Systems Approach:
Adaptive Action, Accountability, and Social Justice

MESI Spring Conference
March 9, 2016

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Nothing is intractable.
What’s up for today?

► See, understand, and take action in the complexity that shapes social justice issues
► Engage with dynamics that shape patterns of social justice
► Practice three assessment processes to understand the impact of your own Adaptive Actions

You will leave this session with . . .

► Clearer understanding of how patterns of social justice emerge
► Three options for assessing your system to shape patterns of social justice
► An action plan to use in your own challenging complex systems

Self-Reflection

► Take 3 minutes to reflect on your own challenging issues. Consider:
  ▶ What is the challenge you want to explore?
  ▶ What makes it so challenging?
  ▶ Where are the tensions in the system?
Why is it so hard to reconcile accountability and social justice?

*Equity is a pattern that emerges (or not) when humans interact.*

In a complex adaptive system, agents (humans, ideas, concepts, etc.) interact in interdependent ways so that system-wide patterns emerge. Those patterns, in turn, influence the future actions of the agents.

Patterns are shaped by

- Known and unknown forces
- High levels of diversity
- Non-linear causality

Adaptive Capacity is an indicator of a system’s ability to respond

- Resilient – across time
- Robust – in the moment

Consider self- and system-assessment approaches that are based on

- Inquiry about your environment
- Pattern Logic about the dynamics around you
- Simple Rules that shape your patterns

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Inquiry

Definition of Inquiry:
► Turn judgment into curiosity
► Turn disagreement into shared exploration
► Turn defensiveness into self-reflection
► Turn assumptions into questions

Patterns
► Similarities, differences, and connections that have meaning across space and time

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Pattern Spotters Reflection

Consider your own challenge and fill in the Pattern Spotters. Record what you see . . .

► In general . . .

► In general . . ., but also . . .

► On the one hand . . .; on the other hand . . .

► I was surprised by . . .

► I wonder . . .

► This reminds me of a time when . . .

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Pattern Logic

Use and study of disciplined reasoning based on the conditions for self-organizing (Eoyang)

Pattern Logic builds adaptive capacity to respond to unpredictable change in complex environments

- See the patterns in the world around us
- Understand the implications and meanings of those patterns
- Respond with wise, informed action

Amplify or Damp

- Containers (Who are we?)
- Differences (What’s important?)
- Exchanges (How do we connect?)

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**Pattern Logic Reflection**

Considering you own challenge, as you think about conditions that shape the patterns,

► Where is the tension in the system?

► What can you do to amplify or damp the conditions to relieve the tension?

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Simple Rules

Simple Rules build system coherence by informing action and decisions across the system.

Retrospective Exploration of Simple Rules

► Identify dominant patterns that shape system-wide tension
► Consider rules that might shape those patterns:
  ▶ Container (Identity)
  ▶ Differences (Important)
  ▶ Exchanges (Connections)
► Name some SRs and check them out with the locals

Prospective Exploration of Simple Rules

► Identify dominant patterns that could shape system-wide tensions you want
► Consider rules that might shape those patterns:
  ▶ Container (Identity)
  ▶ Differences (Important)
  ▶ Exchanges (Connections)
► Name some SRs and check them out with the locals

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Simple Rules Reflection

► How might this approach help you (and others) understand your challenge?

► How might you invite others into the conversation?
Conclusion

For more information . . .

Adaptive Action: Leveraging Uncertainty in Your Organization
Glenda Eoyang and Royce Holladay

Radical Rules for Schools: Adaptive Action in Complex Change
Leslie Patterson, Royce Holladay, and Glenda Eoyang

Simple Rules: Radical Inquiry into Self
Royce Holladay and Mallary Tytel

Thanks

► For your time and attention
► For your participation today
► For the work you do every day to promote social justice

Be in touch!
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