Creating Culturally Responsive Classrooms

Monique M. Chism, Ph.D.
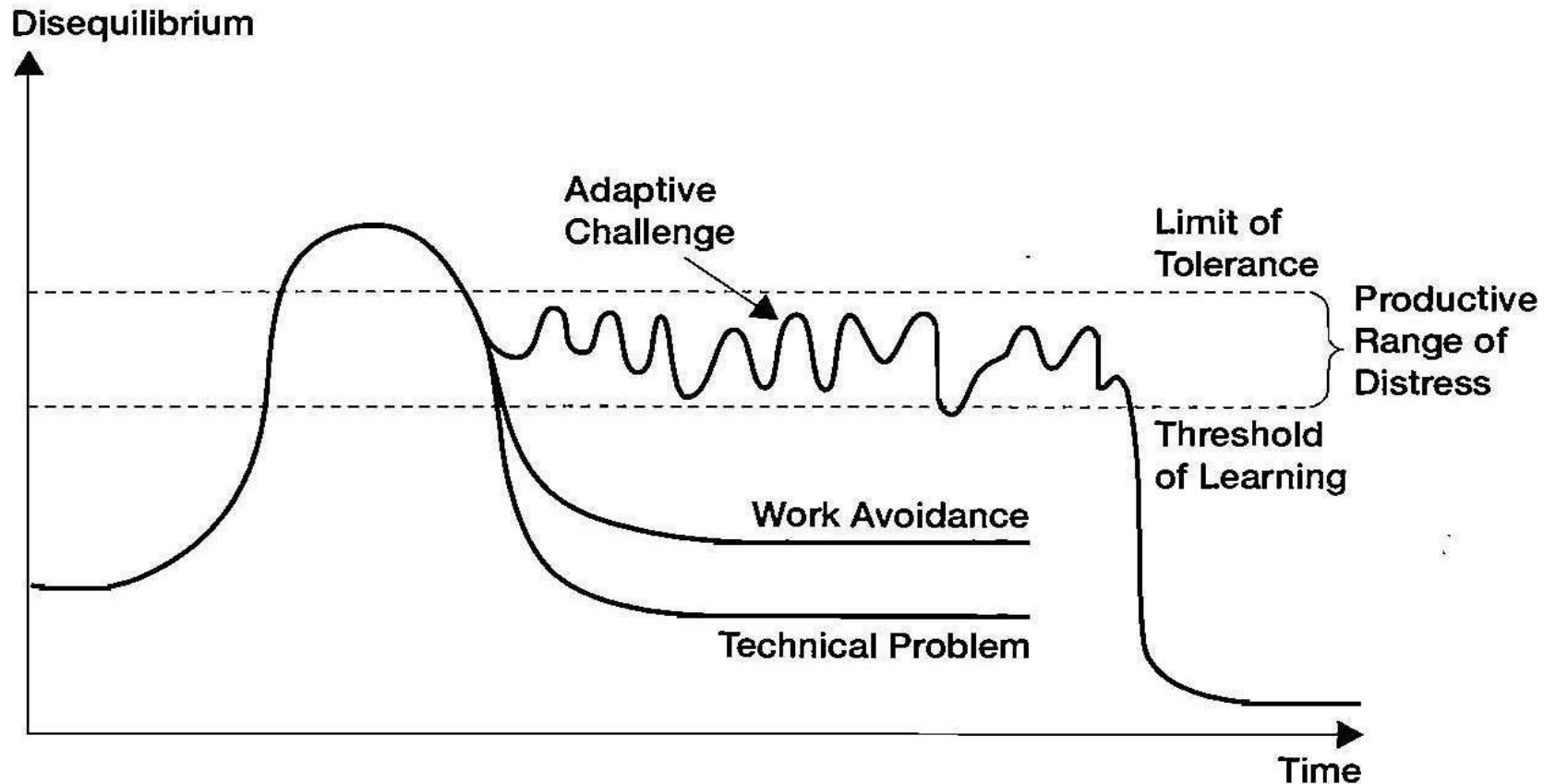
March 2015

Adaptive Leadership

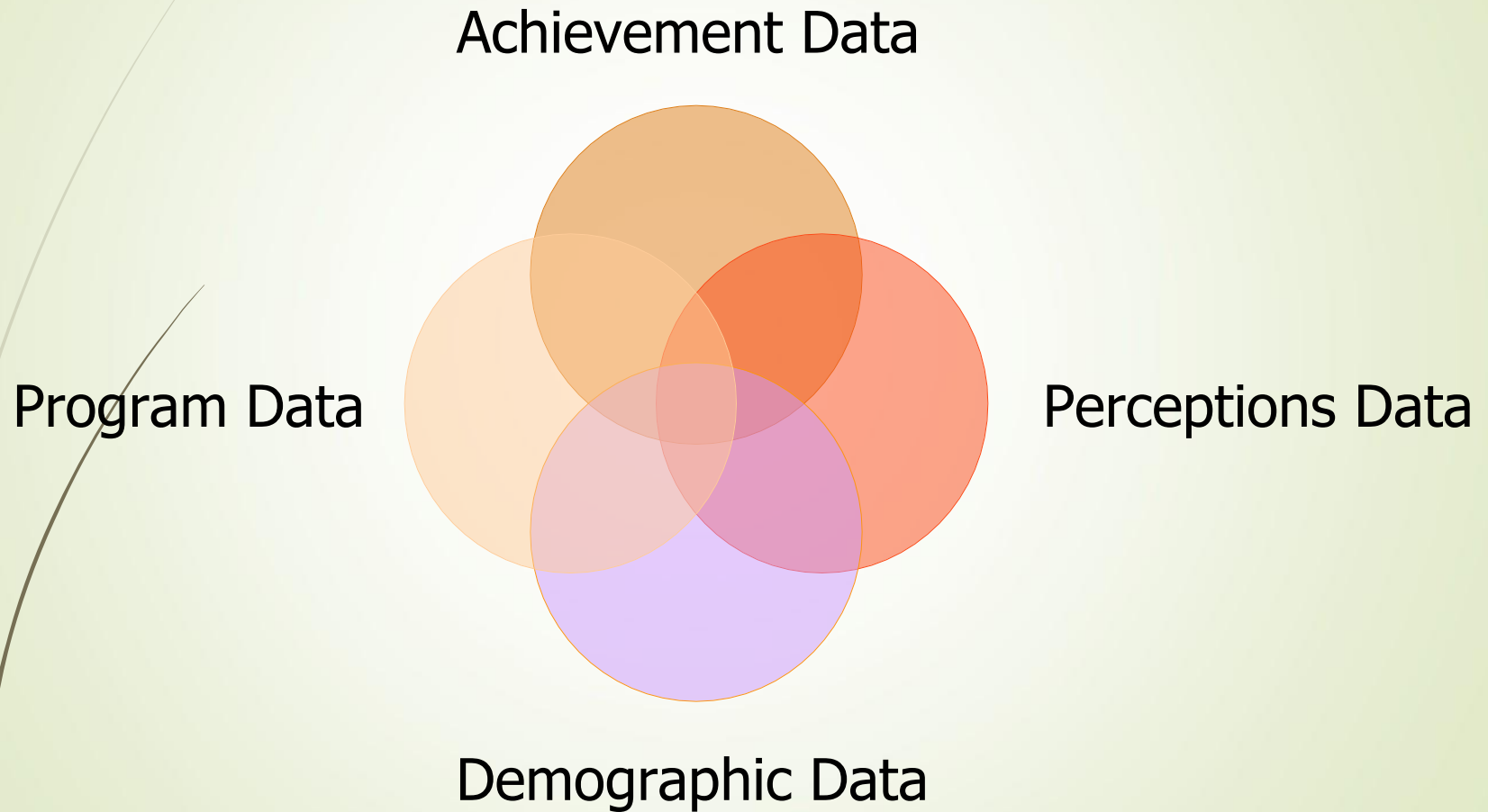# Technical Problem or Adaptive Challenge?

Technical Problem or Adaptive Challenge?

- Technical problems can be solved in agreed-upon ways with current know-how.

- Adaptive challenges require stakeholders to change their values, beliefs, and behaviors.

- A common leadership mistake is to treat adaptive challenges as technical problems.

Source: Singleton & Linton, 2006

Adaptive Change Is Uncomfortable

- It challenges values, beliefs, and behaviors.

- It requires loss, uncertainty, and sometimes disloyalty.

- Some discomfort is necessary, but too much can be immobilizing.

