

Handbook:
Masters Degree Capstone Project:
Leadership Cycle

The Capstone Leadership Cycle: A Model for Continuous Systems Change

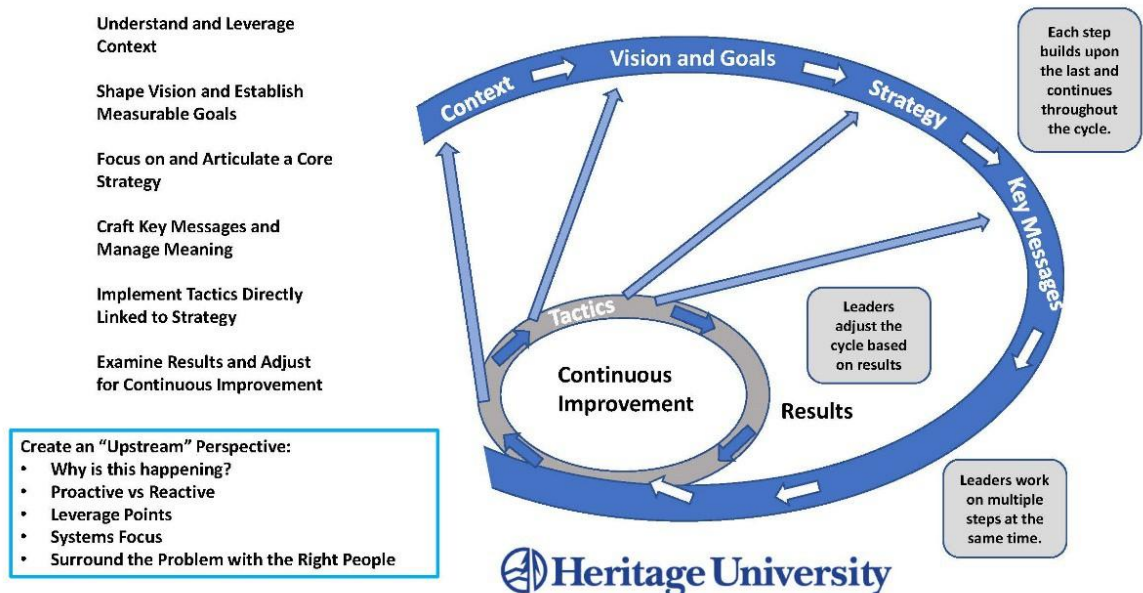


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OVERVIEW OF THE CAPSTONE SEQUENCE

The Heritage Educational Administration Program will challenge, develop, and support leaders who will be transformational with a focus on questioning everything in order to prepare all students to be successful in their world.

With clear outcomes as identified by the Professional Educators Standards Board (PESB), the AWSP Leadership Framework, and the National Educational Leader Program (NELP) Standards, the Educational Administration program provides a comprehensive approach to principal preparation, including the master's degree and a rigorous internship.

Students needing to complete a master's degree to obtain Principal Certification in Washington will complete an additional ten credits over their 5-semester program, culminating in the development, implementation, and presentation of a Capstone Project. The Capstone Project classes are:

- **ED 545C – Problem of Practice: Context (Fall class)**
- **ED 555C – Problem of Practice: Strategy, Tactics, Messaging (Spring class)**
- **ED 565C – Problem of Practice: Implementation I (Summer class)**
- **ED 575C– Problem of Practice: Implementation II (Fall class)**
- **ED 595C – Problem of Practice: Assessment, Expanding and Communicating the Learning (Spring class)**

The foundation for the Capstone Project is the compilation of several models and protocols from various organizations and authors. Chief among these are:

- a. The Leadership Cycle: A Mental Model for Leading Change and Continuous Improvement (Pivot Learning Partners, 2009)
- b. Upstream: The Quest to Solve Problems Before They Happen (Heath, 2020)
- c. Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change (Bridges, 2003)

We believe the use of a Leadership Cycle process that includes the elements presented in the Capstone Project is a powerful tool that school leaders should use with their leadership team or with a representative Guiding Coalition. It is a system wide organizing protocol that will bring focus, a sense of urgency, and a clear plan for success to any school or organization. It is our goal to equip Heritage University Educational Administrative graduates with such tools and transformational leadership capacity – to enable our leaders to have a “Forever Impact.” That’s why our program is entitled: **Leaders for Lasting Impact (L²I).**

