

Refreshed Leadership: A Quest for Grand Unification

Particle physicists are on a quest to explain how objects and elements in the universe are connected and interact with one another on a molecular level. *The Grand Unification Theory*, suggests that there is a single coupling constant that at a high enough velocity actually connects all particles and forces, even oppositional forces in the universe.

Looking at schools through the eyes of particle physicists we believe there is a comparable quest. In the transition to modernize there is an opportunity to refresh what we define as the **faculty** and its customary separation from leadership. Although there are currently differences in roles and responsibilities for administrators and teachers, we do not agree that there is any purpose for the distance, distrust, or difficulty of communication that we have observed in many schools. We see these oppositional relationships as the vestigial tail of the industrialized era. Given one single *coupling constant*, a loyalty to learning, adults in all schools can benefit if not find the metaphorical Grand Unification.

Physicists do not have sufficient ground to adopt the grand unification theory at this time. The bigger issue is that the asking of these questions potentially creates innovation. The field of physics never stands still. Similarly the field of education has never stood still with ever- changing and evolving questions: Who should lead? What matters most? What is the work? We look to hit the “refresh” button on the notion of what leadership means now and what it could mean in future learning environments.

In this chapter we will:

- 1) Distinguish the differences between antiquated, classical and contemporary leadership approaches through the lens of leadership styles.
- 2) Lay out options for cultivating contemporary leadership approach based on distributive leadership both on-site and virtually highlighting implications for roles and responsibilities.
- 3) Explore how leadership can employ the deliberate use of language to shift the types of organizations revealed by quality of conversations.
- 4) Examine the cultivation of professional leadership camaraderie through virtual networks and cyber faculties.

- 5) Examine the possibility of a professional governing board in education to self-monitor our work and our craft.
- 6) Consider the power of leading school organizations with modern mission statements deliberately designed to reinforce innovation and creative approaches to learning.

Why is there a divide, stated or unstated, between administrators and teachers? How did this culture get established and what was the purpose? Does that purpose still exist or have we all moved beyond the need for such a division? We will begin our discussion by applying the concept of antiquated, classical, and contemporary pedagogy to leadership models.

Leading with Language: Fostering Organizational Connections

When we walk down the halls of a school what kinds of conversations are occurring naturally? What is the quality of the discussion interactions in our faculty meetings and in our electronic communications? David Logan and John King are consultants for the business world who have created a model called Tribal Leadership (Logan & King, 2008). Their model provides a basis for analyzing the health and driving motivation of organizations and institutions. The model is organized in five stages reflecting the relationships between individuals and the motivations of a group of people; that is the “tribe”. Central to their work is that the most revealing and effective method for identifying the stage of the tribe is by the careful examination of how people see their connections or lack of connection to one another and the ways people speak to one another. Within an organization and present ways for leaders to interact with and progress an entire organization by being mindful of the ways tribes connect and communicate.

The purpose for organizational analysis using the stages is so that leaders can improve the impact, performance, and connections within their organization deliberately using language, grouping, and focusing on questions that promote higher tribal stages. Logan and King focused their research on the business world. We see a clear application to education.

We note that in education, communications between adults can be witnessed in school classrooms, hallway conversations, blogs, PLC meetings, essentially conversations of any kind, in any place, and in any form including virtual and electronic forms. So, to identify tribes in education systems we must embrace all forms of

communication. A summary of the stages follows. We have added our interpretation as to how the model applies to an educative setting.

Stage one tribes are a meltdown waiting to happen and fortunately less than 2 percent of the business workforce operates in this stage. (Logan & King, 2008 p. 18). The perception from members of this tribe is that the whole world or whole system is hopelessly failing. Individuals at this stage make despairingly hostile comments and they band together to survive in what they perceive as a threatening and mean spirited world.

In education this might be a teacher who disengages from professional development or from a PLC meeting and when asked why they are disengaged replies in one of the following ways: 1) Doesn't matter anyway the whole school system is doomed!, 2) I hate being a teacher now, this is ridiculous!, 3) Times are different now, kids are different now, I don't belong here anymore., 4) I can't handle what is going on here. Although it is not easy, it is possible to coach an individual from tribe one toward tribe two.

