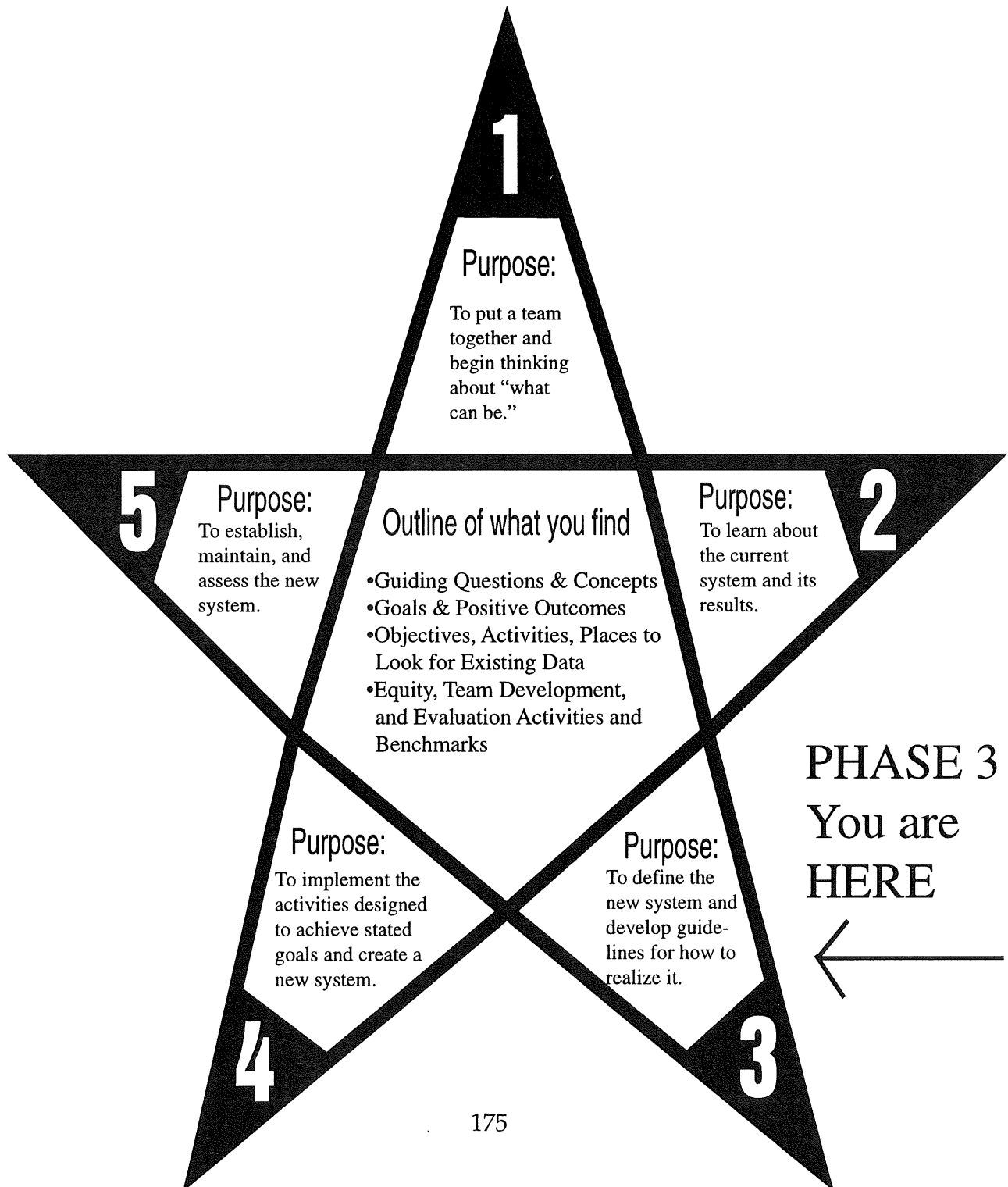


Phase 3
Focusing and
Planning the Dream

AN OVERVIEW of the phases



Phase 3: Focusing and Planning the Dream

Introduction

In this phase, you will begin to narrow the scope of your new efforts. You have looked at the “blue sky” version of what you want to have happen for children in your school in Phase I. Phase 2 told you where the gaps are. Now you can focus on the system and on positive outcomes for students who can do better. You can begin to develop a plan to target their success. We will look at the culture of the groups and begin to see their different and their similar needs.

