

Department of
Education



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

Working Papers Series

International and Global Issues for Research

*Responding to significant educational change
and the importance of affective containment*

Daniel Robinson

No. 2016/1 December 2016

The working papers series aims to recognise the excellent work produced by the large community of graduate students and distinguished associates of the Department of Education at the University of Bath. The series has been designed to create opportunities to disseminate high quality research through our Departmental webpages, in a timely manner. The working papers series aims, in particular, to reflect and contribute to the global standing of the Department of Education as a leader of research in the areas of activity of its research clusters:

Internationalisation and globalisation of education

Educational leadership, management and governance

Language and educational practices

Learning, pedagogy and diversity

Abstract:

Educational change not only poses logistical issues; affective challenges must also be considered. Although staff may communicate resistance to change based on external reasons, the real source of tension may reside in the internal world of the teacher: the desire to avoid anxiety. This paper analyzes the literature on educational change from a psychodynamic perspective. Specifically, it seeks to understand the anxiety created during organizational change and how those feelings can be expressed, experienced, and channeled into a positive dynamic for the benefit of students. The change examined in this paper involves a case study on initiating a one-to-one bring your own device program (BYOD) yielding profound educational change that generated significant resistance and emotion at a diverse, high-achieving international school in Asia. The findings show that affective containment principles are effective, but this particular case struggled to recover from a late inclusion of those practices.

1. Introduction

Compelling reasons for educational change are often presented. Yet, despite the convincing case for change, resistance from teachers, students, and parents often becomes the default response. Initiating one-to-one (1:1) programs in which each student has a device or laptop computer as a tool to boost student productivity, improve student achievement, and increase student engagement is a strong example of such educational change. Research indicates positive results in these areas of student learning when 1:1 programs are properly prepared and conducted (Bebell and Kay 2010; Rosen and Beck-Hill 2012; Penuel 2006; Hanover Research Council 2010). The growing need for students to master 21st century skills including collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity offers another compelling reason for initiating 1:1 programs (Lowther et al. 2012; Alber 2013). The research appears convincing for school improvement. Why would staff oppose change that has such promise for enhancing student achievement?

Psychodynamic theory (or system psychodynamics) offers an explanation for this resistance as it exposes the basic human drive to avoid unpleasant emotions,

particularly anxiety (James 2010; Obholzer and Roberts 2003). The central theme of system psychodynamics is that emotions play a powerful influence on both individual and organizational practice and on change to that practice. Regardless of cognitive rationale for educational change, emotional responses dominate. Systems psychodynamics describes and analyzes this affective experience (James 2010; Armstrong and Rustin 2014; Dale and James 2015).

This paper argues that a change leader must incorporate psychodynamic principles at the top of his/her change models and strategies. Neglecting this area can prove disastrous despite strong leadership characteristics, skills, and change methods. The article is organized into three sections: firstly it examines the literature on leadership related to understanding and managing the affective experience of profound educational change. The second section presents a case study of major change in a school: initiating BYOD, a one-to-one computer program in which each student brings their own laptop to classes. A proper implementation of BYOD introduces a paradigm shift to learner-centered instruction, and reduced teacher presentation. The final section of the paper critiques the leadership principles and strategies employed in order to minimize anxiety. It also includes a reflection on the successes and failures of the case.

2. Literature Review of Affective Dynamic in Educational Change

2.1 Anxiety related to organizational change

Organizational change is often unwelcome regardless of the benefits it holds because of the anxiety it creates (Dale and James 2015; Hargreaves* 2004; Kegan and Lahey 2009; Oreg 2006). Freud explained that anxiety results from the ego feeling at risk of being overwhelmed. The rational mind feels a threat that unconscious fears and desires may take control. Anxiety is the signal of that felt threat (Armstrong and Rustin 2014). Unwelcome change particularly gives rise to anxiety because of the disruption it wreaks on an individual's established defensive behaviors. These defensive behaviors, also known as social defenses, are meant to protect individuals and organizations from undesirable feelings (James 2010). Anxiety is at the top of that list of feelings to avoid. The

development about anxiety explains why organizational change generally including educational change is frequently met with resistance (Gabriel 1999; Hargreaves* 2004; Kegan and Lahey 2009; James 2010).

It is critical for the leader of the organization to understand this dynamic not only to respond effectively to the resistance, but also to develop strategies to minimize anxiety (Dale and James 2015). Rationales for progress can gain intellectual consent, but the leader also needs emotional accord. The affective experience of profound change may prove the greatest challenge for the leader as he/she seeks strategies for affective containment. The essence of affective containment in terms of individual, group, and organizational practice allows unpleasant and powerful feelings to be expressed, accepted, and then transformed into acceptable and even positive results (Dale and James 2015).

2.2 System Psychodynamics Theory and Educational Change

System psychodynamics theory provides an effective framework addressing the affective dimension of educational change. Psychodynamic theory includes several key concepts:

- social defenses: behaviors that individuals and groups embrace to guard against unacceptable feelings resulting from a perceived threat to their identity and esteem;
- unconscious mental activity: the influence of subconscious thought on individual and group behaviors;
- boundaries: the areas of discontinuity between an individual's external social world and the individual's internal psychological world, and the way in which affective experience influences the dynamic between these two worlds;
- the primary task of work groups: the main job a group feels they should be accomplishing and the group's work mentality;
- basic assumption tendencies: group behaviors that strive to meet unconscious needs rather than focusing on the primary task;
- affective containment: fostering a culture that encourages expression of feelings with receptiveness, moves to reflection, and then seeks a positive transformation of those feelings (James 2010).

All of these psychodynamic elements interact during significant educational change, but social defenses and affective containment deserve special attention.

