

Reculturing Schools to Foster Inclusive Learning Communities:

What School Leaders Need to Know and be Able to Do

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Overview

Barth (1990) indicates that he would like to work in a school "characterized by a profound respect for and encouragement of diversity, where important differences among children and adults were celebrated rather than seen as problems to remedy" (p. 10). To that end, we offer this module as a method by which to introduce the layers of understanding necessary to lead schools in a reculturing process leading to the development of genuinely inclusive learning communities.

An inclusive, participatory leadership model will be demonstrated by the instructor throughout the module which reflects distributed leadership, analogous to the inclusion of all constituents – parents and community members, teachers, students and administrators - as valued members of the learning community. Current research on practices which support authentic learning in the preparation of innovative instructional leaders support hands-on, interactive, inquiry-based processes such as those incorporated into this module.

The scenarios included in this module build in opportunities for aspiring leaders to individually and collectively reflect on both past and current practice and to purposefully develop a systemic process to shift their cultural paradigms to support inclusion, both philosophically and pragmatically.

Estimated total time: Three 2-hour class sessions

Objectives:

- Students will be able to apply new understandings about inclusive learning communities in their own classrooms/schools, and consider issues necessary to develop and lead genuine communities of learners.
- Students will, as a result of engaging with this module, become sensitized to the need for school leaders to reculture schools which
 - develop school cultures that include all students
 - ensure literacy for all learners
 - create cultures of empowerment
 - ensure that families and community perspectives are at the heart of the school.

In Learning Teams, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge, procedures and dispositions which prepare them to lead and foster inclusive learning communities.

Students will practice being reflective practitioners, and examine their own mental models about leadership to foster inclusive learning communities. They will demonstrate an understanding about leading inclusive learning communities and reculturing schools individually, in reflective journal entries, and as part of a collaborative Learning Team.

The *essential question* this module addresses is:

What knowledge, presentations and dispositions must school leaders know and be able to do in order to systemically foster enhanced learning for all students in an inclusive learning community?

Relationship of Module to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards

The objectives of this module are consistent with the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, adopted in 1996 by the Council of Chief School Officers.

Materials and Resources Needed

- KWL Chart
- Three research articles
- Case study: Tooms, A. ***Developing Leadership Strategies Inside the Politics of Language, Diversity, and Change***
- Computer
- PC projector
- PowerPoint presentation – ***Reculturing Schools to Foster Inclusive Learning Communities***
- ***Leadership for Inclusive Learning Community Matrix*** included in this module (1 per student)

MODULE AGENDA

First class session

Tell students:

Keep a journal of your individual reflections during this module. Each class session, you will be given a Focus Question to guide your reflection. It will be ungraded, and provides you with an opportunity to be a reflective practitioner, examining your deepest beliefs, or mental models, about leadership which fosters an inclusive learning community.

Students will be able to metacognitively evaluate their proficiency with the module based on their reflective practice.

Introduce the module (10 minutes) with a brief overview of the Four Tenets (see p. 6).

Pose the following questions as an introduction to students' exploration of their own mental models (20 minutes):

- Do we value all children equally?
- Is anyone more or less valuable?
- What do we mean by "inclusion?"

Pre-Assessment

The instructor will facilitate a whole-class inquiry (30 minutes) about students' experiences with and/or understanding of an inclusive learning community. Lead students through the development of a K-W-L chart. This strategy is used to help students become reflective about their learning, and models a process which will be valuable to them as they work with their students and faculty. Students orally contribute to the "K" - *What I Know* - column with everything they already know about the leadership for inclusive learning communities. This helps generate their background knowledge.

The "K" and "W" sections of the KWL chart will be completed during this discussion.

Have students predict what they *What I Want to know* about the topic. This helps set their purpose for reading and discussion, focusing on key ideas.

- K: What do you already Know about *reculturing schools to foster inclusive learning communities?*
- W: What do you Want to learn about *reculturing schools to foster inclusive learning communities?*
- L: What have you Learned about reculturing schools to foster inclusive learning communities?

If students do not address it, the instructor may want to introduce the question, “How do leaders manifest change?” as a “W” – “Things I WANT to Know”.

Pre-assess student familiarity with inclusive learning communities through a class discussion and the KWL chart

- K - What I Know
- W - What I Want to Know
- L - What I Learned

Ogle, D.M. (1986). K-W-L: A teaching model that develops active reading of expository text. *Reading Teacher*, 39, 564-570.