Some techniques to consider are:

- 1) Divide negative groupings when possible. If a person in tribe one is not listening to other tribe one language they can be open to new options. Use assigned grouping of teachers as meetings and in professional development sessions to connect tribe one members with a higher tribal partner. Avoid large groupings as they will disconnect from the group but a dyad can be helpful.
- 2) In private meetings provide examples of how life or the system are working well. Show and describe elements that are positive. Consider highlighting areas of student success, where the teachers had a positive meeting, moments of parent or community involvement, and articles about successful learning in schools are a great place to start.
- 3) Personally invite and encourage attendance at events where the action is. Teachers attending school events, connecting with students, attending meetings, and being invited to discussions can transition to stage two.

Stage two tribes represent about 25 percent of the work force. Although they are a leap beyond stage one, they are still passively antagonistic at work. They are quietly sarcastic and resigned. Their language focuses on having seen it all done before, cycles that fail and resemble a gerbil wheel of choices by incompetent leaders. They describe themselves as helpless victims and all of the flaws of the system are "their" fault and there is simply nothing that can be done to fix it.

In education we might hear teachers say the following sentences: 1) Oh boy, here we go again, they are changing the expectations AGAIN!, 2) Nothing I do works because they don't want us to succeed, 3) It's all going to change again when the next leader comes in so why even bother trying?, 4) So, this is what we are going to do now, or at least until the next change right?, 5) I have seen initiatives come and go, this one is the "new" one now but we used to do it this way ten years ago. In stage two tribes there is no sense of urgency or innovation. Members can be seen crossing their arms and pushing away from passion. Stage two tribe members will protect one another from intruding leaders and accountability measures. Team building and discussions about missions or core values will not be accepted by stage two tribes. They have mottos like "I would rather be fishing" or "Thank goodness it's Friday". The greatest focus area for leaders is to move members of the organization who are in tribe two toward tribe three. (Logan & King, 2008 p. 20). This increases productivity of the organization the most.

In education this would be possible by finding the following leverage points with individuals and supporting them in the following ways:

- 1) Encourage individuals to connect with other individuals. Promote diad teaming in classrooms or on projects.
- 2) Connect a teacher with a mentor who is eager to share ideas or techniques.
- 3) In private meetings point out success and where their work has had meaningful impact. Point out strengths and areas for future development. Transition to positive thinking in this way. Constructive critique is not the purpose of these conversations, building the belief that improvement is possible even inevitable is the purpose.
- 4) Assign the individual tasks and projects that can be completed in a short period of time. Avoid anything that would require constant follow-up or pushing as this will be counter-productive. So, working on writing the curriculum would not be optimal while writing a model lesson plan with a colleague would be perfect.

Stage three represents almost 49 percent of the work force. "I'm great" is the motto of stage three. Highly skilled professionals who succeed by being the best at what they do individually define this tribe. The conversations in the organization are heavy with the pronouns I, me, and my. "I am a good teacher, let me show you what I have made for my classroom." Stage three is defined by the word "I" and members will say they want help, need help, and that they are disappointed in their colleagues who don't have the ability, time, or willingness to work together. However, their actions are of a long wolf because they feel the pressure to just do it all

themselves and they do not trust the other members to get it done or do it well. Thus, the stage three tribe would rather just work alone and get it done right rather than work with a group and have to collaborate with other people. In education you hear this when members say: 1) I write out my lesson plans but no one else really does, they don't want to do the work, 2) I'll write the curriculum during the summer, it's just easier to do it on my own and share it than work with too many people. 3) I love this idea but I don't want to try and roll it out to my team, they will never agree to do it.

To lead a member from stage three to stage four a leader can consider the following options:

- 1) Encourage the member to connect with other team members in groups larger than two. Consider making teams that plan lessons together or work on projects together just to connect in triads. Be sure the project, problem, or task is bigger than something an individual can do alone (i.e., writing the curriculum or designing a recycling program for the school).
- 2) In conversations with the member highlight why you are encouraging the teaming with reasons that include: 1) that they have similar values, 2) they have complementary skills, 3) they have similar interests, 4) they can accomplish amazing things working together, and 5) they can save each other time and make their work easier. Be specific with examples do not generalize as that can sabotage their progress.
- 3) When these teachers complain about not having enough time or that other teachers are not doing as much as they are point out that they have organized their own work in such a way that others cannot easily support them or contribute. Note that this is the way for them to continue developing. Point out that they have worked very hard to get where they are and that they did it on their own, but they have reached the top of how far that can go, and to move forward they need a team.
- 4) Share personal stories of how you transitioned from stage three to stage four. Consider think alouds where you model the thinking from "I" to "we" and the resulting successes.
- 5) Coach the member that there is more power in networks than in knowledge. That there is more possible from a team than from any one individual.
- 6) Encourage the member to over communicate rather than hold back. Model transparency and the language of "let's look at this together" and "let's pull in the team to work this out." Avoid solving problems as a lone wolf yourself thus modeling what you want to see.