2.3 Social Defenses

Social defenses serve to contain emotional experiences that propose a threat to the psychic wellbeing of an individual. These behaviors shield against painful psychological experiences enabling the individual to metabolize these experiences by making meaningful connections (Armstrong and Rustin 2014). Identifying these defensive behaviors creates a window to reveal major issues effecting organizational patterns. Armstrong and Rustin (2014, p. 60) elaborate,

...they encode psychotic anxieties into organizational culture by fostering detachment and repression. When social defence systems promote mindsets that repudiate the struggle inherent in sophisticated work, they help people conceal what is ambiguous or unknown through projection, denial, and projective identification.

These patterns of behavior become routines of response in organizations as they seek to eliminate, or at least reduce, influences perceived to pose a threat to a person's mental state (Gabriel 1999).

Some primary specific social defenses prominent in educational organizations and how they might protect individuals from anxiety follow:

- **Rituals and Routines**: These include repeated practices that are taken for granted by the organization. Rituals and routines provide a consistent and secure pattern of practice and also provide a defense against unpleasant feelings such as anxiety (James 2010).
- **Projective Identification**: This social defense seeks to control another by projecting onto that individual. Projection has to do with moving feelings from one to another, predominantly in an unconscious fashion (James et al. 2006). Projective identification can deflect anxiety by influencing another without taking ownership of one's own feelings. For example, if a principal asked a department head to collect and give feedback on the department teachers' lesson plans and the department head feared this would be met with resistance, he/she could explain to the principal that his department members are overwhelmed at that moment and the anxiety provoked by

evaluating lesson plans would prove counterproductive. The principal may introject the projection of anxiety and rescind the request for lesson plan review. The department head would have successfully avoided his personal anxiety by invoking projective identification.

- Regression: When an individual reverts to childlike characteristics of immaturity, dependency, and helplessness in response to challenging situations that could evoke anxiety, they exhibit regression. This behavior is perhaps the least effective of all the social defenses as it usually fails to avoid the anxiety (James 2010). In addition, others often perceive the persons responding with regression as fatuous in the organization. Nevertheless, regression can be a prevalent response to change and the consequences can damage relationships between leaders and the subcultures adopting regression much like a group of children trying to manipulate a parent. Furthermore, the regressing subcultures empower each other and rationalize these immature attitudes. For example, if a leader requests teachers to enter their assignments daily into the student management system so parents can have access to them through a parent portal, a group of teachers may begin to complain and mock the initiative as a way of avoiding the stress of accountability. A leader capitulating to this form of protest would be similar to a parent giving in to the temper tantrum of a child. In this way, the group of teachers would have successfully exploited the social defense of regression to avoid anxiety.
- Repression: This social defense relegates painful emotions and experiences to the unconscious in order to keep from dealing with them consciously (Gabriel 1999; Obholzer and Roberts 2003). Repressed thoughts and feelings can emerge unwittingly particularly in times of stress such as educational change. More severe failures of repression can prove damaging to one's self-worth and can rouse severe anxiety. Because educational change can prove to be such a threat, it is common for schools to adopt rituals and routines and other social defenses to safeguard from repression breakdown (James 2010).
- Denial: This defense attempts to evade a painful emotion by negating its reality. It differs from repression in that it does not exclude the experience

from consciousness, but seeks to avoid the unpleasant emotion by a disingenuous rejection of it (Gabriel 1999). For example, a teacher doubting their own technological savvy may be quite anxious about a decision by the school to go paperless but outwardly acclaim the benefits of the move and how happy they are about it. In reality, they are denying the anxiety they feel, and their words of support are an unhealthy attempt to invalidate their uncomfortable feelings.

- Resistance: Perhaps the most direct and overt social defense is resistance. It opposes a proposal often without a rational footing. Resistance usually has an unconscious basis resulting from anxious, vulnerable thoughts when identity and self-worth are threatened (Gabriel 1999; James 2010). Since educational change often presents a threat to identity and worth, resistance is a common social defense.
- Splitting: This defense is common in organizations in stress responding to change in extremes. People and experiences that create threatening conflicts are perceived ideally as good or persecutory as bad. For example, in a staff meeting during a period of change teachers could take sides and describe the meeting either as “fantastic” or “awful.” The two split groups may see the leader of the meeting as either “excellent” or “disastrous.” Leadership may also fall victim to splitting calling some teachers “wonderful” and some “pitiful.” This can lead to an unhealthy “us” vs. “them” mentality between leadership and disfavored staff in a school setting experiencing splitting. As splitting and separated feelings project onto other individuals and groups, a blaming culture develops (Obholzer and Roberts 2003; James 2010). The leader absorbing the negative projected feelings in splitting often can only resolve this divisive social defense by leaving. Additional collateral damage of splitting could include groups of students or teachers bearing the scapegoat label.

2.4 Affective Containment

Merely understanding that the social defenses described above are at work during educational change may not suffice for the leader. Resolution to move

forward through these social defenses seems wise. Arguably, that determination to proceed positively should include affective containment. Affective containment includes a set of individual, group and organizational protocols, strategies, and procedures that addresses the affective experience enabling the organization to move beyond social defenses in order to constructively deal with the issues behind the change (Lyth 1988; Obholzer and Roberts 2003; Bion 2013; Dale and James 2015).

Anxiety poses one of the greatest affective containment challenges of all social feelings because the threat that prompts it is internal and hard to define from an external perspective. Gabriel (1999) asserts that anxiety threatens the ego (the organized, rational part of the psyche) with largely unconscious yet powerful desires and fears repressed in the id. This threat from the massive content of the id could overwhelm the ego leading to devastating results in social relationships. People sense the threat anxiety holds and inherently seek ways to avoid it. Educational change is a powerful external stimulant to this internal threat. The leader's goal in supporting change should provide opportunities to show receptiveness for feelings expressed, for reflection on these affective experiences, and then harness the insights gained from this deliberation (Dale and James 2015). Logistical planning for change must be coupled with affective containment strategies to minimize anxiety and maximize potential for successful implementation.

2.5 Models, Meeting Protocols, and Professional Development for Change

The wise leader needs to adopt a model for change that effectively incorporates affective containment of allowing for free expression and validating peoples' feelings during the process. This sub-section highlights two promising change models, a meeting protocol, and professional development critiquing its need to better embed affective containment.

