

Developing Implementations: Supporting Complex Change in Instructional Program Planning

Brian Gander, DEd.

Superintendent, Universal American School - Kuwait

PEAK Presentation

Kuwait Bi-Lingual School, Jahra, Kuwait

December 3, 2016

www.briangander.com



Complex Change as our Reality

- Within the schooling context educators around the world have experienced a great deal of change in the past 10 to 15 years.
 - With a variety of iterations of core subject standards that culminated with the US Common Core Standards and the AERO Standards for international schools, Common European Framework for language skills evaluation.
 - Add in an ongoing array multiple assessment formats from screeners to diagnostics for core programs and 21st Century Skills.
 - Educational change has been complex, at times dizzying, often fraught with false starts and emotions of frustration, anxiety, resistance and confusion.
- 



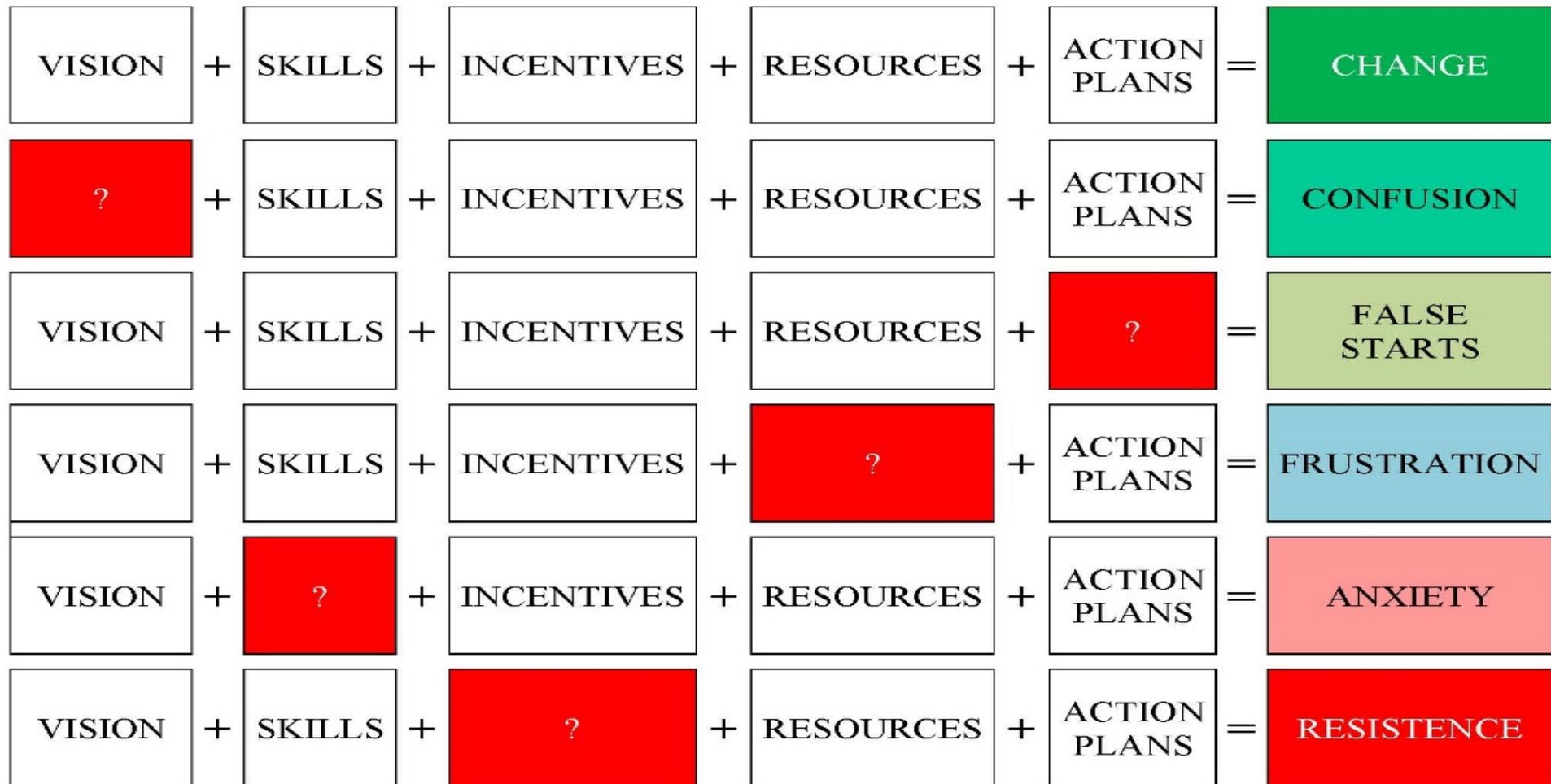
Managing Complex Change: Disciplined Professional Thought

- We have experienced celebrations! What is unique about these circumstances? Was it serendipity, or effective planning?
- I have come to believe that meaningful change can be viewed as having a linkage of 5 critical elements;

1) Vision 2) Skills 3) Incentives 4) Resources 5) Action Plans

Knoster, T. (1991) Matrix on Managing Complex Change

MANAGING COMPLEX CHANGE



Adapted from Knoster, T., (1991)

