

Diversity Catalyst Team Meeting
With Kate Kirkham
May 12-13, 2004

Notes:

Attending: Dolores Arce Kaptain, Director of Alianzas; Tony Delong, Chairman MECCLC; Tom Fuhrman, Human Development Specialist; Jose Garcia, Extension Associate Community Development; Jinny Hopp, Human Development; Yvonne Matthews, Lincoln University Human Resource Development; Vivian Mason, TCRC Coordinator; Julie Middleton, System Program Director; Wayne Moore, Regional Director; David Myers, Youth Specialist; Brenda Procter, State Specialist Consumer Family Economist; Amie Schleicher, Livestock; Celeste Vanderbrugen, Community Development Specialist

Special guests: Tom Henderson, Vice Provost and Director of Extension & Michael Middleton, University of Missouri Deputy Chancellor

We opened the two day retreat with a charge provided by Extension Director, Tom Henderson. He communicated his strong support for the work of the team, asking that we keep this topic in the forefront at all times. He stressed that he is counting on us to keep it “in the face” of the administrative leadership team.

Deputy Chancellor, Michael Middleton provided insight into the importance of diversity work in higher education and at the University of Missouri. He indicated strong campus support for the work of the Catalyst Team. He mentioned that there would be a campus-wide strategic plan for diversity and he trusts that our plan will be in alignment with that plan, allowing a strong foundation for successful work in the area of diversity.

Kate was introduced. She provided an overview of the next two days, the goals and the process that will be undertaken.

She provided background information on herself. She indicated that the goal of this retreat would be to help the organization value and manage difference. She also indicated that she would provide some resources for change. She described her role with Elsie Cross, indicating that they work very closely together. Kate reminded the team that in Sioux City she trained ND and MO CASD teams. Participants included the leadership team of extension in each state. This is key to having them provide the kind of leadership necessary to move forward in areas of diversity.

Hope by Kate: Kate emphasized the importance of individual work to change systems. Has seen changes in systems for the better. People need to pay attention to how systems operate not the individual experience of people. Structural inertia – holding on to old ways.

“Hybrid” Meeting

Challenges

1. **Task** – Q. What is it at the center of what we are doing?
 - a. The key is to change extension services to better serve communities in our areas. Our role as Catalyst Team members is to help Extension do it, not do it for the organization. Kate then emphasized the importance of good theory, and the benefits of having it as a foundation to guide behavior. It also serves as a practical base.
 - b. learn the theory
 - c. use the theory
2. **Roles** – Each person has multiple roles, positions, and identity in our society. An example may reflect that one may be a white person, a woman, a mother, etc.
3. **Diversity** – Extremely demanding of membership. . . We are a coalition of interests. We have to manage our own diversity, interaction or identity. Time, attention, and emotion are all needed to be effective.
4. **Partnership** – We can work together to resolve issues. We are a partnership through this team.

Kate then discussed the process that leaders need to manage diversity in organizations.

Legitimacy – If the organization does not feel this is legitimate, then they will not act on it. Why is it important for us to work on this issue? Outcomes! Hold folks accountable. We have made progress in our organization, but not enough. We must focus on outcomes and the evidence of our success.

