

COASTAL SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL

Developing A Leadership Pipeline in School Districts

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September 27, 2006

- I. Dr. Sanaghan began by
 - A. Worked with an amazing leader in Philadelphia – one who was able to move his organization two or three levels up. And then moved to another organization, but was “eaten alive” in about 6 months.
 1. Question: how is it possible to be “a player” here and a “loser” there?
 2. When new leaders come into a system, they fail primarily because of cultural mismatch.
 - a. Question: how to make sure there is a cultural match between new leader and the existing culture.
 3. We know that we can expect a great many leadership retirements in the coming years.
 - B. Today:
 1. Workshop setting to create a broad database for work. Every activity will have a product, and the database itself will become useful for the remainder of the year.
 2. Rule of 4: In a group of 40, about 4 people will do the most talking (not necessarily the most intelligent or best informed). Job of facilitator is to make sure others have opportunities to talk and contribute.
- II. Future timeline:
 - A. What are the events, trends or issues that could impact/influence public education in *New Jersey* over the next decade?
 1. Put down 1 event, trend, issue per “post it” note.
 2. Legibility is helpful.
 3. Put “post its” in the year you believe it will occur.
 4. If something is going to last for a while, please note that....

5. If you come up to the wall and see something similar to your post-it, please check it off after yours. We want to capture the data, and avoid redundancy.
- B. Top three or four:
1. Funding
 2. Retirement of baby boomers in leadership positions.
 3. Use of technology – interactive curriculum design for a global world
 4. Political influence results in change
 5. Administrative restructure and consolidations are imposed by state
 6. NCLB (funding, accountability and vouchers)
 7. Demographic trends and immigration
 8. Virtual superintendent – challenges of leading on-line schools and educational programs
 9. Special education – funding of high costs.
 10. Security – imposed, funding for it.
 11. Technology will be based on how kids can learn, will enable differentiation of instruction based on brain research
 12. Rising costs of health care; stuck with it, can't control it and will exacerbate have/have not issues.
- C. Surprises:
1. Lack of “global” perspective. Yet, things could “blow up” (like an Armageddon) and what do we do then?
 2. National curriculum.
 3. Lack of discussion of curriculum and instruction
 4. NCLB will be a memory, but accountability will be an ongoing reality.
 5. Education in space.
 6. Elections will have leadership impact.
- D. Top 5 skills or characteristics:
E.g., when talk with university presidents, they said that university presidents have to be “cultural travelers” – be able to walk into diverse aspects of the organization and relate to people from different backgrounds, with different goals, etc.
1. Communicator (effective)
 - a. Clear, inspirational, good listener.
 2. Resourcefulness
 3. Instructional leadership
 4. Cultural understanding
 5. Perspective – know what's truly important and focus there
 6. Be decisive
 7. Problem solving skills
 8. Passionate
 9. Manage and navigate change – make sure on course
 10. Integrity
 11. Knowledgeable
 12. Common sense
 13. Political astuteness
- E. Building the model for a leadership profile:
1. Self-managed group work on one of five key questions:

- a. How do you **identify** talented people who have the potential to be principals? Where do you look? What do they look like?
 - b. What kinds of **learning experiences** do potential principals/new principals need in order to prepare them for the complexity of the principalship?
 - c. What kind of **support** will new principals need in order to deal effectively with the challenges, stress and complexity of their new role?
 - 1) For example, in work with college and university presidents they talk about needing two things: a learning network and a support network.
 - d. What is some critical/essential **advice** for aspiring/new principals that will help them in their leadership role?
 - 1) For example, when Pat was starting, a famous national consultant gave Pat two pieces of advice:
 - (a) “Make waiting your friend.” This includes using waiting time effectively.
 - (b) “Make sure you are working for your aspirations not your appetites.”
 - e. What does a **typical day** look like? What are the pluses and minuses of the job? What are the complexities and challenges?
- F. Essential advice:
1. Be patient – it is a process and takes time to learn processes in the school and the process of being an administrator.
 2. Focus on detail – do it thoroughly, be prepared for all presentations.
 3. Be proactive, not reactive... envision pitfalls and prepare.
 - a. Don't always have to react immediately. Can take time to network within school, within district, to think things through.
 4. Be sincere. in how you deal with people, speak with not at them.
 5. Own up to mistakes. Most people know you made a mistake, so denying it loses credibility. Owning up to it.
 6. Also look at the big picture. It's not just the particular problem, but how it fits into the big picture.
 7. Nobody died... decisions can be changed, practices can be modified. Don't be too serious.
 8. All decisions should come back to the student and student needs.
 9. Be reflective and learn from experience – build in time for reflection each day.
 - a. Some people keep a journal and then look back at it.
 - b. The habit of taking time every day (even 10-15 minutes)
- G. Support:
1. Very important for central office and superintendent to support new principals to be risk takers – take risks that are thoughtful, well prepared, risks.
 2. Central office must be there for superintendent to talk things through. To help them reflect.
 3. Get them a mentor – either in the district or outside the district. Perhaps someone from search team who supported.
 4. Professional development – help them see larger picture.
 5. Central office must be visible with the principal in the building.
 6. Orientation to the culture of the school and district – getting to know key people, etc.

7. Help them balance the professional and personal life.
- H. Learning experience:
1. Provide leadership opportunities for them – on committees, budget development, back to school night, attend workshops going to board meetings, etc.
 2. Send them to training on leadership models and have them report back what they learned.
 3. Mentoring and shadowing with experienced leader – and focus on instructional issues, instructional design, etc.
 4. Share resources that come our way.
 5. Delegate meaningful tasks to them and hold them accountable to high standards.
 6. Share the importance of networking (formal, informal) – and provide opportunities to do it.
 7. Interpret the data with them.
 8. Opportunities to communicate with different stakeholders and give them feedback.
 9. Talk with them about their aspirations.
 10. Share you experiences with them.
- I. How to identify talent – both inside the district and selecting the finalists in a search:
1. Individuals willing to take risks.
 2. Have instructional excellence.
 3. Have passion.
 4. Can operate within your culture – to navigate current culture to lead change/improvement.
 5. Communicator/effective interpersonal skills
 6. Take ownership
 7. Constructive dialogue – question status quo with superior and others.
 8. Talented person who has love for and connection with students.
 9. High energy with integrity.
 10. Match the talent to the position – make sure it is a good fit.
- J. Typical day:
1. Monday: Friday
 Recap weekend ←key personnel→ Anticipate the weekend
 2. Staffing levels
 3. Transportation issues
 4. Students transitioning to their day – ready to learn
 5. Principal’s morning announcement – return phone calls, emails.
 6. Admin/staff meetings responding to district/building level/
 7. Parent contact community issues
 8. Firefighting (putting out fires)
 9. Evaluation – formative/summative
 10. Curriculum/instructional meetings
 Technology troubleshooting
 11. Attend sporting events/activities
 12. Formulate tentative plan for tomorrow
 13. Kid fix
 14. Meetings – night/interschool
- Complexities/challenges

Communication with all cultures (stakeholders)
Moving vision into action
Managing people – staff, students, board of education, superintendent custodial
Time management

Minus: Separate personal and professional lives
Time commitment
Irrational demands from outside sources

Plus: It's all good when you feel the passion

Plan for tomorrow: research shows that principals that hit the wall are not very planful.

