

*University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign - College of Education  
Department of Educational Organization and Leadership*

**EOL 543: School Improvement  
Oak Brook Spring, 2006**

**Wednesday 5:30-9:30 p.m.**

Multi-University Center Room A

January 18 - April 19

**Instructor**

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**Office Hours**

332 Education Building

Office hours: Monday 3 - 5

Or by appointment

**Recommended prerequisite texts**

Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (2001). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience and school* (Expanded ed.). Washington, DC: National Research Council.

Loewen, J. W. (1995). *Lies my teacher told me: Everything your American history textbook got wrong*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Scheurich, J. J., & Skrla, L. (2003). *Leadership for equity and excellence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

**Required texts**

Johnson, R. S. (2002). *Using data to close the achievement gap: How to measure equity in our schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Lee, E., Menkart, D., & Okazawa-Rey, M. (Eds.). (2002). *Beyond heroes and holidays: A practical guide to K-12 anti-racist, multicultural education and staff development* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Washington, D.C.: Teaching for Change.

Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

NSSE. (2002). *School improvement: Focusing on student performance*. Schaumburg, IL: National Study of School Evaluation.

(also can be ordered: 1-800-THE-NSSE or 847-995-9080)

Schmoker, M. (2000). *Results: The key to continuous school improvement* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

**Recommended texts**

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Schmoker, M. (2001). *The results fieldbook: Practical strategies from dramatically improved schools*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Tomlinson, C. A., & Allan, S. D. (2000). *Leadership for differentiating schools and classrooms*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

### **Electronic reserve readings** (available Jan. 10)

For directions see <http://www.library.uiuc.edu/ugl/mrc/faq2.htm>

Choices for access:

1. <http://library.ilcso.illinois.edu/uiu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&PAGE=rbSearch>
2. <http://web.library.uiuc.edu/ereserves/querycourse.asp>

*To save time, money and paper, consider printing two pages onto one: for windows, go to File. Print. Click on box "properties." Select 2 pages per page.*

### **Course Overview**

Welcome to School Improvement! The guiding theme of this class is creating and sustaining healthy, reflective and successful teaching and learning environments for all students and staff. It is designed to provide teachers, reading and content specialists, principals, and other administrators with an introduction to school improvement.

The purpose of this course is for students to understand school improvement research, theories, and practices directed toward preparing all P-12 students to be successful and productive citizens in a complex, democratic and diverse society. We will explore school improvement through multiple perspectives on school improvement purpose, leadership identity, data-based decision-making, organizational learning, organizational change, and systems thinking.

Through assigned readings and discussion, structured activities, individual projects, and collaborative group work both theoretical and practical aspects of school improvement will be considered and developed throughout the course. National Standards for school leaders (ISLLC) and Illinois Principal Standards will be major consideration in the course.

### **Course Association with Content Area Standards in Educational Administration**

This course directly utilizes the following professional content area standards for the preparation of principals and superintendents:

#### **1. Facilitating a vision of educational excellence**

This course requires students to study and practice applications of leadership competencies in the planning, development, and maintenance of a productive and inclusive school environment.

#### **2. School culture, learning environment, and instructional program**

Through group discussion and written work, students will study the development and maintenance of school cultures and instructional programs and the design of programs for student learning and professional staff growth.

#### **3. Management**

This course asks students to explore theories and methods of effective school management and to design administrative support for a positive teaching and learning environment.

#### **4. Collaboration with families and communities**

Through group and individual problem-solving efforts, students practice collaborative administrative roles in communicating with and in working with professional staff, students and families, other members of the school community.

**5. Acting with integrity, fairness, and in compliance with legal and ethical standards**

Class discussion and problem examples require students to examine the determination and application of ethical practices in public school administration.

**6. The political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context**

This course prompts students to seek comprehension of the social, economic, and political contexts in which public schools function and through course readings and small group work to anticipate and understand the influence of these contexts on public school operations.

### **Principal Content-Area Standards**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) developed specific area standards, knowledge, and performance indicators for principals. These standards are intended to indicate what principals, who lead public schools in the State of Illinois, are expected to know. Two of the standards were used in formulating this course: Standard 1 – *Facilitating a Vision of Learning* and Standard 2 – *School Culture and Instructional Programs*. The appropriate knowledge and performance indicators for these standards are listed on the next two pages.

#### ***Standard 1 – Facilitating a Vision of Learning***

The competent school principal is and educational leader, who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

*Knowledge indicators: The competent principal:*

1B: Comprehends the principles of developing and implementing long-term plans.

1C: Recognizes theories of educational leadership.

