



Fall 2011 SLCP Project Directors Meeting

EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT THE WORK

Presenters: David Ruff, Pam Fisher, and Mary Hastings, GSP

If you want to build a ship, don't herd people together to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.

—Antoine de St. Exupery

Not surprisingly, public education has always been a hot topic of public debate, unfortunately, a debate that is often filled with factual errors, personal perceptions masquerading as facts, and individual needs falsely argued in the best interest of everyone. As educators, we have routinely failed to use research that would help us understand how best to present the quality of our work, the changing learning needs of our students, and the necessity of educational refinement.

A growing body of research on effective communication will be shared to start this workshop. This will be followed by several easy to use, but key, communication strategies that have been implemented by schools. Finally, participants will start to explore their own communication triangle, the foundational base for broader communication efforts.

Outcomes:

- Explore key research findings regarding public perceptions regarding public education;
- Learn several effective communication strategies; and
- Explore the development of a message triangle to support their work

Agenda

Time	Activity	Lead	Material
0:00	Welcome and a Few Stories <i>1) Principal introduced as the principal of the school "where every kind goes to college"</i> <i>2) Principal who reported the dire physical structure of the building with a call for investment who found the building closed</i> <i>3) Principal who started with "493 kids had a great day, 2 kids really messed up"</i> <i>What do these stories tell us?</i> <i>1) How we frame information is key to how it's heard</i> <i>2)</i>	David Ruff	

0:05	Frameworks Institute Findings <i>Go through the ten key points</i>	David	Keynote
0:20	School Board Focus Group Findings <i>A few key takeaways</i>	David	Keynote
0:25	Familiar vs. Unfamiliar <i>What people tend to understand and not understand about education.</i>	David	Keynote
0:30	Think, Turn, and Talk <i>What is a key concept about your work that you often share in public? Write this down. Now review the perceptions list. How might you need to change this? Share with a neighbor.</i>	David	Keynote
0:35	Strategy One: The Message Triangle <i>Introduce the message triangle: key, easily understandable message with supporting messages. It can be shifted a bit from time to time (especially the supporting messages) but the key message should remain pretty consistent. Show example.</i> <i>Talk about how important it is to stay consistent and to keep repeating—you will get tired of your message long before it is universally and widely understood. Note negative connotation of “staying on message”</i> <i>What is your message?</i>	David	Keynote
0:45	Strategy Two: Responding Strategically <i>Everything can be placed in one of four quadrants: T/F and P/N. Explain and talk about responses. What are the things people could say about your key message? Write them down and share.</i>	David	Keynote
0:55	Parting Thoughts: The Messenger Matters	David	

Session Handouts

Frameworks Message Memo

NESSC School Board Focus Group Report

Communications Worksheet

The universe is made of stories, not atoms.
~ Muriel Rukeyser