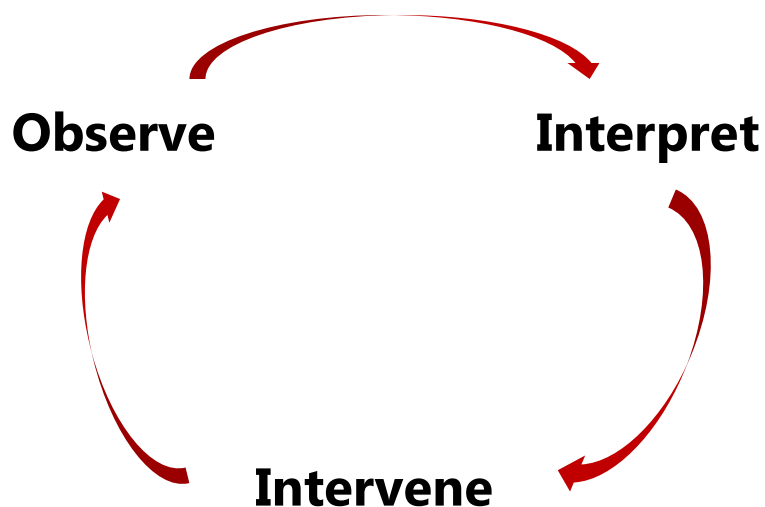


Leading Adaptive Change – a brief summary

Two types of challenges are typically identified when leading adaptive change: **adaptive and technical** (* please see further reading). A technical challenge can be defined as a challenge that can be solved by the knowledge of experts, whereas an adaptive challenge will require new learning. When the problem definition, solution and implementation are clear, this is referred to as technical change. For the adaptive challenge, change must come from the collective intelligence of the team at all levels. Together, the team learn their way toward solutions.

Level I: Technical	Level II: Technical & Adaptive	Level III: Adaptive
★ Problem definition is clear	★ Problem definition is clear	★ Problem definition, solution, and implementation require new learning
★ Leader or expert provides solution	★ Solution requires new learning	★ Responsibility for the solution resides within the followers
★ Easiest to resolve	★ Both leader and followers are responsible for the solution	★ Most difficult to resolve
★ First order change		★ Second order change

The Adaptive Leadership Process



Six Principles for Leading Adaptive Change

1. Get on the balcony

- a. Leaders need to have distance to see the “big picture”

2. Identify the adaptive change

- a. Leader needs the ability to identify adaptive change when it is called for
- b. Must address it in order to turn it around
- c. Confront the brutal facts (Jim Collins, 2001)

3. Regulate distress

- a. Do not overwhelm but provide enough tension to maintain urgency
- b. Challenge unproductive norms
- c. Ask questions rather than give answers

4. Maintain disciplined attention

- a. Must be able to identify distractions and refocus the work
- b. Attention on tough issues
- c. People tend to slide back into old behaviours unless focus is maintained
- d. Reframing issues get at the heart

5. Give work back to people

- a. Getting others to assume responsibility
- b. Instil confidence in others through encouragement and support
- c. Be part of the change

6. Protect voices of leadership from below

- a. Protect rather than squelch those who risk speaking up
- b. Need to hear all voices including dissenters

Remember!

- ★ Personal relationships are the key to successful leadership;
- ★ Adaptive leadership is based on political thinking;
- ★ Develop alliances and keep the opposition close;
- ★ Acknowledge the loss and difficulty;
- ★ Accept casualties in order to make progress;
- ★ Take responsibility for your piece of the mess.

* Further Reading

Academi Wales (2014) Adaptive Leadership – embracing chaos and courage for sustainable change.
<https://academiwales.gov.wales/Repository/tree?sort=recommendation&language=en&tags=Publications&nodeId=43c6bfde-18e5-4e9b-8fe1-b53e39a72ba9> Accessed: 14th July 2016. (Academi Wales - Sowing Seeds Series)

Questions for Leading Adaptive Change

Get on the balcony

- What do you believe is the ‘bigger picture’ that indicates a need for change?
- As a leader, how will you assist others to have distance and recognise the ‘bigger picture’?

Identify the adaptive change

- What have you specifically identified as the adaptive change?
- What things must you address in order to ‘turn it around’?
- What are some of the brutal facts you may need to confront?

Regulate distress

- How do you intend to create a ‘sense of urgency’?
- What are some of the ‘unproductive norms’ that need challenging?
- How will you help people feel a sense of control?

Maintain disciplined attention

- What do you anticipate are some of the tough issues that will need addressing?
- What key areas will help you, and those involved in the change, to maintain focus?

Give work back to people

- How will you motivate, encourage and support others to accept responsibility for the change?
- What will you specifically do to involve others in the change?

Protect voices of leadership from below

- What will you do to protect rather than suppress those who risk speaking up?
- What are some of the dissenting views that need to be listened to?

What will be the first or next action you will take to create momentum or move things further forward?

Adaptive Leadership - notes page

Get on the balcony

Identify the adaptive change

Regulate distress

Maintain disciplined attention

Give work back to people

Protect voices of leadership from below