1D: Understands informational sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies

1E: Understands effective communication.

1F: Understands effective consensus-building and negotiation skills.

*Performance indicators: The competent principal:*

1I: Facilitates the development and implementation of a shared vision and strategic plan for a school district that focuses on teaching and learning.

1J: Analyzes, evaluates, and monitors operational plans and processes to accomplish strategic goals using practical applications and organizational theories.

1M: Conducts needs assessments and uses qualitative and quantitative data to plan and assess school programs.

1N: Analyzes and interprets educational data, issues, and trends.

1O: Uses appropriate interpersonal skills and applies appropriate effective communication strategies in using written, verbal, and nonverbal

communications.

### ***Standard 2 – School Culture and Instructional Program***

The competent school principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

*Knowledge Indicators: The competent principal*

2C: Knows the procedures used in the assessment of the learning environment.

2E: Understands curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement

2K: Understands the change process for systems, organizations, and individuals

2L: Recognizes the role of technology in promoting student learning and professional growth.

*Performance indicators: The competent principal*

2N: Creates with teachers, parents, and students a positive school culture that promotes learning.

2O: Promotes an inclusive school culture.

2P: Articulates the district's or school's vision, mission, and priorities to the community and media.

2V: Develops collaboratively a learning organization that supports instructional improvement, builds an appropriate curriculum and incorporates best practice.

2AA: Aligns curricular goals and objectives with state learning standards.

2BB: Facilitates the design, implementation, and evaluation of curricula, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs for continuous improvement.

2DD: Uses qualitative and quantitative data to plan and assess school programs.

2GG: Facilitates the change process for systems, organizations, and individuals by using qualitative and quantitative data to plan and assess school programs.

2HH: Studies best practices, relevant research and demographic data to analyze their implications for school improvement.

2KK: Uses technology, telecommunications, and information systems to enrich curriculum and instruction.

### **Expectations**

Students are expected to:

1. Attend class. Because of the nature of activities as described below (i.e. group discussions and critique, in-class simulations, and team projects), there are no appropriate ways for you to make work up missed during an absence.
2. Read and be prepared to discuss and evaluate all materials. You will have approximately 100 pages to read per week. At least half of our class time will often be spent discussing readings. You are expected to understand, but not necessarily agree with the authors' main points. Preparation includes, at

- minimum, having ideas about the following questions:
- What new ideas or ways of thinking do the readings invoke?
  - What are the implications of the reading for teaching & learning, your work or school improvement?
  - What are the limitations, contradictions, or ambiguities of the readings? What is your critique? What are your questions?
2. Participate actively in class activities (both in and out of the classroom).
  3. Complete four discreet parts of National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE) school improvement project framework.
    - Part I : School Profile
    - Part II: Brief Analysis of Current Mission Statement
    - Part III & IV: Desired Results for Student Learning; Analyzing Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness
    - Part V & VI: Action Plan & Implementation of the SIP
  4. From this NSSE SIP Project, write a 10-15 page summary report and an Executive Summary (250-500 words), and prepare for a culminating Poster Presentation.

### **Working Assumptions for the Course**

1. Ideas, not individuals are open to challenge. The nature of this seminar will entail substantial discussion and a diversity of ideas. To ensure that multiple voices are heard, all of us must feel safe to express our ideas. You should feel comfortable voicing your opinions and viewpoints. You should also feel comfortable challenging the ideas and thinking of others (and open to others challenging your ideas). However, that challenge cannot disparage the personhood of others. We are here to learn with, from, and about each other. Creating this safe and interactive space provides a rich, engaging and collective learning opportunity which cannot be experienced through individual learning pursuits.
2. Questions represent an opportunity to learn. It is somewhat ironic that as we progress in our educational journeys, sometimes we are more reluctant to ask questions believed to be “unintelligent.” On the contrary, questions are usually an indication of one’s engagement with the subject matter. Do not self-censor because your questions will likely lead to clearer understanding for us all.
3. Participants assume responsibility for their own learning and success. The oft quoted adage “You reap what you sow” is worth repeating here. As with any graduate course that takes learning seriously, this seminar requires a substantial amount of intellectual work. By fully preparing for class, you will optimize your opportunities to learn in your current role and for your future endeavors as an educational leader. Stated differently, use this experience to pursue your own questions and practice interests. No one course can be all things to all students. The expectation is that you take an active or inquiry approach rather than a passive one in your learning. Thus, it is incumbent upon you to “mine” the course for experiences and knowledge that suits your individual needs and

purposes. I greatly encourage you to develop collaborative relationships with your cohort to further bolster your and their learning opportunities. This assumption also means that you must make your needs known, and sooner than later (I can't help you much at the end of the course!). I am very willing and interested to listen to your ideas and concerns.

