

Phase 1
Team and Vision
Development

AN OVERVIEW of the phases



Phase 1: Team and Vision Development



Phase 1

Introduction

In undertaking any part, or all, of this program, your initial responsibility will be twofold: 1) You will identify a team and facilitate its work, and 2) you will assist in creating a vision for the team and the target project it elects to focus on. We invite you to dream about a world in which each student in your school can learn to be a happy, self-reliant, contributing citizen, to imagine a school in which each student and each adult is respected and encouraged. It may seem unrealistic to you, but you will not make progress unless some of you dream about possibilities that do not yet exist. **Preview:** In Phase 2 you will be asked to evaluate where you and your students are now.

Guiding Questions

These questions are designed to remind you that equity and diversity must be a focus of every educational initiative. Ideally, the values of equity and diversity should be an integral part of the the cultural fabric in our country, for they stand as the core values of democracy. At the very least, equity must be a part of every initiative in public education. You will probably recognize these questions, because some of them are a part of your district's standards development process. They are reflective questions that will help you improve education in your school, while taking individual student needs into account. Find your team's answers to these questions.

- What is your vision for each student? What do you want your students to know, be able to do, and be?

You cannot figure out what to do unless you know where you want to go. Check your local educational content and performance standards for an answer to this question, your state standards, if you are using



Guiding Questions

those, or competencies found in disciplinary models, such as the Wisconsin Developmental Guidance Model. They can tell you what your school and community have decided is best for students to learn. If you have not designed standards yet, be sure to consider all children as you develop your local standards or respond to this question.

- What is the optimum environment for growing and learning?

What do we know already about those factors that help each student learn? This means, what do we know about those elements that fit each individual student's learning style and preference? We may have to broaden our assumptions about good teaching practice and learning. What served us well when only certain students came to school, persisted with parent support, and did well under the system we offered may not work well for all students now (nor did it then).

What constitutes an optimum learning environment? What should a learning environment include? Do the elements change for different sites and age levels? Who creates that environment? What is the teacher's responsibility for creating the learning environment in the classroom? What other elements have an impact on the learning environment? Who has further responsibility for the learning environment?

- How would your education have been different if—
 - you had *not* seen people like you at all in your textbooks?
 - you had seen people like you in your textbooks?
 - your teachers had presented all sides of selected historical issues?
 - you had read literature and journals written by women, African Americans, Spanish-speaking peoples, the poor, and those with disabilities?
 - you had heard stories from Native American elders?
 - you had talked to Muslims, Hindus, Jews, pagans, and others who were not raised as Christians?



- you had learned in school to use exactly the same methods your parents used to teach you language and critical survival skills?
- Is there a difference between the statements “all students can learn” and “each student can learn?”
What are the benefits and pitfalls of each? Which do you prefer to use as you work to increase equity and benefit from diversity in your environment?
- To the individuals on the team: When have you had the experience of being “dealt out” of a situation you wanted very much to be a part of and how did it feel?
Were you ever pulled out of your classroom for a special program? Were you ever placed in a program that other students in your class were not assigned to? What were the results of those pullouts or placements? What were the biases that got in others’ way as they evaluated you?
- What are the filters that can cloud our lenses as we observe students?
What influences, perceptions, and assumptions affect how we evaluate our students? What do we see that is, perhaps, not even there? Where do those filters originate? How can we get rid of the ones that distort our opinions?

After you have carefully considered the above Guiding Questions as a team and individually, please continue to the Concepts, Goals, and Objectives for this phase, which are described in the next section.



Notes



Concepts

Building a Team

The initial task in this project is to select and develop a team. In the 1960s, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) did a lot of work on the benefits of teamwork as opposed to solo effort. NASA used exercises that demonstrated that no **one** person could make decisions or devise solutions as well as a team could. Wheatley (1997) states that in every act of observation more data are lost than are gained, suggesting that multiple points of observation could enhance the total view.

There are many benefits of working on a team, both to the individual and to the process. Everyone knows, however, that there are trade-offs. A *bad* team multiplies the deficiencies and difficulties of a single individual. As the benefits may be enhanced, so may the handicaps. With this in mind, we are focusing intently on team development and **threading team building and strengthening through all phases of this process**. Believing that the benefits of the team approach are realized if trust and vision are shared by the members, we call on project participants to engage in a deliberate and diligent team-formation process.