Stage four tribes represent 22 percent of the workforce. Members of tribe four have transitioned from the "I" language to the "we" language. Leaders and members of the stage four tribe work together to promote

the vision and shared identity of the group through networking. Members are often in triads or larger and when they do meet there is a strong sense of tribal pride or team spirit. In fact, part of the identity of a stage four group is the competition with the identity of a direct rival. School sports teams show this easily when there is more energy and focus against a rival school. With a worthy foe comes a powerful response from the team - "We are great" is the motto of this tribe. With a common purpose, values or mission stage four tribes are very successful and represent an accepted definition of a successful organization. They typically produce high quality work in less time. In general members are ready for constructive feedback.

When a school has strong stage four tribes there is a sense of balance of power between administration and teachers. In fact, leading a stage three tribe is easier compared to a stage four because the group in stage three will follow a worthy leader. In a stage four tribe there is less "following" and more of an "ebb and flow" together. Tribal leadership with stage four is more of a distributed leadership model because it is more of a team. It is more than just language though, the tribe is happy, genuine, and inspired. The members describe a sensation of being impactful and confident that they can actually achieve their missions and stated goals. In schools we hear statements like: 1) Ok, we can do this!, 2) Our school is known for great programs, just come visit and check us out, 3) I love to see how our teachers work with the children, just makes me happy to know they are there for the little ones that way, and 4) If we bring this question up at our PLC meeting this month we can get an answer and plan a response. Let's wait until then.

To lead a member from stage three to stage four a leader can consider the following options:

- 1) Speak about the shared values, mission, or purpose that is uniting the tribe. Acknowledge the role a noble mission plays in driving high quality. It is the focus on the mission, values, and purpose that will inspire the tribe four to reach tribe five moments. A stage four tribe needs nurturing - it must be sustained through language that focuses on and returns regularly to our mission.
- 2) Encourage the members to speak about and note the shared values, mission, or purpose in all meetings or gatherings dedicated to solving problems of any kind. When they stress the nobility of purpose, it inspires the tribe to greatness. "When we are making all decisions by looking at the point of view of the learner and the impact on the student first, then we know we are going in the right direction for our program."

- 3) Respect the power of the tribe. Decisions, even ones that could be made independently or right on the spot, should be presented to the tribe for consideration. “Let me just run this idea by a few of my teachers before we settle on something” would be a comment we would hear from an administrator. Distributed leadership, formal or informal, must be nurtured if we want it there for the long haul.
- 4) Seek out or simulate opportunities for a stage four tribe to make a difference. That is to innovate, to design new forms, and to create social change. Schools that meet the needs of all their students, schools that optimize space, schedules, grouping of students and grouping of adults for learning, and schools that exhibit contemporary learning by all members have strong stage four and stage five tribes active within the organization.
- 5) Promote networking by stage four members. Encourage them to recruit more members to the tribe. Talk about the things that can be accomplished if “we only had a few more people believing in or caring about what we are doing here at this school/program/department”.
- 6) Give descriptive and constructive feedback to members. They are eager for descriptive ways to improve what they are doing. They want the brass ring so support them in reaching for it. When members want to learn new things, find networks and resources that can support their professional learning. This is a critical part of creating the opportunity for a stage five tribe.

Stage five tribes represent less than 2 percent of the work force. There are moments when a stage four tribe gel together to solve a problem or achieve a goal that previously seemed impossible. Members are not distracted by things like the competition or the budget. There is no worthy rival only a worthy question or cause. When the tribe works hard to solve a problem or answer a question, they create miracles. When stage five tribes do this, after working together and pushing their own limits, they are often humble and just as amazed as everyone else at what they achieved. The loud chants and cheers for success seen at stage four are replaced by quiet whispers of “wow”. The language of the stage five group shifts from “We are great” to “life is great”. In schools it might sound like whispers saying: 1) Wow, every single senior is graduating this year - and not a single one was “fudged” they REALLY did it, 2) It doesn’t seem possible that we have so many makerspaces in this school, we are REALLY lucky, 3) We are very fortunate in this school, we plan together and even have the chance to change things we see aren’t working - most places are not like this., 4) How crazy is it that we got the grant for building a virtual lab?!, 5) This community really got together behind this school, if you had been here, even three years ago, you would not believe it was the same place. It’s like a miracle happened. Stage five tribes flex between stage four and stage five. It is critical to maintain and nurture your stage four tribes to create

the opportunities for stage five moments. The successes seem like luck or miracles, but we know they are not. They are the reflections of the art and craft of leaders that can see the nuance and patterns within their organizations and take actions and use language to promote the development of innovation and success.

