

Statement of Intent – EdD applicants

This statement should be in letter format, no more than about 500 words and highlight the following:

- 1. your formal and informal training in educational leadership and other related academic and professional skills**
- 2. an area of interest(s) that you would like to pursue as a problem of practice on which you would formulate an organizational improvement plan (see below for additional information)**
- 3. some contexts of your organization and any past experience with organizational/improvement planning**
- 4. if you have a “leadership philosophy statement,” then condensing it to include in your application would show what attitudes, dispositions, and values drive your leadership**
- 5. ‘goodness of fit’ through examples and evidence, rather than simply describing personal passions**

Problem of Practice: The following provides important information to you in applying to Western’s EdD program in Educational Leadership. Use the points below to craft a *Problem of Practice area of interest* (a paragraph in length) in your Letter of Intent as required in the application. (*n.b.* - Please note that Letter of Intent provides the admissions’ committee with important information about your readiness for the program, but it is understood that as you learn and grow through the program, your Problem of Practice may change significantly.)

Problem of Practice (PoP)

A problem of practice is defined as: “a persistent, contextualized, and specific issue embedded in the work of a professional practitioner, the addressing of which has the potential to result in improved understanding, experience and outcomes.” (<http://www.cpedinitiative.org/page/AboutUs>)

Some criteria you must consider. The PoP is:

- Connected to leadership
- Familiar to you
- Issue-based
- Connected to the workplace
- Practical and observable
- Designed to solve a problem that closes a perceived gap between current and future state

More criteria

The PoP will ultimately be framed using your comprehension and ability to apply theory and relevant literature (organizational; leadership; educational leadership) that you gain through coursework. At this point, however, it must be

- Manageable to address
- Actionable (a plan that can be implemented, and measured)
- Reasonable given your position in the organization.

Applicability

- Needs to be applicable to more than a few people (a team, a department, an entire organization)
- POP does not have one answer or solution; rather, it is something that you research and consider over the program
- Identified through practice, dialogue, and examining qualitative and quantitative research
- Underpinned by strong desire for organizational change

SOME Guiding questions

- What is happening here?
- What do we know about this issue?
- Who argues that things need to stay the same?
- What purposes are being served?
- Whose vision is guiding this issue?
- Whose interests/needs are being met? Whose are not?

- Whose voices are being silenced? How do we know?

Key Readings

Archbald, D. (2008). Research versus problem solving for the education leadership doctoral thesis: Implications for form and function. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(5), 704–739.

Belzer, A., & Ryan, S. (2013). Defining the problem of practice dissertation: Where's the practice, what's the problem. *Planning & Changing*, 44.

Dirkx, J. M. (2006). Studying the complicated matter of what works: Evidence-based research and the problem of practice. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 56(4), 273-90.

Dunlop, S. *Problems of practice*. Retrieved February 28, 2014. <http://suedunlop.ca/tag/problem-of-practice/>