The KWL strategy serves several purposes:

- Elicits students’ prior knowledge about
 - inclusive learning communities and
 - reculturing schools.
- Sets a purpose for reading text.
- Provides an opportunity for students to expand their ideas beyond the text.

Students should be divided into Learning Teams groups. Distribute copies of the article to each student, according to their Learning Team assignment (15 minutes). Each Learning Team is assigned a reading to be completed for Session 2 (see References for full citations), and will be responsible for sharing the key ideas from each during the large group discussion:

Learning Team A: Shields, C. *Creating a Learning Community in a Multicultural Setting: Issues of Leadership*

Learning Team B: Hart, B. & Risley, T. *The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3*

Learning Team C: Kleine-Kracht, P. *The Principal in a Community of Learning*

Distribute the **Leadership for Inclusive Learning Communities Matrix**, which will be used in the third session. Students need to know what they are expected to know and be able to do before the instructional component begins. Familiarize them with the Matrix, and respond to any questions (10 minutes).

Students will be assigned to read one of three research articles assigned to their Learning Team for the second session. They may be asked to verbally provide a summary of their assigned article during the second session. Additionally, they are assigned to write in their Reflective Journals, using this [Focus Question](#) to guide their writing:

What steps have you taken in your own educational context to provide differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all learners?

Second class session

Each group will share a summary of the research article for which they are responsible, with shared responsibility for the oral presentation (45 minutes). The instructor may ask students to apply their understanding of the article to their own school context using such questions as:

- ✓ How is your school similar to what the author describes? Different from it?
- ✓ What would they do, as an instructional leader, to support faculty and staff in this area?
- ✓ How would you, as an instructional leader, make sure that instruction is being differentiated to meet diverse learning needs school-wide?

The instructor will use the PowerPoint presentation to build a research base for student understanding (30 minutes). Distribute the *Notes* sections for students to use as they take notes during the discussion which should follow the presentation. Probes are included in the *Notes* section to engage students in a collaborative inquiry, which models an inclusive learning community. Such a participatory process provides a first-hand empowerment experience.

Ask students to complete the *What I Learned* section, and lead students through the *Want to know* section to determine whether they've learned all that they were interested in learning in the "W" column. (15 minutes) They can also metacognitively clear up misperceptions about leading inclusive learning communities which might have shown up in the *What I Know* column before their readings. If not, refer them to the Reference section of this module.

Before the third session, students will read the case study (Tooms, A. *Developing Leadership Strategies inside the Politics of Language, Diversity, and Change*), and will be prepared to discuss it in the third session. In addition, students will write a 2 page personal statement describing their leadership style and values relative to leading an inclusive learning community.

Students are assigned to write in their reflective journals, using the following **Focus Question** as a guide:

What knowledge, performances and dispositions must school leaders know and be able to do in order to reculture schools to foster learning for *all* students in an inclusive learning community?

Third class session

Collect students' Personal Statements, read and respond to them.

Allow 30 minutes for the Teams to discuss these questions pertaining to the case study.

The instructor will facilitate a discussion about the case study (30 minutes). There are additional questions and probes at the end of the case study.

Teaching Team A What are the supports and challenges for facilitating an inclusive learning community in your school context?

Learning Team B What indicators did you see of an inclusive school culture in this case? What was lacking?

Learning Team C What practices did you notice that support equitable access to best practice instruction for all learners, including those who are English language learners, have developmental challenges, or are otherwise at risk?

Students will choose a partner, and share a selected passage from her/his reflective journal which most clearly demonstrates the student's epistemological shift about leadership to foster inclusive learning communities as a result of their engagement with this module (10 minutes).

After each partner has an opportunity to share with the other, students will work in their Learning Teams to complete the *Leadership for Inclusive Learning Communities Matrix* (30 minutes). Aspiring school leaders and their Learning Teams will develop a model, informed by a collaborative review of the literature and shared evidence, which addresses the question,

What knowledge, presentations and dispositions must school leaders know and be able to do in order to systemically foster enhanced learning for all students in an inclusive learning community?

This process includes multiple perspectives, with dialogue guided by questions of inquiry and applied learning. Poster-size copies may be provided by the instructor (made before class) which will facilitate group collaboration and presentation. Learning Teams will share their findings with the whole group (30 minutes).