Contemporary Leadership: Formal Attention to Words

Building on the work of the Tribal Leadership Model, we advocate that modern leaders to formally monitor and commit to a conscious attempt to value connections and language. When we are working in a school we can think about the conversations we are participating in and the quality of those conversations. Most critically, is the conversation in a formal meeting environment clearly focused on the learners in the care of the professionals? Are we hearing complaining on how powerless we feel? Are we talking about and blaming other stakeholders for the problems that we have? Are we discussing how we are the only ones able to do the job? Are we focusing on being the best organization? Are we committed to solving the world's problems and changing the world through our efforts? By listening closely we can evaluate the stages of the tribes within our organization.

By being mindful we can elevate our organization deliberately and purposely by avoiding conversations that bring us down and generating and participating in conversations that elevate us. We have shaped a set of protocols to support the awareness of connection and communication to raise the level of functioning in a learning organization.

Upgrading Communication Protocols: Connections and Word Power

To assist a leader or leaders in an organization, whether a teaching team, a headmaster, or two curriculum developers, we propose identifying scenarios and positing protocols to raise the conscious decisions leading to connection, clear communication, word choice, and elevated mission.

A key strategy is to formally end meetings and interactions whether on-site or virtually with three key questions:

- How do we see benefit for our learners from our work today?
- What words in our interactions point to the motivation behind our decision making and actions?
- What professional connections are of greatest value to us as participants in the meeting or interaction?

The “mantra” for an organization committed to making a determined shift to quality interaction is to openly make a conscientious focus on connection and mission in communication.

Cyber Faculty Communication

To participate in conversations both physically and as a part of the cyber faculty that elevate the organization as a whole is the ultimate goal of networking. The ability to promote positive social and world change through being an active participant is a testament to the power of a community network. Words have power. Who we say words to and how we respond to words will be a part of defining how far we can go with contemporary education. If we are indeed committed to performing miracles in education, achieving a purpose of educating all children, a goal previously described as impossible by many, then we must consider what it will require of leaders to promote the evolution of tribes in schools to move from stages two and three toward stages four and five. We believe the transition requires a shift from a single leader which is the hallmark of stage two and three toward a model of distributed leadership and PLCs that promote members to work together, connect around common values and missions, and finally to move beyond the confines of the building to connecting virtually with as many talented educators as possible. The strength of the cyber faculty is seen in its ability to empower a stage four tribe toward stage five moments of success.

We began our chapter with a reference to the quest for a unified theory. We see that the possibilities for achieving a unified and connected organization are possible when leaders strategically develop a conscientious approach to language in ongoing communication. It is this commitment to mission driven interactions coupled with the deliberate development of virtual networks that can make the possibilities for a unified and effective learning system possible.

Cultivating Leadership Camaraderie: Three Tiers of Virtual Networking

How is it possible for a principal or a teacher to work in a building filled with professionals, students, and administrators and feel isolated?

A network is, by definition, a series of connections. These connections are repeatable as opposed to a single contact. They can be a series of fiber optic cables that carry information across the nation or an ocean. They can be a series of people that share information through conversations in person or through digital wires.

An effective antidote to feeling alone or overwhelmed is to connect with other professionals who are dedicated to and working toward the same goals you are. When a group can work together to solve problems or generate possible solutions there are two important results: problems and challenges get solved faster and easier and participants report a sensation of relief and increased motivation. As the DuFours note, “the norms of a group help determine whether it functions as a high-performing team or a collection of people working together.” They go on to pose the challenge that a collaborative team should identify the commitments they are willing to make to one another. (2012, p728 Kindle)

Participation in a network provides intellectual stimulation and a sharing of ideas that can help learning systems solve problems quickly and efficiently. Virtual networks can also provide doorways for learners to share their learning publicly. Beyond this, it is helpful to anyone, even dozens of teachers in the same department or a group of principals across a county, to reach beyond their immediate view and see options and possibilities from other resources. There is the power of perspective through an expanded network.

