

THE POWER AND PROMISE OF PATHWAYS:

*A Guide for Group Discussion
or Personal Study*

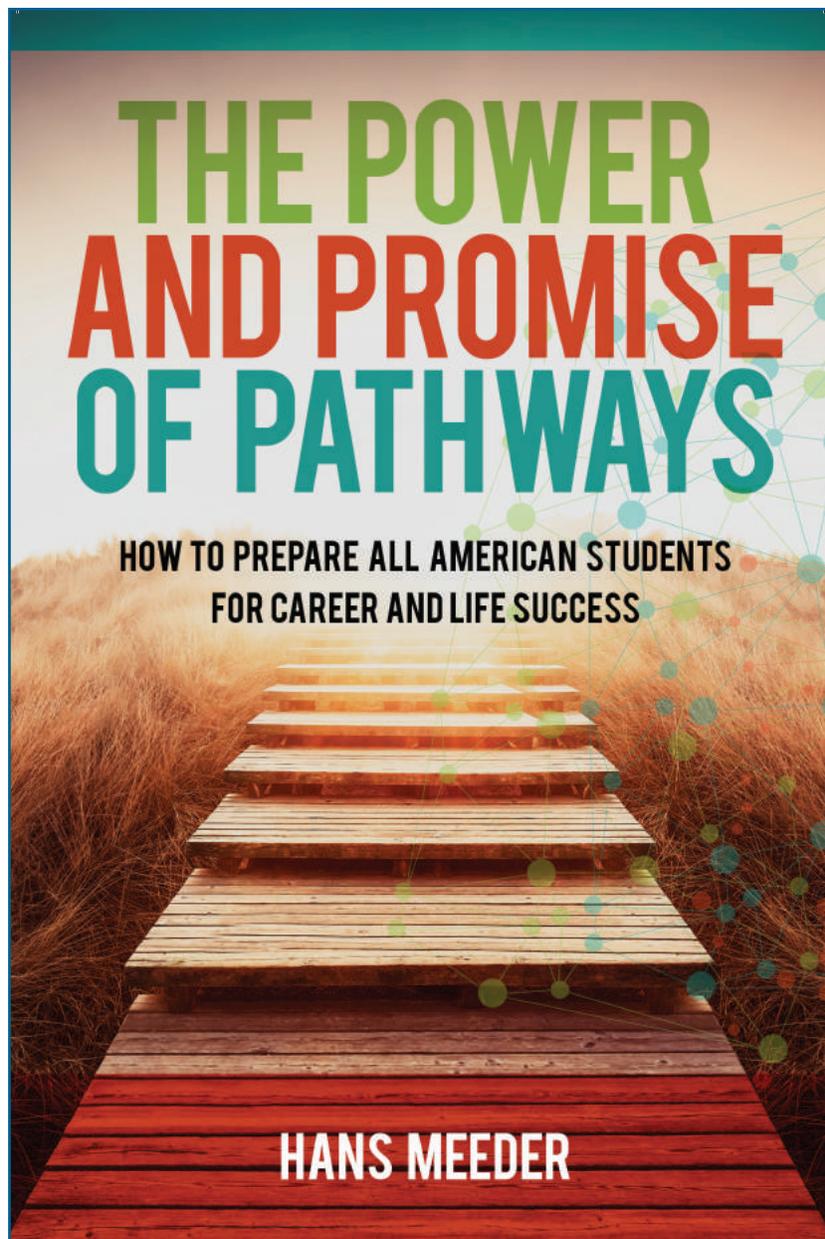


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Discussion Guide-Chapter 1

“Discovering Pathways”

