Project I⁴ Cohort III
Fall 2021

LEED 7520: Special Topics Seminar in Educational Leadership
Solidifying the School-based EC-NIC and Engaging in Classroom Observations

Larry Hodgkins, East Carolina University
hodgkinsl19@ecu.edu | 252-945-6888

(Main contact will be through Project I⁴ coach)

Project Website:
https://education.ecu.edu/projecti4/

OVERVIEW OF FALL PROJECT I⁴ COURSE
(3 graduate credits toward the 6 credits for micro-credential)

Welcome to the Fall semester, our work continues as we seek to build on learning from the summer and apply it to practice. Specifically, we want to create stronger practice for equity by improving teacher actions through these content strands:

- ***Evidence-based observations and conversations*** to identify specific pathways for improvement
- ***Ambitious math tasks*** that set the stage for academic discourse to occur
- ***Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices (CLRP)*** to integrate equity practices into all aspects of school leadership, supported with readings, EC-NIC discussions, and a dedicated Learning Exchange. Specifically, we explore how establishing CLRP can provide students with a nurturing learning environment where teachers become Warm Demanders resulting in students transitioning from dependent to independent learners. Independent learners engage more thoroughly in academic discourse.
- ***Distributed leadership*** to make improvement a collaborative process in which teacher voices are heard and their ideas are valued

Building relational trust and creating gracious space leads to distributed leadership. The Project I^4 framework provides a conceptual model of how distributed leadership applies to school leaders, teachers, students, families, and communities (Participant Stances). Equity, as the cornerstone of our work, is embedded in each of the major content strands.

A content-specific Learning Exchange in September strengthens our understanding and skills about how **Observations** lead to (properly facilitated) **Conversations**. We meet in October to explore rich mathematical tasks.

The semester is organized to spiral through the three topics as they each contribute to creating an environment in which teachers can improve their practices. Spiraling curriculum means we integrate these topics throughout the semester to offer an integrated approach to the learning, which is always incremental and needs to be connected to prior learning (Bruner, 1960).

Our overarching AIM remains the same, "to improve equitable learning access and rigor for students by observing and having evidence-based conversations with teachers". Teachers who combine ambitious math tasks with effective and equitable calling-on and questioning techniques create a learning environment in which academic discourse can flourish and **all** students are actively engaged in learning.

The **Project I^4 framework** illustrates the differences between teacher and student-generated academic discourse. Academic discourse is critical because it is indicative of student
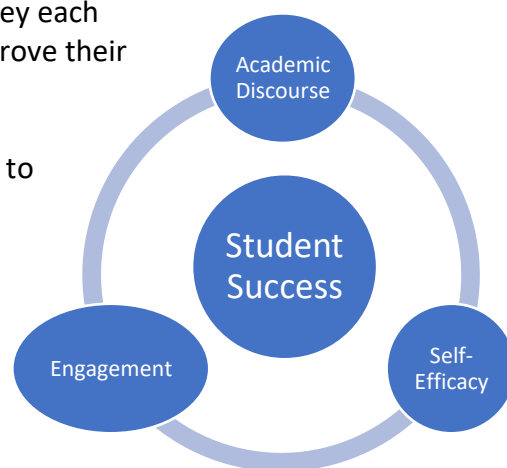
engagement. As Boykin and Noguera (2010) illustrate in Chapters 3 and 4, engagement is inter-connected with self-efficacy and student success.

Questions and Outcomes

Essential Questions
1. What is relational trust and how can it be cultivated?
2. What is the basis for Equity Centered Networked Improvement Communities (EC-NIC)?
3. How is academic discourse connected to issues of equity?
4. What are observable components of academic discourse?
5. What is a quality academic task that can spark academic discourse?
6. How do teachers effectively monitor academic discourse?
7. How are evidence-based conversations conducted?