There are times when the sensation of being alone or isolated is strong because of the isolation of teachers by schedule and space and for administrators by role and granular responsibilities. Virtual cyber networks are an anecdote. It becomes important for these kinds of leaders and teachers to connect with other professionals that can support them and share ideas.

We see three tiers for effective Cyber Networks:

Tier 1: Personal learning as the individual seeks open networks for connections

Tier 2: Formal and deliberate link within a learning environment

Tier 3: Formal and deliberate links between groups beyond our school on common projects

Individual Educators Personal Learning Network

Cyber Professional Learning Networks are dedicated to learning together and being present in both the physical and virtual spaces available. Once a professional learner opens the space of a learning community using the internet, he or she has become a member of the cyber PLN. Imagine a large meeting space on an open campus where teacher-learners read and publish cutting-edge information, knowledge, wisdom, questions, and joy connected to our profession. The space exists and it is virtual. Modern academic discussion and emotional expression about what is important to each of us impacts our students every day. An individual teacher

can immediately find out “what is happening” in our profession. In other words the Cyber-PLC meeting is 24/7 virtual meeting space. It is fluid, ongoing, and always available to its members.

Notable has the ascension of individual cyber faculty leaders who have created a following of global individual followers. Consider the reach via Twitter of Vicki Davis, a full time teacher and IT director from Georgia @Coolcatteacher with almost 200K followers. One of the rising examples of the modern principal and administrator is @EricShenigan who has gone on to become a best-selling author. We believe that one of the most outstanding teacher/ consultants on global connections and contemporary annotexting is Silvia Tolisano @Langwitches. Her ability to show fellow teachers how to employ social media in research is followed by thousands. By providing thousands of resources on his site ‘FreeTech4Teachers.com’, Richard Byrne has become a cyber colleague for educators’ worldwide @rmbyrne. Any individual educator cannot only connect with a cyber leader and network but can create one as well.

Leaders can consider implications for professional development here and how a faculty develops itself as individuals can report and information gleaned from individual networking. We have had the benefit and continue to have the benefit of working individually in both physical and shared spaces. Extending the reach of our professional circle is certainly informative but can also be inspiring. The first tier is an open one that can be highly informal if not random in the selections that educators make but can also be developed in concert with others for professional development purposes. How can a more formal approach be developed within a school?

The second tier of cyber faculty networking occurs on the school level. How do we develop ourselves as a profession within our organization? Whether formally stated or not there is a social contract between colleagues both administrative and instructional in a school. A collaborative culture is one of a learning system and a series of collegial circles. These circles should play and interplay with one another in positive and supportive ways. A key example of how electronic communication has improved and enhanced interaction and productivity in schools is through **curriculum mapping** which truly is a focused virtual PLC (Jacobs, 1997, 2004, 2008, 2012). By providing a virtual platform to examine curriculum pre-K-grade 12, alignment to standards, gap analysis, and assessment progress, all members of a learning institution cultivate healthy interdependence in service of monitoring the pathway of their learners. We have seen school communities flourish by the 24/7 access to the operational curriculum in each and every class in a school whether using Google Docs, Atlas Rubicon,

CurricuPlan, EduTect, eDoctrina, or Curriculum Mapper. These software platforms have changed the level and immediacy of virtual communication on the school and district level between schools in a feeder pattern.

A Tier 2 cyber faculty is a group that connects using any form of a network to connect and share because they cannot meet physically often enough to have all of the conversations they need to have to support student learning. This group may or may not work in the same building, district, or city. They do have a common goal and are dedicated to working through common goals or challenges together. A team working on designing units of curriculum together or common assessments might design a shared wiki or web based database to co-create together without having to meet at the same time. A group that needs to make decisions about purchasing resources or a curriculum program might post their observations and questions on a common wiki that is up for a period of time, maybe three weeks. After the three weeks the site is pulled down and all of the contributing voices are compiled and synthesized at a decision making event or meeting. However, the cyber faculty model allows for more voices to participate even if they are unable to attend the actual event or meeting.