1. At the beginning of Chapter 1 (pp. 7-8), the author talks about some prevalent social problems that might drive the conversation about pathways. In your community or region, what are the social problems and concerns that reflect general discontent among our citizens? How might education address these concerns?
2. What do think when the author says, “It has to do with jobs – good jobs and meaningful careers (p.8)?” How much of our national “mood” is related to jobs and careers?
3. Gallup’s research (p. 8) indicates that most workers want a “good job” with 30+ hours a week of steady employment. Is this desire for work hard-wired or is it cultural? What expectations about work do you see among today’s youth and young adults?
4. From your observation and experience, how has trade, transportation, and technology (the Three T’s) changed the American job market (p.9)?
5. How well are schools and colleges in your region coping with these change drivers? What are some examples of hitting or missing the mark?
6. The author talks about the historical divide over how schools treated and prepared students who were seen as “college-bound” and the “non-college-bound” (p. 11). Does this approach fit with the reality of today’s labor market? Do our schools, teachers and parents see a clear divide between the college-bound and non-college bound? Why or why not?
7. There are two kinds of skills gaps – college graduates who lack practical workplace and employability skills, and poorly educated students who lack academic skills as well as marketable technical skills (pp. 12-13). How do you think our local schools are doing? Are we adequately developing broad employability skills and marketable technical skills among students? Why or why not?

8. Are students learning enough about career options while they are in our schools? Are they getting good career development in the college setting? Why or why not?

9. In referencing the book "Race Against the Machines," the author notes how automation and assistive technology is changing the workplace and requiring more workers to be strong in their use of technology (p. 14). Beyond the use of social media, how well are our students learning to use technology for work-related projects?

10. At the close of the chapter, the author talks about a "pathways-for-all" approach where all students learn about and explore careers as part of their educational experience (p. 17). What would be the positive aspects of this approach? What would be the concerns or pushback this approach might engender?

11. The author lays out six commitments that track to the six components of a pathways system (pp. 20-21). What would it take to create a local movement to adopt the six commitments?

12. The author references the need for strong local leadership to move reform forward (pp. 21-22). How would you describe the level of local activism and leadership in education and other social needs?

13. Who are the people with local influence that need to be engaged in this conversation (other than elected officials)? How can you find out about the local influencers?

14. STEM education is a very important and visible concept in education today. In your view, how can the work of STEM education be connected to the work of college & career readiness, and pathways more broadly (p. 24)? What are the obstacles to connecting these topics?

###

Discussion Guide-Chapter 2

“The Urgency of Pathways”

Visible Challenges

1. In Section 2 of Chapter 2, there are seven Visible Challenges identified (pp. 30-39). Which challenges are familiar to you and which ones are new to you?

Familiar challenges:

New-to-me challenges:

2. Of the seven Visible Challenges listed, which ones do you think are most relevant to employers, families and educators? Why?

Most relevant to employers:

Most relevant to parents & families:

Most relevant to educators:

3. For your community, list the three challenges that you consider to be the most important. Why?
4. What are some local facts and figures that would help explain these challenges? If you don't have the facts and figures, where could you find them?

Root Causes

5. In Section 3 of Chapter 2, there are eight Root Causes identified (pp. 39-53). Which Root Causes are familiar to you and which ones are new to you?

Familiar root causes:

New-to-me root causes:

6. Of these eight Root Causes, which ones are true for your community, and which ones are not really a problem?

Local root causes:

Not a local problem:

7. For your community, list the top three root challenges that you consider to be the most important. Why?

8. At the end of the chapter (p. 54), there are four discussion questions listed as examples for getting a local discussion started. They are:

- ◇ What do you think about this finding?
- ◇ Is this result good enough for now? What about for the long-term? What would be a satisfactory result, realizing that perfection is not a realistic possibility?
- ◇ What will happen for youth and our community if nothing changes?
- ◇ If we could find effective solutions, would this problem be worth addressing?

9. List some ways you (and your team) could structure a local discussion around these topics of Visible Challenges and Root Causes.

###

Promising Practice Profile

The Academies of Nashville (pp.55-57)

10. In reading this profile, I was really impressed with the following aspects of their reform model: (list them here)
11. In reading this profile, I had questions about the following:

Discussion Guide-Chapter 3

“What the Research Indicates”

Section 1. The Urgency of Pathways

1. Research on the effectiveness of a Pathway System demonstrates that full system implementation improves student/school/district performance in five measurable areas: **academic achievement, academic course taking, high school graduation rates, career readiness skills, and long-term earning potential.** (p. 59)

Ranking them from 1 to 5, identify which of these outcomes are most important in your community and school/district.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

When reading the research, which findings did you find most interesting with regards to these five areas? Did you have questions about any of the findings?

