THE NEW WORLD OF HEAD START...EMBRACING TRANSFORMATION...

Dr. Tim Nolan, Barb Haxton, Yolanda Winfrey
REINVENTING OURSELVES...
EMBRACING TRANSFORMATION

An overview of our time together today ...

- A look at our changing Head Start world...Transformational Change is Well Underway
- New Performance Standards Requirements Are Fully In Place
- A New Monitoring Process is coming! There are hidden gifts to grab on to.
- We Need to Adjust Our Organizational Culture to Thrive in the Future. We will need to lead transformational change
- We Must Retain and enhance Our Creativity As We Meet New Expectations!!
- We Need To Examine and Reinforce Our Locus of Control
- We Need A Healthy and Happy Talent Pool to Assure Our Success
I am EXCITED about the new approach to monitoring!!

Our time together is an opportunity for reflection...for you to think about the level of change necessary in your own back home agency. This will vary dramatically between agencies in this room.

This is TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE not really “2.0”!!

This is being rolled out as 2.0 to lessen political backlash. This “continuous quality improvement” approach can set agencies up to overlook the profound change that is taking place.

Links to two protocols. For example, this is a time to rethink all documents you’ve submitted to the HSES/Regional Offices

Today should be a discussion starter for each of us...
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A Few Moments for Reflection for Your Own Organization...
There is a NEW MONITORING SYSTEM Coming.

- Tim has been working on this since 2011. Co-authored the 2012 Report to OHS and worked on shaping the 2016/2017 work with OHS.
- This was finally shared publically on September 18, 2017
- There are emerging pieces of information coming from OHS
- The New Monitoring approach will...
  - Change frequency of on-site visits; focus of the visits; the type and focus of exchange during desk reviews; the exchange during a site visit; the report being generated...
  - Encourage Internalized Locus of Control Approaches
  - Require us to use valid and reliable measures
  - Encourage Creativity and Ownership
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“When the Rules Change, Everyone Goes Back to Zero”

Joel Barker, Futurist
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The rules and practices we sought to change...

1. The pervasive “Catch them doing something wrong” mentality
2. Deliver on Head Start Act of 2007 requiring a balanced monitoring system
3. Abandon the “record nothing that is neutral or positive” evidence gathering approaches
4. Return to a developmental mindset...the “F-Word”
5. Retain the necessary identification of shortfall, NOT as the first goal
6. Enable the grantee to take ownership and direction of their work
7. Deliver on the promise of tailoring Head Start/EHS to community needs
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Levels of Change

• Targeted Stability
• Incremental
• Transformational
• Transformation Plus™
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• The Challenges of Transformational Change
  • Fuzzy Sense of Our Desired Future...Strategic planning soft...done for “them” not for US!
  • Too much comfort with our current “self”
  • Minimal investment in scanning and interpreting the environment
  • Current leadership limitations in skills and followership
  • Deep culture of compliance defining our actions
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Did You Get Your Letter?
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Did You Get Your Letter?
People Challenges and Opportunities

• A workforce is too often built for past challenges...not for our desired future!
• Workforce is often worn out and lacking reserves to manage transformational change...both leaders and followers.
Locus of Control

1. What Does This Mean?
   Deciding that WE are in charge of and responsible for our future...

2. Why Is It Important?
   It enables you to “own” your work and feel the ability to shape it

3. Where Are You in Your Work?
   Do You Have An Internalized Locus of Control? Do YOU OWN THE WORK YOU DO?

4. What Might Help You “Own” Your Work?
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The Federal Intent...

• *Performance Standards*

• *Monitoring*
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• What are the Performance Standards?
• Where do I find the clarity that I need?
• Are they fully contained in the spiral-bound book?
• What is the new and seemingly inspired use of the Head Start Act of 2007 all about?
• What about the hundreds of pages of “back story” that OHS also published?
• Do you have the new Performance Standards and the Head Start Act of 2007 in the same binder...physically and mentally?
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• It is **NOT** Just About Implementing New Performance Standards

The Subtle but profound change is...

• **OHS HAS REMOVED THE “RECIPE”!!**
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• The shift from OHS defining the HOW in almost a prescriptive form shifts the responsibility for defining the HOW from OHS to YOU!!

• This requires a shift in locus of control...do NOT be waiting for the answers!!
And, also be prepared to explain...

1. “WHY?”,
2. “How You Are Measuring This?”
3. “Why did you choose these measures?” and finally,
4. “How you are using these measures to inform your work?”

We worked hard to shape this new direction...with roots from the past; from approaches that worked much better than recent approaches.
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The New Monitoring System Will Require the Retooling and Reinvention of...

• Head Start Managers and Leaders
• Head Start Staff
• Monitors/Consultants coming from OHS
• OHS National Office Staff
• OHS Regional Office Staff
“Re-tooling/Reinvention” Back Home Will Require...

- **Defining the Skillsets Needed By Each Position/Role**
- **Identifying The Current Skillsets of Each...with an HRD Inventory**
- **Developing the Training/Development/Coaching to close these gaps**
- **Determining Whether Current Individuals Can Make the Change**
- **Launching the Reinvention Process**
Human Resource deal breakers at a human level
• Locus of Control is too external and won’t shift
• Leadership/management skills that don’t support transformation
• Re-energizing yourself and those who see you in a leader role
• Managing the energy of your workforce...refueling planned ahead of time
• Some of your employees are not up to the this new future
Your Organizational Culture Enhanced...