K. What resonates

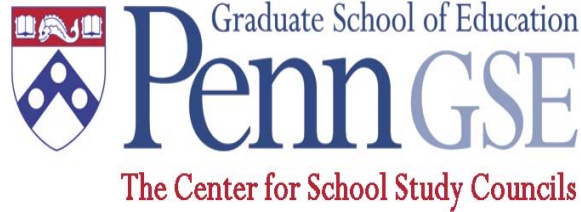
1. Takes a special person
2. Complexity
3. You have to want it for the right reason
4. Staying kid focused
5. Collaboration
6. Authentic interpersonal intelligence

III. What is something you are currently doing that is building the pipeline and what is one thing we need to do to prepare my school district for this future?

A. What do you currently do?

1. In small district, use discretionary grants, give teachers opportunity to get supervisory experience before and after school.
2. We have teachers and administrators interacting with advisory boards so they can see what's out there.... Who is interested and who has potential.
3. Encourage our staff to be in a program to get certificated for administration or in program, and I give them something to be in charge of.
4. Change in philosophy to use assistant principals as instructional leaders, so they see themselves in new roles.
5. Using communication to help teaches meet needs.
6. Encourage teachers to take courses and ask them to use their prep time for administrative purposes.
7. Sit with teachers who are potential administrators to help them see the broader district vision.
8. Meet with people who are in administrative preparation programs to provide them with administrative work.
9. Mentor those in programs.
10. Create experiences for teachers and administrators to be curriculum and instructional leaders (working with teachers on curriculum mapping)... and involve them
11. Have teachers who are in masters programs in leadership and have formal leadership internships... work with them and teachers not yet in programs to help them see the potential.
12. We are growing our own – give staff shared decision-making opportunities and support for success and failure. We are so big we have many people in programs and our challenge is to match the internal skill set and perspective with the right position.

13. All administrators must get to MS plus 30, taking a course every year or don't get increase. This encourages them to look for administrative positions – and I work to help them get jobs outside of district if don't get one inside.
- IV. We know “you cannot rise above your leadership” – if principal is good you have a shot at being a great school.
 - V. What we know about leadership, at the end of the day:
 - A. Leaders produce results – how they do it defines the quality of the institution.
 - B. They act with integrity.
 - C. They treat people with care.
 - D. They know other folks in the district who have talent and bring them and their talents/expertise into play.



COASTAL SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL

Succession Planning: A Framework for Insuring the Next Generation of Leaders for Your District

Dr. Laurence Kahn
November 15, 2006

- I. One of most important messages from prior meetings is that it is necessary to develop a talent pool to have real succession planning.
 - A. Today:
 1. What is it—to develop a shared understanding?
 2. Why do it at all?
 3. Why is it difficult to do?
 4. How succession planning is part of a whole system.
 5. Go through a succession planning process and the kinds of conversations and kinds of forms we need to make that process work.
- II. What is “succession planning?”
 - A. Three questions:
 1. Build a working definition of succession planning by completing the following sentence: “Succession planning is....”
 - a. Preparing to lead the organization with personnel that will carry forth the mission of the school district.
 - b. Active process for involving stakeholders in identifying and implementing the criteria and competencies ... mission, objectives, vision, etc.
 - c. To identify employees with leadership skills and develop a mentoring system to support their move into formal leadership.
 - d. Most often refers to identifying leadership skills and making sure they continue in the organization in the future.
 2. Why would we even consider doing it? What’s in it for us?
 - a. Continuity of program and of leadership. Things happen and leaders leave and this enables the organization to move forward. This enables you to identify

appropriate people within the organization that can take you forward and identify the voids you have so you know where to look outside.

- i. Succession planning often involves looking outside the organization for leaders you anticipate needing tomorrow.
 - ii. Also a cultural issue. When you are in a leadership position, you are looking for people to mentor, and this establishes a culture so that mentoring people gets built into the work of leadership. Modeling this kind of professional development for the organization.
 - iii. It's a professional responsibility we have.
 - iv. Continuing the values.
- b. Need for consistency in the organization, people with connections within the school system and how others see the connections, and for succession of leadership so that when you promote people the mission and programs of the district can remain the same. This can stop the constant movement to something new; to keep the organizational future consistent.
 - c. Consistency of values and mission. We add the idea that leaders *care* about the district and the program. To insure a legacy for the district.
 - d. It helps, when you make decisions in the organization, that people know and trust you. The culture and climate of the organization build expectations. When planning for succession you also need to plan ways to bring in new and different ideas, not just continuity.
3. Why is it so difficult? What gets in the way?
- a. Fluid nature of boards of education.
 - i. In NJ, 100 interim superintendents and average tenure is 2.3 years.
 - ii. In some districts, board is looking for "change" of some kind. This change direction view presents an obstacle for succession planning.
 - b. When you develop someone to take the role within the district, that also makes them valuable elsewhere and they may leave.
 - c. Employee reluctance due to economic and time factors:
 - i. Recent teacher contracts reduce the economic incentive for teachers near top of pay scale to move to an administrative position. The pay scale is not that much greater.
 - ii. Administrative work takes more time with fewer additional rewards. Also, move from 10 to 12 month contract.
 - d. Good people from within see the nature of the principalship and the demands on them and say "No thank you!" Often people with good administrative potential opt out, but stay in informal leadership roles.
 - e. Even if all agree to this concept, the person can lose control at the top. Some superintendents may view the person being trained to succeed them as a threat to their job.
 - f. We need to identify not individuals but groups of individuals to mentor to fill positions that come open. Don't know who will be ready or willing and when.
4. Succession planning is more of an issue now than 5 years ago. Why?
- a. Superintendents no longer have tenure.
 - b. People are leaving the profession.

- i. 13 of the superintendents in the 24 operating district are planning to leave in the next 5 years.
 - c. Finding it difficult to find good people to fill positions we have open... Can have 25 applicants and not find the kind of person we are looking for.
- III. A system for succession planning –
 - A. It is essentially a forward thinking planning process.
 - B. You can adapt whatever planning system you now use (e.g., for curriculum, etc.), for succession planning.
 - C. The Management development cycle.
 - 1. Major aspects:
 - a. Selection process
 - i. Need the right person in the right place at the right time.
 - It is often impossible to get the best person – they are someplace else and don't want to leave.
 - ii. Often a function of doing a gap analysis – what do we have and what do we need and how can we get what we need. Using what we need as part of the selection process.
 - This can include when hiring teachers thinking about whether we want someone who can move up in the organization or will stay in the teacher ranks?
 - b. Performance appraisal process – are they doing what you want them to do?
 - i. Once we have them on board, it is crucial that we evaluate their performance – are they doing the job. Two kinds of evaluation:
 - Supervisor giving continuous feedback – where supervisor tells person they are doing a good job and keep doing it or where they need to improve.
 - Formal, on-the-books evaluation process based on written objectives.... Here's how you did and here's what you need to move forward on.
 - Question re: how long industry gives employees who are not performing up to par before we get rid of them?
 - Industry gives less than a year.
 - Most school districts give two years, don't give the third year.
 - Some can do it after one year, if it is really blatant.
 - We all do a good job of not giving tenure to bad teachers, but we are not so good with mediocre teachers (particularly in difficult to fill positions).
 - This sets a standard for all teachers who see that mediocre can be good enough.
 - c. Training so they get better as they work with. This can include other development activities.
 - i. Training is typically fragmented, not sequentially developed. And not developed around a focused direction.
 - ii. We need to do a serious training-needs analysis – what do administrators need to know and be able to do – and develop training system around that.
 - d. Other development activities:

