L. M., Grunow, A., & LeMahieu, P. G. (2015). Improvement research carried out through networked communities: Accelerating learning about practices that support more productive student mindsets. In S. D. Laurie, J. H. Schonert-Reichl, R. W. Roeser, & K. A. Hoy (Eds.), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 1-28). Springer.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). Herder and Herder. (Original work published 1970). (Chapter 2).
- Guskey, T. R. (2014). Planning professional learning. *Educational Leadership*, 71(8), 10-16
- Irby, D. J. (2021). *Stuck improving: Racial equity & school leadership*. Harvard Education Press.
- Langley, G. J., Moen, R. D., Nolan, K. M., Nolan, T. W., Norman, C. L., & Provost, L. P. (2009). *The improvement guide: A practical approach to enhancing organizational performance* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Press.Provost L. P. & Murray S. K. (2011). *The health care data guide: Learning from data for improvement*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
- Adichie, C. N. (2009, July). The danger of a single story [Video]. TED Conferences.
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en

Common Course Assessment Tasks

Candidates complete a series of seven discrete tasks at various points throughout the semester. These tasks are designed to support the candidate as they develop an equity-oriented improvement project situated either at their current school and/or internship site. Each of the tasks are progressive and aligned with lessons planned over the semester. This work culminates in a final digital presentation and project brief detailing the learning that occurred both (1) in the process of carrying out an improvement project; and (2) as a result of the improvement work carried out. Task descriptions are provided below in the order assigned:

Task 1: Data Conversation Protocol (NELP1.2, 1.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 6.1, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2) Students have chosen an equity-based problem of practice (i.e. discipline disparities, Grade 2 math outcomes, etc.). They then select and analyze data related to their chosen problem of practice. They must then address the following questions:

- UNDERSTAND: What do you understand from the data display?
- DESCRIBE: What did you see and notice about the data? What are the different ways of thinking about this data?
- INTERPRET: What hypotheses or explanations do you have about what you see? What are different explanations for this data?
- INQUIRE: What questions does this raise for you?
- ACT: How should you act on this data? What is the next step in your inquiry process?

Task 2: Empathy Interviews (NELP 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 6.1, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2) Given insights generated from the data conversation protocol, students will engage in a series of three complementary empathy interviews to support learning about their selected “problem of practice”. This means development of an empathy interview protocol (created in-class). Students provide a

written summary of their learnings, organized as responses to the same probing questions posed in the data protocol assignment.

- UNDERSTAND: What do you understand from the data collected?
- DESCRIBE: What did you see and notice about the data? What are the different ways of thinking about this data?
- INTERPRET: What hypotheses or explanations do you have about what you see? What are different explanations for this data?
- INQUIRE: What questions does this raise for you?
- ACT: How should you act on this data? What is the next step in your inquiry process?

Task 3: Fishbone Diagram & Narrative (NELP 1.3, 1.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 6.1, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2) Students are introduced to the Ishikawa fishbone diagram. This serves as a visual aid for identifying potential root causes to the problem of practice currently under study. For this assignment, students complete a fishbone diagram utilizing both the quantitative (data conversation protocol) and qualitative (empathy interview) insights produced to that point. Students submit a brief written narrative that helps to explain the identified root causes and evidence to support those suppositions.

Task 4: Fishbone Revision (NELP 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 6.1, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2) As with all improvement work, it's important to leverage stakeholder insights in order to inform future action. For this task, students review their fishbone diagram with key stakeholders to the problem of practice under study. Students must also document stakeholder responses. For instance, do these stakeholders agree with the root causes already identified in draft one of the fishbone diagram? Or do these stakeholders have a different perspective on the sources fueling the problem of practice? Conversations with multiple stakeholders help to confirm (or disconfirm) the direction the student is taking with their improvement project work.

Task 5: Driver Diagram & Narrative (NELP 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 6.1, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2) This is the final task prior to the culminating digital presentation and project brief. Students complete a driver diagram that outlines a theory of change for their improvement work. As part of that effort, they must complete a driver diagram and provide a brief explanatory narrative rationalizing their primary, secondary, and change ideas.