Section 2. Outcomes for Pathways-Related Strategies

2. Career Development: What did you learn about the positive benefits from Career Development strategies? Are your students realizing similar benefits from career development activities in your school or district? Why or why not?

3. Career Technical Education: What did you learn about the positive benefits from Career & Technical Education strategies? Are your students realizing similar benefits from these strategies in your school or district? Why or why not?

4. Employer & Community Engagement: What did you learn about the positive benefits from Employer and Community Engagement strategies? Are your students realizing similar benefits from these strategies in your school or district? Why or why not?

5. Structured Student Supports: What did you learn about the positive benefits from Structured Student supports? Are your students realizing similar benefits from structured student support in your school or district? Why or why not?

6. Structured Programming: What did you learn about the positive benefits from Structured Programming strategies? Are your students realizing similar benefits from these strategies in your school or district? Why or why not?

7. Dynamic Teaching and Learning: What did you learn about the positive benefits from Dynamic Teaching and Learning strategies? Are your students realizing similar benefits from career development activities in your school or district? Why or why not?

8. Has your school or district experienced a positive outcome by employing one or more of these strategies? If yes, please explain

9. Which of these strategies do you believe are most important to be implemented or expanded in your school or district? Why?

###

Promising Practice Profile

P-TECH (pp. 81-82)

1. In reading this profile, I was really impressed with the following aspects of their reform model: (list them here)

2. In reading this profile, I had questions about the following:

Discussion Guide - Chapter 4

“Pathway Essentials”

Section 1. Is There Education Reform Overload?

1. The author notes that education reform can often seem random or take on the aspects of “the next big thing.” (p. 84) Do you identify with the idea of initiative fatigue? Why/why not?

2. When you hear about a new education initiative being introduced, what are your initial thoughts?

3. Has your school and/or district experienced one of the four types of education reform identified on pages 83 and 84?

If yes, what type of reform was initiated? How did the reform impact your school?

Section 2. The Pathway System Framework

4. Read the goal of a Pathway System on page 86. How does this goal change your understanding of what a Pathway System can and should accomplish?

How does this compare and contrast with other reform initiatives you have experienced/been a part of?

5. Based on the definition of a Pathway System (page 87), on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being a fully implemented Pathway System, how would you rate your school or school district? Why did you give it that rating?

6. Has your school or district already identified developing “Career and Life Ready Learners” as a goal?

How does your school or district’s goal differ from those identified in the chapter?

How are they similar?

7. Employer and community partners are essential to the development of Career and Life Readiness attributes in our students. How engaged do you feel this stakeholder group is in your school/district? What would it take to better engage them?

8. Brainstorm for just a minute. Who are some of the local employer/community partners you would like to see connecting with students and teachers?

Section 3. Discussing and Defining Career Pathway

9. Based on how the author defines “Career Pathway,” did your understanding of this type of program change? How?

10. Which Pathway Program components are currently present in your school/district? Which components are most lacking? (pp. 91-93)

11. What do you think are the most important benefits of Pathway Programs?

What might be some of the limitations of Pathway Programs in your school/district?

Section 4. Frequently Asked Questions About Pathways

12. What is your initial take on the idea of the two goals of developing adaptive learners and preparing students for careers (p. 96)? Do you find these goals to be supportive or incompatible?

How do you see the tension between these two goals working together?

13. What other questions do you have about a Pathway Program framework? Are there any additional elements you think should be included?

Promising Practice Profile Volusia County Schools Career Academies (pp.102-104)

1. In reading this profile, I was really impressed with the following aspects of their reform model: (list them here)

2. In reading this profile, I had questions about the following:

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Discussion Guide - Chapter 5 "Career and Life Readiness"

Section 1. The Value of Defining Career and Life Readiness

1. The author states that an effective educational system begins with the "end in mind," yet educational systems often lack clear definition and targets. Operating under the idea that "where you are going" is key to defining and achieving goals, how important is Career and Life Readiness to you? (p. 105)

2. One of the challenges with defining and implementing Career and Life Readiness goals can be the large focus on accountability and testing of core academic content and knowledge. Do you find this statement to be true in your school or district? Why/why not?