An example of Tier 3 virtual networking and the power of cyber networks is in the American Association of School Administrators Collaborative. A dynamic and exciting program under the auspices of the AASA, the American Association of School Administrators, is the Collaborative. Started in the spring of 2014, facilitated by Mort Sherman, executive vice-president of AASA, and Bena Kallick, noted author of Habits of Mind, a collective group of thirty plus public school district superintendents made a pact to work together in an exciting new approach. Each superintendent working with his or her own faculty team selects an area needing attention and will receive feedback and critique from collaborative members via ongoing networks, a learning platform using EduPlanet21, and on-site meetings.

In particular the group wishes to:

“...open doors to new ventures, And, as a Collaborative member, you can be part of a virtual visiting team which provides new learning for you with colleagues and a Thought Leader and with an opportunity to share your expertise and validate your own work. Over the years, we’ve all benefitted from program evaluations, working with consultants, learning walks, and strategic plans. Today, communications are instantaneous and so is our work! And, practically, as superintendents, our time is spread thin but we still want to be immersed in new learning and continuous thoughtful improvement.”

Presently member schools are examining the integration of new literacies, re-imagining assessments and missions, considering imaginative approaches to equity, and possibilities for networking curriculum resources across the United States. We see this group as exemplifying bold moves which value future planning and breaking older isolated approaches to decision making.

Fundamentally they reflect a Tier 3 Network of superintendents from across the United States engaged in a collaborative effort to learn from one another and with one another with a particular focus on innovation. Furthermore, they have developed the concept of a “consultancy” where a thought leader will work with a specific school or district planning team to support innovation with the observation and input from the other collaborative administrators via webcast and coaching sessions. An examination of their key operating tenets reveals the commitment to a genuine and refreshed view of networking, action research, and formal partnership.

Focus on Collegial Solving and Creating

- The AASA Collaborative is a process for accountability that focuses on teaching, learning and the structures that support them. Designed to maximize a focus on problem solving that leads to action, the Collaborative offers three *peer to peer* methods for addressing key issues of policy and practice as schools work to meet evolving demands:
- System Reviews that include both internal and external models for assessing the quality of work focused on student performance.
- Resource Networks in which there is a sharing of ideas, effective practices and texts as well as the opportunity to build “critical friends” relationships.
- Study groups in which superintendents learn from one another through discussion and analysis of common challenges and promising and proven responses.

Collaboration

Working as critical friends, members apply the principles, standards and indicators to benchmark member districts' progress in advancing teaching and learning through these components:

- Standards and protocols which would guide continual improvement

- Professional learning and training for staff; Connections to universities
- Site visits
- Follow up support in person and through emerging and innovative forms of technology
- Consideration will be given to the creation of an AASA certification or accreditation for those districts which have successfully completed the collaborative process.

What is heartening about these efforts is that as Sherman, the director of the (Collaborative and executive vice-president of AASA, notes, “these superintendents rarely get a chance to dive deep into their schools issues and plans over time. Frequently it is brief, social, and at a conference. What we have is real research network. It is refreshing.” (Jacobs, personal correspondence, AASA Conference, San Diego, CA, February 25, 2015)

Cyber Networks Support a Connected Culture for Learning

In summary, a cyber faculty is best supported by individuals who have an open and inquisitive mindset. Once that mindset is embraced doors open for the adult learner with access to thousands of others. With such a powerful resource, supportive colleagues, and potential friends the isolation burden is lifted. We are not alone. The practical reality shift is that we no longer have to fit our professional communications into neat meetings that happen in a physical space called school. The freedom that comes from cyber faculty connections is one that allows us to work from anywhere, at any time, and with anyone. Contemporary leaders should embrace this notion and employ it in their own professional relationships.

Self-Regulating Leadership: A Contemporary Professional Education Board

With respect and integrity professionals in a developed field of practice, generate a means for self-monitoring. We see this trust in the medical and legal professions. There is an implicit understanding by the public that it is in their best interest to respect that skilled professionals are best suited to regulate the depth and breadth of knowledge, skills and judgement required to be effective in a specific line of work. The designation of a board who designs and regulates licensure, certification, and research and development of best practices is one of the logical next steps for educators. In education, we need a structure that represents our best interests, protects us from both oppression and self-sabotage. If anyone is to regulate who is worthy of representing the art and craft of contemporary teaching - it should be educators. Whether on the state, provincial, or national level, a self-

regulating board with the authority to strip teachers of their licenses if they cannot represent our profession with honor, integrity, and participation in authentic learning is akin to a medical board stripping a doctor of their medical license for malpractice. A professional educators' board could have the authority and ability to recognize what it takes to be a quality teacher using updated frameworks and thus protect teachers and administrators from school boards that may be unfamiliar with the changes in education and what the job description is today.

