

Putting the “Development” in Professional Development: Understanding and Overturning Educational Leaders’ Immunities to Change

DEBORAH HELSING

ANNIE HOWELL

ROBERT KEGAN

LISA LAHEY

Harvard Graduate School of Education

In this article, authors Deborah Helsing, Annie Howell, Robert Kegan, and Lisa Lahey argue that today’s educational leaders face a host of complex demands as they strive to implement lasting, meaningful change in their school environments. As these demands often require a level of personal development many adults may not yet have, there is a need for professional development programs that are genuinely developmental. This article describes one such program that provides the opportunity for participants to make qualitative shifts in the ways that they understand themselves and their work. Using case study methodology, the authors explore the psychological development of one participant as she increases her capacity to determine, and be guided by, her own theories, values, and expectations of her personal and professional relationships and responsibilities.

Educational leaders often face daunting problems and complex demands. In recent years, superintendents, principals, and central office staff have faced mounting pressure to make fundamental changes in the ways they lead. In addition to their previous management and operations responsibilities, these leaders are now charged with improving teaching and learning for an increasingly diverse student body, skillfully facilitating teacher learning, and negotiat-

ing the pressing political context at state and federal levels. Many leaders have not been trained to manage and make sense of these multiple demands and can be overwhelmed by the responsibilities required of them (Wagner et al., 2006).

Educational leaders' work is further complicated by current needs for the fundamental and systemic change required for dramatically increasing student learning and achievement. Responding to these needs means that educational leaders are often engaged in running schools while they are also working to reinvent them. The task of reinventing schools to meet new expectations constitutes what Ron Heifetz (1994, 2002; Heifetz & Linsky, 2004) calls an "adaptive problem" rather than a "technical problem." According to Heifetz, a technical problem is one experts know how to respond to, since the knowledge and capacity to solve the problem already exist. To successfully address technical challenges, the relevant experts or leaders and their constituents can undertake proven procedures that will bring about the desired results. Adaptive challenges are ones for which the experts and authorities on the issue have not yet developed an adequate response. In order to create the new knowledge and skills to address the problem, the existing system itself may need to undergo change. Everyone involved may need to work in new ways, often making fundamental changes to their "values, beliefs, habits, ways of working, or ways of life" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2004, p. 35).

This article provides a brief overview of the demands that adaptive work makes on educational leaders and suggests that successfully undertaking this work requires specific psychological capacities. Since many educational leaders (like leaders in other sectors) do not come to their jobs with these capacities, they need opportunities that are specifically designed to foster such growth or "transformation"—professional development that is more explicitly developmental. This study explores how one new approach to professional development may yield transformative learning and increase participants' effectiveness in understanding and enacting their roles in order to meet the shifting and increasingly complex expectations of school leadership.

Adaptive Work Calls for Self-Authorship

The problem that change leaders in education face qualifies largely as an adaptive problem: Schools are expected to educate all students to master the increasingly complex skills required for success in the economy of the twenty-first century (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2003; Goleman, 1997; Murnane & Levy, 1996, 2004; Wagner et al., 2006). As computers eliminate jobs that can be easily automated, more of the population will be unable to earn a good living unless they can demonstrate the sophisticated problem-solving and communication skills needed for higher-paying work. Therefore, schools can no longer prepare only a select few with these skills, as has been the case in the past. Embracing a new mandate for educating all students to master these skills

requires that schools reinvent themselves. Without a clear blueprint guiding this reinvention, educators have to discover their own answers; they must work together to create new ideas and experiment with novel strategies to devise a solution.

Educational leaders who undertake adaptive work within their school systems encounter formidable challenges, and Heifetz and Laurie (1997) identify two fundamental difficulties. First, these leaders must stop "providing leadership in the form of solutions" (p. 124). Since the necessary knowledge for solving an adaptive problem does not exist, individual leaders should not see themselves as the ones who can or should deliver effective solutions to these problems for others. Additionally, because there are no easy solutions, these leaders must widely share responsibility for fully understanding the problems and experiment with others in the district to find solutions. Everyone in the school system will face the distress that comes with asking tough questions, appreciating the scope of the problem, reconsidering their current roles, and challenging comfortable norms.

Essential to overcoming these two difficulties is the expectation that leaders of such work cannot be dependent on others' opinions or captive to another's agenda (Heifetz & Linsky, 2004). While telling others what they want to hear may garner them praise and support, the adaptive work of school reinvention involves challenging others to question their values, beliefs, and long-established habits. In fact, a leader's sense of the change needed may frequently cause him or her to disagree with or disappoint others.

Leadership often involves challenging people to live up to their words, to close the gap between their espoused values and their actual behavior. It may mean pointing out the elephant sitting on the table at a meeting—the unspoken issue that everyone sees but no one wants to mention. It often requires helping groups make difficult choices and give up something they value on behalf of something they care about more. Leadership often entails finding ways to enable people to face up to frustrating realities, such as budget cuts, low achievement scores, high dropout rates, or the gap between the revolutionary aspiration of leaving no child behind and the programmatic design and funding of NCLB. (Heifetz & Linsky, 2004, pp. 33–34)

Those who can successfully do adaptive work are likely to have certain personality characteristics as well as training. Yet none of these skills and dispositions is sufficient because the demands of adaptive work cannot be reduced to a set of externally identified behaviors, skills, or knowledge. Rather, they necessitate an increased complexity of consciousness and an ability to construct one's own internal belief system, standard, or personal filter that enables one to make meaning of oneself and one's work in new ways. The ability to effect these capacities requires an individual to exercise what adult developmental theorists call "self-authorship" (Kegan, 1994, 2000, 2003). Self-authoring individuals have the capacity to consult their own internal authority to determine

when, how, and why an unpopular but necessary step must be undertaken. These capacities evolve in some individuals who have been able to reconsider their reliance on others' expertise. Leaders who can only act on loyalty to another's vision or expectations are unable to challenge others' beliefs and values as required by adaptive work. Educational leaders may therefore need to possess and be able to exercise these particular developmental capacities in order to be successful.

It may be that the capacity for self-authorship is therefore a psychological requirement for successfully conducting the adaptive work of change leadership, as it is for many other aspects of modern life (Kegan, 1994). We may unwittingly hold expectations that adults, educators, or even change leaders will automatically possess these capacities, just as a matter of course. However, research with large samples, using a variety of robust measures (though there is no straightforward predictor—age, affluence, education, temperament—as to who might already possess such capacities), suggests that roughly one-half to two-thirds of the adult population in the United States has not yet fully developed self-authoring capacities (Kegan, 1994, 2001). Thus, many change leaders in the education sector likely face a gap between the demands of the role and their own mental capacities: These demands are more complex than individuals' abilities to meet them. The struggles change leaders may experience in learning to engage these tasks successfully can therefore be viewed as genuinely developmental in nature. For such leaders, it is particularly important that they have access not only to professional development opportunities to acquire new skills or to increase their knowledge, but also to sources of support and encouragement for their psychological growth.