Planning is as important as the action of doing. It is a part of the learning process. Some graduate schools help their students prepare for major examinations by giving them the following advice. On a timed test, they advise their students to first determine exactly how much time will be allotted for each response. For example, in a four-hour examination with three questions, each response might theoretically take 80 minutes ($4 \text{ hours} \times 60 \text{ minutes} = 240 \text{ minutes}$ divided by three questions = 80 minutes). Second, they advise students to look at one question and determine when by the clock the 80 minutes will expire, write that time down, then determine when 40 minutes will expire, and write that down. They then suggest that the students take 40 minutes, *fully half of the time allotted for the response*, to outline and plan their response to that question. The second 40 minutes is allocated to actually writing the response, using the detailed outline. Responses to each question should be timed in the same manner.

This may seem like an unbelievable amount of time for planning, but a student who was coached this way told the authors that the professors have found that their students do much better if they force themselves to take the time to plan before they write. Likewise, this phase asks your team to plan carefully before acting.



Phase 3

*“If you do what
you’ve always done,
you’ll get what
you’ve always got.”*



Guiding Questions

In the organization we really want to build, what structures (policies, reward systems, and resource-allocation mechanisms) would support our vision?

Senge, et al., Fifth Discipline Fieldbook, p.41

Guiding Questions

These guiding questions are designed to help you integrate good teaching and optimum learning with the principles of equity. They are reflective questions and will take some thoughtful discussion by your team before you start the activities in this phase. Reminder: See "What Is Success?" in Phase 2 to review your definition of success.

- What do you need to do to make your environment one in which most students can learn? For whom are you creating the environment now?

If you want to ensure greater success for all students, even those who have not done well in your school, you must make some changes. Some of those changes may be directed outside the school, some will be directed to internal systems and processes.

Some changes will be directed at goals, some at infrastructure, some will focus on methods and tools. Obviously, you can control the internal systems more easily than the external ones, but changes are not made in a vacuum.

In Phase 1, you were able to dream what might be. In Phase 2, you looked at your results and examined patterns that showed which groups of students were not succeeding in your system. Now is the time to focus the dream and discover new methods for teaching and learning, especially for those who are not doing well.

- What filters (biases, stereotypes, expectations) are affecting the way you look at some groups of students?

Remember, we are often not to blame for having learned the biases and stereotypes that affect how we see some children and their abilities. We have usually received them into our subconscious passively. However, it is our responsibility to

examine those filters and remove them from our lenses, especially when they have a negative effect on our expectations for some students.

- Where will you concentrate your efforts? Whose contributions to your school need to be more visible or seen in a more positive light? What will need to change to achieve your vision?

In this phase, you will begin to focus on “very reasonable goals” that can be achieved and that take your system toward the “blue sky” vision you created in Phase I. New dreams for your system will be impossible to achieve without a corresponding commitment to appropriate methods and tools, so you will need to think about what new skills people will need to succeed and how you can provide them.

- Do you feel that all the students in your school are doing well?

If not, do you think that you as educators may be able to find other strategies that may work to include those who are on the margins? If you are a teacher, how do you feel about having more of “those students” in your classroom, the ones who are not succeeding in your system?

- Do you know how to write out a plan that everyone can understand and take part in? How can you sell the plan?
- How do you feel about this resource and planning guide approach so far?



- Related reading available in Supplemental Materials:
- *A Deming Primer*
- Biosketch of W. Edwards Deming (SM-5)
- Deming's 14 Points applied to education (SM-6)
- What is consensus? (SM-7)
- Common Errors in Selecting Projects (SM-8)
- The 7 Deadly Diseases (SM-9)
- The 85/15 Rule (SM-10)



Concepts

Mental models are the images, assumptions, and stories which we carry in our minds of ourselves, other people, institutions, and every aspect of the world. They are often untested and unexamined, many times flawed.

