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From the Center Outward! Implementation Model of Sustainable Community Capacity Building

By

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The Model of Sustainable Community Capacity Building¹

1. **Collaborate** with public and private stakeholders, business, volunteers, community members and others to engage in fact-finding, planning and program development and evaluation with the goal of achieving sustainable solutions to the problems identified. Leadership exists at every level.

2. An unshaken **belief** that solutions lie within the grasp of the assembled community will lead to broad engagement and determination, by all who participate in good faith and commitment.

3. **Motivation** will emerge from the opportunity to improve the quality of life in a community. Inclusion is the key, a “*center outward energy*” versus top-down, outside-in, or special interest pressure. A community determined to bring about sustainable change is unstoppable when the purpose is clear and morally right.

4. **Organization** of a community change endeavor lies in its diversity of purpose, person, and purity of rationale. Geographic boundaries provide the location; people provide the use, individual diversity of skills, knowledge, abilities, and experience the energy for success, and the identified problems requiring sustainable change the rationale. Waiting or hoping for improvement seldom works, but with committed people, therein lays the power of change.

Model of Sustainable Community Capacity Building

1. Collaborate.

2. Unshaken Belief.

3. Motivation.

4. Organization.

5. Professional Development

6. Implement the Program

7. Evaluation

¹. **From:** "Reducing Gun Violence: Utilizing Community Capacity Building Strategies to Achieve Sustainable Change." By: Richard C. Lumb, Author. Amazon.com.

5. Stakeholders also benefit from **professional development** that addresses gaps in knowledge and skills to elevate their effectiveness in goal achievement. These decisions emerge from assessment as they engage in the process of identifying problems, determining sustainable problem solving and community capacity building.

6. **Implement the Program.** Program implementation follows planning and careful development of the mission and goals. Full awareness, open communications, a mechanism to identify issues and problems and find resolution and other barriers to knowledge and access to one another is critical. If there is a failure in any one of them, the program will experience stress, and that can inhibit working with the client as the focus.

7. **Evaluation.** Never should a program be implemented without a plan to evaluate all aspects in a continuous manner. Address problems when they occur. To expect a perfect plan, especially early in its life, may cause it discontinuance. With information, problems can be identified and fixed to keep the original mission and goals center to the efforts of people working together.

An Example: Sustainable Community Capacity Building and Change Introduction

Community issues, needs, and expectations would benefit from a model that engages in a depth of examination of topics of interest, identify specific problems, conduct in-depth research and analysis to determine best practices and what is known. Emerging from this is a sustainable plan for solutions and growth that equate to appropriate change.

“Agencies from varying jurisdictions depend on a broad range of collaborative tools to connect and empower workers and citizens — there’s no shortage of strategies from which to choose².”

Education and training, two relevant concepts, can make huge inroads to change if adapted to the community environment. The below conceptualization model explores this in some depth. It is a continuing process, and many shifts in the model will emerge over time. The following is an in-depth and thorough example based on utilization of education and training as central to leading successful change, whatever the local focus of the exercise.

Is Education & Training Important?

In the minds of many people, both in and out of academia, there is a differentiation between higher education and training or professional development. For many, it is an either/or situation, and any blending is deemed strictly unacceptable.

². Center for Digital Government. (2013) Collaborating with Confidence. www.centerdigitalgov.com

Understanding the difference between *training* and *education* is important when considering lesson plan development³ and importantly learning needs and outcomes of students. It is also important to use these core principles in other venues of interest.

Training includes those activities designed to improve the employee's present job performance by introducing a new behavior or modifying existing behaviors which result in new or changed behavior. Glaser⁴ equates training as leaning toward specific objectives, such as operating a machine or following certain regulations.

Education, defined as those activities, which are designed to improve the overall competence of the employee in a specified direction that is beyond their current skills, knowledge, and abilities (SKA's).

Glaser (1962) equates education as a process of acquiring broader objectives, such as learning to be an active manager. Education results in a new set of skills that advance the individual's SKA's and leads them into new areas of knowledge and responsibility. The line between training and education occasionally becomes blurred when lesson plans are developed.

Values

We value well-rounded education, degree acquisition, and accomplishment from an internal view. In the educational world, the value identified as a process of linked learning achievement (courses within defined degree requirements) leads to a well-rounded individual.

In the organizational world, an employee who can carry out their job effectively and efficiently, with minimal guidance, can think critically, solve problems, and assist with change efforts, is ideal. They are team players who contribute to the success of the organization.

Common to both is life-long learning to ensure currency, growth, acquisition of new skills and knowledge and the ability to apply them to their career and organization, as we now live in a world where change dominates in every aspect of life, work, and society.