Professional Development for Educational Leaders

Much has been written that criticizes traditional forms of professional development for educational leaders.¹ Regarded by critics as shallow, fragmented, and unfocused, most professional development programs in schools have been in response to educational fads rather than solid research (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Elmore, 2004; Hawley & Valli, 1999). These programs have often been evaluated only in terms of the "happiness quotient," a measure of participants' satisfaction with the experience and their "off-the-cuff assessment regarding its usefulness" (Sparks & Hirsh, 1997, p. 1).

The result is a smorgasbord of staff development workshops where the instructors don't listen to the participants, they don't talk to each other, and they might even contradict each other. Nothing reinforces the techniques that are learned, so participants move immediately back to their previous approach and their previous comfort level. The trainers move on, or no coaching occurs to allow trainees to gain mastery of the skills or knowledge presented in the training event. Moreover, principals, central office staff, and parents are usually left out or elect not to participate. (Joyner, 2000, p. 386)

Professional development opportunities for educational leaders to learn new ways of understanding their roles and acquiring new skills tend to be limited. District and school leaders may participate in isolated events with little or no follow-up (Sparks & Hirsh, 1997) simply for the purposes of satisfying their continuing licensing requirements or to be compliant with other district-imposed policies (Thomas, 2004). Matthew Miles (1995) of the Center for Policy Research states that most professional development is "pedagogically naive, a demeaning exercise that often leaves its participants more cynical and no more knowledgeable, skilled, or committed than before. And all this is accompanied by overblown rhetoric about 'the challenge of change,' 'self-renewal,' 'professional growth,' 'expanding knowledge base,' and 'lifelong learning'" (p. vii).

In light of these criticisms, experiments with new forms of professional development have begun to emerge.² Some appear within university-based programs or within school districts that provide in-service opportunities. Many of the experiments are offered by third-party organizations such as nonprofits (e.g., the Big Picture Company or New Leaders for New Schools) and state-wide leadership academies. These programs aim to increase leaders' knowledge and skills and, ultimately, impact student learning; as such, they contribute substantially to leadership development. However, to our knowledge, none is explicitly linked to theories of adult development or claims to have transformational purposes or results.

This article seeks to make two contributions to the field of professional development for educational leaders in this complex and changing environment by (1) calling attention to the need for professional development opportunities and goals that are informed by theories of adult development, and (2) illustrating the potential of one particular professional development framework to lead to transformative learning. This framework involves understanding and overturning one's *Immunities to Change*, or the underlying barriers that prevent an individual from making progress toward a desired professional goal.³ To illustrate how these processes can work, we present a case study of one district leader engaged in this kind of learning. We describe her hopes for, difficulties with, and eventual success at adopting new and more effective practices and beliefs. The case study also illustrates how the Immunities to Change framework can both account for developmental differences and promote developmental or "transformative" change.

Diagnosing and Overturning Immunities to Change

Psychologists Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey (2001) devised a professional development framework that aims to increase participants' effectiveness in their roles by making explicit the contradictions between intended goals and behaviors. At the same time, individuals uncover their hidden assumptions, beliefs, or mental models that give rise to those contradictions, thus raising

the points of conflict to a conscious level in order to help diagnose the Immunity to Change. This process provides opportunities for participants to envision and experiment with new, more effective behaviors and to form new relationships to the commitments and assumptions that underlie them.

To diagnose their Immunities to Change, participants complete a verbal and written exercise that makes explicit the contradictions in their thinking and behaviors. Participants respond to a series of questions and record their responses in a four-column template, or “immunity map.”⁴ For example, a principal might identify a powerful and as-yet-unrealized commitment to remake her role to prioritize leading instructional improvement. She records this commitment in the first column of the template. In the second column, she takes an honest inventory of her behaviors that contradict that commitment. Her list might include her spending little time visiting teachers’ classrooms or giving feedback on their practice. The third and fourth columns provide space for her to discover the underlying fears and assumptions that she holds, often unknowingly, which enable these contradictory behaviors to prevail. She might uncover a fear that, if she were to criticize teachers’ instructional practice, she would spark serious political and personal conflict throughout much of the school, or she would find herself on thin ice because she is not sure what constitutes improved practice in a teacher’s subject matter. She might uncover an assumption that conflict will escalate and that she will be powerless to stop it, or that she is not allowed to be a “learner” in any aspect of her work, including identifying genuinely rigorous instruction. Naming her assumptions overtly and seeing how they sustain behaviors contrary to her goal might help her understand how and why she is “immune” to changing her current behaviors in order to meet her desired goal.

To overturn these Immunities to Change, participants envision and experiment with behaviors that run counter to their own assumptions and then consider whether those assumptions need modification. In practicing these new behaviors, participants can begin to form new understandings of and relationships to their previous commitments and the underlying assumptions. The experimentation and reflection process typically takes four to six months of action-oriented exercises and focused reflection, ultimately leading, in many cases, to quite significant advances toward the stated goal (Kegan & Lahey, in press).

For example, the principal might try introducing a conversation about quality teaching practice in a staff meeting and then reflect on her feelings about raising such a topic with her teachers, as well as the teachers’ reactions to it. She might also take on the role of researcher and begin to look for evidence that assuages her fears or challenges her underlying assumptions. In doing so, she may discover that some teachers actually give each other feedback informally and that it is not against the culture to offer such support, as she had assumed. Or, she may learn that the teachers who were weakest in instruction were also aware of and concerned about their own ineffectiveness but did not

know how to adopt more successful practices. These behavioral experiments and observational exercises could help the principal challenge the assumptions that previously prevented her from evaluating her teachers, and thus may help her overturn her Immunity to Change.

When fully implemented, the Immunities to Change process is focused and continuous, leads to changes in mind and behavior, and allows participants to more effectively understand and enact their complex roles. Thus, it links the growth and change processes and can yield lasting results. Perhaps its most powerful result is transformative change, a qualitative shift in how participants understand themselves and their world and the relationship between the two. Transformative change enables people to take a broader perspective on themselves and the world, thereby increasing the complexity of their cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal capacities (Cranton, 1994; Kegan, 1982, 1994, 2000; Kegan & Lahey, 2001; Mezirow, 1991).

The concept of transformative change is rooted in theories of adult development and learning, which describe differences and predictable growth patterns in adults’ understandings of themselves and their worlds (Basseches, 1984; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Kegan, 1982; Kelly, 1955; Kohlberg, 1984; Mezirow, 1991). The systematic ways one actively makes sense of reality—the ways one “makes meaning”—can undergo transformation, leading to the creation of a new and more complex meaning system. In Robert Kegan’s (1982, 1994) constructive developmental theory, the complexity of one’s thinking has the potential to develop over the course of a life span through a series of five, progressive, qualitatively different stages. Although every stage has its own distinct conception of the world and an individual’s interactions with it, each successive stage subsumes the prior stage and serves as a necessary condition for the development of the next, higher one. Transformation is not a dramatic jump from one stage to the next, but instead involves an evolution, and so individuals are often “between stages.” As we evolve, we gradually display greater ability to make sense of the world at the more complex stage.