Although this project ends the module, students should be asked to complete the final Reflective Journal entry guided by this **Focus Question**:

Record key thoughts and/or ideas that supported or challenged the flow of your Learning Team's collaboration. Consider how leaders provide support to help learning community members examine alternative perspectives on challenging issues, and how they facilitate change.

This module aligns with the National Institute on Leadership for Disability and Students Placed at Risk's ***Four Tenets of Social Justice***:

Four tenets of social justice

- **Developing school cultures that include all students**

The “new principalship” is about complexity, not about rationality. The module will introduce prospective school leaders to an epistemological change – thinking like leaders - through a digital video vignette, followed by an *After Action Review*. An inclusive, participatory leadership model will be demonstrated which reflects distributed leadership, analogous to the inclusion of all students as valued members of the learning community.

- **Ensuring literacy for all learners**

High expectations, matched by high levels of support, for levels of literacy attainment for all learners will be illustrated in one component of the module. The principal as a literacy learner will be an expectation.

- **Creating cultures of empowerment**

The prevention science model of a critical continuum of support will be emphasized in this module, with explicit explanation of Senge's learning organization model as a template for understanding organizational change. As participants recognize their ownership of responsibility within a system, they are empowered to make changes. A survey of school climate will be included with which school leaders can assess changing attitudes and dispositions. Participants will be encouraged to chronicle their own professional growth in a reflective journal, reflecting about their understanding of the indicators of inclusive, value-added leadership.

- **Ensuring that families and community perspectives are at the heart of the school**

Family and community members will be engaged as members of such processes as the School Improvement Team. The module will engage participants in a role-playing exercise in which the instructional leader facilitates a School Improvement meeting and solicits authentic feedback from the community. Organizational change for social justice is a process with which transformational leaders must be acquainted in order to build systemic support to improve learning for *all* students, and its success hinges, in part, on the involvement and commitment of families and the community within the school.

ISLLC STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Standard 1: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.**

Standard 2: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.**

Standard 3: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.**

Standard 4: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.**

Standard 5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Standard 6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by **understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.**

Related ISLLC Standards and benchmarks

Standard 1

- 1a. Developing the vision
- 1b. Communicating the vision
- 1c. Implementing the vision
- 1d. Monitoring and evaluating the vision

Standard 2

- 2a. Valuing students and staff
- 2b. Developing and sustaining culture
- 2c. Ensuring an inclusive culture
- 2d. Monitoring and evaluating the culture

Standard 4

- 4a. Involving members of the community
- 4b. Understanding community needs
- 4c. Providing opportunities for community and schools to serve each other
- 4d. Understanding and valuing diversity

Standard 5

- 5a. Demonstrating a personal and professional code of ethics
- 5b. Understanding how your leadership affects the school and community
- 5c. Respecting the rights and dignity of all
- 5d. Inspiring integrity and ethical behavior in others

Standard 6

- 6a. Operating schools to respond to needs of students and families
- 6b. Communicating change to stakeholders
- 6c. Working within policies, laws and regulations
- 6d. Communicating with decision-makers outside the school community

Effective school leaders are strong educators, anchoring their work on central issues of learning and teaching and school improvement. They are moral agents and social advocates for the children and the communities they serve. Finally, they make strong connections with other people, valuing and caring for others as individuals and as members of the educational community.

Murphy, J. (1996). *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium: Standards for School Leaders*. Chief Council of School Officers. p. 5.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral component of instruction. This module will include a rubric and a matrix with which the graduate student, an aspiring instructional leader, will be able to engage in self-reflection, examining her/his own mental models about leadership to foster inclusive learning communities, and self-assess.

The K-W-L exercise, from the first class session, provides a baseline for student understanding about reculturing schools to foster inclusive learning communities. It can be used as a formative assessment instrument, providing insight into students' understanding about leading inclusive learning communities to the instructor, and helping students reflectively test their own mental models about leadership to foster inclusive learning communities.

Students will be asked to keep a reflective journal during this module, guided by an assigned Focus Question each class session. It is ungraded, and provides them with an opportunity to examine their mental models about a variety of issues related to leadership which fosters an inclusive learning community.

During the third class session, students will work collaboratively in Learning Teams to complete a **Leadership for Inclusive Learning Communities Matrix**. Their input will develop a response to the question, *“What does leadership for inclusive learning communities look like?”*

Session 3

Case Study Overview

Students were assigned to read this case study prior to the third class session.