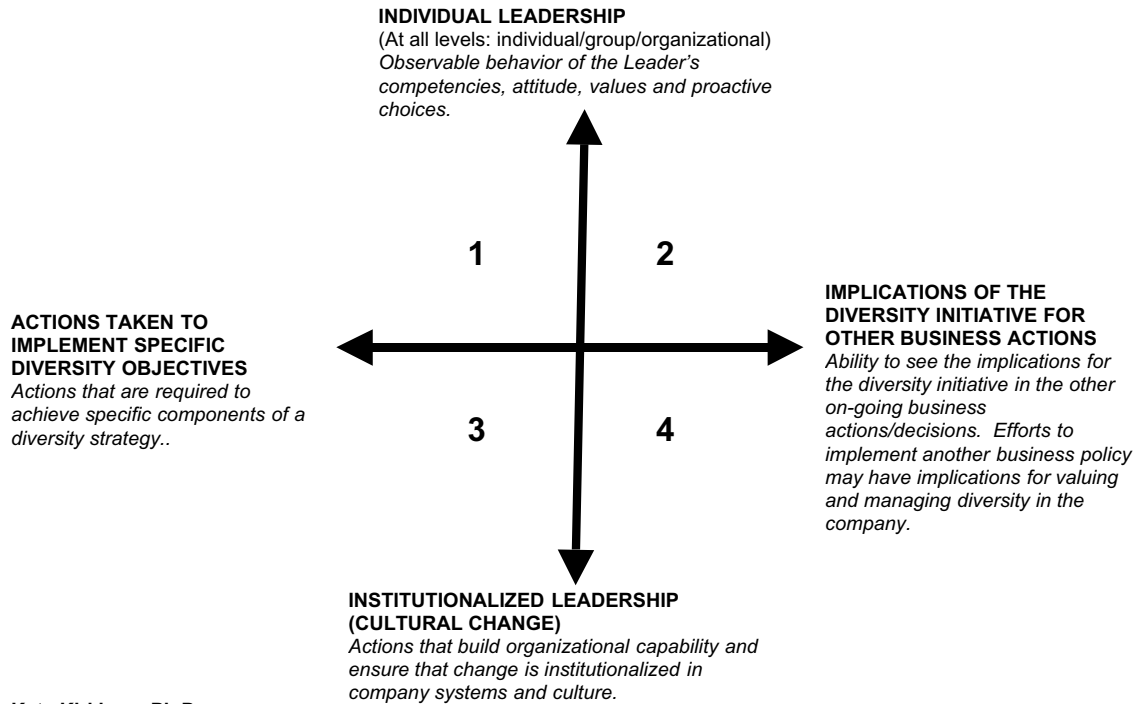
Framework – What do you do? What is the big picture?

Emotions – Leaders must be able to handle a range of emotion. How to we handle the apathetic emotions, as well as the high intensity? Look for the arc. Keep relationships together and see where the changes need to result, i.e. the system. An excellent book for recommended reading is “Seeing Systems” by Barry Oshry. It allows one to take a look at systems in an organization rather than specific people.

Competency Building – As you pay attention to the roles that people play in extension, also pay attention to competencies that people have. One must have knowledge and awareness of diversity, and skills for working in this area.

Kate then called the group’s attention to the Leadership Model Table. We want to be in the bottom right quadrant in our diversity work “SO THAT” we have change.

LEADERSHIP MODEL IMPLEMENTING A STRATEGIC DIVERSITY INITIATIVE



Kate Kirkham, Ph.D.
Elsie Y. Cross Associates, Inc. 1997

The discussion below elaborates on this leadership model.

1. Quadrant 1: This quadrant would include activities such as one going to an event.
Example: Black history month event, or Spanish heritage event. – This would encompass individual actions. It allows one to learn something.
2. Quadrant 2: This quadrant gives voice to multicultural experiences.
Example: Business brings in immigrants to work, but nothing else. Preacher helps make connections. In this way, there is application of what has been learned.
3. Quadrant 3: This quadrant would include holding annual events.
Example: Sharing our diversity with campus.
4. Quadrant 4: In this section of the quadrant, practices go on even when the leader leaves organization.
Example: Diversity becomes part of performance evaluation, regardless of the officer.

For the evening activity, Kate led the team through a Simulation called “Star Power” that focused on power, privilege and wealth in organizations. Through role play, the team discovered how some groups are treated and how they feel about that treatment within organizations

DAY 2 Thursday

Yvonne and Julie began the day a “check in” with the group. The following reflects the discussion.

How are you feeling about yesterday?

It is great to get out what is going on a personal level in the organization. I am thinking about how lots of people know what’s going on but no one is doing anything about it.

I am thinking about the skills that are required to cope with extension both personally and socially.....How to deal with it and how others may be feeling.

I am refreshed that we are not taking a set of tools to colleagues to “fix things”.