Working together is more powerful than working alone. As stated in the general introduction, teams or working groups are often formed in nature to accomplish difficult creative tasks. When a community of bacteria is about to run out of nourishment, it forms a cluster of "random walkers" that are sent out to scout the environment for appropriate food supplies. These "random walkers" carry a common understanding of their purpose as well as individual abilities to collect information and perceptions.

In the initial phase of this project, representatives of the site



BUILDING
A TEAM

To consider in building a team:

- start small, then build
- assure diversity
- make it voluntary, if possible
- provide time
- include reflection, planning, collaborative work, and training for the team

A model in nature



participating in the project will identify a group of “random walkers” as its designated action team. This team will accept as its charge working within a specific “target” system (a classroom, school, school district, office, organization, community) toward greater acceptance of diversity and the valuing of equity for *all* system members. To that end, the team will focus initially on establishing **itself** as a cohesive working entity with a shared vision and purpose.

Team-building activities will:

- identify skills and strengths of team members;
- lay out rules and roles for functioning;
- establish a team identity; nurture the growth of trust; clarify values and beliefs (like and different); and, finally,
- evolve and articulate a vision, both for the team and for the improvement of the target system, thereby benefiting each member of that system.

The team process will begin to clear the lenses of bias and stereotyping that affect everyone’s view. The process will especially affect those stereotypes that have unconscious, unintended negative effects on students and on working together with others.

Most of us have had some experience working on teams. From scouting or school projects to participation in high-level athletic endeavors to working with a research group, team experience can teach us many things. We learn that many of us working together can do more than any one of us; that pooling skills, understanding, efforts, and ideas enriches solutions and processes; that a certain *synergy* results when we work as a team that nurtures our effort and is not present when we work alone. Those of us who have never participated on a well-functioning team may have heard about how teams are supposed to function but may lack the experience of “knowing” how it feels to be a part of a group that shares vision, trust, competency, and collaborative functioning.

By engaging in good faith in the steps and activities for developing a team, you will, we hope, experience the best of being a part of a team. You will know what it means to be seen, heard, valued, and respected for your uniqueness and

Synergy: “In-creased effectiveness or achievement produced by combined action or cooperation.”

Oxford Encyclopedic English Dictionary,
1996

your shared qualities. You will feel the satisfaction and power of acting according to your vision and your beliefs. You may learn that you can make a difference and that blending your own gifts and energy with those of people who share your vision increases the impact that you can have on the world.

Creating a Vision

One is hard pressed to think of any organization that has sustained some measure of greatness in the absence of goals, values, and missions that become deeply shared throughout the organization.

Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*

One of the key elements of highly effective teams is shared vision—a guiding idea or image of the best that can be. For athletic teams, this vision grows with early successful performance, either in practice or in contests. Coaches have long known the importance of a compelling vision; that concept is now widely recognized by corporate leaders and organizational managers as well. Meg Wheatley (1996) writes about vision as central to the process of an organization. She asserts that organizations are most productive when living their mission. Peter Senge states that “if any one idea about leadership has inspired organizations for thousands of years, it’s the capacity to hold a shared picture of the future we seek to create” (Senge, 1990, p. 9).

In *The Fifth Discipline Field Book*, pages 298-300, Senge offers a set of precepts for building a shared vision. These



CREATING A VISION

“I dream things
that never were,
and ask, ‘Why
not?’ ”

--Robert F.
Kennedy,
adapted from
George Bernard
Shaw



include the belief that every organization has a destiny, a deep purpose that expresses its reason for existing; that visions which tap into that deeper sense of purpose have a unique power to engender aspiration and commitment, that the heart of building vision is developing processes which allow people to speak from the heart about what matters to them regarding the purpose of the work they are doing, and to be heard.

Lacking shared vision, people will mechanically perform their jobs, will try to care about what they are doing, will do the best they can without a compass. Senge says that people may passively accept the meaning they are given, or they may feel resentful, but they will not feel enrolled (p. 300). At this point, you will be asked to identify what *you* consider the ideal vision for your system--the "blue sky" version. In Phase III, you will focus that vision on goals, but now is the time to dream your wildest dreams.

You will find in the next section activities designed to assist you in developing a common vision for creating an environment that expects and supports the best educational environment for all children. We have no doubt that you and your colleagues have long held the values that underpin that vision. We now ask you to engage in a process that will ensure that each child gets the best we can provide in education.

Getting Started

The first goal of Phase 1 focuses on developing the expertise of the team.

