

School of Education
Ed.D. in School Improvement

EDSI 6320 – Leading Critical Conversations for School Improvement

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Term Fall 2026

Last day to withdraw from this course: October 30, 2026

Course Description

This course employs an interdisciplinary approach to examine how educational leaders can determine, promote, support, and achieve successful, systematic school improvement through the use of data and meaningful feedback, and the implementation of systems to monitor teaching and student learning. Furthermore, the course explores the skills needed to engage in critical conversations and conflict resolution while enacting change and creating a culture of continuous improvement.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Identify, understand, and apply strategies that will improve communication and increase a productive work environment. (*Program Goal: a, e*)
2. Identify and evaluate elements of crucial conversations leading to effective communication and used to diffuse difficult situations. (*Program Goal: d*)
3. Assess and evaluate organizational frames from the perspective of communication and collaboration. (*Program Goals: b, c*)
4. Recognize causative factors leading to campus culture. (*Program Goals: a, c, d, e*)

Required Texts

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2017). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership* (6th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

Patterson, K., Grenny, J., McMillan, R., & Switzler, A. (2012). *Crucial conversations: Tools for talking when stakes are high* (2nd ed.). McGraw Hill.

**Note – Both of these texts are available as an eBook from the UT Tyler Library*

Course Schedule		
Available	Module Topics	Assignments Due
	Start Here Module • Introductory Discussion Board • Introduction Quiz <i>*All discussion board due dates are for the initial post. Final posts are due before the next module opens.</i>	Sun, Aug 30
Mon, Aug 24	Module 1 - Reframing Complex Organizations • Discussion Board • Module 1 Reflection • Module 1 Quiz	Sun, Aug 30 Sun, Sep 6 Sun, Sep 6
Mon, Sep 7	Module 2 - Framing Structures • Discussion Board • Module 2 Reflection • Module 2 Quiz	Sun, Sep 13 Sun, Sep 20 Sun, Sep 20
Mon, Sep 21	Module 3 - Framing Human Resources • Discussion Board • Module 3 Reflection • Module 3 Quiz	Sun, Sep 27 Sun, Oct 4 Sun, Oct 4
Mon, Oct 5 <i>(3-weeks)</i>	Module 4 - Framing Organizational Politics • Discussion Board • Module 4 Team Scenario • Module 4 Quiz	Sun, Oct 11 Sun, Oct 25 Sun, Oct 25
Mon, Oct 26 <i>(3-weeks)</i>	Module 5 - Framing Symbols and Culture • Discussion Board • Module 5 Team Scenario • Module 4 Quiz	Sun, Nov 1 Sun, Nov 15 Sun, Nov 15
Mon, Nov 16 <i>(3-weeks)</i>	Module 6 - Reframing School Improvement • Discussion Board • Final Reflection • Module 6 Personal Scenario • Module 6 Quiz	Sun, Nov 22 Sun, Dec 6 Sun, Dec 6 Sun, Dec 6

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Graded Course Requirements

- **Discussion Boards** – Discussion boards encourage students to communicate and explore open-ended prompts that require, evaluation, and reflection. Students will respond to a given prompt and provide peer feedback.
- **Reflections** – Reflections build student ownership in their learning. Reflections should build a bridge between course concepts, personal goals, and future learning. Student will develop a personal connection based on recent learning.
- **Team Scenarios** – Small group activities that engage students in multiple levels of critical thinking. These require analysis, collaboration, and the development of a final artifact that demonstrates understanding.
- **Reading Quizzes** – Quizzes test a student's understanding of covered course content.

Full descriptions of each assignment will be provided within the course module.

Course Evaluation

Assignment	Percentage of grade
Discussions and Participation	25%
Reflections	25%
Team Scenarios	25%
Reading Quizzes	25%

Grading Criteria

Performance standards			
Points	Percent	Grade	Standard
90-100	90	A	Superior
80-89	84%	B	Meets Standard
70-79	75%	C	Below Average
60-69	66%	D	Unacceptable
00-59	60% or below	F	Unacceptable

COURSE POLICIES

All assignments are expected to be completed to the best ability of the student and adhere to the stated assignment criteria.

All assignments must be submitted by date listed on the assignment schedule. No late work will be accepted.

Participation and your commitment to your learning is critical to your success in any course. Your timely participation in the class discussion and group assignments is a substantial part of your grade in this course. The due date listed in Canvas is for your first post while your peer responses will be due before the next module opens. This structure will ensure we can engage in meaningful conversations about instructional supervision. Please plan accordingly; late participation will not be accepted.

Communication

To contact me via email, you may use the Canvas email. Click on the Inbox on the left side of the Canvas main menu. Through Canvas, you may send a text email or a video message. You may also email me at fkaiser@uttyler.edu. Please note that this is not a Patriots email address.

My preferred method of communication is **email**; I am not always able to answer your phone calls.

Written Assignments and Quizzes

Some of the assignments in this course require collaboration with other students; your participation as documented on Canvas will count towards the Class Discussion grade.

All other written assignments as well as all quizzes are **individual assignments**. Students may not collaborate on the individual assignments. Unauthorized collaboration is considered cheating and will be handled according to University Policies and the Students Standards of Academic Conduct.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY (CEP) VISION AND MISSION

Vision

The CEP will be a global leader in responding to needs in the fields of education, psychology, and counseling, with a focus on the East Texas region, by creating innovative academic and scholarly pathways and partnerships.

Mission

The mission of the CEP is to prepare competent and passionate professionals in the fields of education, psychology, and counseling; to advance knowledge and expertise; and to impact these fields locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION PROGRAM STANDARDS

Texas Education Standards

The School of Education is committed to teaching and implementing the Texas Educator Standards at the highest level. The School of Education faculty use the Texas Education Standards, along with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) standards used by educator preparation programs throughout the United States.

Access the [Texas Education Standards for Principals](#).

Access the [Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators](#)