- Your current culture may be highly functional, but needs the addition/intensifying of the use of data to drive your decision making.

- Requires A Culture That Embraces Creating, Gathering, Tracking and Using Outcomes to Inform Your Work With...
  1. Children
  2. Parents
  3. Training and other developmental investments
  4. Every aspect of our work...a full culture shift/enhancement we will identify.
Accountability Systems That We Will Create, Define and Implement

1. Selected deliverables tracked and reported *quarterly*, identify, track and analyze. *Assure the importance of CREATIVITY.*

2. Other Selected deliverables tracked and reported *monthly*; identify, track and analyze. *Creativity encouraged here as well.*

3. Electronic reporting *real time* as our goal over the next two years.

4. Prescheduled meetings to *learn* from our data...identify deliverables and establish systems to support implementation of changes/tuning. *Creativity will be encouraged in finding solutions/improvements.*
5. Accountability tracking systems put into place where they were not before. *Seek to use tools from others as well as create our own.*


7. Reinvent and enhance our *annual performance appraisal* into an efficient quarterly ongoing system with a strong developmental focus. *We WANT a better system that is more developmental and current.*

8. Linking our *Community Needs and Wants Assessment* into its foundational role for all of the work that we do. *It is INTERACTIVE.*

9. Positioning Ourselves to Thrive in the NEW Monitoring System. *Contribute to inventing the broader future while we invent ours!*
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Parent Gauge™
A Region V Contribution

• It’s value/contribution...
  ➢ One of the only valid and reliable instruments for work with parents...
  ➢ Data on family progress and agency contribution

• It’s creation from 2013 to today...from vision to reality

• MAJOR Region V Discount of 30%
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Positive Psychology
We Need a Healthy, Happy and Skilled Talent Pool In Order to Excel Under AMS 2.0 and the New World of Head Start

Workforce Development Efforts
Region V is Exploring Ways to Help Attract, Develop and Retain the Talent that We Need... “Brain Builders”

Transformational Leadership Skills
Learn How to Lead Transformational and Cultural Change
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Let’s Make 2017-2018 Our Best Year Ever!!

Creativity
+
Accountability
=
Making a Huge Difference in the World!!
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Up Until Now...From Now On...
**REINVENTING OURSELVES...**
**EMBRACING TRANSFORMATION**

*Up Until Now...From Now On...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locus of Control</th>
<th>With the Feds</th>
<th>Within you, your staff and your agency</th>
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**REINVENTING OURSELVES... EMBRACING TRANSFORMATION**

*Up Until Now...From Now On...*

| Path to success | 1. Learn the Performance Standards  
2. Learn the OHS “recipe” regarding “how”  
3. Implement the recipe  
4. Carefully build files to demonstrate compliance | 1. Learn the Performance Standards  
2. Determine what is needed in your community (CNA+)  
3. Identify the outcomes that you will pursue  
4. Develop your approach to meeting this need  
5. Develop one or more measures with which to define success | Notes for us |
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Up Until Now...From Now On...

| Monitoring: The role of the monitors | 1. Reviewers come to your agency to check whether you are in compliance with the OHS required recipe 2. Collect “evidence” of compliance 3. Reviewers are staff to others in DC, making few judgements 4. Reviewers were restricted in their ability to share the full picture. 5. Reviewers could not suggest or enter into a real conversation | 1. Reviewers will come to see you less frequently, being replaced with a mix of telephone and site visits 2. Reviewers will learn who you are as an agency; the needs of your community; the approaches you are taking to meeting the needs of your community; they will learn how you use outcomes data to shape your work. |
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Up Until Now...From Now On...

| Monitoring: Defining success | 1. Compliance with Performance Standards  
2. Compliance with the “how” recipe within the Performance Standards | 1. Address each Performance Standard  
2. Start with CAN  
3. Identify the needs/wants in your target areas  
4. Develop resolutions to the challenges...identify what you will do  
5. Create outcomes measures to define success  
6. Break measures into progressive targets  
7. Develop action plans for implementation |

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Up Until Now...From Now On...

8. Launch your action plans
9. Gather data regularly
10. Analyze and use the data to inform your practice, make service delivery change, report to others and to celebrate progress.
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**Up Until Now...From Now On...**

| The culture necessary for success in the New World of Head Start | 1. Commitment to following the process defined by others...the required recipe  
2. Rely on other’s direction and control  
3. Collect numbers to impress others | 1. Commitment and belief in your ability to create the best possible response to needs and standards  
2. Rely on your own choices regarding best possible direction  
3. Collect numbers to inform your work.  
4. Be able to demonstrate your effective use of numbers |
|---|---|---|
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### EMBRACING TRANSFORMATION

