Ed. D. in Organizational Leadership
Course Descriptions (updated November 2016)

The Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership is a 54-credit program, beyond the Master's degree, designed for the leader practitioner. In this program, leadership development is viewed as an integrated and sustained process, not as a series of events. We take the view that 'doing' high quality leadership is an essential outcome of this program. Thus, all leadership concepts and experiences are connected to and expected to be practiced within the leader's work environment.

The program is divided into two phases: Phase I encompasses an interdisciplinary core of eight courses (24 credits). Completion of the interdisciplinary core in Phase I is required for entrance into Phase II. Phase II is the research and dissertation-in-practice component of the program and is comprised of four courses and the Dissertation-in-Practice (30 credits).

The following leadership understandings, habits, and mindsets have been identified in the research on leadership development and are considered overarching. Thus, they are not limited to a single course in the proposed program. Instead, they are integrated throughout both phases of the program and embedded as an interconnecting framework between and among the courses in order to provide richer, fuller, and reinforcing leadership experiences. These core understandings and habits of mind are not intended to be specific to any style of leadership. Nor, do they affect one type of organization more than another; they transcend all organization types. Instead, they represent the understandings, actions, and mindsets that all leaders will need to navigate the perpetual whitewater of leadership in the current and future environment.

Integrated leadership understandings, competencies, and actions are embedded throughout the program and are designed to connect leadership development with the real-world, work environment. The core leadership understandings building the foundation for in the courses in the program follow:

- U1. Knowing yourself
- U2. Leading with ethical behavior and integrity
- U3. Thinking and planning strategically and systemically
- U4. Thinking and planning adaptively
- U5. Thinking creatively, innovatively, and entrepreneurially
- U6. Making decisions in a complex, chaotic, and interconnected environment
- U7. Leading and engaging others
- U8. Communicating verbally and in writing
- U9. Communicating strategically
- U10. Engaging stakeholders and embracing responsiveness, diversity, and inclusion
- U11. Helping people in the organization develop and grow
- U12. Coaching, mentoring, and developing new leaders in the organization
- U13. Facilitating and managing change
- U14. Creating and sustaining an organizational culture
- U15. Creating and sustaining an interdependent, participative leadership culture
- U16. Creating strong team and collaborative networks at the work environment

- U17. Establishing and communicating a vision that conveys direction, alignment, and commitment
- U18. Embedding social and moral responsibility into the organization's processes and procedures
- U19. Working comfortably with ambiguity and unpredictability
- U20. Understanding global boundaries and diverse cultures and how to span them

In addition to the core leadership understandings, leadership habits and mindsets are embedded throughout the program and are designed to foster reflective thought and inquiry about leadership as a developmental process. The essential habits and mindsets included in all of the courses in the program follow:

- H1. Thinking reflectively
- H2. Listening and connecting
- H3. Building trust and respect
- H4. Building and sustaining relationships
- H5. Inspiring and influencing employees
- H6. Building confidence, initiative, and accountability
- H7. Growing and improving from risk taking

Phase I: (24 Credits)

The minimum requirement for entry into this phase of the program is a MA/MS Degree, or completion of a program leading to a professional degree, i.e. JD, MD, etc.

The eight courses in this phase are offered as 3-credit courses. Courses will be offered primarily in a face-to-face delivery format with a hybrid component. In the face-to-face format, each course will meet face-to-face during four weekend sessions (Friday night, 5 pm to 9 pm, and Saturday, 8 am to 4 pm) during the fall and spring semesters and in an intensive one-week format (8 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday) during the summer session. A hybrid format will offer some online experiences and complement the face-to-face delivery format. Courses are taught by both Stockton and guest faculty, representing various organization types, who are experts in their fields, providing an insight into innovative, leading-edge theories and practices. Some courses will be team-taught, including professionals from different organization types.

Each course in Phase I of the program includes three 'primary learning themes' that are included to organize the core leadership understandings, essential habits and mindsets, and learning activities specific to that course. Each of the first three weekends of each course will be dedicated to one of the primary learning themes. The fourth weekend will be dedicated to interconnecting and reinforcing the relationships between and among the three primary learning themes.