- i. People need to know how things are done – how decisions are made, how committees work, how board works, etc.
 - ii. These development activities are remarkably strong in helping know how things work and how to make things better. This prepares people for the job
- 2. Other aspects:
 - a. Personal development plan – based on person’s self-identified needs or interests. Can also be based on a career path and developing the knowledge, skills and dispositions for the next steps.
 - i. Person builds this plan with his/her supervisor.
 - b. Succession plan.
 - i. In some corporations, succession plans look like a replacement chart. For every position, there is the name of a person who will take that role when the current person leaves.
 - Problem is these replacement charts don’t work.
 - ii. Better to have a pool of talent – a group of people we are bringing along for movement up the organization.
 - This requires identifying people who can fit into that pool. The pool can include people who are going through some training...
 - We need to monitor their development to make sure they are developing the skills, attitudes and knowledge we want them to develop to move up.
 - People in this pool may gravitate to other positions than the one you initially had in mind – e.g., people you are grooming to be principal who don’t want to be principal, but want curriculum leadership role, or some other leadership role.
 - Key is to identify the leadership needs we have and which are and are not being met.
 - iii. NJ requires districts to watch “administrative costs” and some districts have created additional roles (non-administrative roles) to do some of the informal pedagogical and curricular roles.
 - These can become the foundation for people to take next role.
 - c. It takes time to put all of these building blocks (selection, performance appraisal, training, other development activities, personal development plan and succession plan) in place.
 - i. This plan outline is a cycle, or series of cycles.
- 3. Discussion:
 - a. Hiring a teacher is a million dollar investment. When you have a person who is mediocre, do you want to invest that million by giving them tenure?
 - b. What some of us are doing now.
 - i. As educators, we tend to be “nurturers” and sometimes let the business side suffer.
 - We do, however, do careful selection and have professional development plans in place.
 - But not sure we do it early enough.
 - We are doing a much better job in education than 20 years ago for professional development. The NJ mentoring plan can be very powerful.

- But it is very difficult to anticipate our leadership needs for the future and then look to hire people we think might fill that in the future.
 - Recall the challenges we noted earlier – that someone we are grooming may wind up elsewhere before we need them. Internal openings don't happen quickly enough and we need a way to groom and retain people.
 - The tension between paying competitive salaries and state-level administrative cost reviews (and limits).
 - This may make it difficult for districts to do cross-district collaboration.
 - Corporate world has development plans that involve working in different parts of the organization – sharing jobs in central office.
 - Districts did some job sharing around child-study teams.
 - Could do some common in-service days for administrators on curricular and supervisory issues.
 - You can “regionalize” the succession planning. But there are trust and other issues we must overcome.
 - And can find other ways to collaborate.

IV. Developing a succession planning process: conversations, “forms,” etc. These “forms” are not meant to be formal protocols, but refer to the kinds of things on which you need to focus in the process.

A. Personal profiles plans.

1. Completed every 2 years.
2. Personal profile completed by the individual
 - a. Background.
 - b. Training they have done or will do.
 - c. And perhaps career objectives.
3. Can be the foundation of conversations about their development and progress.

B. Development plan:

1. What kind of development has taken place since last we met?
2. Where do you want to go from here?
3. Strengths and weaknesses?
4. What kinds of activities and exposures will help there?
5. Typically completed by supervisor, but should involve the supervisee in developing their own plan as the basis for the discussion.
6. Then supervisor and supervisee discuss all of this together.
7. Superintendents should do this for themselves and do it with the board.

C. Review of the most recent year's plan.

1. Done by top three or four people in the organization.
2. What does the organization look like? How is it staffed?
3. What are our needs for the coming years? Which will we focus on most? How will we accomplish this?

D. Current organization structure, staffing and replacement candidates

1. What is our organizational structure? How does that structure fit with our needs?

2. Who might fit into positions that might open in the next few years? Are they ready for promotion now? If not, what do they need to learn and do in order to become ready?
 3. If you have a replacement chart, make sure the candidate is immediately promotable (or within the next 12 months).
- E. Future organization structure and staffing
1. Take a fresh look at how you are currently structured (k-5, 6-8, 9-12) and ask if that is best for what you are trying to accomplish.
- F. Identification of lower-level, high potential educators and development action plans.
1. If you ask principals who are the rising stars for different kinds of position, they will likely identify X number of people for different roles.
 2. What kinds of people are we likely to need?
- G. These five “forms” are meant to be issues to grapple with. Use them to start discussion.
- V. Barriers to this kind of planning:
- A. Often find people who would seem to fit a position you need, but may not have the right certification at the time we need them.
1. Getting them certified prior to the time we need them is the reason we need to think X years ahead, to make sure we have the right people certified.
 2. We would hope that a person with those aspirations would get the right certification ahead of time.
 3. Superintendents can, at times, go to a person and suggest they seek specific certifications to fit anticipated district needs.
- B. Rules keep changing.
- C. These barriers may make it more difficult to cultivate new leaders, but don’t prevent us.
1. Wading through these obstacles are part of the succession planning process – e.g., to sit down with a person ahead of time and help them identify what they need and to take the steps they need for the kind of future they want.
 2. One issue is that the responsibility for succession planning is not just the requirement of the district, but requires the staff take responsibility to get where they want to be.



COASTAL SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL

Public Education's Critical Role In a Globalized Economy

Dr. Thomas Rogers, Executive Director
New York Council of School Superintendents
January 17, 2007

- I. Some background on Tom's Perspective:
 - A. Undergraduate degree in biochemistry but got job working for state legislature and got assigned to education because he was one of the only people who knew how to work a spreadsheet.
 - B. Beginnings of my career are the genesis of my career.
 1. I have gone from the world of hard science to the world of public policy and now into public service.
 2. My career has changed three times....
 - a. If wanted to go to medical school now, I would probably have to go back to college, to renew my knowledge.
 - b. Illiterates of the 21st century will be those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.
 - i. They will be trapped into a single path.
 - ii. Cycle time in careers is under 10 years – means over 40 years can expect to change careers 3-5 times.
 - iii. Profound implications for public education
 - iv. The skills we help students develop are the skills they will have as a foundation as they move into this career cycle.
 3. Tom Freedman's book can frame this conversation for us:
 - a. Why would any employer anywhere in the world pay American's to work for them when they can find others in other countries equally educated who will work for much less?
 - i. Now, the cost of health care for auto workers is greater than the cost of the steel in the car.
 - b. Cost of shipping – of goods and information – has become so rapid (any product anywhere in the world in less than 48 hours) and so inexpensive as a percentage of the cost of the product.
 - i. Don't need site manufacturing near the raw materials.
 - ii. Can manufacture the parts anywhere in the world, wherever it is cheapest.
 - iii. More skill may be required in putting the pieces together.

