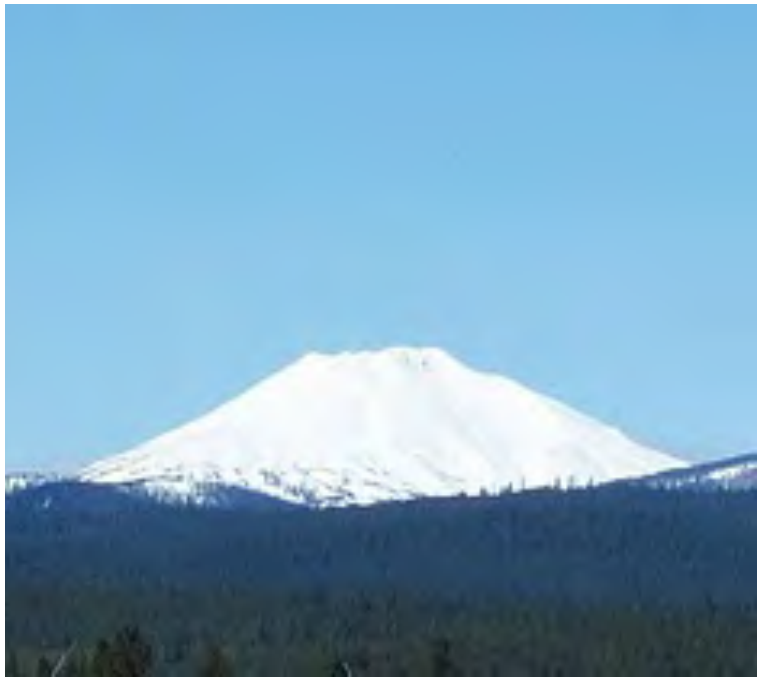
Sustaining Best Practices
Strategies for School Leaders



OREGON GEAR UP

Practical Leadership

Improving the Schools of Today
Inventing the Schools of Tomorrow

Presenters

Ron Williamson

Eastern Michigan University

rwilliams1@emich.edu

Howard Johnston

University of South Florida

Johnston@usf.edu

Sustainability in Education

Sustainability is the ability to continue a defined behavior indefinitely.

Educational Sustainability is the ability of an educational operation to produce high levels of student achievement and prepare them for post-graduate success indefinitely.