Courses

LEAD 6010: Leading Your Organization (3 Credits)

This course is designed to provide a relevant framework for the participant to nurture and apply the understandings, skills, and dispositions required of leaders for 21st century organizations; to encourage the investigation of the participant's leadership assumptions, behaviors, and goals; and to begin personal planning to improve leadership effectiveness. The course focuses on concepts at three levels: the individual, groups and teams, and the organization. At the individual level, the participant synthesizes the interconnections of personality, leadership styles, beliefs, values, motivations, and ethics as part of leadership practice and their collective effect on decision making within their own organization. At the next level, the participant explores the effects of group/team dynamics, team decision-making, collective and participative leadership, mentoring and coaching, and power and conflict within their own work environment. Finally, the participant examines the organizational level, focusing on: leading people, establishing and communicating vision, understanding and spanning boundaries, organizational structure and culture, ever-accelerating change, strategic planning, and sustainable improvement. Participants will also analyze their own and others' paradigms and leadership styles, and determine best practices to promote sustained improvement in the organization.

Primary Core Leadership Understandings
- U1. Knowing yourself
- U2. Leading with ethical behavior and integrity
- U7/U16. Leading and engaging others / Creating strong teams and collaborative networks at the work environment
- U12. Coaching, mentoring, and developing new leaders in the organization
- U17. Establishing and communicating a vision that conveys direction, alignment, and commitment

Essential Habits and Mindsets
- H1. Thinking reflectively
- H2. Listening and connecting
- H3. Building trust and respect
- H4. Building and sustaining relationships
- H5. Inspiring and influencing employees
- H6. Building confidence, initiative, and accountability
- H7. Growing and improving from risk taking

Primary Leadership Development Themes
- Knowing yourself as a leader
- Leading teams within the organization
- Leading the organization

LEAD 6020: Engaging Communities and Stakeholders (3 Credits)

This course will examine leadership as it applies to communication and stakeholder engagement, both internal and external to the organization. Participants will investigate the impact that communication has on creating an open and ethical organization; identify the opportunities and challenges of stakeholder engagement with internal, external and diverse audiences; examine the power of the news and social media on building and sustaining communities of engagement; organize and design for social responsibility; and assess the roles of stakeholder groups in sustaining organizational effectiveness. Participants will also investigate the opportunities and challenges leaders face in a changing, complex environment, focusing on aspects of leading global and diverse workforces and cultures. Evaluation of case studies and the creation of scenarios specific to current organizational events will offer participants practical, as well as conceptual, perspectives of communication and stakeholder engagement. Participants will reflect on their own experiences concerning leadership and stakeholder engagement in their own work environment.

Primary Core Leadership Understandings
- U7/U16. Leading and engaging others / Creating strong team and collaborative networks at the work environment
- U9. Communicating strategically
- U10. Engaging stakeholders and embracing responsiveness, diversity, and inclusion
- U17. Establishing and communicating a vision that conveys direction, alignment, and commitment
- U20. Understanding global boundaries and diverse cultures and how to span them

Essential Habits and Mindsets
- H1. Thinking reflectively
- H2. Listening and connecting
- H3. Building trust and respect
- H4. Building and sustaining relationships
- H5. Inspiring and influencing employees
- H6. Building confidence, initiative, and accountability
- H7. Growing and improving from risk taking

Primary Leadership Development Themes
- Engaging stakeholders and mobilizing people
- Communicating strategically
- Spanning boundaries and diverse perspectives and cultures

LEAD 6030: Adapting to Change and Complexity (3 Credits)

Confronted with ever-accelerating, global, technological, and transforming changes in the work environment, most leaders and organizations find that they are neither prepared nor equipped to cope effectively. Complexity and ambiguity have become a new normal. This course emphasizes the need for leaders to understand that organizations are constantly changing and the necessity for leaders to practice the skills considered important to lead people in the changing landscape. Participants will examine and practice the ability to lead transformational change effectively. Concepts and strategies analyzed and assessed for leading change in a world of increased turbulence and complexity include: social, global, and technological influences, multi-perspective thinking, decision making, organizational design, individual and organizational behavior, group dynamics, interpersonal communication, conflict management and negotiation, empowerment and coaching, ethical use of power, diversity and cultures, performance benchmarking and assessment, adaptive challenges, resilience and sustainability, work stress, and critical reflection.