2.5.1 Concerns-Based Adoption Model

Hord's (1987) Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) addresses several key considerations:

- Change is a process not a single event. School improvement occurs over time. CBAM could improve its effectiveness with affective containment principles clearly delineated in this change process.
- Individuals, not rules, accomplish the change. This model recognizes and validates that change affects people and they must be the focus of attention in implementing change. Again, this area should include individual emotions and need for expression.
- Change is a uniquely personal experience. Every individual is different and will react to change differently. Change must support the individual's needs. In short, this model is client-centered where the teacher is the primary client in most school improvement plans. Hord would do well to address the need for emotional expression to be truly client-centered.
- Change must include developmental growth plans. The growth plan involves skills differentiated to each individual with the flexibility to adjust to meet the individual's unique path to success. Affective containment principles should also be emphasized to address the feelings portion of the growth plan.
- Change should be communicated and understood in operational terms. Teachers need to know what the change will mean to them. What changes in values and behavior will it require? What will this cost in terms of effort and time? CBAM needs to not only address these individual, operational concerns logistically, but emotionally to reduce anxiety and minimize social defenses.
- The focus of the change should not be the new program or curriculum but individuals, innovations, and the reason for improvement. "The real meaning of any change lies in its human, not its material, component" (Hord 1987).

CBAM claims to be a client-centered model that accounts for individual issues that enable the change leader to provide essential support to create a productive plan together (Hord 1987). Affective containment principles could be better weaved throughout the model for greater effectiveness of its goals.

2.5.2 Kotter's Eight Steps to Transforming an Organization

Organizational change expert John Kotter (2007) identifies eight steps for a successful transition:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency including identifying and discussing crises, potential problems, and opportunities.
2. Forming a guiding coalition that has the influence to lead the change and work together as a team.
3. Creating a vision and strategy to give motivation and direction for the change and minimize resistance for reaching the vision.
4. Communicating the change vision by every means possible especially through the guiding coalition.
5. Empowering staff to act on the vision by overcoming obstacles to change and challenging systems that undermine the vision.
6. Planning and creating short-term wins by celebrating performance improvements and recognizing individual's efforts and successes.
7. Consolidating improvement and producing more change by continuing to build on the credibility momentum to tweak procedures, systems and structures and by developing staff who will implement the vision.
8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture by highlighting connections between new behaviors and achievement success, as well as creating ways to develop leadership and succession.

Kotter's model is a proven model for organizational change in the business world but it lacks the emotional attention necessary for educational change. Affective containment principles should be incorporated in each of Kotter's steps and particularly in Step 5. Kotter needs a client-centered, emotionally sensitive theme to garner the trust, support, and guiding coalition he seeks. His model lacks a strategy to reduce anxiety with change. How does a leader effectively minimize anxiety?

2.5.3 Meeting protocols: The Six Thinking Hats

The use of protocols in meetings is one highly acclaimed method that educators have implemented to promote healthy discussion that reflects transparency of feelings. The "Six Thinking Hats" protocol developed by Edward

De Bono (1989) can be an effective protocol embracing affective containment strategies resulting in more productive dialogue. In this system a colored “thinking hat” metaphorically represents a state of thinking or feeling. The white hat calls for facts both known or needed. The yellow hat expresses optimism exploring the positive angles and opportunities for benefit. The black hat implies caution and critical thinking. This thinking mode seeks to uncover all the possible problems with a plan or issue. The red hat signifies the expression of emotions without requiring a justification. It is here that the leader can best provide a means for affective expression and foster the affective containment process to change. The green hat centers on possibilities, alternatives, and creative ideas: it is “thinking outside the box.” The blue hat concentrates on management of the thinking process and following the guidelines of the protocol. “Six Thinking Hats” focuses the participants in a meeting on the same issue, at the same time, and in the same frame of mind (De Bono 1989).

Applying this protocol in a time of change, the leader would be wise to request the wearing of the blue hat first to understand the structure for discussion. The white hat could then be worn in order to provide the needed information of what the suggested change is, rationale for it, and how it may affect them. The red hat would represent the next strategy of affective containment providing an opportunity for staff to express their anxieties and have them accepted as valid. Once staff has been affirmed on their emotional concerns, the black hat may follow in order to identify problematic issues with the change with lower emotional intensity clouding the reasoning. Next, the yellow hat is suitable to create an optimistic outlook as the group tackles the problems raised during the black hat time. The green hat then focuses discussion on creative problem solving to make the change beneficial for both students and staff. The purpose of the protocol is to maintain a thinking and discussion balance that may otherwise be dominated by the red hat (feelings and social defenses) and black hat (problem identification) in times of change. It is the responsibility of the leader to shape the culture by weeding out negativity with gentle, yet effective methods (DuFour and Burnette 2002). The Six-Hat protocol can serve as one of those methods.

De Bono, DuFour, and Burnette have provided models and advice to reduce negativity, but caution is needed to avoid these becoming instruments of manipulation in the hands of the leader. The leader should recognize and express their own threatening feelings and social defenses to avoid projection on those being led. The leader needs to wear each hat and allow checks on the use of the protocol to safeguard it from becoming a tool of control undermining building a culture of trust. If a staff is characterized as a community of listening, authentic reception of feelings, trust in others and their capacity, and understanding primary concerns in order to collaborate as a team, Reilly (2015) asserts even the most reluctant teachers can be brought on board with the change.

2.5.4 Professional Learning Communities

Change poses a threat to feelings of competency and self worth giving rise to the question, “How are we supposed to know how to do this?” The leader can reduce anxiety with a clear professional development plan that provides not only the skills and knowledge for the innovation but also provides for affective expression, allows for risk taking, embraces failure as a means of learning, and builds a culture of collaboration that is supportive and synergistic. Professional learning communities (PLC’s) practicing the principles described above and together accepting these as norms can provide a professional development environment that makes change not only tolerable but also invigorating (Cole 2004; James et al. 2007; Fullan 2014). Collaborative communities need to develop a long term mentality and persevere through difficulties much as the members of a family business commit to each other and dedicate themselves to the eventual success of the venture (Kotter 2013).