Section 2. The Origins of College and Career Readiness

3. On a scale of 1 – 10 with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, how do you rate your school in terms of preparing students for both college (aka postsecondary education) and careers? Do you find your school tends to silo students according to whether they are “college bound” or plan to go straight into the workforce? Please explain.
4. On page 108, the strengths of the Common Core K-12 standards are listed. If your state adopted Common Core or some adaptation of it, have you seen the standards affect teaching and learning?

Do you see these strengths working to support our students to become career and life ready?

What strengths are lacking from this list?

Section 3. Beyond Academic Skill Readiness

5. What does the phrase “College readiness is more than academic knowledge and skills” mean to you? (p. 108) How would you define college readiness? How would you define career readiness?
6. Why is integrating career readiness education for all students so important?
7. Based on the competencies listed in the Integrated Framework for Career and Life Readiness (pp. 113 -118), which elements do you think are already addressed in your school or district? Please explain.

Which elements do you think need to be addressed most urgently? Why?

Section 4. Developing, Communicating and Implementing the Career and Life Readiness Definition

8. Based on the Integrated Framework for Career and Life Readiness, take a minute and list the elements that you think are fundamental to developing a comprehensive definition of Career and Life Readiness.

Using the list you just made, think about your own definition of Career and Life Readiness. Write something down, but it does not need to be polished! This is just a starting place for conversation and consensus development

9. The author discusses how developing buy-in among all stakeholders is crucial to building consensus, utilizing the definition and bringing value to the Pathways System. List the stakeholders you would like to be at the table when creating this definition.
10. On page 121, read about how Greater Clark County Schools developed an entire program around Career and Life Readiness. What elements and/or courses might you include when developing a similar program?
11. Look at the list of instructional approaches schools may consider when integrating Career and Life Readiness instruction. (p. 122) Is your school currently utilizing any of these models?
12. Which program – either listed or not – would you like to see used in your school as a strategy for developing career and life competencies in your students?

###

Discussion Guide - Chapter 6 “Designing the Pathway Program”

Section 1. Strategic Decisions

1. According to the author, establishing a Pathway Program requires direction, attention, support, and accountability. (p. 126) Based on these requirements, who, from your school or district, should serve on the Campus-based Leadership Team?

2. Identifying key workforce gaps is crucial when selecting which Pathway Programs to implement. Without doing a deep-dive on workforce data at this time, are you aware of any high demand sectors in your local area suffering from a workforce shortage? For reference, some of the national demands include information technology, health care, engineering and/or advanced manufacturing. (p. 126)

3. When addressing how to approach Pathway Programs throughout the school, the author asks some key questions. Take a minute and write down your thoughts and ideas about each of these questions. (pp. 126-127)

How pervasive will Pathways be within the school?

How many Pathway Programs do you think the school can accommodate? (Look at page 126 for a general overview of program structure and enrollment.)

Will the school offer a collection of stand-alone Pathway Programs or organize them into larger academies?

Will the school offer a Freshman Experience or Freshman Academy?

How quickly will the transition to Pathway Programs happen?

4. When addressing how students are categorized on page 127 (college prep vs. career prep), are there any labels in your school that need to be reconsidered? If yes, how might this change occur?

5. To your knowledge, are there any programs offered at the local tech center that you believe should be offered at your school instead? If yes, which programs?

6. Regarding your school's relationship with the local tech center, in what areas are positive collaboration between programs and facilities happening? (pp. 128-129)

Which areas are challenging and in need of improvement? (pp. 128-129)

Section 2. Creating a Pathway Program

7. Pathway Program Interconnected Structure: Curriculum sequencing is often one of the biggest changes a school and/or district faces when implementing Pathway Programs. Take a minute to identify potential challenges when streamlining curricula.

