

**FACT**

Systems thinking is only for the business world.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems thinking is evident in all organizations, including schools.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

People use systems thinking every day, they just haven't applied a term to it.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems thinking is too complex to understand.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems thinking is only about changing large systems.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

The principles of changing systems apply to all systems, regardless of scale. Whether big or small, understanding how your systems behave—and why—can help you improve them.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems thinking has a fixed destination.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems are dynamic. The various parts are continually changing and interacting, impacting the whole system in the process. Given this dynamic nature, the original “endpoint” will likely change by the time you get there.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems thinking is just another term for goal setting.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Goals can be isolated, one-time events. Systems thinking requires everyone to think about how all parts of a system are related and affect each other.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems thinking occurs strictly at the district level.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems thinking can be a powerful classroom tool, giving students a participatory role in the learning process.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

At the school level, you have no control over initiatives and implementation, so systems thinking won't help you.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems thinking empowers education leaders to align school initiatives, improve instruction, increase efficiency, eliminate waste, and strengthen student outcomes.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Once a plan is in place, it cannot be changed.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Plans should be changed to accommodate mistakes and respond to periodic reviews of progress and outcomes.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Once established, systems essentially run themselves.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems require ongoing collaboration in order to be effective. Cooperation and communication are essential to success.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Goals will emerge naturally when systems theory is in place.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems thinking is not magical. People still must intentionally set goals, analyze progress, and take the action steps necessary to achieve the established goals.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems theory will change the culture of your organization.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

A theory alone does not change the culture. Organizational culture is impacted by the people and their roles, values, beliefs, attitudes, and actions.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Mistakes are personal failures in organizations.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Mistakes are part of life, for everyone. You can learn from mistakes when you identify and correct them. Organizations and individuals should acknowledge mistakes and embrace the learning.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems change comes with an agenda.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems change is an approach, and as such has no preconceived agenda.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems change requires talking about systems with a mastery of specific jargon.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

People have achieved systems change without ever mentioning those words.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems need changing only when they do not work.

**MYTH**

**FACT**

Systems are typically working for someone. They didn't develop in a specific way accidentally. Understanding who the system is and is not working for is critical. This helps analyze where the power lies in the system, why it was designed a particular way, and how it needs to be redesigned to better serve everyone.

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