Metacognitive/Meta-affective Questions
1. How do you engage with the school-based and Project I^4 EC-NICs to challenge and learn from one another?
2. What equity issues are present in your context?
3. How do you engage with the Project I^4 EC-NIC and coach during this semester to challenge and learn from one another?
4. How does your praxis (reflection to action) of an instructional leader cultivate an environment of rich academic discourse?

Outcomes
1. Cultivate relational trust in the school-based EC-NIC.
2. Create a functioning school-based EC-NIC.
3. Broaden and deepen understanding of quality academic tasks that are needed to foster student academic discourse.
4. Analyze and use data to prepare for and have conversations about equitable academic discourse in math classrooms.
5. Analyze how a focus on evidence-based observations and conversations with teachers and a support network of school leaders helped them to further cultivate skills as an equity-driven leader.

SCHOOL-BASED EC-NICs

You should be meeting regularly with the school-based EC-NIC. It is important to embed the equity-centered pedagogies in which we engaged at the Summer Learning Exchange within the EC-NIC. This includes using dynamic mindfulness and a personal narrative prompt for opening circle and an equity-centered prompt for closing circle. Document all meetings; a template for meeting agendas is attached at the end of this document. Click here to access: AgendaTemplate

Each Project I^4 EC-NIC is facilitated by a coach and meets one time per month as a group via a Zoom conference call. Coaches also meet with each participant once per month. These meetings serve as an opportunity to receive ongoing support from the EC-NIC and coach, engage in learning opportunities throughout the course, and ask questions about issues that may arise.

SEMESTER ASSIGNMENTS

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS and MAJOR ARTIFACTS

Each semester has a variety of activities/assignments that constitute a 3-unit graduate course. A 3-unit course is based on 45 hours of classroom time or activities. All activities/assignments are designed to deepen your understanding of the teaching and learning theories and practice related to increasing the level of academic discourse in your school. You engage in activities and reflect on the impact of your educational leadership.

- Written assignments are to be submitted to Project I^4 coach.

Learning Exchanges	**Effective Conversations: Engaging with teachers to apply evidence from observations for teacher improvement**
	  • **September 12 3:00PM – 5:30 PM EDT or September 14 7:00PM – 9:30PM EDT**
	
	Math Tasks: Selecting and analyzing ambitious tasks that promote authentic academic discourse
	  • **October 24 3:00PM – 5:30PM EDT**
	
	Capstone: Presenting overview of work to-date and looking ahead to next steps
	  • **December 12 3:00 – 4:30PM EDT whole group, 4:30-6:30PM EC-NICs**

Due Date	Assignment	Submit to Coach
September 12/14	**Web Exchange-Selective Verbatim, Observation Tools - LIVE SESSION**	
September	Establish School-based EC-NIC - Be intentional about selecting staff to collaborate with on this work – see sample Agenda template below	
September Readings	Bryk et al. (2010), 137-147 – Link Participate in discussion during monthly EC-NIC meeting	
	Radd et al. (2020), Practice III, Chapter 10, 115 – 142	Written reflection (~ 1 page) to coach on one or more of the four practices for building effective and cohesive leadership teams. How might you use these routines to support your equity driven leadership?
	Kendi (2019) begin reading to prepare for discussion at December Learning Exchange	
	Equity Reflection – What are the issues of equity in your context?	Written reflection to coach answering: What are the assets and challenges to addressing issues of equity? Who are your allies in this work?
September	Question Form tool and/or Calling On Tool Complete at least one evidence-based observation for each teacher in EC-NIC each month	Share completed tool and written analysis with your coach. Analysis is your interpretation of the evidence and key points to include in conversation with teacher.

Due Date	Assignment	Submit to Coach
October 24	**Web Exchange: Ambitious Math Tasks - LIVE SESSION**	
October Readings	NCTM (2019) pages 17-41 in preparation for October 24th live session	
	Hammond (2017) Chapters 1 and 5 - Participate in text seminar at monthly EC-NIC meeting. Share the Trust Generators on page 79 with your school-based EC-NIC and discuss ways to incorporate into practice in your context.	