8. Are there any areas within your school/district that have already integrated academic and experiential learning activities? (List them here)

9. Student Access: On a scale of 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent), how would you rate your school or district's performance with regards to providing students of varying achievement levels access to a variety of programs? Please explain.

Are there any areas – whether related to academics or social supports - that could improve? If yes, how might your school/district better support these students while offering them access to broader programming?

10. Student Cohort Scheduling: Does your school/district currently schedule students in cohorts? If not, what challenges should be anticipated when creating cohort scheduling?

Are there any schools in your region or state utilizing cohort scheduling from which you could gather information/guidance?

11. Pathway Program Advisory Committee: Are employers currently involved in your school/district in an advisory role? If so, describe their role. Is it more of a “rubber stamp” relationship that perhaps should be reevaluated? Is it an integrated, engaged relationship with a “co-manager” mentality? Or is it somewhere in between?

Has your school/district developed partner organizations? If yes, please briefly list and describe them. If no, who do you envision as potential partners?

12. Pathway Program Instructional Team: Does your school/district currently use Instructional Teams? If yes, please describe. If no, what challenges do you anticipate when forming a team and how might those challenges be overcome?

What questions do you have regarding the formation and workings of an instructional team?

13. Alignment with Workforce Needs and Opportunities: Are current Pathway programs aligned with local workforce needs? Please explain.

14. Alignment with Standards: Do you feel that the current standards used in your school/district are relevant and “begin with the end in mind?” (p. 142) If not, what areas of instruction do you feel would benefit most from a new curriculum/standards alignment?

In your opinion, how trained are teachers in your school/district at knowing and utilizing standards?

15. Alignment Across Courses: How well do teachers currently collaborate when developing and implementing learning units? What works well?

What are some of the challenges or prohibitions that occur when teachers collaborate? How might these challenges be overcome?

What are some of the challenges or prohibitions that occur when teachers collaborate? How might these challenges be overcome?

How equipped do you think the teachers in your school/district are at identifying, building, and implementing integrated learning units?

16. Alignment with Industry-based Credentials, Certifications, and Technical Skills Assessments: Do any current courses or programs offer students the opportunity to earn industry-based credentials? If so, please list.

What questions/concerns do you have about using industry-based credentials in Pathway Programs?

17. Experiential Learning, Community-based Experience, and Student Leadership: How would you describe the current experiential learning activities in place at your school or in your district?

What challenges do you anticipate when scaling experiential learning to involve all students? How might these challenges be overcome?

18. Seamless Connections with Postsecondary Institutions and Regional Career and Technical Centers: Does your school/district collaborate with regional tech centers and/or community colleges? If so, please describe that relationship. If not, how might these connections be made? With which organizations would you like to see your school/district partner?

19. Postsecondary Dual Enrollment and Articulation Agreements: Are students at your school or in your district currently offered opportunities to earn college credit while in high school? If so, are a wide variety of students or just high achievers participating in this offering?

What challenges need to be overcome to increase the number of early credit options offered to students?

Promising Practice Profile

Mountain Home High School Career Academies

(pp. 151-153)

1. In reading this profile, I was really impressed with the following aspects of their reform model: (list them here)
2. In reading this profile, I had questions about the following:

Discussion Guide - Chapter 7

“Designing the Pathways System”

System Component 1. Career and Life Readiness

1. The definition of Career and Life Readiness should address the following skills: applied knowledge, effective relationship skills, executive skills, postsecondary transition knowledge and skills, career navigation skills, financial literacy, and civic engagement. Which of these skills are sufficiently addressed in your school/district? Which ones are most often overlooked?

Sufficiently Addressed:

Often Overlooked:

2. What are examples of how content-centered instruction and learner-center instruction are used in your school(s)? (See p. 165)

Examples of Content-Centered Instruction:

Examples of Learner-Centered Instruction:

3. What local factors and demographics might affect how CLR is defined?

System Component 2. Career Exploration and Planning

4. What are some existing career development practices, resources, and standards that could be a starting point in your pathways work?
5. What are some barriers to building a Career Development System for K-12 and postsecondary learners?
6. What key components do you think should be included in a personal Career and Education Plan (CEP) (p. 168) for K-12, college, or adult education students?
7. How can pathway leaders overcome communication barriers (such as language and parental comfort with school) to communicate with families about pathway programs and postsecondary options?