**Full Inclusion**

I wish to include fully persons with disabilities in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments to enable you to participate fully. I will try to maintain the confidentiality of the information that you share. Please contact me as early in the course as practicable.

**UIUC Academic Integrity Policy**

Every graduate student is expected to comply with the academic integrity policy of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Every graduate student should obtain a copy of the booklet entitled *Code of Polices and Regulations Applying to All Students*, which sets forth the official regulations governing all student conduct on the Urbana-Champaign campus. The *Code* also clearly stipulates a graduate student's rights in the event he or she is charged with misconduct or some violation of University regulations. Rule 33 ([www.uiuc.edu/admin\\_manual/code/rule\\_33.html](http://www.uiuc.edu/admin_manual/code/rule_33.html)) applies to course-based infractions by both undergraduate and graduate students. More detailed information concerning the operation of the procedures in the *Code of Policies and Regulations Applying to All Students* may be obtained from the Office of Student Conflict Resolution, 300 Student Services Building, 610 East John Street, Champaign, IL 61820, (217) 333-3680.

**Course Grade**

Your grade for this class will be based on the following areas. Rubrics will be provided for written assignments later in the course.

**Class participation**

- Attendance, whole group and small group participation 15
- Learning Team Class Facilitation 10

**Current Philosophy of Student Learning Statement** 5

**School Improvement Project**

- NSSE Part 1 15
- NSSE Part 2 5
- NSSE Part 3&4 15
- NSSE Part 5&6 15
- Summary Report 10
- Executive Summary & Poster Presentation 10

**Total** 100

Assignments turned in late will be lowered one letter grade or 10 percentage points. As we are all busy professionals, you are allowed one absence (this is still not encouraged!) at your professional discretion without penalty. Each absence afterward will result in the lowering of one letter grade.

Course grades are based on the following scores:

100-93 A	87-89 B+	77-79 C+	67-69 D+	< 60 F
92-90 A-	83-86 B	73-76 C	63-66 D	
	82-80 B-	72-70 C-	62-60 D-	

### ***Teaching and Learning Strategies***

Teaching and learning activities in the course have been designed to model successful professional development strategies. These include directed readings, planning of whole group discussion, small group work, individual inquiry and research, collaborative inquiry, lectures, student-directed discussions on readings, student presentations, and in-class simulations and activities.

### **Rubric for Group Facilitation**

	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Excellent
Grounded in Readings	Activities/Discussion are not grounded in the readings.	Activities/Discussion are usually grounded in the readings but may lose focus at times.	Activities/Discussion are grounded in the readings.
Key Ideas	Key ideas are unclear, underdeveloped, or there are too many to grasp.	A few manageable key ideas are developed.	A few manageable key ideas are clear and well developed.
Response to electronic postings	Leaders do not mention postings.	Leaders use postings as an effective tool for discussion.	Leaders integrate postings with discussion in an engaging and stimulating manner.
Engagement	Few students are intellectually engaged.	Most students are intellectually engaged.	All students are intellectually engaged. Opportunities for students to make connections, critique, and synthesize main points to the reading.
Building on Prior Knowledge	Activities/Discussion do not build on prior student knowledge, experiences or course content/context.	Activities/Discussion provide opportunity to build on prior knowledge and experiences and connects key ideas to previous course content.	Activities/Discussion build on prior knowledge and course goals/content, addresses possible misconceptions.
Implications for Leadership	Implications for leadership are unclear.	Implications for leadership are explored.	Insightful implications are explored.

### Common Mistakes to Avoid

- “Activities” without substance
- Trying to cover too much
- Too much activity, not enough attention to readings
- Telling and summarizing for students what they read
- Isolating readings from each other without pulling them together (at some point)
- Thinking critique means being negative
- Having to agree with viewpoints of authors as presented
- Having one student on the facilitation team dominate the session
- Facilitators sitting back and watching group discussions rather than participating

### *Philosophy of Student Learning Statement*

Please note this assignment is due the first class. This assignment should respond to the question: In a complex, diverse, and democratic society, when students graduate from high school, what are the most important things they should understand and be able to do? This statement should be a very concise statement that does NOT exceed 3 pages.

The rationale for this assignment stems from research that suggests 1) effective educational leaders have a broad and clear personal vision of what they want students to learn and 2) school improvement efforts should intentionally link back to desired student learning opportunities and outcomes. Additional, your philosophy of education should guide the personal vision of who you want to be as an educational leader.

