



WASHINGTON STATE  
**LEADERSHIP**  
A C A D E M Y

Working in the “Zone”  
(Instructional Core)

September 25-26, 2008



# EARLY THEORY OF ACTION

- We claimed that the key variables were curriculum, assessment and instruction
- This theory in action really suggested that the key variable was curriculum and assessment.
- Grade level benchmarks and assessments in reading, writing, and math (alignment)
- Virtually no work on instructional practice or pedagogy.



## WE NOW CALL THIS THE “STUDENT LEARNING SYSTEM”

- We focused most of our attention/resources on answering these two questions;
  1. What do we want students to know and be able to do at each grade level?
  2. How will we know if they are learning this?



# MISSION AS MORAL IMPERATIVE

## Urgency Creation!

- ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF ALL STUDENTS
- GRADUATING ALL STUDENTS COLLEGE, CAREER, AND CITIZENSHIP READY

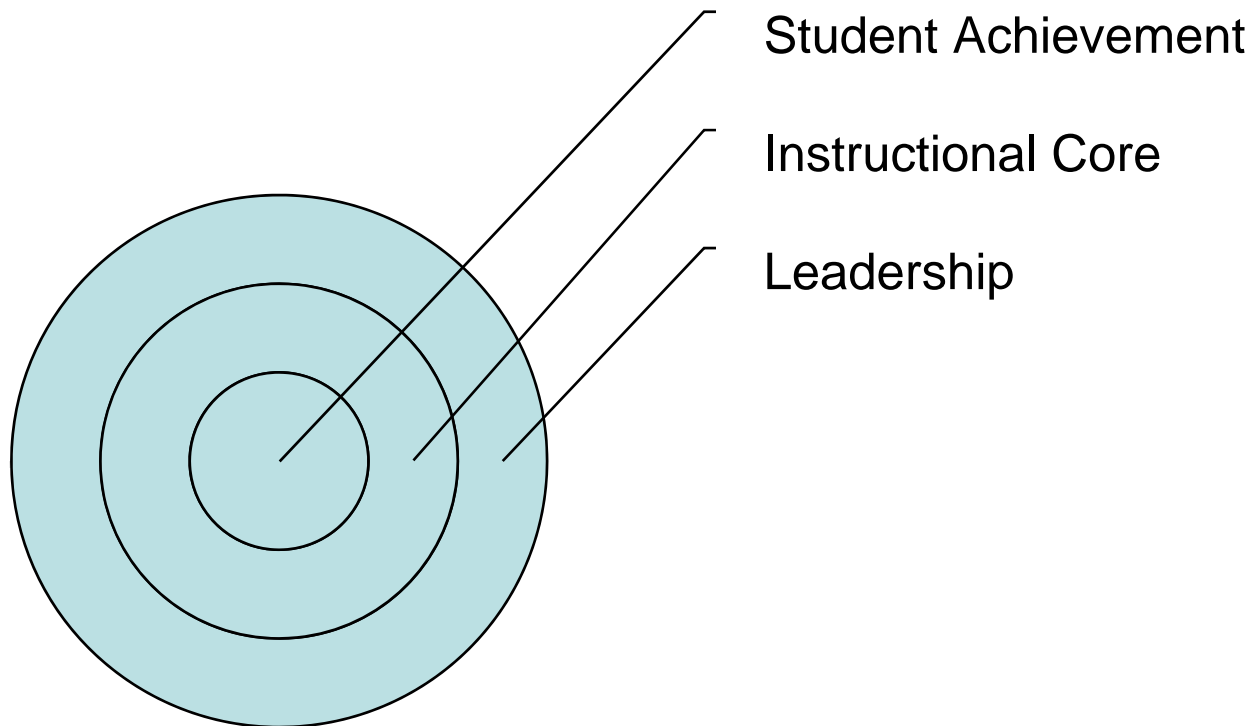


# EXPLICIT THEORY OF/IN ACTION SHIFT

- IMPROVEMENT OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL CORE IS THE KEY VARIABLE IN ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF ALL STUDENTS
- CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF ADULT PRACTICE THROUGH COLLABORATIVE ADULT LEARNING IS THE VEHICLE
- THIS IS THE SYSTEMS NUMBER ONE RESPONSIBILITY. (System as unit of change)
- THIS IS A LEADERSHIP IMPERATIVE

