

Staff Development Toolbox

Windows & Mirrors

by Jim Roussin

If staff development is about increasing student achievement, where does one begin to focus efforts to get the greatest results? While there are a multitude of initiatives a staff development team can explore, each effort can be found in one or more of the four quadrants identified by Ken Wilber in his book, *A*

Brief History of Everything

Each of these quadrants represents a window and a mirror to help us become more conscious of the energy currents that are constantly flowing through every individual and organization. Sometimes an organization only focuses on initiatives that can be found in one or two of the quadrants. When this happens, an organization limits its potential for exceptional results. Each window has a voice and truth that speaks to how we can be more effective. One window is not better than the other, but each needs to be addressed for an organization to reach all it is capable of with the collective energies of those who work there. Each quadrant is also tied back to the individual and his/her sense of "self," referred to here as identity. Each window can influence how individuals perform in the workplace and if not addressed can affect an employee's commitment to the vision and mission of that organization. It is the understanding that practice and behaviors are just as much tied to an individual's identity as are the values, passions, and beliefs as well as the culture and systems of the workplace.

Quadrant One - (Interior - Individual) reminds us that each person in our organization has unique passions that give energy to her/his life. There needs to be initiatives that honor and support the visions and energies of each person in our workplace. David Whyte reminds us that "the sound and the fury of an individual's creative life are the elemental waters

missing from the dehydrated workday."

Quadrant Two - (Interior - Cultural) reminds us to pay attention to the culture in the workplace.

Organizational culture is the invisible field that gives meaning to individual lives within the context of others. The workplace culture holds the norms and expectations of how we behave and respond toward each other. Wheatley & Rogers remind us that "we

do not live in a world that encourages separateness. Only when we join with others do our gifts become visible, even to ourselves." **Quadrant Three - (Exterior - Individual)** reminds us that there are standards of excellence in every discipline that are revealed in our practices. These standards are measurable and have a clear language that defines

<i>The Interior quadrants are assessed by introspection and interpretation</i>	<i>The Exterior quadrants are assessed by perception and empiricism</i>
<p>INTERIOR - INDIVIDUAL [INTENTIONAL]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk, Dialogue, and interpretation gets to this area • Emotional Intelligence • The use of "I" language • This quadrant can be blocked by deceit and deception • Coaching for Understanding 	<p>EXTERIOR - INDIVIDUAL [BEHAVIORAL]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses "it" language • Based on propositional truth • Looks at empirical evidence • INTASC Standards • Focuses on behavior • Coaching for Performance
<p>INTERIOR - COLLECTIVE [CULTURAL]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides the common context in which my own thoughts and interpretations will have some sort of meaning • Contains the collective identity • Participant/observer role • The use of "we" language • Mutual understanding • Dialogues 	<p>EXTERIOR - COLLECTIVE [SOCIAL SYSTEMS]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refers to the exterior, material, institutional forms of the community • Uses "it" language • Embedded in systems theory and the "quality" movement • Empirically observable components • System archetypes and analysis

Communities of Practice

the benchmark for excellence. Charlotte Danielson is quick to remind us that "an important step to enhancing the stature of educators in the family of professions is defining clearly what constitutes excellence in teaching."

Quadrant Four - (Exterior - Collective) points us toward the social systems that are at work in every organization. These system forces focus the organization in the direction it moves and can influence the energies and visions of each individual. Peter Senge reminds us that, "vision without systems thinking ends up painting lovely pictures of the future with no deep understanding of the forces that must be mastered to move from here to there."