Research shows that most adults make sense of the world in a manner less complex than the fourth, or *Self-Authoring*, meaning-making stage (Kegan, 1994, 2000). The *Self-Authoring* perspective is distinguished from the third stage, or *Socialized* perspective, by the adult’s ability to determine—“author”—his or her theories, values, and expectations about personal and professional relationships and responsibilities, rather than be “made up by” the theories, values, and expectations of others. Kegan (2000) writes, “One goes from being psychologically ‘written by’ the socializing press to ‘writing upon’ it, a shift from a socialized to a self-authoring epistemology” (pp. 59–60).

Understanding these types of developmental differences can be particularly useful for designing transformational professional development programs that are appropriate for a variety of educational leaders. First, they point to the variation in how school leaders understand their roles. Leaders at different

developmental stages may conceive of the same sorts of challenges in distinct ways. For example, if a principal were making meaning from the Socialized perspective, he may hold a view of leadership that entails satisfying the various people who make demands on him, being careful not to risk disappointing their expectations. Yet another principal, one who makes meaning of the same dilemma with the Self-Authoring perspective, might see beyond the demands of others and toward the organizational whole according to her own values and commitments. Professional development programs that account for these types of disparities in participants' understanding and experience can provide differentiated instruction, helping participants understand and adopt strategies that are appropriate for their developmental capacities.

Professional development plans mindful of these varied perspectives might also aim to increase individuals' effectiveness in their roles by helping them grow beyond their current developmental capacity. Indeed, such growth may be necessary for educators to meet the demands of their roles, even if they are not engaged in the adaptive work of systemic change. For example, educational research suggests that leaders must hold explicit priorities and set a defined course for change, refusing competing or unrelated demands (see Heifetz & Linsky, 2004; Sparks, 2005). Elaine McEwan (2005) draws on psychological research (Friedman, 1991) to list crucial capacities of school administrators, such as:

- The capacity to view oneself separately from teachers, with a minimum amount of anxiety about their feelings and problems
- The ability to maintain a non-anxious presence, present and attuned to what is happening now without worrying about tomorrow, when working with and interacting with teachers who are angry, troubled, exhausted, or confused
- The maturity to chart one's own course by means of an internal set of personal values rather than continually trying to figure out what others are thinking or trying to see which way "the wind is blowing" before making a decision
- The wisdom to be clear and committed about one's personal values and goals
- The willingness to take responsibility for one's own emotional being and destiny rather than blaming either others or uncontrollable cultural, gender, or environmental variables. (McEwan, 2005, p. 4)

Meeting these demands requires the Self-Authoring stage of development. In order to develop these necessary leadership skills, a principal who makes meaning with the Socialized perspective would need to reconstruct his reliance on others' opinions as the source of his own direction. He must create a more complex psychological system that allows him to subordinate the opinions of others on behalf of his own framework of leadership. This change would require transformative learning. Hence, professional development initiatives that are informed by theories of adult development can significantly

affect individual performance (Levine, 1989). Applying these theories may also yield improved and more meaningful goal setting, more powerful approaches to change, and visible lasting results.

Although participants in the Immunity to Change program target a specific, bounded, and focused goal for improvement (e.g., becoming better listeners; being able to delegate more effectively; engaging, rather than avoiding, difficult conversations), the process of diagnosing and overturning their immunities actually helps participants gradually rework deeper underlying mind-sets, which leads to improved functioning across a very wide canvas, well beyond the initial improvement focus. Participants are newly able to see how their long-held assumptions limit both understanding and actions, and they can entertain the possibility that these assumptions are not always true. Taking small steps toward these changes to their behavior as well as their meaning-making, they begin to make their assumptions more complex, in some cases overturning them and in other cases modifying or adding to them. They undertake transformative learning.

Program Description and Methods

As facilitators of a professional development program for school and district leaders, we were curious about the types of learning and change that could come from incorporating the Immunities to Change framework into our work. The program's goal was to guide and support public school leaders from across the country as they engaged in whole-district change. The primary criterion for selecting participants was the leader's degree of commitment to improving teaching and learning through professional development. A central premise in the program was that change leaders must have a dual focus. They must enhance their capacity for looking outward, in order to understand why it is hard for organizations to change and what they as leaders can do to improve their organizations; at the same time, they must also enhance their capacity to look inward, to understand why it is hard for individuals to change, and what they as leaders can do to improve in their own roles.

Over the course of two years, sixteen program participants examined these issues and developed their capacities through a series of tools and exercises (described in Wagner et al., 2006) to help them better understand and undertake systemic change. All sixteen participants completed the exercise to diagnose their Immunities to Change; fourteen engaged in follow-up activities over the course of one year to overturn their Immunities to Change. Subsequent activities addressed specific behavioral and meaning-making changes.

In tracking the changes participants were making, we began to notice interesting differences in the types and features of the changes they described. Many participants reported that they were learning to increase their effectiveness in their leadership roles, and some of these changes seemed to be developmental in nature. That is, in working to increase their effectiveness,

some participants seemed to be examining themselves and their work with a broader perspective. We suspected that these changes might be transformational in nature and wondered whether we could document any indications of a relationship between a participant's increased professional effectiveness and his or her increased developmental capacity.

At the start of the professional development program, we conducted the Subject-Object Interview, a one-on-one, sixty-minute interview designed to elicit information about each participant's developmental capacities (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1988). The interviewer probed to understand how that participant constructed his or her experience within his or her leadership role. These interviews were transcribed and analyzed to discern where on Kegan's (1982) developmental continuum the participant was currently making meaning.

To document and reflect on participants' learning during the Immunities to Change work, we collected and analyzed their written immunity maps as well as written records of their activities and reflections. They regularly e-mailed their reflections to a coach, a trainer within the professional development program who facilitated the process. The coach then arranged a series of recorded phone calls between the coach and two program participants who agreed to partner, providing each other with perspective, encouragement, and accountability. The phone calls gave participants the opportunity to reflect on each other's learning, discuss progress, and prepare for the next steps in the immunities work. Following every call, the coach e-mailed each participant, summarizing the conversation and providing suggestions and directions for future work. In analyzing the e-mails and phone-call transcriptions, we looked for indications of participants' learning over time, especially key shifts in actions and thinking that signified developmental change.

Using these data, we chose to explore the change process through a case study of one participant's experiences in the individual professional development process. We selected Selma Meredith based on evidence of her success in making progress on her stated goals and indications that she did so through transformative learning. We present her case to document her change process and to reflect on the implications of this type of learning and professional development for other change leaders.

Case Study of Selma Meredith

Selma Meredith is a school change coach in a large urban district in the southern United States, where, previously, she had also served as a teacher and then a school principal. When she began working with us, she was new to her coaching role, which she described as "helping schools articulate their vision, set goals, work with their school teams to develop an action plan, and use their data to inform school change." In addition, Selma assisted with professional

development for school site leaders and regularly participated in school, district, and community meetings focused on the work of improvement.

