Learning Community and Workplace Culture

Competency

Educator deepens their understanding around improvements in community and workplace culture.

Key Method

The educator uses the Learn-Design-Do-Reflect cycle to identify places of improvement in community and workplace culture. The educator implements strategies for improvement, guiding a group of stakeholders to develop an intended outcome.

Method Components

Association leadership means understanding how to create and guide meaningful, positive, and powerful collective action. It means learning to lead members of large, culturally diverse, and engaged groups and steering the activities of group members in the direction of desired change. Within the context of the association, teacher leaders can build bridges with administrators and other stakeholders in order to advance quality instructional practice and the right policies to make that practice possible.

Association Competencies for Teacher Leaders
- Organizational Effectiveness: Leading with Vision
- Organizational Effectiveness: Leading with Skill
- Organizing and Advocacy
- Building the Capacity of Others
- Learning Community and Workplace Culture

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Learn-Design-Do-Reflect Cycle

The Learn-Design-Do-Reflect Cycle is a tool used in the NEA Teacher Leadership Institute to support the development of teacher leadership. The following descriptors will help you understand your participation in each step of the process.

- Learn - Delve into resources; explore the needs of your school, district, or state; explore resources to challenge inequities, experience resources to learn about other cultures, and self-assess in order to gain a deep understanding of research, best practices, the needs of your educational setting, and your own professional learning needs.
- Design - Design an action plan that addresses at least one of the needs of your school, district, or state.
- Do - Implement your plan and collect information and evidence about the challenges and successes of your implementation.
- Reflect - Take time to reflect on your biases and on the outcomes and the process of implementation of your action plan and consider next steps.

Learning Community, Workplace Culture, and Teacher Leadership

According to the NEA Teacher Leadership Competencies (2018), developing your teacher leadership in the area of Learning Community and Workplace Culture includes the following (see Resource section for link to the complete guide):

Emerging Level
- Understand the importance of contracts and policies.
- Identify how contracts and policies can create, sustain, or develop positive teaching and learning environments.

Developing Level
- Understand the landscape of major policy and contractual initiatives.
- Use research to identify contract provisions and policy options for a positive impact on teaching and learning conditions.
- Foster a positive workplace culture of support and encouragement.

Performing Level
- Utilize interest-based and/or problem-solving strategies to guide the development and implementation of desirable changes in working conditions.
- Advocate for contract provisions and policy options that have a positive impact on teaching and learning environments.

Transforming Level

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- Lead members and other stakeholders in their effort to develop new and innovative policies and contractual articles to enhance learning environments for students, educators, and/or families.

Types of Collaborating Purposefully Leadership Plans
- Identify current education issues as they relate to working conditions and share that information with others.
- Identify how to respond appropriately and effectively to challenge inequities.
- Utilize research to develop a stance on issues that positively impact teaching and learning conditions.
- Establish appropriate strategies to bring about desired changes in working conditions.
- Advocate for policies and provisions that positively impact teaching and learning.
- Understand the relationships among education community members and others.
- Organize members in the development and implementation of innovative strategies to bring desired change in working conditions to promote equitable practices within classrooms, schools, and districts.

Supporting Rationale and Research

Day, D. V., Zaccaro, S. J., & Halpin, S. M. (2004). Leadership development for transforming organizations: Growing leaders for tomorrow. New York, NY: Psychology Press.
This book emphasizes the importance of leaders (using the U.S. Army as an example of a world-class organization in need of transformation) in the development of cultures that are conducive to leadership development.

Hattie, J. (2015). What works best in education: The politics of collaborative expertise (Open Ideas). Pearson. Retrieved from https://www.pearson.com/content/dam/corporate/global/pearson-dot-com/files/hattie/150526_ExpertiseWEB_V1.pdf
Hattie makes a strong case for collaborative expertise based on his meta-analyses of effective teaching practices and builds on his visible learning work.

Kraft, M. A., & Papay, J. P. (2016). Developing workplaces where teachers stay, improve, and succeed. The Albert Shanker Institute. Retrieved from http://distributedleadership.org/assets/asi-(2016).pdf

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Leithwood, K., Seashore-Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2010). Learning from leadership: Investigating the links to improved student learning. New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation.
In this study commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, researchers from the University of Toronto and the University of Minnesota concluded that collective leadership has a stronger influence on student achievement than does individual leadership—and higher-performing schools award greater influence to teacher teams, parents, and students. Further, the study found that principals and district leaders do not lose influence as others gain influence.

Resources

Templates

[Action/Design Plan Template for non-Teacher Leadership Institute Fellows for Artifact 3](#)
Anyone NOT in the TLI should use this template.

[2018–Current Teacher Leadership Institute Fellows Action Plan Template for Artifact 3](#)
TLI Fellows from 2018–current should have completed this template as part of the TLI's requirements. Please upload your Action Plan as evidence for this micro-credential.

