

# Solution Tree | Press

## Leading Unstoppable Learning

By Rebecca L. Stinson

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### Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *Leading Unstoppable Learning* by Rebecca L. Stinson. *Leading Unstoppable Learning* shows how education leaders must exercise the four principles of systems thinking—which editors Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey establish in *Unstoppable Learning: Seven Essential Elements to Unleash Student Potential*—and responsive leadership characteristics in order to help foster positive instructional environments.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a healthy school culture.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Leading Learning Planning**

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1. Why is purposeful planning a key aspect of the role of a systems thinking leader? What driving questions should systems thinking leaders consider when they start planning curriculum and communication?
2. How can systems thinking leaders help guide and support teachers in creating official and operational curricula?
3. In what ways can leaders go about reviewing teachers' weekly lesson plans? Which of these techniques most closely represents your current method of lesson plan review? How would you change your current method based on the techniques raised in this chapter?
4. What communication method, or methods, do you use to clearly and regularly connect with staff and faculty members to influence their behavior and keep them informed? How do school groups submit updates or announcements to share them with the whole school?
5. What five driving questions should systems thinking leaders ask themselves when they consider purposeful planning? What knowledge about your planning goals can you take away from your responses to these questions?

## Chapter 2

### Leading Learning Target Launches

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1. How did author Rebecca L. Stinson know from her classroom visits at Claremont Academy that students needed to have more explicit learning targets?
2. What do learning targets encompass and focus on, and why does a teacher's success with students depend on his or her ability to launch learning targets?
3. For what reason should teachers state an overall learning target both before a lesson starts and after the lesson ends?
4. Why is it significant that teachers and leaders make relevance clear for the purposes of teaching and learning? How does *relatedness* relate to *relevance*?
5. Why does Stinson encourage teachers and leaders to start the school year off by expressing their personal stories to students and teachers? How have you gone about relating to students or teachers in this way?

## Chapter 3

### Leading Learning Consolidation

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1. Why does lesson complexity carry great importance when learning consolidation is the aim? What is the goal of learning consolidation?
2. What does *independent learning* mean, and what does it not mean?
3. How does the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework shift the cognitive load?
4. What does *rigorous* mean when it refers to the work or texts with which students engage? Why do teachers need to share rigorous work with students, and how do good systems leaders guarantee rigorous instruction?
5. Describe a practical field experience or arts integration experience that you or a fellow educator provided to students for learning consolidation. What learning outcomes did you seek from that experience, and how was the experience relevant or related to students?

## **Chapter 4**

### **Leading Learning Assessment**

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1. How did Stinson know her school's system of learning assessment wasn't working as it should? Which of these characteristics, if any, come up in your learning assessment system?
2. Why is it important to create a balanced assessment plan during unit planning, and what should this plan incorporate? What kinds of assessment practices are included in a balanced assessment, and when do these practices occur during a unit of instruction?
3. What new thoughts about grading practices do school leaders need to convey to teachers?
4. Based on the examples of actionable student feedback that replace traditional feedback, create a few of your own examples of actionable feedback based on real examples of traditional feedback you have seen teachers give to students.
5. Consider the ways in which teachers can replace traditional parent feedback with actionable feedback listed in table 4.3 (page 45). Which of these changes do you think will reap the most positive results for your school, and why is this the case?

## **Chapter 5**

### **Leading Learning Adaptation**

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1. What driving questions should leaders ask as they guide learning adaptation?
2. Why is looking at data-based trends important, and what makes data-based trend analysis key to high-performing schools?
3. What three questions should school leaders ask teachers and themselves to comprehend how to meet students' learning needs?
4. How can a systems thinking leader support the peer observation process? What two perspectives can leaders take while considering teacher reflections if they support peer observation?
5. Consider the sample student goal form found in figure 5.4 (page 55). What key points do student goal forms require, and how would you alter this sample goal form to meet your needs?

## **Chapter 6**

### **Leading Learning Management**

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1. Consider the leadership actions this chapter suggests that help maintain a culture of learning. Which of these actions do you take to engage staff and students in creating a productive schoolwide climate?
2. What shared vision and understandings has your faculty established for your school?
3. List a few student behaviors that should be managed in the classroom and some that should be managed in the school office.
4. How do you or teachers or leaders in your school apply systems thinking to students' social and emotional learning? What do you do to recognize students for good behavior, and how could your school improve how it acknowledges positive behavior or empowers students to monitor their own behavior?
5. Why should a school leader take time to be present in classrooms? Describe a situation in which you experienced the benefits of interacting with students in the classroom.