This section has taken a look at models, strategies, and protocols a leader can employ for successful change. It has asserted the need for affective containment principles to be woven throughout each of those elements in the process. It has scrutinized the leader’s motive for the use of each item highlighting the need for the leader to provide checks on his/her own emotions, agenda, and social defenses to safeguard from manipulation. The focus now turns to a case of

significant educational change including a critique of the leadership methods employed.

3. Case Study: Initiating Bring Your Own Device in High School

3.1 Background on Case

This section examines the initiation of a one-to-one computer program requiring students to bring their own laptop computer to class each day. Teachers are expected and trained in a paradigm that utilizes technology as productivity tools, student-centered lesson planning, increased project-based assessments, and enhanced research. The section particularly examines the psychodynamic perspective of the change and the leaders use of affective containment principles.

The international school in this case study has an American curriculum serving 500 expatriate children. Approximately 70% of the children are United States citizens with Canada, Australia, Korea, and United Kingdom following up in that order. The high school (grades 9-12) comprises 250 students including approximately 25% in boarding. The school was originally created in 1952 to provide schooling for children of missionaries and nearly 40% of the student body fit that category. The other students' parents represent highly educated professional families in predominantly medical and international business professions. The school is accredited by Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and has received the maximum six-year review cycle since it first was accredited in the 1970s. Over 80% of graduates head to North America for college with average SAT scores more than 300 points above the U.S. national average. Staff citizenship is similar in composition to the students.

In the fall of 2013, the school's administration began extensively researching the possibility of initiating a one-to-one program. The research process included a task force, conferences on initiating 1:1 programs, and observing some of the most successful schools with these programs in Asia. A road map was developed that included extensive staff development in the 2014-2015 school year, a trial run during the spring semester of 2015, and full implementation in the high

school beginning in the fall of 2015. The decision was made for high school students to begin BYOD with any device which met minimum requirements delineated on the school's website and printed materials. The rationale for BYOD at the high school included developing a familiar tool of productivity for the student that would promote a sense of ownership for their learning. It also included students progressing in the six areas that follow.

Six professional learning communities (PLC's) were formed around International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards for students (ISTE 2007). One common criteria of each PLC included planning how technology would enhance instruction without undercutting curricular benchmarks. ISTE standards provide that kind of focus and are summarized as follows:

1. **Creativity and innovation** – students demonstrate creative thinking and innovative projects with the use of technology.
2. **Communication and collaboration** – students use digital media to enhance collaboration and enrich effective communication.
3. **Research and information fluency** – students are trained to collect and analyze data using digital tools.
4. **Critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making** – students use technology to sustain critical thinking to solve problems, conduct research, and make informed decisions.
5. **Digital Citizenship** – students practice legal, ethical, and socially proper use of technology.
6. **Technology operations and concepts** – students understand how to select applications for productivity and have a grasp of technological concepts (ISTE 2007; Robinson 2014).

Secondary goals included preparing students with the 21st century skills, technology skills, and innovation mindset they need for success after high school (Alber 2013 ; Lowther et al. 2012; Robinson 2006; Wagner 2012). The PLC's met monthly and shared their findings and how they created and met their SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely) goals at the final professional development meeting (Haughy 2015).

3.2 Principal's Strategies

The Principal began his strategy of initiating BYOD by vision casting on the importance of the innovation from a historical perspective in order to provide a sense of urgency (Kotter 2007). A presentation at a staff meeting compared the significance between the Gutenberg press and the Internet. Staff could recognize that the Gutenberg press gave rise to some of the greatest revolutions in western civilization, such as the industrial revolution and the protestant reformation, as information and ideas now crossed borders in mass production (Briggs and Burke 2010; Norman 2005). An educational paradigm shift took place where access to literature was not restricted to the elite, but allowed for the common person as well. This diaspora of ideas and information contributed to forming the foundation of the modern market economy and radically altered the socio-political structure of Europe. In the same way, the Internet has ignited the information and digital age, revolutionizing the manner in which we gain knowledge, access information, connect and communicate, innovate, and conduct business. In short, we find ourselves in one of the greatest paradigm shifts in educational history with similar opportunities for progress as the age of the printing press (Briggs and Burke 2010; Norman 2005). The Principal urged the staff to acknowledge the school's responsibility to prepare students for success in today's new paradigm.

Following the Principal's vision casting, community forums, staff discussions, and department head meetings were organized focusing on two primary leading questions for BYOD: (1) *Why are we doing this?* (2) *What will it look like for our students and teachers?* Subset questions included Rocco's (2012) five essential questions before initiating a major innovation:

- Is this an authentic and wise innovation or just implementing a change to say we did it?
- How does the innovation improve student learning?
- How does the innovation improve instruction?
- What professional development for teachers, preparation for students, and information sessions for parents must be implemented to maximize the potential of success for the innovation?

- What is a realistic timeline for the innovation?

Questions and discussion were included in each meeting to address concerns and feelings. For example, at one of the parent and staff forums, a parent fighting tears exclaimed, “I don’t want my son to have a computer with him all the time. I am worried about all the garbage it will put into his moral life.” The leader affirmed the mother’s feelings, her fear of the dangers the Internet poses to her child, and her desire to want the best for her child’s character. He then reframed the concern as one of the key issues in answering the question “why are we doing this?” The discussion was turned back to the parents by asking, “would you rather let your child get their first laptop as they head off to college and then begin to make decisions of how they will use it without the guiding support of loving parents and caring teachers?” The principal then lamented of seeing how that area had wreaked havoc in some alumni. He reiterated his conviction that it was a primary area of responsibility to partner with parents and relate closely with students. He pointed out that digital citizenship is a crucial issue the school will address in the initiative because of the very concern this parent expressed. The tone of the meeting transformed as parents recognized the school shared their concerns on this issue and others. The principal demonstrated how forbidding the use of devices at school could develop more devastating results and reaffirmed the benefits of working together with students to develop healthy technology habits. Using an analogy with mining, the principal asserted, “If we want our students to find gold buried in dirt and rock, we must teach them.” The analogies proved helpful, but the affective containment principles of accepting emotional responses and then reframing them proved key.