In her former roles as teacher and principal, Selma had been recognized for her excellent work and had enjoyed challenges and successes that were fueled by her love of schooling and her passion to provide high-quality education for all students, especially racial minorities and those living in poor economic conditions. As an African American, Selma had herself attended racially segregated schools, and as a teacher and principal she had worked in predominantly African American schools. It was when she took a position as a teacher in a racially balanced magnet school that she began to see the inequality of educational opportunities among the races. She realized that the quality of education at this magnet school was extremely high and represented the standard of education that all students should experience. "I got a chance to see what good schooling was. The teachers were really incredible. The way kids were treated. Not a lot of time spent on junk like rules and uniforms." She became committed to the idea that all schools should be performing at this standard, an idea that motivated her to excel in her work as a principal.

Her new position as a school change coach gave her the opportunity to have a greater impact on students' education throughout the entire district. She was excited and optimistic about the many possibilities for improving education, but she also found herself experiencing confusion and anxiety about how exactly she should go about doing her job. She was given a great deal of latitude to determine how she could be most effective, and it was this latitude, this lack of a clear role with defined responsibilities, that caused her the most uncertainty.

I mean, this is what they said: "You just design the job." I felt like a new teacher. I felt, "I don't know what I'm doing," and so it's hard to be in that place. It's really exciting to have them say that, but it's harder than it seems. Sometimes I wish they would just say, "Okay, this is what I want you to do: every week go talk to a principal and do this." It's a good challenge for me because I do believe I need to keep growing, and I really do want to keep growing until I just drop dead, but it's hard.

Having the license to use her own judgment as a guide, Selma found herself questioning her judgment and worrying about her abilities. Not only did she struggle to clearly define what her work should entail, but she also became preoccupied with fears that she would not be able to succeed at this work and that she would be responsible to others for her failure.

I have bouts of depression, thinking, "I'm going to be a failure. I'm not going to do well." I mean, not depression where I could commit suicide or anything. But I make big demands on myself. And the other thing is, I feel if I don't do well, the whole race will suffer. That's some of my racial baggage. . . . I don't want to be a failure because I think somebody is depending on me.

In acknowledging these concerns, Selma uncovered many rich possibilities for self-reflection, including her fear of failure, responsibility for the success of her race, and dependence on others' approval. Because these ideas are often interrelated, it can be difficult for the participant to narrow her attention to a central commitment. Ultimately, Selma's focus in her Immunities to Change work shifted from specific issues of race to more general issues of perceived competence. As constructivist facilitators, we let Selma take the lead in defining the focal point for her reflection.

Diagnosing Her Immunities

In her immunity map, Selma identified a first-column commitment to "doing the best work possible in her new role" (see Table 1). She was also aware that there were things she was doing that worked against that commitment. Among other things, in her second column she identified that she was spending too much time on projects that were not directly related to her new role but that provided her with affirming feedback. Additionally, she was focusing so much on what others were doing and how they responded to her that it was difficult for her to do her best work. When she thought about doing the opposite of these behaviors, several fears arose within her:

I fear that if I spend more time on high-priority projects, I may discover that I don't have the capacity to do [them] well. I fear that study and preparation are not enough to make me successful at coaching principals. I fear that if I do my new work in a people-centered way, I may discover that it does not bring the personal and professional satisfaction I felt in my role as principal. I fear that if I stop blaming others for sabotaging my efforts, I will have to confront the issues that cause me to sabotage my efforts.

The Immunity to Change framework invites people to consider that they do not just hold their fears in a passive way; they also actively (if unconsciously) work to prevent what they are afraid of from occurring. Kegan and Lahey (2001) refer to these perfectly sensible, self-protective stances as "competing commitments" (p. 49). Selma realized that in addition to being committed to doing the best work possible in her new role, she also held a competing commitment to appearing to know what she is doing, even when she had questions or concerns, so others wouldn't find out she might be an ineffective leader.

In effect, Selma's competing commitment and her first-column commitment are in tension with each other; to affirm and support one commitment is to negate and deny the other. As long as she holds both commitments, neither is able to dominate, thus creating a kind of "dynamic equilibrium" (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, p. 5) that preserves the current system and sustains Selma's Immunity to Change.

Selma's immunities were largely based on her own concerns about her competence and her fears that others (particularly her peers and supervisors)

would not value her work. This orientation toward others' opinions was particularly problematic in that she assumed they evaluated her negatively, and she became increasingly worried that she would fail in her new work, which, in turn, made it even more difficult for her to be effective in her role. For example, she realized that in meetings and in her work with school principals, she often was not listening carefully to what others were saying. Instead, she was focused on what she was going to say back to them, worrying that she would be called on to know what to do, to provide a solution, or to come up with the right answer. "And then sometimes my response is inappropriate because I didn't really listen," she conceded.

From a developmental perspective, Selma's concerns are characteristic of many bright, driven, and conscientious professionals who make meaning with the Socialized mind (third stage). Selma internalizes the point of view of others with whom she works and feels somewhat disoriented, or at a loss, without an external compass. As evidenced by her immunities map, the ways that others assess her are extremely important to her, so much so that she relies on them to determine her own sense of self-worth. She recognized, "I am spending an inordinate amount of time on things that get me 'liked' and not enough time learning/reading to build my capacity." She often took on tasks or projects that she knew were not high priorities in her new position because she knew that she would be able to do them well and then receive positive feedback and have people think well of her. Although spending her time on these projects was not actually helping her gain the new knowledge and skills she needed for her job (her stated improvement goal), she continued to do so because she needed this affirmation of her worth. She worried, "I will lose contact with groups I can depend on for praise; people who think I have something valuable to contribute." This is the essence of an "immune system": In order to protect ourselves from what we fear, we take actions that actually prevent the changes we hope for and need to make.

As Selma explained to us, her need to maintain high regard was connected to her concerns that others might perceive her as less talented, competent, or successful than she could be. She explained, "With the high-priority work, I am uncomfortable with the challenges and always concerned that I will fail at work that is really important. Even when I have successes, the fear is always there, lurking, waiting to strike. It knows I know it's there." She compared herself to the others around her, wondering if she would be able to perform at their level: "Now, I'm working mostly with people who are on the leadership level. They are so smart and secretly that's part of it too. These people are so smart; I cannot be stupid." She was therefore very sensitive to the feedback she received from others, saying "My confidence gets shaken if I write something and I have someone say, 'Gosh, this is really bad writing.'" In order to protect herself from the criticisms and negative evaluations she expected from others, she tried to act as though she had greater confidence and assurance about her work than she actually had: "I am committed to 'appear to know.' As a leader,

I'm supposed to know—that's why I'm a leader." Her current definition of good leadership—a view shared by many—does not give the leader the space in which to be adaptive. She cannot be a learner; she must already know.