- c. Information is becoming transnational as well.
 - i. Not just “support by phone” but conceptual work as well.
 - ii. Engineers in China will work for 10% of US wage; in (India, for 1/6 of US wage).
- 4. As we see outsourcing –info, manufacturing, engineering work – we are not producing enough skilled workers in the US.
 - a. By 2020 we will have a shortfall of 14 million workers in US.
 - b. Finding that NY State has 71% high school completion rate in five years.
- 5. Most growth in new jobs in US will be in skilled labor, which means proportion of jobs in economy will drop.
 - a. There is turbulence in the job market – that will reach equilibrium.
 - b. There is an incredible amount of shifting of job locations.
 - i. Proportion of jobs that can be filled with people with low skills is dropping from current 30% to 9%.
 - ii. So if our high school graduation rates don’t go up to match that, we will have three unskilled students for each unskilled job. And will have a lot of skilled jobs that are unfilled. This will only fuel the needed outsourcing.
 - c. This suggests there can be as much as a 40% drop in the standard of living because:
 - i. 14 million unfilled skilled jobs.
 - ii. Only 1 in 3 without high school diploma can get a job.
 - iii. It has been argued that this is the most daunting national security challenge facing the country.
 - d. Need to have a graduation rate of 90% by 2020 to meet the skilled job needs of this country.
 - i. Challenge is to raise the graduation rate while keeping or improving the quality of that education.
 - e. But even if we could do this, we are competing against an international labor pool. Why would they hire here?
 - i. They enjoy living here because of our standard of living.
 - Business siting decisions are made by those at the top. Executives care about where they live.
 - ii. Freedman argues that in economics, we can have a win-win situation. Once one economy does well, the global economy tends to do so as well. Even though it seems competitive, we are still the largest economy on the planet and others benchmark themselves against them.
 - One implication is that other countries that have invested hugely in the US have an interest in seeing US grow.
 - f. What are the impediments to increasing the graduation rates?
 - i. Poverty:
 - Most districts have more kids in poverty today than 10 years ago.
 - US is now 25th of 26th of industrialized countries in number of kids in poverty – more that 1/5th of youth in poverty.
 - Poverty carries with it a variety of issues: health, nutrition, welfare, readiness to learn, etc.

- Countries above us in TIMSS and other international comparisons have much lower poverty rates and invest more of their GDP in education.
 - Kids in poverty have 1/3 the vocabulary at age 3 than those not in poverty.
 - Summer set-back for kids in poverty is much more pronounced than for kids not in poverty.
- ii. Structure:
- Agrarian calendar, Prussian grading system, industrial organizational model, etc.
 - Parents often are the staunchest opponents against changes in structure.
 - Structure creates problems in how we fund schools, how we organize learning, etc.
 - This structure may be inappropriate to the product we are working to create.
 - E.g., NY Regents Exams are given at a specific time. Why not let kids who are advanced take it earlier and use the rest of the time in college courses, or advanced learning projects.
- iii. Curriculum:
- Largely a memorization and computation curriculum (which is what is tested by NAPE).
 - But these kinds of curriculum do not get you the higher order thinking skills that will get you the wage premium for a better standard of living.
 - We need high levels of literacy and numeracy – and people with higher order thinking skills, problem solving skills, aesthetic sensibility.
- iv. Indeed, creativity, problem solving, aesthetics are where the wage premium will come from. That is part of our cultural heritage, and not part of the culture of some other countries that have traditionally valued conformity and honoring parents and tradition (e.g. China and Japan).
6. Schools can't do this alone... they need a public policy partner.
- a. Testing vendors need to create assessment tools that go beyond memorization and computation. We need tests that measure what matters, not what's easy to measure.
- i. E.g., writing test ignores the writing process that we know people go through (and that we teach).
 - ii. Heavy reliance on summative testing, but disdain for formative testing – that is better for informing instruction and better for assessing higher order thinking skills.
- b. Paradox:
- i. We are trying to measure achievement (and get achievement levels) and that's what districts are judged on.
 - ii. That leads districts to support curriculum that supports what's tested, and music and drama and art can suffer because we don't test it.
- C. Some history of educational reform:
1. First major reform movement in past 30 years: A Nation at Risk report.
- a. Root cause analysis in the report was that schools didn't work hard enough.

- b. Real root cause analysis:
 - i. Serving more kids in poverty than ever before.
 - ii. Our national efforts to provide access to broader range of children (minorities and kids with variety of disabilities) had become successful.
 - 2. Second: Standards movement.
 - a. Root cause analysis: Have uneven teacher quality, uneven resources and uneven commitment to kids.
 - b. But theory of action (raise standards, assess against standards and report performance and punish those who under perform) was faulty.
 - c. Result: those places where the root cause analysis was accurate began to perform better, but the root cause analysis does not apply everywhere.
 - d. Problem is that we have narrowed the curriculum (to the test) and it is inadequate to the economy many of those students will move into.
- D. Discussion:
1. How do you influence the state which sets core curriculum which then drives the tests?
 - a. May require revisiting content standards to focus on depth, not breadth.
 - b. Content standards that can allow emphasis on higher order thinking skills....
 2. Must also work with mindset of school board members and community members.
 - a. Community still wants people to memorize states and capitals of states and more, when it may be more important for students to know where to find the information when they need it.
 - b. One key issue is how we use the time we have with children – 180 days, less what you need for testing, days before and after holidays; 4-6 hours a day, etc.
 - c. We know there is an “implementation dip” in student performance as we implement changes.
 - i. So there is a challenge in moving to new practices in education – a challenge exacerbated by NCLB and community pressure to always be going forward.
 3. Irony is that districts have more mandates and less control than ever before.
 - a. American Diploma Project sounds great, but the implementation with current resources may be even more challenge.
 4. As we have argued that we must educate a higher percentage of students to reach proficiency or higher, it will be more expensive. One question is how to pay for that? What are we willing to pay for – for ourselves? for others?
 - a. Need to view cost of education not as a simple cost, but an investment in the community.
 - b. It’s not just needing more money, but money to support a different structure better designed to meet goals.
- E. Possible next generation of reform.
1. Change in curriculum – away from memorization and computation to higher order thinking skills, ability to collaborate, work in groups, etc.
 - a. Change stated standards to be more depth, less breadth.
 - i. Indeed, there are conversations around the country about what we want those standards to look like and include.
 - b. Find ways to measure what’s important, not what’s easy to measure.
 - i. Require rethinking the use of standardized test as a policy solution.

- c. Rethink how we deliver instruction (to project learning when relevant).
 - d. Even “low level” jobs require different kinds of literacy – literacy in voc-tech can be more demanding than in college (or differently demanding). E.g., kids working in parts shop need to know how to use technology to look through massive database of parts and read what they find.
2. Resources alone don’t make change.
- a. See this in Abbott District.
 - b. More money in the same structure – very little changes.
 - i. We need to use the money to change the system – standards, curriculum, testing, etc.
 - c. Change structures:
 - i. Find efficiencies where we can – e.g., functional consolidation (don’t need so many transportation systems, bookkeeping systems, etc.).
 - ii. Structure schools for universal proficiency, not universal access.
 - Physical structure – small lecture rooms and small group work rooms.
 - What parts of curriculum lend themselves to different kinds of teaching and learning activities?