The Capstone Leadership Cycle: A Model for Continuous Systems Change

Understand and Leverage
Context

Shape Vision and Establish
Measurable Goals

Focus on and Articulate a Core
Strategy

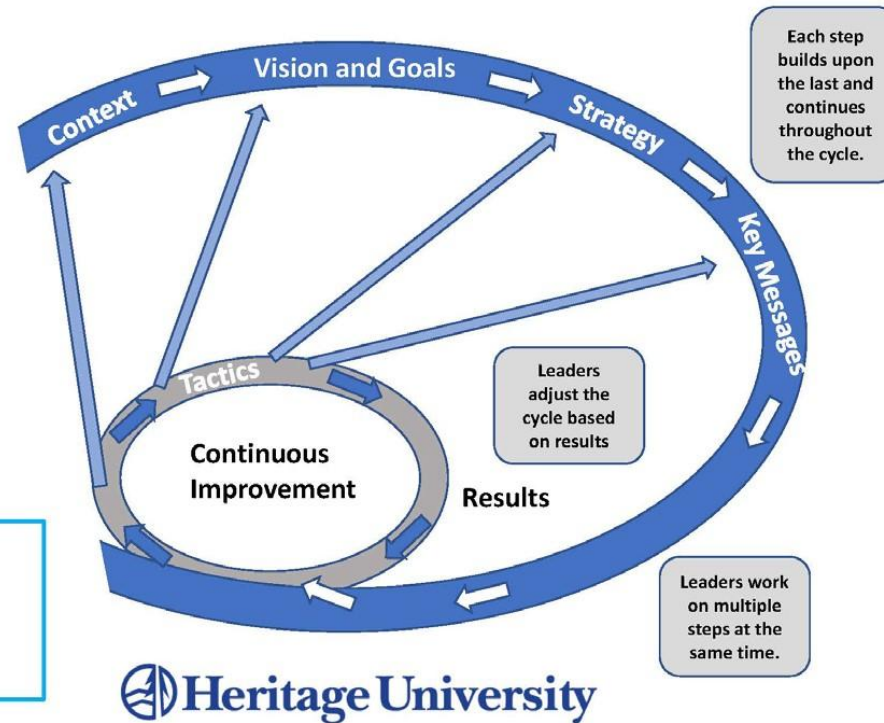
Craft Key Messages and
Manage Meaning

Implement Tactics Directly
Linked to Strategy

Examine Results and Adjust
for Continuous Improvement

Create an "Upstream" Perspective:

- Why is this happening?
- Proactive vs Reactive
- Leverage Points
- Systems Focus
- Surround the Problem with the Right People



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK – THE LEADERSHIP CYCLE MODEL

The Capstone Leadership Cycle: A Model for Continuous Systems Change

Overview

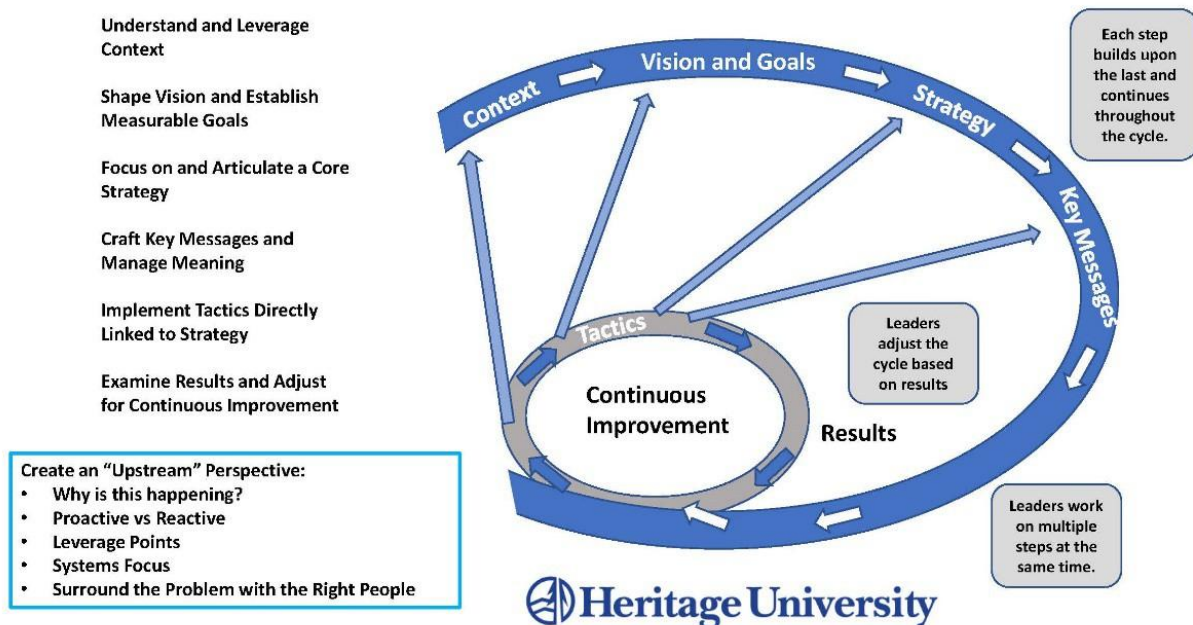
When it comes to improving teaching and learning for ALL students, school leaders play a critical role in the culture they build, the focus they bring to the school, and the structures, processes, and procedures they collaboratively develop. Looking at student academic achievement data is a good starting point but what leaders DO with that data is what will make the difference. They “create the space” for teams of teachers and other stakeholders to understand and ACT upon the data. Furthermore, the data are used to get to the root issues of what is happening. Armed with a deep and well-researched understanding of those root issues, the leader surrounds the problem with the right people and the work begins.

