

The Mutual Understanding Process (MUP)

What

The Creating a Culture of Achievement System and its component programs are all based on a communications protocol. Simply stated that protocol, Goal-Focused Communication, is based on three critical questions.

- What is your goal?
- Where are you now?
- How will you get there?

Each Culture of Achievement program teaches or employs that protocol.

In keeping with that communications protocol, each program begins with what is termed the Mutual Understanding Process or MUP. In essence the MUP asks district-level and then school-level leaders what are their goals relative to the program being discussed. The discussion then is directed at where they are now relative to that goal and a plan of action is outlined and discussed.

During the MUP meetings the role of Metis Leadership Group and that of the district and school are delineated.

- Metis is responsible for each participant's (teacher, principal, school leader) demonstration of the program outcomes.
- The district and school are responsible for sustaining the process after Metis has completed its work.

Why

First, it is the beginning of the modeling of the Goal-Focused Communication protocol. Beyond that, it is well known that educators resist change when "new things" are put upon them. When they do not understand what they are being asked to do, why they are to do it, how it is to be done, and, primarily, what value will it bring they naturally resist. This is common in most situations well beyond education.

The Mutual Understanding Process is designed to involve school and district leaders in discourse that informs them of what can be accomplished, how that will be done, what resources are needed, and what their commitment will be. The process provides participants with knowledge and skill and a guided practice environment in which to demonstrate that they have, in fact, performed the requisite outcomes. Beyond that, each program prepares the participants to sustain the program and the locus of responsibility moves from Metis to the district and school.

Simply, the MUP meetings at the district and at the school or academy develop a mutual understanding involving: *what, why, how, and when*. Additionally, there is an understanding of *how well*.

Modeling

Beyond everyone having a clear understanding of all the system and program elements and how they will work, each of the school leaders will have had a first-hand experience with Goal-Focused Communications. Further, at the school-level MUP meeting, the school leaders can determine how they, in turn, will introduce the Culture of Achievement and the first program to the school or academy staff.

The school leaders will explore the use of first adopters (mavens) as a means of engaging, and sometimes teaching, their colleagues. The use of first adopters is the subject of another white paper.

In Conclusion

Since the Creating a Culture of Achievement system and its programs are communications programs the Mutual Understanding Process is a necessary introduction. It assures that all have a common understanding of what will transpire and why. It will enable district and school leaders to know what to expect and to know how to determine if the program is succeeding in accomplishing what was agreed upon.

Finally, the process informs district and school leaders about what they must do to sustain the value received by the system and its programs.