Variable	Universal Access	Universal Proficiency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical structure ▪ time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ consistent one-size of rooms ▪ time is fixed, achievement is variable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Different room sizes and shapes for instructional flexibility ▪ achievement is fixed, time is variable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ attribution of failure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ failure is attributed to the child (low skills, bad home environment), not an unresponsive system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ failure is attributed to system and system is restructured to support the child
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ instruction ▪ professional development ▪ accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ one sized fits all ▪ one size fits all ▪ course-based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ differentiated ▪ differentiate to skills and responsibilities ▪ outcome based and different grading system

3. Assembly-line view of teaching:
- a. Need different kinds of productivity measures.
 - b. Ted Sanders argues that teachers follow one of two patterns:
 - i. Level-off after 5-7 years of teaching
 - ii. Keep improving through career
 - iii. This suggests we need to have different kinds of career ladders for people with different career patterns.

- Some become master careers who work with novice teachers or even experienced teachers who need improvement.
 - Can free up some time of master teachers by having some classes be larger lecture classes.
 - c. Productivity measures linked to:
 - i. Value added measures.
 - ii. Merit based salary schedules.
 - iii. Neither is yet developed to go to “prime time” but we could do well to start to experiment with them.
- 4. Align incentives throughout the system so that teachers and administrators benefit/suffer on same criteria.
- 5. More centralization.
 - a. Mandates (NCLB) are a form of centralization –forcing states to align curriculum with assessment which will likely lead to a national curriculum.
 - b. But we may be able to use this as leverage for more federal funding (which is currently at 6%).
 - c. As states reduce taxes on top income brackets (to attract business) this strangles state budgets with drastic impacts on state funding of schools.
 - d. Increased federal funding will take pressure off local property taxes, the trade-off may be a national curriculum, perhaps with more pervasive federal assessment (e.g., NAPE for all).
- 6. Deal systemically with poverty – some that is within our grasp, some require greater reach.
 - a. 1970 - Top income was 70 times the median.
 - b. 1996 - Top income was 300 times the median.
 - c. 1979 - 80% of population.
 - d. Huge proportions of the wealth of society is in hands of smaller group of people.
 - e. What’s happened:
 - i. Federal government has reduced taxes on taxes that most effect top brackets:
 - Income taxes,
 - ii. At same time, middle class has become smaller yielding less.
 - iii. Broad shift from reliance on income taxes to reliance on property taxes – everyone pays property tax, wealthy pay lower income taxes.
 - f. Question: Don’t the wealthy spend their money in ways that reinvest it in the economy? Wouldn’t taxing them more strangle this?
 - i. In 1949 the top tax rate was 75% and we had growth then.
 - ii. We’ve tried tax cuts at the highest end twice (Reagan and current) and both times we have had recessions.
 - iii. Not arguing that we need to go back to a 75% tax rate, but we do need to find a way to rebalance it.
 - g. What do we do about generational poverty?
 - i. The workforce of 2020 is already in our schools.
 - ii. We can’t change the fact that kids live in poverty, we can change the way we work with them.
 - iii. Policy needs to provide more services to impoverished children through agencies that can work/collaborate with schools.

II. Conclusion:

- A. NY State is the most segregated state in the country (Harvard Civil Rights Survey).
- B. Even if campaign for fiscal equity results in funding schools to get equitable education, the poor will not get an equal education.
 - 1. Will have separate and unequal educational system.
- C. Thus, education is the civil rights issue of our age.
 - 1. We must find a way to reverse this trend, just as we reversed the civil rights challenges of the 50s and 60s.
 - 2. NCLB and the previous reform efforts were a start, but we must move on to a more effective reform effort – to meet the emerging needs of the global economy with communities that are increasingly stressed.
 - 3. This will require a discussion of:
 - a. What our goals for education are...
 - b. How it contributes to our economy...
 - c. How it contributes to our form of government...



COASTAL SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL

DEVELOPING “PLAN B”: Understanding and Working through Professional Development Options

Ms. Theresa Stimpfel,
Drake Beam Morin Consultant
February 12, 2007

Introduction to DBM: DBM is an international company that does career counseling and transition work, executive coaching and human resources training.

Today’s workshop draws from different workshops developed by DBM, dealing with the “Career Fit,” a two day workshop on “retirement success” and “career transition.”

- I. Perceptions: What are your ideas of “Plan B” or “retirement?” What does it mean to you? And how does the general public view retirement, a retired person?
 - A. Public:
 1. Views them as “out” of it, as not contributing.
 2. A way to get away from what they didn’t enjoy in their jobs.
 3. “Retire and move to FL”.
 4. Public thinks retired people are lucky.
 5. Public perception is changing, more to offer to and from retired people.
 6. Perception of others... in an over 55 community, many more than 50% work. People want to stay active and keep mind alert.
 7. Period of flexibility earned by years of intense work.
 8. It has changed over time and is regional, for some it is a financial issue – can you retire and still live where you live and afford it. More and more a transition retirement is going into a second career.
 - B. My view:
 1. Someone who has put their time in, contributed to society and is now time to enjoy the remainder of their lives.
 2. Plan B – not different, but less time commitment that I am doing now.
 3. An opportunity to do something completely different. I enjoy what I am doing, but am tired of it. What to do something more creative.

4. Leave the current job, but pursue maybe two or three different careers – in education at post secondary level, or perhaps hospital administration.
 5. Not “a guy on the beach walking the dog”.
 6. A more flexible life, pursue those interests.
 7. Retirement has changed, we are in good health. Now a point of giving back. Time to do some things we want to do and don’t now have the time to do.
 8. Flexible. Continue to work, but less time and more time with family.
 9. More time to enjoy what you’ve worked for. Time for more fun.
 10. Redirection of energy.
 11. Stay in field, but not with high level of daily responsibilities.
 - a. Fear is “Will I know when it is time to get out?”
 12. I am not the stay-at-home type, or the volunteer type. I want to stay busy, and redirect my energy in education.
 - a. It is my personality to take on a lot of things.
 13. Freedom from meetings and schedules that are so time consuming... and knowing there are options that are possible.
 14. Not stopping work, but exploring new opportunities I can’t now explore because of other demands on my time.
 15. Flexibility but not sure what I want to do with that flexibility. It can be intimidating to have that flexibility and now know exactly what we are going to do.
 16. Educators are lucky – retirement comes with a pension and with health benefits.
- C. Ideas about retirement are shifting.
1. People are concerned they can’t retire financially – not all have good pensions or medical care.
 2. If you go deeper, you will hear people talk about retirement in a variety of ways:
 - a. A bit of a stigma
 - b. Knowledge out of date
 3. “Plan B” sounds positive but also has a connotation of settling, that it is less than what others have, a fall-back position, not as distinguished as Plan A.
 4. Retirement isn’t a finite situation – it has changed, become much longer.
 - a. If you go out at 55, you can expect to live for another 30-40 years.
 - b. And to do so with more health, and more opportunities.
 5. So it’s not “Plan B” but how to continue our life plan. Retirement is just another period.
 - a. Yes, some people are burned out. But even those people come back looking for more to do.