The initial task will be to identify members of the team, looking for the skills and experiences needed for the project. Team members should be committed to the project chosen, be willing to participate in a change process that will increase equity and diversity in the system on which they will be working, and be able to address key components and constituents of the target system.

A second goal is designed to provide participants with opportunities to reflect on the "blue sky" version of their ideal system and assist them in articulating that ideal.

Each goal is supported by objectives that specify tasks related to goal achievement.

The activities will help your team reflect on its role, clarify its mission, and move forward. Activities are designed to integrate equity, teambuilding, reflection, and evaluation, while working toward positive outcomes for each objective. The activities will help teams perform tasks and get results. They will begin to shape how you look at a system with an eye toward equity for each student.

Tips

- Use agendas: Purpose, Topics, Time Guidelines
- Choose a facilitator (focuser, opener, closer)
- Choose a note-taker (key subjects, decisions, carry-overs)
- Work on the agenda for the next meeting
- Evaluate the meeting

Adhere to the "100-Mile Rule" (Everyone gives full attention . . . no one gets called out of the meeting unless the disruptions would occur if the meeting were 100 miles away.)



Goals

Objectives

Activities



Notes



Goals and Objectives

The activities listed in this section are included in their entirety. You will find the activity sheets immediately after the Summary Chart.

Goal I. To establish a team to work on an issue of importance to your school.

Positive Outcomes:

- The issue you choose will enhance equity for students.
- A team is chosen to work on the issue, using the process outlined in this book.
- Team membership is finalized and disseminated to all staff.
- Team ground rules are determined.
- Team members share and listen to each other respectfully.
- Members identify and discover a common purpose.

Objective I.1. To identify members of the team and the skills and experiences needed on the team.*

Activity: Team Selection

Evaluation: Is the team selected? Is it diverse racially, ethnically, by socioeconomic status, by gender, by disability, by religion, by role (parent, teacher, support staff, students, etc.)? Has everyone in the school and community been notified of the opportunity?

Objective I.2. To identify roles, functions, and skills of team members.

Activity: Five Card Draw
Activity: Innovate with C.A.R.E. Personal Profile



Goal I

BUILDING A TEAM

*Resources available in Supplemental Materials applicable to team building:

- Stages of Team Growth
- Ten Strategies for a Successful Team
- Notes on Conflict Resolution
- Notes on Mediation



Goal I
Objectives

Evaluation: Do members of the team recognize the strengths they and the other members bring to the team? Are there different types of skills available among the team members?

Objective I.3: To establish relationships and trust among members of the team.

Activity: Acknowledging One's Personal Cultural History
Activity: Describing Your Personal Vision
Activity: Common Denominators
Activity: Identity Molecule

Evaluation: Is the team meeting regularly to work collaboratively on a common purpose? Can members accept differences in values and opinions among members?

Objective I.4. To establish team ground rules.

Activity: Organizational Principles Workshop
Activity: Ground Rules Development (See Guidelines on Ground Rules in Supplemental Materials)

Evaluation: Do ground rules exist? Are they followed when the team meets? Are they changed when things don't work?

Objective I.5. To establish a way to deal with differences among members.

Activity: Review Notes on Conflict Resolution (Supplemental Materials)
Activity: Review Notes on Mediation (Supplemental Materials)

Evaluation: Can team members use "I" statements when differences occur? Do they direct the team's attention to "Notes" when review is needed?

Objective I.6. To share personal beliefs and values.

Activity: Checklist for Personal Values

Activity: Discovering Our Differences

Activity: Ethnic Humor

Evaluation: Have team members talked about or listed their own and the team's values, going beyond an assumption of shared values? When there are different values among team members, can all values be accepted? Can the team begin to list core values that the school or the organizational system can reflect?

Objective 1.7. To develop ways to evaluate activities.

Activity: Grade Your Partner

Activity: Evaluating the Environment

Evaluation: Is the team beginning to see that evaluation of success cannot take place unless there are agreed-upon benchmarks for success? Will the benchmarks be diverse and creative?





Goal II

CREATING A
VISION

Objectives

TIP:
See Glossary in
Appendix

Goal II. To develop a vision for the team and for the targeted effort of the project.

Positive Outcomes:

- Team members begin to develop effective and respectful working relationships.
- The team works with other staff to establish the system it will work on within the district.
- A common intention is established by the team.
- A glossary of terms is developed.
- A purpose that all can agree on is written down.
- A list of specific team goals is published.

Objective II.1. To share hopes and wishes for the project.

