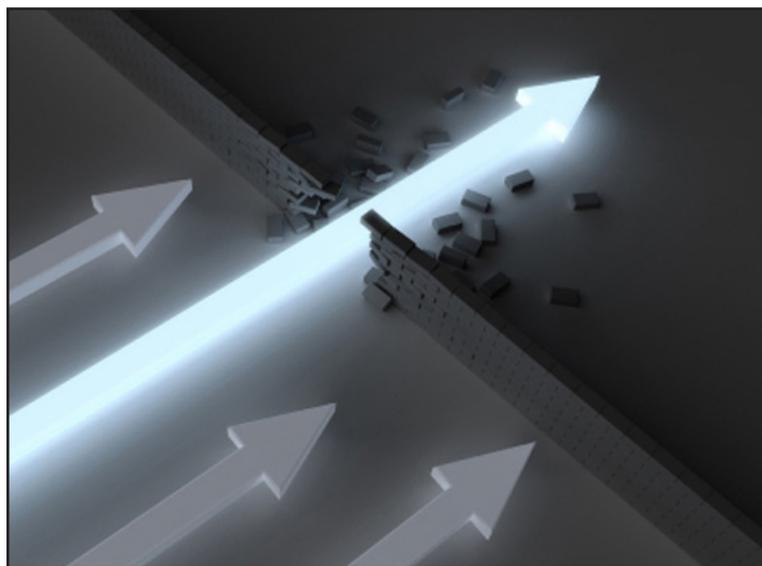


Professional Learning Conversation Protocol

Crossing boundaries is something generally frowned upon in our society because of its connection with interfering or behaving inappropriately in some way. There is a sense that boundaries should not be crossed and this is probably because at a boundary there is a sense of discontinuity.

However, boundary crossing of the right kind plays a very important role in change and transformation, especially when the change is complex. Engeström et al. (1995, p. 332) define boundary crossing as 'horizontal expertise where practitioners must move across boundaries to seek and give help, to find information and tools wherever they happen to be available.' An example might be an academic interacting both with students as a teacher preparing them for work integrated learning, and with an industry group as a university-based colleague trying to procure work placements. These are simplistic and, for most academics (experienced boundary crossers) readily traversable boundaries, but for a novice, such as a new graduate seeking employment, they might represent a more difficult space.

Boundary crossings become more complex when they include time and space boundaries such as moving from adolescence to



adulthood. Entering unfamiliar territory that involves a series of loosely connected systems where "markers of difference are created, maintained or contested at many different levels" (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011, p.135) is a challenging 'boundary crossing' activity. The boundary between two knowledge systems, activities, places or times is an opportunity for growth and development. In fact, the ability to successfully cross boundaries is critical to learning, growth and transformation. It is a dialogical process that requires a tolerance for difference, the ability to take multiple perspectives, a willingness to negotiate and a capacity to live with seeming contradiction, at least for a time. Boundary crossing is a key skill for leaders!

Protocol for Conversation Five

1. Introduction of participants by name, protocol and 'boundary crossing' as a core concept for leaders.
2. Share and reflection on a strong message from first hour conversation. Each participant gives input with little further discussion
3. Implications of the conversation for you: Use data drawn from either the conversation itself or your preparation for this week. Are you noticing any connections between the conversations? Have the conversations prompted you to view, plan or
4. Response: What has emerged during both parts of the conversation so far that are relevant to a deeper understanding of leadership? What has changed from the first conversation to this one?
5. Key themes: If you were to describe the key points of the conversation to another group, what would you say?
6. Debrief the conversation protocol

References:

Akkerman, S. and Bakker, A. (2011). Boundary crossing and boundary objects. *Review of Educational Research*, 81: 2, 132-169.
Engeström, Y., Engeström, R. and Kärkkäinen, M. (1995). Polycontextuality and boundary crossing in expert cognition: Learning and problem solving in complex work activities. *Learning and Instruction*, 5, 319-336.