Reclaiming Futures

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aha! Process, Inc.
Workshop Goals

Compare and contrast class in the U.S. while exploring new ideas and approaches for our communities.
Key Point #1

This workshop focuses on economic diversity, not racial or cultural diversity.
Median Net Worth, by Race

Source: Federal Reserve's Survey of Consumer Finance
Definition of Poverty

“The extent to which an individual does without resources.”
Definitions of Resources

FINANCIAL
Being able to purchase the goods and services of that class and sustain it.

EMOTIONAL
Being able to choose and control emotional responses, particularly to negative situations, without engaging in self-destructive behavior. Shows itself through choices.

MENTAL
Having the mental abilities and acquired skills (reading, writing, computing) to deal with daily life; education; trade or skills

SPIRITUAL
Believing in (divine) purpose and guidance; one’s cultural base

PHYSICAL
Having physical health and mobility; appearance, fitness, athletic abilities

SUPPORT SYSTEMS
Having friends, family, and backup resources available to access in times of need. These are external resources.

RELATIONSHIPS/ROLE MODELS
Having frequent access to adult(s) who are appropriate, nurturing, and who do not engage in destructive behavior.

KNOWLEDGE OF HIDDEN RULES
Knowing the unspoken cues and habits of a group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Size</th>
<th>Annual Income</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>$21,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>$17,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>$14,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>$10,400</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (January 2008)
Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD)

- 30 nations that accept the principles of representative democracy and free-market economy.
- Definition of poverty: incomes below 50% of the national median.
OECD
Six Identifiers of Resources

- Material Well-Being
- Health and Safety
- Educational Well-Being
- Relationships
- Behaviors and Risks
- Subjective Well-Being
No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship.

–Dr. James Comer
Mental Models

- Are internal pictures of how the world works
- Exist below awareness
- Are theories-in-use, often unexamined
- Determine how we act
- Can help or interfere with learning

For a dialogue to occur we must suspend our mental models.

Source: *The Fifth Discipline Field book* (1994) by Peter Senge
Clarian Health Partners, Indianapolis, IN
MENTÁLNE OBRAZY
VZŤAHY

KONKRÉTNO

ZOVRETIE
CHVÍLE
- Fast food
- Check cashing
- Temp services
- Used-car lots
- Dollar store

**Businesses**

**Relationships**

- Pawn shop
- Liquor store
- Corner store
- Rent-to-own
- Laundromat
59% of poor renters spend more than 50% of their income on housing/utilities

Source: “Why America’s Workers Can’t Pay the Rent” (Summer 2000) by Peter Dreier in Dissent
Barriers to Employment

- 60% suffer depression.
- Limited child care options.
- Lack of care for sick children.

—Cincinnati Works
“The trouble with being poor is that it takes up all your time.”

–Willem de Kooning, quoted in the Richmond, VA, Times-Dispatch
“The need to act overwhelms any willingness people have to learn.”

Source: *The Art of the Long View* by Peter Schwartz

“The healthier you are psychologically, or the less you may seem to need to change, the more you can change.”

Achievement

Businesses

- Shopping/strip malls
- Bookstores
- Banks
- Fitness centers
- Veterinary clinics
- Office complexes
- Coffee shops
- Restaurants/bars
- Golf courses
Mental Model for Wealth

Connections

- Private Clubs & Associations
- Travel
- Oversight of Personnel Concerns
- Charitable Activities
- Media & Political Linkages
- Board of Directors
- National & International Advisers
- Lawyers & Accountants
- Event Sponsorship Attendance
- Vacation
Mental Model Poverty Summary

• **It is a description of the concrete experience:**
  – Unstable, vulnerable, interlocking.
  – The arithmetic of life doesn’t work.
  – Time horizon: tyranny of the moment.