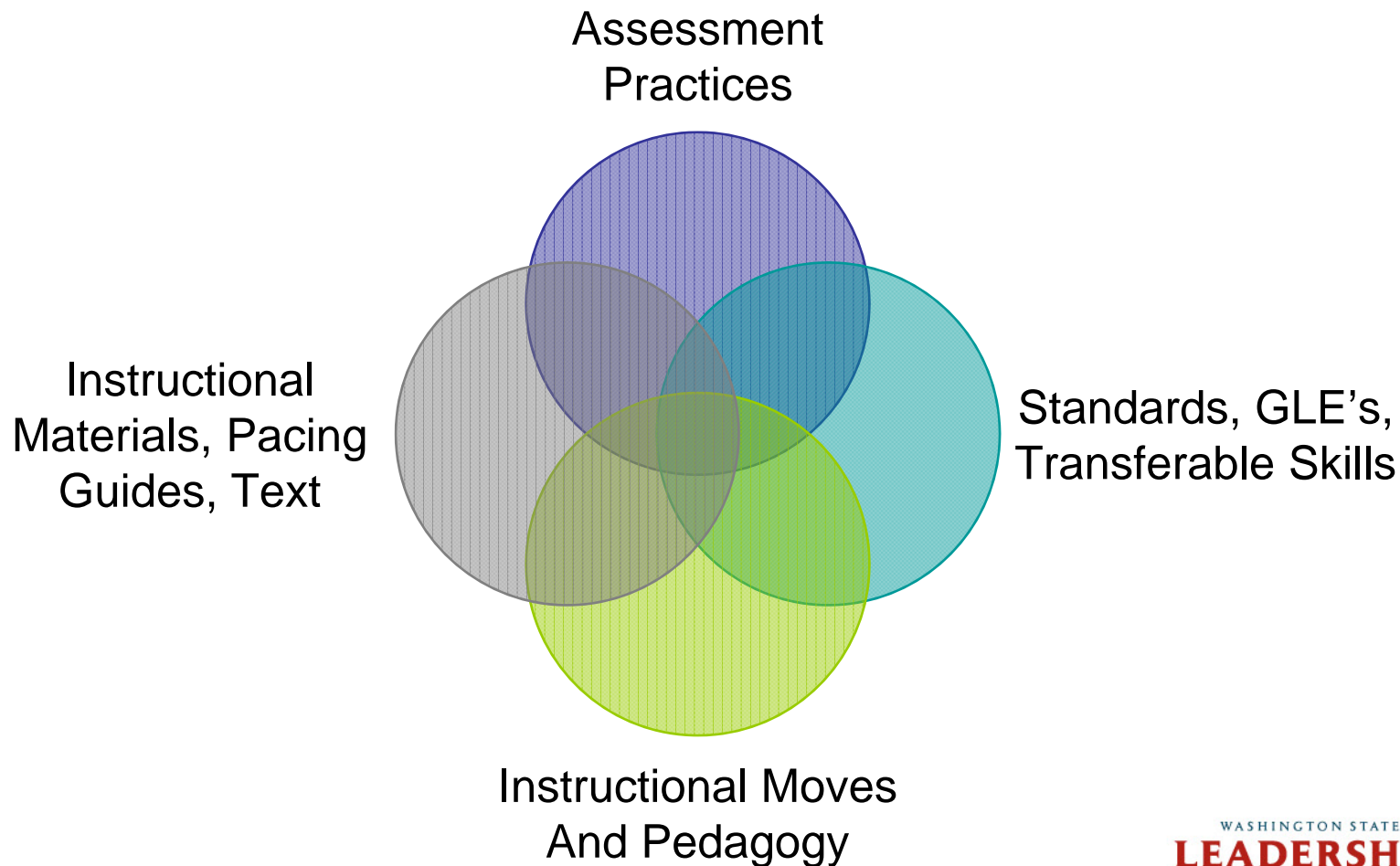


# Theory of Action





# WORKING IN THE “ZONE”





# KEY QUESTIONS-OPERATIONALIZE!

- What would a school system/school “look like” where all teachers are designing and creating learning environments that exemplify the attributes of high achieving classrooms?” (Ex. The system would have a common vision of powerful instruction)
- How do we create/lead this system?



# OPERATIONALIZING THE CONCEPTS

## For Alignment, Coherence, Accountability

### Instruction

- How will we ensure the realization of our instructional models, frameworks, and best practice knowledge in every classroom every day?

### Curriculum/Content

- How will we ensure an aligned curriculum where high priority GLEs/Standards and transferable skills are consistently taught and assessed?

### Assessment

- How will we use this data on a frequent basis to improve teaching and learning?

### Communities of Practice

- How will we ensure collaborative adult learning to improve teaching and learning, with a focus on student achievement results?



## GUIDING BELIEFS AND PRINCIPLES

- CREATING A SYSTEM THAT SERVES BOTH ITS MISSION AND PURPOSE AS WELL AS THE SOULS/SPIRIT OF THOSE WHO WORK IN IT” (P. BLOCK)



## THEME: RESULTS AND RELATIONSHIPS

- ALL Students and Staff Succeeding At High Levels
- Schools and Districts exist for the purpose of improving learning and teaching
- Public education is a moral endeavor
- Commitment v. compliance
- Alignment through dialogue and best practice
- Success with and through people



## RESULTS AND RELATIONSHIPS-CONT.

- Reciprocal relationships
- Distributed leadership
- Internal accountability
- Standardize to excellent/best practice
- Coherence and alignment (board room to classroom)
- Parallels between adult and student learning
- Beliefs and action change over time



## RESULTS AND RELATIONSHIPS-CONT.

- Children can't learn on an empty spirit