### Up Until Now...From Now On...

| Culture changes relating to your staff | 1. Select and reinforce staff for compliance  
2. Drill staff in memorizing Performance Standards  
3. Present to staff the recipe for success coming from within the Performance Standards  
4. Monitor staff to ensure compliance with the OHS “recipes” for each program area | 1. Select and reinforce staff for understanding connections between CNA; program design; identifying measures; applying measures and being able to discuss the measures and how they inform their work.  
2. Train staff in Perf. Standards and all involved in #1 above.  
3. Train staff in all aspects of #1 above  
4. Assure that staff are both doing what needs to be done with children and families and have that ability to articulate this to others  
5. Develop a staff capacity for embracing numbers |
# REINVENTING OURSELVES... EMBRACING TRANSFORMATION

Up Until Now...From Now On...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Resource Development (HRD) and Talent Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Learning the Performance Standards...</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Learning CLASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Use T&amp;TA Structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Contract for CLASS trainers</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. OHS often defined T&amp;TA.</td>
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<td>6. OHS controlled T&amp;TA network</td>
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<td>7. State associations provided varying resources</td>
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<tr>
<th>Capacities of staff will define success</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Will need to do #1 and #2...Performance Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Deepen sophistication and understanding of CAN</td>
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<td>3. Deepen culture of data driven learning; discussion;</td>
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<tr>
<td>and action</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Develop skills and comfort in use of numbers</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Develop thinking skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Develop verbal skills to work in new monitoring</td>
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<td>environment</td>
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**Up Until Now...From Now On...**

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<tr>
<th>Additional areas that will emerge as we study this....and track Aligned Monitoring 2.0.</th>
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</table>
Locus of Control

Dr. Tim Nolan

As you think about going about your work, think about how you are able to influence decisions impacting you and your ability to succeed. Be very honest with yourself and rate each item as accurately as you can for yourself. If an item does not apply to you, skip it.

1. When I get up in the morning I believe that my day will go well.

   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

   I can influence that very little
   I can influence that a lot

   Why do you believe that?

2. Being able to have the funding necessary to do my work.

   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

   I can influence that very little
   I can influence that a lot

   Why do you believe that?

3. Being able to control how I go about my work.

   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

   I can influence that very little
   I can influence that a lot

   Why do you believe that?

4. Being able to control how I will invest my time in my work setting.

   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

   I can influence that very little
   I can influence that a lot

   Why do you believe that?

5. When I enter into a new relationship with a client, I believe that the relationship will work well.

   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - 5

   I can influence that very little
   I can influence that a lot

   Why do you believe that?

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6. **Hard work will enable me to succeed much more often than not.**

   1 2 3 4 5
   I can influence that very little I can influence that a lot

   Why do you believe that?

7. **How I will meet or exceed the regulations that are given to us by our funding sources/customers.**

   1 2 3 4 5
   I can influence that very little I can influence that a lot

   Why do you believe that?

8. **Decisions that are made by those in charge of my organization.**

   1 2 3 4 5
   I can influence that very little I can influence that a lot

   Why do you believe that?

9. **Decisions that are made by the those with whom I am working.**

   1 2 3 4 5
   I can influence that very little I can influence that a lot

   Why do you believe that?

10. **I can impact my future by what I do today.**

    1 2 3 4 5
    I can influence that very little I can influence that a lot

    Why do you believe that?
The New World of Head Start: Embracing Transformation
Dr. Tim Nolan, Barb Haxton

Our Perspective..
- Background we bring to this discussion
- Types of change
- Transformation Plus change.

A new Monitoring System to Assure Performance Standards
Implementation Is Being Revealed...
- Performance Standards have been changed...Understanding the depth of this change
- The new monitoring approach is designed to change the world of Head Start
- The implications beneath what you are learning about monitoring in the future.

Transformational Change is already taking place.
- Office of Head Start Mandates have been changed from “What and How?” to “What?” The recipe is being taken away.
- Grantees are now having to supply the “How?”
- The incredible importance of defining the “Why?”
- How you are measuring?
- How are you improving based upon the use of the data that you have collected?
- Creating a culture of data-based service delivery.
- Self Assessment of Skillsets Necessary for the New World of Head Start
- Importance of Community Needs/Wants Assessment
- The importance of high quality Strategic Planning
- Action Planning

Learning Outcomes...
1. Be able to articulate the new OHS expectations of grantees
2. Examine the role of Performance Standards and the implementation of these standards.
3. Identify gaps between what you now have and what you will need.
4. Develop an action plan to address reinventing ourselves at the individual, group and agency levels...transformational change to create the New World of Head Start.

Post event questions...

1. The Office of Head Start will provide us with the regulations and specific directions to follow in order to succeed.
   __ True __ False

2. Monitors/reviewers will determine whether we are following the directions provided by OHS. If we are able to prove that we are, we will be determined to be successful
   __ True __ False
3. Most of our staff will need to know what we found in our Community Needs Assessment.  
   ___ True ___ False

Answers...
1. False
2. False
3. True
Thinking Skills Inventory

As you seek to provide strategic leadership during challenging times, several thinking skills contribute to your success in the process of identifying, understanding, interpreting, and developing solutions to challenges. Examine the thinking skills listed below, rate yourself on each using the following scale, and make any notes to yourself about why you chose the rating you did, how you might continue to develop that skill, when you use it, and so on.