	Kendi (2019) continue reading to prepare for discussion at December Learning Exchange	
October	Question Form tool and/or Calling On Tool Complete at least one evidence-based observation for each teacher in EC-NIC	Share completed tool and written analysis with your coach. Analysis is your interpretation of the evidence and key points to include in conversation with teacher.
October	**Equity Reflection –** How have you grown as a leader for equity?	Written reflection to coach answering: How have you been able (or plan) to apply knowledge from Project I[4] readings and discussions to your context?
October	Conversation Analysis – record a post-observation conversation with a teacher in your EC-NIC	Bring video to 1:1 meeting with coach
October	**CALL Survey Administration -** Details to be shared in October	

November	Analysis of CALL data	Discuss with coach during 1:1 meeting
November	**Equity Reflection -** How are the observation tools different or the same than the processes you have been typically using for observations?	Written reflection to coach answering how do the tools contribute to conversations about equitable student access to academic discourse?
November	Math Task Analysis – bring math task from teacher to monthly EC-NIC meeting	
November Readings	Khalifa (2018), Chapter 5 *Culturally Responsive Leaders in the Shaping of Curriculum and Instruction -* Participate in text seminar in monthly EC-NIC meeting	
	Kendi (2019) finish reading to prepare for discussion at December Learning Exchange	
November	Question Form tool and/or Calling On Tool Complete at least one evidence-based observation for each teacher in EC-NIC	Share completed tool and written analysis with your coach. Analysis is your interpretation of the evidence

		and key points to include in conversation with teacher.
December 12	**Capstone Web Exchange - LIVE SESSION**	
December	Capstone poster	Presentation to your EC-NIC highlighting your work from the semester – details to be shared in November

READINGS

Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., & Easton, J. (2010). *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. The University of Chicago Press. [pp. 137-147]

Hammond, Z. (2015). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Corwin.

Khalifa, Muhammad. (2018). *Culturally responsive leadership*. Harvard Education Press.

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. (2014). *Principles to actions: Ensuring mathematical success for all*. NCTM.

Tredway, L. & Argent, J. (2019). *Effective conversations*. East Carolina University. Unpublished guide.

GRADING

At ECU, grades are A, B or Incomplete. There are no + or – grades. Therefore, completing all the assessments on time and with effort and thoughtfulness typically constitutes an A. For content courses that require significant online discussion with peers and peers depending on you for responses, those who do not fully participate in online group or paired discussions substantively and in a timely manner can expect to receive a B, even if they complete all assignments.

Starfish: Your instructor will be using Starfish (an early alert and connection tool) to keep you informed of your academic performance. Through Starfish, the instructor will be able to send you kudos (reflecting positive work performance), raise flags (indicating poor work performance), and/or send attendance related warnings. These notifications are sent to your ECU email account and a copy of the email is sent to your academic advisor. If you should receive a Starfish notification regarding this course and have questions, please email the instructor immediately. You can find a student's guide to Starfish at http://www.ecu.edu/itcs/students.cfm.

Academic Dishonesty: As individuals who plan to be members of academic communities for a significant portion of their lives, academic integrity is integral to the work we do. As we all know, **cheating** ["the actual giving or receiving of any unauthorized aid or assistance or the giving or receiving of any unfair advantage regarding any form of academic work" (*ECU Code of Conduct*)], **plagiarism** ["copying the language, structure, ideas, and/or thoughts of another and adopting same as one's own original work" (*ECU Code of Conduct*)], and **falsification** [a "statement, either spoke or written, of untruth regarding any circumstances relative to academic work"(*ECU Code of Conduct*)] are intolerable offenses in an academic community.