Teaching adults require a different conceptualization and preparation than teaching children. Adults need different treatment and consideration when developing education and training programs. The focus of adult learning is centered on personal, employment, and community contexts. Additionally, adult education needs dictate that

³. Nadler, L. (1970). *Developing Human Resources*. Houston: Gulf Publishing.

⁴. Glaser, R. (1962). *Training Research and Education*. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press.

instruction should focus on particular problems, issues, and concerns as they relate to the learner's immediate needs⁵. Teaching themes also include the student's input to the proposed education and training. Program topics include the context and content of the proposed lesson materials, desired competencies and skills needed by the students, and input from the instructor based on his or her knowledge of the material itself.

As stated by Dirkx and Prenger (1997), "*in contextual learning, desired competencies or skills in academic subjects, work, or parenting are integrated with specific life contexts.*" When developing education and training, it is important not to lose sight those new skills and competencies and must include applicability to the learner's life needs, which include both current and future family, work, and personal interests. Included is an emphasis on the acquisition of essential skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and learning-to-learn as well as basic competencies related to the lesson at hand. Instructional development includes attention to process skills that learners use when engaging in the learning process with a focus on applicability, usefulness and specific to needs outcomes.

Education is mired in tradition, and there is much value in that philosophy, if, practice follows the vision. Success in life, demands active learning, not just for K through 12 and higher education, but for one's productive lifespan. We must plan, design, evaluate and find pathways forward throughout life, or we diminish ourselves. In life and work, volunteering, engagement in self-interest and for others with a variety of purpose, there are key indicators of being successful and achieving the goals we set for ourselves and with others. They include⁶:

- Who we are inside - (values and attributes that shape our character, what we portray and use in life including inspiring, forward-looking, competence, honest, and truthful. A person is authentic and acts consistently in behavior and dealing with others use his or her attributes of character and ability.
- What we know - (Able to link knowledge to action, to do what is right, avoid being self-serving, personal qualities of integrity, courage, respect, loyalty, emotional well-being and balance in life).
- How we act (to influence others, fulfill the organization's mission, vision, values, and goals, solve problems, achieve objectives, and attain results).

And,

- How we bring value to all, we do in life?
- Are we life-long learners?
- Are we marketable to the many existing venues?

⁵. Dirkx, J. M., and S. M. Prenger (1997). *Planning and Implementing Instruction for Adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

⁶. Hesselbein, F., & Shinseli, E. (2004). *BE-KNOW-DO*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Are we marketable in the field of occupation we choose?
- Do we have growth potential?
- Are we a team player and able to engage with others?
- Can we build coalitions to get the job done?
- What is our growth potential across our life span?

Framing the Question

The question is, how do we achieve the stated goals as a person and what help is available to make it happen? It starts internally, for, without motivation, goal setting, and linking with others to achieve this personal image, we linger, sometimes throughout life. A state of persona inertia, an outcome not good for anyone.

Education is the key to most of the problems in life, for what we know and can apply, often marks our progress. We must become partners with education in all its forms, throughout our lifetime.

Moving forward to explore a model that bridges two concept areas. The Director of the Franklin County Adult Education Program spent years engaged in volunteer work, promoting and seeking changes in the Maine Prison System regarding inmate transition from incarceration to community reintegration.

To promote sharing of educational information, the Maine Adult Education system utilizes the Tandberg System that allows broadcasting of programs across the state to numerous locations including Adult Education sites, library's, public schools, and other places. The system is capable of providing the delivery of programs across Maine to both public and private individuals, groups and organizations. In other words, the provision to people should be seamless as possible, encouragement of participation, and a learning tool that might otherwise be skipped due to barriers of access, time, travel and distance.

The blending of Programs:

Blended education and training utilize self-immersion learning via the Internet that includes discussion among participants and instructor on the posted material, as well as exercises to apply learning concepts to actual or simulated scenarios in combination with experience and best-practices. The value is in applicability at the moment, near future and the individual's hopes, aspirations, needs, and interests. About specific and general audiences, the Tandberg System provides a means to share information.

Participant discussions, simulations, small group exercises, and other learning outcome enhancements can be used to provide pathways to acquire learning goals. The goal is the transfer of learning and its applicability in the short term, a building block format to link to the next topical series and eventually the acquisition of pre-determined knowledge and skills that equate to a full and defined outcome.

On occasion, we assume the learner has no place in determining what they will learn,

except for the general type of degree, the content and other relevant decisions made almost exclusively by the instructor. Changing practice and tradition must have the input and participation of those who are engaged in the work we seek to change, or it often fails.