High-performing leaders create “leadership systems” that utilize the talented and caring professionals and other important stakeholders in their respective organizations. The role of the leader is to bring a systems perspective, to create the trust, relationships, and support systems required to effectively address the persistent Problem of Practice or systemic inequity. Heath (2020) promotes a proactive approach that identifies WHY a problem is happening and then seeks to craft solutions that work to avoid the problem from happening in the first place. It takes the perspective away from intervention (which is still required in the short term) to one of prevention (which is more lasting, long-term work). He addresses the following three barriers to “Upstream” thinking:

1. Problem Blindness – the belief that negative outcomes are natural or inevitable, out of our control.
2. A Lack of Ownership – if the work is not chosen by someone, the underlying problem won’t get solved. Unless somebody leads, no one will.
3. Tunneling – When people are juggling a lot of problems, they give up on trying to solve them all. They adopt tunnel vision. There is no long-term planning, no strategic prioritization of issues. They are just solving the immediate problems (sometimes over and over again).

The integration of these leadership systems in the context of Upstream or future-focused, strategic problem solving constitutes what we are calling the Capstone Leadership Cycle: A Model for Continuous Systems Change. The work is more transformational when strategy is connected to best practice; tactics include the creation of professional learning communities; and work goes beyond a mechanical commitment to using multiple sources and types of data and is linked to an inquiry process that taps into professionals' deep desire to learn, grow and improve.

The Capstone Leadership Cycle: A Model for Continuous Systems Change



Context and Culture

Understand and leverage context to create catalysts or levers for change.

The culture of a district and school shows itself in the norms and unspoken "rules" that guide people's behavior. The culture - "the way people do things around here" - offers valuable information to a leader about the assumptions people have about their work and how they do it. It is said that "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." A leader must understand the culture of her or his organization to introduce and manage any significant change process. A leader understands that the culture is rich with data about norms guiding people's behavior, how information travels through the system, those whom individuals respect or acknowledge as leaders and heroes, and the rites and rituals that are important to people in the organization.

Successful leaders are "contextually literate." They "read" their contexts like a text, including understanding the sub-texts, the meta-messages and the micro-politics while not becoming victims of them. Leaders are not passive players in their contexts - indeed, they are influential actors and should be pro-active in shaping their organizational settings, cultures and ways of working. They can analyze and understand their settings, determine priorities and enact their own and others' leadership in ways that are strategic, and needs based. This means using a mix of district and school self-assessment methods and student outcome data to recognize trends and the "brutal facts" of the district's and school's levels of performance, progress and rates of improvement.

Understanding the context is particularly important when the goal is equity. Context determines what is possible. More reform efforts flounder because of failure to continually assess and understand the context. So, unpacking the factors of "context" - scanning the external and internal

factors - is key.

Successful leaders also understand context and culture as key pieces of crafting “upstream” or proactive strategies. Applying effective models of change such as William Bridges’ *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change* within the understanding of the organizational culture and context makes transformation more likely to happen.

Vision and Goals

Shape a compelling shared vision and establish measurable goals.

A leader's vision tells a story about the future she believes in. It sets a direction for followers in a narrative about how the future can be better than the past. A vision's broad strokes don't include the details of a plan, rather it shapes the outlines of a dream about how things can be better if we're willing to work together to make it a reality. In Bridges’ model this is the clear statement of Purpose along with a clear Picture – one where we see ourselves in the vision.