I feel good about where we were and what we did. We talked about a framework and philosophical underpinnings. We now have language.

I noticed that our comfort level has increased throughout the day. I noticed specifically from discussion that there is some “dislike” for, or “lack of acceptance” of older people and gay/lesbian individuals within our organization.

I feel that all that has transpired so far as been really good for various reasons. I enjoyed the simulation.

I enjoyed getting to know folks better. I found the discussion about the impact of being male or female very thought provoking.

I am enjoying getting to know people. I am impressed with their knowledge and application of that knowledge in their diversity work. I believe that using the terms, “ SO THAT”, and “because of”, are good tools to engage people to get to an ultimate goal.

It is nice to get with people on the team face to face. There is a warm feeling in the room. I am thinking about the fact that we need structure or framework to work from. We must look at our current situation and our current resources and provide a structure for moving forward in our diversity work.

I am pleased. . . Fascinated by what people do and say.

I feel very good about our work yesterday.

I believe that privilege is more than just being linked to money. It may include one's affiliation to certain things such as education, one's link to a University, one's ability to make choices or the ability of one to shop certain places of convenience.

Once each person had a chance to express how they were feeling about the work of Day 1, we were ready to move forward.

We began with a review:

We want to work toward systemic results: We want our work to focus on Quadrant IV.

Kate posed the following questions:

1. How do we get there?
2. What are the issues?

Star Power

This exercise allows us to look at systems of Tracking. - People in power want to stay in power. Impact: People at the bottom tend to stay there.

This role play exercise allows one to look at Social and Organizational Systems.

We focused on tracking System identity? How did you feel about it? What was the Impact of being a purple square or a triangle?

The following discussion of Star Power ensued:

Group 1. Someone was not allowed to move up even though they have earned the points to move up. Example: Some can be allowed fewer resources because they are thought to have less value.

Implications for Extension: Some groups feel like they are at the bottom of system. They feel left out of decisions. Fear of loosing jobs when a specialist is hired. Their information screened before going to them. This cuts down on their ability to communicate with anyone in the structure. For example, in putting out guide sheets, documents from this group must be screened before they are published. People who work on soft money may feel like they are at the bottom of the organization.

Top get locked into their own dynamic. Where are some of the most important things at risk because of the way a system operates? We need for the leadership of the system to pay attention to the value of the programs and change the system or put it into the language that the system understands.

Group 2: In the middle group, they checked out. They knew what was going on. The Triangle group totally checked out. They seemed to feel bound. This experience shows that there was some learned helplessness that occurred. Sometimes the bottom group created out of the box ideas. Those at the top caved and did not stand up for principle or for those at the bottom, even when they knew things were “not right”.

Implications in Extension: We support one of us to the top, then they cave we are really hurt.

Learned helplessness – The top wants info from the bottom, what difference does it make.....been there done that. Helplessness causes cynical attitude. It will often cause a person to leave for other employment.

Group 3. Randomly picking a cup gave less resources. Therefore, fewer resources and internalized failure were the result. Better negotiation is not luck. After school program is not traditional 4-H. In MO you have 2 schools offering extension programs, LU less resources but expectation to contribute in time and money. Specialists have resources. No personal resources, then wait for reimbursement. The “Squares” made the decision to maximize chips.

Implications in Extension: We discount effort when there is no progress – Some can never have high numbers in programming because they are working with the “hard to reach”, Thus, more efforts do not necessarily lead to greater success.

Q: How can we help leaders continue to be a purple circle in all areas when he is a green triangle in the University as a whole?

A: In societies, it can always be seen that one group will need to be better than others. If we understand this dynamic, we will help move on and create different experiences, but if we ignore, we will be stagnant.

The next exercise was to view a film:

Film – The film looked at multiple systems, school board (like the purple circles), pre-Mong immigrants (like the squares), post-Mongs (like the green triangles) and Mongs. The spokesperson for Mongs was a purple circle in the Mong community.

What behaviors are seen in the community when there was a sudden influx of the MONG population?