II. Review of skills and career options for district/school leaders:

A. Skills:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Fiscal management | 11. Community relations | 21. Human resources |
| 2. Negotiations | 12. Youth | 22. Networking |
| 3. Contracts/law | 13. Strategizing | 23. Visionary |
| 4. Analysis/reporting | 14. Policy making | 24. Research |
| 5. Presentation | 15. Sales | 25. Change agent |
| 6. Government compliance | 16. Prioritizing | 26. Counseling |
| 7. Group leadership | 17. Planning | 27. Public speaking |
| 8. Delegation | 18. Public relations | 28. Writing |
| 9. Mentoring | 19. Decision making | 29. Mediation |
| 10. Staffing | 20. Problem solving | 30. Lobbying |
| | | 31. Consensus building |
| | | 32. Fundraising |

B. Career Options

1. Restaurant
 2. Higher education
 - a. Supervising student teachers
 3. Real estate
 4. Finance
 5. Fiscal advising
 6. Insurance industry work
 7. Hospitality
 8. Consulting
 9. Mediators/negotiators
 10. Writing
 11. Alternative careers out of leadership (e.g., landscape, gardening, artistic)
 12. Grant reviewer/consultant (with different foundations)
 - a. Or to be a consultant that the funder provides to support the grant.
 13. Politics:
 - a. Candidate
 - b. Campaign
 - c. Staff for politicians, state committees, etc.
 14. Board of Directors members
 15. Company President
 16. General corporate management
 17. Nonprofit leadership
 18. Docent
 19. Higher Education – teaching, department manager/dean; VP of a unit
 20. Personal coaching
 21. Consulting
 22. Sales
 23. Writer – either a book or articles – fiction or non-fiction.
 - a. Cosmopolitan pays very well for free lance work.
- C. As you look at these career options – you are looking at 10-15-20-25 years of active life, where you have lots to contribute.
- D. Superintendents have such contacts – incredible networks – that can be very useful in the next steps you take.
1. E.g., with the non-profit world.

III. 50 Plus Career Fit

- A. Career Fit is an industrial psychology tool – tested and validated internationally.
- B. Incorporates the Myer’s Brigs and other personality trait variables.
- C. Most of it focuses on how you are in your work, which may focus us and our responses in one direction, and may not reveal the non-work related parts of our psyche, or our interests that we don’t explore in work.
- D. Because it concentrates on life after age 50, it focuses in part on ability to change as you move into retirement and our ability to change in response to the physical changes that occur as we get older.
- E. Review of results – were there any responses? Was it right on or off the mark?

1. Was right on... concept for preference for stability vs. preference for change.
 - a. Got into this profession because of the stability, and as superintendents at times we have to focus on how to maintain stability in the face of external changes.
 - b. There were some questions about whether you see glass as half-empty or half-full. As an optimist I have to be cautious to keep a healthy optimistic outlook while avoiding an unhealthy denial of reality.
 - c. Emotionally reactive vs. emotionally resilient – will relate to the way you respond to pressure; whether stress drains you or is something you get over easily.
 2. Comment: sometimes strengths can be your weaknesses. At times the things that are your strengths – if you are on one end of the continuum can also be those things which annoy others most about you.
 3. Not unusual for executives, leaders, managers to be ‘work centered’ (as opposed to non-work centered).
 - a. For retirement, issue is where to direct these energies.
 - b. If your friends are still in the position, and remain work-centered, retaining those friendships can be a challenge.
 - c. As approach retirement, it can be important to consider how to structure your post-retirement time, and on what you will be “working” (e.g., more projects, profession-related projects, etc.).
 - d. You will need to develop your “60 second introduction” or “elevator story” that you use to describe yourself. This can include where you came from as well as where you are going next.
- F. Review the career options we discussed earlier. Which ones link best to which of the 50+ Career Fit categories?
1. Some, e.g., volunteering (with the blood bank) may not provide the structure the Career Fit suggests you need.
 2. One of our challenges is that we have been in charge, we can probably fit into anything and make it work (whether we love it or not is another question), how do we know, or explore, what’s out there and how to get there?
 - a. Where we are is comfortable – we know how to do it.
 - b. But once we close the door, we are on the other side and not sure where we are going?
 - i. It is like being in a vestibule, with my hand on the education door and don’t know which of the other doors to look into.
 - ii. One strategy is once we walk through the door, to take the time to breathe and look around, perhaps to wean ourselves away.
 - We are such type A personalities that we are likely to be impatient with that. Yet, important to take time to breathe.
 - Breathing time, might include minimal part time consulting time (e.g., reading Prazis exams)
 - iii. Superintendents can do interim superintendency if they want to. It’s a way of going from full-time to weaning back....
 - c. One question is what areas of expertise do you want to explore? How do you want to spend your time?

- d. Some want to explore something outside of education, a second career not related to education. One question is whether you have other passions, interests you want to explore and how to allow yourself the time to explore it.
 - i. One way to find out what else is out there is networking – talking with people in different fields and areas and finding out about that world.
 - ii. Often, people doing networking to decide next steps will develop questions tied to what they are interested in thinking about.
 - iii. Superintendents are accomplished people and others are always happy to talk with you, will likely feel flattered that you are interested in their work.
 - iv. We can underestimate ourselves. We know people in corporate America and could go into that environment if we wanted. But there are different risks in the corporate world.
 - v. Becoming an interim superintendent is a step into our comfort zone.
- e. One key is attitude and hope – the expectation that you will succeed.
- 3. As you think about retirement, reflect on what part of your skills, traits, personalities do you want to explore over the next __ years.
- 4. Thoughts are like magnets, how I am thinking is where I am going.
 - a. I am at the stage of my life where I don't want to be defined by the title on my card.
 - b. We are all far more that what we do, than our title. Many of those things are more valuable than where we go to work in the morning.
 - c. Retirement is hardest for those who don't have, or haven't developed, other interests, outside of our work.

IV. Retirement values

- A. Agenda has a partial list of “values” to think through.
- B. As you go down that list, review and reflect, which are the most important 5 for you now and then which will be most important when you retire?

V. As you plan for retirement, think about:

- A. Work reorientation – what will be your attitude toward work into the future.
- B. Attitude toward retirement.
- C. Your directedness – are you making the decisions or are there outside factors (kids going into college) directing decisions.
- D. Health – how you maintain it is important. Studies show the more maintained physical health, supports your mental health as well.
 - 1. Memory – short term memory can be maintained with age by doing things which stretch your mind.
 - 2. Set specific physical and mental health goals.
- E. Develop and explore leisure interests – art, music, golf, etc.
 - 1. Start it before you retire, so you have a head start and know what makes you happy.

Invite past/retired superintendents to talk about their retirement experiences..... Recently retired and those who retired 10 years ago and longer ago.... Ask them to tell us where you were when you first retired, what you did next, etc.



COASTAL SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL

CELEBRATING CONFUSION ***“Real Leaders Ask for Directions”***

Harris Sokoloff, Ph.D.