I view this assignment as both an opportunity for self-reflection and as a starting point for getting to know you as an educational leader (many of you will have developed a philosophy statement for EOL 540). I hope your philosophy of education will continue to evolve throughout the course and your preparation in educational leadership.

### *NSSE School Improvement Plan (SIP)*

This assignment will be discussed with more detail in class. Examples of past projects will also be available. What is important now is that you purchase and begin to familiarize yourself with the NSSE book which will provide the framework for your SIP. You can see below that the course is structured to help you complete different sections throughout the semester. The SIP is a thorough, rigorous endeavor that cannot be completed in a last minute effort.

In the past, I have experimented with various approaches to this assignment, each of which has its advantages and trade-offs. Although the school improvement process should be a collaborative effort in practice, my experience has taught me collaborative school improvement efforts in classroom contexts have more cons than pros. Unless you can make a strong case for collaboration (e.g., you work in the same school), this semester you will

individually choose a school for your project. I recommend choosing one in which you are currently situated to make this assignment most meaningful. To make the workload realistic, you will *choose one academic student learning area* in need of improvement to develop your SIP.

**Course Calendar: Essential Questions and Assignments**

*Subject to change*

Session	Essential Question(s)	Reading	Assignment Due
<b><i>Introduction</i></b>			
<b>Session 1</b> Jan 18	What do these authors assume to be the larger purposes of education? How might different philosophies influence the thrust of school improvement efforts?	Crow (word file and powerpoint); Shields; Johnson 1; Marzano 1  Recommended: Wilber	1-3 page Philosophy of Student Learning Statement
<b><i>Using data for school improvement</i></b>			
<b>Session 2</b> Jan 25	How can leaders use data for school improvement?	Schmoker - whole book; NSSE 1  Recommended: Halverson - The New Instructional Leadership	(Start thinking about what data you will collect for your SIP)
<b>Session 3</b> Feb 1	How can leaders use data for school improvement?	Johnson Chaps 2-6	(Start thinking about what data you will collect for your SIP)
<b><i>Reflections on identity and school improvement</i></b>			
<b>Session 4</b> Feb 8	How does your identity influence 1) how and why you lead, and 2) for whom you lead? What experiences influence your worldview and identity?	Bennett; Wilber; Lee: 2-6; 7-24; 45-51; 65-66; 77-80; 81-82; 87-90; 93-96; 110; 113;  Recommended: Lee: 36-44	
<b><i>Equitable, quality teaching in school improvement</i></b>			
<b>Session 5</b> Feb 15	What is quality teaching for <i>all</i> students?	Marzano 71-122; Lee 118-124; 126-130; 132-136; 154-169; choose at least 4 articles from Lee 193-337; Wiggins 1; Tomlinson 1&2	(Big reading week!)

		Recommended: Harris Interactive (From Teasing to Torment); Ladson Billings	
<b><i>An overview of vision and school factors that influence student learning</i></b>			
<b>Session 6</b> Feb 22	How is vision tied to all students? How is vision tied to future citizenship in a diverse & democratic society?	McNamara – Basics of Mission & Strategic Planning; NSSE 2; McKenzie; Lee 73-74; review 7-18;	NSSE Part I  Bring in school’s vision, mission statement
<b>Session 7</b> March 1	What other factors influence school improvement?	Marzano: <i>Sections</i> I, III, IV	
<b><i>School improvement, systems thinking, and organizational change</i></b>			
<b>Session 8</b> Mar 8	How do leaders assess instructional and organizational effectiveness?	NSSE III & IV; Johnson 7, 8	NSSE Part II
<b>Session 9</b> Mar 15	How can systems thinking and organizational learning influence school improvement?	Senge (2 sections); Lee 370-5; 380-392 Newmann  Recommended: Argyris; Wiggins 12	
<b><i>March 22 – Spring Break</i></b>			
<b>Session 10</b> Mar 29	How can leaders build organizational and teacher capacity?	Capper Chaps 1-5 Bredeson 4, 5, 6; Halverson – Artifacts and Prof. Community  Recommended: Langer CPS PD Planning Guide Bredeson – P Role in PD	NSSE Parts III & IV
<b>Session 11</b> April 5	How can leaders use educational change for school improvement? How might they evaluate SI?	Fullan Ed Change 2, 3; NSSE V, VI; Johnson 9  Recommended: Johnson 10, 11	
<b>Session 12</b> April 12	How can leaders use educational change for school improvement?	Kegan; Horsely; Fullan - Do and Don’t Assumptions	