Key Principles

Key Principles of Sustainable Improvement

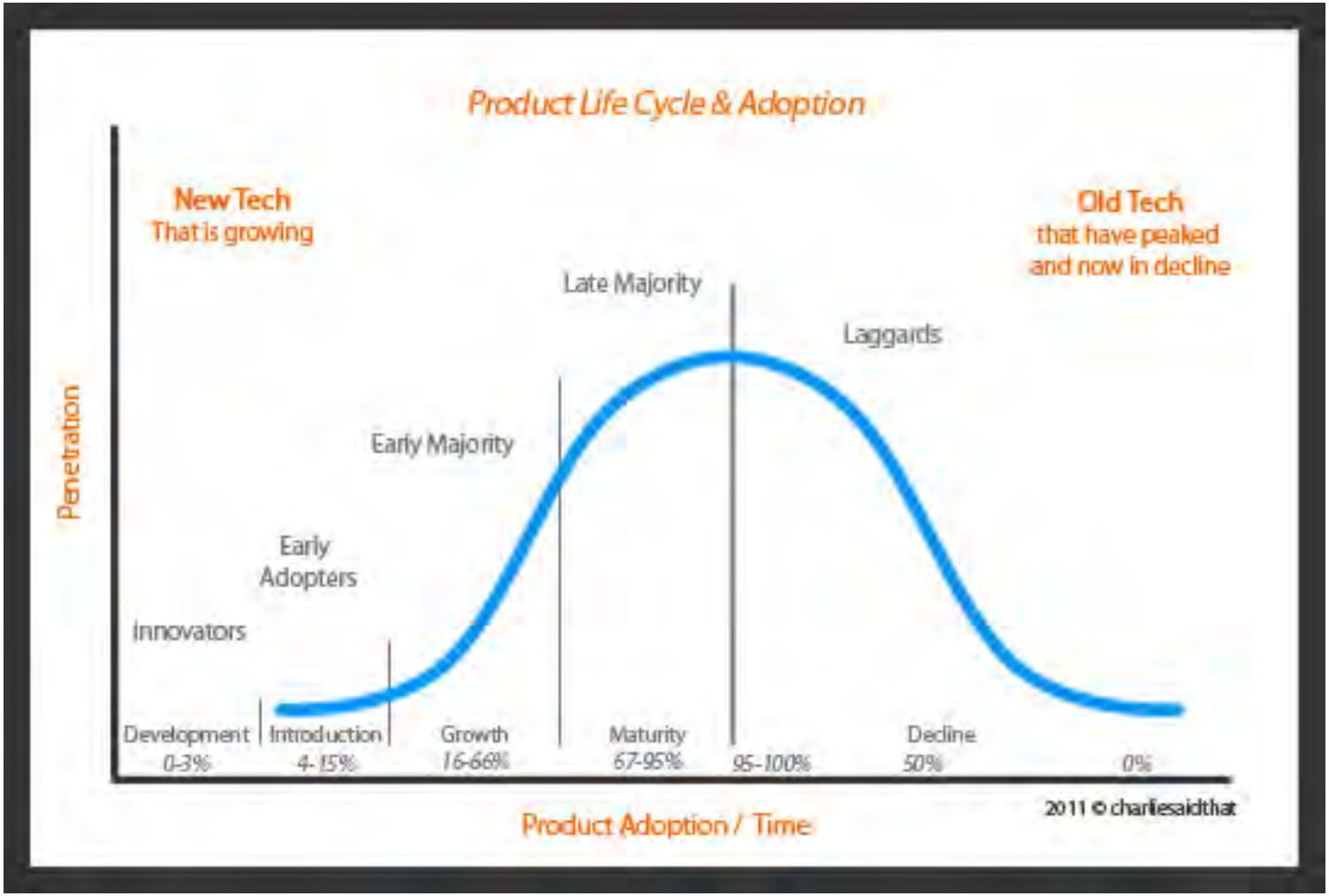
(1)Focuses on what matters

(2)Makes improvement last and spread

(3)Achieves its ends without doing harm to others around it

Hargreaves & Fink, 2004

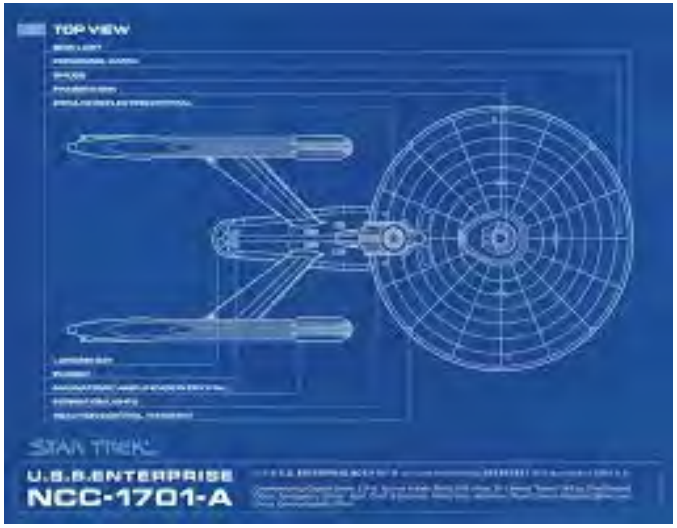
Life Cycle and Adoption



Two Sustainability Challenges

Keeping worthwhile features and programs you already have.

Designing new programs and features that are sustainable.



The Solutions Are Known

"If schools are to sustain an innovation, they need to build a school ecology suited to it."

--Nancy Law, Allan Yuen, Robert Fox

- Produce a clear vision and mission for school
- Secure high levels of engagement – in and out of school
- Focus on what matters most
- Engage teacher leadership
- Find resources $omewhere

1. Clear Vision and Mission

A vision is an aspirational dream

- What kind of school do you envision for your own child?
- What would it look like?
- How would the child be treated? You?
- What would his/her experiences be like?

- What kind of work environment would you like?
- What would it look like?
- What would your experiences be like?

A Mantra

A driving idea – the reason for our existence.

Short, concrete, credible, emotional and motivating

“The way we do things around here”

Create peace of mind

-- Fed Ex

Get them wet, get them dirty, get them involved

-- Chart 411

Think different

-- Apple

Be better today

-- UEA

A Mission is a Promise

G.M. is a multinational corporation engaged in socially responsible operations, worldwide. It is dedicated to provide products and services of such quality that our customers will receive superior value while our employees and business partners will share in our success and our stock-holders will receive a sustained superior return on their investment.

