

Text Seminar - Guiding Questions

Schools That Learn - Senge

Chapter 5 - The Industrial Age System of Education

9:20a-10:30a, Monday, August 8, 2011

1-Introductions- name, school, town or city, role in school, role in Network initiative

2-Ground Rules:

- ❖ **Whenever possible cite from the text to frame your remarks**
- ❖ **Watch your air time; if you have spoken more than once, leave room for others to speak**
- ❖ **Our goal is not to win an argument or make a point, but to expand our collective understanding**
- ❖ **Ask permission to depart from the current topic if you wish to bring up another line of inquiry**
- ❖ **Avoid giving advice or telling “war stories”**
- ❖ **Make the text your own by underlining/highlighting, annotating, etc. and keep it as an artifact of our work**

3-Opening Activity-

Senge’s central assertion appears in the fourth and final sentence of the first paragraph in our reading – and, his central dilemma follows in the subsequent, interrogative statement. Please have someone in the text seminar read each, aloud. The assertion and the question can frame a rich, collective inquiry flowing from a disciplined yet generative exploration of the text. This text, as well as the resulting questions and conversations, can serve as an important part of our shared body of knowledge and experience moving forward in the Network. We will revisit it at the close of our seminar, hoping to become clearer about meaning and action.

4-Seminar Q's

--From the text on p. 2 and 3, what factors should be mentioned when explaining the impact of both cosmology (*a view or doctrine describing the natural order of the universe*) and social engineering on the design of our schools? Are any of Senge's historical references new and/or surprising to us? Is their impact recognizable or tangible in the rhythms, tone, or "feel" of our schools?

--Citing from the text (p. 6-8), how does the author explain the challenges faced by schools and districts in sustaining improvement and change initiatives? Do the experiences he cites and his explanations hold true in our own experiences? (Participants should speak briefly from their perspective, stressing key factors that support or challenge Senge's claims.)

--Senge names five prevailing assumptions about learning that have major impact on our educational system. Take a few moments for everyone to briefly scan them on pages 9-16, and then ask volunteers to "interpret" each of the five in their own words. We may also ask if they resonate with our own experience.

--There are four industrial age assumptions laid out on p. 17-23. Please read aloud those assumptions/headings. These are daunting institutional forces/beliefs that Bill Bryan will help us unpack in his Change Leadership session. Therefore we will not delve into them here, now.

--What are some reasons the author cites (p. 27, 28) that the right conditions for innovation are materializing? Are we in agreement?

--In calling for a new prevailing metaphor, what are some of the reasons Senge suggests an ecological or "living systems" approach? To what degree do the ideas expressed in the bullets on p. 29 link to opportunities provided in the Network

With approximately 15 minutes remaining (10:15 a.m.), please revisit and re-state the central assertion and dilemma in the text from our **opening activity**. Ask each participant to write for a minute or two about how she/he might have further clarified values or assumptions,

--or have now formulated better questions

--or have been provoked

--or how such similar text discussions might be employed in the Network activities.



Have at least 5-6 people share out, with each volunteer limiting their comment to two or three sentences. Let them know you can't hear from everyone. Pause for a moment between each share out, for people to jot down notes and thoughts for the School Team to revisit as they prepare to open school and/or follow up from the Network's Summer Institute.

Thank the group members, remind them to save the text and their notes, and ask them to reconvene at 10:45 sharp for the panel.