Effective leaders craft compelling vision statements or key themes that marshal and unify collaborative action to bridge the gap between current reality in the school and an improved future state. The vision provides the view of what the school can and should be that captures the dreams of others and mobilizes their actions to achieve challenging but powerful results. This well-crafted and frequently communicated vision will help to see that the required effort to attain success is worth it, and that the breaking of old habits and assumptions is necessary and preferable.

These successful leaders work together with other leaders throughout the organization or on their Leadership Team to translate goals into measurable targets that are both challenging and achievable and that foster a sense of urgency. They review goals frequently to assess their progress and adjust when necessary. Shared vision and goals empower leaders at multiple levels to engage in continuous improvement processes that increase the alignment and effectiveness of school priorities and operations.

The most useful goals begin big but are quickly translated into targets that are measurable, challenging, but also achievable and meaningful. The most useful goals are also those that seek to fully understand and eliminate the problem from occurring in the future. These may work to resolve the immediate issue or intervene in a specific problem, but the more they can identify important points of leverage resulting in systems change, the more long-term impact they will have.

Strategy

Focus on and clearly articulate a Core Strategy

Vision and goals are a necessary part of a change process but are not sufficient. In the private sector, it is common to talk about strategy. Private sector leaders know they need strategy, but in the public sector, explicit talk about strategy is rare. Yet leaders of any change effort need to have a change strategy. More than a goal, a change strategy includes both what leaders intend and how to get there. In Bridges’ model this is the Plan – with a specific part for everyone to play.

Research on successful schools finds that leaders of these districts work collaboratively with all other leaders (both formal and informal) to define a core strategy that lays out the group's hypothesis about how to achieve their long-term goal. The strategy defines the school's instructional core and expectations for common practice and creates a framework for describing both the on-going work of people and the organizational capacity necessary to realize the district's mission and vision. It is sometimes presented as a Theory of Action or similar multi-conditional statement. The selected core strategy/s must be focused on efforts to ensure that the prevailing or persistent problems no longer happen, and that true systems change occurs.

According to Heath (2020), "A well-designed system is the best upstream intervention. Leaders of the most successful schools lead through vision, mission, core values and goals, and they don't shy away from being directive when necessary. But they also rely heavily on a "middle way" - leading through the conscious selection of a core strategy that provides a clear direction for the school's improvement efforts. A focused school core strategy empowers others throughout the system because, when they get to a fork in the road, they don't need to wait to ask for guidance. The core strategy points them to the right choice. In this way, the core strategy makes coherence and focus possible.

Strategy tells people what to focus on, what to say no to, and guides their actions to achieve important goals. The advent of standards-based reform has brought focus on a small number of school-level change strategies, most specifically, clearly defining and implementing a high-quality instructional core that includes tight alignment of standards, high-leverage instructional strategies, assessment, professional development and curricular resources; building capacity through human resource development; or creating data and information tools for continuous improvement. Effective strategies should go beyond the traditional "box" of curriculum and assessment and seek to clearly define all student outcomes and dispositions, as well as 21st century skills to better prepare ALL students for THEIR futures (not our past).

Key Messages – Communication and Meaning Management

Craft Key Messages and "Manage Meaning"

Good leaders are good communicators. But many communication efforts focus on telling constituents about the "what" of reform ("We've adopted a new curriculum for math.") or explaining the "why" in terms of function ("We needed a math series that provides more support for students learning English."). Yet leaders in the most successful schools understand that they also must be explicit about the meaning - the deeper reasons for what they are doing - to prompt people to take effective action on behalf of the school's core strategy and goals.

Being explicit about meaning - the deeper "why" behind any change - is essential because cultures are conservative when it comes to assigning meaning to something. New structures or processes can be instantly undercut by a culture that says, "Oh, I know what that means" and assigns an old meaning to a new tool, initiative, or strategy. Many of the old meanings that are ever-present in schools and districts are toxic to change. Thus data-focused reform efforts must struggle to shift the meaning of data collection from compliance and "gotcha" to a focus on using data for continuous improvement. Thus, with testing, accountability, textbook adoptions, and professional learning communities, the failure to explicitly manage meaning leaves the culture and its old meanings in

charge.

Many successful leaders use stories as a way to help others make sense of new information and place it in a meaningful context. Stories help people make connections with new ideas and give them some background such as a narrative about a teacher who used the new process or approach effectively and how she achieved success with her students.