Learning does not have to be bracketed as it can be developed around an individual model that allows self-paced engagement. This model is positioned for the asynchronous world of distance learning. There is a time limit apparently and not left open-ended, for some would never finish. Successfully completing the module and demonstrating achievement of learning outcomes and application strategies, and credit awarded for that segment.

It behooves individual choice to take highly focused topics and complete one or more, to link knowledge acquisition, to obtain certificates and acknowledgment of successful completion. The decision to measure success is a very different in concept and is not quickly put in place. It often comes down to a depth of discussion and input by instructors and others, input from potential stakeholders and a pilot program to determine possibilities and then determine how to get there. It has to be quality based, focused and tight in focus without additional material or investment. Also, immediate application based on the participant's current knowledge, skills, abilities and experience, and deemed useful to the individual and his or her organization.

Educational Capacity Building – A Sustainable Change Model

The proposed **model**⁷ utilizes relevant education and training research and best practices information emerging from school systems, business and government agencies that seek to influence learning outcomes. The model addresses all manner of the individual, group, and organizational needs to address and resolve issues and problems in a sustainable manner.

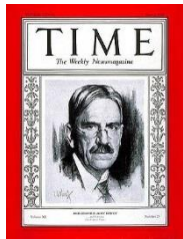
Build training and education around problem-solving, critical thinking, and collaboration where Stakeholder Knowledge, skills, abilities and experience (KSAE) blend with the goals of the desired outcomes. Community capacity building that leads to sustainable change and improvement is the model of development.

The approach addresses known issues and problems, utilizing known facts, best practices and a depth of inquiry and analysis that leads to sustainable solutions. The goal is the transfer of existing conditions into new outcomes. It is important to improve both effectiveness and efficiency of training delivery, transfer of knowledge, and immediate application of learning outcomes to personal and organizational needs.

⁷ . Model by R. Lumb @ Wilton, ME Sept. 16, 2013

Influence of John Dewey (1933)

Dewey's influence on education cannot be discounted in today's situation as he addressed some eighty years ago the conditions and concerns we struggle with today. He discussed the role of informal educators, and in my thinking, applied to anyone who seeks to elevate someone through the learning process, the integration of information to current skills, knowledge, abilities, and experience resulting in new or elevated abilities.



➤ **Dewey believed that education must engage with and enlarge experience.** Dewey's statement is quite true in forms of the informal educational practice (workplace, volunteers, current efforts to achieve, guiding, motivating and coaching someone, as well as teachers who provide in this arena.

- **His concern with the interaction and environments where learning takes place provides a framework for practice.** Formal buildings designated as educational facilities are but one of many places where learning takes place. We should, however, consider the impact of the environment with an eye to positive enhancement of satisfying learning needs and expectations.
- **He explored how people think and reflect and the role of educators in this process.** Mindless sitting in an educational environment, distracted in today's world with the pull of social media (also mindless trivia for the most part) and not engaging in the learning experience before them, is all too common.

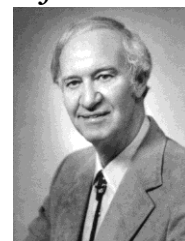
In concert with Dewey, **Malcolm Knowles** (1913-1997) contributes to thinking about education with his focus on adult learners (andragogy). His goals on the development of adults have relevance to formal higher education and the potential to assist adults whose life experience and current learning needs remain unaddressed. Education, in its many forms, need not be separated by function, as blending can be devised and applied to positive outcomes. Clear separation of the role of a university in helping individuals acquire new knowledge that enhances immediacy of need, utilizing new models, is at hand, yet few are willing to address these demands.

Malcolm Knowles 5 Goals of Education for Adults.

1. Self-concept: *As a person matures his/her self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being*

2. Experience: *As a person matures he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.*

3. Readiness to learn. *As a person grows, his willingness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles.*



4. Orientation to learning. *As a person matures, his/her time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem centeredness.*