Task 6: Digital Improvement Presentation (NELP 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.3, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2, 8.1, 8.2) For this assignment, students upload a 15-minute “conference-style” digital presentation to YouTube describing their improvement project. Students must address the following elements:

Section 1: Introduction

- Problem Description
- Rationale
- Specific aims of the improvement project

Section 2: What did you do?

- Context
- Change idea(s)
- Measures

Section 3: What did you find?

- Results

Section 4: What does it mean?

- Key findings
- Potential impact of the project
- Conclusions/Lessons learned.

Task 7: Improvement Project Brief (NELP 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2) A project brief serves as a short description of the key elements within the student's improvement project. It includes the following elements:

- Description and rationale for the problem of practice
- Site (school/internship site) context
- Data collection efforts and summary of key findings
- Articulated change ideas and recommended approaches to measuring impact
- Conclusion and lessons learned from the improvement conducted this past semester
- Appendices should include: revised fishbone diagram and driver diagram

The brief should be no more than 5-6 pages excluding appendices and consistent with APA formatting guidelines.

Common Course Scoring Rubrics

Task 6: Digital Presentation (70 points)

Criteria	Excellent (5-4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Score
Section 1: Introduction					
Problem of Practice (NELP Standards 1.1, 3.1)	Clearly identifies a significant school improvement issue; provides comprehensive background information.	Clearly identifies a relevant issue; provides good background information.	Identifies a relevant issue; provides adequate background information.	Vaguely identifies an issue; provides little or no background information.	
Rationale (NELP Standards 1.2, 1.3)	Provides strong justification for the project; explains the importance and urgency.	Provides clear justification; explains importance.	Provides adequate justification; mentions importance.	Weak or unclear justification; does not explain importance.	
Specific Aims (NELP Standards 1.3, 1.4)	Clearly defined, specific, and measurable aims directly related to the problem of practice.	Clearly defined and relevant aims.	Aims are defined but lack specificity or measurability.	Vague or irrelevant aims.	
Section 2: What did you do?					
Context (NELP Standards 3.1, 4.1)	Thoroughly explains the school context and relevant factors influencing the project.	Clearly explains the school context and relevant factors.	Adequately explains the school context.	Poor or unclear explanation of the school context.	
Change Ideas (NELP Standards 4.2, 6.1)	Presents innovative and well-thought-out change ideas supported by evidence or theory.	Presents clear and feasible change ideas.	Presents change ideas that are somewhat feasible.	Presents unclear or impractical change ideas.	

Criteria	Excellent (5-4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Score
Measures (NELP Standards 4.3, 5.1)	Clearly describes measures and provides strong justification for their selection.	Describes measures with adequate justification.	Describes measures but lacks strong justification.	Poor or unclear description of measures with little justification.	
Section 3: What did you find?					
Results (NELP Standards 5.1, 6.2)	Presents results clearly with well-organized data and visuals; demonstrates significant findings.	Presents clear results with organized data and visuals.	Presents results with adequate organization; findings are somewhat significant.	Presents unclear or poorly organized results; findings are insignificant.	
Section 4: What does it mean?					
Key Findings (NELP Standards 6.1, 6.2)	Provides insightful and highly relevant key findings that directly address the aims.	Provides clear and relevant key findings.	Provides key findings that are somewhat relevant.	Provides unclear or irrelevant key findings.	
Potential Impact (NELP Standards 7.1, 7.2)	Clearly articulates the potential impact on the school and stakeholders; provides strong supporting evidence.	Clearly explains potential impact with some supporting evidence.	Adequately explains potential impact with minimal supporting evidence.	Poor or unclear explanation of potential impact with little evidence.	
Conclusions/Lessons Learned (NELP Standards 8.1, 8.2)	Provides insightful conclusions and lessons learned; reflects on the process and outcomes comprehensively.	Provides clear conclusions and lessons learned; reflects on the process and outcomes.	Provides adequate conclusions and lessons learned; reflects minimally on the process and outcomes.	Provides unclear or poorly articulated conclusions and lessons learned.	
Presentation Quality					

Criteria	Excellent (5-4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Score
Clarity and Organization	Highly organized, logical flow; easy to follow and understand.	Organized with a logical flow; clear and understandable.	Adequately organized; somewhat clear.	Poorly organized; difficult to follow or understand.	
Visual Aids	Uses effective, engaging, and well-designed visual aids that enhance understanding.	Uses clear and adequately designed visual aids.	Uses visual aids that are somewhat helpful.	Uses poor or unclear visual aids that do not enhance understanding.	