When people experience a void in information and concrete examples, they tend to fill the void with their own interpretive meanings and assumptions. Such situations create unnecessary obstacles to implementation and follow through because people's assumptions are based on what they understand to be true. Shining the light on and celebrating successes will emphasize what is important and valuable to the school's initiatives and provide the "fuel" to sustain the momentum. It will also reinforce the meaning of the new terminology and answer the great question, "What does that look like?"

Leaders often forget how important it is to constantly and repetitively communicate to all stakeholders. Key messages and managing meaning must be adapted and tailored for each group of stakeholders and constituents, but should all tightly align with the Vision, Goals, and Core Strategy.

Tactics

Implement tactics that directly support and align with the Core Strategy.

When it comes to change, strategy is only a starting point: strategies must be translated into tactics or action plans to guide the work that must be done to achieve the desired outcomes. Of course, all tactics are actions - but not all actions are tactics! Tactics are actions that are linked to the core strategy. The direct linkage between tactics and the Core Strategy is not always considered or clearly communicated. As a result, many leaders are frustrated that the Core Strategy isn't implemented, or isn't implemented well, not realizing that no one has helped leaders throughout the system understand how to develop and implement tactics, including attention to detail on roles and responsibilities, timelines and budget (as applicable).

Increasingly, research points to the finding that the most effective tactics cut across traditional roles and functions and focus on issues such as building human capacity /professional learning, creating the tools for continuous improvement, establishing the conditions for effective collaborative teams, explicitly defining the instructional core and outcomes for common practice, and developing organizational capacity to be a "results-driven school" that responds to the needs of both students and the adults in the system. When the vision and goals are compelling and the Core Strategy is clear, people at all levels of the organization can develop powerful tactics that leaders at the top would never have thought of, but which are aligned with and support the core strategy.

Clear, well-researched, and consistently implemented tactics are observable, measurable, and easily coached. Such clarity makes it more feasible to measure the success of the Core Strategy and individual, aligned tactics.

Results and Continuous Improvement

Build a culture of continuous improvement and fine tune or adjust tactics based on analysis of the results.

Research on schools that demonstrate successful achievement for all students work with stakeholder leaders at all levels to create the necessary systems and structures for collecting and analyzing data about teaching and learning and build a cultural of internal accountability in which everyone views their primary work as continuously improving systems, structures and processes that improve student learning. This work is driven by a true commitment to the school's Vision and Goals and is enhanced by the development of a culture of respect and collaboration. Effective systems of support are in place and the coaching of collaborative teams is of paramount concern.

The concept of continuous improvement implies a culture of accountability and results-driven decision-making processes that seek data and feedback, both qualitative and quantitative, about both students and adults. It also implies a well-coordinated system of teams that learn from one another and that inform the work of the site Leadership Team (and even District Leadership Teams).

Successful schools schedule regular mandatory inquiry meetings to work as a team to analyze student work products and student results on teacher-developed common formative assessments. Using a data-based inquiry cycle, teachers and leaders at all levels collaborate to look at student learning data to discover what students have learned and what they still need to learn. They also examine their own practices (and the effectiveness/appropriateness of the selected curricular path and priorities) and the extent to which these practices positively impacted student learning. Data about leading indicators - the things that must change in order to produce improvements in outcomes - are particularly important. In the highest performing schools, most improvement cycles seek to fine-tune tactics rather than the school's larger Core Strategy, though periodically the Core Strategy, too, must be adjusted when results suggest that the Core Strategy is not sufficiently addressing students' learning.

IDENTIFYING AND BENCHMARKING THE WORK

ED 545C – Problem of Practice: Context, Vision and Goals (Fall class)

Course Objectives, Essential Questions, and Deliverables:

- Problem identification, determining root causes
- Identifying Goals
- Theory of Action
- Developing a Knowledge Base
- *What are some possible on-going, perplexing problems our students and teachers are facing? What priorities have been identified by the school's Leadership Team?*
- *How do we know this is a problem? How do we use data effectively to discover the root problem? What additional types of data do I need to more fully understand the issues, context, and culture?*
- *What elements of our school's context and culture are contributing to this problem?*
- *If your Leadership Cycle is effective, what would it look like (Picture – where everyone can see themselves in it)? What are the Vision and major Goals of this project? What are the major themes that will be addressed?*
- *Who needs to be involved in resolving this problem with an “upstream focus?”*
- **Deliverable:** At the end of this course students will identify and appropriately narrow a Problem of Practice to be collaboratively addressed through the design of the Capstone Project. Students will have a solid outline of and reasonably developed draft of the Context and Culture section of the narrative paper.