Toombs, A. Developing Leadership Strategies inside the Politics of Language, Diversity, and Change. *Journal of cases in educational leadership*. (Spring 2004). 7(1). Columbia, MO: UCEA.

The instructor should give the following directions to the whole class:

*The challenges in this case center on change, cultural diversity and the purpose of school. Meet in your Learning Team. Each Team will be assigned one of the questions that follow. Discuss your Team question together, and be prepared to collaboratively share your Team's input when we reconvene as a whole group. Use these questions to guide your reading of the following case study, **Developing Leadership Strategies inside the Politics of Language, Diversity, and Change**.*

Learning Team A	What are the supports and challenges for facilitating an inclusive learning community in your school context?
Learning Team B What was lacking?	What indicators did you see of an inclusive school culture in this case?
Learning Team C	What practices did you notice that support equitable access to best practice instruction for all learners, including those who are English language learners, have developmental challenges, or are otherwise at risk?

Allow 30 minutes for the Teams to discuss these questions. The instructor should then ask students to share the findings from their discussions. (30 minutes)

Discussion of Case Study

1. What is the purpose of school?

The principal's understanding of the purpose of school is as important as the community's view. When considering the purpose of school, students need to frame their thoughts within a historical perspective to understand that this argument of a school's purpose is not a new one. Readings to provide this context include:

Counts, G. (1932). *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, Ill.

This book focuses on how the school acts as a change agent in society by imposing societal views on children so that when they grow up those view and changes are reflected in a new generation.

Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education*. Macmillan, New York, NY.

This book deals with the role school plays in the maintenance and evolution of society, specifically its values and ideals.

The two books listed above provide a historical perspective to the discussions related to the purpose of school.

Delpit, L. (1995). *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. New Press, New York, NY.

This book seeks to answer the difficult question of "Why do we have such a hard time making school a happy place for poor children and children of color?" Honest and pragmatic answers are offered by the author.

Collier, V. (1995). Promoting Academic Success for E.S.L. Students: Understanding Second Language Acquisition for Schools. Monograph of the New Jersey Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages-Bilingual Educators, Newark, NJ.

This monograph explains how dual language instruction models can affect student achievement.

2. How does a leader manifest change?

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a Culture of Change*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

Fullan presents in the first chapter the idea of moral purpose and its relationship to leadership. It is noted that leaders are driven by both altruistic and egoistic motives. The fact that they are driven by both (called Moral Pluralism by Sober and Wilson, 1998) explains why we can not expect all leaders to behave in completely altruistic ways. Within this context of moral pluralism, students should be given the opportunity to ponder the benefits and costs related to their choice of leadership challenges.

Harvey, J. (1988). *The Abilene Paradox and Other Meditations on Man*. Lexington University Press, Lexington, KY.

This work speaks to the dangers of employing change for change's sake along with an analysis of the politics involved when people within an organization agree to implement a plan, but in reality do not.

Suggested Student Activities:

- Instruct students to generate beliefs about the relationship between schools and populations of students who speak languages other than English.
- Encourage students to reflect on what they consider appropriate answers to the questions Georgia scribbled on her clipboard.
- Have students, in groups of three or four, discuss their own values and beliefs about the relationship between school and cultural diversity.
- Ask students to brainstorm other options that Georgia did not generate
- Assign students to create a list of books the principal could assign that focus on change, cultural diversity and increasing community involvement.
- Invite students to discuss this case study with their own principal and then contrast the practitioners' answers with their own in a follow up class discussion
- Encourage students in group of three or four to analyze the tables in Exhibit One and find other patterns of information that would help the principal clarify the problem concerning student achievement on the criterion reference tests with her community and staff.
- Have students think of themselves as Georgia and then write a reflective assessment for her annual review framed around the ISSLC standards. Which standards and/or areas focus on improvement?
- Have students conduct a cost benefit analysis of implementing change that the leader feels is right but which is resisted by the community and staff.

References

Collier, V. (1995). *Promoting Academic Success for E.S.L. Students: Understanding Second Language Acquisition for Schools*. Monograph of the New Jersey Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages-Bilingual Educators, Newark, NJ.

Counts, G. (1932). *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, IL.

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Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education*. Macmillan, New York, NY.

