

Systems Thinking in Education

Equipping leaders to thrive in an era of rapid change.



Purpose

This micro-course aims to introduce the concepts of Systems Thinking to school leaders. The skills and concept of Systems Thinking, when applied to the work of school leadership, will help frame concrete and practical ways to successfully tackle complex problems in school settings. Leaders that apply these concepts will be able to move away from day-to-day management and into the role of the transformative leader that their school needs.

Micro Course Overview (5-6 hours total time)

This is a self-paced and self-guided workshop designed for teams of school leaders to work through together over a 5-6 hour time frame. It is recommended that activities are conducted over the course of about three weeks, with participants taking an hour each week to review content and an hour for a reflection or discussion activity as a group. Activities alternate between reading texts or watching videos and then responding to prompts for discussion or written reflection. While it is recommended that the course be conducted in small collaborative groups, individual school leaders will also benefit from these exercises.

Session One - The Profound Knowledge of Systems Thinking

Watch: [Systems Thinking: A Group Demonstration](#) (4:28)

Read: [Systems Thinking, Profound Knowledge, and Leading Change](#) (6:00)

Read: [Always Applicable](#) (18:00)

Prompt / Discussion: Based on your current understanding, what are the parts and components of Systems Thinking? What assumptions, professional experience, or circumstances shape the way you see Systems Thinking in relationship to your work as a school leader?

Session Two - Systems Thinking in Education

Listen: [Deming in Education: Interview with David P. Langford](#) (40:00)

Read: [From "Why" to "How"-Deming's 14 Points for Today's School Leader](#) (5:00)

Prompt / Discussion: What connections have you make between the ideas of Systems Thinking and your work as a school leader? What changes in attitudes, thinking, or action are suggested in what you have learned about Systems Thinking so far?

Session Three - Superhero or Systems Thinker?

Read: [The Leadership of Profound Change](#) (7:00)

Read: [Leading Learning Organizations - Superhero or Systems Thinker?](#) (8:30)

Watch: [An Interview with Peter Senge](#) (7:22)

Prompt / Discussion: What is exciting about using Systems Thinking in your work? What do you want or need to learn next? How might you move forward with Systems Thinking as part of your approach to school leadership?

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