1 = Highly accomplished ... a major strength

2 = Competent

3 = Emerging competence

4 = New to me ... to be explored

1. Creative ... the ability to generate a number of unique ideas in response to an identified need.

Comments:

2. Down-board ... similar to a world-class chess player, the ability to pre-think consequences of a particular action, several moves ahead.

Comments:

3. Critical ... the ability to discriminate among key components of a given situation, to make sense of it, to make choices.

Comments:

4. Synthesis ... the ability to combine critical pieces of an idea into a new result.

Comments:
5. **Focus** . . . the ability to concentrate your attention on a given challenge with intensity.

   Comments:

6. **Framing and reframing** . . . the ability to recast the situation into a new context, thus freeing up creativity and increasing understanding of a situation.

   Comments:

7. **Visionary** . . . the ability to create a vision that serves yourself and others in such a way as to give direction effectively during turbulent times.

   Comments:

8. **Scanning and interpreting** . . . the ability to view a situation, find patterns, make sense of the data, and provide insight to oneself and others.

   Comments:

9. **Fluid** . . . the ability to shift deliberately from one thinking mode or point of view to another at will and in a manner helpful to the thinking process.

   Comments:

10. **Intuitive** . . . the ability to make decisions and take actions before all of the data are in, using a mix of experience, training, and the information at hand.

   Comments:
11. **Complex** . . . the ability to manage several thoughts at the same time.

Comments:

12. **Strategic** . . . the ability to free yourself from a focus on current operations and place oneself into the future, exploring both possibilities and challenges.

Comments:

13. **Systems** . . . the ability to see interrelationships between components of an organization, enabling you to strive to keep these systems in balance.

Comments:

14. **Broad-view** . . . the ability to see “the big picture”, and not get lost in the detail.

Comments:

15. **Analytical** . . . the ability to take in and interpret data and information.

Comments:

16. **Meta-cognition** . . . thinking about thinking, which enables you to direct individual and group thinking across numbers 1 through 15 above as appropriate and for greatest impact.

Comments:
## Summary of Thinking Skills of Group Members

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Skill</th>
<th>Group Member’s Self Ratings</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Down-board thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Synthesis thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focused thinking</td>
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<td>Framing and reframing</td>
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<td>Visionary thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scanning and interpreting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fluidity of thinking</td>
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<td>Intuitive thinking</td>
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<td>Broad-view thinking</td>
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<td>Analytical thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meta-cognition</td>
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</table>
Personal Notes and Action Plan for Thinking Skills

1. Thinking skills that I can contribute to the work of the strategic planning group
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
   Notes:

2. Thinking skills that I want to develop further
   1. 
   Notes:

   2. 
   Notes:

   3. 
   Notes:
Thinking Skills

Dr. Tim Nolan

Over the last four decades, we have worked with managers from a very wide
variety of organizations, representing all sectors and sizes of organizations. We have
worked with CEOs in executive coaching relationships. We’ve worked with hundreds of
management groups of widely varying size and professional backgrounds. We’ve helped
organizational leaders create new and vibrant futures for their organization. We’ve helped
managers and leaders rethink and redirect their organizational culture. What has been
very clear is that those managers with the best developed thinking skills are much better
prepared to thrive in the rapidly accelerating environments of change that currently define
life for most organizations.

For example, in our work doing Applied Strategic Planning with a wide variety of
clients over the last three decades, we have been clear that success is dependent upon the
ability of planning group members to think through the future direction of their
organization. Our definition of strategic planning is “the process by which the guiding
members of an organization envision its future and develop the necessary procedures and
operations to achieve that future.” Given this definition, one can see why we emphasize
the importance of thinking. Strategic planning relies heavily on thinking skills, which
presents a challenge because many planning group members are not as adept at
deliberately using a variety of thinking skills as they need to be.

A VARIETY OF THINKING SKILLS

The planning process requires a variety of cognitive or thinking skills and the
ability to select and shift among them as needed. Groups that are most adept at using a
full range of thinking skills and applying them efficiently in each phase of their work
achieve better results, develop more ownership, and receive a higher return on their
investment of time and energy. Even more likely to thrive is the group that is also able to
reach outside itself to make use of these resources in other parts of the organization or
even from outside the organization.

Although not all members of the group is required to utilize each of the thinking
skills listed below equally well, all of these skills should be available to the work group if
it is to maximize its success in this process. Among those thinking skills needed by an
effective group are:

1. Creative thinking
2. Down-board thinking
3. Critical thinking
4. Synthesis thinking
5. Focused thinking
6. Framing and reframing skills
7. Visionary thinking
8. Scanning and interpreting skills
9. Fluidity of thinking
10. Intuitive thinking
11. Complexity in thinking
12. Strategic thinking
13. Systems thinking
14. Broad-view thinking
15. Analytical thinking skills
16. Meta-cognition, or thinking about thinking

This article is fundamentally about *meta-cognition*, or thinking about thinking. The understanding, identification and development of thinking skills is not only an aid to success in the planning process, but also an important capacity-building effort that will benefit the organization well beyond the planning process itself.