Professional development focused on BYOD preparation took the focus in planning between the principal and the professional learning coach. Besides the PLC’s mentioned above, “Tech Tuesdays” were established with hands on experiences for staff to create short-term wins that work to reduce staff anxiety and increase motivation (Kotter 2007). Parent technology lessons (PTL’s) were provided to give parents a better idea of what their students would really be doing with technology and to show how course content would remain the focus. Several parents did not bring their computers to these seminars, giving the principal and professional learning coach an opportunity to address the fear of

failure or fear of seeming ignorant in a disarming, humorous fashion. It also gave an opportunity to assert the school's heart to encourage the students to take risk, embrace failure as an effective learning opportunity, and encourage a supportive collaborative learning community.

The principal attempted to build a coalition of support by open discussions with department heads on the concerns and feelings expressed in their departments concerning BYOD. At one department head meeting, a teacher revealed feelings of threat by protesting, "Why are we doing this? Can't you see it is going to change our culture? Why do we want to go the way of the world, the way of the great Babylon?" The principal seemed caught off guard, but did stress the opportunity to address that fear in department meetings and staff meetings. He also highlighted the opening question as the main essential question to discuss: "Why are we doing this?" As the discussion proceeded on that question the dialogue was subdued revealing an unsuccessful attempt at affective containment.

The principal incorporated an agenda item called "tech moment" into each staff meeting inviting a teacher to share how they were using tech successfully or how it had failed and what was learned from that. The purpose of the tech moment was to build support by bringing staff into the role of the expert modeling colleague technology use, and celebrating successes and ideas. One such tech moment a teacher showed a piece of software they used to go paperless in class and how it was requiring too much time. He then showed a very simple alternative that ended up working better as an organizational aid and time-saver. The failure and the success were both celebrated.

The principal became aware and studied affective containment principles in the second half of the year and began employing some strategies to uncover and express the social defenses at work regarding the change. The Six Hats protocol was used in a staff meeting and in a department head meeting with discussion shared both verbally and digitally in a Google document for the quieter staff and longer processors. The written and verbal results contrasted with verbal having more negative content and written being more positive. During one meeting a teacher stated, "I am already at a 7 on a stress scale from 1 to 10, this will send me to 11." A rant proceeded on the unreasonable time

expectations and how it would hurt teacher preparation and lead to poor instruction. The leader allowed the teacher to vent and acknowledged demands placed on teachers. This was a red hat (emotional) expression. Wearing a green hat (possibilities and problem solving), the leader stressed the need for departments and PLC's to brainstorm a win/win using technology that would not only meet the goals of BYOD for students, but also become a time saver for teachers. The computer word processor replacing the typewriter provided an appropriate example. Those old enough to remember that transition admit to frustration and loss of time initially but tremendous savings in the long run.

Significant time was given in staff and department head meetings to identify both logistical challenges and affective issues. These were recorded in a shared Google document for staff. The following issues emerged as the chief concerns:

- The cost demands in both finances and time (logistical and affective)
- The threat of distraction (logistical and affective)
- The change of culture and socialization concerns (affective)
- The Professional Development plan required to make BYOD successful (logistical);
- The infrastructure needs (bandwidth and access points) and power issues with laptops (logistical);
- Staff stress and feelings of inadequacy (affective);
- The fear of losing control in the classroom (affective).

Time was allotted in staff meetings, PLC's, and department meetings to put on the green hat to find positive solutions to these main concerns. Furthermore, an administrative/technology team was assembled to meet regularly throughout the year to seek solutions to these identified issues as well as other challenges found in research and school visits. The principal opened discussion on mindsets and how it might apply to BYOD. Staff was presented research that concluded success being determined by persistence to improve learning and skills through effort and practice rather than being predetermined by intelligence. The discussion grappled with a "growth mindset" compared to a "fixed mindset" (Dweck 2010; Dweck 2006). It included what a teacher should try to model for students and which one they should encourage in their students.

Perspectives on failure and risk-taking were included and the message that students should embrace in these areas. This discussion was generally positive, but later criticism of feeling manipulated could have been making reference to this activity.

3.3 Data Gathering on Bring Your Own Device

A qualitative study pursued to better understand the affective experiences of staff. In addition to the input staff and department heads gave at meetings collected into a Google Doc, optional surveys were sent out each day to staff during the trial BYOD week, and a required survey was distributed at the end of the week. The responses to this survey were collected into a spreadsheet for analysis. Students also received surveys during BYOD week with those results amassed onto a spreadsheet for evaluation. End of year conferences between the principal and teacher included interviews for this major change and a final survey concerning BYOD was given to staff at the close of the year. The guidelines in University of Bath's Ethical Implications for Research Activity (EIRA) were adhered to with a form submitted along with the draft of the paper. The guidelines set forth by BERA were followed where applicable (British Educational Research Association 2011). The school authorized the gathering of the data as described above. Regardless of this research paper, the data would have been gathered as part of the BYOD road map evaluation.

The professional learning coach and the Principal analyzed the data for patterns of input. They identified the following themes from this qualitative study:

- Both logistical concerns and affective issues that surfaced from previous staff meetings still remained (see bullet points in 3.2).
- There was a split between the faculty in positive and negative reaction to BYOD and the teaching paradigm emerging from it, with a slightly higher percentage on the positive side. The input from written forms showed higher positive feedback towards BYOD. Negative feedback dominated the verbal input gathered at meetings.