• **Problem solvers use reactive skills.**

• **The driving force is survival, relationships, and entertainment.**

• **It is an abstract representation.**

• **The goal:** stabilize the environment, develop a future story, practice choice, build resources, become powerful.
### Community Sustainability Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Individual Behavior</th>
<th>Human and Social Capital in the Community</th>
<th>Exploitation</th>
<th>Political/Economic Structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Action</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Action</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Key Point #11

In order to move from poverty to middle class or from middle class to wealth, an individual must give up relationships (at least for a time) for achievement.
Hidden Rules of Class

- Hidden Rules are the unwritten and unspoken cues and habits of a group.
- They are about belonging.
- They arise from the environment.
POVERTY
Key question:
Did you have enough?
Quantity important

MIDDLE CLASS
Key question:
Did you like it?
Quality important

WEALTH
Key question:
Was it presented well?
Presentation important
POVERTY
Survival, relationships, entertainment

MIDDLE CLASS
Work, achievement

WEALTH
Financial, political, social connections
MONEY

POVERTY
To be used, spent

MIDDLE CLASS
To be managed

WEALTH
To be conserved, invested
POVERTY
Present most important
Decisions made for the moment based on feelings or survival

MIDDLE CLASS
Future most important
Decisions made against future ramifications

WEALTH
Traditions and history most important
Decisions made partially on basis of tradition/decorum
POVERTY

Power linked to personal respect
Ability to fight
Can’t stop bad things from happening

MIDDLE CLASS

Power/respect separated
Responds to position
Power in information and institutions

WEALTH

Power in expertise, connections
Power in stability
Influences policy and direction
POVERTY
Casual register
Language is about survival

MIDDLE CLASS
Formal register
Language is about negotiation

WEALTH
Formal register
Language is about networking
## REGISTERS OF LANGUAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGISTER</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FROZEN</strong></td>
<td>Language that is always the same. For example: Lord’s Prayer, wedding vows, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FORMAL</strong></td>
<td>The standard sentence syntax and word choice of work and school. Has complete sentences and specific word choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONSULTATIVE</strong></td>
<td>Formal register when used in conversation. Discourse pattern not quite as direct as formal register.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CASUAL</strong></td>
<td>Language between friends and is characterized by a 400- to 800-word vocabulary. Word choice general and not specific. Conversation dependent upon non-verbal assists. Sentence syntax often incomplete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTIMATE</strong></td>
<td>Language between lovers or twins. Language of sexual harassment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from the work of Martin Joos
To survive in poverty, one must rely upon non-verbal, sensory, and reactive skills.

To survive in school, one must use verbal, abstract, and proactive skills.
Language and Power

- Casual is more accurate.
- Formal has more power.
- Communication problems can be a balance of power problem.
- It’s only when the balance of power is relatively equal that candid communication can take place.
- Listening is an attitude, not a skill.
PATTERNS OF DISCOURSE

FORMAL

CASUAL

↓

🔍
STORY STRUCTURES

FORMAL

B

E

PLOT

CASUAL

^ ^ ^ ^ ^
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- Connections, social networks, and norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness
- Private and public aspects
  - Bonding
  - Bridging
  - Thick and thin

Social Capital

- Neighbors & Family
- Religious Organization
- Formal Organization
- School
- Clubs

Bonding Capital

Bridging Capital
# Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Mental</th>
<th>Spiritual</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Support System</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Hidden Rules</th>
<th>Integrity</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
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</table>
If you have come to help me, you can go home again.

But if you see my struggles as a part of your own survival, then perhaps we can work together.

—Lila Watson, an aboriginal woman from Australia
## Bridges Communities, partial list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Battle Creek, MI</th>
<th>Keshena, WI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boulder, CO</td>
<td>Lisbon, OH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucyrus, OH</td>
<td>Newton, KS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charleston, SC</td>
<td>Pensacola, FL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charlotte, NC</td>
<td>South Bend, IN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evansville, IN</td>
<td>Springfield, OH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Junction, CO</td>
<td>Syracuse, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton, OH</td>
<td>Toledo, OH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indianapolis, IN</td>
<td>Warsaw, IN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“An insight is a restructuring of information – it’s seeing the same old thing in a completely new way. Once that restructuring occurs, you never go back.”

—Earl Miller, M.I.T.
“Innovators are often not the principal agents of change; early adapters are.”

–Michael Fairbanks