Primary Core Leadership Understandings
- U3. Thinking and planning strategically and systemically
- U4. Thinking and planning adaptively
- U6. Making decisions in a complex, chaotic, and interconnected environment
- U13. Facilitating and managing change
- U17. Establishing and communicating a vision that conveys direction, alignment, and commitment

Essential Habits and Mindsets
- H1. Thinking reflectively
- H2. Listening and connecting
- H3. Building trust and respect
- H4. Building and sustaining relationships
- H5. Inspiring and influencing employees
- H6. Building confidence, initiative, and accountability
- H7. Growing and improving from risk taking

Primary Leadership Development Themes
- Leading in a new normal: complexity, chaos, unpredictability, and ambiguity
- Leading the change process; helping people manage transition
- Thinking and planning strategically and systemically

LEAD 6040: Transforming an Organizational Culture (3 Credits)

Organizational culture is complex; each part of the organization is dependent upon the other parts and all parts react to changes in any other part. This course will examine the leader's role in the culture creation process and the interconnections that exist between leaders, the people within the organization, the structures and boundaries, the intended outcomes, and how they, collectively, support, sustain, and/or change the collective norms, values, and climate that shape a culture within the organization. Participants will analyze and measure the reality of the culture within their organization in a complex, interconnected, and changing environment through surveys, scenarios, case studies, and reflective thought. Participants will examine strategies designed to create and evaluate understanding of the dynamics of organizational culture, including the psychological basis for human action, individual and organizational learning, communicating across diverse and global cultures, and intellectual capital. This course will also examine such concepts as communication, motivation, diversity, understanding differences, stress, power, influence, trust, and organizational change.

Primary Core Leadership Understandings
- U10. Engaging stakeholders and embracing responsiveness, diversity, and inclusion
- U11. Helping people in the organization develop and grow
- U14. Creating and sustaining an organizational culture
- U15. Creating and sustaining an interdependent, participative leadership culture
- U18. Embedding social and moral responsibility into the organization's processes and procedures

Essential Habits and Mindsets
- H1. Thinking reflectively
- H2. Listening and connecting
- H3. Building trust and respect
- H4. Building and sustaining relationships
- H5. Inspiring and influencing employees
- H6. Building confidence, initiative, and accountability
- H7. Growing and improving from risk taking

Primary Leadership Development Themes
- Understanding the dynamics of culture; creating and sustaining a culture
- Spanning global boundaries and diverse cultures
- Fostering and sustaining an inclusive, interdependent, and continually developing workplace

LEAD 6050: Thinking Creatively, Innovatively, and Entrepreneurially (3 Credits)

Whether participants are aspiring entrepreneurial leaders bent on launching new programs, products, or initiatives or leaders focused on growing an effective organization, the course will encourage participants to think big, far-sighted, and outside the box. The central focus of the course is on two key successful, creative factors: the qualities and mindset of a creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial leader; and the leader's ability to recognize opportunities, overcome constraints, and avoid pitfalls. The course will examine the concepts, skills, and attitudes that are reliable for leaders engaged in a complex, changing, and ambiguous environment. Key questions raised and answered in the course include: What are the key aspects of the creative process? In what ways do creativity, innovation, imagination, divergent thinking, and entrepreneurialism connect? How do we evaluate an opportunity? How are creative growth and innovation defined in the organization? How do new initiatives grow? What are the strategies for creating, cultivating, and sustaining new ideas? What are the unique qualities of entrepreneurial leaders and their organizations? Entrepreneurial leadership combines the energy, discipline, and innovativeness to solve pressing organizational problems. Through readings, discussion with class peers, reflection, simulation, and active practice in the work environment, participants will explore the upsides of and obstacles to creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial leadership as a catalyst for improving the organization.

Primary Core Leadership Understandings
- U4. Thinking and planning adaptively
- U5. Thinking creatively, innovatively, and entrepreneurially
- U6. Making decisions in a complex, chaotic, and interconnected environment
- U16. Creating strong team and collaborative networks at the work environment
- U19. Working comfortably with ambiguity and unpredictability

Essential Habits and Mindsets
- H1. Thinking reflectively
- H2. Listening and connecting
- H3. Building trust and respect
- H4. Building and sustaining relationships
- H5. Inspiring and influencing employees
- H6. Building confidence, initiative, and accountability
- H7. Growing and improving from risk taking

Primary Leadership Development Themes
- Facilitating creativity and energizing innovation at the individual, team, and organizational levels; creating, nurturing, and sustaining ideas, innovation, and growth
- Navigating the inherent tensions between managing day-to-day business and leading creativity and innovation
- Embracing the constancy of change and remaining agile in a fast-paced world; fostering problem finding, in combination with problem solving, to visualize and evaluate opportunities