Penn Graduate School of Education

March 21, 2007

- I. The session is entitled “Celebrating Confusion.” But why “celebrating” it?
 - A. Harris began by noting that the session seems to be internally inconsistent.
 1. Why would we celebrate something like confusion when we normally see being confused as “taboo?”
 2. One answer is in suggesting that we need to think about confusion in a more positive light, that we need to find ways of using confusion productively.
 - B. Confusion:
 1. A mental state characterized by a lack of clear and orderly thought and behavior. A sense of being disoriented.
 2. This also involves some pain.
 - C. Pain:
 1. Emotion distress; a fundamental feeling that people try to avoid.
 - D. The important point is that confusion and emotional pain are things that, by definition, we try to avoid.
 - E. But one thing is that in trying to avoid confusion and pain, we can also create problems.
 - F. Jentz and Murphy chose “confusion” and “pain” in our work because they *are* laden with emotion and are charged and in this way can point us to see things we might otherwise miss.
 - G. In public, educational leaders seem to be certain, have answers, etc. But in select settings when they became comfortable, they often admit uncertainty in knowing how to do it. Not just uncertainty, but being perplexed and flummoxed.
 1. In private, they seemed to be saying they didn’t know how to do X – either because they didn’t have sufficient resources or because they were perplexed, for example about how to do X or how to take X to scale, etc.
 - H. Part of this has to do with the increasing complexity of the world.
 - I. The confusion puzzle – the best leaders get confused, even lost.

II. Causes of confusion:

A. The VUCCA environment educators face:

- a. Volatile and Uncertain
- b. Chaotic and Complex
- c. Ambiguous

B. Fullan suggests, “Systems are not linear. Complex systems produce a fair amount of fragmentation and overload. You come to appreciate in an exquisite way what life and human beings in social systems are like. You know it is messy, so you take that as a given and aren't thrown by it. And then you are attracted to creating some patterns of goodness out of the messiness.”

C. Organizations are characterized by paradox:

- 1. Paradox is the reality that two opposite things are both true. How I deal with it is to accept the fact that they are both true. Transcend the paradox by acknowledging that they are both true, and they will be acting on me for the rest of my life. But you can't let the paradox paralyze you. (Peter Block)

D. Heifetz captures this in his analysis of the kinds of situations or problems leaders confront:

Situation	Problem Definition	Solution & Implementation	Primary Locus of Responsibility for the Work	Kind of Work
Type I	Clear	Clear	Physician	Technical
Type II	Clear	Requires learning	Physician and Patient	Technical and adaptive
Type III	Requires learning	Requires learning	Patient more than physician	Adaptive

- 1. While Heifetz talks about these in a medical context, there are clear applications to education, where:
 - a. The “physician” is the educator – either the administrator or the teacher.
 - b. The “patient” can be the “student” but might also include the family or the community.
- 2. What's key is the realization that in a VUCCA world, many of the situations we face are Type II or Type III and yet others often expect us to treat them as if they were Type I, purely technical, situations.

E. There are daunting challenges that are unyielding.

- 1. Achieving high universal attainment without sufficient resources is just one such daunting challenge facing superintendents.
- 2. Indeed, these are Type III situations.

- F. There are also unexpected problems that often pop-up “out of the blue”.
 - 1. These can trigger “Oh, no” moments – when you are going along and something pops up in the moment.
 - a. Such “Oh, no” problems can usurp your strategic agenda.
 - 2. For example,
 - a. NCLB scores can create an “Oh, no!” situation at any time.
 - b. A situation with a student which seemed settled yet when the parent went home and started talking to others grew into a racial situation. Have no idea where that is coming from.
 - 3. What is often true of “oh no” moments is that they can blow things out of proportion.
 - G. Some of these “oh, no” situations come up when people raise an issue in a way that demands immediate results, not allowing a process that involves dialogue and working through.
 - 1. Research on when revolutions start indicates that revolutions don’t start when people are totally repressed, but start when people’s expectations outstrip their realities. And that happens when they already have something and want even more. “The more [people have], the more people want.”
- III. Coping with confusion. That is, how do leaders often, but not always, deal with this, and why.
- A. Internally: when confronted with a confusing situation, leaders tend to:
 - 1. Deny they are confused.
 - 2. Hide that they are confused.
 - 3. Escape the confusion.
 - 4. Avoid the confusing work.
 - B. Externally,
 - 1. Kill the messenger.
 - 2. Impose a quick fix.
 - 3. Explain away the problem – so that the level of confusion goes down.
 - a. Sometimes this involves shifting the blame to others.
 - b. Other times we shift the problem or call it something else.
 - 4. Hold back.
 - C. Part of the argument is that if you are leading, you are in a state of confusion. Leading is about moving from where you are to where you want to be, which can often be a confusing state.
- IV. Why do leaders cope these ways internally and externally?
- A. Fear: Fear that *acknowledging confusion* is to
 - 1. Lose authority and control of the situation.
 - 2. Display weakness – (when leaders are expected to be strong, to be “the answer person”)
 - 3. Look stupid.

4. Be exposed as an imposter –
 - a. Imposter theory – a study of newly tenured faculty at Harvard found that newly tenured faculty felt that they were imposters, that if the others knew how little they knew, they would lose it all. So they hide their lack of knowledge by engaging in the coping mechanisms noted above.
 - B. We also engage in those coping mechanisms because staying with confusion – in this state of discombobulation – is painful.
 1. Much of this has to do with who we are as a person and where we are in our career.
 - a. Who we are as a person includes our makeup, how we were trained, etc.
 - 1) It is also related to what we are taught (explicitly or implicitly) about leaders and how leaders act.
 - b. It is also about what we think will work in the situation, and issues of trust are important.
 2. Raises notion of “acceptable incompetent” from research field.
 - a. When a student goes out to do research, they can ask question that a more experienced researcher cannot.
 - b. A new person can be an “acceptable incompetent” – can get away with asking questions that people would not accept from a more experienced person.
 - c. But an experienced person, such as a superintendent, cannot get away with this.
- V. Negative consequences of engaging in those coping mechanisms:
- A. Organizationally –
 1. Can lead to bad decisions – if you are confused and impose quick solutions.
 2. If you are in a confusing situation and act as if you have the answers, and others recognize it is a confusing situation, this can undermine trust, credibility and learning.
 - a. NOTE: The alternative to hiding the confusion is *not* to act confused and befuddled. The alternative is to *acknowledge* this is a confusing situation and *establish a process for working through* the issue to develop ways of acting on the problem.
 - B. Personally,
 1. If there is a taboo about confusion, you can feel isolated and alone when you feel confused.
 - a. When we link feeling confusion to weakness and failure, this increases the stress of the work.
 - b. A successful leader must manage five things: change, context, organizations, relationships and yourself. Fundamentally, if we don’t manage ourselves, and take care of ourselves, we are not doing our job.
 - c. It is often important to remember that when people say something negative, they are talking about the role, not you. And when they say you are doing a great job, they are often talking to the role of authority, not to you as a person.

