Tell-Test-CoCreate

We discussed the “Tell-Test-CoCreate” model. The graphic that Roger drew on the board is below. The model expresses a continuum for bringing about change in an organization. We discussed this in relationship to the possible change of Cal Poly to semester. The paths drawn below each of the three methods indicates the persistence of change. In “tell,” because change happens by force, once the force is removed the system goes back to the previous state. In “test” the path is a bit more gradual because the change is arrived at over time with many parties involved. But because the change is not a bottom up process, the system will return to the previous state. In co-create, the change is sustainable, cyclical or appears as a step function.

Model for addressing problems or complaints

This model is a way of looking at the cause of a problem where you focus your attention one at a time on the three contributing aspect: self, System and perception. It is important to initially concentrate on the self. You should ask yourself, how did I contribute to this problem? In what ways did my behavior cause this to occur? This is quite difficult when you see that there is injustice in the system (maybe persistent prejudices, as an example), but it is necessary to do this work first. The second level is systematic or structural. You would ask: What about this system caused this problem? What is structurally in place such that this is the only way this problem could occur? You might even start to “blame” someone or something. You will have to be careful not to get stuck in this place. The third is perceptual. This is a bit difficult to explain (for me). It might mean that there is not really a problem, but just a perception of a problem, or that the problem has been exaggerated by people’s perception. A classic example of this is how many people think that engineering isn’t attracting females or people of color because these people have the wrong impression of engineering. The solution, at this level, is to create TV shows where Engineers are cool (like CSI did for scientists). Entering only at this level feels very much like public relations BS. But it is still important to see how perceptions contribute to a problem.

Systems Interventions (Aristotle, Meadows and Roger)

Roger discussed his adaptation of Meadow’s systems interventions and Aristotle’s causality. The lowest level of intervention in a system is at the material level. In an education system this would be changing class size, syllabi, or textbooks. These make a difference, but not a big difference. The next level of intervention is at process (Efficient). In education this would be changing the school calendar, or moving to more online or to flipped teaching. These changes will make a bigger difference in the system. The third is at the level of goals or visions. This is often the best place to enter into a system. It is a fairly high level intervention yet it doesn’t require a shift in the paradigm. Also, at this level you can have a conversation about the paradigm through dialog. The final level is where you get at underlying assumptions or paradigms. This is difficult because it requires that you really look at a thing. You state why you do something, what you are serving - “for the sake of which”.

![Tell-Test-CoCreate Model](image-url)

![Model for addressing problems or complaints](image-url)

![Systems Interventions Diagram](image-url)
Transaction and Collaboration

Next we talked about transactions. Suppose person A and person B want a transaction. This means that one will trade with the other: money, time, things or knowledge. This often assumes that one of these people has something the other wants. If instead of remaining on the transactional level you inquire about each other’s reasons for involvement, you may find there is an overlap in the “that for the sake of which” area, and you can then join together to develop a mutually beneficial collaboration.

Tension

The last model Roger talked about is the structural tension model. In this model you look at both an espoused or aspired state and the current condition. In most people the current and the aspired state are not the same. Therefore there is a constant tension in this system. When looking at the aspired state it is important that it is defined without form. As an example, you might aspire to a state of peace and contentment. You wouldn’t put a particular form on this like saying you aspire to be married. In fact being married may not produce what you want (peace and contentment). There is also the current state. The current state might not be peaceful or full of contentment. So how do we deal with the difference, the tension? We might drink or complain or do other things to cope with the discomfort. We might lower our expectations of the aspired state, or we might ignore the current state and live in a kind of denial. None of these is a great solution. In addition, we often feel that the current state is fixed and so we are fighting from the point of view of discontentment. The truth is that the current state is always changing and it is the aspired state that can be fixed. Everything is created and to make something “real” we must put our attention on that. So in order to realize our aspired state we need to give it attention: Think on in. Notice when it is present, if even a little bit. Notice when you are at peace.

Trust

We had a good conversation about trust. Roger suggested that “trust” is not really possible. When we say that we don’t know if we can trust someone, we are developing a secret “trust test.” If a person passes this test, then we can trust them. But we cant tell them about the test or else they will game it because of the distrustful person that they are. You can see this would be very difficult for a person to actual become trustworthy. Instead we could have an infinite positive regard for another. We could enter into relationship thinking the best about a person, expecting that they are trustworthy.