LEAD 6060: Leaders Serving with Ethics (3 Credits)

Consistent with the ideal that leadership is not just an act but a sustained way of serving and being, this course will explore the ethical foundations that frame the leader's personal and professional practices. Participants will examine ethical, moral, and social concepts designed to simulate leadership challenges in authentic workplace situations. Emphasis will be placed on understanding ethical leadership for social and organizational change, the leader's role as an ethical agent within and outside the organization, and the organization's role as an ethical agent in society. Through individual and group scenarios, case studies, and reflective practice, participants will examine how ethical leaders function in building and sustaining system wide environments. Participants will apply value and ethical judgments when considering solutions to problems. A focus will be placed on connecting the course concepts and activities to the participant's work environment.

Primary Core Leadership Understandings
- U1. Knowing yourself
- U2. Leading with ethical behavior and integrity
- U10. Engaging stakeholders and embracing responsiveness, diversity, and inclusion
- U18. Embedding social and moral responsibility into the organization's processes and procedures
- U20. Understanding global boundaries and diverse cultures and how to span them

Essential Habits and Mindsets
- H1. Thinking reflectively
- H2. Listening and connecting
- H3. Building trust and respect
- H4. Building and sustaining relationships
- H5. Inspiring and influencing employees
- H6. Building confidence, initiative, and accountability
- H7. Growing and improving from risk taking

Primary Leadership Development Themes
- Acting responsibly and with integrity, perspective, courage, and honesty by modeling ethical behavior inside and outside the organization and by integrating social and moral virtues into the organization's vision and operating values and practices
- Fostering an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued and leveraged to achieve the organization's vision and strategies
- Thinking carefully, and doing the right thing; using social intelligence to build alliances, engage stakeholders, make decisions, manage conflict, conduct successful negotiations, demonstrate behavioral flexibility and differentiation across roles unique to their place in the organization, and develop a globally responsible mindset

LEAD 6070: Evaluating, Assessing, and Planning (3 Credits)

This course will examine key concepts, methods, and strategies in the field of evaluation research. The comprehensive range of activities involved in developing, implementing, evaluating, and assessing organizational programs and processes will be a primary focus of the course. This course will also introduce participants to the concepts of program quality and assessment that can be applied to organizations. Participants are expected to connect and apply relevant concepts they learn about leadership, planning, quality, standards, accountability and accreditation within their respective organizations and within their respective roles and experiences. Attention will be given to strategic alignment and connection of organization values, culture, programs and processes along with a focus on the utilization of different tools for evaluating and assessing quality. Examples include: cause and effect diagrams, affinity diagrams, relations diagrams, idea creation tools, SWOT analysis, check sheets, control charts, scatter diagrams, stratification techniques, balanced scorecard, data collection and analysis tools, and strategic planning.

Primary Core Leadership Understandings
- U3. Thinking and planning strategically and systemically
- U5. Thinking creatively, innovatively, and entrepreneurially
- U9. Communicating strategically
- U13. Facilitating and managing change
- U19. Working comfortably with ambiguity and unpredictability

Essential Habits and Mindsets
- H1. Thinking reflectively
- H2. Listening and connecting
- H3. Building trust and respect
- H4. Building and sustaining relationships
- H5. Inspiring and influencing employees
- H6. Building confidence, initiative, and accountability
- H7. Growing and improving from risk taking

Primary Leadership Development Themes
- Understanding the interdependence of the develop, implement, monitor, evaluate, and assess cycle as applied to organizational processes and programs
- Creating the conditions for encouraging new and unexpected ways to problem find, create ideas, and resolve challenges
- Applying and evaluating the effects of using relevant quality tools in a leadership environment of complexity, ambiguity, and unpredictability; institutionalizing quality tools into the culture of the organization as a normal way of doing business

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LEAD 6080: Cultivating Organizational Talent & Innovation (3 Credits)

In this course, participants will examine concepts of motivation, communication, leadership, power and change, and through reflective practice, apply the learnings to relevant, current issues in the work place. Participants will also examine key development and reward systems aimed at improved performance and organizational efficiency through the power of collective and participative leadership and cooperative decision making. This course emphasizes the strategic role of the leader in identifying, recruiting, and selecting new employees; mentoring, coaching, and developing employees during the career process; respecting the principles of adult learning and stage development; and understanding global boundaries and diverse cultures within the organizational setting. Through simulations and direct applications into the work environment, participants will independently, as well as cooperatively, make and apply human resource and development decisions, communicate the justification for these decisions, report on overcoming constraints and differences; and reflect upon the practice of application and the outcomes realized. This course is intended to reinforce real-world application as well as build a formal dialogue between the participant and his/her peers in class as well as in the work place. Participants will draw on current literature, scenarios, case studies, relevant experience and applied practice in the work place to explore the organizing, planning, entrepreneurialism, innovation, decision making, ethics, and priority setting involved in systems thinking.