?

Doesn't GM make cars?

A Mission is a Promise

The multi-ethnic community, parents, business partners, administrators, students, and staff of Someplace Middle School work together to create an academic, physical, emotional, social, and safe environment where everyone can learn and respect one another. We care about ourselves and others to create, support and maintain powerful, engaged learning in the Arts and Sciences. We are to use innovative techniques to enhance life-long learning through technology, the multiple intelligences, varied instructional strategies, and interdisciplinary units. We share our cultural backgrounds to nurture growth, responsibility, and productivity by celebrating our diversity within a positive school-wide atmosphere and by promoting sportsmanship, school spirit, and pride in ourselves through our daily studies and our educational accomplishments.

So…*what* are they going to do?

Not Perfect, But Getting Better

- Benton Hill School provides individualized education that addresses students' unique learning styles, cultivates independent thought, and promotes the building of character, enabling them to contribute to their communities in meaningful and positive ways.

- Lakeview will provide a safe, supportive learning environment with opportunities for each student to develop the skills and knowledge to become a responsible, successful citizen.

- Providing effective education for tomorrow's leaders.

Now THIS is a Promise!

We will put a man on the moon and return him safely by the end of the decade.

-- JFK, 1961

Any questions?

Sure…but not about what we are going to do, only how we are going to do it.

Once You Know WHAT Focus on HOW

The other four solutions to sustainability:

- High levels of engagement – in and out of school
- Focus on what matters most
- Engage teacher leadership
- Find resources $omewhere

2. High Levels of Faculty Engagement
What Motivates People?

1. ***Autonomy*** – the desire to direct our own lives.
2. ***Mastery*** — the urge to get better and better at something that matters.
3. ***Purpose*** — the yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves.

~Daniel Pink

Once a clear mission (purpose) is embraced, the "how" (autonomy and mastery) needs to be the work of key faculty and staff.

High Levels of Faculty Engagement What's My Role?

Hmmm…so what's MY role in this enterprise?

Engineers and Scientists started thinking…

- "First we have to solve this problem…"
- "And then we have to solve this one…"
- "But we need to work with ____ to ____."

High Levels of Engagement In School What's My Role?

Hmmm…so what's MY role in this enterprise?

Teachers and Staff Need to Start Thinking…

- How do we support struggling students to graduation?
- How do we raise student aspirations for higher education?
- We need to work with ____ to ___.

High Levels of Engagement Outside of School

Connect with “Opinion Leaders”

- Civic organizations
- Business groups
- Grassroots organizations
- School boards
- Labor unions
- Parent-teacher groups
- Church organizations
- The local press
- Health organizations
- Elected and appointed local government officials or entities
- Grant makers

3. Focus on What Matters Most

The Goal: Raise student aspirations for post-secondary education.

The Necessities:

- Awareness
- Confidence
- Preparation
- A Plan

- What can we do to assure each of these necessary components?
- What alternatives exist?
- How can we maximize their effect?

IDEAL: Campus Visit

https://college.harvard.edu/admissions/visit/virtual-tour

4. Engage Teacher Leadership

- Send out “Scouts” to places where they are doing it.
- Cultivate “mavens” for each program piece.
- Use program-focused, local professional development with teacher-leaders.

Engage Teacher Leadership

- Are the “right” people involved?
- Are the outcomes clear?
- What norms will we use for decision-making?
- How do we provide for collaboration?

Create Urgency

Four Strategies

1. Break Down Barriers to the Outside
2. Act with Urgency Every Day
3. Embrace Crises
4. Deal with Naysayers

5. Find Resources $omewhere!

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5. Find Resources $omewhere!

Four Approaches:

- Reduce
- Refine Practices, Stretch Dollars
- Reprioitize Goals and Functions
- Regenerate with Partnerships

From: Johnston and Williamson, 2014

The Real Path to Sustainability

Just hang in there!

Sustainability Toolkit

Oregon GEAR UP Research Briefs

- Sustainability: Part I
- Sustainability: Part 2 & 3
- Creating Urgency for Change
- Staff-Led, Site-Based Prof. Development
- Nurturing & Sustaining PLC's

PD: Sustainability of GEAR UP Initiatives

- Part 1: Thinking About Capacity
- Part 2: Assessing Our Status
- Part 3: A Sustainability Plan

For More Information

Contact us:

Howard at: hojofl@gmail.com

Ron at : rwmson214@aol.com