System Component 4. Employer and Community Engagement

8. What message would you want to share with business and community members to help gain their support to offer learning opportunities to students?
9. What factors might affect employer and community engagement in your community?
10. How might employer- and community-based learning opportunities benefit students?
Businesses? Your community?

Students:

Businesses:

Community:

11. What resources are already in place to help establish/expand employer- and community-based learning opportunities for students and business-related learning experiences for teachers? Do you know what percentage of the student body participates in these opportunities? What are some of the barriers?

Existing Resources:

Barriers:

System Component 5. Dynamic Teaching and Learning

12. What elements of dynamic teaching and learning (see pp. 177-179) are frequently used in your school/district?

13. What type of resources and support are needed to help your district and school implement high quality curriculum and instruction and meet the diverse needs of students?

System Component 6. Cross-Sector Partnerships

14. What are some of the qualities you want participants in cross-sector partnerships to have?

15. What other factors will you consider when selecting individuals to serve on these partnerships and teams?

16. In your region, which industries experiencing a skills-gap? Which are undergoing restructuring or a downturn? (p. 195)

Experiencing a skills-gap:

Undergoing restructuring or a downturn:

17. Of the Pathway Program indicators on pp. 198-200, which ones are the most important to you? Which ones do you think are the easiest to collect? Which ones might be hard to collect?

Most important indicators:

Easiest to collect:

Hard to collect:

18. List the stakeholders you think should read the Pathways System Implementation Plan (PSIP, p. 202).

Promising Practice Profile Food and Finance High School (pp.208-209)

1. In reading this profile, I was really impressed with the following aspects of their reform model: (list them here)

2. In reading this profile, I had questions about the following:

Promising Practice Profile Career Street (pp.211-213)

1. In reading this profile, I was really impressed with the following aspects of their reform model: (list them here)

2. In reading this profile, I ad the following questions:

###

Discussion Guide - Chapter 8 “Exploring and Planning for Careers”

Definition of Career Development

1. Based on this definition of career development (p. 215), on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being a fully developed career development model, how would you rate your school or school district in carrying it out? _____. What are the reasons for your rating?

Career Navigation Mindset

2. Think about the Career Navigation mindset concept (P. 218). How does the “career navigation mindset” relate to the “growth mindset” (a la Carol Dweck) that many schools are working to develop among their students?

3. Based on your understanding of the economic and workforce changes in recent decades, how do you respond to the author's call for a career navigation mindset? What kind of mindsets do you see among young people relating to careers?
4. How can we present the career navigation mindset in a positive light, giving students a greater sense of hope and resilience?
5. At what age do you think students are able to start understanding the idea that career navigation is a skill set they will utilize during most of their adult life?

Decision Paralysis

6. Is decision paralysis (p. 220-221) a problem that you've seen among students? How can we present career options in a way that encourages further exploration without overwhelming students and causing decision paralysis?

Career Fit

7. Based on the discussion of career fit (p. 221-222), How do you think students will respond to the idea that they may not find an ideal career fit until they try out several jobs and are perhaps well into their 20's or 30's?

The Holland Codes

8. With the Holland Code model of career personality (pp. 222-227), how can this be used to help students pursue a career fit?
9. Do you think a school's use of career interest assessments develops deeper self-knowledge among students? Why or why not?
10. How can you develop a deeper self-knowledge that contributes to student understanding and a positivity about their ability to discover a good career fit?

11. How do we help students deal with the reality that, at some point, they may need to take a job that is not an ideal fit because they simply need to generate income? How do we balance the value of seeking a good career fit, while still upholding the inherent dignity of all work?

Creating a Career Development System

12. Based on what you've read about the four components of career development (pp. 227-230), how well does your school or district offer the four components?
13. What are the strengths and what are the gaps? What are some immediate steps your school could take to address gaps?