Primary Core Leadership Understandings
- U2. Leading with ethical behavior and integrity
- U7/U16. Leading and engaging others / Creating strong team and collaborative networks at the work environment
- U11. Helping people in the organization develop and grow
- U12. Coaching, mentoring and developing new leaders in the organization
- U14. Creating and sustaining an organizational culture

Essential Habits and Mindsets
- H1. Thinking reflectively
- H2. Listening and connecting
- H3. Building trust and respect
- H4. Building and sustaining relationships
- H5. Inspiring and influencing employees
- H6. Building confidence, initiative, and accountability
- H7. Growing and improving from risk taking

Primary Leadership Development Themes
- Helping people in the organization develop and grow; identifying, recruiting, and selecting new employees; mentoring, coaching, and sponsoring employees; and fostering the principles of adult learning and stage development (U2, U11, U12)
- Fostering communication, collaboration, and interpersonal skills across vertical, horizontal, and other team-oriented boundaries within the organization (U11, U14, U16)
- Assessing and planning for the effective, efficient, and ethical utilization of human and organizational resources; spanning cultural, capacity, integrity, and diverse boundaries and realities (U2, U14, U16)

Phase II: Ed.D.in Organizational Leadership (30 Credits)

The minimum requirement for entry into this phase of the program is completion of Phase I of the program or use of a Competency-Based / Experiential Portfolio Assessment to determine if the applicant has completed the core understandings and essential habits integrated throughout Phase I of the program.

Courses

LEAD 6100: Quantitative and Qualitative Research (3 credits)

This course covers all aspects of writing a major applied research paper. Discussion of relevant theories and methodologies, including: qualitative research methods; surveys, focus groups, and interview-based research; quantitative research methods and descriptive statistics; and software for research. The course also covers skills and techniques to be completed as a research project in phases. Assignments will help prepare the student for undertaking the required applied research project as the capstone experience. This course is an intermediate research course allowing students to apply research concepts to specific student-identified research projects. The course will focus on both qualitative and quantitative designs and the importance of linking problem identification, methodology, data gathering, and interpretation of results as an integral process when conducting research projects at the graduate quality level.

Primary Core Leadership Understandings
- U3. Thinking and planning strategically and systemically
- U4. Thinking and planning adaptively
- U8. Communicating verbally and in writing
- U9. Communicating strategically
- U19. Working comfortably with ambiguity and unpredictability

Essential Habits and Mindsets
- H1. Thinking reflectively
- H2. Listening and connecting
- H3. Building trust and respect
- H4. Building and sustaining relationships
- H5. Inspiring and influencing employees
- H6. Building confidence, initiative, and accountability
- H7. Growing and improving from risk taking

LEAD 6500 and LEAD 6501: Research Seminar I and II
(Each course is 3 credits for a total of 6 credits)

These courses are an in-class research seminar for the doctoral student. They cover all aspects of completing a dissertation: selecting a topic, conducting a literature review, designing the correct research method(s), selecting a dissertation committee, drafting a dissertation proposal, defending the proposal, writing sections/chapters, and practicing for an oral defense. The course will also cover the college's requirements for completing the dissertation, including the style guide, IRB, etc.