**Natural and Learned Skills**

Exploring the variety of thinking skills examined in this article members of the group will each find one or more personally resonant. Natural styles tend to be hard-wired as a personality variable. All individuals will easily use several among the sixteen styles we have listed, though typically one or two will be dominant. Furthermore, each person’s preferred styles also evolve over time as a result of that individual’s life experiences. Many develop as successful adaptation and coping techniques in the settings of an individual’s life in general, and work life in particular. Moreover, we all learn ways of observing and sorting out what we have seen that are tied to our sense of self, to what we have been challenged to do, and the ways in which we have achieved success to date. Natural styles tend to reflect the way a person will tackle a problem when left to his or her own devices.

People can, and do, learn to think in different ways, but they require three conditions to succeed: 1. knowledge of the possibilities, 2. a safe environment within which to explore new ways of thinking, and 3. a structure that encourages them to do so. A consultant with good facilitator skills can play an influential role across all three of these conditions for learning to think differently. Thinking skills can, for instance, be taught or enhanced as a part of a training session prior to or concurrent with strategic planning or other group agenda, or can be woven into each step in the process with the guidance of the consultant. The choice to provide special training largely depends on the amount of time available to the group and the level of commitment of the organization to capacity-building. As noted earlier, such investment of time in learning about thinking skills will not only improve the quality of the groups effort, but will provide more depth for group members as they tackle other aspects of their work. Now let us turn our attention to the varieties of thinking skills and how each in turn impacts group effectiveness.

**The Importance of Creative Thinking**

The Applied Strategic Planning process, and many other group challenges benefit particularly greatly from a high degree of creativity, the skill at the top of our list for good reason. As an organization seeks to create its ideal future, the process is always improved if there are many high-quality ideas from which to choose. Failure to achieve a high degree of creativity in idea generation regarding ideal futures for the organization will result in a future that is most like that which normally emerges from basic long range planning—something that is essentially a linear extension of today. We have a great deal to say about this skill before continuing with each of the others in turn.

*Learning from “Endarkenment”*

Usually we learn from enlightenment, from exploring positive ways of doing things. A 180° turn will enrich our understanding of what fosters creativity by dwelling for a few moments on what stifles it in so many adults. Among the key dimensions of those forces are the following:
- **Criticism and judgment of others**
  Although normal brainstorming rules call for no criticism, few have ever been in a truly judgment-free group. Though outright criticism may be suppressed, rolled eyes and other non-verbal behaviors deliver the message!

- **Time limitations**
  The most creative and ultimately useful ideas are found in the second half of all ideas generated. When time is limited, the group may never get to the really rich mother lode of ideas with high potential.

- **Time of day**
  Far too many meetings and creative idea generation sessions are scheduled for early afternoon, immediately following lunch. This is the least productive hour for the vast majority of all individuals.

- **Group pressure**
  Almost all organizations and managers believe that, when creative ideas are needed, a group should be convened and asked to generate ideas. Generating ideas in a group inhibits the creativity of many people because they are aware of and limited by the presence of others.

- **Limits of the physical environment**
  Most meeting rooms are closed boxes with little or no natural light, no fresh air, and little stimulation despite the fact that creativity needs exactly those elements to flourish.

- **Goal driven people**
  The most frequent killers of great ideas among us are those who are extremely task-driven in their approach to tasks, who wants to complete each and every phase of strategic planning as quickly as possible,

*Creating Ideal Capability for Idea Generation*

Given all these means for killing useful ideas, how can one create an environment that will maximize creative idea generation? First of all, devise measures to suppress or reverse each of the above items, beginning with the establishment of a safe environment. Strong facilitation is especially important, with the facilitator controlling variables that foster or inhibit creativity. The literature is rich with books on creativity that provide useful resources and a variety of techniques that enhance the number and quality of ideas.

As we noted in the discussion of limitations above, the physical setting in which the group does its work influences idea generation. If financial resources allow, when tackling a very important topic, the work group should do its work away from its traditional work setting.

*Down-Board Thinking*

It is said that world class chess players are able to plan up to seven moves down-board. They play out the consequences of a move that they might make and anticipate a series of responses by both their adversary and themselves. So must it be with strategic thinking. Simple solutions rarely apply in the complex marketplace environments within which organizations find themselves. Too often their leaders operate with the notion that one can define where a competitor is today in the marketplace and create an effective counter to or maneuver around this position. This assumes that the competitors will show the courtesy and grace to freeze in place and not continue to evolve and develop themselves and their product offerings. It also assumes that competitors are not doing
their own strategic planning and developing strategies that will eclipse current players in the marketplace. It also assumes that the competitors of today’s marketplace, as well as their products and services, will be those of the future.

Several aspects of group work offer opportunities to practice and reinforce down-board thinking. Giving this technique a name and providing a structure for its learning enables group members to identify and practice the skill and also underscores the risks of anticipating a future without considering the consequences of subsequent moves, both by the competition and by their own organization.

**Critical Thinking**

*Critical thinking*—the ability to evaluate and make judgments about given ideas, proposed new products or services, approaches to competition, and so on—is a key skill for group members. It is the natural style of many middle and upper level managers because it is a skill commonly learned and deepened through formal education.