Should the academic advisor, become aware of a possible infraction of academic integrity, he will confer with the student immediately and follow the procedures outlined in the Student Handbook (found at www.ecu.edu/studenthandbook/policies.htm). Should he determine that an academic integrity violation has taken place, he reserves the right to assign a grade penalty.
Should it come to his attention that a student has had a prior academic integrity violation, or if there are other aggravating circumstances, he reserves the right to refer the student's case directly to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for an Academic Integrity Board hearing. The Academic Integrity Board may assign a grade penalty and/or any other sanction allowed under the Student Code of Conduct, up to and including expulsion from the University system.

Students with Disabilities: East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138 ((252) 737-1016 (Voice/TTY) to verify the disability before any accommodations can occur. Any student with a disability that may affect class activities should inform the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to adjust the grading procedure accordingly.

AGENDA TEMPLATE

Rationale:

We are strongly suggesting using an agenda template for meetings with nested EC-NICs (coach, leaders, and school-based) so that we maintain consistency and coherence. However, two other reasons for using a template are more compelling. First, how we construct agendas communicates what we value, including equitable participation. Secondly, agendas reflect how well we model processes and pedagogy. What we want to see in classrooms, we need to model at every meeting in a school or district. Every agenda is like a good lesson plan with clear outcomes, assessments, activities, and reflection time. Every agenda is similar to a good classroom because there is room to adjust as needed following what Dewey says about structuring teaching – the most structure offers the most freedom for thinking and dialogue. Finally, we are interested in Project I[4] in having participants practice using Learning Exchange processes.

Successful agendas do not "stack and pack" so many items that it becomes impossible to accomplish anything significant. Successful agendas do the following------

- Communicate clear outcomes and expectations that use observable verbs
- Model equitable processes for full engagement of all participants
- Model processes for multiple learning styles
- Use formatting that is visually engaging
- Use formatting that is responsive to visual impairment if needed in your group (font 16)
- Include projected time
- Include norms/agreements
- Include think time and reflection time
- Have a "through-line" that is clear to participants (the activities are connected and build on each other).

The attached format could vary, but every agenda should have "white" space communicating that the agenda process has breathing room/thinking time. We do not want to communicate to participants of a meeting or professional learning session that we have a list of items we are ticking off.

We know that we always over-plan; most always, we think we can accomplish more in any given time period than we actually can (or probably ever could). In those moments, we have to remember the first LE axiom: *Learning and leadership are dynamic social processes*. Dynamic and social take time.

Agenda
SCHOOL NAME
Project I^4 School-based EC-NIC

Date

Attendees: ☐ Name ☐ Name ☐ Name ☐ Name ☐ Name ☐ Name ☐ Name
☐ _____ ☐ _____

Quotes and/or images provide useful additions to the agenda—particularly if the quote or image captures the key elements of the meeting and perhaps is connected to opening circle.

Could include ESSENTIAL QUESTION

OUTCOMES	AGREEMENTS
1. Cultivate relational trust in EC-NIC group. 2. Co-generate a SMARTE AIM statement that is **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic & **R**elevant, **T**imely and **E**quity-focused 3. Reflect on ………..	

YOU MAY HAVE SOMETHING TO INCLUDE HERE THAT REMAINS CONSISTENT IN EVERY AGENDA

Assign roles: Facilitators should be decided before meeting so each facilitator can be prepared, but timekeeper and notetaker roles can alternate.
Suggested times for one hour meeting

TIME	ACTIVITY	PROTOCOL	FACILITATOR
5 min	Opening Circle (OC)		
5 min	Dynamic Mindfulness		
10 min	Personal Narrative		
30 min	Content Focus Example: Agree on AIM statement based on current evidence of what we should collaboratively focus on		
5 min	Closing Circle Example: Reflection on Equity How does our co-generated aim statement ensure an equity focus?		

Be sure you are prepared with an opening circle question that is related to the overarching question and outcomes for the meeting. For EC-NIC meetings (small group), probably could use a consistent talking piece to pass around. If you use same agenda template for larger meetings, you may have to vary how you organize OC as you have time constraints.