Primary Core Leadership Understandings
- U1. Knowing yourself
- U3. Thinking and planning strategically and systemically
- U16. Creating strong team and collaborative networks at the work environment
- U18. Embedding social and moral responsibility into the organization's processes and procedures
- U19. Working comfortably with ambiguity and unpredictability

Essential Habits and Mindsets
- H1. Thinking reflectively
- H2. Listening and connecting
- H3. Building trust and respect
- H4. Building and sustaining relationships
- H5. Inspiring and influencing employees
- H6. Building confidence, initiative, and accountability
- H7. Growing and improving from risk taking

LEAD 6800: Independent Study (3 credits)

This course emphasizes individual and collaborative selected readings organized around a topic of interest and viewed through four thematic lens. The thematic lens includes:

- Spanning global boundaries
- Integrating technology
- Understanding responsiveness, diversity and inclusion
- Making decisions in a complex, chaotic, and interconnected environment

The topic of interest could be an area that the student might like to consider exploring during the dissertation in practice experience; the topic of interest could reflect an issue, concern, program, or practice in the organization that the student would like to explore in more detail, seeking an advanced degree of understanding and possible resolution; or the topic of interest could be designed to expand current knowledge, understanding, and improvement within a specific competency area of leadership.

In this course, students will meet on the first and fourth weekend sessions. In between these course sessions, communication can take place individually or in small connected and collaborative groups through face-to-face meetings, Collaborate, Skype, Google Docs, Google Hang Out, e-mail, or any other agreeable electronic means. The professor will be involved in some of the communication, but does not have to be involved in all of these communications. The degree of and need for the professor to be involved will be determined by the student(s) and professor. Student to student communication, especially on related topics of interest, is strongly encouraged. The final summation of the selected readings will result in an executive summary (practitioner reflection) of approximately 8-10 pages, a written article designed for submission to a professional publication, development (and possible application) of an innovative leadership practice in the organization, or some type of electronic presentation to be posted in the Internet. Some 'guiding' information about the summation will be provided at the first class meeting. There is no one way to organize the final summation. Students will make that determination. A number of competency requirements can be explored and attained as a result of participation in this course.

Primary Core Leadership Understandings
- U1. Knowing yourself
- U5. Thinking creatively, innovatively, and entrepreneurially
- U6. Making decisions in a complex, chaotic, and interconnected environment
- U8. Communicating verbally and in writing
- U19. Working comfortably with ambiguity and unpredictability

Essential Habits and Mindsets
- H1. Thinking reflectively
- H2. Listening and connecting
- H3. Building trust and respect
- H4. Building and sustaining relationships
- H5. Inspiring and influencing employees
- H6. Building confidence, initiative, and accountability
- H7. Growing and improving from risk taking

LEAD 7100 (6), 7101 (6), and 7102 (6): Dissertation-in-Practice (18 Total Credits)

Participants will pursue independent action research and write a dissertation in practice under the supervision of a faculty member who serves as the dissertation in practice chair, and two other members of the dissertation in practice committee. The dissertation in practice is an authentic undertaking that identifies a complex issue, concern, or practice in the organizational setting; develops and applies meaningful solutions through disciplined, reflective inquiry; and measures and analyzes the actions and results for the impact made.

Primary Core Leadership Understandings
- U1. Knowing yourself
- U3. Thinking and planning strategically and systemically
- U8. Communicating verbally and in writing
- U13. Facilitating and managing change
- U17. Establishing and communicating a vision that conveys direction, alignment, and commitment

Essential Habits and Mindsets
- H1. Thinking reflectively
- H2. Listening and connecting
- H3. Building trust and respect
- H4. Building and sustaining relationships
- H5. Inspiring and influencing employees
- H6. Building confidence, initiative, and accountability
- H7. Growing and improving from risk taking

Successful completion of this phase will result in the participant receiving a Doctor of Education degree in Organizational Leadership.

Dissertation in Practice (Action Research)
Overview

Purpose

The action research dissertation in practice is the culminating, or capstone, experience of the Stockton University Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership. The experience begins in LEAD 6501 (Research Seminar II) with exploration of possible problems of practice within the organization that could be developed into a project and continues in LEAD 7100 (Dissertation in Practice) as a year-long independent research and evaluative undertaking. We believe the action research dissertation in practice experience, rather than the traditional dissertation, integrates the analytic abilities, professional understanding, contextual knowledge, and teamwork skills that are accrued throughout the Ed.D. program, and more closely mirrors the challenges that organizational leaders face in today's environment. Like the doctoral program itself, the action research dissertation in practice is innovative and different.