[Teacher Leadership Context Circle Map for Artifact 1](#)

Readings

[Be a Cage-Buster](#)

[Continues Improvement for Schools from Carnegie Foundation](#) (pages 32-45)

[Getting Genuine Commitment for Change](#)

[Intercultural Development Research Association: Fostering Culturally Diverse Learning Communities](#)

[Strategies for Building Cultural Competence](#)

[Teacher Leadership Competencies Booklet](#) Scroll until you find the download pdf button

[The Importance of Continued Board Development](#)

Videos

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[NEA video on engendering commitment with colleagues](#)

[Resolving the Heart of Conflict](#)

[The Puzzle of Motivation](#)

[Tribal Leadership](#)

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3 and receive a proficient for all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

(350–500 words)
Please use the suggested word count as a guide to answer the following contextual questions. This will help our assessor understand your current context for working on this micro-credential.

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.
Answer the following contextual questions to help our assessor understand your current situation.

- What is your professional mission and vision for teacher leadership?
- Describe your professional learning goals for completing this micro-credential.
- Describe the professional context for earning this micro-credential.
    o Number of years in education, subject area, etc.
    o School/community—e.g., rural, urban, suburban, school level, student/community demographics, socio-economic data, etc
    o School cultural and community background.
    o Share any additional information that may help someone understand your context.
    o Describe your current roles and general experience in teacher leadership at the school, district, and/or state level.
    o Who are the stakeholders in your community?

Passing: Professional mission and vision clearly states what the educator hopes to achieve in their career and what success will look like when achieved. Professional context is reasonable and accurate and includes specific professional learning goals as an outcome of completing this micro-credential.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following five artifacts as evidence of your learning. Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.

Artifact 1: Teacher Leadership Circle Map
 (see template in Resource section)
Fill in the Circle Map using the template in the Resource section, or draw your own on chart paper.

Teacher Leadership Context Circle Map

Needs
1.
2.

Context
1.
2.

Core Belief/Theme
1.
2.
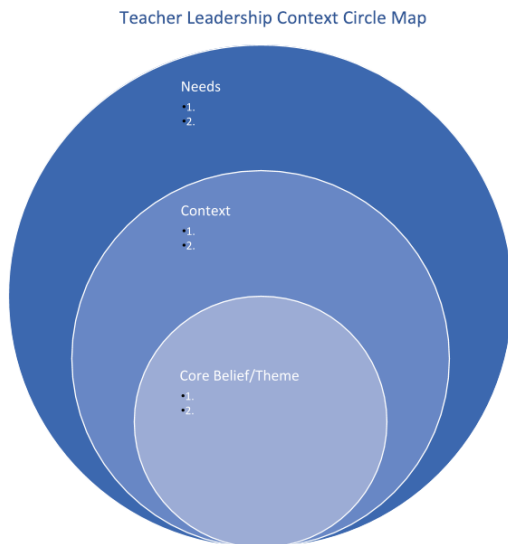
Directions for Circle Map
- Center Circle: Core Theme/Belief

Use page 5 of the NEA Teacher Leadership Competencies Booklet (see Resource section) to identify the Core Belief/Theme that resonates with you.

- Middle Circle: Context

Synthesize the information you gathered in Part 1. You may include any other relevant contextual information to guide your thinking and recording for the middle circle:

- District (suburban/rural/urban)
- Colleagues
- Site/district administration
- Teacher leadership culture
- Demographics (school, community)
- Who are the stakeholders in your school/district

- Outer Circle: Needs

After identifying your teacher leadership context, identify and record in the outer circle the needs of your school and/or district in relationship to learning community and workplace culture. Consider the following guiding questions as you identify your contextual needs:

- Is there a stakeholder group that is not represented in decision-making?
- What inequities currently exist in your school/district?
- What resources are needed to address these inequities?
- What are the needs of the community?
- How does the school address the needs of the community?
- What are the needs of my school/district?
- What are the needs of my colleagues/my association?
- How do the needs of my colleagues affect the classroom, school and district?
- How do the needs of my colleagues affect the classroom, school, and district?
- What are the needs of my local association?
- How do the needs of my association affect me and my colleagues?

Artifact 2: Review

Connect your Teacher Leader Circle Map to the learning community and workplace culture by answering the following questions (50–150 words or 3–5 bullet points each):

1. What might your role be as a teacher leader to positively impact the identified learning community and workplace culture needs of your diverse stakeholders (students, school, district, association) based on your context and grounded in your core belief/theme?
2. What might your role be as a teacher leader to inspire and support other potential diverse teacher leaders in creating an effective learning community and workplace culture based on your context and grounded in your core beliefs/theme?

Artifact 3: Design

Use the Teacher Leadership learning community and workplace culture competency to design an activity or action that you can do to address an identified need from your Leadership Circle Map. Describe how the plan supports and promotes equity.