ED 555C – Problem of Practice: Strategy, Tactics, Messaging (Spring class)

Course Objectives, Essential Questions, and Deliverables:

- Identifying the Core Strategy, Tactics, and Key Messaging
- Solidifying the Problem of Practice
- Equity & Ethics
- *Based on your review of multiple sources of data, and your examination of the Culture and Context, what are some possible research-based best practices that may be used in the design of your Core Strategy and resulting Tactics?*
- *How will your Core Strategy influence any selected Tactics? How will you ensure that these elements are closely aligned with your Vision and Goals?*
- *How will you recognize and manage the change and transition process (Bridges)?*
- *Based on your Vision, Goals, and Core Strategy, what will your Key Messages be to all stakeholder groups?*
- *How will you clearly define and continuously communicate the Key Messages and critical terms to all stakeholders? How will you monitor to ensure that these Key Messages and critical terms are understood throughout the organization?*
- **Deliverable:** At the end of this course students will solidify their Problem of Practice or focus of the Capstone Project, identify the outcomes/goals of the project, identify the Core Strategy to be implemented, identify a beginning list of specific Tactics to support the Core Strategy, and define Key Messages and critical terms to be communicated. Students will have a

solid outline of and reasonably developed draft of the Strategy, Tactics, Messaging section of the narrative paper.

ED 565C – Problem of Practice: Implementation I (Summer class)

Course Objectives, Essential Questions, and Deliverables:

- Collaborative Practice and Design
- Components of Assessment
- Revising the Cycle of Inquiry
- *How can you design and implement a continuous improvement protocol to engage all appropriate stakeholders? What evidence will be collected (quantitative and qualitative) to inform the improvement process?*
- *What systems of support will be designed to address individual, and group needs during the cycle? How will you continue to manage the change and transition process during this time?*
- *What process will be used, in conjunction with the continuous improvement protocol to assess the effectiveness of the Core Strategy and selected Tactics? How will you determine what, if any, adjustments need to be made?*
- **Deliverable:** At the end of this course students will solidify the specific action steps of the Capstone Project including the timeline and processes for implementing and assessing the effectiveness of the selected Core Strategy and Tactics. Students will have a well-designed plan to manage and sustain the change process. Students will have a solid outline of and reasonably developed design/plan for the Results and Continuous Improvement section of the narrative paper.

ED 575C– Problem of Practice: Implementation II (Fall class)

Course Objectives, Essential Questions, and Deliverables:

- Collaborative practice continued
- Data collection and analysis – intended outcomes
- Assessing the Cycle of Inquiry process
- *How will I work with the Guiding Coalition, or “group of people surrounding the problem” to get the work done?*
- *How will I ensure I am gathering the data necessary to assess the success of our project?*
- *What additional support, training, or professional learning is needed to ensure success of the Project?*
- *What is my plan for closing the project and analyzing the multiple sources of data collected? How will I link my data to the Vision, Goals, Key Messaging, and Core Strategy of the project?*
- **Deliverable:** At the end of this course students will be well along in the implementation of their Project. Students will have a clear and well-organized system for collecting and categorizing the multiple sources of data collected. Students will make revisions or adjustments as needed to the tactics and team processes, providing additional support and resources as needed. Students may begin the draft or outline of the final sections of the Capstone Project narrative paper.

ED 595C – Problem of Practice: Assessment, Expanding and Communicating the Learning (Spring class)

Course Objectives, Essential Questions, and Deliverables:

- Reflection on the Problem of Practice and Outcomes
- Reflection on the Cycle of Inquiry Process
- Communication Plan, Narrative, and Recommendations for Next Steps/Action
- *Looking at the Capstone Project experience and the data collected, did we select the right Core Strategy and Tactics? How effective were our Key Messages and our efforts to Manage Meaning?*
- *Looking at the Capstone Project experience and the data collected, what have I learned about the process overall? What changes or improvements on the process would I make from the Principal or Leadership role viewpoint?*
- *How can I formalize and communicate my findings (in the narrative document)? What would be my recommendations for either keeping the momentum going or to take the work to the next level?*
- **Deliverable:** At the end of this course students will finalize all aspects of the Capstone Project. The final narrative report and findings will be approved and presented to a body of peers and faculty.