Having diagnosed her immunities, Selma next faced the task of undertaking a plan for overturning them, for solving her problem so that she could find greater success in her work. A common approach participants often want to take is to focus immediately and exclusively on changing their second-column behaviors. This approach makes sense in that eliminating those behaviors seems to logically lead to progress. This is the same logic we tend to use when we make New Year's resolutions: If we can tackle the habits and behaviors that undermine our good intentions, then we will have eliminated the problem. In effect, we regard our problems as bugs in a system. It may be that some issues can be addressed effectively in this manner and that some people will find that they achieve productive results by doing so. However, we have found that the success rate in taking this approach tends to be similar to that of people who make New Year's resolutions: Despite their best intentions to change their ways, most participants slip back into old habits and eventually forget what they originally resolved to do in the first place.

If we regard all problems in this manner, as bugs to be removed from a system, then we preserve the larger system as it has been. We essentially (and unwittingly) assume the problem is a technical challenge as opposed to an adaptive one. We do not consider or address the system itself as the potential source of the problem and do not look for ways it may need to change and grow. Identifying the aspects of meaning-making that anchor our immune systems enables us to more fully understand the immune system itself, and also provides an entry point for changing it. These anchors, or assumptions, are the basis for the ways we shape reality. Usually unaware that we hold these assumptions, we tend to act as though they are not just the ways we shape reality, but are reality itself.

In constructing her map, Selma was able to identify four assumptions that anchor her immune system:

I assume that I do not have the capacity to succeed in my new role as change coach so I default to a role where I know I can be successful. I assume that I have to be "masterful" in order to add value to my organization. I assume that I cannot be successful working in a people-centered way with people who don't need me to solve their problems for them. I assume that I cannot confront and address the issues that lie behind my sabotaging behavior.

Treated as reality, these assumptions sustain Selma's immune system and provide her with no chance for change. We can see why it is often pointless to try to treat this immunity simply by changing one's behaviors. After all, if Selma knows that she does not have the capacity to change her behaviors and succeed, she will likely be able to enact that type of change only temporarily. However, in uncovering these assumptions and considering them as such—

not as certain truths but as the ways she shapes reality—she is newly able to also call them into question. She can consider whether, in fact, there might be some exceptions to her assumptions, some conditions under which they might not hold true, or some evidence of their inaccuracy. As the gray arrow in Table 1 illustrates, she now has a lever powerful enough to disrupt her immune system, one that creates the potential for change.

In Selma’s case, looking at the system that produces her ineffective behaviors means looking at two of the beliefs that actually underlie her stated Competing Commitments and Big Assumptions: First, others will surely find her incompetent; and second, if others believe she is incompetent, she must be incompetent. There are two possible ways that Selma could significantly challenge the beliefs that anchor her immune system. She could seek to find out whether others do or do not think of her as incompetent. Should she find out that they actually value her work, she may be able to disregard her preoccupation with their opinions of her. She would in fact be substituting her old beliefs about their expectations for new beliefs. The Socialized mind is still intact, but with a happier conclusion.

Alternatively, she could change her relationship to others’ expectations. That would mean she would need to begin separating her opinion of herself from others’ opinions of her; she would begin to develop the criteria by which she would measure her own success and assess herself according to those criteria. Making this second type of change is not about substituting one set of beliefs for another, and it is not about learning to disregard others’ assessments completely. She would still be able to take in and learn from others’ opinions of her, to consider others’ opinions as important sources of information for how she evaluates herself. But these opinions would no longer constitute her sole source of information, nor would they be the ultimate determinants of her self-evaluation. They would become one source of information that she would be able to draw from to inform her own opinions about her value and abilities. In making this change, Selma would increase her epistemological capacities, developing the ability to consider others’ opinions as one part of a larger process of self-evaluation. Understood from the perspective of Kegan’s developmental theory, this means that she would develop greater Self-Authorship, including the capacity to “have an independent seat of judgment” that allows her “to tune into other people’s expectations but not be made up by them” (Kegan, 2003, p. 31). The process of overturning one’s immunities invites these types of evolutionary changes.

Overturning Her Immunities

Changing the System: Replacing Old Beliefs with New Ones

Selma began to take small steps toward further understanding and overturning her immunities. One particularly productive step for Selma involved sim-

TABLE 1 Selma's Four-Column Immunity Map

1. Commitment	2. Doing/Not Doing Keeping #1 from Being More Fully Realized	3. Competing Commitment	4. Big Assumption
I am committed to doing the best work possible in my new role as change coach for principals.	I am spending an inordinate amount of time on low-priority projects (unrelated to my new role) that affirm me.	I fear that I will lose contact with groups I can depend on for praise: people who think I have something valuable to contribute.	I assume that I do not have the capacity to succeed in my new role as change coach so I default to a role where I know I can be successful.
I am committed to doing my new work in a people-centered way.	I am not preparing and building my capacity to do my best work possible.	I fear that if I spend more time on high-priority projects, I may discover that I don't have the capacity to do [them] well.	I assume that I have to be "masterful" in order to add value to my organization.
	I am not using the autonomy available to me to do my new work in a people-centered way.	I fear that study and preparation are not enough to make me feel successful at coaching principals.	I assume that I cannot be successful working in a people-centered way with people who don't need me to solve their problems for them.
	I am focusing on how others sabotage my efforts rather than focusing on how I sabotage my efforts to keep my first-column commitments.	I fear that if I do my new work in a people-centered way, I may discover that it does not bring the personal and professional satisfaction I felt in my role as principal.	I assume that I cannot confront and address the issues that lie behind my sabotaging behavior.
		I fear that if I stop blaming others for sabotaging my efforts, I will have to confront the issues that cause me to sabotage my efforts.	
		I am committed to "appear to know." As a leader, I'm supposed to know; that's why I am a leader.	

ply observing her Big Assumption in action. Selma began keeping track of situations in which she could see that her Big Assumptions were influencing how she viewed things, what she did, and how she felt. This step in the process of overturning one's immunities specifically suggests that participants do not attempt to change their behavior. Instead, they act as researchers or ethnographers, looking for examples of when and how the Big Assumptions influence them. In Selma's case, there were two situations that seemed particularly salient to her because, in reflecting on them, she saw that they cast doubt on the truth of some of her Big Assumptions.

In the first situation, Selma was participating in a meeting with some of her other colleagues about a recent workshop they had organized and implemented. After coming to agreement about how the workshop had gone, they decided to identify important next steps in their work together. The group began to brainstorm a list of ideas, and one member began listing the ideas on flip-chart paper. Selma offered a suggestion, but she noticed that her idea was not recorded on the paper. She thought, "I assume that my suggestion is not valued." However, she also remembered having this same experience once before when meeting with the same group of people. In that case, someone else had repeated her suggestion and was then acknowledged for having a great idea. Selma had assumed this happened because, "I failed to state my suggestion clearly, and I [became] angry thinking someone else made the contribution I wanted to make because I wasn't clear." However, this time something slightly different happened. Again, Selma heard a colleague offer the same idea she had proposed. But this time, another colleague interjected, saying, "That's what Selma just said!"

