

# Theory of Impact

IEE curricular, professional development, and assessment resources are based on theory and research indicating that the development of essential competencies of excellence and ethics<sup>1</sup> occurs through an intentional organizational culture<sup>2</sup>, which is facilitated by explicit standards, strategies, and tools,<sup>3</sup> that shape consistent individual and organizational habits through the use of 4 KEY Strategies: Self-Study, Other-Study, Performance/Simulation, and Support & Challenge.<sup>4</sup>

**1 Identify and develop essential competencies of excellence and ethics.** Competencies are skills representing a blend of awareness, reasoning, judgment, and behavior. For positive behavior to take place, one must recognize the need for specific positive action, process the contextual requirements, reason about what action to take, and finally take action. Only when skills for each of these processes are fully developed and become automatic, cognition and action become intertwined and an individual consistently engages in positive behavior.

IEE framework features four broad areas of essential competencies contributing to—or detracting from (when missing or underdeveloped)—individual and organizational success. These essential competencies have been identified by IEE in its field research as most frequently requiring attention. They are at the core of our holistic approach while allowing the flexibility to target the most essential competencies for a particular setting or group of individuals.

**2 Establish an organizational culture characterized by intentional and pervasive norms, rituals, procedures, and habits.** Strong cultural norms shape individual competencies: our individual habits are shaped by the standards which we practice and upon which we are held to account as members of various social groups. When norms are not intentionally defined, explicitly taught, and deliberately practiced, informal norms emerge that result in a counter-culture — beliefs and behaviors that are in opposition to or conflict with the mission and vision of the organization. Therefore, intentional organizational culture is essential for consistent and pervasive habits to support its mission and vision.

To have an impact, the culture of an organization needs to be direct and intentional, which is achieved through common norms, beliefs, and standards for behavior, also known as a “shared way”. An intentional culture is one where the standards and expectations are clearly defined, explicitly taught, deliberately practiced, and regularly assessed.

**3 Facilitate intentional culture and develop essential competencies through explicit implementation standards, consistent expectations, and memorable models for behavior.** Explicit standards and consistent expectations are achieved through research-based “tools” developed by IEE. Tools represent standard procedures or checklists that guide implementation, thereby ensuring a consistent standard of output.

Concrete, memorable, and action-oriented tools become models to guide behavior. Consistent and pervasive use of the tools over time is required in order for them to become operational cultural norms, and for those operating in that culture to develop the targeted competencies.

**4** Develop consistent individual and organizational habits through the flexible and strategic use of 4 KEY strategies: **Self-Study, Other-Study, Performance/Simulation, and Support & Challenge**. The IEE approach has identified four essential teaching practices that produce powerful and sustainable growth and development in individuals and organizations. We call them “keys” because they “unlock” transformational insight and learning experiences when used in strategic combination.

The flexible use of these 4 KEY strategies ensures adoption by allowing the intervention to adapt and change to fit the needs of the individual and the context. Enduring change in the organizational culture and individual competencies is achieved through consistency and pervasiveness of leadership and practice.

### ***Excellence & Ethics™ Tools***

## **4 KEYS**

### ***Research-Based Master Strategies***



#### **Self-Study:**

Self-reflection to identify strengths and areas for improvement, to examine beliefs and experiences, to set goals, monitor progress, and revise as needed.



#### **Other-Study:**

The study of people, products, and performances to identify positive and productive behaviors, practices, and habits to emulate — and negative or ineffective examples to avoid.



#### **Support & Challenge:**

Intentional efforts to establish safety and trust, to set shared norms, to enhance personal and collective responsibility, and to provide encouragement, expertise, and accountability.



#### **Performance/Simulation:**

Opportunities to enhance confidence and expertise by engaging in or simulating real life experiences through deliberate practice, experiential learning and authentic assessment.

Adapted from Lickona & Davidson (2005).