The consultant faces two challenges regarding critical thinking and its application: when to encourage and nurture it and when to urge its suspension. In our discussion above on creative thinking, we observed that creativity is often fragile. And when creativity is crushed, the most frequent villain is critical thinking. We argue that the premature onset of critical thinking kills many potentially great ideas, which is even more likely when a new product or service idea is critiqued prior to becoming fully formed.

Creative and critical thinking styles are essentially mirror images of each other. Comparing and contrasting individuals who are naturally highly *creative* thinkers with those who prefer critical thinking helps both sets of individuals as well as the entire group better understand and appreciate the value of diverse approaches. When individuals use their natural styles and play to their strengths the results of the group’s work will be enhanced.

**Synthesis as an Asset in Thinking**

Synthesis is the ability to identify diverse ideas and weave them into artful new patterns. Although it appears as a natural style for some people during creative idea generation, for many it is a skill to be learned and reinforced. In a world of specialists who attempt to bring order through focus and specialization, a person with the ability to synthesize identifies opportunities that others just cannot see due to the lenses they are wearing as they view the world. A particularly striking characteristic is that the ability to synthesize adds value to a great many of the complex activities in which high level professionals engage.

**Focused Thinking**

In a world that has made multi-tasking an art form, focus has become an infrequent event for many individuals, including planning group members. *Focused thinking* is the ability to attend to a single item for an extended period of time. The very need to define this type of thinking contributes to identifying the challenge of actually doing so. As organization members find themselves bombarded with more and more information and as increasingly sophisticated communication systems allow others to demand instant access and responses, attention spans have been dropping. Shortened attention spans are closely related to the decline in the ability to focus. Group work, including strategic planning, that will have meaning and impact requires dedicated time and attention. It is not a hobby or a casual addition to one’s calendar.

**Framing and Reframing**
The ability to see a situation and then reframe it into another way of understanding it—is a skill of great value, especially in planning. Consultants often use this skill with their clients to free up stagnant patterns of thinking. A prime example of this is the reframing of something seen as a threat into rethinking it as a potential opportunity. For many people, the threat in a new regulation, a new competitor entering a marketplace or a new product being presented to the marketplace is obvious early on. Once it becomes labeled as a threat, then everyone directs their energies into reducing its impact of that threat. The individual who can naturally reframe the threat into a potential opportunity can generate positive energy to pursue that opportunity. Reframing is also a tool to shift or recast an idea that is not quite on target to one with real promise.

**Visionary Thinking**

*Visionary thinkers* are able to extend their view beyond current limits and see larger possibilities. Typified by foresight and imagination, it is a natural skill set for some but can be learned by others. Boards of Directors and others in an organization often have high expectations of the visionary leadership of their senior executives, accompanied by the unrealistic expectation that skill will magically appear once an individual is named to a senior position. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

Applied Strategic Planning draws out this thinking skill, developing this capacity as a natural outgrowth of the design of the model. This process is not just about creating the current strategic plan, but offers the added value of developing more visionary thinkers. When the CEO and many others scattered throughout the organization develop visionary thinking skills, the organization has the opportunity to not only survive but thrive. It is also true of group work outside the strategic planning venue. Creating visions of the ideal future is often a learned skill which gets better the more that it is used.

**Scanning and Interpreting**

Members of a senior management group need to observe and make sense of the environment in which their organization operates. We call this *scanning and interpreting*. Effectively scanning and interpreting an environment first requires curiosity, then sufficient time to gather and decipher what is happening in environments that are complex and continually changing. The need for this capacity to scan and make sense of external environments important to an organization is especially important in making a planning process truly strategic.

**Fluidity of Thinking**

*Fluidity* is a thinking skill which enables the individuals to release themselves from one pattern of thinking and shift to another pattern smoothly and quickly. Both groups and individuals can find themselves trapped in a given pattern of thinking. One aspect of the consultant’s role is to observe when the pattern in place is not suited to the issue under consideration or that the group has become caught in a pattern that is no longer productive. In such situations the consultant or a group member should propose a shift and provide the support that facilitates the change.

**Intuitive Thinking**

Intuitive thinking used to be considered “too soft” and a threat to the order of a numbers-driven organization. When life was more predictable and linear in nature, organizations could take solace in the notion that numbers and facts could define current and future states with confidence. This confidence is likely to be misplaced in
environments that are rapidly changing, where change is no longer incremental, but also transformational in nature.

Time for decision-making is also shortening. More decisions must be made with less than all the data having been gathered and interpreted. This is the domain of intuitive thinking, the ability to make a decision based on limited data with a relatively high degree of success. This is a thinking skill that develops over time in individuals, one that is cultivated through experience and attention of the learning opportunity that present themselves.

The process of reflecting and learning nurtures intuitive thinking. It promotes management and leadership a bit more by feel than solely by fact. This “feel for the business” matures through constant learning, especially by learning from surprises. Intuitive thinkers may need encouragement to propose ideas to the management group that are not data-based. The consultant can help provide a safer environment for modeling, reinforcing, and using intuitive thinking as a tool for both individuals and the group.