<b>Session 13</b> April 19	School Improvement Plan Presentation and Poster Session		In-Class Poster Presentation
<b>No Class</b> April 25			Complete School Improvement Plan (Revised I-IV & V-VII). Executive Summary

### Sources and Recommended Readings

- Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1996). *Organizational learning II: Theory, method, and practice*. New York: Addison-Wesley.
- Bennett, M. J. (2004). Becoming interculturally competent. In J. Wurzel (Ed.), *Toward multiculturalism: A reader in multicultural education* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 62-77). Newton, MA: Intercultural Resource Corporation.
- Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (2001). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience and school* (Expanded ed.). Washington, DC: National Research Council.
- Bredeson, P. (2003). *Designs for learning: A new architecture for professional development in schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Bredeson, P., & Johansson, O. (2000). The school principal's role in teacher professional development. *Journal of Service Education, 26*(2), 385-401.
- Capper, C. A., Frattura, E., & Keyes, M. W. (2000). *Meeting the needs of students of all abilities: How leaders go beyond inclusion*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Chicago Public Schools. (2003, December). *School level professional development planning guide*. Chicago: Office of Public Schools.
- Crow, G. (2005, November). *UCEA Presidential address: Democracy and educational work in an age of complexity*. Paper presented at the University Council for Educational Administration, Nashville, TN.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2005, November). Do and don't assumptions about change. *The Learning Principal, 1*(3), 1, 6-7.
- Halverson, R. (2005, November). *A distributed leadership perspective on how leaders use artifacts to create professional community in schools*. Paper presented at the University Council for Educational Administration, Nashville, TN.
- Halverson, R., Pritchett, R., Grigg, J., & Thomas, C. (2005, September). *The new instructional leadership: Creating data-driven instructional systems in schools* (WCER Working Paper No. 2005-9). Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center for Educational Research.
- Harris Interactive. (2005). *From teasing to torment: School climate in America, a survey of students and teachers*. New York: Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network.
- Horsley, D. L., & Loucks-Horsley, S. (1998). Tornado of change. *Journal of Staff Development, 19*(4), 17-20.
- Johnson, R. S. (2002). *Using data to close the achievement gap: How to measure equity in our schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Kegan, R., & Lahey, L. L. (2001, November). The real reason people won't change. *Harvard Business Review, 84*-92.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice, 34*(3), 159-165.

- Langer, G. M., & Colton, A. B. (2005). Looking at student work: Collaborative analysis of student learning can be the lifeblood of school improvement. *Educational Leadership*, 62(5), 22-26.
- Lee, E., Menkart, D., & Okazawa-Rey, M. (Eds.). (2002). *Beyond heroes and holidays: A practical guide to K-12 anti-racist, multicultural education and staff development* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Washington, D.C.: Teaching for Change.
- Loewen, J. W. (1995). *Lies my teacher told me: Everything your American history textbook got wrong*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- McKenzie, K. B., Suttmiller, E., Christman, D., Hernandez, F., Capper, C., Dantley, M., et al. (2005, November). *Educating leaders for social justice: A design for a comprehensive, social justice leadership preparation program*. Paper presented at the University Council for Educational Administration, Nashville, TN.
- McNamara, C. (1999). Basics of developing mission, vision and values statements. Retrieved December 5, 2005, from [http://www.managementhelp.org/plan\\_dec/str\\_plan/stmnts.htm#anchor519441](http://www.managementhelp.org/plan_dec/str_plan/stmnts.htm#anchor519441)
- Newmann, F. M., Smith, B., Allensworth, E., & Bryk, A. S. (2001, Winter ). Instructional program coherence: What it is and why it should guide school improvement policy. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 23(4), 297-321.
- NSSE. (2002). *School improvement: Focusing on student performance*. Schaumburg, IL: National Study of School Evaluation.
- Scheurich, J. J. (1998). Highly successful and loving, public elementary schools populated mainly by low-ses children of color: Core beliefs and cultural practices. *Urban Education*, 33(4), 451-491.
- Scheurich, J. J., & Skrla, L. (2003). *Leadership for equity and excellence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
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- Senge, P. M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.
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- Shields, C. M. (2004). Dialogic leadership for social justice: Overcoming pathologies of silence. *Education Administration Quarterly*, 40(1), 109-132.
- Tomlinson, C. A., & Allan, S. D. (2000). *Leadership for differentiating schools and classrooms*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design* (Expanded 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Wilber, K. (2000). The amazing spiral. In *A theory of everything: An integral vision for business, politics, science and spirituality* (pp. 1-16). Boston: Shambhala.