Later, Selma began to think more about the situation and how she would have typically responded with self-criticism. In most cases, when her ideas were not received in the ways she hoped, she quickly assumed that she was lacking in intelligence or competence. Now a new possibility began to occur to her. Perhaps the problem was not that her ideas were not valuable or that she was not communicating them clearly. Perhaps the problem was that these colleagues were not always listening as carefully as they could be. Suddenly, this explanation seemed very plausible: "I realized this incident was not about me; it was about the way the group listens."

As she continued to make observations in her work environment, she began to notice many instances in which others made mistakes or didn't know how to do things that were central to their roles. Rather than assuming they were incompetent, Selma noticed that she often felt glad to help them when she could and was eager to offer them encouragement and support. This inclination contrasted sharply with the ways she responded to her own mistakes.

My Big Assumption—I mean the big thing—was, "I'm changing to a new role, and I'm going to be a failure." And so the epiphany for me was thinking about how I beat myself up. And then the people I work with, when they make mis-

takes, I'm so generous with them! I just say, "No, no, you're not a failure! Give it another shot. Everybody does it!" See, I give them so many opportunities, and I try so hard to make it comfortable for them, and then they come through, and they do well. But I don't do that for myself. That was a big part of it. And so what I've been doing since then is really just taking notes and trying to be reflective about what's happening to me in meetings; what's happening to me when I'm working on my new work; and both trying to observe myself and trying to observe others and how I respond to the ways they do their work in the whole context of success and failure. I've really just been trying to note what happens.

Before she even began trying to change her behavior, Selma began to see that her tendencies to assume that she would fail and that others would evaluate her negatively might not be accurate. She continued to observe, finding more examples that ran counter to her assumptions. She also began to write the "biography" of her Big Assumptions, thinking back over her life to see if she could figure out when she had begun to question her own worth and when she had become preoccupied with fears of failure and others' potential criticisms. Completing these steps enabled her to understand her own tendencies better; it allowed her to step back and reflect on her Big Assumptions and the ways they had influenced her.

In fact, she learned that everyone was not expecting her to be perfect all the time; she saw that the ways she judged herself were not aligned with the ways that others saw her or how she saw others. The more she began to look for examples that disconfirmed her fears, the more she found confirmation that others valued her and her work.

I got this e-mail yesterday. I went to a meeting, and I actually disagreed with the people who set it up. And I thought, "They'll never invite me back." . . . I got this e-mail that said, "We're beginning to act on the information that came out of the report. We're going to have a committee. And we really want you to work on this." Now, I know that I have to balance this. Okay, is this one of those other things that I don't need to take on? But, I'm thinking, "These people never want to see me again." And here he's saying—I mean, it was such a wonderful e-mail—it said, "When we started thinking about who should be on the committee, you were really at the top of the list." I thought these people hated me! I thought they thought I was so confrontational! And it made me feel really good that my perception of myself is not their perception of me.

Reflecting on this and other experiences, Selma concluded, "I think I understand that people don't expect me to know everything. And that I don't need to expect myself to know everything." She realized her old belief that others viewed her work negatively was inaccurate, and she began to replace that belief with new ones acknowledging that others often found her contributions valuable and skillful.

Meanwhile, Selma had begun to design and run tests to plan for and make changes in her behavior. In creating this plan, she considered what kinds of changes might be safe and modest enough to undertake without arousing too

much of her own fear. She also thought about how she would assess the results of her test: What kind of data would she need to collect to help her evaluate the effects of her behavior changes? After running each test, she reflected on how the test results affected her perceptions of her Big Assumptions.

For one test, she decided to focus her efforts on being as prepared as possible for meetings.

I notice when other people present, what suggestions they make are a result of the kind of reading they've done (that goes way back to what I said at the very beginning—I need to read more for this new job), the kind of preparations for the meeting, preparations for the work, the doing-the-homework kind of stuff.

Wondering if taking more time to prepare for a meeting would enable her to feel more successful, she decided to see what would happen if she began putting more effort into her preparation, to see if this change in her behavior produced different results and influenced her feelings about her potential for success.

I prepared for this meeting. I got there. And I really could remember specific details when we started talking—we had to review some grants that schools had written. And all of the things I always hear them do and think, "Oh wow! That's so wonderful that they can remember specific details after reading ten grants." I could do those things today! Well, I prepared. I can really do that if I take the time to really prepare. And not just, you know, prepare for this, but do the other reading that I need to do, just to keep reading the books I need to read, read the journal articles I need to read, try to be aware of what it is I need to know to contribute in the ways I need to contribute. So I'm getting that.

Discovering that there are very specific changes she can make to help her be more successful in these meetings allowed her to realize that success in her new role may have more to do with what she does and does not do and less to do with her own innate skills and talents. She realized that she had been assuming that if she could not immediately and intuitively know what to do, she must not be talented enough. But now she began to see that she might have more control than she thought when it came to her own success or failure in her work.

In my new job, I thought, "I have no control over my success or failure. I have no control here. I'm going to go into a meeting, I'm going to make suggestions, and I have no control over whether it will work." But I *do* have control over that. . . . I have control over how well I prepare before I go to a meeting. . . . So [one thing I've really been working on is] preparing, and then seeing when it's time to do my work if the quality of it is better—not because I'm naturally talented or intuitive, but because I prepared really well.

As she tested these new realizations and learned from them, Selma was not just changing her behaviors and getting better results; she was also reflecting on what these changes could tell her about the deeper underlying assump-

tions she made about her work. That reflection allowed her to see that she could change these assumptions. Her observations interrupted two of her Big Assumptions: She no longer assumed that the determining factor is her “capacity to succeed” or that she needed to possess incredible talents that would make her naturally “masterful” in order to add value to her organization. At the same time, she was also revising her third Big Assumption. These experiments enabled her to see that she could begin to address issues that had felt too scary and overwhelming to her before. She found herself more able to change the behaviors that had previously prevented her from making progress on her commitment to succeeding in her new work.

On the day before a long trip, my plan for the day was to attend to several low-priority agenda items before heading to the airport. I realized I was defaulting to low-priority work rather than fully preparing for the high-priority work ahead. I caught myself and said, “No. I do not have to do this now.” By working . . . on overcoming Immunity to Change, I realize that I can confront the issues that lie behind my sabotaging behavior.

Changing the System: Developing New Capacities

If Selma were only focusing on these types of changes, she would be making a kind of progress in her work. But she was also able to take a further step: to reflect on the bigger question of what this learning could tell her about how she related to others’ expectations and evaluations of her. By the end of her coaching experience, she was starting to see that maybe she was investing too much authority in what others think. She began to seriously consider the idea that her own self-evaluation could be independent of the ways others viewed her and that she might have more control than she had thought in assessing her work. She agreed that her next developmental opportunity was to take control of assessing “Do I have what it takes?” For example, she could imagine the possibility of being able to participate in a meeting and feel that she had been effective, even if others did not assess her participation in the same way. “Because I do get overly sensitive sometimes,” she mused.