- Although most of the resistance to BYOD attempted to use logistical rationale, affective reasons were recognized as the underpinning motive. For example, teacher input in surveys and end of year interviews expressed concern that all of the lesson plans they had developed and refined over the years would now be obsolete. They felt this was a waste of time and effort and would result in an inferior product. This was identified as an affective threat to their feelings of competency as well as a challenge to their prioritization more than as a logistical issue. The change leaders acknowledged it as anxiety.
- Student feedback was primarily favorable about their experience of BYOD. There were concerns by some students that the device they would be able to bring would be significantly inferior to what some students were able to acquire. There was also an impression that some teachers were forcing the BYOD aspect in their instruction where it did not have a good fit with the instructional goal. Most students were excited about the prospect of owning the learning more and the creative possibilities in presentations to reflect their learning for assignments. The data did not reveal a strong need for affective containment with students.

4. Discussion: Reflection and Critique of the Case Study

4.1 Key Issues Emerging from Case Related to Literature Review

4.1.1 Social Defenses Revealed

BYOD proved to be a major educational change and unwelcome to a significant number of the staff as evidenced by the qualitative feedback. The social defenses described in the literature were manifested in some form at a meeting, in interpersonal interactions, and in the classroom. Social defenses exhibited in reaction to the plan to initiate BYOD confirmed the teachers' instinct to avoid anxiety brought about by significant educational change (Dale and James 2015; Armstrong and Rustin 2014; Hargreaves* 2004). Feelings of inadequacy with technology, loss of a comfortable teaching method, and

insecurity with the demands of the change was expressed in resistant tones just as predicted by the literature (Gabriel 1999; Kegan and Lahey 2009; James 2010). For example, the music department changed their PLC focus from the ISTE standard of communication and collaboration to copyright laws revealing their “basic assumption tendencies” to stay in a safe area of expertise (ISTE 2007; James 2010). Several staff expressed discomfort with the change in staff meetings, and the Six Hats protocol to process change revealed the defense of “rituals and routines” (De Bono 1989; James 2010). Vocal department heads angrily protested in department head meetings that this change was stressing their department members in a counterproductive fashion, displaying the social defense of “projection and projective identification” as other neutral staff introjected their emotion (James 2010; Armstrong and Rustin 2014). Mocking statements made in staff meetings labeled teachers and students as “technology nerds” and decried the change as a jealous attempt to copy large international programs in a classic example of “regression.” An outburst by an angry teacher was followed up later in private dialogue revealing repressed thoughts on authority and a manifestation of “repression failure” (Gabriel 1999; Obholzer and Roberts 2003). The professional learning coach’s interpretation of the qualitative data gathered summarized the negative input as “there is an ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ mentality coming from this feedback,” portraying the social defense of “splitting” and creating a blaming atmosphere (Obholzer and Roberts 2003; James 2010). There were also some who affirmed the change, attempting to positively keep the peace in “denial” of their anxiety with technology and change (Gabriel 1999).

4.1.2 Affective Containment Strategies and Change Models receive mixed reviews

The principal and the professional learning coach were responsible for the affective containment strategies and discussed them at length. They sought to find healthy means and protocols to allow staff to express their feelings, but admit to it being late in the change process and not considered in the development of the initiative’s road map. They also sought ways to employ

change models such as CBAM and Kotter's steps for successful change in an organization (Hord 1987; Kotter 2007). The advice of Reilly (2015) was heeded as stories of student successes were shared to connect to teachers. Resistance was reframed as a teacher's desire to be excellent for their students and they were praised for their hard work in the PLC's to get BYOD right. The principal followed Reilly's advice to avoid being the expert by including tech moments by teachers in each staff meeting, by having students lead "speed dating" seminars in professional development meetings, and by PLC presentations. These attempts were met with mixed reviews in the feedback at the end of the year.

4.1.3 Persistence of emotional responses to change

There was a surprising staff response as logistical issues were being tested and solved, such as power issues, budget concerns, bandwidth capacity and access points, and costs to parents. Instead of relieving anxiety, new feedback surfaced expressing the loss of time getting technology to work for each student. In each of these cases, the teacher did not follow the protocol of having another student contact the I.T. office to gain assistance, thus minimizing disruption to the teacher. Rehearsing that protocol was often met with anger, giving evidence that the issue was more of an emotional response to change and display of the social defense of resistance rather than a logistical issue (Gabriel 1999; James 2010).

4.1.4 The positives that emerged from the case study

Teacher surveys and shared collaborative input on Google documents in the fourth quarter revealed the following:

- Professional development had adequately clarified what BYOD will look like for the teacher and student;
- The question "Why are we doing this?" was revisited repeatedly and welcomed expression of a wide range of feelings and views;
- PLC's working on the ISTE Standards completed their SMART goals with positive input on that collaborative experience;

- Staff members acknowledged and were relieved that they did not have to become technological experts for the success of the BYOD initiative.

4.2 Affective Containment Processes Reviewed

A clear affective containment plan was implemented as described in section 3.2 “Leader’s Strategies,” but the plan was late, only implemented intentionally in the second semester when the fallout of some of the more damaging social defenses like splitting and resistance had taken its toll. This reality was revealed in the end of year conferences, the input from the surveys, and during informal conversations. It would have been better if both the principal and the professional learning coach had studied psychodynamic theory a year in advance, especially social defenses and affective containment, and had incorporated strategies earlier in the change process (Armstrong and Rustin 2014).

The Six Hats protocol was employed as an affective containment strategy, but was rushed in a one-hour staff meeting that included other agenda items. In retrospect, a half-day of professional development time would have more adequately processed the affective experience of this major educational change, better enabling the staff to navigate the social defenses at play (Lyth 1988; Obholzer and Roberts 2003; Bion 2013). Teachers were encouraged to continue processing their feelings for BYOD on the Google doc that was shared in that meeting, but the opportunity for collaboration and group processing had likely passed. The principal’s impression and input from two seasoned administrators observing the video of the meeting was that although it was well incorporated, it did not have the time necessary to meet the goal of deep reflection on affective experiences, the principal displaying receptiveness for these feelings, increasing trust by this result, and then together reaping the fruit of insights and bonding produced from the discussion (James 2010).

