Adaptive Leadership Resources

Contact coliescher@gmail.com if you want to discuss this topic further.

Here is a quick video that highlights the value of adaptive leadership during these times.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0avV4-Lcxk

Here are some helpful articles when practicing adaptive leadership during a crisis.

Arnett, T. & Waite, C. (2020). A new road map for schools: 3 strategies can help you plan for an uncertain future. *The Learning Professional, 41*(3), 38-41. https://learningforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/the-learning-professional-june2020.pdf

The authors address some challenges and suggestions for school leaders for Fall 2020 under the assumption that schools might not reopen conventionally. During a crisis, such as these times, the authors implore leaders to frame the situation as positively as possible; look for ways the district, schools, teachers, and families can grow, not just how to overcome the obstacles at hand. How can this closure be seen as an opportunity? Leaders should sell that message in their communication to stakeholders. Leaders also need to invite others to creatively plan and collaborate as new options emerge and decisions are made. These stakeholders include parents, especially as schools may be leaving students at home as they learn for even longer than just the last quarter. As they set goals, leaders should remember to make them SMART: specific, measurable, attainable, results-based, and time-bound. These investments in creative change may even be worth adapting or keeping in the coming years after the pandemic has ceased.

Cowen, S. (2020, April 1). *Out on the Balcony: Thinking Beyond the Crisis.* Inside Higher Ed. https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2020/04/01/colleges-should-start-thinking-now-how-covid-19-might-transform-them-better-opinion

The president of Tulane University during Hurricane Katrina reflects on the experience of adapting and coming through the crisis with success and transformation in several areas. He urges other higher education leaders to embrace the COVID-19 problems as a chance to evaluate how processes and missions are executed in universities now and how they can be enhanced in a post-pandemic world. He states that resilience is required of the leader and organization in a time like this, and in order to be resilient, the group must seek opportunities for improvement and innovation. Leaders must think beyond survival or the pressing needs of the moment. Leaders must step back and decide how to make lasting impressions with the decisions they make during a crisis.

Gill, J. (2020). Long-distance leadership: Principals support teachers as they dive into remote learning. *The Learning Professional, 41*(3), 26-29. https://learningforward.org/journal/what-now/long-distance-leadership/

As teachers face the added stresses of distance learning, trying to aid their students and parents in the process, school leaders must also support their teachers from afar. The author recommends mitigating the learning curve for teachers as much as possible, even producing videos to help teachers with new technology. Setting up weekly or daily check-ins with teachers are also ways to make them feel supported. Reaching out to parents regularly, through Zoom, helps families feel connected. In fact, with the restart of school, momentum with parent connections may be able to continue so parents are even more part of the learning process when schools

reopen traditionally in the future. Principals should show their teachers grace and support in these trying times, as a model for how teachers should act with their students.

Goodall, J. (2020). Engaging parents during school closures. *Impact, 1*(9), 67-68. https://impact.chartered.college/article/engaging-parents-during-school-closures/

Not only are parent engagement strategies important for this pandemic time, but Goodall provides insight in how to continue these practices later on as well, tapping into some adaptive leadership themes. Notable advice to educators that is unique to this article is the term "asynchronous support," meaning that families may not have enough devices in the home for all those who need to use them; teachers and school leaders should plan for that. Also, she states policymakers and school leaders need to remember that many of their teachers are also parents schooling their children at home too. The author implores schools to partner with parents, choose the most essential skills to focus on in home learning, and remember their training took years, and parents may not be experienced with teaching. Reminding the readers how schools, and the people who arrive, will be different when everyone eventually returns; this situation will create a lasting effect.

Harris, A. (2020). School leadership in lockdown. Impact, 1(9), 62-63. https://impact.chartered.college/article/school-leadership-lockdown/

The author challenges school leaders to consider some advice moving forward with redefining and repositioning oneself in the COVID-19 educational world. In these unpredictable times, with no end in sight, leaders from across the school will rise up, engaging the school in distributive leadership to address the complex challenges of the day; working collectively is the only way forward with this pandemic distance learning paradigm. Since there is no precedent for literature on good practices for school leaders during a pandemic, this author points to some general good practices, such as establishing clear protocols within the school, communicating clearly, and setting boundaries for working hours. Making sure the leader stays healthy, mentally and physically, will be essential for the unending work to continue in a productive way, and by speaking and acting with empathy and gratitude, a leader will go far during these uncertain times.