CAPSTONE PROJECT NARRATIVE OUTLINE & REQUIREMENTS

While not a formal research paper, the Capstone Project should represent solid, formal academic writing. Guidelines found in the APA, sixth edition must be followed for in-text citations and references. While it is not necessary to strictly adhere to requirements such as referring to the writer as “the researcher” the narrative should be written in the past tense with the exception of the sections on Context and Culture and the final sections on extending the learning (recommendations and next steps). Other items to consider include:

- The author must write the entire proper noun before an acronym may be used. A correct example is American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). On subsequent pages, ACLU may be used to identify the organization.
- The Project needs to be typed using font type Ariel or Times New Roman, size 12 using standard margins.
- While there is not a formal literature review section it is expected that appropriate resources will be sought, used, and cited in the development of the Problem of Practice, Core Strategy, and Tactics developed for the project. There should be a references page at the end of the narrative, appropriately formatted in APA, 6th edition.
- A Table of Contents should be included after the cover page.

RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOUR WORK

A summary of the key services offered by the Donald K North Library on the HU campus:

http://libguides.heritage.edu/friendly.php?s=librarystart#_ga=2.43203749.169972126.158464656

Eagle Search / Primo

Primo is a search tool that allows users to search through most of the library's collection in one convenient location. It is a great tool to use during your research.

What can Primo Find? Primo scopes allow you to define what types of resources you search for.

Everything: just like the name implies, this scope will allow you to search through all physical items, online articles and eBooks, and more.

Heritage Catalog: books, eBooks, audio-visual recordings, journals, and most items available at the library.

Articles and More: scholarly journals and articles, reviews, datasets, dissertations and more available through the library's digital collection.

Does Primo Search Everything? While Primo searches through many of the research databases that Heritage University subscribes to, it does not search through all of them. For discipline-specific searching, visit the Databases page and locate a database related to your discipline.

Article Databases

The library has access to many different databases that offer access to abstracts and records for over 17,780 journals and other publications, and full text for more than 10,010 periodicals. Interlibrary loan functionality is part of database access; anything we only have records for can be easily requested.

Additionally, we have an A-Z Journal service allowing users to look up specific publications and access part or all of the entire publication run of a particular journal.

Subject Guides

Subject guides are collections of different kinds of online library resources that all relate to a particular subject or topic. Some of the databases you will find here will contain scholarly articles, but these guides also include other kinds of sources, meant to help you at different stages of the research process.

Digital Reference

The library offers a wide range of reference sources online, which collectively provide access to nearly 1,000 different encyclopedias, dictionaries, thesauri, and other reference works. These include Educational Administration Action Research encyclopedias and reference books as well as general ones.

Interlibrary Loan

The Donald K North Library has borrowing relationships with several other libraries, allowing students to borrow needed books or articles from other institutions. This can be done either at the point of access when database searching, or through WorldCat. For more information, contact one of the librarians.

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

The pervading spirit underlying the mission and goals of Heritage University is the pursuit of justice and truth in every aspect of a student's education. Honesty and integrity are expected of all members of the academic community and are essential to the learning process. Professors must demonstrate, by precept and example, the necessity of rigorous honesty in the use of sources and of utmost respect for the work of others.

Heritage students have the responsibility to adhere to academic honesty in all their educational endeavors. Faculty members have the responsibility to model academic honesty, to prevent and detect violations, and to counsel and/or discipline students who violate the Heritage University Academic Honesty Policy. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, academic misconduct, and all behavior inconsistent with academic integrity and honesty.

RUBRIC FOR EVALUATING: Capstone Project Narrative: Final Edition

Criteria	Below Standard	Meets Standard	Above Standard
Determination of the Problem of Practice	The process that determined the Problem of Practice is unclear or fragmented	The process that determined the Problem of Practice is logical and rigorous, resulting in a significant PoP	The process that determined the Problem of Practice is logical and rigorous, and is based on a wide variety and type of data sources
Systems, Proactive (Upstream) approach – Vision & Goals	The PoP is reactive or not clearly defined	The PoP is cast or designed to be proactive rather than reactive. It seeks to stop the problem from happening as a system rather than just intervening	The PoP is designed to be proactive but also includes needed short-term measures and a logical benchmarking of progress

Culture, Context, Collaboration, Ownership	The overall approach does not involve or is inadequate in addressing involvement or impact on organizational culture	The overall approach is well-designed to identify key stakeholder involvement and seeks to change the culture of the organization	The overall approach is well-designed and adds specific structures or elements that address ownership if the Pop and Core Strategy
Transitions, Messaging, Meaning Making, P ⁴ (Bridges)	The Project does not consider the change and transition process or does not clearly define key concepts and terms	The Project adequately considers the change and transition process and clearly defines key concepts and terms	In addition, the Project includes a well-designed method to monitor and assess the transition process itself
Realistic, Research-based Core Strategy	Selected Core Strategy lacks evidence of research/justification or is not viable in the given context	Selected Core Strategy is adequately researched and is viable in the given context	In addition, the Core Strategy selected impacts the entire organization or is easily scalable to larger parts of the organization