- Teachers can't teach on an empty spirit
- Leaders can't lead on an empty spirit



# WHAT PEOPLE WANT FROM WORK

- Meaningful Work/Contribution
- Belonging
- Respect and Honor
- Care
- Opportunity to Grow
- Appreciation
- Participation
- Success/Accountability
- Authorship
- Significance



# CHALLENGES

1. Balancing Act
  - Results and Relationships
  - Urgency and Hope
  - High Expectations and High Support
  - Beliefs and Action
  - Action and Patience/Persistence
  - Systemic Approach and School Autonomy
  - WASL and Transferable Skills “Soft Skill”/”Habits of Mind”
  - Trust and Task
2. Politics of Instructional Focus
3. WASL v. Transferable/Soft Skills
4. Alignment and Coherence



# We are the difference!

From bitter searching of the heart,  
Quickened with passion and pain  
We rise to play a greater part.

This is the faith from which we start:  
Men shall know commonwealth again  
From bitter searching of the heart.

We loved the easy and the smart,  
But now, with keener hand and brain,  
We rise to play a greater part.



# Pericles

“ . . . those who can truly be accounted are those who best know the meaning of what is sweet in life and what is terrible, and then go out, undeterred, to meet what is to come.”



# CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY-

## Making a Profoundly Moral Choice

“We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history there is such a thing as being too late. . . . Now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter-but beautiful-struggle for a new world. The choice is ours. . . .”

Martin Luther King, Jr.  
(1967)



# Something to think about?

If you had a kindergarten (or freshman) child today, what would you hope and expect for them upon graduating from Nooksack Valley HS?

What about other peoples children?



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