Complete and upload one of the following design templates:

- Option 1: 2018–Current Teacher Leadership Institute Fellows Action Plan Template

(see template in Resource section, or use the one you created in your state cohort)

- Option 2: Action/Design Plan Template for Non-Teacher Leadership Institute Fellows

(see template in Resource section)

Artifact 4: Do (part 1)
Upload 3 different artifacts that show evidence of implementation of your action plan, annotated with descriptions (20–50 words each).
These artifacts may include:
- Websites
- Newsletter
- Emails
- Recorded webinars
- Presentations
- Emails to or from participants
- Online forums (screenshots of conversations)
- Completed websites
- Products developed during the process
- Artifacts from tools like Remind or Hussle
- Voice recorded messages for phone lists
- Group chats/text messages

Description should include:
- Time/date
- Number of participants
- Purpose of artifact and how it was used
- Explain how equity is supported and promoted

Artifact 5: Feedback from Participants—Do (part 2)
Obtain feedback from at least two stakeholders in attendance.
Use these prompts to obtain necessary feedback to serve as evidence. Your chosen participants should respond to each prompt in 2–3 sentences or 2–3 bullet points.
- How did the teacher leader engage you in learning community and workplace culture?
- What were the intended outcomes, and to what degree were the outcomes achieved?
- How did the teacher leader address their own personal biases and did they address challenging inequities?
- What did you gain from participating in this experience?
- If the teacher leader were to implement this plan again, what could be done differently? Why?
- How did the teacher leader address diversity, equity, and cultural competence during this activity?

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Circle Map	Circle map is complete, and directions were followed closely	Circle map is missing important information	Circle map is incomplete
	Core Theme/Belief is from the Teacher Leadership Book	Core Theme/Belief is not from the Teacher Leadership Book	Core Theme/Belief is not identified
	The context section is complete with enough context to be useful in understanding the full picture	The context is missing some important information	Very little context is given
	Needs are listed and realistic and within your sphere of influence	Needs may be too broad and out of your realm of influence	Needs are not identified or not based on facts
	Needs reflect diverse perspectives	Needs reflect at least one diverse perspective	Needs do not include diverse perspectives
	Needs are identified using a positive, proactive, professional voice and are facts, not opinions	Needs are based on opinion and not fact Professional or proactive voice is not used	Needs are stated in a negative tone that is not proactive
Artifact 2: Action Plan	Template is completely filled out	Template is incomplete or not thoughtfully done	Template is not complete, or it is incorrectly filled out
	Professional goals are measurable, actionable, and relevant to learning	Professional goals may not be measurable, actionable, and/or	Professional goals are missing

	community and workplace culture	relevant to learning community and workplace culture	
	Needs and current reality are based on actual evidence, not opinion	Needs may be based partially on opinion and/or evidence is not substantial	Needs are missing or are based on opinion and/or personal biases
	Needs reflect diverse perspectives	Needs reflect at least one diverse perspective	Needs do not include diverse perspectives
	Results are realistic and focus on affecting the practice of others	Results may not be realistic and/or do not focus on affecting the practice of others	Unrealistic results
	Description is clear, and activity directly relates to professional goals, needs, desired results, and learning community and workplace culture	Description is not clear and/or the activity does not directly relate to professional goals, needs, desired results, and learning community and workplace culture	Description is missing or not understandable
Artifact 3: Design	Activity Design Template is completely filled out Activity design aligns to your identified needs Activity design is actionable	Activity Design Template is not completely filled out Activity design loosely aligns to your identified needs Activity design is not actionable	Activity Design Template is not used Activity design does not align to your identified needs Activity design is not actionable

	Activity supports and promotes equity	Activity supports equity	Activity does not address equity
Artifact 4 & 5: Do	Three artifacts with descriptions are included and provide strong evidence of implementation. Feedback is provided from at least two stakeholders.	Two artifacts with descriptions are included and provide strong evidence of implementation. Feedback is provided, but from only one stakeholder.	Less than two artifacts with descriptions are included OR the evidence is not strong. No feedback is provided.

Part 3 Reflection

(400–500 words)
Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For tips on writing a good reflection review the following resource:

How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.
Answer the following reflective questions.
- How will your knowledge of learning community and workplace culture impact your leadership work with others?
- How did you address diversity, equity, and cultural competence during this activity?
- How will you continue to lead learning activities to enhance the practice of others at various levels of leadership?
- What are your next steps to continue your growth as a teacher leader?

Passing: Reflection provides evidence that this activity has had a positive impact on the teacher leader as well as on others in the professional context of earning this micro-credential. Specific examples are cited directly from personal or work-related experiences to support claims. Also included are specific actionable steps that demonstrate how new learning will be integrated into future practices.