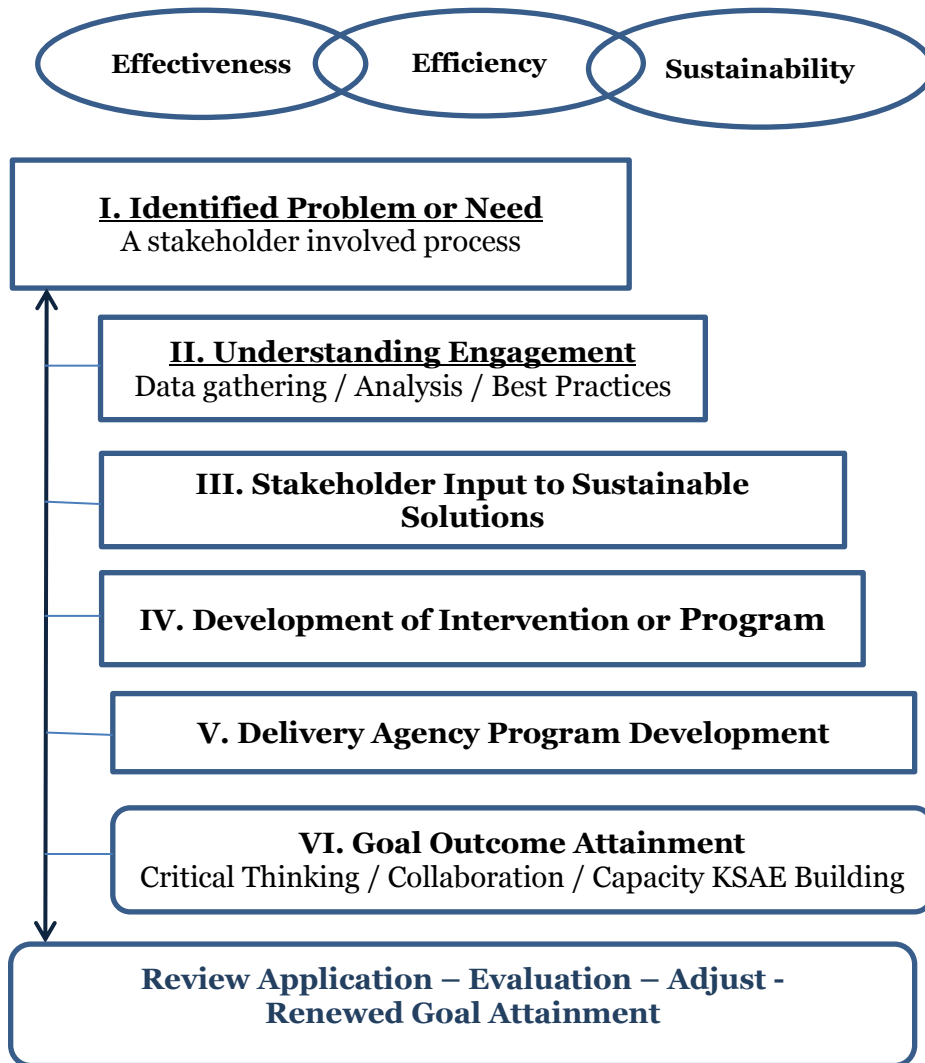
5. Motivation to learn: *As a person matures the motivation to learn is internal.*

The proposed model is a “developing emergence model” that seeks engagement with agencies and individuals who provide a broad spectrum of services to people who have learning needs. The quest for the acquisition of specific skills and knowledge may be generalized. Some have a particular life application goal (therapist, scientist, engineer, teacher, and others) requiring a more accurate course of studies. Moreover, in the larger world environment are the multiple millions of people who seek life-long learning, continuing professional development, and job skills enhancement.

The question exists, what are we doing to address the multiplicity of learning needs by the multiple providers who find themselves arbitrarily labeled or defined in ways that seek uniqueness? Examples are a public or private higher education, business training facilities, and all manner of professional development providers.

The model provided develops as communication and action take place. Change continues to gain with the ability to refine and clarify through engagement with others.

Sustainable Community Capacity Building - Change Model⁸



This discussion intends to extend and clarify information for the future study. The expectation is it will serve as a platform for debate and decision-making.

Recommendations:

1. Form collaborative partnerships to explore needs, develop a plan, design and provide programs as described in the second paragraph of the above model. The beginning should have a design policy for administration, instructors, and employees with approval to move forward.
2. Develop and market with the partnership a blended model of professional development that equates to benchmark acquisition of learning needs and outcomes.

⁸ . Model by R. Lumb @ Wilton, ME Sept. 17, 2013

3. The quality of education information is dependent on the instructor, who must ensure that best practices, current research, and links to the parallel and ancillary material are tied in to allow insight into the broader perspectives. However, he or she cannot assume they have it right without assessment and input from the participant.

4. The challenge is to maintain standards.

Far too often the instructor enters the learning environment oblivious to the participant, applies an expectation with program demands, presents his or her expertise and at the end of the day has no idea who the people are they look at in every class. Travesty!

5. Delivery modality, content, participant activities and assurance of learning outcome measures, generally must be innovative and represent quality, applicability, and blending with the individual's current knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience, emerging into new insights and utility. That is a large challenge and not within the regular use of tests, discussion posts and papers. It must have a real applicability to the participant, and that is the challenge.