Source: Singleton & Linton, 2006

Where the Work Begins

Achievement Data

Program Data

Perceptions Data

Demographic Data

Guiding Questions

1. Which students are meeting or exceeding our achievement expectations and which are not?

2. What patterns of achievement progress are evident over time? (elementary, middle, high school)

3. Are there any surprises in the data?

4. What questions emerge as you review the data?

Locating the Problem

- The way we talk about a problem does several things:
  - It locates the source of the problem.
  - It defines the range of solutions we consider.
  - It tells a story that conveys values and reinforces beliefs.

*Source:* Hill, 2008

Cultural Proficiency

Working Definition of Culture

- ***Attitudes and beliefs*** held by persons both inside and outside the school, particularly attitudes about schooling, change, students, and other persons.

- The cultural **norms** of the school, composed of the set of informal, unwritten rules governing behavior in the school and community.

Working Definition of *Culture*

- "The ***relationships*** of persons inside the school, on both an individual and group level."
  - "The ways in which teachers relate to other teachers, students and teachers interact, and the relationships between teachers and administrators are examples of this element."

Source: Boyd, 1992
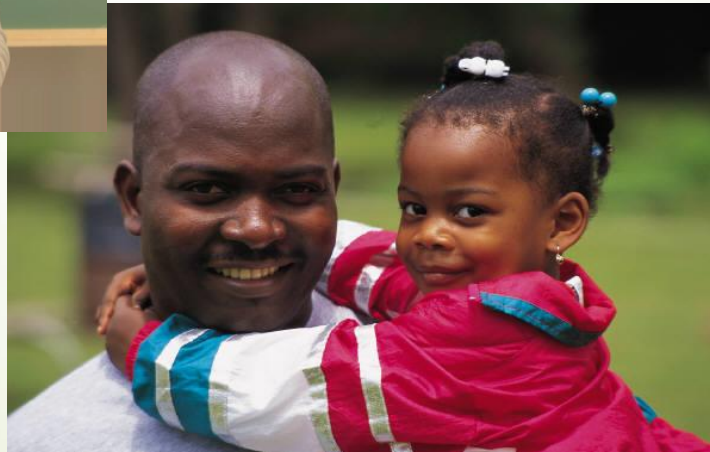
Culture

"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences."

–Audre Lorde

What Is Cultural Proficiency?

- The use of specific tools for effectively assessing, describing, responding to, and planning for improvements to better meet student needs.

- A language for facilitating productive cross-cultural conversations about controversial, sometimes contentious issues.

Source: Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003

What Is Cultural Proficiency Cont'd?

- An *inside-out approach* that identifies **Policies and practices** at the organizational level, and **values and behaviors** at the individual level, that enable effective cross-cultural interactions among students, teachers, administrators, and community.

Source: Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003

What Does It Look Like?

- Your core values.

- Your organizational structure and systems.

- Your language and behavior.

- Your organizational norms, traditions, and practices.

Cultural Proficiency Continuum

- Purposes:
  - To develop a common language for describing policies, practices, and people.
  - To share observations about the range of behaviors related to cultural proficiency in your school or district.

Cultural Proficiency Continuum

Descriptive language for healthy and nonproductive policies, practices, and behaviors

Destructiveness **Blindness** **Competence**

Incapacity **Pre-competence** **Proficiency**

Lindsey, R. B., Robins, K. N., & Terrell, R. D. (2003). *Cultural proficiency: A manual for school leaders* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

What Is a Courageous Conversation?

- What does it look like?
- What does it sound like?
- What does it feel like?
- How can it be used to enhance teaching and learning to improve student achievement?

What Attitudes or Dispositions Are Necessary for Courageous Conversations?

Reactivity ▽   **Intentionality** ▽

Control ▽   **Trust** ▽

- ▶ Recognition of opposites
- ▶ Commitment to dialogue
- ▶ Self-regulate negative emotions.
- ▶ Create increased trust and safety.
- ▶ Seek deeper understanding and empathy.

What Skills Are Necessary to Have Courageous Conversations?

- Reflection
- Ownership of statements
- Active, engaged listening
- Validation of another's point of view
- Empathy

Reflective Questions

- What is my role in addressing the districts' racial achievement gaps?
- What changes am I willing to make to disrupt racial disparity?

Source: Hill, 2008