—Senge, 1994

Concepts

Setting Reasonable Goals

There are two key concepts you will work on during this phase:

- *Developing specific goals and objectives to achieve the vision you set in Phase 1; and,*
- *Planning to achieve those goals.*

Goals give teamwork meaning (Schmoker, 1996). What motivates and energizes effective teams are 1) "a clear, elevating goal and 2) a results-driven structure."

The interdependency between teamwork and tangible improvement develops when the team sets its vision, develops its goals, and works to achieve those goals. For example, setting standards for student achievement is not enough if the school and its community do not discuss the standards, determine strategies for achieving them, try out the strategies, change what needs to be changed, and plan for additional strategies. Always, you will have your "eyes on the prize"—the results you are trying for.

Key skills needed in goal-setting are reflection and inquiry. We need to slow down our thinking processes to become more aware of how we form our mental models ("The fastest way to get students information is to lecture." "There is only one way to learn math.") about teaching and learning, and we need to hold conversations in which we openly share views and develop knowledge about our own and each others' assumptions. Our fellow team members are invaluable resources in this process.

Concepts

Planning to Achieve Goals

In this phase, your team will be involved in planning activities that enable you to achieve your vision.

You will be tempted to say, "That won't work here." or, "We tried that and it didn't work." (But did you try it conscientiously, was it effectively implemented? Why didn't it work?)

A traditional resistance we find is: "I don't have the authority to plan for the district." (You don't need to wait for approval to plan. You will always have to sell and, perhaps, adapt the plan.)

Try to move forward, despite those doubts, and find new ways to do new things to achieve your goals.

There are key aspects of planning. We need to know what will be done, when, and by whom.

When deciding who will do something, it helps to have more than one person responsible for a given task, especially if that task is a major one. It also helps to discuss backup systems, or fail-safe processes that allow someone to ask, "Are you having difficulty finishing that task? How can we help?" Talking about a process ahead of time saves frustration, stress, and embarrassment when normal events prevent a responsible person from finishing a task for which she/he has volunteered.

Sometimes, we need help deciding what to do. That may be because we simply do not know what else can be done. This is not something about which we need be dismayed or defensive; we cannot possibly know everything, especially about other cultures and what they value. Our job as educators is to find out about how



See the
Introduction for
further
discussion
about "culture."

- the cultures of our students work, and how we can best work
- with the forces within a culture to help its children succeed,
- given that educational expectations within each culture may
- be different.

Goals and Objectives

The first goal within this phase focuses on determining what you need to do to achieve the vision you established in Phase 1. You have begun to notice the gaps between what you envision (Phase 1) and what is (Phase 2), and you will begin to build on and develop strategies to change what is to get to what can be.

The second goal provides opportunities for planning: designing reasonable goals, objectives, and activities; outlining a plan; beginning the work of selling and implementing the plan.

Goal I. Determine what is happening that prevents the system from achieving the vision.

Positive Outcomes:

- Demographics of the chosen system are reported in a simple, user-friendly format.
- An “assets” sheet or report describing the positive contributions of diverse groups in the system is developed for general dissemination.
- The team will have identified the gaps between “what is” as found in Phase 2 data collection, and “what can be” at the end of the process.
- The team describes its vision for what the system will be five years from now, using flip chart paper, or a model.
- Each team member will have written a statement describing his/her commitment to achieve the goal(s) and shared it with other team members.

Objective I.1. The team will describe the demographics of the population engaged in the issue in line to be changed (the “target system”) and those systems surrounding the target system.
For example, if you are studying school dropouts (the target system), you will need to collect information on



Goal I

Moving
From Blue
Sky to
Manageable
Reality



REMINDER:
Activities in full
follow this
section.

the students who are dropping out and if there are patterns that are evident, determine how the demographics of those dropping out compare to the rest of the school population; you will need to look at policies and procedures that affect dropouts as well as community pressure, state laws, or parent involvement.