**Complexity in Thinking**

Thinking and acting strategically is very difficult. It requires managing many variables simultaneously. Our Applied Strategic Planning model appears to be an orderly step-by-step process, and it is. But it presents a very complex set of tasks in a manner that is easy to comprehend. Unfortunately, few management activities come with such a manual or such a convenient illustrative model. The ability to think through and manage complexity as this level is essential for success at middle and senior levels of management and in this process is a real asset to the planning group.

Individuals who have difficulty managing the complexity will find themselves at a severe disadvantage in relation to those who feel comfortable with this challenge. It is important for the group, with the aid of the consultant, not to recast the organization’s external environment as less complex and less demanding than it is. Today’s complexities cannot be so simply evaded. Consciously attending to how ideas are captured, defined, and applied can provide the group with methods of thinking through and managing complexity.

**Strategic Thinking**

Strategic thinking is the capacity to let go of today’s issues and to place oneself into the future—to engage in heads up thinking. It is people’s capacity to identify a target year and to create a picture of that target year in such a way that it is possible to create a sense of ideal future for themselves or their organization. Letting go of today is difficult, in part because so much of what shapes managerial success today is tied to operational problem solving and focusing on today, or relying on heads down thinking. Given this reality, organizational leaders and managers have too few opportunities to think strategically and to develop the comfort and skill necessary for success at this style of thinking.

When leaders and managers do try to think strategically, they often find it hard to think very far into the future. While this difficulty is often explained by the fact that the future is far too unpredictable, such resistance is more frequently due to a sense of discomfort and a lack of skill in strategic thinking. In order for strategic thinking to have significant impact, it requires a thinking about a future well beyond current plans and known product lifecycles. A time frame of less than three years is usually too short
because much of what will happen in the next 36 months is largely in place. We would argue that five years should be the minimum timeframe for most strategic planning. Constantly accelerating change is tending to shorten time frames.

**Systems Thinking**

Organizations are open systems that can be described in a variety of ways that illuminate their various characteristics. From one point of view an organization is a single large system with a number of interrelated subsystems. Some of these subsystems are the structural ones that appear on the organizational charts—financial management, administrative services, human resources, various lines of business or programs, and so on. Others are process systems such as decision-making, patterns of communication, accountability, rewards, and such. From another viewpoint organizations consist of formal and informal systems that complement and strengthen each other in healthy organizations. For example, in a healthy organization informal communication systems complement formal communications to better share information across the organization.

Systems are dynamic and constantly in flux, and one important function of organizational leadership is to keep the systems in balance. Changing one element in one system will suddenly reveal how interdependent organizational systems truly are as other changes flow from the first, some anticipated, but others surprising.

Systems thinking is important to successful strategic planning in that systems are a focus of planning in that they are included in most internally focused strategic thrusts. Systems must often be strengthened, changed or redesigned if a given business is to succeed. Understanding how systems are structured and how they function and are able to maintain their balance and effectiveness defines *systems thinking*. Systems thinking is an obvious essential for the success of any strategic planning process; planning invariably requires that systems in the organization must be strengthened, changed, redesigned, or added to accommodate the changes envisioned in a strategic plan.

Systems thinking is also critical in most other management situations. Making any change within an organization has implications for other parts of the organization. Systems thinking helps managers to anticipate, plan for and guide these changes deliberately to maximize efficiency and success of the effort.

**Broad-View Thinking**

Some people are *wired* to see forest; others the trees. Strategic planning is greatly facilitated by the ability to see the forest—the big picture or broad view. Research tells us that these disparate approaches to viewing reality are strongly tied to deep-seated personality variables. People vary across three principal levels ranging from focusing on small details, to a medium focus, to a broad view. Some may be primarily one of these with others focused on two or even evenly sorted across all three.

**Analytical Thinking**

Analytic thinking skills are reasonably self-explanatory. These are the thinking skills that enable an individual or a group to focus upon data—to manipulate, understand, and apply data in making decisions. Most managers develop analytic skills in classrooms or other formal educational settings. Those in the group with the best developed analytical thinking skills probably have a combination of solid formal education in this area and a personality that embraces the use of numbers and data to bring clarity to their world.

**Metacognition**
Metacognition is simply thinking about thinking. It is the ability to identify which thinking skill is needed from individuals or groups as they approach certain tasks. It is, moreover, the ability to understand one’s own thinking skills and to identify the thinking skills present in members of a planning group, all of which have been the subject of this chapter.

The importance of understanding metacognition is knowing how to use the insights that it provides. Understanding thinking skills becomes critical to the process of strategic planning only when these skills can be focused and directed appropriately. Doing this may, in its earliest stages come from the consultant, over time the group will become more effective if individuals within the group can identify the thinking skill needed for themselves and move in that direction. The group will become even more potent when its members can suggest to one another the value in shifting to using a different thinking skill to better pursue a challenge that they are exploring.

**SCENARIO THINKING, INNOVATION, AND STRATEGY CREATION**

The literature surrounding thinking and acting strategically is rich in resources describing techniques such as scenario thinking, innovation, and strategy creation. As we examine thinking skills in relationship to strategic planning, these are not themselves thinking skills, but rather processes which require the artful weaving of several individual thinking skills.