4.3 Consequences Both Positive and Negative of Change (BYOD)

Several positive results transpired because of the principal and professional learning coach's determination to see the change through in a healthy manner. A strong answer emerged to the primary essential question, "Why are we doing this?" This answer was frequently revisited and shared with parents and students. An acronym of POWER developed by the principal served as a mnemonic to remind stakeholders of why the school was proceeding with such a massive educational change.

P = Productivity (effective tools for organization, presentation, and research)

O = Ownership of learning by students

W = World preparation (the skills students need for an innovative economy)

E = Educational standards (21st century skills and college expectations)

R = Responsibility (Digital Citizenship and technology use)

Staff began to process together what possible byproducts of BYOD could benefit students if teachers implemented the change with a positive and innovative spirit. These included modeling "growth mindset" over a "fixed mindset" (see 3.2). Cultivating the passion for learning as the paradigm of instruction now called for more project-based learning and innovation. Finally, developing wisdom for finding a healthy balance between tech and touch (i.e. valuing relationships over things and turning their laptop into a tool of productivity rather than an entertainment device).

Negative consequences included the fallout from the social defense of splitting in which staff took sides and the principal and professional learning coach were assigned the scapegoat roles by the disgruntled group for causing the anxiety. Although the affective containment strategies employed improved the splitting, there was a loss of political capital felt by the principal who had made it his main goal to mentor and pave the way for the professional learning coach who would be succeeding him as the principal the following year. This cast a shadow over the final school year for a principal who had invested 25 years in the school. Fortunately, farewell events that expressed appreciation served to heal much of the pain experienced in this change process. Nevertheless, more timely application of affective containment principles could have avoided much of the pain.

4.4 Critique on Leadership Principles Employed in the Case Study

Data results affirm the principal and professional learning coach's attempts to incorporate leadership models of change. The elements of Kotter's eight steps for successful change in an organization were incorporated: establishing a sense of urgency; creating a guiding coalition; developing a vision and strategy; communicating the change vision; empowering staff to act on the vision; planning and creating short-term wins; consolidating improvement and producing more change; and anchoring new approaches in culture (Kotter 2007). The critique again was on timing, with some of these elements occurring later in the change process, thus making it more difficult to build trust.

Perhaps the strongest suggestion the leaders can take from the staff feedback is related to the CBAM model. Particularly, the need to concentrate on the client-centered themes (Hord 1987). More individual attention and dialogue and greater attempts at differentiating the professional development would have not only built more trust and support but proved more successful in affective containment. In retrospect, the principal and the professional learning coach focused more on group settings for change and affective containment strategies, and this lacked influence to the resistant group. Moreover, at the beginning of the change process, the focus was on the new program. Although the leaders of change heeded Hord's advice to concentrate on the innovation and reason for improvement, the most important focus was minimized: the individuals' needs. The initial stages of the change process neglected the key role of the individual as reflected in this motto: "The real meaning of any change lies in its human, not its material, component" (Hord 1987).

Perhaps the leader was most successful in following Reilly's (2015) advice in *Getting Genuine Commitment for Change*. Feedback affirmed the leader's attempts to connect to the heart of the teacher. The leader increased support by reframing the expressed resistance in a positive direction by acknowledging the strongest resistant voices as excellent teachers with deep concern for their students and the learning process. This aspiration for excellence was utilized to build upon the vision. The leaders avoided playing the expert promoting a

theme of learning collaboratively with the entire staff team. Furthermore, they highlighted the need for staff to model the same spirit of learning to students.

In self-assessing, the principal and professional learning coach identified one key area they could have improved: earlier implementation of the affective containment plan. The strategies were employed late in the process and proved helpful. However, ground had to be recovered in building trust, collegiality, a sense of leadership support, and in gaining a catharsis with anxiety. Therefore, the staff and leaders suffered from a loss of healthy collaborative planning for a significant portion of the year. This case exemplifies a common scenario wherein the leaders of change developed a solid road map for change but did not realize the anticipated degree of success and support because of an early neglect of psychodynamic elements.

5. Conclusion

This paper has examined the literature and found that research on psychodynamic theory related to educational change is limited. Technology is posed to reform education making psychodynamic theory a critical field of study. This study has particularly examined affective containment and social defenses and looked through those lenses in examining models and leader strategies for change. In the BYOD initiative case study the principal and professional learning coach practiced sound change strategies and developed a well-timed road map. However, affective containment strategies lagged behind logistical problem solving creating dissonance amongst staff. The leaders did recognize this gap and final surveys revealed a “better late than never” response to the activities and strategies implemented for affective containment. The inclusion of affective containment in change strategy is sorely needed for educational research.

Major educational change is necessary as research proves the benefits it can have for students. School staff must acknowledge that education should be student-centered and not teacher-centered. But presenting compelling reasons for change and implementing popular models of change is not enough for the leader to successfully move his staff forward through the transition. Affective containment strategies need as much attention in the preparation stages as

vision casting and logistical planning. The BYOD initiation plan in the case study is a testament to the need for individuals to express and process feelings which surface from the change, validate those feelings with authentic understanding, employ individual and group protocols for effectively expressing these affective experiences, and then utilize a guiding coalition to navigate through the social defenses to constructively deal with the issues of the change (Lyth 1988; Obholzer and Roberts 2003; Bion 2013; Dale and James 2015).

Often, the change leader has a tendency to focus on managerial aspects of change. This proved true in this case study. The professional learning coach and principal did extensive research on 1:1 and BYOD programs and with the help of a task force that served as support team for the change, they developed a road map that was reasonable in its implementation timeline, provided for necessary professional development, and accounted for necessary infrastructure needs. But the plan overlooked the need for affective containment until well along in the change process. This omission proved regrettable and slowed the expected change progress as support waned, undoubtedly, as a result of social defenses triggered to avoid anxiety. Anxiety proved to be the major obstacle to educational change. The threat was internal and difficult to define in terms of the external world perspective that dominates a leader's planning (Gabriel 1999). This realization transpired later rather than sooner in the change process, leading to frustration for both the leaders and the staff. Affective containment strategies were eventually implemented - albeit rushed - and feedback confirmed a positive move toward change for the majority of the staff. The lesson demonstrated in this case study is put individuals first by addressing their affective needs. When emotional expressions have been aired and accepted, move forward with change plans together with an understanding, sympathetic coalition of support leading the way. This is affective containment.