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Sober, E. & Wilson, D. (1998). *Unto Others: The evolution and psychology of unselfish behavior*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Biographical Statement

Dr. Tooms is an Assistant Professor of K-12 Educational Administration in the department of Teaching, Leadership and Curriculum Studies. She joined the faculty at Kent State in August of 2001, after serving as a school administrator for several years in Phoenix, Arizona. She has worked primarily in large (1,000-3,000 student) urban core schools that serve at-risk and culturally diverse populations. Dr. Tooms' contributions as school principal include desegregating an elementary school, implementing a school wide dual language acquisition program funded by Title VII monies, and restructuring school curricula to increase standardized test scores. Dr. Tooms' primary responsibilities as a faculty member are the training of school principals. Her lines of academic inquiry focus on school reform, the principal as curriculum leader, and school politics. She can be contacted at atooms@kent.edu

Eric Descriptors

Change
Roles
School communities
Teaching/Administration

Table 1

**Leighton Elementary School
Student Demographics
Five-Year Longitudinal Study**

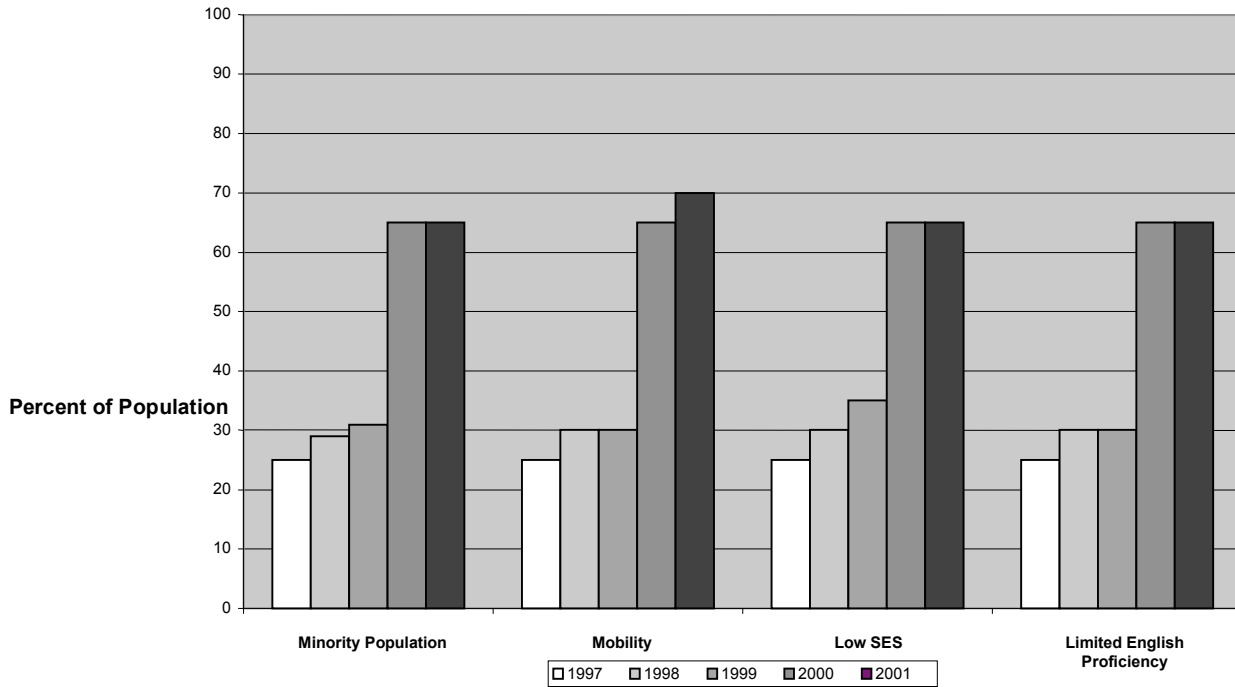
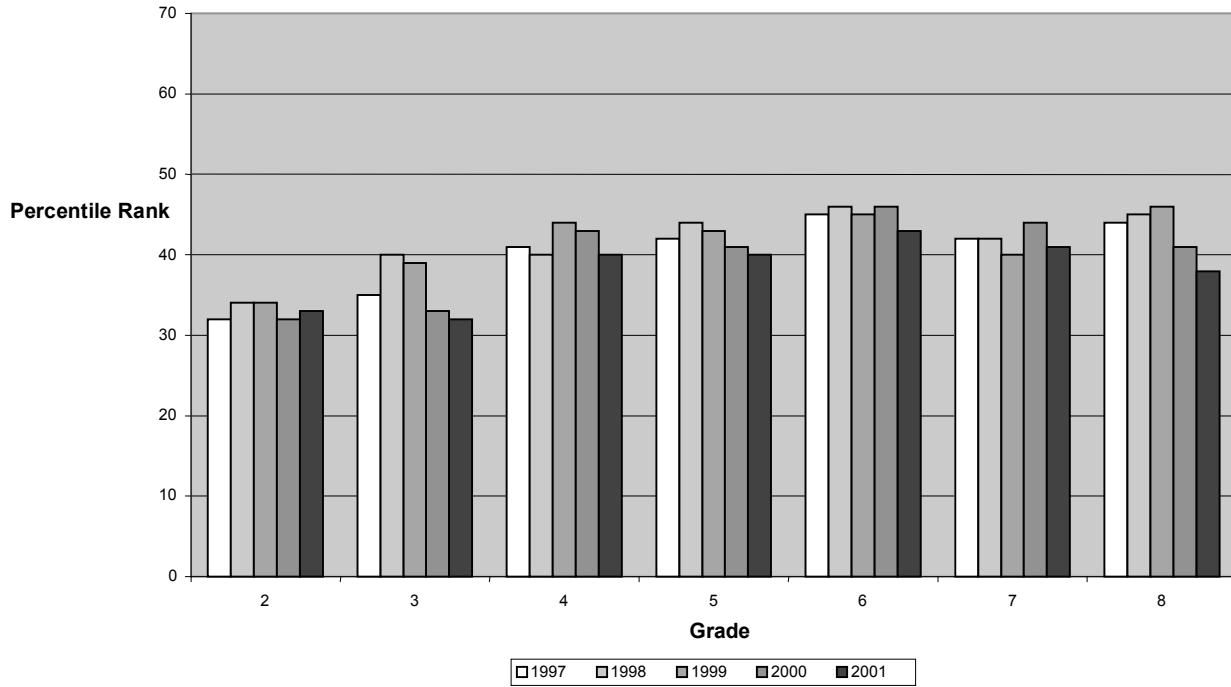