Horn, M. B. (2020, April 30) COVID-19's ultimate impact on online learning: The good and the bad. *Campus Technology.* https://campustechnology.com/articles/2020/04/30/covid19s-ultimate-impact-on-online-learning-the-good-and-the-bad.aspx

The author's commentary on the abrupt switch to online learning for colleges and universities offers insight into this research as it pertains to making a quality platform students will appreciate and benefit from. With colleges in business to attract students, they found themselves scrambling in March to hastily move classes online, and some that did so poorly have gained bad reputations or had families requesting refunds for the semester. Will colleges breathe a collective sigh of relief when classes finally resume in person, or can this situation with COVID-19 be an opportunity to adapt and make changes for the future that will have lasting impact? Colleges have no other choice but to innovate, unless they are prepared to close their doors.

Klinger, A. (2020). Navigating school leadership in a post-pandemic world. *ASCD Education Update, 62*(6), 4. http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/education_update/jun20/vol62/num06/Navigating_School_Leadership_in_a_Post-Pandemic_World.aspx

Although adaptive leadership is never referenced in this brief article of tips and ideas to consider, the author calls school leaders to make the most of the pandemic by finding ways to make lasting changes through innovative ideas. The author implores leaders to re-imagine the system, adopting new decision-making frameworks that do more than just provide temporary fixes but that make schools what they could be. Putting a focus on relationships and meaning as a result of what systems social distancing might require, such as smaller lunch period groups, is just one example of how to turn a difficult situation into one that forces schools to make positive changes for the long-term benefit of students.

Macpherson, R. & ‘t Hart, P. (2020, April 18). *Leading in a crisis: Using adaptive leadership to shape the COVID-19 crisis response.* ANZSOG. https://www.anzsog.edu.au/resource-library/research/using-adaptive-leadership-to-shape-the-covid19-crisis-response

From the perspective of leaders in Australia and New Zealand, these authors emphasize how to proceed during the pandemic through the lens of adaptive leadership. Although Heifetz recognizes the need for exercising authority in the midst of a genuine crisis, these authors call into practice Heifetz’s suggestions for adaptive leadership to bring the world through it in a thriving way. The only way the leader can exude authority and it be effective is if he or she does not duck, deny, distort or procrastinate during a crisis, nor can he or she show over confidence in a self-serving way and expect to be successful. The world has not yet reached a place where we can breathe a sigh of relief that the pandemic is over. Instead, leaders need to consider creative ways to help the economy and health systems bounce back. The world needs to realize that going back to normal is not possible, just like the world learned after World War II and the 1973-74 oil embargo. Leaders shifting their ways of thinking and reflecting will be paramount to success this time, especially as adaptive leaders. Additionally, leaders must invite and set up opportunities for others to step up within the organization and help tackle problems together.

Tam, G. (2020, June). The path forward amid COVID-19. *TD Magazine, 13*(6), 39-43. https://www.td.org/magazines/td-magazine/the-path-forward-amid-covid-19

In the world of business, the sudden COVID-19 crisis has rendered a large portion of former practice obsolete, yet many leaders have managed to navigate the complexity of the moment. They have reshaped their businesses by mobilizing their teams and embracing adaptive leadership. The greatest advice from this author is for leaders to focus first, during these uncertain times, on the organizations purpose. In order to prevent the business from falling into an unfavorable or vulnerable state, the leader should look at the situation holistically, be able to predict outcomes for actions, and clearly communicate the new steps toward remaining successful with others in the business.

Teahen, R. C. (2019, November). Adaptive leadership: Strategies for challenging times. *Perspectives, 6*(10), 1-4. https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/administration/academicaffairs/extendedinternational/ccleadership/Perspectives-November_2019-final.pdf

Although many leadership theories inform community college decision-making, this author argues that adaptive leadership produces leaders who challenge their people’s capacity to thrive with new challenges in a sustainable way. Woven throughout the article is the compilation of adaptive leadership theories and benefits that community college leaders can take with them into their own leadership practices. The author compels leaders to take a big-picture view because their problems are so complex they cannot afford to operate in silos but must proactively view their challenges from a balcony perspective, allowing diverse decision-makers to assist them in the process. By including others in the change process, followers realize the reasons behind changes, thereby having a greater chance of buying into the changes. Additionally, when stakeholders feel part of the change process, they feel valued and are more invested in helping to make the change meaningful and long-lasting.