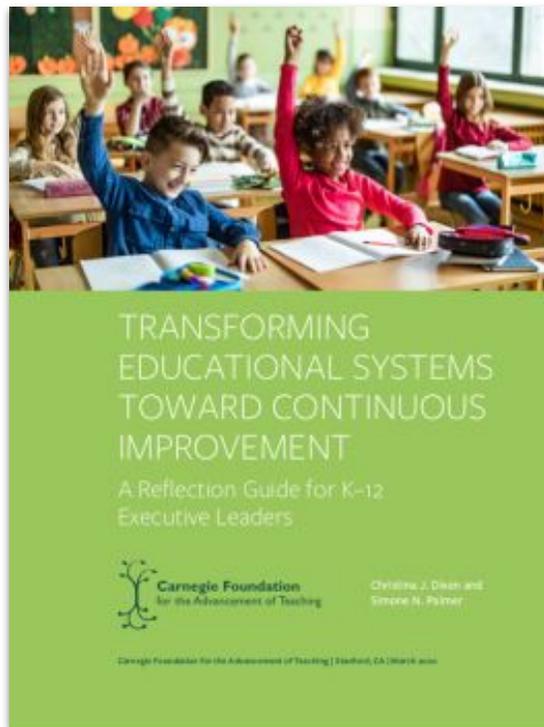


System Leader Toolkit: Diagnostic Tool for Reflection



A companion resource to

**Transforming Educational Systems Toward
Continuous Improvement**
A Reflection Guide for K-12 Executive Leaders



Carnegie Foundation
for the Advancement of Teaching

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Leading System Transformation

Transforming Educational Systems Toward Continuous Improvement: A Reflection Guide for K-12 Executive Leaders summarizes the findings of a Carnegie Foundation project to understand how executive leaders in education transform their organizations to be capable of producing new levels of system performance through the use of improvement science principles. The guide describes the key dispositions, core practices, and levers of transformation used by executive leaders. Within each of these categories, vital elements of successful executive leadership of such a transformation are identified. Each element includes a description accompanied by an illustration drawn from the experience of an executive leader. Some of these elements may be familiar, but others are likely to be new or offer “stretch goals” for leadership practice.



Few leaders in our field routinely incorporate all elements into how they lead, and learning to lead improvement, like improvement itself, is a never-ending journey. For this reason, each category concludes with questions to stimulate reflection and deeper learning to support leaders in self-discovering opportunities for changing their own thinking and behavior to advance continuous improvement in their own contexts.

The leadership categories and elements described in the guide are not meant to represent a menu of choices. Just as elements of a system can't be improved in isolation, the elements of leadership are unlikely to produce transformational results if enacted individually without attention to the whole.

It is highly recommended that you read the [reflection guide](#) before you access the System Leader Toolkit: Diagnostic Tool for Reflection. By first becoming familiar with the elements of leadership described in the guide, you will be able to respond more accurately as you take the self-assessment.

Introduction to the Diagnostic Reflection Tool

The System Leader Toolkit: Diagnostic Tool for Reflection is a companion resource to the publication *Transforming Educational Systems Toward Continuous Improvement: A Reflection Guide for K-12 Executive Leaders*. The diagnostic tool provides system-level leaders with the opportunity to reflect on their strengths and areas of growth in the key dispositions and core practices described in the reflection guide, and to evaluate the extent to which they have acted on system levers in their quest to drive continuous improvement across their organizations. Through self-assessing where they stand on each of the leadership elements, the tool enables leaders to see a holistic view of their development as well as the capacity of their systems for continuous improvement. The Diagnostic Reflection Tool is meant to offer leaders an opportunity to consider their own learning trajectory and inform their focus as a systems-level leader.

Instructions

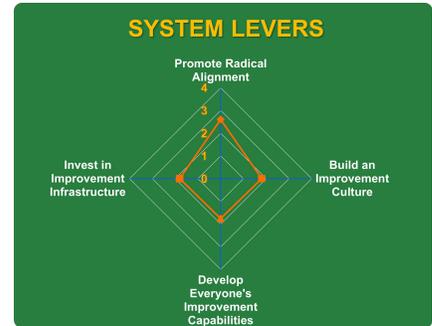
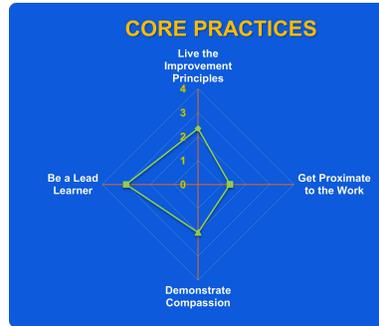
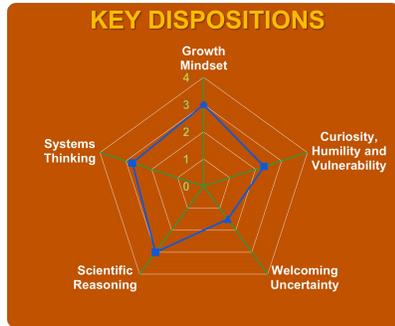
You will need approximately 15 minutes to complete the diagnostic. This self-assessment is intended to function like a mirror and reflect back valuable information to help you see your current state and the state of your organization more clearly. For that reason, it is best to answer as honestly as you can so that the results accurately represent your perspective.