Activity: Who Are We Now?

Evaluation: Can you describe the population demographics by race, gender, language spoken, disability, income level, and other characteristics for your school and the system(s) surrounding the target system? The surrounding systems might be the neighborhood, entire city, county, state.

Objective I.2. The team describes its system five years from now in a chart, paper, or model.

Activity: What Do We Want to Create?

Evaluation: You have many pages of chart paper filled with the answers to questions 1-11 in this activity. You have also answered the question "How would we measure our results?" for each question. All team members have contributed. The results give you ideas for goals to work for.

Activity 2: Creating Scenarios

Evaluation: Has the team worked together to create a scenario that you feel can be successful to help your students achieve better? Can it be described to those not on the team? Is it reasonable, plausible?

Objective I.3. The team begins to fill in the gaps between what is and what can be.

Activity : Who Has Been Left Out?
Activity : What Has Been Done Before?
Activity : How Will We Know When We Get There?

Evaluation: Can the team determine, from the data collection in Phase 2, what segment of the school population is not achieving as it should be?

- Does the team know what has been done by 1) its own school system, or 2) other school systems, to increase achievement of those students falling through the cracks?
- Has the team overcome its defensiveness about the school's role in poor student achievement in some populations?
- Has the team tried to collect research on similar groups and how other schools have helped them achieve? Does the team know what has worked, what has not?
- Does the team know how to determine the success of its initiatives? What are the indicators?

Goal II. Based on what the team and others want to work for, the team chooses reasonable goals for its work and begins to implement strategies designed to attain those goals.

Positive Outcomes:

- After generating a long list of possible goals designed to attain the new dream, the team narrows its focus and chooses a few very reasonable goals to work on.



Goal II
IMPLEMENTING
EFFECTIVE
CHANGE

Summary Chart 3

Phase 3: Focusing and Planning the Dream

Goal I. To determine what is happening that prevents your system from achieving the vision.

Positive Outcomes

- Demographics of the chosen system are reported in a simple, user-friendly format.
- An "assets" sheet or report describing the positive contributions of diverse groups in the system is completed and disseminated.
- The team will have identified the gaps between "what is" in Phase 2 and "what can be" at the end of the process
- The team describes its vision for what the system will be five years from now in a chart, paper, model, etc.
- Each team member will have written a statement describing his/her commitment to achieve the goal(s) and shared it with other team members.

Objectives	Activities	Evaluation
I.1 To describe the demographics of the population within the system and the system surrounding the target system	• Who Are We Now?	A description of the population of the surrounding area and a description of the population within the target system, by race, gender, language, and other characteristics is developed.
I.2 To describe the system five years from now in a chart, paper, model.	• What Do We Want to Create? • Creating Scenarios	The team can show others, in a model or chart, what the target system can look like five years from now.
1.3 To fill in the gaps between what is and what can be	• Who Has Been Left Out? • What Has Been Done Before? • How Will We Know When We Get There?	The team has looked carefully at who is falling between the cracks and documented what has been done before to save those students. The team has developed indicators of success.

Goal II: To choose reasonable goals for the team's work and to begin to implement strategies designed to attain these goals.

Positive Outcomes:

- After generating a long list of possible goals designed to attain the new dream, the team narrows its focus and chooses a few very reasonable goals on which to work.
- The outline of a plan is written and shared with other members of the community.
- Others begin to work with the team

Objectives:	Activities:	Evaluation
II.1 To choose one or two goals that help achieve the new vision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Five Why's 	The team is working together efficiently. It can look at the target system objectively and, without defensiveness, find reasons for the success or failure of its own system.
II.2 To develop a plan for achieving the new vision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stratification and Is/Is-Not Analysis • Cause/Effect Diagram • The Planning Grid 	The team is able to use diagrams to illustrate what is happening in the system. It has developed a good draft of the plan it wants to undertake.
II.3 To begin groundwork for implementing the plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployment Chart • Top-Down Flow Chart 	The team has begun figuring out who can best complete the tasks in the plan. Prospective new members are identified, and a reasonable timetable is developed.