Leading Our Own Profession

A professional educators board must embrace contemporary capacities and dispositions of the right-now educator. Thus, protecting administrators and teachers as they show the courage to make bold moves. This professional educators board could mend the political and social barriers between the foundational fibers of our profession - teachers and administrators. The future of our field will have us all working as educators and committed to the success of the student as a unified profession. Ultimately a board will be providing oversight on the qualities and caliber of the profession it governs. The impact of that governance will be directly felt on the school level. Leading a new school environment with professionals prizing excellence in their craft will mean clarifying if not recasting the mission and purpose of a learning organization.

Leading with Updated Mission Statements: Injecting Modern Pedagogy

Central to revealing the operational premise on which a school runs can be found in its mission statement. In many ways the mission statement is an institutional declaration of its beliefs about teaching and learning. The very roles that a school claims to be taking on in relationship not only to the individual learners but to the community and society.

Mission driven learning environments tend to create a sense of community and a culture of collaboration. As Wiggins and McTighe note in *Schooling by Design* (2011), "The school's mission statement describes the essence of what the school as a community of learners is seeking to achieve. The expectations for student learning are based and drawn from the school's mission statement. These expectations are the fundamental goals by which the school continually assesses the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Every component of the school community must focus on enabling all students to achieve the school's expectations for student learning." Thus, in contrast to compliance-driven schools where leadership attempts to meet requirements, educators in a school with a meaningful mission have a purpose.

Our concern is that mission statements take into account the present tense in language that is actionable. This latter point ties to the earlier discussion of pedagogy that will be realized throughout a learning system. A twenty first century learning setting can build on the great classical goals from the past and at the same time consciously reflect the needs of contemporary learners. If a learning organization whether a school or otherwise, accepted the roles we have identified as foundational pedagogy, one would expect to see them vibrant and clear in a mission statement.

Consider these three examples:

- Tech Valley High School, Albany, NY

One of the hallmarks of this outstanding school program is the clear focus on developing career opportunities and student skill sets in engineering and nano-technologies while concurrently supporting the economic needs of the region. The mission statement certainly underscores this point for what is fundamentally a STEM school. Tech Valley represents a contemporary partnership school accomplished through collaboration between K-12 public schools, higher education, business, organized labor and government. Students work in research labs, participate in authentic experimentation, workplace internships, and solution building for society.

MISSION: Tech Valley High School provides a unique and innovative student-centered educational opportunity, engages students in current emerging technologies and supports the growth and economy of the region.

- High Tech High K-12- San Diego, California

Considered as a lighthouse school group for innovation, High Tech High K-12 represent eleven schools that operate under a set of four Design Principles: Personalization, Adult World Connection, Common Intellectual Mission, and Teacher as Designer.

High Tech K-12 Design Principles. In this regard the mission is embedded as part of these actionable premises.

Common Intellectual Mission

High Tech High schools are diverse and integrated. Enrollment is non-selective via a zip code-based lottery, and there is no tracking of students by perceived academic ability. All HTH students pursue a rigorous curriculum that provides the foundation for entry and success at the University of California and elsewhere, as well as

success in the world of work. Schools articulate common expectations for learning that value 21st century skills, the integration of hands and minds, and the merging of academic disciplines. Assessment is performance-based: all students develop projects, solve problems, and present findings to community panels. All students are required to complete an academic internship, a substantial senior project, and a personal digital portfolio. Teachers employ a variety of approaches to accommodate diverse learners, and recognize the value of having students from different backgrounds working together.

Thus, teachers and learners are producing project based learning products linked to problems and issues from the larger world. Teachers publish their curriculum projects and are co-learners with their students. The four design principles play out on the elementary, middle and high school levels.