2. It can also restrain you from leading the way you want.
 - a. If you think confusion and pain represent territory you want to avoid, that will hold you back from being the kind of leader you want to be. Avoiding pain and confusion will make it impossible to explore actions and ideas you might not otherwise explore.
3. This is what Murphy and Jentz call the “Lost Leader Syndrome”.
- C. As Jentz and Murphy suggest: “Organizational cultures that cling to the ideal of an all-knowing, omni-competent executive will pay a high cost in time, resources, and progress, and will be sending the message to managers that it is better to hide their confusion than to address it openly and constructively.” (Jentz and Murphy)

VI. An alternative perspective on “Oh, No!” moments:

- A. We often think that confusion is like quicksand – to be avoided at all costs.
 1. Indeed, the best way out of quicksand is not to struggle against it, but to endeavor to float, and find something external to help you out.
- B. Alternatively, confusion is not quicksand, but rather “potters clay” of leadership. It is something to be used and molded for productive purposes.
- C. Complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty are normal.
 1. No one person can know everything we need to know in this VUCCA world.
- D. Often, individual expertise isn’t sufficient. Group expertise and wisdom are normal.
- E. Murphy and Jentz suggest we need to find a way to use confusion as a resource: “In the 21st century, as rapid change makes confusion a defining characteristic of management, the competence of managers will be measured not only by *what they know* but increasingly by *how they behave* when they lose their sense of direction and become confused.”
- F. Need to move from “expert” and “authoritative” information to “public” or group learning.
- G. In an article about boundaries in organization, Larry Hirschhorn and Tom Gilmore suggest that the role of the leader includes managing the boundaries within the organization.
 1. They focus on four basic boundaries, each of which is defined by a key question:
 - a. Authority: Who is in charge of what?
 - b. Task: Who does what?
 - c. Political: What’s in it for us?
 - d. Identity: Who is, and isn’t, us?
 2. Within each boundary there are several key tensions that need to be managed as well as some key emotions that surface when the boundary is not well-led.
 - a. See attached chart.
- H. Progress requires:
 1. *Acceptance* – that being in a state of confusion is a sign that you are in the right territory...
 2. *Listening and learning* – being confused is a sign to listen and learn.
 - a. “I don’t know” are important words... but not alone.
 - b. Better to say something like “I don’t know, yet. But I do know how to find out.” or “I don’t know, yet and here’s what we are going to do...”
 3. *Acting*.

- I. Leaders can maintain strength and authority by:
 1. Knowing how to move forward.
 2. Having “answers” on *process*.

VII. An alternative process: Reflective Inquiry and Action (RIA)

- A. Being “reflective” is the key and involves:
 1. Reflecting thoughtfully *on* what others have to say.
 2. Reflecting *in your own words* what you understand others said back to the speaker and others.
- B. RIA is a six step process, as follows:
 1. Embrace your confusion.
 2. Assert the need to make sense.
 3. Structure the interaction.
 4. Listen reflectively and learn.
 5. Openly process the effort to make sense.
 6. Act.
- C. Step 1: Embrace your confusion.
 1. Understanding: confusion causes pain.
 - a. Avoiding pain = no leadership.
 - b. If leadership is going to where you want to get, that uncertainty is part of the process of getting there.
 2. Motivation:
 - a. Passionate commitment to a goal.
 - b. Personal survival and success.
 3. Leap of Faith – To get beyond the pain, you must fully embrace it (rather than withdraw from it).
 - a. Just like quicksand – if you fall into it, the natural tendency is to try to step out of it. But the more try to step out, the deeper you get in. You get out of quicksand by “embracing it” by spreading out your weight and floating out.
 - b. Just like the Chinese Finger Trap – the harder you pull, the more stuck.
 - 1) When in confusion, the more we avoid it, the more confused we get and the deeper in we get.
 - 2) When we feel we shouldn’t be confused and try to get rid of the confusion, accepting that the confusion is part of who we are and part of this situation can be productive.
 4. Courage involves a willingness to be afraid/confused and act anyway.
 5. Acceptance – acknowledge feelings to yourself – e.g., “I’m confused *and* that makes me feel weak.” [But not that being confused makes you weak – it doesn’t but that may be how you *feel*.]
 6. Positive meaning.
 - a. A different way of interpreting confusion – feeling confused is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of strength.
 - b. If you are not feeling confused some times, you are missing part of the complexity that is there. If you are not confused at times, you may not know enough, or may not be in touch.
 - c. When you are feeling confused, you are in the “leadership zone.”

7. Practice is required:
 - a. Learn how to accept the confusion and pain, while keeping your eye on the goals that you are trying to achieve.
 - 1) Carry your baggage (confusion) while making the trip (your goals).
 - 2) Having a mantra can be helpful. E.g., “Pain is my pal.”

D. Discussion:

1. Our role requires us to move in linear ways – following policy and procedures (e.g., contracts). At the same time, we are often pressured by groups (some powerful) to break policy and do something else.
 - a. It would be easy to say “yes” to the group in front of us in the moment. But we (and others) have to understand that what we do in one case has effects on others.... These effects complicate things and may argue against what those in front of you want done.
2. An example of what happens when people in leadership feel under the gun, besieged and somewhat confused about what to do. They also feel misunderstood and under the gun to do the right thing.
 - a. Often when in this kind of situation – we get in an explaining mode – to explain ourselves.
 - b. What the others (those coming to us with a problem) may well need most, is to be listened to (not explained to).
 - 1) One question is how to spend time listening to them, to understand where they are coming from, and to reflect back what you have heard.
 - 2) Only after they have felt heard (from their perspective) is it okay to explain to them.
 - c. When we are feeling besieged with an out of the blue situation and think that people feel entitled, we may tend to get into an explaining mode and they will be less likely to hear us. At those times it may make sense to probe for understanding and to listen and then say let’s see if we can spend some time problem-solving to see if we can develop a solution together.
 - d. Before going into problem solving mode, when they come to the authority figure, start by listening to them and listening deeply, to express their concerns (and pain), and then get into the problem solving mode.
 - e. There is a distinction between “being heard” by the boss and “being followed” by the boss. You can be compassionate and empathic by hearing them deeply while still being tough.
 - f. When they come in, you can say, I am not sure (or I’m confused) how best to address this issue, so I proposed we spend the first X minutes with you helping me understand the issue from your perspective, and I’ll tell you what my concerns are and then we can figure out how to best address the concerns.
 - g. If we start with our explanation, they will not hear you. If you start by listening to them and reflect that back to them, then they may be ready to hear you.

- h. The kinds of situations where we feel we have time to do this kind of process are less and less frequent, as more and more situations demand immediate response and you don't have time for reflection.
 - i. The key is we need to listen most in those situations where we are least inclined to listen (because of time, because of contract, etc.). In those situations, hold your explanation until you have heard them and they feel heard and understood. Then respond with your explanation, often incorporating their language into your explanation.
 - j. If the press is there, you may not want to do this kind of process.
- E. There is some research evidence that when people get lost in the woods and they lie down to die, shame is one of the reasons they become immobilized.
1. A story is told of a group of Swiss soldiers who were out for a hike in the Alps. They were caught in sudden snow storm and became totally lost. As they lay down to die one of the soldiers reached into his pocket and discovered a map. This mobilized them and after several days they found their way out.
 2. Several days later, they were back in safety, they learned that the map was of the Pyrennees not the Alps.
 3. Moral of the story – when confused and lost, any map will do, any road is better than no road at all. You use the map you have and start on a path, use data to change direction.

A Manager's Guide to the Boundaries That Matter

Key Questions		Necessary Tensions	
"Who is in charge of what?" →	AUTHORITY BOUNDARY	How to lead but remain open to criticism. How to follow but still challenge superiors.	
"Who does what?" →	TASK BOUNDARY	How to depend on others you don't control. How to specialize yet understand other people's jobs.	
"What's in it for us?" →	POLITICAL BOUNDARY	How to defend one's interests without undermining the organization. How to differentiate between win-win and win-lose situations.	
"Who is – and isn't – 'us'?" →	IDENTITY BOUNDARY	How to feel pride without devaluing others. How to remain loyal without undermining outsiders.	

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