Systems Thinking & Leadership

Leading change in a complex world

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#systemsthinking
What are the essential elements of this child’s system?
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1

2 [X]

3

4

5

6

7

8 [X]

9

10
How is this child impacted when essential system components are diminished or eliminated?

5 minute table conversation
How are the elements of Weston’s system connected? Would a change in one element affect or impact a change in another?
Characteristics of Complex Systems

• Boundaries
• Parts or Elements
• Interdependencies (Relationships)
• Goal or Purpose
• Dynamics
Systems Thinking Provides Essential Ways of Thinking and Tools for Today’s Leaders
Habits of a Systems Thinker

Card Sort
Make a pile of Habits Cards that you feel you practice on a consistent basis.

I am especially good at practicing these habits.

Seeks to understand the “big picture”
Make a pile of Habits Cards that you feel you practice on a consistent basis.

I am especially good at practicing these habits.

Seeks to understand the “big picture”
Choose 2 Cards from your “Good practice” Pile

I am especially good at practicing these habits.

Seeks to understand the “big picture”

Be prepared to tell a 1-minute story that illustrates how you have put the habit into action for each of your chosen cards.
First Grade
Problem-solving

Mean Words

Say “sorry”

Break up the group

Play a game with only one team

Hurt Feelings
Habits of a Systems Thinker

Seeks to understand the big picture

Oberves how elements within systems change over time, generating patterns and trends

Recognizes that a system's structure generates its behavior

Identifies the circular nature of complex cause and effect relationships

Makes meaningful connections within and between systems

Changes perspectives to increase understanding

Surfaces and tests assumptions

Considers an issue fully and resists the urge to come to a quick conclusion

Considers how mental models affect current reality and the future

Uses understanding of system structure to identify possible leverage actions

Considers short-term, long-term and unintended consequences of actions

Pays attention to accumulations and their rates of change

Recognizes the impact of time delays when exploring cause and effect relationships

Checks results and changes actions if needed: "successive approximation"
The Feather Challenge
Habits of a Systems Thinker

- Seeks to understand the big picture
- Observes how elements within systems change over time, generating patterns and trends
- Recognizes that a system's structure generates its behavior
- Identifies the circular nature of complex cause and effect relationships
- Makes meaningful connections within and between systems
- Changes perspectives to increase understanding
- Surfaces and tests assumptions
- Considers an issue fully and resists the urge to come to a quick conclusion
- Considers how mental models affect current reality and the future
- Uses understanding of system structure to identify possible leverage actions
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- Checks results and changes actions if needed: “successive approximation”