Table 2
Percentile Rank of Criterion Reference Test Literacy Scores 1997-2001

Bells District Average



Leighton Elementary School

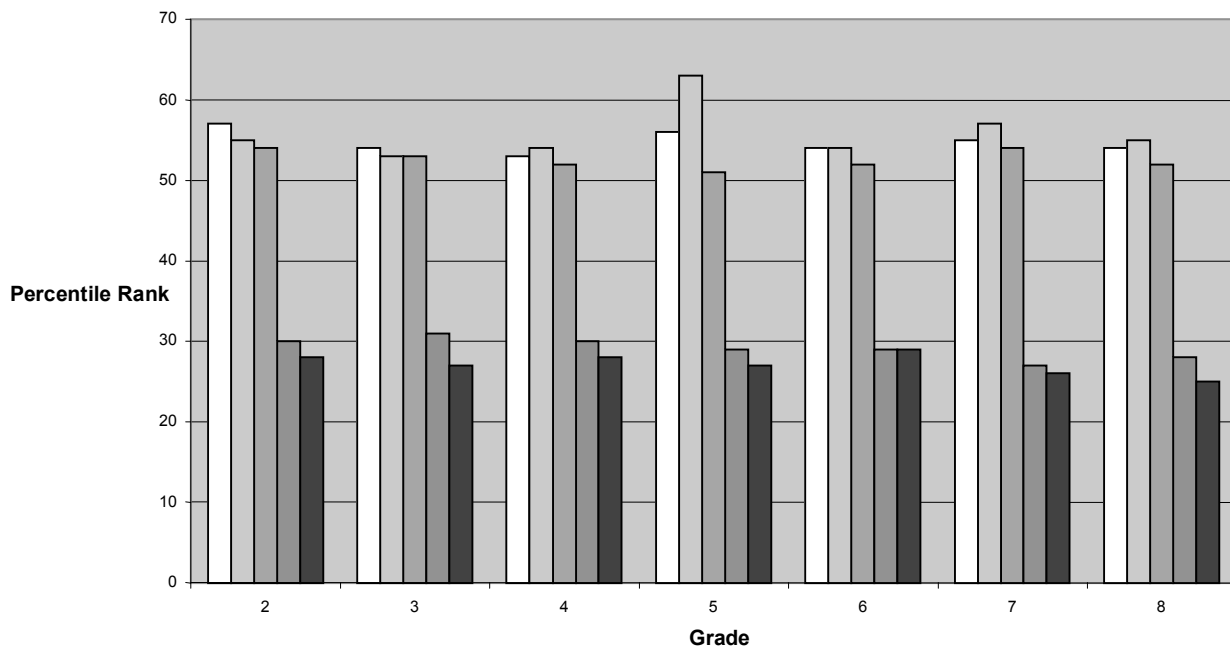
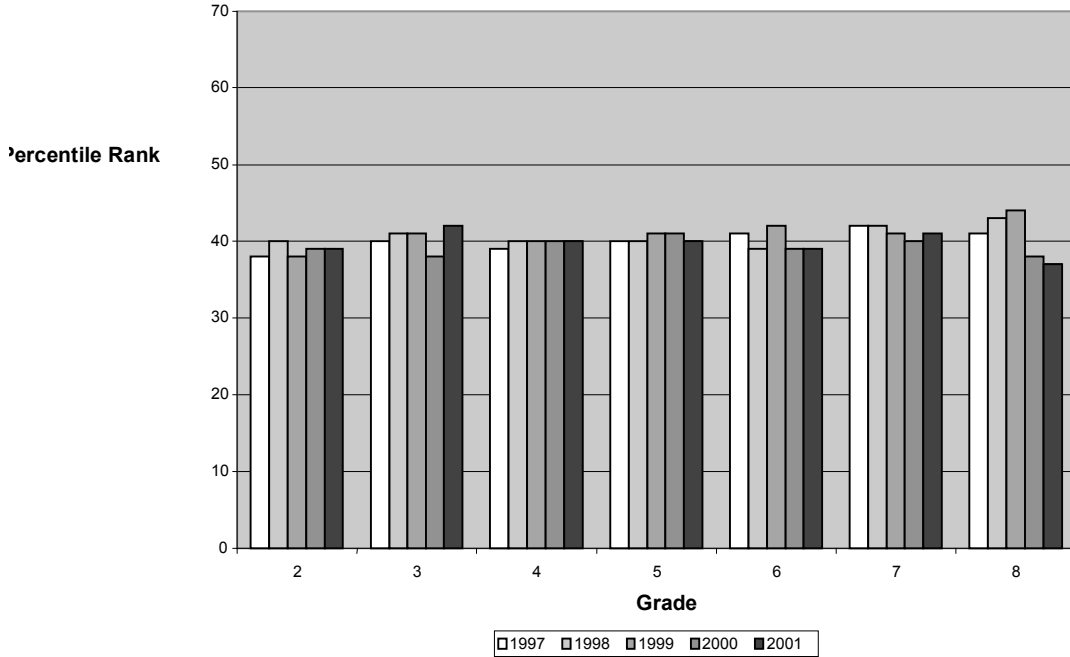
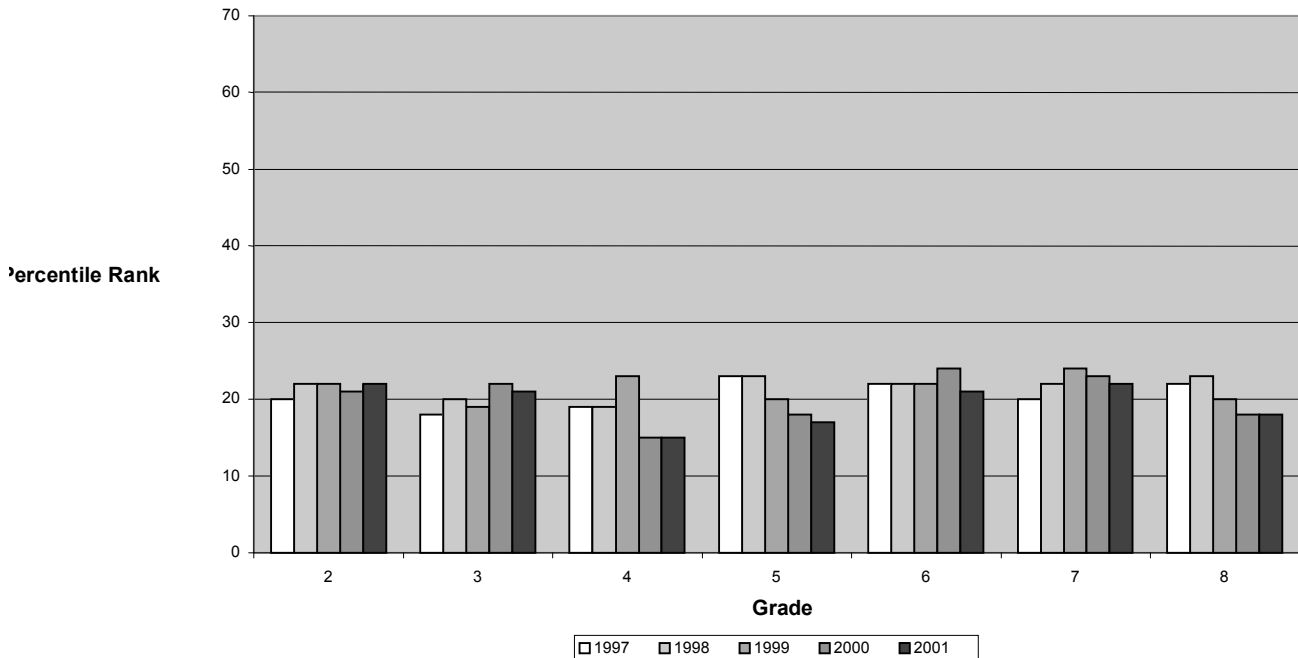