Discussion:

Value judgments: Who had empathy in the beginning for the new Mong population coming to the community? What resources within the community can be called upon to address the issues with which the community is struggling?

Each community has finite resources. What obligation does the federal government have to assist? What systems could be placed in the community to assist as the community adjusts to the changes brought on by sudden diversification?

We have to expect these reactions.

We have activity not analysis.

Within every system those in leadership positions have discretionary power. Officers have discretionary power. This power must be used appropriately. This applies to

extension. Discretionary power, used appropriately can lead to a smooth transition as we prepare for the changing demographics in the work force.

In order to make changes, one should pick the system where they might have the most influence. i.e. Kate's example was that she had influence in where to post a job opening. This impacted the hiring result by impacting access to the system.

To apply the theory and concepts learned over the past 2 days, there was a discussion of which systems allow the greatest opportunity to get a desired diversity result in our extension organization. These areas could be used to focus discretionary power and attention. They could be the framework for a Strategic Diversity Plan.

Areas for Emphasis for a Strategic Plan:

Brainstorming: Programming – includes resources
Wage & salary – HR
Council operation
Council election
Fundraising
Environments in an office & community that support retention
Communication across the system
Programs, how to reach diverse audiences
Evaluation
Staff development
Department and academic relations
Department and extension relations

The group then grouped the areas:

Group 1

Program Area – Resources

Our current structure is set up more like silos where funding goes to specific areas. We want to develop the interconnectedness among colleges, disciplines, within Extension. We want to be able to pool resources for more effective programming.

Looking across disciplines & pooling resources toward will be an important approach. Reporting begins at field faculty level to SPD, RD, PL, OSEDA, Campus Specialists, and others at UMC.

Who in the system is helpful to make change? The Program Leaders, Regional Directors, System Program Director, & especially the Director of Field Operations. We will include approaching the Director of Field Operations because of her bridge to so many top avenues.

Group 2

A. Professional Development/Retention

1. Create an environment that encourages retention of diverse staff. SO THAT people feel valued, people feel welcome, respected, morale increased, appreciated for the diversity they bring. This will lead to decreased turnover among staff and it will save dollars. We must integrate the work of the diversity catalyst team into existing systems.
2. Identify processes that will lead to retention:
 - Evaluation
 - Compensation (\$\$)
 - Rewards system
 - Mentoring
 - Office decorum
 - Community personal council
 - Training, professional development
 - Orientation
3. Key components-
 - Professional development should:
 - a. Be culturally appropriate
 - b. Include a code of conduct
 - c. Include a process for creating and designing the training
 - d. Consist of a clear selection process for training offerings (mandatory?)
 - e. Pay attention to the timing of the experiences
 - f. Include quality and quantity
 - g. Be held in an inviting environment.

Steps in Designing professional development:

- a. Get ideas from Field Faculty
- b. Selection of the offerings
- c. Provide the training
- d. Evaluate the Training
- e. Provide feedback to those who provided the training

During the design process there would be a set of guidelines that had to be met before a professional development experience could be selected. In professional development, Kate suggests using an engaging approach to learning that may include active learning such as the earlier activity that involves the Catalyst team moving to a section of the room and grouping according to their like characteristics.

Closing and Next Steps:

Remaining Questions:

- Q. How do we effectively deal with fear from majority culture?

A. Use dimensions on where the fear is.....Is the problem a result of loss of benefit in the system? If so, design an appropriate experience to address that situation.

Q. How do we persuade others that diversity is a priority?

A. Operate as though diversity is imbedded in the organization. Don't ask those in the institution why it is good or not good. Instead state why it is great to you assume they want to join in creating a diverse environment

The team noted that the process would not be easy and could be frustrating.

We must focus our attention on specific tasks if we are to have success.
We need to educate ourselves on what is current.

We must develop a communication plan so that all in the organization are aware of the vision, commitment and goals set out by the Catalyst team.

Because our system is always changing, but we can look at how we can get the information to the table. We must consider building short term indicators to see how we are progressing.

We should plan a follow-up face to face meeting to use this information to begin to develop a statewide diversity plan.