Applying this new thinking to a relationship with one of her work colleagues, she decided she wanted to be affected less by his tendency to assess her harshly. In the past, she had let her fears about his critical attitude toward her determine how readily she would offer her opinion and how she would evaluate the quality of her comments. Now, she wanted to be less focused on how he reacted to her opinions (or her worries about how he might react) and more focused on what she needed to do to articulate her position clearly.

And yesterday I really said something to him that I felt really good about. When I go to talk to him about something, he’ll start asking me questions, and then he’ll say, “Explain that.” And then I get really nervous, and I don’t get the words out of my mouth. And so yesterday . . . I went to talk to him [because] I thought we were making a bad decision. And he said, “Well, talk to me now. Why do you

think we're making a bad decision?" And ordinarily, I would just start explaining it, and in my mind, I would be thinking, "Any minute he's going to ask me a question that's just going to throw me off balance." But what I did was, I said, "Before I tell you why I think it's a bad decision, I need to hear from you about why you think it's a good decision." And so I had him do the talking. I felt so good about that. Because I didn't feel like I was on the spot. And nor did he feel like he was on the spot.

After he had explained his position, Selma felt more confident that she understood what he was saying and that she still disagreed. She was then able to express and defend her own, contrasting opinion. She had found a strategy that enabled her to gain some distance from her fears about how her colleague might assess her skills and opinions. She could then feel greater confidence in herself; she could determine when she had something valuable to say and find a way to say it clearly.

And I just felt better that I said that. I mean, I really was wired about that. We were about to make this big, bad decision. So, it's not really him, but sometimes I'm reluctant to say that, and I'm upset. But I just decided not to be upset yesterday, just to say, "I really need to talk to you."

In making this small change in her relationship with her colleague, Selma was actually undertaking a much larger change effort. She was not simply altering her beliefs about how someone else assessed her performance; she was making a change to the very metrics by which she measured performance. She became newly able to see herself as a legitimate source of authority for determining the value of her own opinions, the way in which she expressed herself, and the overall quality of her work.

Selma used the map and the exercises to revise and eventually overturn her Big Assumptions. In making progress on her initial commitment to become more successful, confident, and committed to her work, she began to reduce the behaviors that compromised this commitment and to replace them with ones that supported it. In altering the assumptions that had been limiting her conceptions of herself and her work, she was not just making behavioral changes but also mental ones. These changes were not simply ones of adopting new ideas or attitudes; they involved altering her relationship to her former frame of reference. She retained but now subordinated her former reliance on the opinions of others to an evolving internal sense of her own authority. The immunities work provided a dual curriculum that enabled her to make progress in her role by attending to and supporting developmental evolution.⁵

Discussion and Implications

Selma's case illustrates the mental demands that the work of change leadership places on individuals and the need for them to be able to exercise self-authoring developmental capacities in order to be successful. There-

fore, programs such as the Immunities to Change work are critical to support educational leaders' evolving abilities in their roles. Professional development programs that attempt to teach these abilities by simply explaining their importance or by trying to address them through attitude change (e.g., resolving to become more "empowered" or "assertive") may, at best, be only marginally helpful. Without the capacity to consult their own internal authority to determine when, how, or why an unpopular but necessary step must be undertaken, a leader can only act on others' conceptions of what must happen and what constitutes empowered or assertive action. Most traditional forms of professional development likely underestimate the complexity of this kind of growth and change process in real-world contexts (Elmore, 2004; Guskey, 2003; Little, 1993; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). In fact, most professional development experiences may be implemented because of their simplicity, chosen because "they are administratively familiar, simple to organize, and politically easy to account for and defend, rather than because they are pedagogically effective" (Little, 1993, as cited in Hargreaves, Earl, Moore, & Manning, 2001, p. 169).

The Immunities to Change framework supports transformative change within the context of improved work performance because of its unique design to effect changes in participants' behaviors and beliefs. Changing educators' behaviors is important because their actions may affect student achievement. Yet, traditionally, professional development programs have not adopted behavioral change as their explicit goal and have therefore not been designed for these purposes (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Participants may be exposed to new ideas and develop greater awareness or different attitudes, but there is little evidence that exposure alone will lead to meaningful changes in professional practice (Joyner, 2000; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004). For changes in practice to occur, educators have to know how and when to use new ideas and what specific behavioral changes are needed. They must practice new ways of acting, receive feedback on these new ways of acting, and be able to experiment further until they become skilled in the new behaviors.

Changing participants' minds and beliefs is important because individuals are often unaware of how their expectations and underlying assumptions affect their actions. It is not until they become aware of the limiting or distorted beliefs that frame their behaviors that they can begin to change their actions in lasting ways, and across a whole variety of situations, to meet their intended goals successfully. Designing programs that have these kinds of significant effects on participants' minds and beliefs is a complex undertaking, and few programs challenge or transform participants' fundamental assumptions about how they do their work. "Much of what goes under the banner of professional development amounts to helping us develop more skills or capacities to cope, but to cope within the worlds of our assumptive designs. The design itself is never in question" (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, p. 71). While individuals' conceptions about their work and learning can be very resistant

to change, the most powerful professional development programs will address and challenge these limiting beliefs and assumptions, thereby helping participants acquire new ones that are aligned with more effective practices (Borko & Putnam, 1995; Hirsh, 2005). In order to provoke a sufficiently higher level of self-awareness, professional development programs may need to include a deliberate intervention that creates cognitive dissonance and hence challenges people to develop more complex ways of thinking about their work (Thompson & Zeuli, 1999).

The immunities work aims to help participants change both behaviors and mental frameworks by making explicit the contradictions between their intended goals and their actual behaviors, thus uncovering an individual's hidden assumptions that give rise to those contradictions. As they experiment with new, more effective behaviors, participants work toward forming new relationships to the commitments and assumptions that underlie them. These increasingly complex abilities signal the kind of transformative change that is often necessary for their success.

It is also the case, however, that linking professional competence to issues of adult development raises serious concerns about the potential misunderstanding and misuse of this lens. Higher levels of development can be mistakenly associated with innate superiority and lower levels with inferiority. Similarly, inclinations to use developmental measures as a kind of sorting mechanism for hiring or promotion decisions raises ethical concerns and runs the risk of reducing the myriad experiences, traits, and abilities of individuals to single developmental scores. Relying solely or even predominantly on developmental capacity for assessing an individual's readiness for leadership (or any other role in the school system for that matter) seems an unrealistic and unpromising strategy. Instead, it makes more sense to focus on ways that professional development programs and the organizational culture of school systems can best provide individuals with the opportunities to support their ongoing psychological growth.

Immunities to Change and Adaptive Work

The Immunities to Change approach is perhaps particularly appropriate for individuals who undertake adaptive work, as Selma's case also illustrates. To tackle an adaptive problem, such as closing achievement gaps and "leaving no child behind," everyone involved must work and learn together in order to fully understand the problem they are facing and to invent solutions to it. In short, everyone must adapt and evolve. This means that all adults working in schools will have to learn and change. They will have to undertake processes of experimentation, monitoring which new strategies lead to better results and altering plans where necessary. In Heifetz's (2002) words, "One needs to create an environment in which multiple experiments are being run through invention and innovation and then sift through those experiments to see which ones are fruitful and exciting" (p. 45).