Activity: Heart Meaning

Activity: Imagine

Activity: Hopes & Desires Conversation

Activity: What If . . . ?

Evaluation: Has the team talked about what it really wants to do and the effort it will take to achieve its plan?

Objective II.2. To define terms to be used in developing the project.

Activity: Developing a Common Language

Evaluation: Has the team worked out a common understanding of volatile or politically charged words? Has a glossary been started?

- Objective II.3.** To identify the target system for the project.
- Activity:* Definition of a Target System (Supplemental Materials)
- Activity:* Selecting a Target System
- Activity:* Potential Target System Worksheet
- Evaluation:* The team has decided on a target for its work.
- Objective II.4.** To articulate a shared idea of the purpose of the project.
- Activity:* Looking Back
- Activity:* Vision of the Future
- Evaluation:* A purpose that all can agree on is written down.
- Objective II.5.** To establish clear *team* goals that are congruent with your vision.
- Activity:* Backing Into Goals
- Evaluation:* A list of team goals is disseminated to all publics.





Before You Move On . . .

Reflective Questions

- Did these objectives assist you in getting the team established?
What kind of results did you get?
What worked, what didn't work?
- Did these objectives help you establish your purpose?
What kind of results did you get?
What worked, what didn't work?
- Did you meet any personal goals?
- In what ways has your knowledge about culture and equity changed? What are you more aware of regarding equity and culture?
- Review the Guiding Questions. Do you want to add to your responses?

STOP here . . .

Please complete the Linking Worksheet at the end of the materials for this phase.

- Are you ready for the next phase?

Summary Chart 1

Phase 1. Team and Vision Development

Goal I: To establish a team to work on an issue of importance to your school

Positive Outcomes

- The issue you choose will enhance equity for each student.
- A team is chosen to work on the issue, using the process outlined.
- Team membership is finalized and disseminated to all staff.
- Team ground rules are determined.
- Team members share and listen to each other respectfully.
- Members identify and discover a common purpose.

Objectives	Activities	Evaluation
I.1 To identify members of the team and the skills and experiences needed on the team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Selection 	Is the team selected? Is it diverse by race, by gender, by disability, by religion, by role, by SES?
I.2 To identify roles, functions, and skills of team members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five Card Draw • Innovate with C.A.R.E. 	Do team members recognize the strengths they and the others bring to the team? Are there different types of skills among members?
I.3 To establish relationships and trust among members of the team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledging Personal Cultural History • Describing Your Personal Vision • Common Denominators • Identity Molecule 	Is the team meeting regularly to work collaboratively on a common purpose? Can members accept differences in values and opinions among members?
I.4 To establish team ground rules.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Principles • Ground Rules Development 	Do ground rules exist? Are they followed when the team meets? Are they changed when they do not work?
I.5 To establish a way to deal with differences among members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Notes on Conflict Resolution* • Review Notes on Mediation*. 	Can team members use "I" statements when differences occur? Can they direct the team's attention to "Notes" when review is needed?
I.6 To share personal beliefs and values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Values Checklist • Discovering Our Differences • Ethnic Humor 	What are the values of the team and its individual members? Can all values be accepted? Are core values emerging?
I.7 To develop ways to evaluate activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade Your Partner • Evaluating the Environment 	Does the team realize that specific indicators are needed to evaluate programs?

- See Supplemental Materials

Goal II. To develop a vision for the team and for the targeted effort of the project.

Positive Outcomes:

- Team members develop effective working relationships.
- Team works with other staff to establish the system within the district it will work on.
- A common intention is established the team.
- A glossary of terms is developed.
- A purpose that all can agree on is written down.
- A list of specific team goals is published.

Objectives:	Activities:	Evaluation
II.1 To share hopes and wishes for the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heart Meaning • Imagine • Hopes/Desires Conversation • What If . . . ? 	Has the team talked about what it really wants to do and the effort it will take to achieve its plan?
II.2 To define terms to be used in developing the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a Common Language 	In order to make sure everyone is talking about the same thing, has the team defined terms and begun a glossary that fits its hopes and wishes.?
II.3. To choose the target system for the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of a Target System* • Selecting a Target System 	Has the team established its target?
II.4 To articulate a shared idea of the purpose of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking Back • Vision of the Future 	Has the team and the rest of the staff agreed on a common purpose for this project?
II.5 To establish clear team goals that are congruent with your vision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backing into Goals 	Has the team disseminated a list of goals for its own work to the entire staff and interested constituents?

* See Supplemental Materials