*Scenario thinking* is the ability to create several parallel potential strategic paths for an organization tied to multiple possible assumptions regarding the future. It involves, among other thinking skills, large doses of creativity; down-board thinking; framing and reframing, fluidity, synthesis, visionary thinking, systems thinking, and scanning and interpreting. It further requires the ability of those involved to manage high degrees of complexity.

*Innovation* is also not a thinking skill, but the clever combination of a whole series of thinking skills to move from an idea to a product or service in the marketplace. Once the thinking skills discussed in this chapter are mastered, achieving successful innovation in an organization is greatly enhanced.

*Strategy creation* is the development of a set of strategic directions to direct an overall campaign, a new positioning in the marketplace, a major expansion or any other significant move by an organization. Whatever the desired outcome of this strategy creation, the process is fostered by the artful use of several of the above identified thinking skills. Practicing and enhancing these skills in the planning process will result in the ability to create better, stronger strategic approaches, and will also provide a return on investment for the time spent learning how and when to use each thinking skill more effectively.

**FINAL THOUGHTS ON THINKING**

The domain of thinking skills is of pivotal importance to the success of a management group as it works through key organizational challenges. The group, sometimes with the help of a consultant, needs to evaluate the range of thinking skills it has available to use and how gaps in skills can be remedied, as well as how better to use the full range of thinking skills. Remember there are many ways for the group to enhance its strengths as well as develop its weaker areas so it can produce an even better product
Transformational Change:  
When the Rules Change, Everyone Goes Back to Zero  
Dr. Tim Nolan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Structure</th>
<th>Up Until Now...</th>
<th>And From Now On...</th>
<th>Developmental Challenges and Opportunities For My Agency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Required Structure</td>
<td>The Feds defined “what” we needed to do and “how” to do it. They gave us the required recipe.</td>
<td>The Feds continue to define “what” but expect us to define “how” we will do this. We will also need to explain “why” we made each choice.</td>
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<th>Locus of Control</th>
<th>With the Feds</th>
<th>Within you, your staff and your agency</th>
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| Path to success | 1. Learn the Performance Standards  
2. Learn the OHS “recipe” regarding “how”  
3. Implement the recipe  
4. Carefully build files to demonstrate compliance | 1. Learn the Performance Standards  
2. Determine what is needed in your community (CNA+)  
3. Identify the outcomes that you will pursue  
4. Develop your approach to meeting this need  
5. Develop one or more measures with which to define success | |

1
| Monitoring: The role of the monitors | 1. Reviewers come to your agency to check whether you are in compliance with the OHS required recipe 2. Collect “evidence” of compliance 3. Reviewers are staff to others in DC, making few judgements 4. Reviewers were restricted in their ability to share the full picture. 5. Reviewers could not suggest or enter into a real conversation | 1. Reviewers will come to see you less frequently, being replaced with a mix of telephone and site visits 2. Reviewers will learn who you are as an agency; the needs of your community; the approaches you are taking to meeting the needs of your community; they will learn how you use outcomes data to shape your work. |

| The culture necessary for success in the New World of Head Start | 1. Commitment to following the process defined by others...the required recipe  
2. Rely on other's direction and control  
3. Collect numbers to impress others | 1. Commitment and belief in your ability to create the best possible response to needs and standards  
2. Rely on your own choices regarding best possible direction  
3. Collect numbers to inform your work.  
4. Be able to demonstrate your effective use of numbers |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Culture changes relating to your staff | 1. Select and reinforce staff for compliance  
2. Drill staff in memorizing Performance Standards  
3. Present to staff the recipe for success coming from within the Performance Standards  
4. Monitor staff to ensure compliance with the OHS “recipes” for each program area | 1. Select and reinforce staff for understanding connections between CNA; program design; identifying measures; applying measures and being able to discuss the measures and how they inform their work.  
2. Train staff in Performance Standards and all involved in #1 above.  
3. Train staff in all aspects of #1 above  
4. Assure that staff are both doing what needs to be done with children and families and have that ability to articulate this to others  
5. Develop a staff capacity for embracing numbers |
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Human Resource Development (HRD) and Talent Development</strong></th>
<th><strong>1. Learning the Performance Standards...</strong></th>
<th><strong>Capacities of staff will define success</strong></th>
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<td><strong>2. Learning CLASS</strong></td>
<td><strong>1. Will need to do #1 and #2...Performance Standards</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3. Use T&amp;TA Structure</strong></td>
<td><strong>2. Deepen sophistication and understanding of CAN</strong></td>
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<td><strong>4. Contract for CLASS trainers</strong></td>
<td><strong>3. Deepen culture of data driven learning; discussion; and action</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5. OHS often defined T&amp;TA.</strong></td>
<td><strong>4. Develop skills and comfort in use of numbers</strong></td>
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<td><strong>6. OHS controlled T&amp;TA network</strong></td>
<td><strong>5. Develop thinking skills</strong></td>
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<td><strong>7. State associations provided varying resources</strong></td>
<td><strong>6. Develop verbal skills to work in new monitoring environment</strong></td>
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**Additional areas that will emerge as we study this....and track Aligned Monitoring 2.0.**

**Additional areas that will emerge as you work through this in your agency.**

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