Table 3

**Leighton Elementary School Percentile Rank of Criteria Reference Test Literacy Scores
For Primary English Speakers (including students with >3 years ESL)**



**Leighton Elementary School Percentile Rank of Criterion Reference Test Literacy Scores
For English Language Learners**



Leadership for Inclusive Learning Communities Matrix

Note to the instructor: Ultimately, instructional leaders must be able to create, lead, advocate for learning communities which:

- are inclusive.

- ensure high levels of literacy for all learners.

- create collaborative processes that build shared vision.


- place family/community perspectives at the heart of school culture.

Students will work in their Learning Teams to complete the *Leadership for Inclusive Learning Communities Matrix* (30 minutes). In these Learning Teams, aspiring school leaders will develop a model, informed by a collaborative review of the literature and shared evidence, which addresses the question:

What knowledge, performances and dispositions must school leaders know and be able to do in order to systemically foster enhanced learning for all students in an inclusive learning community?

[Poster-size copies may be provided to each Learning Team by the instructor (made before class) which will facilitate group collaboration and presentation.] Learning Teams will share their findings with the whole group (30 minutes).

Students will, in Learning Teams, be able to describe knowledge, performances and dispositions necessary to lead schools to foster inclusive learning communities.

(+/-) Observations	Knowledge	Performances	Dispositions	Generalizations
Developing school cultures that include all students				
Ensuring literacy for all learners				
Creating cultures of empowerment				
Families and community perspectives are at the heart of the school				
Generalizations				<i>What knowledge, performances and dispositions must school leaders know and be able to do in order to systemically foster enhanced learning for all students in an inclusive learning community?</i>

K What I KNOW	W What I WANT to Know	L What I LEARNED

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Suggested web sites

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association www.asha.org

Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) www.ael.org

Apple Learning Interchange (ALI) www.apple.com/ali

Association for Curriculum and Supervision (ASCD) www.ascd.org

Attention Deficit Disorder Association www.add.org

Council for Exceptional Children www.cec.sped.org

George Lucas Educational Foundation www.glef.org

International Reading Association www.ira.org

International Society for Technology in Education www.iste.org

LD Online www.ldonline.org

Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory (at Temple University) www.temple.edu/departments/LSS

Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) www.mcrel.org

National Association for the Education of Young Children www.naeyc.org

National Association of Elementary School Principals www.naesp.org

National Association for Gifted Children www.nagc.org

National Association of School Psychologists www.nasppweb.org

National Association of Secondary School Principals www.nassp.org

National Center for Literacy www.nifl.gov

National Middle School Association www.nmsa.org

National Staff Development Council www.nsdc.org

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) www.ncrel.org

Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University (LAB at Brown University)
www.lab.brown.edu

Guidelines for working with English Language Learners - Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
(NWREL) www.nwrel.org

PTA www.pta.org

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) www.prel.org

South Eastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE) www.serve.org

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) www.sedl.org

The Inclusion Network www.inclusion.org

University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) www.ucea.org

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services www.healthfinder.gov

West Ed www.wested.org

Wrightslaw www.wrightslaw.com/#education