Task 7: Improvement Project Brief (30 points total)

Criteria	Excellent (3)	Good (2)	Satisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (0)	Score
Introduction					
Problem of Practice (NELP Standards 1.1, 3.1)	Clearly identifies a significant school improvement issue; provides comprehensive background information.	Clearly identifies a relevant issue; provides good background information.	Identifies a relevant issue; provides adequate background information.	Vaguely identifies an issue; provides little or no background information.	
Rationale (NELP Standards 1.2, 1.3)	Provides strong justification for the project; explains the importance and urgency.	Provides clear justification; explains importance.	Provides adequate justification; mentions importance.	Weak or unclear justification; does not explain importance.	
Specific Aims (NELP Standards 1.3, 1.4)	Clearly defined, specific, and measurable aims directly related to the problem of practice.	Clearly defined and relevant aims.	Aims are defined but lack specificity or measurability.	Vague or irrelevant aims.	
Project Description					

Criteria	Excellent (3)	Good (2)	Satisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (0)	Score
Context (NELP Standards 3.1, 4.1)	Thoroughly explains the school context and relevant factors influencing the project.	Clearly explains the school context and relevant factors.	Adequately explains the school context.	Poor or unclear explanation of the school context.	
Change Ideas (NELP Standards 4.2, 6.1)	Presents innovative and well-thought-out change ideas supported by evidence or theory.	Presents clear and feasible change ideas.	Presents change ideas that are somewhat feasible.	Presents unclear or impractical change ideas.	
Measures (NELP Standards 4.3, 5.1)	Clearly describes measures and provides strong justification for their selection.	Describes measures with adequate justification.	Describes measures but lacks strong justification.	Poor or unclear description of measures with little justification.	
Findings and Impact					
Key Findings (NELP Standards 6.1, 6.2)	Provides insightful and highly relevant key findings that directly address the aims.	Provides clear and relevant key findings.	Provides key findings that are somewhat relevant.	Provides unclear or irrelevant key findings.	
Potential Impact (NELP Standards 7.1, 7.2)	Clearly articulates the potential impact on the school and stakeholders; provides strong supporting evidence.	Clearly explains potential impact with some supporting evidence.	Adequately explains potential impact with minimal supporting evidence.	Poor or unclear explanation of potential impact with little evidence.	
Conclusions and Lessons Learned (NELP Standards 8.1, 8.2)	Provides insightful conclusions and lessons learned; reflects on the process and outcomes comprehensively.	Provides clear conclusions and lessons learned; reflects on the process and outcomes.	Provides adequate conclusions and lessons learned; reflects minimally on the process and outcomes.	Provides unclear or poorly articulated conclusions and lessons learned.	

Criteria	Excellent (3)	Good (2)	Satisfactory (1)	Needs Improvement (0)	Score
Technical Aspects					
APA Formatting	Perfect APA formatting.	Minor APA formatting errors.	Some APA formatting errors.	Many APA formatting errors.	
Overall Clarity and Organization	Highly organized, logical flow; easy to follow and understand.	Organized with a logical flow; clear and understandable.	Adequately organized; somewhat clear.	Poorly organized; difficult to follow or understand.	

Related Field Components

This course uses authentic data derived from the candidate's school and/or internship sites in order to identify improvement-based interventions that can be measured for impact. The candidate is also expected to engage in reflection around project learnings and the impact of those learnings on their equity-based leadership practices.

In order to support these efforts, we engage in activities within and outside of the classroom that include:

- Critical analysis of school / internship site School Improvement Plan (in-class during Week 2)
- Assessment of STI in existing School Improvement Plan and critical discussion of ways in which to incorporate STI competencies into improvement work (in-class during Week2)
- Analysis of authentic data sources (see Task 1)
- Completion of the observation/empathy interviews and subsequent analysis (see Task 2)
- Fishbone/root cause verification with key stakeholders (see Task 4)
- Reflection work on the significance of STI to broader cultural competence and equity improvement work (various points throughout the semester)