1. Download a copy of the [Diagnostic Reflection Tool](#) (Microsoft Excel, recommended) with this link or open a copy of the tool (Google Sheets) using this [link](#).
2. Open the file and click on the first tab of the spreadsheet labeled "Instructions" to read the instructions.
3. Follow the instructions to complete the self-assessment. When you have entered all your responses, the average rating for each element in each category will appear in the column to the right of the section.
4. Your responses will automatically be displayed in the form of radar charts. Click on the tab labeled "Radar Charts" to view these representations.
5. Use the next section of this toolkit, "Making Sense of Your Results," to analyze and interpret your results. You will find a data protocol and some reflection questions to help you synthesize your learning.

To complete the diagnostic tool again in the future, create a copy of the workbook, clear the scores from the Responses tab, and enter new responses.

Making Sense of Your Results

When you have entered all of the responses in the reflection tool, three radar charts will be generated, one for each category of leadership described in the guide. *Note: The Excel version of these charts is included below. The Google versions will appear visually different but contain the same information.*



To help you make sense of your results, the Carnegie Foundation offers a basic data protocol that can help ground you in facts and observations before making inferences or deciding what to do. The data protocol can help you understand the meaning of the radar charts, describe and interpret the data, and identify questions or actions to pursue in order to learn more about your leadership and the state of your system.

Carnegie Foundation 5-Step Data Protocol

1. **UNDERSTAND** Does everyone understand what is being shown in this display?
2. **DESCRIBE** What do you see and notice?
3. **INTERPRET** What hypotheses or explanations do you have about what you see? What are alternative hypotheses?
4. **INQUIRE** What questions does this raise for you? What additional data might you need to answer those questions?
5. **ACT** What would you do next?

The first step, **UNDERSTAND**, is completed for you on the next page in the form of an explanation of how to read the radar charts generated by the reflection tool. On the following pages, you will find the rest of the steps with fillable spaces to record your thoughts. You will also find some additional reflection questions to help you synthesize what you have learned and to consider next steps.

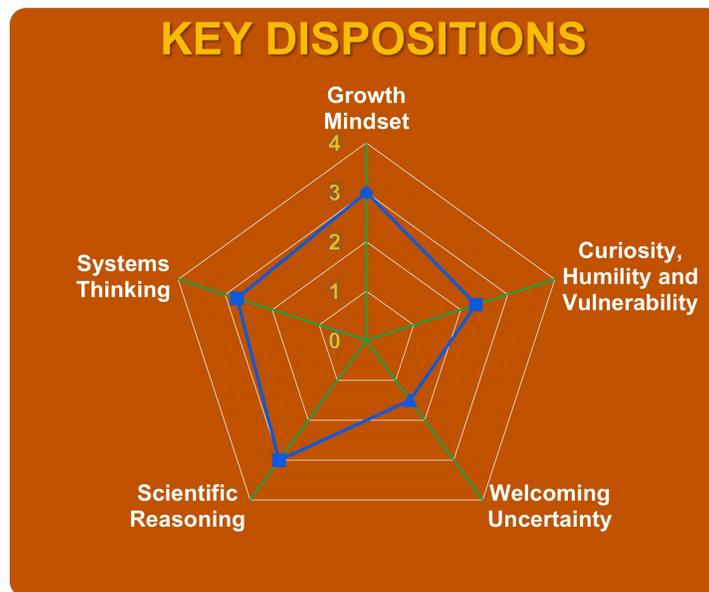
An example of a fictitious superintendent's reflection tool results, analysis and interpretation of the data, and final reflections is provided for you in this slide deck [Example Diagnostic Reflection Tool Analysis](#). This example provides a model of how you might optimize your own learning as you apply the same steps to your results.

Making Sense of Your Results (cont'd)

UNDERSTAND Does everyone understand what is being shown in this display?

Radar charts, also known as spider, radial or web charts, are charts that show a two-dimensional visual of quantitative measures that represent multiple variables. Each axis represents a variable and is labeled with the name of the variable. Quantitative values for the variables are represented as points along the spokes (axes). The shape formed by connecting the points forms a useful visual for comparing the variables.

For example, the sample radar chart below shows a summary of results related to the Key Dispositions. *Note: the Google version of the reflection tool will generate radar charts that appear different from the example shown below but contain the same information.*



In the chart, you can see that each of the five axes in green is labeled with the key disposition it represents. The blue point* on each axis is determined from the individual survey responses, and represents the average rating across the set of responses aligned to each disposition. The shape formed by connecting the points shows that the leader considers their strengths to be growth mindset, systems thinking, and scientific reasoning and their areas for growth to be curiosity, humility and vulnerability and welcoming uncertainty.

To continue the steps of the data protocol, please proceed to the next pages.

**In the Excel workbook, if you hover the mouse over any of the points of the radar charts, the average rating will be shown to the nearest tenth.*

Making Sense of Your Results (cont'd)

DESCRIBE What do you see and notice? Facts and observations only.

INTERPRET What hypotheses or explanations do you have about what you see? What are alternative hypotheses?

Making Sense of Your Results (cont'd)

INQUIRE What questions does this raise for you? What additional data might you need to answer those questions?

ACT What would you do next?

Reflecting on Your Results

What insights did you gain about the current state of your development as a leader of systemwide continuous improvement?

What questions might you explore to more deeply understand your strengths and opportunities for growth?

Reflecting on Your Results (cont'd)

What insights did you gain about how pushing or pulling on system levers has impacted your organization's capacity for continuous improvement?

What might you do to collect more information on your system's current capacity to continuously improve?