Strengths:

Gaps:

Immediate Steps:

###

Discussion Guide - Chapter 9 "Leading Through Change"

Section 1. Defining Leadership

1. The author shares the concept that, "Leadership is not a position. It's a Disposition" (p. 249). What does this statement mean to you?
2. Think of someone you know who is an effective leader. What leadership characteristics of this person stand out to you?

Section 2. Applying Models of Leadership Emotional Intelligence

3. Which elements of emotional intelligence do you think are most important for leaders to exhibit? Why?
4. Which characteristics of emotional intelligence do the effective leaders you know exhibit? Provide an example of how the leader(s) demonstrated emotional intelligence.

Characteristics of emotional Intelligence I've observed in effective leaders:

Example of how an effective leader demonstrated emotional intelligence:

Level 5 Leadership

5. What motivates you to pursue a pathway program for your school and community? Be honest about motivations that seem altruistic (for the good of others) and also those that might be related to self-esteem or sense of prestige.
6. How will "professional will" (p.254) be important as you implement pathways?

Section 3. The Process of Leading Change

7. To lead major change, there must be a sense of urgency to drive the change (p. 255). Are there "universal and visible" challenges identified by members of the community (families, workers, and businesses)?
8. What is a straightforward urgency statement based on these universal and visible challenges?
9. What school, community and business issues will you consider when you create a vision for change and key strategies (p. 257) for pathways?
10. What are three obstacles to change will need to be addressed as you start work on pathways? Rank these in order from most difficult to change to easiest to change.

11. What is a feasible “short-term win” (p. 259) as you begin to work on pathways?

12. How open is your school’s culture to change (p. 260)? What factors contribute to the relative openness or resistance to change?

13. Chapter 9 focuses on key leadership principles. Which of these principles do you think are the most important for leaders of your pathways initiative to exhibit? Why?

###

Discussion Guide - Chapter 10

“Communicating the Power and Promise of Pathways”

1. On page 265, the author says, “Before you can build your marketing and communications plan, you have to be able to identify what the current perception of your brand (Pathway Program) is from your constituent’s point of view.”

How do you think the following constituents see your current brand (your school/district)?

Teachers:

Parents:

Business Partners:

Post-secondary Education Institutions:

2. Who are some individuals (from the schools, business community, and community groups...) you would like on your Brand Team? What characteristics, experience and skills would you like them to have?

Brand Team Members:

Characteristics, Experience and Skills:

3. On page 266, the author states, "If you do only one thing, conduct a SWOT analysis." Why do you think a SWOT analysis will be important for communication efforts? What might be some challenges to conducting a SWOT analysis?

Importance of SWOT Analysis:

Challenges to conducting a SWOT Analysis:

4. The author asks how you could use the results of the SWOT Survey on page 268 to make sure you are benefitting your constituents. List some of the ways you could use the results.
5. Who do you see as the constituents for your Pathway Programs? Are there some constituents who may be overlooked (p. 268)?

Constituents of Pathway Programs:

Constituents who may be overlooked:

6. A Brand Promise is an internal statement of external purpose." (p. 271.) What makes for a powerful Brand Promise? Why will a Brand Promise will be important for your Pathways work?

7. An example of a Brand Promise is on page 272. What is compelling about the statement? What would you change about it?

8. On page 274, the author talks about developing a process protocol so there is "control over the messaging." What does the statement "In a vacuum, people will fill in the blanks," mean to you? How might "filling in the blanks" affect your work on Pathway Programs? What steps can be taken to make sure this doesn't happen?

What "In a vacuum, people will fill in the blanks," means:

How "filling in the blanks" might affect work on Pathway Programs:

Steps to prevent "filling in the blanks":

9. What traits and characteristics do you think are important for the Pathways Brand Ambassadors to have? Who are some potential Brand Ambassadors for Pathways?

Traits and characteristics of Brand Ambassadors:

Potential Pathways Brand Ambassadors:

10. What would your 30 second elevator speech about the value of Pathway Programs in your community be? (This doesn't need to be a final product – just a starting point to get you thinking about what you want your message to be.)