Cohesiveness of process, assessment, and sustainability	Elements are fragmented or poorly aligned	All elements of the project design are adequately aligned to support the Core Strategy and Vision/Goals	In addition, the Project addresses a well-defined plan for communication, especially focused on the “why” and transition process
Quality of academic writing, coherence, adherence to APA 6 th ed. formatting	Lacks coherence, may contain logic or grammatical errors, does not follow APA formatting	Writing flows logically and addresses all components of the culminating activity, sources are properly cited	All major points are well-supported by artifacts, evidence, or relevant citations, paper is both compelling and concise

NARRATIVE TEMPLATE

The following section is a recommended outline for the Capstone Project Narrative Paper

Title of Capstone Project

An Educational Administration Masters Degree Capstone Leadership Cycle Project Presented to

Name of Professor Heritage University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Education

Candidate Name Academic Year

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NOTE: *The contents of each section will be based on your design and experience. The guiding questions are just that – guides and items to consider. They do not represent all of the topics or items that can and should be addressed. You should add any sub-headings you feel are necessary to properly organize your narrative paper.*

Overview

This section should be considered an abstract of your project.

Context and Culture

1. What are some possible on-going, perplexing problems our students and teachers are facing? What priorities have been identified by the school’s Leadership Team?
2. How do we know this is a problem? How do we use data effectively to discover the root problem? What additional types of data do I need to more fully understand the issues, context, and culture?
3. What elements of our school’s context and culture are contributing to this problem?

Vision and Goals

1. If your Leadership Cycle is effective, what would it look like (Picture – where everyone can see themselves in it)? What are the Vision and major Goals of this project? What are the major themes that will be addressed?
2. Who needs to be involved in resolving this problem with an “upstream focus?”

Core Strategy

1. Based on your review of multiple sources of data, and your examination of the Culture and Context, what are some possible research-based best practices that may be used in the

- design of your Core Strategy and resulting Tactics?
2. How will your Core Strategy influence any selected Tactics? How will you ensure that these elements are closely aligned with your Vision and Goals?
 3. How will you recognize and manage the change and transition process (Bridges)?

Key Messages – Communication and Meaning Management

1. Based on your Vision, Goals, and Core Strategy, what will your Key Messages be to all stakeholder groups?
2. How will you clearly define and continuously communicate the Key Messages and critical terms to all stakeholders? How will you monitor to ensure that these Key Messages and critical terms are understood throughout the organization?

Tactics

This section should present your specific Tactics, including a timeline and persons responsible. It is basically your action plan for the identified work.

Tactics should have a direct alignment in supporting the identified Core Strategy (or Theory of Action).

1. How will I work with the Guiding Coalition, or “group of people surrounding the problem” to get the work done?
2. How will I ensure I am gathering the data necessary to assess the success of our project?
3. What additional support, training, or professional learning is needed to ensure success of the Project?
4. What is my plan for closing the project and analyzing the multiple sources of data collected? How will I link my data to the Vision, Goals, Key Messaging, and Core Strategy of the project?

Results and Continuous Improvement

1. How can you design and implement a continuous improvement protocol to engage all appropriate stakeholders? What evidence will be collected (quantitative and qualitative) to inform the improvement process?
2. What systems of support will be designed to address individual, and group needs during the cycle? How will you continue to manage the change and transition process during this time?
3. What process will be used, in conjunction with the continuous improvement protocol, to assess the effectiveness of the Core Strategy and selected Tactics? How will you determine what, if any adjustments, need to be made?

Reflections and Next Steps

1. Looking at the Capstone Project experience and the data collected, did we select the right Core Strategy and Tactics? How effective were our Key Messages and our efforts to Manage Meaning?
2. Looking at the Capstone Project experience and the data collected, what have I learned about the process overall? What changes or improvements to the process would I make from the Principal or Leadership role viewpoint?

3. How can I formalize and communicate my findings (in the narrative document)? What would be my recommendations for either keeping the momentum going or taking the work to the next level?

REFERENCES

Carefully follow APA 7th ed. For listing all references cited in the project.

APPENDICES