Accountability for Innovation in a Mission Statement

One theme that will emerge in our book is the need to be strong and clear about assessing what matters most to prepare for the future. We will continually raise the question of being accountable for innovation. Thus, meaningful missions can also alter the purpose and activities of professional education organizations. The Canadian Education Association is a not for profit organization committed to identifying and supporting innovation in schools that are transformative. Specifically they aim to shed light on learning systems that are highly responsive to the range of student needs in contemporary life. Their byline reads “new ways of thinking and doing education.” CEA acts on their beliefs. Each year, the group gives the Ken Spencer Award: *The Ken Spencer Award for Innovation in Teaching and Learning was established with the generous contribution of Dr. Ken Spencer to: recognize and publicize innovative work taking place in schools and classrooms that is sustainable, has the potential of being taken up by others, and encourages transformative change in teaching and learning; encourage a focus on transformative change in schools; and provide profile for classroom innovation within school districts, schools, and the media.*

Reviewing the winners of the award is a refreshing reminder of what teachers and school personnel can produce when given the opportunity to meet a mission predicated on creative, timely innovation. What is clear is that CEA is providing a platform to spotlight best practice that can influence the work of others seeking to create modern learning environments. Among the winners for 2013 were:

- **HGI News and Entertainment** *Telling the neighbourhood's story, one broadcast at a time*
- **Henry G. Izatt Middle School – Pembina Trails School Division** Winnipeg, Manitoba

HGI News and Entertainment connects students to the pulse of their community through the production of current affairs broadcasts. Originally spearheaded by one Grade 8 classroom, this creative process has become a sustainable school-wide initiative that integrates student flex time, student voice, and inquiry-based learning focused on explorations of what interests' students.

- **HWDSB Commons** *A district wide blogging network that hones students' digital citizenship*
- **Hamilton Wentworth District School Board** Hamilton, Ontario

The HWDSB Commons is a collaborative virtual space that collects the myriad of voices of school district staff and students in a variety of public and private spaces, creating a stage where learners publish creative work and exchange feedback with their peers. Built on WordPress and BuddyPress – Open Source web tools offering features similar to Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr – the HWDSB Commons creates an interactive space for learners to connect within a classroom, across the hall, within the school district, and around the world. Students develop personal blogs as online learning portfolios, and manage their digital footprint in a safe space while learning what it means to be a responsible digital citizen.

The Canadian examples raise a question for us. What if a learning organization (such as a school) were to identify innovation as a belief for all members of its community to cultivate and develop? Certainly this could become operational with recognition and contributions by learners, teachers, and principals.

Conclusion - A Return to Grand Unification

- 7) Distinguish the differences between antiquated, classical and contemporary leadership approaches through the lens of leadership styles.
- 8) Lay out options for cultivating contemporary leadership approach based on distributive leadership both on-site and virtually highlighting implications for roles and responsibilities.
- 9) Explore how leadership can employ the deliberate use of language to shift the types of organizations revealed by quality of conversations.
- 10) Examine the cultivation of professional leadership camaraderie through virtual networks and cyber faculties.
- 11) Examine the possibility of a professional governing board in education to self-monitor our work and our craft.

- 12) Consider the power of leading school organizations with modern mission statements deliberately designed to reinforce innovation and creative approaches to learning.

Coming full circle we have attempted to consider the possibilities for leading to unification in our profession and in learning organizations. We have considered on multiple levels the necessity of a refreshed view of leadership on multiple levels. The basis for leadership as it is in teaching and learning is to analyze antiquated, classical, and contemporary approaches to leadership and to deliberately select the latter two as a basis for making informed leadership moves.

Drawing on the work of classics in the world of leadership, Situational Leadership and Tribal Leadership, we see that distributive leadership can take on great possibilities by breaking out of the rigid notion of decision making by roles versus by talent, interest, aptitude, and experience. What is more the weaving in of deliberate awareness as to connection and commitment to mission reflected in language and communication can keep a group in an organization focused on what matters most. Communication and connection is not only to be developed on the physical premises of a school but very importantly on the virtual level. We have identified three tiers of cyber networking, each of which can provide specific benefits to leaders and to their learners. Having reflected on the possibilities for groups of teachers and administrators to break into new ways of relating, it seemed essential to raise the long standing issue of standing up for a professional governing body on a more consistent basis as is done in law and medicine. Bringing the discussion full circle ultimately schools wishing to become contemporary learning environments need to lead with a clear and vibrant mission statement.

Leading is an areas that is prone to slippage back to habit and old roles. Upgrading our collective understanding of leadership makes it possible to imagine remarkable new learning environments with creative architecture, virtual scheduling, responsive student grouping practices, and wide ranging faculty configurations. What might a right now learning environment look like?

Adapted from: Logan, D., King, J. P., & Fischer-Wright, H. (2011). *Tribal Leadership: Leveraging Natural Groups to Build a Thriving Organization* (1st Harper Business pbk. ed.). New York: Harper Business.