As described by the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate, this culminating, or capstone, experience creates: "'Laboratories of Practice' as settings where theory and practice inform and enrich each other. They address complex problems of practice where ideas—formed by the intersection of theory, inquiry, and practice—can be implemented, measured, and analyzed for the impact made in the organization. Laboratories of Practice facilitate transformative and generative learning that is measured by the development of scholarly expertise and implementation of practice."
(http://cpedinitiative.org/design-concept-definitions)

In the proposed dissertation in practice process, there is less concern for universality, or generalization, of findings as more value is placed on the relevance of the findings to the researcher and his/her local collaborators, as well as the benefits to and improvement of the organization. Thus, our action research dissertation in practice experience is designed to be specific to an organization. The action research dissertation in practice experience is distinctive because of its interrelated purposes:

- The purpose of a doctoral candidate's action research dissertation in practice implementation is to make a positive difference in an organizational setting in which the candidate currently is serving. If a candidate is not presently working in an organization, we will assist the candidate in seeking an organization in which to conduct the dissertation in practice, or offer the candidate an authentic problem, issue, or concern submitted to the Ed.D. program by an organization.
- The purpose of a candidate's action research dissertation in practice is to investigate a problem, issue, or concern as well as implement an action systematically and methodically through a form of disciplined reflective inquiry.
- The action research dissertation in practice experience stresses research literacy, a set of skills and knowledge that leaders need to understand and use in making practice and policy decisions. Throughout the Ed.D. program, candidates will focus on issues of research literacy, methods of systematic inquiry, and the identification and analysis of data and information, with the primary goal of building the skills leaders need for

effective decision making. In order to base action upon research, leaders must be able to judge the quality, applicability, and limitations of the research.

- A purpose of a candidate's action research dissertation in practice is to report the investigation and results of the action to an external audience. Thus, the project will be framed in local organizational terms, that is, the overall project will address a pressing organizational need, such as programmatic innovation, design, evaluation, policy, or political initiative. In the action research dissertation in practice project, the external audience must be identified.

- Action research can be thought of as a process of deep inquiry into one's practices in service of moving towards an envisioned future, aligned with values.

- Action research can be seen as a systematic, reflective study of one's actions, and the effects of these actions, in a workplace or organizational context. As such, it involves deep inquiry into one's professional practice and the benefit of that practice to the organization.

- Critical reflection is at the heart of action research, and when this reflection is based on careful examination of evidence from multiple perspectives, it can provide an effective strategy for improving the organization's ways of working and the whole organizational climate. It can be the process through which an organization learns, improves, and grows.

In general, the purpose of the action research dissertation in practice in the Stockton University Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership is to report the consequences of a particular organizational change effort. The purpose is not to fill gaps in, or add to, the knowledge base of a scholarly discipline.

Features

The following are key features of an Action Research Dissertation in Practice:

- The scale of the action is small enough to be completed in conjunction with the participant's full-time work as a leader in an organization; yet, it should be substantial enough to potentially demonstrate positive benefits for the participants in the study. It ought to be small enough to do well and large enough to matter.

- The action is influenced by the best scholarship available. The review of scholarship in the dissertation in practice / action research project results in the selection of strategies that support the change effort(s) to be implemented. The review is targeted, selective, practical, and highly relevant to the change effort. A traditional, comprehensive literature review is not appropriate for an action research dissertation of practice.

- The research design features are based on action research and mixed-methods methodologies. Random assignment to treatments, control groups, and inferential statistics generally are not appropriate for an action research dissertation in practice because it is not concerned with generalizability, universal principles, or hypothesis testing.

- The resources needed to complete the action research dissertation in practice are typically modest. Resource demands should not exceed what is normally available in the candidate's organizational work setting.

Updated 11/2016

General Dimensions of the Action Research Dissertation in Practice

- An Action Research Dissertation of Practice is a scholarly product that demonstrates a candidate's ability to frame and critically inquire into a significant problem of practice and to develop defensible recommendations to solve the problem of practice.
- Action researchers use the literature as a foundation for inquiry at key points: framing the problem, synthesizing what is known about the problem, investigating the problem and informing the solutions and implications of the dissertation of practice
- Action researchers emphasize the creation/development of a transformative change in an organizational setting through continual learning, progressive problem solving, and by taking purposeful action
- Action researchers use practices to generate theories beginning with values, needs, and knowledge of human interaction.
- Action researchers are empowered to locate problems of practice within their organization and develop methods to improve them. The dissertation in practice work should contribute to an improvement in organizational practice.
- Action researchers define the questions to be investigated. The questions asked by action researchers guide their process. A good question will inspire one to look closely and collect evidence that will help find possible answers.
- Action researchers locate problems, issues, or concerns and engage in progressive and participatory research and problem solving.
- Action researchers communicate and share what they have learned, thus helping to improve the organization in which one's practice is embedded.
- The dissertation in practice experience demonstrates an action researcher's ability to present ideas, arguments and evidence in a logical, systematic, and coherent fashion in both written and oral formats.
- The required product of the action research dissertation in practice process is a reader-friendly written report that describes the needs addressed, the action taken and reasons why, the consequences for participants, and lessons learned by the author(s).