###

Discussion Guide - Chapter 11

“Policy Agenda for Pathways Systems”

Section 1. Emerging State Policies and Initiatives

1. Why do you think state policymakers have realized the importance of helping students transition from high school to postsecondary education and careers?
2. How might their increased awareness help your efforts to develop and implement the Pathways System?
3. Of the various initiatives, programs and policies listed on pages 279-283, which do you find the most promising and/or most interesting? Why?
4. If your state is included in the list, how do you think the particular initiative/program/policy will affect your work on developing a Pathways System at the local level?

Section 2. The Pathways State Policy Framework

5. Section 2 describes essential policy elements necessary for Pathways System success. Which of these has your state implemented?

6. Which of these elements do you think are most important for your state to implement?
7. Which of them do you think would be the least challenging to implement? The most challenging?

Least Challenging to Implement:

Most Challenging to Implement:

Section 3. Policy Audit

8. How would a state policy audit help your efforts to develop a Pathways System at the local level?
9. Who might you select to serve on a stakeholder team to conduct the audit?

###

Discussion Guide - Chapter 12

“Advancing The Pathways Movement”

Section 1. How Ideas and Innovations Spread

1. The author quotes Malcolm Gladwell, saying “It doesn’t take many people to spread an idea as long as they’re the right people.” (p. 289) As you begin work on your local Pathways initiative, begin making a list of the people you know are interested in being part of the work. Then from this list, try to identify which category (Connector, Maven or Salesman) these individuals fit into in order to spread the Pathways message, and to maximize the strengths and impact of the initiative. (pp. 289-290)

Connector:

Maven:

Salesman:

2. Being aware of your own adoption style can inform how you process change. Using the “innovation adoption curve,” the author describes the five types of attitudes towards innovation. (p. 291) With which type do you most identify and why?

3. Pathways implementation could suffer if each member of the cohort does not engage and understand the how and why of the initiative. This might be particularly true for the “Late Majority” and “Laggard” types. (p. 294) What are some challenges you foresee when bringing these types on board? How might the cohort overcome these challenges?

4. According to research by Keller and Berry, engaging the “Influentials” is key to spreading ideas, recommendations, and reforms. Who among local stakeholder groups do you identify as an “Influential?” These groups might include students, teachers, counselors, community partners, and/or employer partners. (p. 294)

Section 2. Danger Zones

5. Take a minute to review the different Danger Zones identified by the author. Which zones do you feel might be most threatening to implementing a Pathways Program? How might these dangers be mitigated?

6. Have you experienced your local school/district rising above one or more of these dangers? If yes, please share your experience.

Section 3. Who are the Influentials?

7. After reviewing the data shared on pages 299 – 301, go back and review the list of “Influentials” you drafted in Section 1, Question 4. Are there any other names you can add to the list?

Section 4. Action Steps to Get Started Today

8. Consult the list of action steps for individuals. Under which category do you fall? (p. 303)

9. Depending on the network in which you belong, what action steps do you feel confident enacting in the immediate future? Why?

10. Which action steps seem most challenging? How might you overcome these challenges?

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Your Next Steps

Thank you for using this discussion guide to deepen your understanding and application of the concepts explored in the Power and Promise of Pathways.

If you're looking for additional resources and ideas for your pathways work, check out the website of the National Center for College and Career Transitions (www.NC3T.com).

You can subscribe to our blog and newsletter, and you can also explore our services for Pathways Development, Employer Engagement, and Workshops and Presentations.

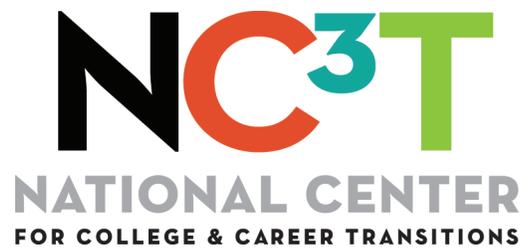
Best wishes in pursuing this important work for our students and the future of our communities and nation!

Sincerely,



Hans Meeder

President, NC3T



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The National Center for College and Career Transitions
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