Change leaders are charged with orchestrating this work, and so many leaders, like Selma, are in the position of not knowing exactly what their job is, how to do it well, or what the best first step should even be. They may be the ones who most need to try on new values, beliefs, and behaviors to determine what is successful and to model change for others. But leaders do not commonly conceive of their roles in that way. Typically, they expect themselves to be in full control, to know exactly what to do next, and to quickly solve whatever problems arise. These leaders will have to learn new ways of acting, thinking, and understanding, and they will have to change the very ways they orient themselves to their roles. They must adopt learner-centered leadership, helping school systems function as learning organizations:

In such a culture, all people in the system are seen as learners and act as learners. It is no longer as important to appear “learned”—to have several graduate degrees and authoritativeness and the primary credential of leaders. Instead, leaders expect themselves and others to be uncertain, inquiring, expectant of surprise, and perhaps a bit joyful about confronting the unknown. (Roberts, 2000, p. 417)

The psychological challenge of reconceiving one’s work and one’s role in such a way can be quite daunting for many leaders. Not only will they have to adjust their own expectations for themselves, but they will also need to make these changes despite the expectations from others around them who look to their leaders for answers and solutions instead of new questions and plans for learning. Heifetz (2002) has found that many leaders respond to the pressures of others’ expectations by making the mistake of trying to address the adaptive challenge through technical means. Unsure of how solve the problem, they offer strategies and promise answers that then fall short. And in the face of mounting pressure to solve these problems, the leader “frequently ends up either faking it or disappointing people” (p. 44).

Professional development for educational leaders must attend to these issues if it is to be successful in generating their greater personal capacity so that they can orchestrate systemic educational reform. It must help them identify the adaptive challenges they face and understand the nature of the work required of them in order to succeed. The immunities work can be useful in this regard because it helps people challenge the fundamental assumptions they hold about their roles and their work. Change leaders may need an explicit curriculum like the immunities framework that helps them surface and examine the suitability of these kinds of expectations for themselves and their work.

The Immunities to Change Framework Allows Leaders to Work in New Ways

Of course, change leaders are not just in charge of understanding and bringing about major shifts in their organizations, and they are not just in charge of their own personal learning. Many adults in school systems and elsewhere do not anticipate and, if asked, might rather not undertake the work of adap-

tive learning. Heifetz and Linsky (2004) have found that "most people would rather have the person in authority take the work off their shoulders, protect them from disorienting change, and meet challenges on their behalf. But the real work of leadership usually involves giving the work back to the people who must adapt, and mobilizing them to do so" (p. 35). Change leaders therefore face additional challenges in helping others reconceive their roles and their work.

Selma's increasing ability to rely on herself as her ultimate source of authority for determining how and how well she was working is a necessary component for the adaptive work of change leadership. As she and her colleagues try to define their work and their roles in an environment where there are no available solutions, the kinds of conversations that allow them to air and discuss differences are particularly crucial. In fact, Heifetz and Laurie (1997) argue that instead of suppressing conflict, leaders often have to look for opportunities to draw it out. When engaged productively, disagreements and conflicts help ensure that all new ideas and initiatives are properly scrutinized so that the best ones can emerge. Furthermore, when disagreements are not openly discussed, resentments and work avoidance can result. These problems may be particularly relevant in the field of education, since school cultures are traditionally characterized more by compliance than by engagement and ownership (Wagner et al., 2006).

As Selma progressed through the immunities work, she became aware that the learning she was doing about how to be successful in her new role would actually make her better equipped to help others who may be feeling similarly confused about the change work and their roles in it. She likened this transition to swinging between two trapezes, where the just-released trapeze represents the familiar work of the past and the about-to-be-caught trapeze represents the work of the future. To make the transition from old ways of working to new ones, the leader must let go of the old trapeze before actually catching the new one. Selma compared these moments of risk and fear to those educators face in taking on new work, where "you don't want to let go of the old trapeze. You haven't quite caught on to the new trapeze, and that little place in the middle is scary. . . . And [they need to learn] to just let that go, feeling comfortable enough to let that go." Selma credited the immunities work she had done as being helpful to her own experience of being in the scary space between two trapezes. She saw that many of the principals with whom she worked were experiencing the same fear and anxiety she had and that she might be able to help them.

I'm supposed to be their coach, and I'm supposed to be modeling for them. And so I just have to work through my own issues. I suspect that some of the principals I work with have this dilemma too, and that is, they're not sure how to do the job they do. . . . Some of them were very good teachers; and [now] they're in the principalship. And they have just said it. They may have just said it to me when we're alone, or when there are just a few of us together. They don't have a clue

about what they're doing. But they're expected [to know], so it's not just something they can go up and tell people, "I don't know how to be a principal." I want them to develop some skills, and I want to be able to coach them in thinking about how they can learn to [be successful in their new roles]. They don't have to learn on their own; they don't have to invent it. . . . But it's kind of scary to face up to, "I may not be competent to do the job that people think I can do."

The processes for diagnosing and overturning one's immunities provides an explicit curriculum for undertaking this kind of work, as was the case for Selma. While this article highlights the usefulness of these processes for addressing the learning challenges change leaders face, the immunities curriculum has also been used successfully to help educators in other roles (e.g., teachers, principals, superintendents, and other central office staff) to increase their effectiveness and to take on new types of work (see, for example, Howell, 2006; Kegan & Lahey, 2001; Wagner et al., 2006). With additional experience and training, part of Selma's change leadership role could involve coaching others through the immunities process.

Applying an adult developmental lens to issues of professional competency has powerful implications for professional development. This lens enables us to identify the particular demands of change leadership that may not be effectively addressed simply through increased knowledge acquisition or behavioral modification. It allows us greater understandings of what constitutes effective change leadership, why individuals may struggle to succeed at particular tasks or aspects of their work, what success and struggle in this profession often involves. Increasing the developmental capacities of adults and the quality of their professional practice, requires that we provide an environment that is both welcoming of individuals at their current developmental level and also encouraging of their greater psychological growth. Professional development programs that provide avenues for identifying, reflecting on, and altering one's core beliefs, such as the Immunities to Change work, can offer this kind of assistance.

Notes

1. For reviews of this literature, see, for example, Kennedy, 1998; and Wang, Frechtling, & Sanders, 1999.
2. For reviews of the current research on the most innovative of these, see, for example, Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; and Thomas, 2004.
3. For a fuller illustration of the Immunities to Change process, see Kegan and Lahey (2001).
4. Often, the work of diagnosing and overturning Immunities to Change takes place under the direction of a trained coach. However, many groups and individuals also successfully undertake this work guided by published descriptions of the process (see Kegan & Lahey, 2001; Wagner et al., 2006).
5. While the changes in Selma are characteristic of the development of self-authorship, we do not have the subject-object interview data that would positively confirm evidence of this type of transformational change.

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