Specific Components of the Action Research Dissertation in Practice Experience

Authentic problems of practice can typically be identified from within the organization. However, authentic problems of practice could also be submitted to the Ed.D. program from various organizations as problems, issues, or concerns that exist in various types of organizations. Preferably, candidates will work on a problem of practice specific to the organization in which he/she works. If necessary, we will assist a candidate in seeking an organization in which to conduct the action research dissertation in practice, or offer the candidate an authentic problem, issue, or concern submitted to the Ed.D. program by an organization. Candidates will work individually, or as part of a small team (referred to as a collaborative, or companion, dissertation in practice team) on an authentic problem of practice that requires them to understand the problem as posed, analyze the issue from multiple perspectives, and respond with practice and/or policy.

Candidates primarily work with a three-person advisory team, comprised of a Primary Faculty Dissertation in Practice Advisor, as well as a Second Faculty Reader and an External Reader, or

Community Reader. Two of the three members of the advisory team must be members of the Stockton University faculty. The third member of the advisory team is external to Stockton University and is usually selected by the candidate. While the candidate will work closely with all three members of the Dissertation in Practice committee, he/she will work closest with the Primary Faculty Dissertation in Practice Advisor. The Dissertation in Practice experience culminates in an oral presentation followed by questions from the candidate's Doctoral Dissertation in Practice Committee. In addition, selected representatives from the external audience identified in the project by the author will be invited to attend the oral presentation.

The dissertation in practice represents a sophisticated and complete recapitulation of a process that is a year-long quest to discover local knowledge, create local change, study the effects, and implement more informed change. The following dissertation-in-practice designs are applicable:

Dissertation in Practice Committee and Single Candidate
- Primary Faculty Dissertation in Practice Advisor, Secondary Faculty Reader, and External Reader
- Individual Study
- Product: The submission is a Single Author Dissertation in Practice

Dissertation in Practice Committee, Thematically Connected Team, but Individual Research Questions
- Primary Faculty Dissertation in Practice Advisor, Secondary Faculty Reader, and External Reader
- Common Theme for the Collaborative Team of Practitioners, Different Research Questions
- Individual Research Question #1
- Individual Research Question #2
- Individual Research Question #3
- Product: Although thematically connected, each candidate on the team will submit a Single Author Dissertation in Practice, ex. three team members, three submissions

Dissertation in Practice Committee, Single Topic with Interconnected Strands, Same Research Questions and Methodology
- Primary Faculty Dissertation in Practice Advisor, Secondary Faculty Reader, and External Reader
- Single Topic
- Individual Strand #1
- Individual Strand #2
- Individual Strand #3
- Product: Although interconnected, each candidate on the team will submit a Single Author Dissertation in Practice, ex. three team members, three submissions

Action research is a reflective process of progressive problem solving led by individuals or by teams as part of a collaborative practice to improve the way they address issues and solve problems. Action research involves the process of actively participating in an organization change situation while conducting research.

Inquiry is the process of posing significant questions that focus on complex problems of practice. By using research, theories, and professional knowledge; practitioners design innovative solutions to address the problems of practice. As such, inquiry of practice requires the ability to gather, organize, judge, aggregate, and analyze situations, literature, and data through a critical and reflective lens.

The completed Action Research Dissertation in Practice will:

- Describe the organization;
- Develop primary and supporting questions that define, describe, and justify the existence of the problem, issue, or concern in the organization;
- Conduct a targeted review and synthesis of relevant literature;
- Design a plan for implementation, based in research, that is intended to offer an effective response to the identified problem; implement a research design that includes the collection of data and information, plans for analysis, and provides a framework for assessing the effects of the proposed action project;
- Describe the analysis of the data and information collected;
- Present the results and conclusions; and
- Discuss the implications of the findings for practice, policy, and research specific to the organization, as well as reflect on the leadership lessons learned as a result of leading the action research dissertation in practice experience.