The Interactive Element of Today

- ▶ You are going to work through your own five stage implementation of a program!
- ▶ You have some choices ... so be aware before you make them your choice is going to have to be amenable to the five variables we'll be discovering:
 - 1) Vision**
 - 2) Skills**
 - 3) Incentives**
 - 4) Resources**
 - 5) Action Plans**
- ▶ You (or your small group) will pick a program to develop...
 - ▶ Choose from the idea cards on your table.
 - ▶ Revisit a program/implementation you recently completed
 - ▶ Evaluate a current plan you are executing



Ideas You Can Build Upon

- Child Safety Enhancements to assure consistent protocol adoption for the protection of pre-primary through grade 6 students in an international school setting.
 - Teacher Peer Mentoring program that integrates instructional coaching and peer walk-throughs as a means to improve ESL instruction in the international school setting.
 - Differentiation of instruction using interdisciplinary units to link art, economics, and world history to new nation formation in the 20th century.
 - Leading a grade level team in the development of curriculum, practices, and implementation of new playground safety protocols.
 - Opening a clown school for 16 to 22 year old adults.
- 

VISION

- ▶ Vision is both the easiest and the most entangled...How do our beliefs guide us.
 - ▶ Vision has to be specific enough for people to connect their personal passions and skills to a well defined initiative.
 - ▶ At the same time a vision should be open enough to encompass the elements a school cannot control over short periods of time.
 - ▶ How do you make that loose / tight juxtaposition work?
 - ▶ An unclear vision in combination with the other elements (well planned or not) leads to confusion. Confusion undermines implementation fidelity.



SKILLS

- This is perhaps one the most challenging aspects for a school system and site administration to lead!
 - How to design meaningful and effective professional development in a time of multiple change initiatives?
 - Herding cats is the most often used metaphor...
 - How do we support teachers, who come to us with varying years of service with various subject matter expertise and build a professional development protocol that aligns our school strategic plan, best practices and current division level initiatives?



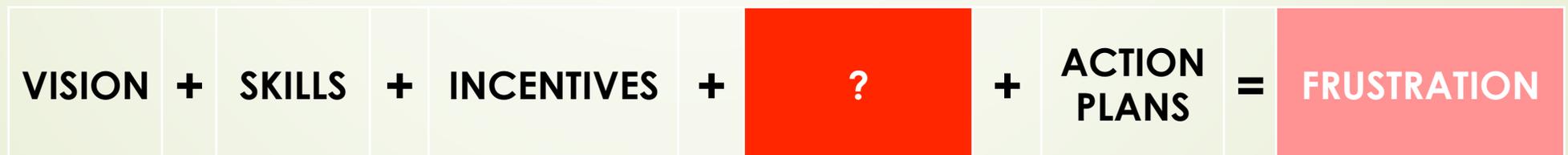
INCENTIVES

- This is perhaps the most interesting of the categories...the confluence of autonomy and team.
- Professionals view incentives in a variety of ways:
 - What is in this for me?
 - What will I have to give up to move in this direction?
 - How will my students gain from this change process?
- The first response is completely understandable and is typically initiated out of anxiety, previous frustration with change ...and it is a starting point of an effective dialog about viewing changes defined in a new initiative.
- The third response is the most productive position to start from, it puts the students first...where they belong!



RESOURCES

- This is perhaps the most dynamic variable of the five, but should not be an excuse for not getting to our vision...
 - How to start only what we can finish?
 - What do we prioritize, "...starting with the end in mind!"
 - What do we decide to stop because it detracts from what we can finish?
- These are the conflicts we struggle with in education. How do we leave something...something we are passionate about but not bound to do...behind?



ACTION PLANS

- This is perhaps the most worked over area in education, we are good at this...we plan well, we know SMART goal format.
- SMART goals can be effective in fostering change:
 - Closing the planning/outcome loop with effective evaluation and project sun-setting.
 - Data becomes available for multiple purposes and great nuance in decision-making.
 - Celebrating our achievements...we are good at celebrating our students success, we need to take more pride in our team successes.



How do we talk about Change?

- My experience is that communities need to have unifying structures to view their current circumstances so they can effectively communicate with each other about their professional beliefs.
- This adaptation of Knoster's model (1991) is not the be all, end all, but it gives us a starting place; a unifying perspective.
- There is a great deal of "new" yearly at International Schools:
 - We ALL need to watch to see how we respond in this new environment.
 - Look for things that are in need of celebration.
 - Defining our passions...what gets us here each day.
 - Participate fully when asked to contribute your guiding beliefs.
 - Embrace change as a member of a team...we are our own best resource.





LEADERSHIP IN PERSPECTIVE

- It helps me to view leadership through five unifying concepts that Jim Collins presents in his *Good To Great* series of books.
 - 1. Clear Vision and Mission** – reference it often, frame our changes within it.
 - 2. Practice Level 5 leadership** – passionate, focused and humble.
 - 3. Focus on our key mission** – preparing students for multiple options in life.
 - 4. Hire smart** – recruit widely, promote from our own to assure continuity.
 - 5. Use technology as an accelerator** to meeting our mission.
- 