

ED 592 Capstone
Exploring New Roles

Ändern, Cambiano, Mudam, Change Around the World

"A transformation or transition from one state, condition, or phase to another." (Dictionary.com). This definition of change describes the continual transformation of fundamental philosophies in how to teach our children. Our current education system is in the process of ongoing change that can produce both positive and negative results for teachers, students and the community.

For this capstone, I am choosing the following factors involved in change:

1. Conflict, Internal and External
2. Community Involvement
3. Personal Efficacy

Conflict, Internal and External

"People don't resist change, they resist being changed." (Merickel). With House Bills 3565 and 2991 bringing external changes to education, teachers and staff often feel overwhelmed with new responsibilities and may sometimes have internal conflicts due to philosophical differences. However, internal conflict can lead to a cycle of positive external changes that can help teachers reflect on their current teaching strategies and classroom curriculum in order to "strive for continuous improvement in our effort to maximize student learning." (Baker). This pattern of change leading to conflict and conflict leading to change represents the continual transformation of our education system.

Community Involvement

Living in the small, rural community of Oakridge, Oregon, I have witnessed first-hand the power of community involvement in effecting positive change with the local school system. Two years ago, our district asked the community to pass a bond to improve facilities and services for our students. A key factor in the bond's success was the return of 7th and 8th graders to the middle school and out of the high school. With impending renovations and additions, a significant amount of funds were necessary to bring our school district into the 21st Century. Most of the community, and especially parents, strongly supported and were even passionate about this bond. The community became involved because this "change" was important to them. Meaningful change is crucial for community involvement. Another significant bond issue involved bringing additional technology infrastructure to the schools. Several community members were very outspoken in support of more technology access to students. They view technology as the

vehicle for students to succeed in our high-tech society, and rightfully so. With poverty being so high and free and reduced lunches reaching 70%, the community is wise to be proactive to ensure that future generations of students can achieve high academic standards and be productive members of the work force.

In contrast, some citizens were not in support of the bond measure. Statistically, most of those were elderly, fixed-income individuals. This resistance to change in our district was a "necessary evil" because it made people really think about why our community needed this bond. Citizens had to verbalize their feelings and communicate with one another. This was a positive outcome of community involvement in educational changes. This debate is another example of the continuous transformation of education: change leads to conflict and conflict leads to change.

Personal Efficacy

Because efficacy is defined as effectiveness, I decided to reflect on my effectiveness in the changes in technology in our school district. Hired as the district Technology Coordinator, I see my role categorized in three primary areas: infrastructure, training, and support. In addition to maintaining the physical computer network, I am also responsible for training teachers and staff in implementing technology into their classrooms. I believe that the desire to be effective is key in dealing with change. Having a constantly evolving job, I have learned the value of being flexible and creative. Every day is a new day and performing my job in the most efficient manner is a constant challenge. I do not face my challenges alone, however. A fellow student observes that "for teachers who are already on overload, talk of more change can lead to burnout if not dealt with properly." (Green) Sometimes it's hard to imagine not being on overload. I agree with this module that change does involve stress, personal and professional. By managing the stress of change in my job responsibilities, I feel that I can become more effective in handling change in a positive and productive way.

Conclusion

Ändern, Cambiano, Mudam. All these words mean change. Change is inevitable. Change is necessary. Change leads to conflict and conflict leads to change. Our education system undergoes continuous transformation. It is constantly evolving and educators face the challenge of handling the stress that change brings. As educators, we must channel inner conflict about change into innovative thinking and creative problem solving.

REFERENCES

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