References

Alber, R., 2013 *Deeper Learning: Defining Twenty-First Century Literature* [Online]. Edutopia. Available from: http://www.edutopia.org/blog/twenty-first-century-literacy-deeper-learning-rebecca-alber?utm_content=buffer4069&utm_medium=social&utm_source=linkedin.com&utm_campaign=buffer [Accessed 23 July, 2014 2014].

Armstrong, D. & Rustin, M., 2014. *Social Defences Against Anxiety: Explorations in a Paradigm*. Karnac Books.

Bebell, D. & Kay, R., 2010. One to one computing: A summary of the quantitative results from the Berkshire Wireless Learning Initiative. *The Journal of Technology, Learning and Assessment*, 9(2).

Bion, W.R., 2013. *Experiences in groups: And other papers*. Routledge.

Briggs, A. & Burke, P., 2010. *Social history of the media: From Gutenberg to the Internet*. Polity.

British Educational Research Association, 2011. *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011)*. Retrieved May 22 (2011): 2012.

Cole, P., 2004. *Professional development: A great way to avoid change*. IARTV Melbourne.

Dale, D. & James, C., 2015. The importance of affective containment during unwelcome educational change: The curious incident of the deer hut fire. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 43(1), pp. 92-106.

De Bono, E., 1989. *Six thinking hats*. Taylor & Francis.

DuFour, R. & Burnette, B., 2002. Pull out negativity by its roots. *Journal of Staff Development*, 23(3), pp. 27-30.

Dweck, C., 2006. *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House.

Dweck, C.S., 2010. Even geniuses work hard. *Educational Leadership*, 68(1), pp. 16-20.

Easton, L.B., 1999. Tuning protocols. *Journal of Staff Development*, 20(3), pp. 54-55.

EssentialSchools, 2015. *Coalition of Essential Schools Resources* [Online]. Portland, ME: Coalitions of Essential Schools. Available from: <http://essentialschools.org/resources/> [Accessed June 18, 2015].

Fullan, M., 2014. *Leading in a culture of change personal action guide and workbook*. John Wiley & Sons.

Gabriel, Y., 1999. *Organizations in depth: The psychoanalysis of organizations*. Sage.

Hanover Research Council, 2010. *The Effectiveness of One-to-One Laptop Initiatives in Increasing Student Achievement*. Washington, D.C.: Hanover Research Council.

Hargreaves*, A., 2004. Inclusive and exclusive educational change: Emotional responses of teachers and implications for leadership. *School Leadership & Management*, 24(3), pp. 287-309.

Haughy, D., 2015. *SMART Goals* [Online]. PROJECTSMART. Available from: <http://www.projectsmart.co.uk/smart-goals.php> [Accessed June 16 2015].

Hord, S.M., 1987. *Taking charge of change*. ERIC.

ISTE, 2007. *ISTE Standards* [Online]. International Society for Technology in Education. Available from: http://www.iste.org/docs/pdfs/20-14_ISTE_Standards-S_PDF.pdf [Accessed].

James, C., 2010. *The Psychodynamics of Educational Change*. Springer Science & Business Media.

James, C., Connolly, M., Dunning, G. & Elliott, T., 2006. *How very effective primary schools work*. Pine Forge Press.

James, C., Dunning, G., Connolly, M. & Elliott, T., 2007. Collaborative practice: a model of successful working in schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 45(5), pp. 541-555.

Kegan, R. & Lahey, L.L., 2009. *Immunity to change: How to overcome it and unlock potential in yourself and your organization*. Harvard Business Press.

Kotter, J.P., 2013. Leading Change When Disruption Is the Norm Response. *Harvard Business Review*, 91(1-2), pp. 16-16.

Kotter, J.R., 2007. Leading change - Why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(1), pp. 96-+.

Lowther, D.L., Inan, F.A., Strahl, J.D. & Ross, S.M., 2012. Do one-to-one initiatives bridge the way to 21st century knowledge and skills? *Journal of Educational Computing Research*, 46(1), pp. 1-30.

Lyth, I.M., 1988. *Containing anxiety in institutions: Selected essays*. Free Association Books.

Norman, J.M., 2005. *From Gutenberg to the internet: A sourcebook on the history of information technology*. Norman Publishing.

Obholzer, A. & Roberts, V.Z., 2003. *The unconscious at work: Individual and organizational stress in the human services*. Routledge.

Oreg, S., 2006. Personality, context, and resistance to organizational change. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 15(1), pp. 73-101.

Penuel, W.R., 2006. Implementation and effects of one-to-one computing initiatives: A research synthesis. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 38(3), pp. 329-348.

Reilly, M., 2015. Getting Genuine Commitment for Change. *Educational Leadership*, 72(7), pp. 42-46.

Robinson, D., 2014. An analysis of high-stakes testing policies to improve student learning with alternative policy to consider. University of Bath.

Robinson, K., Year. Do schools kill creativity. In: Presentation at TED2006 conference, Monterey, CA, 2006.

Rocco, S., 2012. *5 Essential Questions to Ask Before You Innovate in Your School* [Online]. ed Social Media. Available from: <http://www.edsocialmedia.com/2012/11/5-essential-questions-to-ask-before-you-innovate-in-your-school/> [Accessed June 2015].

Rosen, Y. & Beck-Hill, D., 2012. Intertwining digital content and a one-to-one laptop environment in teaching and learning: Lessons from the time to know program. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 44(3), pp. 225-241.

SRI, 2015. *School Reform Initiative Protocols* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocols/> [Accessed June 18, 2015 2015].

Wagner, T., 2012. *Creating innovators: The making of young people who will change the world*. Simon and Schuster.